



Welcome to
Berkswich CE Spellings

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Welcome to Berkswich CE Spellings

This guide will help you to support your child's spelling journey. Our spelling books are designed to build confidence and competence through regular, manageable practice using a phonics-based approach combined with the learning of high-frequency words.



Is Spelling Important?

In the age of the computer, it could be asked whether or not it is still important to learn to spell. Good spelling and grammar make it easier for others to read what you have to say and understand what you mean. Spelling can be especially important because one misspelt word, or the incorrect spelling choice, can change the entire meaning of a sentence for you as a reader or as a writer.

Spelling Patterns

We aim to teach spelling in a way that encourages children to actively reflect on their learning, fostering the belief that they can develop strategies and acquire knowledge to tackle new spellings throughout life. In addition to the spellings covered through the spelling book system, children have opportunities in school to explore and apply spelling patterns through an investigative approach. This approach has four key stages:

1. Children investigate and discover a spelling rule.
2. At the appropriate level, children practise the pattern.
3. They have opportunities to apply the pattern in new contexts.
4. Once a spelling pattern has been learnt and reinforced, it is expected to become part of their everyday writing. When mistakes occur, children are encouraged to draw on their knowledge to self-correct.



Children in Years One to Year Four will receive monthly spelling pattern homework to reinforce learning in school. Accompanying resources will help the children to remember the spelling rules. In Year Five and Year Six, the children will receive weekly spelling pattern homework via Spelling Frame.

About the Spelling Book System

Our spelling programme consists of three check-up books and nine progressive spelling books, from Reception through to the end of Year Four. Each book contains carefully selected words that combine:



-  phonics-based words - typically three words per set that follow sound patterns your child is learning.
-  tricky words - usually two words per set (shown in grey) that do not follow regular phonics rules and need to be memorised,

Each set contains five words to be practised over a two-week period. This spaced repetition approach helps to move spellings from short-term to long-term memory.

The Check-up Books

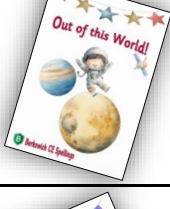
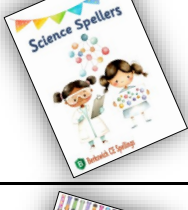
At the beginning of each year (Year One to Year Six), we will check your child's spelling, retesting words covered previously. This will enable teachers to effectively select an appropriate spelling book. Before a new spelling book is given, your child may receive lists written in one of three revision books, depending on their year group. These will contain **only words misspelt in their writing or in a check-up in school**. Every handwritten list is individual.

You may be surprised by some of the words on the list: these may include days of the week and other proper nouns spelt without a capital letter or contracted words without apostrophes (e.g. I'm, don't and won't). Please remember that only words misspelt by your child will be sent home in these books. Your child will need to learn these spellings before moving on to one of the nine spelling books.

Please note that children in Year Five and Six will only receive check-up books, since they will use Spelling Frame after polishing words that have not been secured. Visit our spelling page for our Spelling Frame parent guide and further information ([Spelling Resources | Berkswich CE Primary School](#)).

Children in Reception start in the Spring Term on the first spelling book, Flying High; they do not have a check-up before this.



Book	Year Group	Focus	Phonics/ Spelling Phase
	Reception	'Flying High' introduces basic CVC words and first tricky words; simple phonics patterns; high-frequency words like <i>I, is, the, to</i>	Phase 2 & Phase 3
	Year One	'Forest Friends' builds on Reception learning with digraphs (like <i>ch, sh, oo</i>) and more complex tricky words	Phase 3 & Phase 4
	Year Two	'Journeying Further' explores split digraphs (like <i>a-e</i> in <i>make</i>) and alternative spellings for the same sound	Phase 5
	Year Two	'Sea Adventures' introduces longer words, complex grapheme choices, and more sophisticated vocabulary	Phase 5
	Year One & Two (Additional)	'Digging Deeper' provides additional practice and vocabulary development; focuses on descriptive words, syllable segmentation, and word family patterns	Mixed Phases (revision and consolidation)
	Year Three	'Planet Protectors' introduces Year Three statutory words; longer, more sophisticated vocabulary	Year Three statutory spellings
	Year Three & Four	'Out of this World' bridges learning with challenging vocabulary and spelling rules	Year Three & Four statutory spellings
	Year Four	'Science Spellers' focuses on statutory spellings and vocabulary	Year Four statutory spellings
	Year Four (Additional)	'Skateboard Spellers' introduces ambitious vocabulary; precise word usage and nuanced meanings	Extension vocabulary/ spelling

The Nine Spelling Books

Understanding the Layout

Each book follows a clear structure, designed to support learning:

Each set is for **two weeks**. This allows for your child to practise over time and then to be checked in school.

