**Suggested non-negotiables for spelling practice and policy**

1. At KS2, spelling is taught in discrete 15-20 minute sessions, at least 5 sessions over 2 weeks.
2. In year R/KS1, segmenting to spell should become an increasing element in phonics sessions, whole class and guided writing once the idea of sound to symbol correspondence is clear. Teachers need to use their professional judgement as to whether the additional spelling objectives in year 2 can be integrated in phonics sessions, or whether additional sessions need to be made in curriculum time. This can be particularly true for the morphemic objectives (ed, ing, common prefixes and suffixes, apostrophe for contractions and using syllables to aid spelling.)
3. Teachers use the new NC spelling objectives and HIAS suggested route to structure the core curriculum. PNS Support for spelling sessions can still be used within this structure.
4. Teachers and pupils should link the learning of spelling to good cursive handwriting script. Motor memory and handwriting fluency plays a large part in becoming a good speller.
5. Over a half term, approximately 2/3rds of spelling time is devoted to teaching the year group objectives to the whole class. Differentiation can still be achieved within this by level of support during investigations, and the level of depth and difficulty in the range of words to which a rule could be applied (e.g. adding ed for past tense: removing e from root word, doubling letter to keep vowel short, irregular past tenses that do not use ed)
6. The remaining 1/3 of time is used for devising and improving on personal spelling targets, building a bank of spelling cues ‘how to learn a spelling’, high frequency word practice and specific cross-curricular words. Clearly this work can and should be reinforced outside of spelling sessions during whole group and guided writing, and when using cross curricular words in context.
7. All pupils have a spelling log in which to record spelling rules, build word families and practise dictated sentences. It will also have a section for personal spelling targets.
8. The whole school needs to agree on systems for reminding pupils of their spelling target and the current spelling rule/pattern, outside of spelling sessions and at the point of composition (e.g. stickers in books, bookmarks on a treasury tag, flip out list at back of book, target placemat on desks, poster for whole class target or sub-group targets)
9. Pupils in lower KS2 who are still struggling with using phonic strategies will still benefit from seeing morphemes in words and seeing links between spelling and meaning. Schools manage catch up in different ways. Either:

* Provide intensive phonics catch-up for spelling (e.g. CLLD KS2 materials) in the first term of year 3 in a streamed spelling group.
* Provide phonics catch up that is ADDITIONAL TO spelling provision. This should provide a good balance between blending to read and segmenting to spell, to build muscle memory when writing.

1. Spelling progress should be monitored through the use of a standardised spelling test that yields a spelling age once a year. This should be used more frequently with pupils who have received additional interventions, to measure the ratio gain of the intervention. Progress should also be monitored qualitatively through diagnostic tests and in pupils’ writing and captured at least termly on a tracking grid that records progress in the taught spelling patterns and those from lower years. Conferencing pupils about their confidence as spellers, and the strategies they are acquiring and using to improve also provides valuable self-evaluation evidence.

**Potential adaptations to Support for Spelling for those schools wishing to use some of the sessions and teaching materials:**

1. The teaching sequence of revisit/teach/practice/apply is a good model. It is also used in the teacher materials of the Collins Primary Focus spelling publications. Within the National Strategy materials, insufficient use is made of spelling investigations: rather than teach a rule, pupils devise a rule from a given set of word level data. The practice and apply sequence would still follow on from the class devising its own rule.
2. As the teaching of spelling becomes more confident, teachers will be able to make professional judgements about sub-grouping students during spelling sessions according to need. There can often be a group of good spellers who do not need to be taught a rule – and could be doing vocabulary extension work or working on personal spelling targets.
3. There is nothing in the materials that supports teachers to become more proficient at diagnosing a next step spelling target: prioritising a rule/pattern or word family, or simply a tricky HFW or homophone that will make a difference to a particular pupil. This is why spelling needs to be taught by knowledgeable practitioners, who can scan writing and diagnose priorities.
4. Teaching strings of homophones in a bunch is not often effective, if pupils are struggling to remember the difference. That these are words that sound the same but have different meanings and spellings is exactly the problem! It is best to build a spelling cue for one word that has homophones (e.g. two, twelve, twenty – link between meaning and spelling) then build in the other options. This builds mental meaning cues, rather than just relying on visual memory.
5. The expectations for progression in the draft English programme of study are to some degree different. Some morphemic rules are expected to be taught in year 1 where this is not currently the case. There is a new expectation in years 3/ 4 and 5/6 for pupils to learn set lists of words, but without any reasoning or justification as to why these are age appropriate. There is more of an emphasis on distinguishing between a long list of homophones and learning commonly misspelled words: aloud/allowed, definite, necessary.

Our guiding principle (not principal!) needs to be to ensure that all pupils are making progress with their spelling and word level knowledge. If the teaching of spelling comes from knowledgeable practitioners, is well-paced, interactive, investigative and asks pupils to take responsibility for their own progress as a speller then progress should be made.

If the spelling curriculum is driven by a pressure to teach lists of words and homophones, regardless of pupils’ needs and next steps, progress is unlikely to be made.