

Bervie School
Active Literacy
A Guide for Parents
Stage 4-5
Spelling



Introduction

The aim of this leaflet is to provide you with information about how your child is taught spelling at school and to give you information to allow you to support your child at home.

At School

Children continue to develop their phonemic awareness and understanding through a structured and comprehensive programme that aims to build confidence and engage children in their learning. (Phonemes are the smallest units of sound in a word eg. pin - p/i/n or chip - ch/i/p).

The Active Literacy Spelling Programme at Stage 4 and 5 follows a **4 week** cycle as detailed below.



Week 1 and 2

A specific focus phoneme is introduced and its different representation in words is taught (eg. phoneme 'ae', representations 'a-e', 'ay', 'ai', 'ey' and 'ea'). Children will participate in the following activities:

- Breaking words into phonemes and individual sounds and recording this using Elkonin Boxes. (see below)
- Working with a partner they will be involved in reciprocal teaching where they take it in turns to be the caller, writer and checker.
- Diacritical marking (see later in booklet).
- Finding words containing the focus phoneme in "Phoneme Stories".
- Active spelling activities eg. rainbow spelling.

Elkonin Box

ch	ai	r
----	----	---

Week 3

This week focuses on words that cannot always be spelt using knowledge of phonics eg. the, was. A tricky word list is introduced featuring words appropriate and relevant to their stage, interdisciplinary learning or current school events. The teacher will model how to spell these words and children will participate in the following activities:

- Discuss the meaning of the words
- Discuss and use spelling strategies
- Active spelling activities



Week 4

This week focuses on developing children's knowledge of spelling rules. A word list is introduced featuring words following the rule. Children will participate in the following activities:

- Thinking of words that follow the spelling rule
- Working with a partner they will be involved in reciprocal teaching where they take it in turns to be the caller, writer and checker
- Active spelling activities



Spelling Strategies

In order to aid spelling confidence it is crucial that children are encouraged to use spelling strategies rather than just learning to copy words.

The strategies the children are taught throughout Stage 4 and 5 include:

- Knowledge and use of phonics - using Elkonin Boxes and the Diacritical Spelling Code (see below)
- Syllabification—breaking words into syllables. Each syllable will contain a vowel.
- Words within words—e.g. country: count try
- Compound words—e.g. breakfast: break fast
- Using analogy—if you know some words you can spell others e.g. knowing how to spell light means you can spell bright, sight, fright etc.
- Mnemonic—children use or create their own memory aid. eg. **because** - 'big elephants can always understand small elephants'
- Spelling Rules (if appropriate) - eg. 'i' before 'e' except after 'c'



Diacritical Marking

- 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



Assessment

Children are no longer assessed purely 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 e.g. a dictated sentence/paragraph.

At Home

Support your child in completing their homework. Encourage your child to explain what they have been learning. If it helps your child break the word lists down into manageable sections so you are focusing on 2 or 3 words a night. Playing games can also help to make learning fun - the following activities are suggestions you may wish to try:

- Look for words that contain the focus phoneme in books, magazines or in the local environment.
- Use spelling words to play snap or hangman.
- Create an acrostic poem using a spelling word.
- Use something edible to create your spelling words - raisins, grapes, Smarties etc

