



Thurston CE Primary Academy

Pond Field Road, Thurston,
Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk, IP31 3FT
Telephone: (01359) 230444
E-mail: admin@thurstonprimary.net
Headteacher: Mr J. Bayes B.A. Hons. QTS. NPQH.

Friday 19th April 2024

Dear Parents / Carers,

Over the last few months, the school teaching staff have all undertaken Continuous Professional Development on the effective teaching of spelling. We have worked alongside renowned Primary English Consultant Jason Wade to ensure we are using the most up to date and research backed methods of teaching spelling.

Over the course of this term we will be introducing his methods through the scheme Sounds and Syllables. This was developed to teach children to spell in a simple but logical way, leading to greater understanding of how English spelling actually works. It works with spellers of all abilities, from those who might find spelling consistently a challenge to those who are confident, sophisticated spellers. Second, the Sounds & Syllables spelling approach helps children to spell any word in the English Language from *hip* to *hippopotomonstrosesquipedaliophobia*. It will be used with pupils in Years 3-6 and complements the phonics programme used in Early Years and Key Stage One to continue pupils understanding of spelling.

This new approach means that we will no longer be having weekly spelling tests and sending spellings home to learn. There has been much research in recent years on whether the use of spelling tests is an effective method of teaching children to spell. The British Journal of Educational Psychology found that spelling tests had no significant effect on student learning, in fact, their study found that students who had not taken a spelling test were more likely to perform better in spelling assessments than those who had taken a spelling test. Similarly, another study concluded that regular use of spelling tests in the classroom did not have any significant impact of student learning. The study also noted that students who were more motivated and had stronger prior knowledge of the material were more likely to be successful regardless of whether they had taken a spelling test or not. In school, we have certainly seen evidence of many children learning spellings simply for the weekly spelling test and not using these in their written work. We have every confidence that the new approach to spelling we are undertaking will lead to our pupils becoming more confident spellers throughout their written work. We will review the impact of the new spelling scheme over the coming months. If you have any questions about this then please do get in touch with class teachers.

Yours sincerely

Amanda Wigzell

Clare Green

English Leadership Team



THEDWASTRE
Education Trust



THE DWASTRE
Education Trust