This indicates the set that your child will be learning.

If the set needs breaking down over more time, then specific words will be highlighted in this column.

Teachers (only please) will tick when checked in school. This will be every fortnight. A dot means that more practice is needed. A maximum of two dots will be added, even if checked more times.

Three phonics-based spellings that follow sound patterns your child is learning.

Many sets have one or two tricky words in grey that do not follow regular phonics rules and need to be memorised.

Pop parent or carer initials in here once to show that you have been practising at home with your child.

Set 44	✓	✓
use	✓	
cube	✓	
tune	✓	
hour	✓	
beautiful	.	
Signed		

Please do read the instructions in each book as there are variations between books.

QR codes - linking to phonics pronunciation guides, handwriting practice sheets, example sentences and more - are available inside spellings books. Useful tips and advice are provided throughout the books to help parents and carers to support learning in a range of ways, with the emphasis always on phonics first.

The Two-week Practice Approach

Each spelling set is designed to be practised over two weeks. This extended timeframe is crucial for effective learning:



- ✎ Spaced repetition - when children see the same words multiple times across several days, they develop automatic recognition and spelling ability
- ✎ Long-term memory - even if your child can spell the words after a few days, keep practising to move knowledge from short-term to long-term memory
- ✎ Fortnightly checks - teachers will test each set every two weeks to monitor progress; they will also jump back to words already covered to check retention.

Research shows that spacing out practice over time, rather than trying to learn everything in one session, is by far the most effective method for permanent learning.

Phonics-based Words

The majority of words in each set can be built using phonics knowledge. When practising these:

- ✎ Sound it out - help your child identify each sound (phoneme) in the word
- ✎ Identify the graphemes - work out which letters or letter combinations represent each sound
- ✎ Use sound buttons - draw dots under single letters and lines under digraphs to help see the sound structure. Do ask your teacher to add these in if needed. This avoids children separating out letters (for example, 'p-o-i-n-t' instead of correctly saying 'p-oi-n-t'). This helps word-building match with their phonics knowledge.
- ✎ Correct pronunciation is important; for example, say 's' not 'suh', 't' not 'tuh' to support accurate word-building



For more phonics help and phonics mats, please scan the QR codes on each book.

Tricky Words

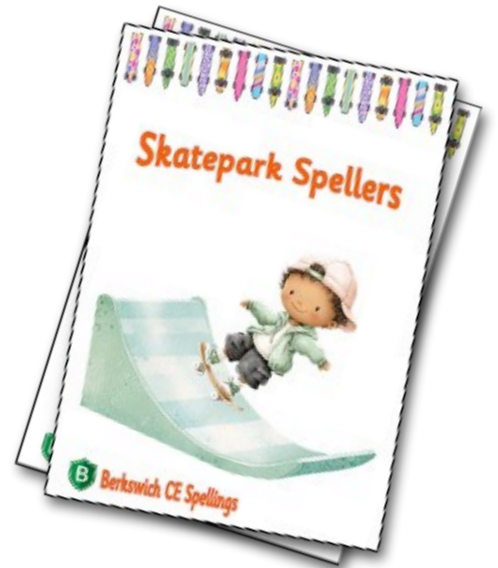
Tricky words (shown in grey) do not follow regular phonics rules and need to be memorised; however, there are strategies to help within the books and through the website (scan the QR codes at the front of your child's spelling book). You may notice some tricky words can be sounded out. They remain classified as tricky at earlier stages because they are commonly used in reading and writing. As your child learns more sounds, some words stop being classed as tricky.

Daily Practice Tips

Keep it short. Just two to three minutes daily is more effective than longer, infrequent sessions.

