

# Helping your child with spelling

U A B C D E F G H I J K L  
SPELLING  
W Y X T S R Q P O N M V Z



Maidwell Primary School

Dear Parents,

Many of you have been asking us how you can support your child at home with spelling.

Over the course of the year, your child will be given five words to learn per week, which can be found in the front envelope of their Busy Bee books.

These words are what we call the 'Key Words', they are the first 100 high frequency words in the English language and most of them cannot be taught using the phonics that the children learn in their first two years at school.

The Key Words are words such as; the, my, he and said. Learning to read/recognise them in the Reception year, will help the children make good progress with their reading and writing skills now and as they move through to Key Stage 1.

### Spelling

Learning to spell is a highly complex business. Some children learn to spell effortlessly – most get there in the end, but too many find the process of learning to spell arduous, painstaking and, sadly, boring. For this reason, it is necessary to have an approach, which meets the needs of all children and allows them to develop their skills at an appropriate rate, in order that they can happily spell common words accurately and develop a range of strategies to tackle more complex words with confidence.

Spelling must be made fun, enjoyable and interesting. Children only really become good at spelling by **practising over and over again** and this is best done in a fun and interesting way.

There are distinct stages through which children progress in spelling and these will be outlined further on. Before finding out about these, please take time to read about how children learn to spell, the range of strategies for spelling and multi-sensory

teaching and learning. This help sheet will help you understand how your child learns best and how to choose the most appropriate activities to help them.

It is important to say however, that all children are different and progress at different rates and as long as learning is made fun, their curiosity and love of learning will ensure that they will continue to make progress at a rate right for them.

### How do children remember spelling?

There are four main ways in which children process the spelling of words.

#### Visual



- Does it look right? - This comes later on when children gain familiarity with the written word through reading. Another effective visual method is using little pictures to 'lodge' the words in the long-term memory, for example drawing a mouth next to the word 'said'.

#### Auditory



- Sound it out- This is taught through our phonics programme and is useful for segmenting and blending phonetic words however, many of the first 100 high frequency words are not phonetically de-codable.

#### Kinaesthetic



Writing the words and the activities suggested below.



## Linguistic

Asking- why is it spelt like that?

Writer is aware of relationships between words or parts of words, based on meanings, syntax, derivations, etc. This is obviously a later stage however children learn very early in their lives the adaptation of words based on tense.

## Development of reading and spelling

In Reception, we introduce the children to the letter sounds and shapes and show them how these are linked together to create words. Children are encouraged to have a go at writing the words they want to say and they are praised highly for their efforts. Initially their writing is often unreadable to the adult eye and may resemble scribble, although the child will know what they mean. At this stage it is vital to value and praise their efforts and to resist correcting spelling or writing words for them to copy or write over the top of.

## Becoming a writer

In order to write, children need to develop various skills, including oral language skills, gross and fine motor skills and phonic skills these are all taught at Maidwell School throughout the highly effective medium of 'Talk for Writing.' Children also need to understand that writing is a form of communication and that what they write is for someone to read. They should therefore write for a purpose that is clear to them and stems from their own interests.

## Gross and fine motor skills

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:

- Painting (with big brushes and water for gross motor skills) • Threading beads, laces
- Peg boards
- Finger rhymes
  
- Play dough
- Cutting
- Writing and doing big movements in the air e.g .with ribbons
- Squeezing sponge balls, stress balls or a small ball of paper
- Bat and ball games
- Pegging things onto a line.
- Using tweezers or sugar tongs in order to pick up beads, raisins or dried beans.
- Undoing and doing up buttons, poppers etc.
- Transferring small objects from one pot to one another.

## Writing for a purpose

Help your child become aware of the writing that surrounds them e.g. 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
  - Notes
  - Shopping lists
  - Signs and messages
  - Dates on a calendar

## Emergent Writing

- Always praise attempts at writing, and respond positively to your child's mark making (even if it looks like what adults call "scribble")
- Show interest and ask them what they have written. Encourage them to point at the marks as they talk.
- As they begin to learn their letter sounds, encourage them to use their sounds in their writing.
- Do not correct their spellings, but celebrate their efforts.

Above all, ensure that your children feel confident that, as writers, they always have your interest, admiration and support.

## 2. Growing confidence with writing and spelling

In your child's year in Reception, we encourage you to help your child learn to spell a range of high frequency (most common) words.

You can help your child by having fun helping them to choose the five words per week that we send home.

The following activities are suggestions for enjoyable and effective ways for children (at this stage) to practice spelling. Remember that writing words time and time again is often only successful in the short term and fun, meaningful activities are more likely to lead to correct spelling being stored in the long-term memory.

## Some ideas for activities to support this stage of development

### Cloudy Words



**Materials:** Word List, paper, glue, cotton wool and Pencil.

Choose a word from the list which your child is learning to read and write. Give an example of how the word is used in a sentence and support them to think of another example.

Write the word for your child and ask them to trace over the letters with a glue stick or a finger dipped in glue. Lay cotton wool over the glue until the entire word is covered.

You could do this with other words and make a cloudy book. Sand or glitter may be sprinkled over the glue in place of cotton wool.

### Pipe-cleaner Words



**Materials:** Word List, pipe cleaners, paper and pencil

In advance, write a few words on individual pieces of card or paper.

