

A Guide to Active Literacy



Stage 6/7

Spelling

Introduction

The aim of this leaflet is to provide you with information about how spelling will be taught at stage 6 and 7 and how you can support your child at home.

Children are taught spelling in 3 main ways at Stage 6 and 7. They are taught common words appropriate and relevant to their stage, words linked to interdisciplinary learning, current school events or a specific writing genre. Spelling strategies and spelling rules are the focus for teaching these words and build on knowledge acquired from previous stages. Reciprocal teaching (peer teaching) is also continued to encourage communication and problem solving.

Spelling Strategies

The strategies the children are taught are:

- Knowledge and use of phonics – using Elkonin boxes and the diacritical spelling code (see below)
- Syllabification – breaking words into syllables
- Words within words
- compound words
- using analogy – for example if you can spell 'light' you can also spell bright, sight, fright etc
- Mnemonic – children learn or create mnemonics as a memory aid
- Spelling rules – for example 'i' before 'e' except after 'c'



Elkonin Boxes - breaking words into phonemes and recording this using Elkonin boxes

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Diacritical marking – investigating words – recognising and identifying which phonemes are contained within each word. Children are involved in listening carefully, enunciating the words accurately and using the diacritical marking code to identify individual sounds and blends.

- Single sounds/phonemes are marked with a dot under the sound
- Joined phonemes are marked by underlining with a dark line
- ⌒ Split phonemes (formerly magic 'e') are marked with a joining loop



Word Building

The second part of the spelling programme focuses on word building. Children are taught about affixes (additions to a root word eg *-ful* to *help* creating *helpful*) and how they alter word meanings. This also means that children deepen their understanding of the grammatical elements of word building. As well as affixes children are taught about homophones and confusions. Words which sound the same but have different spellings and meaning are called homophones e.g. ate and eight. Words which sound or are spelt similarly are called confusions e.g. conscience and conscious.

Spelling Rules

Spelling Rules Across stages 6 and 7 the children will be consolidating previously taught spelling rules and learning new ones. There are 24 spelling rules to learn across the two years. The spelling rule will be introduced and modelled by the teacher. Children will then create a list of as many words as possible which fit the rule. These will then be compiled into a stage appropriate list which will form the basis of the rest of the week's spelling and homework. The children will use spelling strategies alongside the rule to help them spell the words.

Assessment

Children are no longer assessed solely on the basis of a single word spelling test. Teachers can make judgements about a child's ability to spell words by placing them in a context, for example a dictated sentence or paragraph. Teachers' assessment judgements are also based upon daily work in class.

Vocabulary building is assessed by the children's ability to recognise the type of word and then categorise it into noun, verb, adjective or adverb.

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At Home

Encouraging your child to explain what they have been learning is an excellent way of supporting them at home. Helping your child to break down wordlists into manageable sections so that you are focusing on 2/3 words per night can also be helpful. Playing games and making learning fun helps to consolidate and support their learning without carrying out onerous tasks. Below you will find a few suggestions that you may wish to try:

- Look for words that contain the focus phoneme in books, comics, magazines and the local environment.
- Use spelling words to play snap, hangman or other traditional games
- Ask your child to talk to you about the diacritical marking code.
- You could play games with words by seeing who can make the most words from a root word e.g. help, helpful, unhelpful, helpfully, helpless, helplessly. You could discuss how each word differs in meaning.
- Use the values linked with Scrabble tiles (or create a list of your own so common consonants are worth 8, vowels 12 and tricky consonants like 'z' or 'q' could be 15 for example) then write each spelling word, count their total value and see which is 'worth' the most.

