

HeadStart Spelling – A Guide for Parents/Carers

As a school, we will be delivering the HeadStart Spelling programme in Years 1 to 6. Children will be given sets of spellings to learn over a four-week period based on a spelling pattern. The children will be taught the spellings in class through the 'look, cover, write, check' method as well as through games and activities. Below you can find details about the programme.

HeadStart Spelling – Overview

- Includes all National Curriculum spelling patterns for each year group
- Revisits spelling patterns over a four-week period
- Puts words into context
- Reinforces spelling patterns using fun games and activities
- Includes extension words to challenge able spellers
- 144 words learnt per term
- 432 words learnt per year



Spelling Research

Recent research indicates that children do not learn spellings by simply using rote visual memory. Instead, their ability to spell is dependent on their growing understanding of spoken and written word structure. It is crucial that these word structures and spelling patterns are taught to children, rather than sending a list of words home on a Monday to be learnt and tested on a Friday. Some children learn to spell using this method, but many do not. Children who struggle with their spellings will never succeed if they are constantly tested in this manner.

Assessment

Children are tested and given an overall standard at the end of each term and year, which can then help to inform overall teacher judgement.

There is no formal weekly spelling test, however the spelling patterns at the start of the four-week block will be sent home for children to practice and become familiar with.

HeadStart Spelling

The activities provided by the HeadStart Spelling programme allow the children to practice the words in a meaningful and exciting way. Many of the activities have a game element to them, so the children will not regard them as copying exercises, and most of the activities make the important link of putting the word into context. The nature of the activities becomes increasingly challenging as the children get older and is appropriate for each age level.

Marking

It is important that children mark their own spellings, this may initially take some practice. However, for children to become more spelling aware in their everyday writing it is crucial they are given the opportunity to peer and self-mark their spellings.

How can you help at home?

You can help you child at home by getting them to use the 'look, cover, write, check' method. First ask your child to carefully look at the spelling, then cover it and write it down. Finally encourage your child to check their own spellings for errors.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact your child's class teacher for more support.