



Let's Focus on...

Phonics and Spelling



I explore sounds, letters and words, discovering how they work together, and I can use what I learn to help me as I read or write. ENG 0-12a / LIT 0-13a / LIT 0-21a

I can spell the most commonly-used words, using my knowledge of letter patterns and spelling rules and use resources to help me spell tricky or unfamiliar words. LIT 1-21a

I can spell most of the words I need to communicate, using spelling rules, specialist vocabulary, self-correction techniques and a range of resources. LIT 2-21a

Primary 1 - Emergent/Phonetic Spelling

Before children can begin to spell, they first have to hear the sounds within a word, e.g. know that sun has three sounds s - u - n. Children also learn to clap the syllables in familiar words, e.g. their own name: An-drew, Claud-i-a, So-phie, etc. Activities to support this understanding are practised regularly from the very beginning of P1.

Children begin to spell by applying their knowledge of phonics, initially making words using single sounds, e.g. cat, bus, then incorporating blends to form longer and more complex words, e.g. path, rain, green. Initial sounds are not taught in alphabetical order but in groups which can be blended together to create words. As soon as a child can recognise only a small number of initial sounds, they can begin to make words, e.g. s a t i p n; sat, pin, tin, pat, nip, nap, etc.

Phonetic attempts at this stage are valued, encouraging children to develop their confidence as early writers.

Words which cannot be 'sounded out' are known as 'tricky words'. This often applies to common words, e.g. the, they. These words are spelled using a 'Look, Say, Cover, Write, Check' method and are reinforced through early reading. Children are encouraged to look at the word, say it, then cover it up before trying to write it, then finally check to see if their spelling is correct. These words are, as the name suggests, tricky to learn, however, regular practice helps children commit them to memory.

Primary 2 - Phonetic/Transitional Spelling

As children begin to apply their phonic knowledge, spelling an increasing number of words using single sounds and blends, they are taught alternative forms of vowel sounds, e.g. the long a sound: ai (rain), ay (stay), a_e (cake).

Practice in spelling tricky, irregular words continues using the 'Look, Say, Cover, Write, Check' strategy.

Although phonic attempts at spelling continue at this stage, as children become more confident readers and writers, a transition towards conventional spellings begins to replace earlier phonetic attempts.

Primary 3 - Transitional Spelling towards Correct Spelling

By this stage an understanding of spelling patterns and language structures develops and a growing understanding of the structure of words can be seen in children's spelling. Correct spellings begin to appear with greater consistency in children's writing as awareness of some recognised spelling rules begins to become established. Teaching at this stage focuses on spelling rules and children are taught the following strategies:

- Syllabification - breaking words down into syllables, each containing a vowel. Children can clap out words to identify syllables, e.g. go-ing, An-drew, re-mem-ber
- Break words into individual phonemes - Elkonin Boxes are used to help, e.g.

b	a	th
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- Word Shape - look at letter shape, size, ascending and descending letters.

r u g

b a t h

- Compound Words - break the compound word into simple words, e.g.
into - in and to breakfast - break and fast
- Words within words (country - count/try, example - exam/ample)
- Mnemonics - children use or create their own memory aid, to help with tricky words, e.g.
because - big elephants can always understand small elephants.

Primary 4-5

At this stage, spelling rules, strategies and phonics are taught together over a four week block. Two weeks will focus on teaching phonemes and their different representations (graphemes), one week looks at spelling rules and a final week is focused on spelling strategies.

Diacritical Marking

Each week, children will diacritically mark their words. Diacritical Marking involves the children:

- Looking, investigating, sounding out and finding different sounds within words and learning how they are recorded
- Marking their findings and recording these using the marking code
- Applying their knowledge of words from different phoneme groups, to spell correctly

The Diacritical Marking Code

faster

shop

home

Single Sounds/Phonemes

Single sounds/phonemes are marked with a dot under each sound.

The word faster has six sounds.

Joined Phonemes

Joined phonemes are marked by underlining with a dark line.

e.g. ey, ou, ea, sh all make a single sounds.

The word shop has 3 sounds.

Split Phonemes

Split phonemes are formerly the magic e sound
They are marked with a joining loop.

The word home has 3 sounds.

'Growing the Word'

Children are encouraged to explore and develop their knowledge of words in this activity by discussing word meanings, looking at different tenses of words and adding prefixes or suffixes, e.g. pack - unpack, packing, packed, help - helping, helpful, unhelpful

Spelling Rules

This week focuses on developing the children's knowledge of spelling rules. A word list is introduced with words that follow a particular spelling rule. As well as learning the rule, the children will be encouraged to see if phonics or the other spelling strategies they have learnt, can help with the spelling of each of the words.

Common words and Spelling Strategies

As at the early stages of spelling, children continue to practise spelling irregular, or 'tricky' words; we now refer to these as common words. The common word lists used in school can be found at Doorway Online. In addition to common words this website also includes a variety of online resources to support home learning. To access the common word lists, please use the following path:

- <https://www.doorwayonline.org.uk/>
- Literacy
- Spelling 2
- ENTER
- 1200 common words
- 1st hundred/2nd hundred etc
- Set 1, 2, 3 etc

We encourage the use of strategies to support memorisation of these spellings as outlined below.

- Using Phoneme Knowledge (sounding out, use of Diacritical Marking)
- Syllabification
- Word Shape
- Compound Words
- Words within Words
- Mnemonic
- Using Analogy - If you know how to spell one word you can spell similar words e.g. if you can spell light - you can spell bright, sight, fright etc.
- Spelling Rules (if appropriate), e.g. 'i' before 'e' except after 'c'

Primary 6-7

Spelling at this stage focuses on reinforcing and applying previously taught spelling strategies. As children continue to increase their vocabulary, common words and subject specific words are taught.

Word knowledge and children's grammatical understanding is further extended through exploration of words and their meanings; developing root words using affixes and understanding how these affect the spelling and the meaning of a word, e.g.

consider - to think about

reconsider - think about again (re - again)

considerate - showing thought (ate - state of)

As well as affixes children are taught about homophones, e.g. ate and eight and confusions, e.g. conscience and conscious.

Assessment

A holistic approach looks at children's ability to spell words in a context, e.g. a dictated sentence/paragraph. Ongoing observations of children's spelling in daily writing activities helps teachers to gather information about children's progress, identifying whether children are applying taught strategies in their wider writing.