

# WALMSLEY CE SCHOOL

BLACKBURN ROAD, EGERTON, BOLTON BL7 9SA  
TELEPHONE: 01204 332650



Email: [office@walmsley.bolton.sch.uk](mailto:office@walmsley.bolton.sch.uk)

**HEADTEACHER: MRS JOANNA ATHERTON**

16th October 2023

Dear Parents/Carers

We have changed the way we teach spellings in school and now follow the Pathways to Spell programme. This has been designed based on extensive research (Hewett, 2019 & Martin, 2014) into how children learn to become proficient spellers and on guidance from the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF, 2018) on promoting metacognition and self-regulation.



## Pathways to Spell

In order to facilitate effective learning, pupils will be taught to spell in a number of ways:

- **Developmental approach** – pupils moving from a focus on phonics and knowledge of Grapheme Phoneme Correspondence (GPCs) through to patterns and the look of a word at a pace appropriate to their age
- **Generalisation approach** – if you know how to spell cat and bat you can have a go at hat and pat
- **Rote-visual memorisation** e.g. look/say/cover/write/check

In this way, pupils will develop key knowledge about words and the way in which the English language is made up.

**Phonemic knowledge** – the understanding of sounds and grapheme-phoneme correspondences (GPCs) to represent words

**Orthographic knowledge** – the letters or groups of letters that are used to represent words including the look of a word, letter shapes and the order

**Morphological knowledge** – the meaning of the word or the meaning of each component in a word. A morpheme being the smallest unit of meaning in a word








**Etymological awareness** – the origins of words and their meanings e.g. knowledge that chef is a word which is French in origin helps you to learn to spell it with ch rather than sh

## Teaching Strategies

The following principles guide the Pathways to Spell approach to teaching spelling:

- We are determined that children become excited and fascinated by words through investigation of patterns and links between words
- Spoken language underpins all the lessons – talk, exploration, play, hypothesising and experimenting is the foundation of the programme
- Collaborative learning is valued and encouraged
- As children learn to spell in different ways, the programme ensures that pupils have the opportunity to learn through a repertoire of multi-sensory approaches
- Repetition of rules and patterns year on year is key to developing spelling knowledge in the long-term memory, with key elements reviewed each week
- Lessons include support and challenge for the range of learners in every class
- Developing a spelling environment in the classroom supports learners and raises the profile of spelling when pupils are writing
- Application of knowledge beyond the spelling lesson is a vital component that needs to be embedded across school

The Spelling pathways learning sequence follows five stages:

<b>Review</b>		Pupils spend time revisiting a previously taught spelling objective. This will often link to the mastery focus to support pupils with underpinning knowledge required for the new pattern or rule.
<b>Explain</b>		Pupils explore and investigate new words and spellings. They will be given time to identify rules and patterns, hypothesise and explain their findings with their peers.
<b>Practise</b>		Time is given for pupils to practise using the new rule or patterns through a variety of multi-sensory activities in small groups, with partners or independently.
<b>Apply</b>		Pupils have the opportunity to apply the rules with greater independence within sentences. This will take the form of dictation several times each term.
<b>Reflect</b>		Time for pupils to think about their learning and how well they were able to apply their new knowledge. They will think about strategies that have helped them learn best to develop their metacognition.

## Spelling Logs

Within a pupil's spelling journal, they have a copy of the personal spelling log. The personal spelling log should be used to keep a record of words pupils have found tricky during spelling sessions so that they can refer to them during their independent writing.

Pupils should also collect words in their personal spelling log that they have recorded from their independent writing as they have repeatedly made errors with it and been asked to correct it by the teacher.

## Spelling tests

Research (Watkins, 2010) suggests that the vast majority of pupils do not benefit from weekly spelling tests as they do not transfer their knowledge used in tests to their writing. Furthermore, such spelling tests do not promote enthusiasm or engagement with spelling. There is certainly a place for spelling assessments for diagnostic purposes, such as identifying areas for spelling intervention or calculating spelling ages, but time spent doing summative tests could be better spent allowing pupils time to take charge of their own spelling errors through proofreading or practising words from personal spelling logs. This is why spelling lists are no longer sent home with words for pupils to learn for homework. Teachers will assess spellings in class and use this to support their next steps in teaching.

## Homework



Using Spelling Shed to practise pupils' target words from the week can be a very helpful way of helping them to embed what they have been taught.

Each week they will be set a new assignment linked to what they have been learning in school following the five stage learning process. Using the games on Spelling Shed allows your child to constantly review the spellings they have been set.

They will also have access to previous assignments if they wish to continue to practice these spellings. Our spelling overviews and knowledge organisers for English can be found on the school website under the English curriculum section. Certificates will be awarded as part of our Celebration Worship to the pupil/s who achieve the most points each week in each class.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Atherton  
Headteacher

Mrs Cahill  
Assistant Headteacher

