

Our Reading Curriculum: HFWs and CEWs

At Diamond Wood Community Academy, we recognise the critical importance of teaching high-frequency words (HFWs) and common exception words (CEWs) to ensure our pupils become fluent readers.

High-frequency words are the most frequently occurring words in the English language, such as "the," "and," or "is." They often do not follow regular phonetic patterns and are taught as sight words.

Common Exception Words (CEWs) are words that deviate from common spelling patterns and phonics rules but are frequently used. Examples include "said," "come," or "you." CEWs are usually encountered in early reading books and are taught as sight words.

Some common exception words are high-frequency words, but not all high-frequency words are common exception words. It is important to teach children HFWs and CEWs for the following reasons;

- **Promoting Reading Fluency:** HFWs and CEWs are commonly used words encountered in texts. A solid grasp of these words enables pupils to read more smoothly and with greater accuracy, promoting reading fluency and comprehension.
- **Supporting Independent Reading:** By teaching HFWs and CEWs, we empower pupils to read independently without constantly relying on decoding strategies.
- **Building Vocabulary:** Many HFWs and CEWs are non-decodable sight words, meaning they do not follow regular phonics rules. Learning these words helps pupils expand their vocabulary and access a wider range of texts.
- **Enhancing Writing Skills:** Familiarity with HFWs and CEWs allows pupils to use these words in their writing confidently, improving their overall writing skills.
- **Developing Spelling Proficiency:** Knowing HFWs and CEWs provides pupils with a strong foundation in spelling. By recognising these words, they can focus their attention on more complex spelling patterns and rules.

High-frequency words are introduced to pupils from Reception. This is because it is during this year that pupils start to read and spell through their phonics and literacy lessons. As part of this learning, they will be introduced to high-frequency words. As previously stated these are words that are used very often in written English, for example, 'the', 'and', 'to' and 'said'. As these are the words that our pupils will come across most often when reading, they must start to recognise and read them.

In general, high-frequency words tend to be decodable words (children will be able to use their phonics knowledge and skills to 'sound a word out' and blend it together). However, some words don't fit specific spelling rules (common exception words). These can also be high-frequency words.

By the end of year 1, our pupils should have learnt to recognise, read and spell most of the common and trickier words contained in the 100 HFW list on the next page.

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100 High Frequency Words

the	we	mum	get
and	can	one	just
a	are	them	now
to	up	do	came
said	had	me	oh
in	my	down	about
he	her	dad	got
I	what	big	their
of	there	when	people
it	out	it's	your
was	this	see	put
you	have	looked	could
they	went	very	house
on	be	look	old
she	like	don't	too
is	some	come	by
for	not	will	day
at	then	into	made
his	were	back	time
but	go	from	I'm
that	little	children	if
with	as	him	help
all	no	Mr	Mrs
an	saw	off	called
so	make	asked	here

Once pupils have learnt the first 100 high-frequency words they are introduced to the next 200. This is generally by the time pupils are in Year 2.

Next 200 High Frequency Words

across	birds	each	fun	how	looks	next	river	tell	want
after	boat	eat	garden	I'll	lots	night	room	than	wanted
again	book	eggs	gave	I've	magic	one	round	that's	water
air	box	end	giant	inside	man	only	run	there's	way
along	boy	even	girl	its	many	or	sat	these	well
am	can't	ever	going	jumped	may	other	say	thing	we're
animals	car	every	gone	keep	miss	our	school	things	where
another	cat	everyone	good	key	more	over	sea	think	which
any	clothes	eyes	gran	king	morning	park	shouted	thought	white
around	cold	fast	grandad	know	most	place	sleep	three	who
away	coming	feet	great	last	mother	plants	small	through	why
baby	couldn't	fell	green	laughed	mouse	play	snow	told	wind
bad	cried	find	grow	let	much	please	something	took	window
bear	dark	first	hard	let's	must	pulled	soon	top	wish
because	did	fish	has	liked	narrator	queen	still	town	work
bed	didn't	floppy	hat	live	need	rabbit	stop	tree	would
been	different	fly	he's	lived	never	ran	stopped	trees	yes
before	dog	food	head	long	new	really	suddenly	two	
began	door	found	home	looking		red	sun	under	
best	dragon	fox	horse			right	take	us	
better	duck	friends	hot				tea	use	

