

A Guide to Supporting Spelling

Introduction

Parents often ask how best to support their child with spelling at home. This guide explains the strategies used in school for teaching spelling and provides practical ideas for how families can help at home.

Learning to spell is a complex process. Some children acquire spelling skills easily, while others find it challenging. Research shows that traditional weekly spelling lists are not the most effective method for long-term retention. Although children may perform well in a test, they often forget the words shortly afterwards.

At Thameside, our approach aims to meet the needs of all learners—helping every child develop the confidence and strategies to spell accurately across the curriculum. We encourage parents to support spelling in everyday writing, as well as by practising the statutory word lists included in this booklet.

How We Teach Spelling in School

Children progress through distinct stages in spelling, supported by a range of strategies at each stage:

- In Early Years, children begin phonics using the Read Write Inc. programme.
- As they move through the school, phonics knowledge is extended alongside the teaching of spelling patterns, rules, and morphology.
- Across all key stages, children are taught to use multiple strategies for accurate spelling, editing, and checking.

Spelling is taught explicitly in class through investigation, discussion, and application—not simply memorisation. Weekly spelling lists for testing are not sent home; instead, children learn how to apply spelling patterns meaningfully in their writing.

Supporting Spelling at Home

Writing for a Purpose

Help your child see writing as meaningful and part of everyday life. Encourage writing for real purposes, such as:

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- Shopping lists
- Invitations or cards
- Letters and notes
- Signs, messages, or reminders

Early Years (EYFS): Emergent Writing

- Always praise early attempts at writing.
- Respond positively to mark-making—ask your child what they have written.
- Encourage sound use from phonics learning.
- Celebrate effort and experimentation.

Key Stage 1 (Years 1–2)

Children continue learning phonics through Read Write Inc. and begin spelling common ('high-frequency') words. They use phonics knowledge to attempt unfamiliar words.

How to help at home:

- Practise phonics sounds regularly.
- Focus on small sets of high-frequency words.
- Use fun, sensory activities rather than rote writing.

Activities to try:

- Water Words – write words outdoors using a paintbrush and water.
- Pipe Cleaner Words – build letters using pipe cleaners.
- Shape Words – match word shapes to spellings.
- Air Spelling – write words in the air while saying each letter aloud.
- Scrabble Spelling – build words using letter tiles.

Key Stage 2 (Years 3–6)

At this stage, the focus shifts towards accuracy, independence, and applying a range of spelling strategies. Children are expected to recognise and correct their own spelling errors, apply spelling rules in written work, and use strategies suited to their learning style.

How to help at home:

- Practise spelling patterns or investigations set as home learning.
- Support your child to read and spell the Year 3/4 and Year 5/6 statutory word lists.
- Keep practice enjoyable and meaningful.

Activities to try:

- Look, Say, Cover, Write, Check – look carefully, say aloud, cover, write, check.
- Spelling Rainbows – trace each word in three colours.
- ABC Order – organise spellings alphabetically.

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- Spelling Paragraphs – write a paragraph using all spellings.
- Rhyming Words – find rhyming partners for spellings.
- Spelling Sort – sort by syllables, sounds, or parts of speech.
- Word Shapes – outline word shapes to reinforce letter placement.
- Fancy Letters – write words in creative lettering styles.

Key Message

Spelling success comes from understanding patterns, not memorising lists. Through curiosity, practice, and purpose, children develop strategies that build confidence and independence in writing.



Pipe cleaner words



rainbow writing



fancy letters

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Appendix 1

100 High Frequency Words

the	his	be	do	into	house
and	but	like	me	back	old
a	that	some	down	from	too
to	with	so	dad	children	by
said	all	not	big	him	day
in	we	then	when	Mr	made
he	can	were	it's	get	time
I	are	go	see	just	I'm
of	up	little	looked	now	if
it	had	as	very	came	help
was	my	no	look	oh	Mrs
you	her	mum	don't	about	called
they	what	one	come	got	here
on	there	them	will	their	off
she	out			people	asked
is	this			your	saw
for	have			put	make
at	went			could	an



Appendix 2

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Year 3 and 4 Statutory Spellings

accident	calendar	eight	guide	mention	possession	straight
accidentally	caught	eighth	heard	minute	possible	strange
actual	centre	enough	heart	natural	potatoes	strength
actually	century	exercise	height	naughty	pressure	suppose
address	certain	experience	history	notice	probably	surprise
although	circle	experiment	imagine	occasion	promise	therefore
answer	complete	extreme	important	occasionally	purpose	though
appear	consider	famous	increase	often	quarter	thought
arrive	continue	favourite	interest	opposite	question	through
believe	decide	February	island	ordinary	recent	various
bicycle	describe	forward	knowledge	particular	regular	weight
breath	different	forwards	learn	peculiar	reign	woman
breathe	difficult	fruit	length	perhaps	remember	women
build	disappear	grammar	library	popular	sentence	
busy	early	group	material	position	separate	
business	earth	guard	medicine	possess	special	



Year 5 and 6 Statutory Spellings

accommodate	category	determined	foreign	lightning	profession	sincerely
accompany	cemetery	develop	forty	marvellous	programme	soldier
according	committee	dictionary	frequently	mischievous	pronunciation	stomach
achieve	communicate	disastrous	government	muscle	queue	sufficient
aggressive	community	embarrass	guarantee	necessary	recognise	suggest
amateur	competition	environment	harass	neighbour	recommend	symbol
ancient	conscience	equip	hindrance	nuisance	relevant	system
apparent	conscious	equipped	identity	occupy	restaurant	temperature
appreciate	controversy	equipment	immediate	occur	rhyme	thorough
attached	convenience	especially	immediately	opportunity	rhythm	twelfth
available	correspond	exaggerate	individual	parliament	sacrifice	variety
average	criticise	excellent	interfere	persuade	secretary	vegetable
awkward	curiosity	existence	interrupt	physical	shoulder	vehicle
bargain	definite	explanation	language	prejudice	signature	yacht
bruise	desperate	familiar	leisure	privilege	sincere	



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