

## Spelling policy: Scoil Íde

Accuracy and ease of spelling is considered to be important in expressing written thought and feelings. It is recognised that development of accuracy will not occur without specific instruction. Approximate spelling is accepted from an early age as a key strategy to encourage children to take a risk on the spelling and placing the focus on communicating meaning in writing. Errors are noted by the teacher and these are corrected.

However, specific teaching of phonics, spelling rules and strategies is taught throughout the school.

In the junior classes, the Jolly Phonics Programme is implemented. This programme uses a kinaesthetic approach to teach recognition of phonic sounds and its written representation. In the senior classes, the focus moves to “core words” (including high frequency words) and the children’s own spelling errors as a stimulus in teaching spelling.

From Senior Infants to Fifth class Folen’s Spellbound Programme is used.

Through this programme spellings are taught by dictation, using core words and common errors . In this way, the spellings are understood to be relevant both to the writing process in general, and to the child’s own context and experience in particular.

**Texts:**

Junior Infant classes : Jolly Phonics Programme

Senior Infants: Jolly Phonics Programme , Spellbound (Folens)

First classes to fifth class : Spellbound (Folens)

Sixth Class: Words from Reading Zone, words from the novel and words from Spelling Bee List

**Additional texts/resources e. g. (used occasionally by learning support teachers)**

1. Alpha to Omega Programme
2. Dolsch lists
3. High frequency word lists
4. ICT: online websites & school computer discs (e. g. Word Shark,)
5. Magnetic letters
6. The Newell Literacy Programme
7. Spelling games/card and dice games

**The spelling approach includes:**

- High frequency words
- Syllabification (in learning support class from first to sixth)
- Child's own writing
- Phonically rhyming words (early stages of spelling)
- Words with common letter strings (caught, daughter, taught)
- The children are taught to look at words, look at words within words

### **Theme words may include the following:**

- (a) Childs' name (Christian & Surname)
- (b) Relations
- (c) Days/Months/Seasons
- (d) Colours
- (e) Numbers

### **Junior classes:**

Look at the shape of the letter, its starting point and directionality, and how it differs from other letter shapes. Letters may be practised on whiteboard and/or magnetic boards using magnetic letters.

### **Senior classes:**

Word shape is reinforced as above. Children are encouraged to check the visual appearance of a word, "Does it look right?" and to sound out what they have written, to check that they have included all the sounds. They are also encouraged to use various other strategies, such as finding a smaller word within the word, isolate common word/verb endings (-ed, -ing), use rime or onset analogies (eat- wheat/ strong-stream respectively).

The words should be taught in context. Focus on a root from Greek, Latin or French e.g. aqua. Explore meanings of words with this root e.g. aquamarine, aqueduct, aquatic. The children may be asked to deduce the meaning of aqua.

Words within Words: Pupils find smaller words within bigger.

Word Snakes: Focus on nouns/ verbs/adjective/adverb from reading material.

- Create and discuss alliteration sentences
- Explore rhyming pairs

### **Auditory analysis:**

Children are encouraged to listen to the sounds in the words. They are asked initially to identify the sounds they can hear, and subsequently to write the sounds they can hear.

### **Mnemonics:**

Mnemonics can be very useful when learning to spell words that are difficult to learn as they help in remembering the spelling of the word.

- piece – have a piece of pie
- could – o u love doughnuts (other “ould” words : should, shoulder, mould)
- hear – you hear with your ears
- island – An island is land
- Principal – The Principal is your pal
- parallel – has three parallel lines
- business – take a bus to your business
- believe- never believe a lie

### **Word Building**

Add another letter to e. g. “was” to create an insect

## Spelling difficulties:

Children who consistently display difficulties in spelling are referred to Learning Support, where diagnostic tests are performed to locate the specific problem/problems

## The Jolly Phonics Programme:

In the junior classes of the school, the Jolly Phonics Programme is currently in use. This programme teaches sounds using a multisensory approach: visual prompts are used to teach each letter sound, along with an action that mirrors the specific sound. The programme encompasses five basic skills:

1. Learning letter sounds
2. Learning letter formation
3. Blending
4. Identifying sounds in words
5. Spelling tricky words

## Learning letter sounds:

Letters are divided into 7 groups, beginning with those sounds that occur most frequently in early cvc words and continuing onto digraphs. Each sound has an accompanying action which helps the children remember the letter(s). In order to reduce possible confusion, letters are initially taught according to the sound they make, rather than their alphabetic name. Similarly, other common sources for letter confusion (b,d,p etc) are also taught in separate groupings.

1. s, a, t, i, p, n
2. ck, e, h, r, m, d
3. g, o, u, l, f, b

4. ai, j, oa, ie, ee, or
5. z, w, ng, v, oo (look), oo (moon)
6. y, x, ch, sh, th (this), th (thumb)
7. qu, ou, oi, ue, er, ar

A strong emphasis is placed on developing linguistic ability, through the introduction and reinforcement of new vocabulary, sentence and language development, repetition and rhyme. Lower case letters are taught initially, with capital letters only being introduced when the former have been mastered.

#### Letter formation:

Children are taught the tripod grip between the first two fingers and thumb, regardless of whether they are right or left handed. Letter formation is taught according to letter shape, starting position and directionality (See Handwriting Policy).

#### Blending:

Blending is the process of saying the individual sounds within a word and sliding those sounds together to make the word. Initial blends are taught first, with the emphasis on sliding the initial sounds together quickly to make the relevant blend (e.g. b-l- to bl-o-t). Digraphs are taught as a single sound (e.g. the word „ship“ has 4 letters but 3 sounds: sh-i-p).

## Identifying sounds in words:

Identifying initial sounds. Games such as I Spy, clapping when hearing a specific initial sound in a group of words e.g.

- Initial sounds
- Medial vowel sounds
- Final blends

## Ideas to encourage positive attitude towards spelling:

- Create a classroom environment that encourages risk taking and having a go.
- Value the child's effort.
- Encourage problem solving and use of resources.
- Print –rich environment
- Give children opportunities to problem solve relationships between sounds and symbols
- During writing encourage children to write as much of the word as they can

## Activities e.g.

### Word Sorts :

- Sort words using a given closed criteria- all words beginning with a specific blend e.g. dr/ all words with two syllables/
- Vowel sound e.g. ai.
- Same sound represented by different letter patterns,
- Irregular plurals,

## Assessment

- Childrens' spelling is assessed on a daily basis and formally on a Friday in the senior classes
  - The Drumcondra Spelling Test is administered from first class to sixth class
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## Monitoring and Review of Policy

Monitoring of spelling is ongoing. This policy has been prepared based on the conditions existing in our school at the time of writing. It may be altered, revised or updated at a future date so as to comply with any changes in our school or any directive from the Department of Education and Skills. It was last reviewed in December 2016