A useful way to check is:

- ✓ Say the word
- ✓ Use it in a familiar sentence
- ✓ Say the word again
- ✓ Ask your child to write it down



Vary the order. Try not to check each time in the same sequence so your child knows each word individually, rather than the links between words (for example, knowing that the third word has one 't' and the second has two). Practice writing words within sentences. Children often spell words correctly in isolation, but struggle in context. Revisit previous words regularly to build retention.

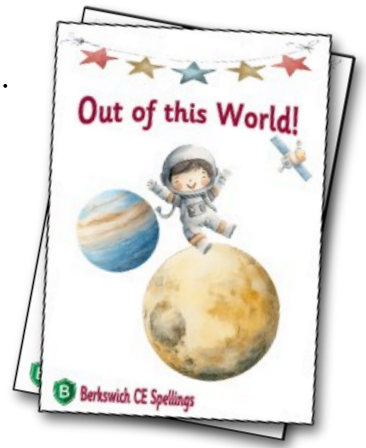
Building Positive Attitudes Toward Learning

- ☆ Celebrate effort, not perfection. Praise your child for practising regularly and trying hard, not just for correct spellings.
- ☆ Reframe mistakes. Avoid saying "You knew that yesterday!" Instead, say "It's okay. Good learning takes time." This builds positive resilience.
- ☆ Focus on progress. Notice improvements over time rather than comparing your child to others.
- ☆ Be patient. Everyone learns at their own pace. Your support and encouragement make all the difference.
- ☆ Discuss learning. Talk about what makes words tricky and celebrate when your child recognises their own mistakes and self-corrects.

Fun Practice Activities

The books include QR codes linking to creative practice ideas. These include a range of ways of writing or building words. You can also view this on our school website: [Spelling through fun active-ities! | Berkswich CE Primary School](#).

It is interesting to hear how individuals find particular games or activities motivating and helpful.



Supporting My Child

Although the primary way of spelling is for your child to use their phonics knowledge, sometimes other approaches can be highly beneficial. Throughout the books and in the SEND spelling area of the website (accessible by scanning the QR codes in the books), there are a number of strategies that we know have helped children to crack even the most challenging of words. As an adult, it is useful to think of a word that could catch us out (such as surreptitious, liaison or paraphernalia) and have a go at finding a strategy to overcome the troublesome part. Modelling this is a great way for your child to see that employing a strategy is not a weakness.

Some examples of these strategies include:

- ✎ Word-within-word - Look for smaller words inside (e.g. 'lie' in 'believe')
- ✎ Mnemonics - Create memorable phrases (e.g. 'Big elephants can always understand small elephants' for 'because')
- ✎ Syllable segmentation - Break words into chunks (e.g., 'sur-prise')
- ✎ Exaggerated pronunciation - Say 'Wed-nes-day' or 'Feb-ru-ary' to remember unstressed or silent letters
- ✎ Visual memory - Highlight or colour the tricky part of the word
- ✎ Physical memory - Write words in joined handwriting to create muscle memory

More ideas can be found in the books and on our website ([Supporting your SEND child | Berkswich CE Primary School](#)).

Review and Check-ups

After a few sets, teachers will begin returning to previous spellings to check retention. The second column in each set is for these check-ups.

- ✎ Sentence checks - Previous words are tested in sentences, which is more challenging than spelling them individually
- ✎ Out of order - Words are checked randomly to ensure genuine learning

Teachers also monitor spellings in your child's independent writing across the curriculum.

Why this matters: without regular review, children easily forget previously learned spellings. This systematic approach ensures words move into long-term memory and are available for use in writing.



Additional Word Sets

Teachers may add extra words to the blank sets at the back of books. These are typically:

- ✎ Words that your child has misspelled in their writing
- ✎ Words that need a little extra polishing
- ✎ Vocabulary relevant to current learning to support or stretch your child.



The Importance of Applying Spellings in Writing

The ultimate goal of learning spellings is to use them correctly in independent writing. This is more challenging than it sounds! Children often spell words correctly when focusing only on spelling, but misspell the same words when concentrating on composing sentences. This is because their working memory is managing multiple tasks (idea generation, sentence structure, punctuation, handwriting and spelling).

