

A booklet for parents

Supporting spelling at home



CRANFORD PARK
Church Of England Primary School



Cranford Park CE Primary School

Introduction to Parents

This booklet is intended to give you information about the approaches used in our school 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 will vary with individuals. The booklet explains the general expectations for children as they move from Year 3 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 is socially important and probably does improve our 'life chances'.
- Spelling is 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.
- Many children find computers highly motivating. Some useful websites are referenced which may be useful

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!

Helping Your Child to Spell – Year 1 and Year 2

Your child will be somewhere along the way to becoming a good speller.

Listed below are a few strategies good spellers use:-

- They have a store of words they can spell- beginning spellers known words like **am, here, the, I, is, it.**
- They sound words out – beginning spellers can sound out words like **cat, mum, dad, sit, fit,** etc
- They know many common letter patterns, so they know when a word looks right – beginning spellers know patterns like **sh, th, ch, ing** later on **ought, ious** etc
- They can divide words into syllables- beginning spellers can do this with words like **carpet** and **garden.**
- They can make links between the meaning of words and their spelling – beginning spellers don't do this much. Later on connections will be made between words like **sign, signature, circle circumference**
- They work out spelling rules for themselves
- They use adults and dictionaries to help them.

It is very important that children are encouraged to have a go at spelling words they don't know when they are writing. If they do not have a go they will not get the chance to practice these important strategies. If children only use words they can spell, they may never make a mistake, but they will not get the chance to become good spellers.

Always praise your child for having a go!

Helping Your Child to Spell – Year 3 and Year 4

In years 3 and 4, most children will:

- understand and use the terms 'letter', 'vowel', 'consonant', 'phoneme', syllable, prefix and suffix
- read and spell words containing 'long' vowel sounds such as dream, thief, bright, flair
- understand that the same sound can be represented in different ways e.g. mean, green, mummy, thief
- 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 for spelling unknown shorter words (e.g. In the word crash there are 4 phonemes or sounds c – r – a – sh)
- use the skill of syllable counting to 'chunk' and spell longer words and compound words e.g. suddenly, unimportant, weekend, blackbird, churchyard
- extend their range of high frequency (common words) e.g. their, again, having, couldn't
- investigate the rules for making plurals e.g. girl, girls, box, boxes, city, cities
- investigate rules for adding 'ing' or 'ed' e.g. stop, stopping, stopped, hope, hoping hoped
- investigate common prefixes and suffixes e.g. un-, dis-, re-, pre-, -ful. -ly
- learn how the apostrophe is used for omission (don't) or possession (the dog's dinner)
- learn to use dictionaries and ICT spell-checkers
- learn to proof read their writing – checking words if they don't 'look right'

You can help by:

- continuing to read and share books together including jingles, nonsense rhymes and poetry
- helping your child to say and spell the alphabet, days of the week, months of the year
- playing Scrabble, 'Hangman'; doing word-puzzles, word-searches and simple crosswords together
- providing 'real' purposes for your child to write e.g. writing shopping lists, 'to do' lists, thank you letters, household labels
- providing 'real' purposes for using knowledge of alphabetic order e.g. looking up a telephone number, finding a book in the library
- sorting objects (e.g. jars of herbs and spices) into alphabetical order
- making up sets of paired words on card and playing 'pairs' using the words your child is currently learning
- 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
- helping your child to learn spellings by 'playing' with the words as much as possible e.g. cutting words up to make word jigsaws, writing a word in pencil and going over the tricky part in colour, making tricky words out of plasticene or play-dough, writing the words with your eyes shut, looking for shorter words inside a longer word talking to your child about the words he/she is learning to spell at school and discussing some good ways of remembering the words
- encouraging breaking words into syllables e.g. Wed – nes –day
- praising successful attempts at spelling – praise the correctly spelt letters and discuss ways of remembering the 'tricky bit'
- showing how to try out alternative spellings and checking to see which looks right
- encouraging the 'look, say, cover, write, check' strategy to learn spellings
- providing a dictionary and illustrated thesaurus – give support with using these
- using the 'Spellits' activities on the BBC website bbc.co.uk

Helping Your Child to Spell – Year 5 and Year 6

In years 5 and 6 most children will:

- understand and use the terms letter, vowel, consonant, phoneme syllable, prefix and suffix
- use independent spelling strategies e.g. breaking words into syllables, using known prefixes, suffixes and letter strings, using known spelling rules, checking that spellings 'look right', using dictionaries and spell checkers
- take personal responsibility for learning their own commonly misspelt words using strategies that they find helpful
- secure the correct spelling of high frequency (common words) e.g.their, through
- transform words e.g. changing tenses (ing ed); negation (un, im) making comparisons (er est); changing verbs to nouns and vice-versa (dictate/dictation, decoration/decorate)
- use the apostrophe accurately for omission (don't) or possession (the cat's whiskers)
- extend their knowledge of prefixes and suffixes (aero- aqua- micro, -scope)
- research the derivation of words and learn how to use an etymological dictionary

You can help by:

- As well as the activities listed above
- talking with your child about the books/newspapers/magazines you are each reading
- talking to your child about the words he/she is learning to spell at school and discussing some good ways of remembering the words
- identifying the 'root' word in a longer word e.g. musician, musical
- demonstrating an interest in words -talking about the meanings and possible derivations of words
- playing Scrabble, 'Hangman'; doing word-puzzles, word-searches and crosswords together
- investigating spelling websites e.g. puzzlemaker from discoveryschool.com, spellits from bbc.co.uk, wordcentral.com
- providing an adult dictionary, thesaurus, spell-checker
- As well as the activities listed above