

## SOMERSET EDUCATION SERVICES

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**HEADTEACHER: NICOLA ROBERTS**

**29.4.20**

**Dear Parents/Carers,**

I hope that the below information will be useful to you in supporting your child with learning to read, write and spell at home.

At this point in the year, many of the children are now ready to start working more on their spelling. However, this can be a tricky transition as we still want to encourage children to write with enthusiasm, according to their own abilities; we don't want to discourage them by moving the entire focus onto spelling when they write.

If your child is doing a piece of writing for a literacy school task, they should have their writing toolkit in front of them so they can see their sounds, and so they can look up tricky words using the tricky trucks. As they write, allow them to sound out words and spell them as they sound. This won't always be correct (they might write "happy" as "hapee"), but it is important at this stage not to correct them, as they are learning to use their sounds to spell. We need to encourage them to do this independently, and their accuracy will improve as they learn more sounds and spelling patterns in phonics lessons.

When your child has finished a piece of writing, you can ask them to read back with their finger and spot a spelling they are unsure of. Ask them how they could check it – could they look in their toolkit or a dictionary? At this age it is important not to push your child to find or correct every error – just correcting one or two simple words together will be a great start for now.

This is something we want to introduce slowly, so sometimes you will want to let your child just write and enjoy writing. Particularly if your child has written something independently for pleasure, it is often more appropriate to just celebrate the positives to build their confidence.

I have enclosed some fun activity ideas for working on spelling and ideas for working on reading high frequency words 'by sight'. However, please don't feel you have to include the below activities in your weekly routine. These are just for reference if you need them – for example, you might choose a spelling activity to do on a Friday in our 'recap/catch up lesson' if your child has found the spelling work during the week challenging.

If you have any questions, please do get in touch.  
Miss Wilkinson

### **Learning To Spell – Information taken from [spellingplay.co.uk](http://spellingplay.co.uk)**

Spelling words is one of the very few activities in life where anything less than 100% correct, is considered a failure. When children are in the early stages of learning to spell, a '100% right vs failure' attitude doesn't really do anything to promote learning or improvement. Instead, we can



create an environment where learning and improving are valued at all times whilst children gradually make their way towards the end goal of being 100% correct. We can tick every correct letter and focus on the effort and the thought processes that have gone into spelling a word. Then instead of viewing the incorrect bits as failures [...] children can use them as useful, precise information that they can learn from and use to help them avoid making the same mistake next time.[...]

Research is very inconclusive in terms of what works for children when learning to spell words. It is therefore likely that different strategies probably work best for different children and for different words. This therefore needs to be a very reflective process of trying out strategies and seeing what works.

### Practising Spelling

Before using the below activities children will usually need a **strategy** for spelling the word, such as:

- a **mnemonic** (“Sally Anne Ignores Dad” to spell said)
- a **rhyme** (“O U G H, who do we appreciate?” for learning the ‘ough’ pattern)
- a **picture** they can draw around or within the word (e.g eyes with an ‘eye’ inside each ‘e’)
- a **“word within a word”** strategy (e.g. “they” is like “the” with a y at the end)
- a **rule or a pattern** (e.g. the ‘d’ sound at the end of “looked” and “called” is made by “ed”)

There is a strategies list on the school website under Our School → Classes → { HYPERLINK "https://www.ashprimaryschool.co.uk/index.php/our-school/classes/class-2/home-learning-resources" }. This lists the strategies we use in class for many words. You may find your child prefers to make up their own strategies or will need to try a few different strategies before they can spell a word.

### Activities:

- { HYPERLINK "https://www.spellingplay.co.uk/member-only/route\_to\_spelling.html" } - a space journey through different strategies
- { HYPERLINK "https://spellingframe.co.uk/" } has many free games. You can create your own word list by clicking ‘Custom Lists’.
- Colour in difficult parts of the word
- Make the word with pasta/buttons/cubes
- Cut the word up, mix up the letters (perhaps with some red herrings) and have your child rearrange it.
- Use magnetic letters/scrabble letters etc to make the word.
- Use crayons/pens/paint/chalk (indoors or outdoors) to write the word.
- Use a whiteboard and pen or chalkboard and take turns being the teacher.
- “Real or Rubbish” – Player A writes the word correctly or incorrectly. Player B runs to the bin (or particular place) if it’s an incorrect spelling, and runs to a different particular place if it’s correct (in school we use a treasure chest for ‘real words’). Swap roles regularly.
- Cover a surface in chalk and child uses a paintbrush dipped in water to write.
- Make the words with pipe cleaners, play-doh or by sticking down wool.
- Use stamps to print the words, or finger prints or cotton buds.
- Use a tablet/phone/PC to type the word in a word processing program (Simple Notepad is the app we use in school for writing).
- On a tablet/phone open a program like Paint which allows your child to use their finger or a stylus to paint the word. You could also photograph the word with a phone/tablet, then open a photo editing program so they can trace it multiple times.

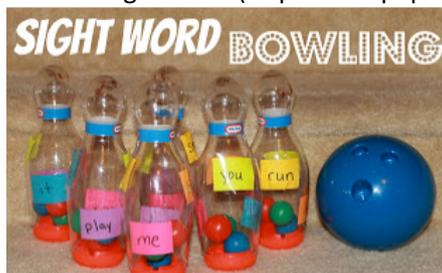
If your child is finding these activities difficult try making the correct spelling visible for the first few goes so your child can copy it at first, then cover up the word a letter at a time until your child can

complete the activity without looking.

### **Practising Reading High Frequency Words/ 'Sight Words' – Possible Activities:**

We are aiming for children to be able to read the word 'on sight', without any sounding out, and for this to transfer to being able to recognize the word in a range of texts. Before your child starts any of the below activities they should have a careful look at their target word. What letters are in it, are there any patterns they can see or double letters or unusual spellings? Are there any words within the word, like 'the' within 'they'? Can they use the word within a sentence?

- Write out some sight words and play Bingo.
- Write out some sight words, place them on the floor and play "bounce the ball on the word" (or stick the word onto cups and ask your child to throw the ball into the right cup)
- Play musical chairs with words on the chairs. When the music stops, say a word for your child to sit on.
- Stick words around the house on post-its and ask your child to go on a "word hunt" for a particular word.
- Use a range of books and ask your child to find as many examples of the word as they can (works best for very common words!).
- Use fly swatters and a bingo board (or piece of paper divided up) to play "Whack the Word"!



- Word bowling :
- More ideas here: { [HYPERLINK "https://handsonaswegrow.com/12-sight-word-activities/"](https://handsonaswegrow.com/12-sight-word-activities/) }