



St Thomas' Spelling

Whole School Plan 2015-2017

Written by St Thomas' Staff - November 2014.

Knowledge about Spelling

At St Thomas' we understand that in order to provide the best opportunities for our students to improve, spelling should be taught daily using a consistent routine. We recognise that students need to be taught explicitly and systematically using a scope and sequence. We understand that spelling is not about rote learning and it is more than just doing words sorts. Rather, it is about an approach based on exploration, investigation and self-discovery. We know that spelling should be taught in both whole class and differentiated small group sessions. Through research, we understand that children need to use the 4 forms of spelling knowledge (phonological, visual, morphological, etymological) and as such, this must be taught as part of our spelling program.

Beliefs about learning to spell

At St Thomas we believe that spelling:

- Needs to be purposeful and relevant.
- Needs to be engaging.
- Needs to involve an inquiry approach, where opportunities for exploration and self-discovery are modeled, provided and encouraged.
- Must be regularly monitored and assessed.
- Needs to be valued by our students as an important part of their Literacy learning.
- Is for writing. Spelling is valued and encouraged during writing - not just spelling sessions.
- Involves editing and proofreading as a key part of the process.
- Needs to be modeled by teachers (working through the modeled, guided and independent stages).
- Is encouraged and promoted through environmental print within each classroom (word/vocab walls and non-negotiable word walls).
- Is linked to audience and purpose. Students need to be aware of the audience for their writing and adapt accordingly.

Scope and Sequence

At St Thomas' each year level will be using the Australian Curriculum Aligned Scope and Sequence, as suggested and sourced from the Catholic Education Office of Western Australia.

Consistent Teaching Practices

The following are the consistent teaching practices that will be evident and visible in every classroom at St Thomas'.

- Each class will timetable 20 minutes of spelling at the beginning of daily literacy sessions.
- As part of this 20 minutes:
 - 5 minutes will consist of whole class explicit teaching (brainstorm/whole class investigation) of word work (using Scope and Sequence to direct our teaching).
 - 15 minutes will be differentiated small group work (using Words Their Way Program).
- Each class will implement the Words Their Way Spelling Program.
- Each class will maintain the integrity of the WTW program by using words sorts and other activities to investigate spelling patterns.
- The Words Their Way differentiated spelling program will involve weekly rotations (with the spelling focus lasting two weeks), where students rotate through and complete a range of different activities based around their word sort.
- As part of the differentiated small group work, the classroom teacher will work with each group once a week in a small focus group session.
- Some students who experience particular difficulties with spelling may need individualised programs.
- Each classroom will contain environmental print to encourage and promote spelling (word/vocab walls and non-negotiable word walls).

Assessment Strategies

At St Thomas' we will implement the following assessment strategies to monitor our students' progress:

- Teachers will use the data from the end of Term (from the previous year) to commence WTW.
- Students will be assessed (using the spelling inventory) at the end of Term 2 and end of Term 4.
- Assessment data (WTW spelling inventory) needs to be saved in staff share assessment folder at the end of Term 2 and 4.
- Teacher assessment is ongoing throughout Words Their Way rotations, including dictation tests to monitor transference of spelling patterns.
- No spelling test on list words.
- South Australian Spelling Test will be administered as per St Thomas' Assessment Schedule (Term 1 & 4).

Resources

- Classroom teachers to have 'Whole School Spelling File'.
- Electronic file on Staff Share titled 'Whole School Spelling' – A place to save and share spelling resources amongst staff.
- Each classroom will have WTW resource books.

Homework

- No lists will be given to rote learn as part of homework.
- Spelling activities will be regularly set for homework:
 - Years 1 and 2 homework will consist of word pattern activities.
 - Years 3-6 homework will consist of activities based on the fortnightly word sort.