



6th November, 2020

Dear parents / carers

I am writing to explain our new spelling system for the school.

Last half term the emphasis was upon assessing any gaps in spelling caused by lockdown where the children missed a large part of their previous school year. Then, using these assessments, lots of opportunities have been given to practise words not learnt or retained.

As you know, we also sent home lists of 'common exception words' (words falling outside the taught spelling patterns) – to give the children further practise. These are currently being retested and the children will bring home their result so that you are aware of their progress.

The children will be taught a new spelling pattern on a weekly basis within class, using a variety of online and practical resources. They will practise words containing these suffixes (word endings) or phonic strategies. They will also have weekly sessions where they will work through individual sets of common exception words according to the outcome of their assessment. Words within the spelling lists have purposely been repeated in different weeks, in order to enable 'overlearning' as this is known to be an effective strategy to learn for the long term.

Spelling tests in school will be on a half termly basis, rather than weekly. This will help to avoid the risk of solely learning for the test, and hopefully produce a more successful permanent retention of words.

It will be extremely beneficial for children to practise any lists of words sent home repeatedly until they can spell them accurately at least three separate weeks. Spellings will often be sent on 'look, say, cover, write, check' sheets which the children are familiar with from school. However, it would also help to practise words in a different context eg within a sentence, as we do in school.

Staff are working towards sending home the lists by the end of next week.

Please don't hesitate to email with any questions.

Many thanks for your continued support.

Allison Brady

Adam J.G Campbell (Headteacher)

The Firs Lower School • Station Road, Ampthill, Bedford MK45 2QR

Telephone: (01525) 402735

Email: firs@cbc.beds.sch.uk • Web www.firslower.co.uk

