



Thirsk Community Primary School

Ensuring our pupils are ready to write



Spelling

Every pupil will become a confident, fluent speller and writer who can express ambitious ideas clearly, compassionately, and inclusively. Fluent spelling reduces cognitive load, allowing pupils to focus on composition, structure, and creativity rather than transcription.

Our Core Values in Action

Value	What This Looks Like in Spelling & Writing
Ambition	We expect all pupils to make steady progress in spelling fluency, enabling ambitious writing.
Compassion	We recognise that spelling can be a barrier for some and provide scaffolds, targeted support, and encouragement.
Inclusion	Every learner receives systematic, explicit spelling instruction with adaptations where needed.

When pupils can spell fluently, they write more confidently, take creative risks, and communicate their ideas with precision.

Rationale: Why spelling? Why now?

Writing requires pupils to think, plan, spell, punctuate, and form letters—all within the limits of working memory. Spelling therefore is one part of transcription, which, alongside composition and executive function, forms the Simple View of Writing.

Writing Element	What Spelling Contributes
Transcription	Accurate, fluent spelling enables smooth drafting and revising.
Composition	Freed cognitive space allows pupils to focus on meaning and audience.
Executive Function	Pupils can self-monitor and edit effectively once spelling is automatised.

To prevent cognitive overload, we need to automate the transcription elements of this: spelling and handwriting, through repeated, structured practice. When spelling becomes automatic, pupils can focus their thinking on ideas, vocabulary, and structure—where creativity and higher-order thinking thrive.

Curriculum Design

Our spelling approach is based on the Spelling Shed Scheme, and is aligned with National Curriculum (Y1–Y6).

This scheme embeds:

- Weekly spelling rules/patterns
- High-frequency and exception words
- Morphology and etymology (KS2)
- Progressive, mapped word lists

Our approach breaks down spelling into small, sequenced steps. Our approach uses a mix of visual prompts, morphology charts, and memory aids to support learners embed their understanding.

Spelling sessions take place weekly. This introduces the spelling rule, linking to prior learning. The rule is then investigated by pupils, for the to identify patterns and exceptions. Across the week, at the start if lessons, pupils are given regular opportunities to practise these skills, before applying them in sentence and dictation work. These are then assessed, feedback provided and next steps generated.

This work is supplemented by the online platform Spelling Shed, which gives pupils opportunities to undertake targeted work at home to further ned rules, and to revisit old ones.

Spelling Strategies and Approaches

The Spelling Shed scheme uses a range of approaches to embed learning.

- Syllable chunking
- Sounding out / phoneme awareness
- Mnemonics and visual imagery
- Morphological analysis (roots, prefixes, suffixes)

Displays will show this week's spelling rules, previous rules, and whole class "watch words". Individual pupils may also be supported with additional sessions, pre-teaching, and opportunities for overlearning.

Teachers will not correct every misspelling, instead they will focus only on words that have been taught and practised. Underline errors lightly in pencil. Teachers will use a straight line for taught words. Each pupil will have their own spelling journal, which is to be used across the curriculum, for them to trial and practise spellings identified. This will enable pupils to follow their own spelling journey. Grow the Code Mats are available in all classrooms.

Teachers will not ask pupils to check misspellings in a dictionary. This can discourage risk-taking and is effective only for confident spellers. Instead, pupils will be supported to record and practise corrected words independently.

Dictation will be at the heart of our spelling offer – giving pupils the tools they need to embed accurate spellings into sentences, in order to embed learning and reduce cognitive demand.

Our approach aims to meet learners where they are—and move them forward with ambition, compassion and inclusion.

Assessment, Monitoring & Evaluation

Formative Assessment

Formative assessment takes place *within and across lessons* to provide ongoing feedback that informs teaching and supports pupil progress.

- Daily feedback: Teachers provide immediate verbal or written feedback during spelling and writing activities.
- Weekly quizzes and spelling journals: Low-stakes tests and journal checks reinforce recent learning and identify misconceptions.
- Dictation and applied writing checks: Teachers monitor how accurately pupils apply spelling patterns within their wider writing.

Formative assessment is timely and responsive — it recognises effort, identifies gaps quickly, and supports next steps for all learners.

Summative Assessment

Summative assessments provide a cumulative picture of progress over time and help evaluate the effectiveness of our provision.

- Half-termly review tests assess retention of taught rules and patterns.
- End-of-term spelling assessments evaluate pupils' mastery and readiness for the next stage.
- Optional standardised spelling age tests may be used to benchmark individual progress and inform intervention planning.

Summative assessment underpins our ambition for steady, measurable progress and celebrates improvement over perfection.

Monitoring & Evaluation

Monitoring ensures that spelling teaching remains consistent, effective, and inclusive across the school.

- Pupil voice interviews explore learners' confidence, strategies, and engagement with spelling.
- Book looks and lesson drop-ins check for consistency, progression, and impact on writing.
- Spelling data reviews are shared in staff meetings to track class and cohort trends.
- Teaching adjustments are made in response to assessment outcomes and professional discussion.

Through ongoing reflection and shared accountability, we sustain a high-quality, inclusive spelling curriculum that supports fluent, confident writers.