



Dear Parents and Carers,

Unlocking Letters and Sounds Spelling is a comprehensive programme which embeds and builds upon children's phonics knowledge from the Unlocking SSP and teaches them all the spelling rules required in the Primary National Curriculum.

What do the lessons look like?

There are three, 15-20 minute lessons a week, which review spelling patterns previously taught, teach new spelling rules and enable the children to practice applying the new learning dictated sentences and practice activities.

Why does my child not have a list of spellings to learn each week?

Rote learning of spelling is not ideal because it generally only leads to short-term memorisation for tests rather than long-term retention and meaningful application in independent writing. It also inhibits deeper understanding of word structures, rules and origins, and can stifle critical thinking and engagement with language.

Our new spelling program explains the rules which govern spelling in the English language, as well as pointing out the exceptions to the rule. It also gives children the opportunity to learn about the 'roots' of words; how the spelling of parts of a word can give a clue to it's meaning and the meaning of other words. For example, children learn that the root word 'therm' is connected to heat or warmth, so when they come across words such as 'thermal', 'thermometer' or 'hypothermia' they know these words all have an association with heat.

How can I support my child at home?

It may sound odd, but the best way you can help your child to spell is to read with them. Reading and spelling both rely on building strong mental representations of words. When children see words repeatedly in books, they internalise patterns of letters and sounds. This helps them recognise and reproduce those patterns when spelling. Children who read regularly tend to become more fluent and confident writers. When spelling becomes automatic, it frees up mental energy for higher-level writing tasks like organising ideas and choosing vivid vocabulary.

When you read with your child, talk about some of the spelling patterns you come across, the words which don't 'follow the unusual pattern' or the words which contain the same letters (graphemes) but which make a different sound (phoneme), for example 'ea' in the word 'head' and 'ea' in the word 'seal'.

We are sure your child will enjoy the spelling lessons!