Using Words in Context

Writing fluency takes time to develop. Children need practice retrieving spellings quickly, not just slowly in isolation. What you can do:

- ✎ Encourage your child to practice writing spelling words in sentences regularly.
- ✎ Use the QR code to access sentence examples as a starting point.
- ✎ Make up sentences using multiple spelling words.
- ✎ Ask your child to edit their own writing, circling words they think might be misspelled.
- ✎ Celebrate when your child uses ambitious vocabulary in their writing.

Building Vocabulary Alongside Spelling

As children progress through the books, words become more sophisticated. It is important that children understand what words mean and how to use them appropriately.

- ✓ Discuss meanings. Ask, “What does this word mean?” or “Can you use it in a sentence?”
- ✓ Explore word families; talk about related words (like, separate, separation and inseparable).
- ✓ Make it real by connecting words to your child’s experiences.
- ✓ Spot them in reading. Point out spelling words when you encounter them in books.
- ✓ Model using the words in your own speech. This exposure builds familiarity.

Thank You!

We appreciate you for supporting your child’s spelling journey. Your involvement makes an enormous difference to their confidence and success.

If you have any questions about your child’s spelling progress, please do not hesitate to contact your child’s teacher.



Together we can help your child become a confident, capable speller!

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: How often does my child need to bring their book into school?

A: Every day. Although testing will take place every two weeks in school, children need to have their book with them every day so that it can be used as a supportive tool in lessons.

Q: My child can already spell these words. Should we still practice?

A: Yes! The goal isn’t just to spell words correctly once, but to ensure that they are permanently retained in long-term memory. Continue practising over the two weeks to strengthen this retention. If your child consistently spells all words correctly, mention this to their teacher who may adjust their book accordingly.

Q: My child spelt a word correctly yesterday, but got it wrong today. What should I do?

A: This is completely normal and part of the learning process. Simply say, “Let’s practice that one again.” Avoid phrases like, “You knew that yesterday!” which can make mistakes feel like failures. This is exactly why we practise over two weeks - to move words from short-term to long-term memory.

Q: We don't have time to practice every day. What should we do?

A: Quality matters more than quantity. Even two minutes, three times per week is better than nothing. Try to make it part of your routine - perhaps before bedtime or breakfast. You can also incorporate spellings into everyday activities like when writing shopping lists or messages.

Q: Should my child practise writing the words or just say them?

A: **Always** ask your child to write the words as well as saying them. Spelling is a motor skill as well as a memory task. Writing helps create physical memory in the muscles of the hand. From Year Two onwards, encourage joined handwriting to strengthen this connection further. Remember that each set has a handwriting sheet too.

Q: What if my child finds the words too easy or too difficult?

A: Please speak with your child's teacher. At the beginning of each year, we assess all children and place them on the appropriate book. However, children progress at different rates and books can be adjusted as needed. If your child requires further support, the teacher will speak to you about additional sessions in school, useful strategies and how the number and type of spellings in each set will be adjusted.

Q: How do I use the QR codes in the books?

A: Use a smartphone or tablet camera to scan the QR codes. They link to:

- Little Wandle phonics pronunciation guides
- Handwriting practice sheets for each set
- Example sentences using spelling words
- Fun practice activities and games
- Phonics mats showing grapheme choices

Q: Should I correct my child immediately when they make a mistake?

A: When practising, give your child a moment to self-correct first. Ask, "Is there another way to make that sound?" or, "Can you spot which part needs changing?" This builds their editing skills. Then discuss what went wrong and how to remember it correctly. Spelling conversations are always valuable learning opportunities: they help with memorising too.

Q: My child keeps confusing similar words (like 'there/their' or 'quite/quiet'). How can I help?

A: This is very common. Create memory tricks that link meaning directly to spelling: There has 'here' in it (both showing place/position). Always use both words in familiar sentences to reinforce their different meanings. Keep returning to these over time.

Q: What about capital letters and apostrophes?

A: Your child should practise words in the form that they will use most often - usually lowercase. However, proper nouns (days of the week, months, names) must have capital letters. Contractions (like I'm, don't, won't) require apostrophes. If your child forgets these, they may appear in review books for additional practice.