Inspire ● Enrich ● Enjoy ● Succeed

Dear Parents/ Carers,

As a school we are adopting a new approach to teaching and understanding vocabulary based on Word Aware. Currently, we are encouraging children to become excited about words and promote their vocabulary development.

Word games are a great way to get your child interested in words. Broadening our vocabulary is proven to help us to be more successful; the more words we know, the easier it is to understand and use new vocabulary.

We value the partnership between school and home when it comes to learning, and recognise the power of talk. We also know that we learn best when we are having fun. Playing word games both at home and when out and about can really benefit your child. Please support your child in their vocabulary journey by getting excited about words with them. Below is a list of fun, easy games which you could play with their child to help them broaden their vocabulary.

I went shopping

This game is good for developing memory, so is good for adults too. One person starts by saying, 'I went shopping and I bought a . . .' (names a food item). The second player says, 'I went shopping and I bought . . .' and repeats the first player's item before adding their own. The third player continues, saying the first two items before adding their own. And so on. See how many you can remember. A variation of this game is: 'I went on holiday and I packed . . .' As an adult you could try to add more varied and unusual names of items to broaden your child's vocabulary.

What am I?

For younger children, riddles need to be straightforward, rather than the conundrums that older children enjoy so much. Three to four simple clues are usually adequate, for example: • You find me . . . • I can . . . • An important thing about me is . . . • When you look at me, you can see . . . Example: 'You find me in the kitchen. I can cook food. An important thing about me is that I get hot. When you look at me, you can see a handle and lid. I am a . . .'

I spy

Play the traditional 'I spy' game. 'I spy with my little eye something beginning with . . . (letter)'.

Variation 1: Thinking hat. Word meaning clues are given rather than letters and the object does not need to be within sight. Say, 'I put on my thinking hat and think of something that is (give a clue).' If incorrect say, 'It's not that. I put on my thinking hat and think of something that is (original clue and

a second clue).' Continue until the word has been guessed. E.g.: 'I put on my thinking hat and think of something that is spicy.'

Variation 2: Big brain. In this game players give a clue containing the first sound of the word as well as a word meaning clue. Unlike 'I spy', players do not need to be able to see the item, but they need to think with their 'big brains'. For example, 'I think with my big brain, something that is part of a tree and begins with a "b." '

Word rounds

Choose one of the categories below. Go around the circle, with each player adding a category item. Variation: After you have chosen your category set a timer for one minute. Taking turns around the group see how many words can be generated in one minute. Record the family total and then try to beat it next time.

Easier

Animals	Clothes	Food
Things you can see at the seaside	Things you would see at the zoo	Boys'/girls' names
Transport	Things in a classroom	Verbs (things we can do e.g. jump, walk, swim)

Harder

Things you can cut	Things you can smell	Toys and games
Somewhere you go on holiday	Countries	Adjectives (describing words e.g. long, pink, smelly)
Things that are cold	Things with legs	Sports
Things that grow	Books	Emotions
Things that are fast	Things that are red	Things that open
Furniture	Living things	Things that make noise
Shops	Breakable objects	Things that are long

What can it do?

Pick one of the words below. Can you think of five things that it can do or that can be done with it? For example, tree: climb, chop, grow, fall down and absorb carbon dioxide.

apple	baby	ball	bread	chalk
giraffe	leaf	lion	lollipop stick	paper
paperclip	pencil	penguin	rubber band	stick
tree	your foot	your hand	cat	flour
flower	hair	water	air	spoon

Alison is an acrobat in Asia

Start at the beginning of the alphabet, the first player must generate a name, profession and place that all begin with that letter. For example, for the letter 'a': 'Alison is an acrobat in Asia'. The next player then has to do the letter 'b': 'Bob is a builder in Benidorm'. Make it more complex and add adjectives, so it becomes 'Alison is an ambitious acrobat in Asia'. To make it easier, try name, food and a place in a house e.g. 'Alison is eating apples in the attic'.

Describe it!

Take a look at www.pobble365.com and look at the amazing images. Choose a picture and talk about it in turn. Support your child by taking turns to talk about all the things you can see, how the picture makes you feel, what might someone be thinking, what might happen next, how someone or something is moving, what might someone say or what sort of person they are. Make the picture the start of an exciting adventure story.

What's the same and what's different?

Select two related words from a topic that your child is interested in and together talk about what is the same and different about two things:

- Book or film characters, e.g. Superman and Batman, Sirius and Voldemort
- Sports, e.g. rugby and football, basketball and volleyball.
- Hobbies,, e.g. different computer games, computer games and board games, reading and films
- Restaurant chains, e.g.: Nandos vs McDonalds

Don't say it!

Cut out the words below or think of your own words. They might be related to what your child has learnt at school or any words that they are familiar with. Place all the words in a 'hat'. Each person takes a turn at taking out words from the hat. The challenge is to describe the word without using the word at all.

hill	trolley	graph	desert
dinosaur	fly swat	spaceship	cornflakes
mountain	biscuit	storm	flood
tree	umbrella	bee	baby
geography	daisy	crocodile	cinema
planets	purse	moon	present
spider	earthquake	tiger	America

Word associations

One player starts by saying a word. The next player says a word that is related to the first word. It can be related in any way. If another player cannot see how the words are related, they can challenge and the connection needs to be explained. Keep going until a word is repeated or a connection cannot be explained.

Here's an example: Egypt – Mummy – Dad – beard – Santa Claus – Christmas – trees – leaves – departs – trains.

20 questions

One person thinks of an object. Others try and guess what it is by asking questions. The original player can only answer yes, no or maybe. Give a clue if they are on the wrong track. Can they guess it in 20 questions? Maybe challenge them to guess it in 10!

We hope that you find the suggestions above useful (we're sure that some will bring back memories from your own childhood of word games you used to play).

If you would like to discuss Word Aware or anything to do with your child's vocabulary development, please feel free to contact their class teacher.

Play word games, have fun and see your child's vocabulary grow!