



St Patrick's

Phonics

PARENTS' GUIDE 3:

YEAR 1 and YEAR 2

Spelling Choices

Using new phonic knowledge

In Reception, children learn one way of recording each of the 44 phonemes in the English language. For example, they learn that the 's' sound (as in 'sit') can be recorded with the grapheme 's', that the 'ee' sound (as in sheep) can be recorded with the grapheme 'ee' and that the 'ai' sound (as in rain) can be recorded with the grapheme 'ai'.

In the Autumn and Spring terms in Year 1, children learn that sounds (phonemes) can be represented by different letters or groups of letters (graphemes) and that some groups of letters (graphemes) represent more than one phoneme.

For example, in Reception, they learned that the 'ai' sound can be represented by the grapheme 'ai' (as in rain). At the start of Year 1, they then learn that it can also be represented by 'ay' (as in day), a (as in acorn) and a_e (as in cake).

During the spring term in Year 1, children learned that graphemes that they previously encountered can sometimes make more than one sound. For example, the grapheme ch can make the 'ch' sound (as in chip) and also the 'c' sound (as in school). The 'ow' grapheme can make the 'ow' sound (as in town) and also the 'oa' sound (as in bowl).

The next stage is for children to learn more about the rules over when each of these spelling choices are used.

Phase 5c

During the final term of Year 1 and into Year 2, children will begin to learn to make some simple, sensible spelling choices. Now that they know different ways to represent each sound, they need to be able to decide which variation to use when attempting to spell a word. The English language can be rather tricky and there are lots of exceptions to rules. At this stage, children are not expected to get it right all of the time, but are introduced to some simple rules that can help them to spell words and to make a 'best bet' choice of grapheme to use.

For example, children now know six different ways to represent the 'oa' sound: oa (as in coat), 'o' (as in old), 'ow' (as in row), 'oe' (as in toe) and o_e (as in bone). They should be confident in recognising these graphemes when reading words, but without some sort of scaffold, this could prove confusing for children when making a choice of which one to use to spell a word. In order to help with this, children are provided with some simple, general 'rules' or 'tips'. In the case of the 'oa' phoneme, they are told that the 'o' grapheme is often followed by the sounds 'l-d', that the 'ow' grapheme is a good choice if the sound is at the end of the word, that the 'oa' grapheme is a good choice if the sound is followed by a 't' sound and that 'o_e' is the most common and so is the 'best bet'.

Spelling Words

At this stage, children will be sent home with some words to learn to spell. These words will all contain the same sound (phoneme), but the sound will be spelt in different ways (different graphemes). The words will be sorted into groups, with a brief explanation of the simplified 'rule' that the children have been introduced to.

Tricky Words

Children will continue to learn to read new 'tricky' words. These are words that do not follow the phonic rules already taught.

They will also extend the range of 'tricky' words that they are expected to spell.



Ways you can support your children at home

Practise spellings sent home – Each week, teachers will send home a list of spellings organised into different spelling choices. When helping your child to learn these words, please encourage them to use their fingers to ‘sound-out’ the word and discuss which spelling choice would be most suitable, based on the ‘rule’ sent home. For example, for the word ‘rainbow,’ the best choice of grapheme to record the ‘oa’ sound would be ‘ow’ as the sound is at the end of the word.

Read with your child – Your child’s home reading book has been selected to contain only grapheme-phoneme correspondences that they have covered in school so it provides a perfect opportunity to practise reading words containing these sounds. Read the book with your child again and again, encouraging them to sound-out the words. By the final read, encourage them to either whisper sounding-out or to try to sound-out in their heads.