

## Year 3 and 4 Spelling and Times tables

This year we will be having a tighter focus on spelling and times tables.

### Spelling

Extensive research shows that weekly spelling tests do not improve children's ability to retain spellings of words over the longer term. Therefore we will no longer be conducting spelling tests on Friday afternoon and instead we will be dedicating more teaching time to spelling in lessons. Children will be taught spelling within their guided reading groups and will complete a spelling activity during every guided reading lesson. Each group will spend time looking at spelling rules, prefixes, suffixes, homophones and commonly misspelt words. We would like children to spend some time at home practising their spellings each week. We will assess children's progress every half term and send home the results of these tests so you can see which words your child still needs to practise.

At the back of the white reading diary you will find a list of Year 3 and 4 common exception words. Children are expected to be able to read and spell all the words on this list by the end of Year 4. They are difficult words as most cannot be sounded out.

Attached to this letter you will find a sheet explaining which words we would like children to focus on for this half term. Please make sure you read the section for your child's READING GROUP teacher not their class teacher.

We would be grateful if you could spend some time each week practising some of these spellings. Ways that have been found to be particularly effective are

1. Writing the tricky part in another colour eg library
2. Dividing an A4 piece of paper in quarters. In the first quarter trace the word several times. In the second quarter copy the word several times. In the third quarter write the word several times from memory. In the fourth quarter shut your eyes and write the word several times.
3. Make up a clever way to remember the word eg  
Because can be remembered as – big elephants can add up sums easily
4. Use a spelling app (lots are free) to help practise.

### Times tables

Children are expected to be fluent in all their times tables and related division facts by the end of Year 4. From this year onwards all Year 4 children will be doing a government set test (similar to the Year 1 phonics test) to assess their progress in times tables. We trialled this test last year and it proved very challenging. Children are required to perform the test on a computer/tablet and are shown multiplication or division facts one at a time. They have 6 seconds in which to read it, type the answer and submit it. This requires instant recall. As many of you will know we have always focused on times table learning in Year 3 and 4 but to help the children to do their best in this test we will be trying to improve their speed of recall.

Times table homework will be set every week and children will complete tests according to their ability. Correct recall of particular times tables will earn the child a badge. There are many websites that might be useful in helping your child to recall their facts at speed. A favourite of ours is called 'Hit the Button'. This is a free game when accessed online (paid if downloaded as an app).

Free apps you might find useful are

- Squeebles times tables app
- Maths Rockx times tables ( 99p per times table, put to music)

Other ways of helping include

- Throwing a ball to one another calling a multiplication fact out. The person catching the ball has to give the answer.
- Counting in jumps of that times table when walking up and down the stairs
- Making a set of 12 cards with the fact on one side and the answer on the other, for children to independently practise.
- Make a set of question cards and a set of answer cards and play pairs.
- Good old fashioned chanting!

If you have any questions about helping your child with spellings or times tables do speak to your child's class teacher.

Thank you for your continued support

Andrea Heath, Sarah Allen, Georgina Price and Debbie Pittarello

### **Spelling focus for first half term**

#### **Mrs Allen's reading group**

All children have been assessed on their ability to spell the Year 1 and 2 common exception words (found at the back of the reading diary). They will be working on these words for this half term as they are the words that they will use most frequently in their writing. Please help your child to practise these words.

#### **Mrs Heath's reading group**

All children have been assessed on their ability to read the Year 3 and 4 common exception words (found at the back of the reading diary). Please practise reading these words with your child to ensure they can recognise them all. This half term we will focus on spelling the following words from the list:  
Woman, women, earth, different, island, often, minute, circle, certain, centre, century, through, quarter, learn, enough, thought, remember.

We will also focus on spelling on contractions eg don't, couldn't, wasn't etc  
As revision we will also look at rules for adding suffixes eg dropping an 'e' when we add 'ing' or doubling consonant when adding 'ing'.

#### **Mrs Price and Mrs Pittarello's reading group**

Children should focus on ensuring they can spell the first column of Year 3 and 4 common exception words (found at the back of the reading diary). They will also revisit common homophones (sound same but spelt differently) especially their/there/they're, through/threw.

In addition they will revisit common suffixes such as 'ful' and look at some commonly misspelt words such as beautiful and colour.