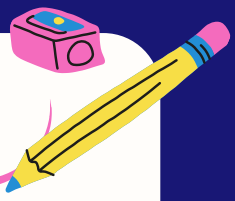




September 2026



Berkeley Primary School Spelling Update

We hope you have all had a wonderful and relaxing summer holiday and that you are returning refreshed and ready for an exciting new school year. As we begin the year, we are excited to introduce a new, evidence-informed spelling programme that will support our children in developing their spelling skills, vocabulary and confidence in writing.

Active Spelling is an approach aimed from Year 2 to Year 6, to teach an understanding of spelling and vocabulary. It uses the principles of mnemonics, intended to assist the memory to develop a breadth of vocabulary. It employs a Gradual Release of Responsibility model to ensure that by the end of Key Stage 2, pupils can confidently select an appropriate strategy to learn and retain a spelling pattern. Spellings will be taught daily for approximately 15-20 minutes. In each lesson there are four distinct phases: Recall, Learn, Check and Apply. Children recall previously learnt spellings to aid retention of spelling patterns and rules. Children are then taught different strategies to help them to learn new spellings that they become increasingly able to apply independently. To fully understand the spelling patterns, Active Spelling uses orthography (the way a word looks), phonology (the way a word sounds), morphology (the meaning of the word), etymology (the origin of the word, which country and language it originates from), and graphology (how it feels to write).

Active Spelling supports reducing the cognitive load and moves away from simple memory tests and focuses on teaching how words actually work. Research shows children retain spelling best when they explore word sounds, visual patterns, roots, and origins together. Instead of relying on weekly tests that measure short-term memory, our daily four-phase model (Recall, Learn, Check, Apply) uses clear teaching and regular, low-stakes practice. This approach helps anchor spelling patterns into long-term memory, giving your child the confidence to apply these skills to any word they encounter.

We look forward to working together with you to support your child's spelling development and to seeing their confidence grow throughout the year.

Best Wishes
Rachel Jones
Assistant Headteacher

