

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. The Friday spelling test may be great for those who can already spell, but for others it makes for a scary Friday morning. Most children get most spellings right on the day, but forget them when coming to use them in future work, others just get them wrong. For these reasons, at BPS we feel 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.

Studies have shown that sending home a list of words to learn in preparation for a weekly test is not the most effective way for most children to learn and many children (although they may have performed well), have forgotten these words just a few hours after the test.

At BPS, we believe that 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 fun and interesting ways.

There are distinct stages through which children progress in spelling and these are outlined below and in more detail in our **Spelling guide for parents** (*available in useful downloads*).

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 he/she means. 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. The danger here is that children learn that only correctly spelt words are acceptable, become reliant on adult support and limit their writing to include only words that they know they can spell accurately. As children's awareness of letter sounds increases, more recognisable words will appear in their writing.

In Key Stage 1 we encourage parents to help the children learn to spell a range of high frequency (most common) words and to use their

knowledge of the sounds that letters make to help them with more tricky words. The expectation is that children will have learnt most of these 300 spellings by the end of Year 2.

In Key Stage 2 most children will be taught through the Read Write Inc Spelling Programme. The teachers use this programme to help them tailor spelling development to each child's individual needs. Children write a set of ten words per unit of the programme covered, that they find tricky, to learn to spell in which ever way best suits them. Children take their **Spelling Log Book** home at the end of each unit with new spellings to learn. We encourage our children to practice spelling their words at home with their parents. At this stage it is appropriate for teachers to point out when certain words are spelt incorrectly, but more importantly, that children recognise for themselves when they have made an error and know a range of strategies for correcting inaccuracies. By this stage children will have a range of spelling strategies that they will have been taught, to draw on. Children will use the strategy which best suits their learning style and works best for them.