



Somerset Literacy Network

Helping Your Child With Spelling

St Aldhelm's C of E Primary School

Introduction for Parents and Carers

This booklet is intended to give you information about the approaches used to help children to become effective spellers. As with all aspects of the curriculum, children learn best when parents provide active encouragement and support. Parents are also able to extend what happens in school and help children apply their learning to the world beyond the classroom. All children are different and the development of spelling skills will vary between individuals. The booklet explains the general expectations for children as they move from the Foundation Stage through to Year 6.

Some points to bear in mind:

- Children learn best through play - spelling activities are best seen as 'playing with words'.
- Good spellers are usually good speakers and good readers – children need to be listened to, read to and read with.
- Spelling is about spotting patterns and generalising - it would be impossible to learn to spell each word separately! Seeing patterns, making analogies and generalising are key skills, which is why sorting activities with words are particularly helpful.
- Being able to spell is not an indicator of intelligence or overall writing ability, but, being able to spell accurately will help with the development of other inter-related writing skills. Particular support for those children with specific learning needs in terms of spelling is best discussed at an individual level.
- Spelling needs to be thought of as a thinking process rather than a rote learning process. If you can explain **why** a word is spelt in a particular way, you will probably remember how to spell it.
- Children will enjoy spelling if it feels like fun and if they feel good about themselves as spellers. We need, therefore, to be playful and positive in our approach – noticing and praising what children **can** do as well as helping them to correct their mistakes.

We hope that this booklet will provide you with some starting points for spelling activities, which you can develop in your own creative ways! It's all about loving words!

Helping Your Child To Spell - Foundation Stage



At this very early stage, children will benefit most from 'playing' with sounds and words - tuning in to the sounds around them and tuning in to speech. The focus for learning in pre-school settings will be on the development of listening skills and on building the child's vocabulary.

Children will be encouraged to:

- enjoy rhyming and rhythmic activities
- distinguish between different sounds
- develop an awareness of rhyme, rhythm and alliteration
- hear and say the initial sounds in words

This continues, but will then be alongside the introduction of the knowledge of the alphabetic code and the development of the skills of blending sounds to read and segmenting a word into individual sounds in order to spell.

The introduction to the alphabetic code will follow a particular order – starting with the most common single letter matches. Children will be taught to:

- hear and say the initial, middle and final sounds in CVC words i.e. consonant/vowel/consonant e.g. *mop, cat, tap*
- link sounds to letters
- recognise that phonemes (sounds) can be represented by one, or more than one, letter e.g. *dog d-o-g, shed sh-e-d, light l-igh-t*
- develop the skills of **segmenting** to help them **spell** e.g. sounding out *tap* as *t-a -p* and **blending** to help them **read** e.g. *t-a-p* says *tap*

Children will also build their recognition of some of the most common 'tricky' words and begin to spell these accurately in their independent writing e.g. *the, to, she, was, you*

You can help by:

- saying and singing lots of nursery rhymes, action rhymes, jingles, nonsense rhymes and songs together
- moving to songs and music together
- listening together to sounds in the environment, talking about them and distinguishing between them
- looking at books together – showing that you are reading the print
- sharing books together that have the features of rhyme, rhythm and alliteration e.g. *We're Going on a Bear Hunt*, *Tanka Tanka Skunk*, *Each Peach Pear Plum*, *Julia Donaldson stories*
- exploring alphabet books together
- developing your child's finger dexterity, which will help with learning to form letters correctly e.g. *helping to peg out washing*, *playing with Lego*
- playing games such as '*I Spy*' – initially this is best done with a limited range of objects e.g. *objects on the dinner table* as otherwise the scale of the choice can be too much
- saying a string of rhyming words with an 'odd one out' e.g. *wish, fish, dog, dish*
- saying a string of words beginning or ending with the same sounds including an 'odd one out' e.g. *tap, mop, buzz, lip*
- encouraging mark making and then recognising the child's efforts as handwriting skills and phonic knowledge are applied to their first attempts at 'writing'
- modelling and engaging your child in varied and 'real' purposes for writing e.g. *a shopping list, birthday cards*

Helping Your Child To Spell - Key Stage 1

Throughout Key Stage 1 children will benefit from rhyming and rhythmic activities, listening games and musical activities. By the end of KS1 the ability to use a joined handwriting style will be supportive of progress with spelling. This will be based on the correct formation of individual letters as the strategy of considering does the word 'look right', can only be effective if the word is legible.



