



## ACTIVE SPELLING CASE STUDY

This case study comments on the spelling journey of The Holt Primary School. It gives details of the positive impact of Active spelling from Year 2 to Year 6 and the progress made.



### INTENT...

The mission statement of The Holt Primary is **Do your best, Be our Best; Belief**. The Holt has a one form intake and is below the national average size for a primary school. The Holt Primary school currently has 195 pupils on roll. The number of pupils entitled to Ever 6 FSM is 18%, close to the national average. Pupils with EAL or Ethnic groups are significantly below national figures and SEND figures are also below the national average.

We began Active Spelling in September 2021 and it has been successfully integrated into our school day since that time. Before Active Spelling, we had begun working on a multi-sensory approach to spelling and the spelling lead had received some CPD from Kelly Ashley, author of the book *Word Power*. Spelling was being taught, but not with a consistent enough approach and rigorously enough to impact on the progress of pupils.

### OUTCOMES...

- To consistently and explicitly teach spelling and vocabulary in a fun, hands-on way that would engage all pupils and underpinned by research.
- To improve the quality of spelling in pupils' independent writing.
- For children to know and understand the language associated with spelling- morphology, phonology, orthography, graphology and be able to have a range of spelling strategies to help them apply this knowledge.
- To have a consistent, rigorous approach that would address the transition from phonics to spelling when our KS1 children come off the RWI programme.
- To improve the knowledge of all teachers so that they all have the confidence to deliver a high quality sequence of learning for spelling.
- For our pupils to achieve the national standards and beyond.
- To achieve whole school progression so that spelling rules are taught in a structured way, revisited, built upon, retained and fully embedded into all our lessons, providing opportunities for pupils to have the skills for secondary school.

*I love teaching Active Spelling as I feel that the learning sticks! The children thrive on the familiar structure of the lessons and enjoy re-visiting old words as much as learning new ones.*

*The actions, visuals and rhymes help the children understand each spelling rule and therefore support them when it is their turn to have a go independently.*

*The progress speaks for itself!*

**Jo McGowan**  
Year 2 teacher

## IMPLEMENTATION...

We began with an initial training twilight for all staff members (teachers and TAs) which unpicked the four phases of the whole school approach. There were several whole school discussions about how we would implement the new programme including timetabling, base line assessment and resources. All year groups from Y2-Y6 were given the suggested spelling assessment and data was collected. This would be the first of three assessment opportunities throughout the first year. Staff made judgements about where their class needed to start the programme and any common weaknesses or gaps from Covid were incorporated into their recall slides. The Spelling lead began the programme first and built some confidence in order to be able to support staff in the implementation. She trained her class with the structure and this allowed other teachers to observe routines already established.

In the first stages of the programme, teachers commented that achieving the 20 minute lesson was difficult, which was expected whilst training the children. Within a few weeks, all staff were extremely positive about how the children were motivated and excited about their daily spelling lesson. Teachers really felt that they were teaching spelling and that their knowledge was improving.

Within the first term, the school received a Quality Assurance visit to ensure staff were supported. This was really beneficial because we were able to have confidence that we were delivering the programme correctly and work on small changes to further improve our teaching. Staff continued to talk to each other, share good practice and celebrate the progress our pupils were making in such a short period of time. A strong coaching culture developed so that everyone felt they could be honest and keep moving forward.

In Year 3, where there are some EHCP pupils, TA's were able to teach the Year 2 spellings.

A trainee teacher in Year 5 was also part of our training and began to deliver spelling lessons with confidence using the Active Spelling approach.

Our timetable for spelling was non-negotiable in order to achieve consistency and give the programme the time it deserved.



*The Active spelling programme that I deliver has had a profound impact on the children that I teach, who all have Special Educational needs. I spent weeks watching Sara present the Active Spelling sessions and then simplified it to tailor it towards the students I have. We follow the basic principle but is it presented in a less complex manner.*

*The Active spelling lessons are taught daily and one of the children enjoys it so much that he asks about it repeatedly and is disappointed if we cannot do it for any reason.*

*I genuinely feel that Active spelling has given this child the tools to believe that he is a capable speller and because of this means that he enjoys the lessons greatly – the improvements he has made are strong too.*

*The repetitive lessons work for these children and a programme has made a significant difference to their educational journey.*

**Sarah Marsland , TA 1-1**

## IMPACT...

Active Spelling has had a huge impact on all our pupils, both in their attitude to spelling, their progress and their ability to apply strategies in their independent work across the curriculum. It has also had a very positive impact on the confidence and knowledge of our staff when teaching spelling. Staff were quick to talk about how much they enjoy seeing the responses of their class and how much their teaching has developed.

SPELLING	Average month increase after 4M	% above chronological age at end of year	% achieving more than 9 months progress	Average increase for the class (9 month)
<b>Year 2</b>	18m	79%	90%	20m
<b>Year 3</b>	21m	90%	70%	21m
<b>Year 4</b>	3m	43%	35%	6m
<b>Year 5</b>	13m	63%	77%	16m
<b>Year 6</b>	8m	56%	73%	17m

In the spring and summer term y2-6 completed the same test. In Y4, due to long term staffing issues, this cohort were unable to access Active Spelling in the same way and so their data was able to be used as a control group for the programme.