



PARKLANDS COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL

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Teaching Spelling at Parklands

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope this letter finds you well. I am writing to share some exciting developments in our approach to teaching spelling here at Parklands.

Traditionally, spelling tests have been a common practice in schools. However, research and educational best practices have evolved, leading us to reconsider this approach. We believe that there is a more effective way to teach spelling—one that empowers our students to become confident and proficient spellers.

So Why Move Away from Spelling Tests?

1. **Deeper Understanding:**
Rather than rote memorisation, we want our students to understand the underlying patterns and rules of spelling. By exploring these patterns, they can apply their knowledge more flexibly.
2. **Long-Term Retention:**
Memorising words for a test may yield short-term results, but it does not provide pupils with the necessary understanding to retain the spellings and apply the rules they have learnt in a wider context.
3. **Creativity and Exploration:**
Spelling is not just about correctness; it's also about creativity. When students explore word families, prefixes, suffixes, and etymology, they develop a richer vocabulary and a love for language.

Building Blocks of Sound: Progressing from Phonics

Our new spelling approach builds upon the strong foundation laid during the early years of phonics instruction. Phonics teaches children the fundamental relationship between letters and sounds. Now, as we take steps for our students to build on what they have already learnt, the strategy we are using to develop spelling will help your child to transition from individual sounds to exploring the intricate web of spelling patterns.

Our New Approach: Investigating and Exploring

Starting this term, we will focus on the following strategies:

1. **Word Families:** Students will explore related words (e.g., "happy," "happiness," "unhappy") to understand common spelling patterns.
2. **Root Words and Affixes:** We will delve into the roots of words and the impact of prefixes and suffixes. This knowledge will empower our students to decipher unfamiliar words.
3. **Spelling Rules:** Instead of isolated words, we will teach spelling rules (e.g., "i before e except after c") and encourage students to apply them.
4. **Contextual Learning:** Spelling will be integrated into reading and writing activities, allowing students to see words in context.

Assessment without Anxiety: Moving Beyond Tests

We recognise that assessment is essential, but we want to reduce anxiety associated with traditional spelling tests. Instead, we will assess spelling through authentic writing tasks, where students apply their knowledge naturally.

How Can You Support Your Child?

1. **Encourage Exploration:** Discuss words, their origins, and spelling patterns with your child. Explore together!
2. **Celebrate Effort:** Praise your child's curiosity and effort in understanding spelling rules.
3. **Read Widely:** Exposure to diverse texts enhances spelling skills.

Together, we can foster a love for language and empower our students to become confident spellers.

Thank you for your continued support. If you have any questions or would like to discuss this further, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

Kind regards,

Charlotte Angeli S Standing

Headteacher English Lead