

A New Approach to Teaching Spelling

Dear Parents and Carers,

We would like to let you know about a small but important change to how spelling is taught beyond our phonics program.

Rather than focusing on weekly spelling tests and memorising word lists, we are placing greater emphasis on helping children understand *how* spelling works. Research shows that while memorising words can help a child for a test, it doesn't always help them remember those words long-term or use them correctly in their everyday writing.

Instead, spelling lessons will focus on:

- hearing and using sounds in words,
- recognising common spelling patterns,
- understanding word parts (such as prefixes and suffixes), and
- learning where words come from and how this helps with spelling.

This approach helps children become more confident and independent spellers. When students understand patterns and strategies, they are better able to spell familiar words *and* have a go at unfamiliar ones, which is a key goal of the curriculum.

You may notice that you will no longer be sent spelling lists for your child to memorise. Instead, they will be learning spelling through hands-on activities, word exploration and applying their learning in real writing tasks. This ensures spelling skills are meaningful and transferable across all areas of learning.

How you can support your child at home

You don't need to teach spelling or drill word lists at home. The most helpful ways to support your child are:

- encourage regular reading, as exposure to words strengthens spelling naturally,
- talk about interesting words you notice in books or everyday life, and
- praise your child for "having a go" at spelling in their writing, even if it's not perfect.

We are confident this approach will better support your child's literacy development and help them grow into capable, confident writers.

Thank you for your support. Please feel free to reach out if you have any questions.

Kind regards,

Alwoodley Primary School

