



Sounds-Write

A Guide for parents at South Stanley Infant and Nursery School

Throughout their time with us your child will be taught phonics using the Sounds-Write programme.

We will talk about the sounds in words and the letters that represent those sounds. Please help at home by not using letter names or saying that letters make sounds. (**Letter names, as an additional skill, will be taught from Year 1, but not in the context of using phonics to read and write.*) Please see the 'guide to the alphabetic code' for how to say the sounds we are learning.

Phonics teaching

We want the children to learn that letters are spellings for sounds, so that when they see the spellings <m> <a> <t>, they say the sounds /m/ /a/ /t/ and hear that together those sounds make the word 'mat'. So, when they see a new word, your child needs to **'say the sounds, say the word'**. We use this phrase every time we see a new word, so the children will be very familiar with this prompt.

To begin with in Reception, we will be working with two- and three-sound words. Your child needs to say the sounds and **listen** to hear what the word is. For this reason, sounds need to be said very precisely. For example, when we see the spelling <m>, we say /m/ and not 'muh'. It can be difficult to say some words without an 'uh', but with practice, it can be done, so please persevere. When your child has said all the sounds in a word and read the word, ask them to **write** the word. You can use chalk, pencil on paper or tracing in sand or rice on a tray (**please always remind them to 'say the sounds, write the word'*).

Playing games with the sounds in words can be good fun and help your child to understand that everyday words are made up of sounds and that we can pull these words apart e.g. 'cat' can be separated into /c/ /a/ /t/. We can then put these sounds back together again to form a recognisable word, so the sounds /c/ /a/ /t/ gives us the word 'cat'. Names can be good examples to start with. If you are not sure how to break a word up into sounds, read the word, close your eyes, and slowly say the sounds in the word to yourself e.g. **Emily** would be /e/ /m/ /i/ /l/ /ee/.

Reading

When you are reading a book with your child, do all the things you would normally do, such as talking about the story, discussing the characters, predicting what is going to happen next, and so on. In Reception, whenever you come to a two- or three-sound word which contains sounds your child has learnt, ask them to read the word by saying the sounds and listening for the word – remember to use the phrase **'say the sounds, read the word'**. When ready, your child will move onto reading more complex words, such as words with four and five sounds e.g. 'lamp' and 'crisp'.

In Year 1 and 2, the children will be taught spellings for sounds that use two or more letters e.g. <ow>, <oa> and <oe> represent the sound /oe/ in 'slow', 'boat' and 'toe'. Encourage the children to **'say the sounds, read the word'** looking for these spellings to help them read new and less familiar words.

Practising at home

As part of their homework, your child will bring home lists of words which will contain the sound spellings that they have been learning. These are for them to practise 'blending' to read (not as sight words). You can support your child by helping them to practise as much as possible, reminding them to **'say the sounds, read the word'**.

Your child will also bring home reading books which contain the sounds they have been recently learnt at school. Your child will have read the book with their class teacher in the previous week, so they should be familiar with the sounds they encounter, but please help them where it is needed. Through **'repeat reading'**, sharing the same book again and again, the children will become more familiar and more confident with spotting the sounds they have learnt and reading new words.

If you have any further questions about Sounds-Write, our approach to phonics or how to help at home, please contact your child's class teacher.

Thank you for your support.



Guide to the alphabetic code

/a/ as in '**cat**'

/b/ as in '**big**'

/c/ as in '**cup**'

/d/ as in '**dog**'

/e/ as in '**leg**'

/f/ as in '**fun**'

/g/ as in '**get**'

/h/ as in '**hen**'

/i/ as in '**pin**'

/j/ as in '**jug**'

/k/ as in '**kit**'

/l/ as in '**leg**'

/m/ as in '**map**'

/n/ as in '**not**'

/o/ as in '**pop**'

/p/ as in '**pen**'

/q/ as in '**queen**'

/r/ as in '**run**'

/s/ as in '**sip**'

/t/ as in '**ten**'

/u/ as in '**bun**'

/v/ as in '**vet**'

/w/ as in '**wig**'

/x/ as in '**fox**'

/y/ as in '**yes**'

/z/ as in '**zip**'

*Double consonants

<ff> as in '**sniff**'

<ll> as in '**fill**'

<ss> as in '**miss**'