Pupils are introduced to common exception words initially during their phonics lessons. Within the Read, Write Inc Phonics and Spelling programmes they are known to the children as 'Red Words'. Pupils are taught that some words with 'tricky letters' can't be read using Fred Talk – these are known as red words. The following phrase is used with pupils to emphasise this and support their memory of this concept – 'remember you can't Fred a red!'.

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The image below shows each of the red words introduced with the grapheme circled. If an asterisk appears next to the word this means that the word is only red for a while. This is because these words include graphemes that have not been taught by the time they are needed in the reading books. As soon as the grapheme has been taught, each of these turn into a green word (fully decodable word).

I the you your said was
 are of want what they to
 he me we she be
 no so go old her baby
 do does all call tall small
 many any one anyone some come
 watch who where there here were
 brother other mother father love above
 two once buy worse walk talk
 bought caught through thought whole wear
 could would should great saw why
 now how down over
 my by son water school ball
 everyone their people put

(* = red for a while)

The image below shows the progression of red words throughout the phonics programme, indicating when children will be introduced to them and therefore expected to be able to read them.

Our English Curriculum: Progression of Red Words taught in RW1

Red/Ditty	Green	Purple	Pink	Orange	Yellow	Blue	Grey
put the I no of my for* he	your said you be are	to me go baby paint*	all like* I've want call we her she washing* some so	what they do old was	saw watch(es) school small their were who tall one brother I'm there fall* any where wall*	does other two could ball would wash* water anyone over wasn't through once son whole people	should come many mother above father here buy bought great someone another walk caught worse everyone talk thought love wear

* indicates 'Red for a while'.

Our Reading Curriculum: HFWs and CEWs

Unfortunately, the RWI programme does not include all of the CEWs regarded as essential to be taught by the end of Key Stage 1. Therefore, our teachers ensure that those not covered during RWI lessons, are taught and recapped regularly during Literacy (EYFS)/ English (KS1) lessons. This is in addition to dedicated spelling lessons in KS1 that focus on these words too. The list of Y1 and Y2 CEWs can be seen in the image below.

Year 1				Year 2			
the	they	one		door	gold	plant	clothes
a	be	once		floor	hold	path	busy
do	he	ask		poor	told	bath	people
to	me	friend		because	every	hour	water
today	she	school		find	great	move	again
of	we	put		kind	break	prove	half
said	no	push		mind	steak	improve	money
says	go	pull		behind	pretty	sure	Mr
are	so	full		child	beautiful	sugar	Mrs
were	by	house		children	after	eye	parents
was	my	our		wild	fast	could	Christmas
is	here			climb	last	should	everybody
his	there			most	past	would	even
has	where			only	father	who	
I	love			both	class	whole	
you	come			old	grass	any	
your	some			old	pass	many	

Beyond Phonics and English lessons, opportunities to encounter and practice HFWs and CEWs are provided across the curriculum, fostering a holistic approach to literacy development. Wider reading opportunities, including access to age-appropriate books and regular library visits, are encouraged to promote exposure to and consolidation of HFWs and CEWs. Parents and Carers are informed about the importance of HFWs and CEWs and are given guidance on how to support their child's learning at home.

Pupils are assessed half-termly by their class teachers to attain which HFWs and CEWs they can or cannot read. Assessing children's ability to read HFWs and CEWs is an integral part of monitoring the progress and attainment of pupils within the English language domain. Assessing HFWs and CEWs enables us to identify gaps in vocabulary and literacy skills, subsequently providing targeted support to develop pupils' confidence and proficiency in reading. By assessing HFWs and CEWs, we can gauge pupils' engagement, motivation, and effort towards language acquisition. Regular assessment encourages positive attitudes towards learning and supports the development of independent and active readers.