



## St Benedict's C of E VA Junior School Governor monitoring report

### **Monitoring focus: What are the children's attitudes to spelling?**

#### **Date and description of monitoring activity: Thursday July 13<sup>th</sup> 2017. Has spelling accuracy increased at an appropriate age related?**

Piers Ranger, Deputy Headmaster, Sue Thurgood and Sue Wootton met to discuss the progress of the children's spelling throughout the academic year of 2016 – 2017.

Piers informed us that Young's Parallel Test was used to assess the Spelling ages and overall each class had made at least 9 months progress in line with their chronological age and in some cases at an accelerated rate.

It was evident from examining a selection of English books from all Year Groups that the children underlined words that they were unsure of by a wiggly line using a blue polishing pen. These could be regular sight words or Topic words depending on the task.

Both Year 5 and Year 6 classes were able to use dictionaries on an individual basis and Piers informed us that if money was available the school would be purchasing appropriate dictionaries for Year 4 and Year 5. When we met 3 delightful Year 6 pupils they were very enthusiastic about using a dictionary which they used at home as well as school and preferred this method to an electronic one. The Basic skill lesson has obviously made these children confident about how to access a dictionary.

There are specific Government Word Lists for the National Curriculum for each Year group, weekly spelling lists and Topic words. The children have their own personalised list and in many of the books we examined these lists were evident. In the Year 5 and Year 6 the selected books had their Young Parallel Test and result which would be very informative to both the pupil and the parent.

Year 5 and 6 Year Groups operate a 'Spelling Buddy' system to help a weaker speller address words that they are unsure of and this system was enthusiastically praised by our selected Year 6 pupils. One of them said that their 'spelling buddy' was very helpful and that they enjoyed using this system to help improve their spelling. These skills not only help with spelling accuracy but class collaboration and independence.

From looking at a selection of books it was evident from the teacher's comments that spelling errors were noted and the pupils were responsible for learning the correct spelling. The children could take these words home to learn or there were opportunities throughout the school day for this. If specific children were finding it difficult to retain spellings then the Intervention Scheme of Read, Write, Inc or Acceler Read, Acceler Write are used for 20 sessions and then reassessed to see how effective this was.

Different activities have taken place throughout the school year to encourage and reward improved spelling. Children are given house points, certificates and have taken part in a 'Spelling Bee' competition. Our selected Year 6 group of 2 boys and 1 girl felt that they were far more confident spellers which had improved their overall performance in the SAT's. They thought that it was important to spell accurately and had adopted their own methods of learning spellings through visual awareness, rhymes and mnemonics. They all commented on the fact that Mr Ranger made up amusing ways to remember difficult words.

The whole school should be complimented on its performance in Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling which has increased from 59% in 2016 to 73% in 2017. Thus the percentage of St Ben's pupils achieving age related standard has risen by an impressive 14% to just below the national average of 77%.

In the next academic year some staff will be attending training in a 'Spelling Detectives' programme. They will continue to encourage and use regularly the Glastonbury Public library to which many more pupils have signed up. It would obviously benefit the school if dictionaries could be provided for Years 3 and 4.

**Questions arising (3-6):**

**To find more inventive ways to further increase the accuracy of spelling throughout the school.**

**Share ideas and methods of learning spellings with other Junior schools.**

**To continue to show that all pupils are responsible for their spelling and how important this skill is in their overall academic performance.**