

Active Literacy - Phonics & Spelling - P1-3

This year at St Cyrus we are implementing the Active Literacy approach to phonics and spelling throughout the school - a methodology developed by North Lanarkshire Council and endorsed by Aberdeenshire Council.



In School



Each week your child will be introduced to a new sound or phoneme. A phoneme is the smallest unit of sound that can be used to build a word. This can be a single letter or a group of letters that together make a sound.

- 'pin' has 3 separate sounds - p / i / n
- 'chip' also has 3 sounds- ch/i/p - as 'c' and 'h' together make 'ch'.

The teacher, using a variety of resources, vocalises the sound and demonstrates letter formation and word building. This is reinforced throughout the week by:

- Using a variety of media and activities to practise correct letter formation.
- Working together to identify words that include the taught phoneme.
- Using rhyming patterns to extend the list of words - cat/hat/mat/sat
- Working with partners to read and write words using the taught phoneme.
- Taking part in a range of fun spelling activities to practise word building with the phoneme.



Some weeks are revision weeks. During these weeks children may be given up to five phonemes to revise.

Your child is also taught to problem solve using spelling strategies to spell common tricky words that we read and write frequently in our daily life. This may include looking at word shape, using memory aids (BECAUSE - Big Elephants Can Always Understand Smaller Elephants), and understanding that some tricky words just need lots of practice to learn. As they progress with their writing they will practise using their spelling words in sentences and become familiar with looking for spellings and meanings in a dictionary.



Big
Elephants
Can
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Small
Elephants



Children are no longer assessed purely on the basis of a spelling test. Instead the teacher makes judgements on a daily and weekly basis about your child's ability to spell words in a variety of contexts, e.g. working with a partner to write individual words or dictated sentences; transferring words into topic work; and looking closely at taught writing.



At Home



As part of their homework your child may be asked to practise letter formation and/or complete one of the activities from the spelling homework grid using the taught phoneme and tricky words. You could also encourage them to find, read and write words containing the phoneme in any storybook, signs outwith the home, or in newspapers etc. You could also take turns to be the 'teacher' and write simple sentences using tricky words and words with the phoneme.