

24th September 2015

New, Whole-School System for Learning Key Words

Dear Parents/Carers,

This week, Christ Church School will be launching a new system for learning key words (*words which occur regularly and which are not always easy to sound out phonetically*).

Our aim is to provide a standardised system from Foundation to Year 6, to enable each child to progress at their own pace and to allow them to commit words to long-term memory through repetition. Alongside the learning of key words at home, we will continue to teach phonics and spelling rules regularly at school, including how to add endings such as 'ing', 'ed' and 's' to some of the key words learnt at home.

During this week, every child will be issued with their first book of key words to learn.

The books of key words

Each key words book takes the name of a country and has the appropriate flag on the front. The first book is England and then, as the children progress through Christ Church school, they will gradually make their way around the world, one continent at a time. As a point of interest, children will be encouraged to find out the capital city of their country every time they have a new book.

The choice of book to start on this week has been based on your child's key words learning from last year. However, as the system is new, they might initially know some of the words in a given book already, in which case they will progress quickly to the next book.

Each book has a grid full of words, with extra gaps at the bottom of each page. These allow us to add a few extra words taken from classroom writing, thus giving the children an opportunity to revisit the spellings of words they have forgotten.

Each key words book also has a corresponding word strip. These will not be sent home, but will be available to the children as a word bank in the classroom, to help reinforce the spellings in independent writing.

Learning words at home

We would be grateful if you could help your child to learn some of the spellings on at least one occasion every week. You can use whichever method most suits your child, eg:-

- Build the words with magnetic letters.
- Call the spellings out verbally.
- Cover up each word and then try to write it in the blank columns provided.
- Write the words on scrap paper.

Consequently, the blank columns provided in the book might or might not be used. The amount practised each week is also flexible. Your child might practise one page, two pages or even the whole book - whatever seems appropriate. **Please sign and date at the bottom of all the page(s) practised and return the book to school every** .



We will then check the book in and write an acknowledging signature, before returning it with your child for another week of practice.

Spelling tests at school

Your child will not be tested at school until you decide that he/she can spell all the words in the book, at which point please sign the bottom of the back page. This is likely to take several weeks. As children in the same class will have different books and be working at their own pace, they will be tested individually or in small groups when they are ready, rather than having a whole-class test on a fixed day.

If, in the test, a child successfully spells all the words, they will be given the next book. If not, the book will be returned with highlights to show which spellings need practising again. If a child only makes one mistake, however, a new book will be issued, with the extra word added to the grid.

Communicating progress

An overview of the whole-school key words system will be stuck into your child's 'Learning Log' book and dated at school each time your child progresses to another spelling book.

We hope that this new system will be beneficial to you in providing a continuous method for spelling throughout your child's time at Christ Church School.

Yours faithfully,