

# Active Spelling

In October 2024, we introduced a new approach to teaching spelling and vocabulary at Birchwood. Active Spelling uses the principles of mnemonics, images and verbal reasoning (through a dialogic talk-based approach) to aid the retention of spellings and, in turn, develop a breadth of vocabulary. The model (which has been developed by LEAD Equate in close relationship with schools and experienced teachers) is aligned to the National Curriculum, with suggested spelling lists ensuring a comprehensive coverage of both spelling patterns and statutory words.

Active Spelling embeds learning in an active and engaging way, providing pupils with a deeper grasp of spelling and vocabulary that serves as a foundation for their future. Underpinned by research and a positive impact upon outcomes, Active Spelling offers a structured approach to the daily teaching of spelling, which ensures that both the statutory spellings and the spelling patterns are learnt by children.

Active Spelling is taught from Year 2 (once the children are confident with Phase 5 phonics) to Year 6; as a whole-school approach, it provides a system that builds year on year to achieve a consistent structure, ensuring the children leave Birchwood as confident spellers. It also employs a Gradual Release of Responsibility Model to ensure that by the end of KS2, pupils can confidently select the appropriate approach to learn and retain a spelling pattern - a skill which will stand them in good stead for KS3 and beyond.






The teaching approach has been devised in four distinctive phases:

## Phase One: Recall

The first phase of the session revisits previously learnt words. Spaced learning refers to the approach of revisiting learning, enabling children to better retain the spelling of words.

## Phase Two: Learn

Two new words are introduced daily. We use different approaches to teaching spelling (including orthography, phonology, morphology, etymology and graphology). The children are supported to remember the pattern to a section of a word, therefore meaning that they have fewer facts to remember than trying to remember each word individually.

Orthography	Phonology	Morphology	Etymology	Graphology
The way the word looks	The way the word sounds	The meaning of the word	Where the word comes from	The way the word feels to write
				

## Phase Three: Correct

Before children can be expected to correct the spelling mistakes in their own work, they must be first taught how to do so by recognising if a spelling 'looks' and 'sounds' right. We encourage children to not mark the spellings as right or wrong, but rather mark each letter. This means, for example if the word 'possible' is spelt 'possoble', the children can see that 7/8 of the words are spelt correctly, and they have a clear focus of their next step.

## Phase Four: Apply

It is vital that the children understand the morphology of each new word taught and how to use them in both written and spoken communication. This section of the lesson allows the children to put the words into sentences, thus embedding their understanding of the meaning of the word, providing a better understanding of how they can use the vocabulary within their written and spoken work.