

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School
Diocese of Clifton



Inspiring everyone to **REACH** through
Faith, Hope, and Love

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Headteacher: Mrs Clare Howells

16th April 2026

Dear Parents and Carers,

I am writing to inform you of an important change to the way spelling will be taught across the school especially in **Key Stage 2** at St Joseph's. From this term, we will be changing the way we deliver spelling lessons. As part of this change, **children will no longer take weekly spelling tests**. The Department for Education does not require weekly spelling tests; instead, its guidance emphasises explicit phonics-based teaching, regular practice and assessment that informs teaching rather than frequent formal testing.

Why are we changing our approach?

Research into how children learn to spell shows that **memorising lists of words for a weekly test does not always lead to secure, long-term spelling knowledge**. Although children may remember spellings for a short period of time, these words are often not retained or applied accurately in their independent writing. Instead, evidence shows that children become confident, accurate spellers when spelling is taught through:

- clear links between **sounds and letters**
- understanding **patterns within words**
- frequent, supported practice
- opportunities to apply spellings meaningfully in writing

This approach supports deeper learning and builds spelling knowledge that lasts.

What will spelling look like in Key Stage 2?

We will be using the **Unlocking Letters and Sounds** spelling scheme. This is the same programme we use successfully in EYFS and Key Stage 1 for phonics. By continuing this approach into Key Stage 2, we aim to:

- provide a **smooth transition** from early phonics learning
- strengthen children's understanding of how words work
- boost spelling confidence and accuracy
- support spelling within reading and independent writing



Spelling lessons will be highly structured, explicit and purposeful, focusing on sounds, spelling patterns and word structure.

What about spelling tests?

While spelling will continue to be regularly practised and assessed through lesson work and writing, we will **not be using weekly spelling tests**. Instead, teachers will monitor progress through:

- day-to-day class activities
- application in independent writing
- ongoing assessment and feedback

This allows us to focus on progress over time and ensure spelling skills are really embedded.

Key Stage 1

Due to changes in spelling expectations across the school, we will **no longer carry out spelling tests in any year group**. However, developing writing skills is still very important. We kindly ask that, as well as helping your child to read their flashcards (in some year groups), you also encourage them to practise writing them. This will help support their spelling, handwriting, and confidence with writing.

National Curriculum spelling word lists

Please find attached:

- **Year 1 and 2 common exception word list**
- **Year 3 and 4 spelling word list**
- **Year 5 and 6 spelling word list**

These lists are taken directly from the **National Curriculum** and show the statutory words children are expected to be able to spell by the end of each phase.

They are **not weekly spelling lists**. Instead, they are intended to:

- act as a helpful reference at home
- support gentle, informal practice
- raise familiarity with common but tricky words

What a great thing to put on your fridge! A little practice at a time — talking about spellings, spotting patterns and using words in sentences — can make a big difference.

We believe this new approach will support children in becoming **independent, confident and resilient spellers**, helping them flourish as writers. Thank you, as always, for your continued support. If you have any questions about our spelling approach, please do not hesitate to contact me or come and talk to me on the playground.

Many thanks as always for your support. Kind regards,

Mrs Knight (Reading and Writing Lead)

Common Exception Words

Year 1

a	his	push	was
are	house	put	we
ask	I	said	were
be	is	says	where
by	love	school	you
come	me	she	your
do	my	so	
friend	no	some	
full	of	the	
go	once	there	
has	one	they	
he	our	to	
here	pull	today	

Year 2

after	class	floor	most	pretty
again	climb	gold	move	prove
any	clothes	grass	Mr	should
bath	cold	great	Mrs	steak
beautiful	could	half	old	sugar
because	door	hold	only	sure
behind	even	hour	parents	told
both	every	improve	pass	water
break	everybody	kind	past	who
busy	eye	last	path	whole
child	fast	many	people	wild
children	father	mind	plant	would
Christmas	find	money	poor	

Year 3 and 4 Statutory Spellings

accident	caught	eighth	heard	minute	possible	strange
accidentally	centre	enough	heart	natural	potatoes	strength
actual	century	exercise	height	naughty	pressure	suppose
actually	certain	experience	history	notice	probably	surprise
address	circle	experiment	imagine	occasion	promise	therefore
answer	complete	extreme	increase	occasionally	purpose	though
appear	consider	famous	important	often	quarter	although
arrive	continue	favourite	interest	opposite	question	thought
believe	decide	February	island	ordinary	recent	through
bicycle	describe	forward	knowledge	particular	regular	various
breath	different	forwards	learn	peculiar	reign	weight
breathe	difficult	fruit	length	perhaps	remember	woman
build	disappear	grammar	library	popular	sentence	women
busy	early	group	material	position	separate	
business	earth	guard	medicine	possess	special	
calendar	eight	guide	mention	possession	straight	

Year 5 and 6 Statutory Spellings

accommodate	category	determined	forty	marvellous	programme	soldier
accompany	cemetery	develop	frequently	mischievous	pronunciation	stomach
according	committee	dictionary	government	muscle	queue	sufficient
achieve	communicate	disastrous	guarantee	necessary	recognise	suggest
aggressive	community	embarrass	harass	neighbour	recommend	symbol
amateur	competition	environment	hindrance	nuisance	relevant	system
ancient	conscience	equipment	identity	occupy	restaurant	temperature
apparent	conscious	equipped	immediate	occur	rhyme	thorough
appreciate	controversy	especially	immediately	opportunity	rhythm	twelfth
attached	convenience	exaggerate	individual	parliament	sacrifice	variety
available	correspond	excellent	interfere	persuade	secretary	vegetable
average	criticise	existence	interrupt	physical	shoulder	vehicle
awkward	curiosity	explanation	language	prejudice	signature	yacht
bargain	definite	familiar	leisure	privilege	sincere	
bruise	desperate	foreign	lightning	profession	sincerely	