Ask your child to listen carefully while you say a word.

Challenge your child to use the pipe cleaners to form all of the letters they hear. Show your child the word card and support them to use their pipe cleaners to add or change the letters they need, in order to spell the word correctly.

## Water Words



**Materials:** Words on card or paper, paintbrushes and water.

Write several words on separate pieces of card or paper. Ask your child to write a word two or three times on the patio or path. Repeat with a different word. This can also be done with jumbo coloured chinks.

## Gooey Words



**Materials:** Re-sealable plastic bags, hairstyling gel or finger paint and masking tape.

Fill the re-sealable bag with gel or finger paint. Use masking tape to secure each bag to a table or other flat surface. Invite your child to choose a word from the word list and use one finger to press the letters of their word into the gel or paint. Your child can erase their word by gently rubbing the bag with the palm of their hand until it is evenly distributed inside the bag.

## Secret Words

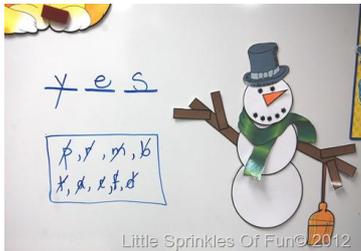


**Materials:** Word cards from 'Busy Bee Book', large sheet of paper, pencil and Scissors.

Write three words on a large piece of paper from the word list. Write out the same three words and cut them up. Lay them out in front of your child. Tell your child that one of the words is a 'secret word'. Choose a word from the paper and say each one of the letters in random order. Support your child to find the letter. Can they rearrange them to find the 'secret word'?

**\*\*Remember when you're giving letter clues to use the letter sound and not the letter name. \*\***

## Snowman (new nicer version of Hangman!)



**Materials:** Paper and pencil

Write a selection of words from the Word List on a large piece of paper. Choose one of the words. Write one or two letters of the word on another piece of paper, with blank lines for the remaining letters.

Ask your child for a missing letter. Write it in if they are correct and if not, draw the head of the snowman.

The object of the game is for the child to guess the word before you have completed the drawing of the snowman.

## Extra Extra!



**Materials:** Word list, paper, scissors, magazines/newspapers and glue.

Write a selection of words from the word list in random order on a piece of paper. Read the words to your child. Ask your child to find the word in the magazine, cut it out and glue it to the appropriate word. (Give your child one page from a magazine and check that the words they are searching for, are on the page.)

## Guess Who



**Materials:** Paper, pencil, masking tape and weekly word cards.

Write some words on paper. Read the words with your child. Ask them to tape a word to your back. You have to ask a question e.g. does it begin with 'th' sound? Can I sound it out? Now your child takes a turn to answers your questions. Tape a word to their back.

## The Concentration Game (Pairs)



**Material:** Paper/card, pencil and weekly word cards.

Make a set of matching word cards from the selection of cards sent home. Put them on the table face down. Turn two cards over at a time. If they match you or your child can keep them. The winner is the person with the greatest number of words. Make sure your child can read the words they turn over.

## Bath time spellings



**Materials:** Foam bath letters, weekly word card for reference.

Bath time is a lovely time to sneak in a bit of learning but make it fun. Large supermarket chains sell foam bath letters and they're also available on Amazon.

Show your child the word card, tell them what it says then ask them to try and remember the letters and find them in the bath water to put on the tiles at the side of the bath. If they have a sibling, see if they can race!

If they don't get it first time, show them the word again and ask them to see which letters are missing. Praise them when they get it.

## Snap



**Materials:** The five word cards with five copies.

Classic game of snap, when your child matches two cards and says 'snap' they get another go.

## Word Hunt



**Materials:** 5 word cards, sheet of paper with the five words written on.

Hide the 5 cards around the house and see if your child can find each word on their list and tick them off as they do, when they find them ask if they can read them.

## 'Eat Your Words' game



**Materials:** Bread dough, biscuit dough or play dough

Most children love 'hands on' learning. Children can make the letters from given words out of dough. If it's bread or biscuits they can eat them afterwards too (only if they can tell you what they say!)

## Drawing fun



**Materials:** felt tips and paper

Encourage children to draw pictures to go with words that help them remember them, see if they can then match the pictures to the words. As the Talk for Writing approach endorses, creating pictures or actions to go with words helps to keep new learning in the long-term memory. *As does leaving them for a day or two and revisiting them at a later date.*

## 'Oldie But Goodie'



**Materials:** Word card, pen and paper or mini white board and pen.

### 'Look, say, cover, write, check'

These five steps are simple yet very effective. In class, I sometimes make it funny by pretending my hand is moving to cover the word up. As it moves to cover the word, I make a buzzing sound and urge the children to put the word 'in to their memories' then I ask them to have a go at writing the word I have just covered. Then we all check it and repeat if necessary.

### What happens next?

When children have learnt these five words, they will be moved to the back envelope of their Busy Bee books to show that they have learnt them.

We teach the spelling of these words throughout the school week so your input at home will serve to compound our efforts and result in good progress for your child.

### A final note...

Thank you for attending tonight's meeting. Your continued involvement with their school life will benefit your child's learning greatly.

Please try to keep the learning positive. Catch your child when they are not too tired and keep the praise for **effort** at the forefront for best outcomes.

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to ask us, we are always happy to help you.

Mrs Littlewood and Mrs Garley