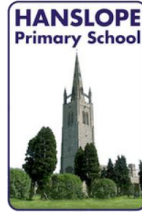


Hanslope Primary School



A Parent's Guide to Spelling

Helping every child become a confident speller

At Hanslope Primary School, we believe that spelling is about much more than learning lists of words. Our aim is for every child to become an accurate, confident and increasingly independent speller who can apply their knowledge across their writing and the wider curriculum.

As children move through the school, they build on their early phonics knowledge and gradually develop a deeper understanding of spelling patterns, word structure, word families and word origins.

What does spelling look like at Hanslope?

Spelling is more than memorising words. We help children develop as spellers by teaching them to:

Learn from reading

Reading exposes children to new vocabulary and helps them become familiar with how words look.

Listen carefully

Children use sounds and their phonics knowledge to help them spell words.

Spot patterns

Children look for patterns and connections between words.

Understand words

As they get older, children explore word structure, meaning and word origins.

Revisit and practise

Important spelling knowledge is regularly revisited so that it becomes secure.

Apply their knowledge

Children are encouraged to use what they have learned when writing independently.

How does spelling develop through the school?

EYFS – Building the foundations

In the Early Years, spelling begins through phonics, talk, books and meaningful writing experiences.

- hear and identify sounds in words
- segment simple words into sounds
- represent sounds using appropriate letters
- spell simple words using their growing phonic knowledge
- begin to learn common exception words
- write simple captions and sentences.

At this stage, children are developing the secure foundations they need for reading and writing.

Key Stage 1 – Becoming increasingly confident

In Years 1 and 2, children build on their phonics knowledge and develop greater confidence and independence.

- apply phonics knowledge when spelling
- learn a wider range of spelling patterns
- develop knowledge of common exception words
- use prefixes and suffixes
- recognise common homophones and contractions
- re-read and correct simple spelling errors.

Children begin to understand that the same sound can sometimes be represented in different ways and that some words need to be learned because they do not follow a simple pattern.

Lower Key Stage 2 – Understanding how words work

In Years 3 and 4, children develop greater understanding of spelling patterns and word structure.

- use prefixes, suffixes and root words to help spell unfamiliar words
- develop knowledge of word families
- apply statutory spelling knowledge
- explore how word structure can affect spelling and meaning
- use dictionaries to check spellings
- identify and correct spelling errors independently.

How does spelling develop through the school?

Upper Key Stage 2 – Becoming independent spellers

By Years 5 and 6, children are developing increasingly sophisticated strategies for tackling unfamiliar vocabulary.

- apply spelling knowledge to unfamiliar and ambitious words
- recognise more complex spelling conventions
- understand how word structure and word origins can influence spelling
- use dictionaries and other reference tools effectively
- proofread and edit their own writing
- apply accurate spelling across the curriculum.

The aim is for children to become independent problem-solvers rather than relying simply on memorising individual words.

We don't just learn spellings – we understand them

As children get older, they are introduced to vocabulary that helps them talk about spelling and explain their thinking. We do this through the Grammarsaurus 'Place Value of Spelling' scheme.

phoneme – a sound in a word

grapheme – a letter or group of letters representing a sound

prefix – letters added to the beginning of a word

suffix – letters added to the end of a word

root word – the main part of a word from which other words can be formed

morpheme – the smallest meaningful part of a word

etymology – the origin and history of a word

homophone – words that sound the same but have different meanings or spellings

Don't worry if these terms sound complicated! Children meet this vocabulary gradually and use it to explain their spelling choices.

What happens when a word is difficult?

At Hanslope, we want children to become spelling detectives. When they don't know how to spell a word, we encourage them to use what they already know.

Listen – What sounds can I hear?

Look – Does this word look like another word I know?

Build – Does it contain a prefix, suffix or root word that I recognise?

Explore – Is it related to another word or word family?

Check – Could I use a dictionary or another reference tool?

Apply – Can I use what I have learned when I write?

Spelling is part of writing

Spelling does not only happen during a spelling lesson. Children are encouraged to apply spelling knowledge when reading, writing and learning across the curriculum.

Practice makes progress

Spelling knowledge develops over time. Children need opportunities to learn, practise, revisit and apply what they have been taught.

At Hanslope, previously taught spelling knowledge is regularly revisited so that important patterns and conventions become increasingly secure. Children also have opportunities to apply their learning through dictation, proofreading and independent writing.

We understand that children will not all learn spellings at exactly the same pace. Teachers use assessment and everyday classroom work to identify where children need additional practice or support.

How can parents help?

You do not need to be a spelling expert to support your child. Some of the most helpful things you can do are:

Read together

Reading widely exposes children to new vocabulary and helps them become familiar with how words look.

Talk about interesting words

Ask what a word means, whether your child has seen a similar word before, or whether they can think of another word with the same ending.

Encourage sounding out

For younger children, encourage them to use their phonics knowledge rather than simply telling them the spelling.

Look for patterns

For older children, explore similarities between words. For example: help → helpful → helpless → helplessly.

Encourage proofreading

When your child has finished writing, encourage them to read it back and check for spelling errors.

Praise the strategy

Celebrate children for thinking carefully and trying a strategy, not just for getting every word correct.

What do we want our spellers to become?

Confident – willing to have a go and tackle unfamiliar words.

Curious – interested in patterns, words and how language works.

Accurate – applying their spelling knowledge carefully.

Thoughtful – able to explain and justify spelling choices.

Independent – able to use strategies and reference tools when needed.

Resilient – understanding that spelling improves through practice and reflection.

Our aim

“I might not know this word yet, but I know how to work it out.”

We want children to leave Hanslope as accurate, confident and independent spellers who understand that spelling is an important part of communicating clearly and developing as successful writers.

A little reminder for parents

Spelling develops gradually and differently for every child. Making occasional spelling mistakes is a normal part of learning. What matters is that children develop the knowledge, strategies and confidence to recognise, investigate and improve their spelling over time.