

Bervie School
Active Literacy
A Guide for Parents
Stage 6-7
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.



In Class

Children are taught spelling in 3 main ways at stage 6 and 7. They are taught common words appropriate and relevant to their stage, words linked to interdisciplinary learning, current school events or writing genre features. Spelling strategies and spelling rules continue to be the focus for teaching these types of words. Children will work with partners to problem solve how they can remember the spelling of these words.

Spelling Strategies

The strategies the children are taught are:

- 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.
- E.g. because 'big elephants can always understand small elephants'
- Spelling Rules (if appropriate) - eg. 'i' before 'e' except after 'c'

Elkonin Box

th	r	ough
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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



Word Building

The second part of the spelling programme is looking at word building. Children are taught about affixes and root words and their meanings. In this way children can understand the grammatical elements of word building and deepen their understanding of words by investigating root words, adding appropriate prefixes and suffixes, and understanding how these affect the meaning of a word eg appear - *dis*-appear

As well as affixes children are taught about homophones and confusions. Words that sound the same but have different spellings and meanings are called homophones e.g. ate and eight. Words that can sound or are spelled similarly and are often mixed up are called confusions e.g. conscience and conscious.

Spelling Rules

Across stages 6 and 7 the children will be consolidating previously taught spelling rules and learning new ones. There are 24 spelling rules to learn across the two years.

The spelling rule will be introduced and modelled by the teacher. Children will then create a list of as many words as possible which fit the rule. These will then be compiled into a stage appropriate list which will form the basis of the rest of the week's spelling and homework. The children will use spelling strategies alongside the rule to help them spell the words.



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.

Vocabulary building is assessed by the children's ability to recognise the type of word and then categorise it into noun, verb, adjective or adverb.

At Home

When your child brings a spelling list home, it is helpful to discuss different strategies which could be used to help with the spelling of these words. Ask your child to talk to you about the diacritical marking code.

You could also play games with words by seeing who can make the most words from a root word e.g. help, helpful, unhelpful, helpfully, helpless, helplessly. You could discuss how each word differs in meaning.

Play 'donkey' with the spelling words, passing a ball back and forth with a partner or in a small group spelling the words with a letter per pass.

Use the values linked with Scrabble tiles (or create a list of your own so common consonants are worth 8, vowels 12 and tricky consonants like 'z' or 'q' 15 for example) then write each spelling word, count their total value and see which is 'worth' the most.