Through Key Stage 1 the aim is that children will:

- understand and use the terms 'vowel' and 'consonant'
- accurately spell words with 3 and 4 phonemes (CVC, CVCC, CCV) using the common representations of the 44 phonemes
- come to understand that the same sound can be represented in different ways e.g. *mean*, *green*, *mummy*, *thief*, *these*, *money* and, when spelling an unfamiliar word, help themselves by making a choice based on knowledge of which is a common representation and whether the position of the phoneme in the word has a bearing
- come to understand that the same letter pattern may represent different sounds e.g. *beat*, *bread*
- continue to use the skill of 'phoneme counting' as a key spelling strategy e.g. in the word *crash* there are 4 phonemes or sounds *c-r-a-sh*
- develop the skill of syllable counting to 'chunk' and spell longer words and compound words e.g. *sudd-en-ly*, *week-end*
- extend the range of 'tricky' high frequency words spelled accurately e.g. *said*, *some*, *any*
- begin to investigate the rules for making plurals e.g. *girl-girls*, *box-boxes*, *city-cities*
- begin to investigate rules for adding 'ing', 'ed', 'er', 'est' e.g. *stop-stopping-stopped*, *hope-hoping-hoped*, *happy-happier-happiest*
- begin to investigate common prefixes and suffixes e.g. *unhappy-disagree*, *careful-carefully*
- begin to use the apostrophe for contractions e.g. *I am - I'm*, *He will - he'll*
- begin to use the possessive apostrophe for singular noun e.g. *the boy's game*
- begin to develop their proof reading skills

You can help by:

- continuing to say and sing lots of nursery rhymes, action rhymes, jingles, nonsense rhymes and songs together
- continuing to read to your child
- playing games such as '*I Spy*,' '*Pairs*' and '*Snap*'
- helping your child to say the alphabet and know that a letter has 'a name' and 'a sound'
- providing magnetic letters for the fridge door or a magnetic board and playing at generating words
- grouping together words that use the same letter/s to represent a particular phoneme or follow the same spelling 'rule'
- providing and helping with the use of a simple dictionary
- providing 'real' purposes for your child to write e.g. *writing shopping lists, thank you letters, messages*
- talking about any tricky or 'high frequency' words they find difficult to spell and helping them find a way to remember it
- using words they are learning to spell in lots of different contexts to ensure the meaning is fully understood
- praising attempts at spelling unfamiliar words, pointing out all the correct letters in their attempt
- encouraging care in letter formation and providing a variety of attractive writing 'tools'

Helping Your Child To Spell - Key Stage 2



Spelling at Key Stage 2: “Phonic knowledge should continue to underpin spelling but, increasingly, pupils need to understand the role of morphology (units meaning) and etymology (word derivation).”

All earlier knowledge and skills will be developed and embedded, and further spelling rules and patterns are introduced. These will include:

- the unusual letter matches for phonemes
- prefixes e.g. *dis- mis- in- il- im- ir- re- sub- inter- super- anti- auto-*
- suffixes e.g. *-ation -ly -ous*
- words ending in *-able -ible -ant -ance, -ent -ence*
- homophones e.g. *groan/grown, peace/piece, practice/practise*
- silent letters
- the use of the hyphen
- the use of the apostrophe for possession (singular and plural)

Pupils will continue to build the bank of common words they always spell correctly and employ a range of strategies to attempt unfamiliar words.

They will be expected to

- think about the meaning of the word in the context of the sentence
- apply spelling rules and to develop their proof reading skills
- have the skills to use both a dictionary and a thesaurus

You can help by:

- continuing to encourage your child to read widely
- demonstrating an interest in words
- talking about the meanings and possible derivations of words
- playing word games together e.g. *Scrabble*, *Bananagrams* and engaging with other activities such as word-searches and crosswords
- identifying the 'root 'word in a longer word e.g. *musician* (*music*), *vicious* (*vice*)
- providing 'real' purposes for using knowledge of alphabetic order e.g. *looking up a telephone number*, *finding a book in the library*
- writing the words your child is learning on cards or post-its and sorting the words in as many different ways as you can think of
- talking to your child about the words he/she is learning to spell at school and discussing some possible ways of remembering the spelling such as singing the letter names as a melody, mispronouncing the word to emphasize its spelling e.g. *Wed-nes-day*
- encouraging breaking words into syllables
- showing how to try out alternative spellings to see which 'looks right'
- highlighting the tricky parts in a word e.g. *separ*ate, *bea*utiful, *weir*d
- reminding them about the correct use of capital and lower case letters
- encouraging the '**look, say, cover, write, check**' strategy for learn spellings
- providing a dictionary and illustrated thesaurus – give support with using these
- making up 'word webs' together e.g.

