



Active Spelling

As a school we use research and evidence to select the most effective strategies for teaching our children. Active Spelling is aimed at years 2 - 6; as a whole school approach and builds on the phonics foundations of EYFS and Year 1. The approach is aligned with the National Curriculum and provides a systematic approach to spelling and vocabulary acquisition.

Active Spelling uses the principles of mnemonics, images and verbal reasoning to aid both the retention of spellings and to develop a breadth of vocabulary. The sessions are led by each class teacher four times a week, for 15 - 20 minutes. In each lesson children recall previously learnt spellings to aid retention of spelling patterns and rules. Children are then taught different strategies to help them to learn new spellings that they become increasingly able to apply independently.

To fully understand the spelling patterns, Active Spelling uses orthography (the way a word looks), phonology (the way a word sounds), morphology (the meaning of the word), etymology (the origin of the word, which country and language it originates from), and graphology (how it feels to write). They then check and apply.

Research recommendations indicate that the use of low stakes testing is beneficial to the learning of spelling for all children. Children regularly revisit learning ensuring it is well spaced and aids memory. No word lists are sent home as over the week children will learn and revisit their spellings with ongoing assessment and support from the teacher to effectively support all children to succeed.

There is a very strong evidence base to suggest that the use of low stakes testing is more beneficial in aiding the learning of spelling. Low stakes testing (which is a form of retrieval practice) means any activity that gets pupils to recall what they have learnt from memory. Consequently, we have removed the high stakes weekly spelling tests, which means no word lists are sent home. Essentially a lot more of the school week now is devoted to learning spelling rather than testing it. The teacher are able to more effectively assess what the children can and cannot do, allowing them to support the children more efficiently.

