

# Hambridge Community Primary School

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Dear parents/carers

Over the next few terms, we are having a real spelling focus across the school. Spelling is an important key skill to learn. The children will not only be learning common spelling patterns and key words, but there will be a focus on understanding these words and how to apply these throughout their writing.

We know and are thankful that you, as a Hambridge parent or carer, are very supportive in helping your child to learn their weekly spellings and the children often perform well in spelling tests. Studies have shown, however, that although many children get their spellings right on the day, they do not always remember these over time, nor do they apply them to their independent writing. Children will only become confident and capable spellers with plenty of practice. I have compiled some ideas of how you can support your child to learn their spellings and make the process fun, engaging and enjoyable.

Every week your child will be bringing home a list of spellings which are the class focus for that week. Please help support spelling at school by taking some time to try a few of the activities on the next page at home with your child. Little and often is far better than all at once; concentrating on a few words each day is best and will really go a long way in helping your child to meet national standards. They will continue to have access to spelling shed so they can practise their spellings and play games.

Remember, just sitting learning meaningless words by rote is not fun and encourages neither a love of writing or an interest in the rich vocabulary of our language. Acquiring more words must be fun and motivating. One of the very best ways is just to encourage your child to read, read and read some more so that they absorb language and spelling in context. Don't forget that 'reading' also can include listening to audio books, hearing stories read aloud by family members, encouraging children to read to their younger siblings and even their pets!

Please take some time to explore the website. Under children - curriculum learning and resources - other resources and links, I have added information to support reading, writing and spelling at home and keep you informed as to how we teach these subjects at school. I will continue to update this.

If you come up with any other enjoyable, successful and motivating ideas that work in your house to learn spellings, please let us know and we can add them to the list.

Happy spelling!

Mrs Chesterfield - English Coordinator

One of the main ways we ask children to learn their spellings initially is through **Look, Cover, Write, Check:**

Look at a word and say it out aloud then cover it, write it and check to see if it is correct. If not, highlight or underline the incorrect part and repeat the process.

## 1. Exploring sounds, words and spelling

In Foundation Stage we introduce the children to the letter sounds and correct formation and show them how these are linked together to create words. During our daily phonic sessions, we teach the children the 44 phonemes:

s a t p i n m g o c k d e u r h b f l j v w x y z qu ch sh th ue ng  
ai ee ie oa oo ar or er ou oi ear air ure

A phoneme is the smallest unit of sound in a word:

Eg there are 3 phonemes in the word c - a - t and 3 phonemes in the word sh - i - p.

### How can parents/carers help at this stage?

- Encourage your child to be aware of the writing that surrounds them, including signs in the environment, and ensure that children see you writing. Daily activities can all be a stimulus for writing: Shopping lists, invitations, cards, letters, signs and messages, dates on a calendar etc
- Children need to develop the muscles in their arms and fingers before they can hold a pencil to write. There are many fun activities that will help your child develop strength, dexterity and control. These could include threading beads and laces, pegging objects onto a line, using tweezers and tongs to pick up small items such as beads, using playdoh, making small models with construction kits etc
- Practise correct letter formation. You can use a multi-sensory approach by encouraging them to write in sand, flour-paste, gloop, sand-paper etc
- As they begin to learn their letter sounds, encourage them to use their sounds in their own independent writing.

## 2. Growing confidence with writing and spelling

As the children progress into Key Stage 1, they begin to learn alternative spellings for the 44 phonemes; these are called graphemes.

For example, the phoneme ai can be written as:

ai as in train

ay as in play

a\_e as in cake

a as in station

Within our daily phonic lessons, we introduce different spelling patterns, including words that can be blended e.g. c-a-t and those words which cannot be blended (tricky words) e.g. "the".

### How can parents/carers help at this stage?

#### **Sounding Out:**

Break the words down into phonemes

E.g. c - a - t, sh - e - ll. It is important to remember, however, that many words cannot be sounded out so other strategies are needed.

#### **Syllables:**

Divide the word into syllables and encourage your child to say each syllable as they write the word

E.g. re - mem - ber

#### **Mnemonics:**

A mnemonic can be helpful in memorising some tricky words.

E.g. because (big elephants can always understand small elephants)

#### **Words within Words:**

Try to find short words within longer ones

E.g. can you see a rat in separate? What word can you see in when?

#### **Speed - Write:**

Give your child 30 seconds to correctly write a word as many times as possible.

### 3. Developing accuracy and a range of strategies for spelling

In Key Stage 2 children carry out spelling investigations, to encourage them to look for patterns and generate rules. Children also write short dictated sentences to ensure they can spell words correctly in context.

As part of the writing process, children are encouraged to proof-read their work and to check words they are unsure of using dictionaries. When marking independent writing, teachers will focus on spellings and spelling patterns that have been previously taught (that the children should know how to spell). It is not our policy to correct every spelling as we recognise the negative impact that this could have on children's self-esteem and creativity.

#### How can parents/carers help at this stage?

##### **Continue using mnemonics**

This will help them memorise tricky words.

Eg Necessary - 1 collar and 2 sleeves are necessary

##### **Finding words within words.**

For example, Teacher: each, ache, her, tea, teach

##### **Making links**

Try to make links between the meanings of words and their spelling. For example, sign, signal, and signature.

##### **Play word games**

For example, I spy, Scrabble, Boggle and Find the Word puzzles, crosswords

##### **Create a homophone list**

Horse/hoarse, knight/night, weight/wait and check definitions

It is important to keep the process of learning spelling enjoyable and engaging for all concerned. The "little and often" approach is the best practice.

Below are a number of other spelling activities that you might like to try. Most of these can be adapted for different age groups.

### **1) Word Search**

Create your own word searches using your spelling words. Or use this link to get your computer to do it for you.

<https://puzzlemaker.discoveryeducation.com/word-search>

### **2) Air spelling:**

Choose a spelling word. With your index finger write the word in the air slowly, say each letter. Your parent needs to remind you that you need to be able to 'see' the letters you have written in the air. When you have finished writing the word underline it and say the word again. Now get your parents to ask you questions about the word. For example they could ask 'What is the first letter?' 'What is the last letter?' 'How many letters are there?' etc.

### **3) Media Search:**

Using a newspaper or magazine you have 15 minutes to look for your spelling words. Circle them in different coloured crayon. Which of your spellings words was used the most times?

### **4) Shaving Cream Practice:**

An easy way to clean those dirty tables is to finger paint on them with shaving cream. Squirt some on the table (with your parents permission and supervision!) and then practice spelling your words by writing them with your finger in the shaving cream.

### **5) Salt Box Spelling:**

Ask your parents to pour salt into a shallow box or tray (about 3cm deep) and then practice writing your spellings in it with your finger.

### **6) Scrabble Spelling:**

Find the letters you need to spell your words and then mix them up in the bag. Get your parents to time you unscrambling your letters. For extra maths practice you could find out the value of each of your words.

**7) Pyramid Power:**

Sort your words into a list from easiest to hardest. Write the easiest word at the top of the page near the middle. Write the next easiest word twice underneath. Write the third word three times underneath again until you have built your pyramid

**8) Tasty Words:**

Try and find tasty things to spell your words with, like raisins. Then when you spell them right you get to eat them!

**9) Design A Word:**

Pick one word and write it in bubble letters. Colour in each letter in a different pattern.

**10) Water wash or chalk:**

Use a paintbrush and water or chalk to write your words outside on concrete or pavements.