



'Déan do dhícheall' - 'Do your best'

Dear Parent/ Guardian,

We are delighted to inform you that our school is now moving on from traditional spelling books **from 2<sup>nd</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> class.** Thanks to Mr.Duggan and Ms.Dowling for successfully introducing and piloting this new programme early last year.

Spelling books have been used for over 150 years in the education system. These traditional books are generic and do not provide differentiated learning for your child. They do not consider your child's individual spelling ability. They simply set a very general standard, based on whatever class your child is in. Traditional spelling books endorse a "one size fits all" approach.

The revolutionary *Spellings for Me* interactive programme, is completely the opposite. **Everything is individualised for your child- essentially a tailor-made spelling programme. Your child's spellings will be solely based on the words that they do not know how to spell, based at their own level.** No two children will have the same spellings, as no two children are the same.

The teaching and learning of spellings have evolved, but until now, there has been no resource to facilitate this. We are very excited to embrace more efficient methods of teaching and learning spellings that *Spellings for Me* will bring. We are confident that your child will be too!

*Spellings for Me* incorporates meaningful, enjoyable activities for your child, that are proven to improve children's spellings. *Spellings for Me* embraces continuous learning and continuous assessment throughout your child's whole spelling journey through primary school.

If you would like to see their progress, you can log into their own profile. Here you will see:

- (i) What level your child is on by seeing how many yellow ticks he/she has.
- (ii) How many words he/she already knew how to spell by looking at the 'Certificates' section.

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- (iii) How many words they have 'mastered'. Mastered words are words that the child has spelled wrong but has since learned them and spelled them correctly on the online test. You can view how many Mastered Words he/she has in the 'Certificates' section.


Children can be retested again and again on these words to make sure they really know them. Your child will earn certificates, which are also available on their profile. This is a great way to celebrate their achievements at their own level.

*"Torbe 1993 states that 'spelling instruction should always acknowledge the uniqueness of the learner and so an individualised approach is always best.' This supports Anderson & Lapp (1988) who argued that an individualised approach to spelling is most successful. In Ireland, the traditional approach to learning spellings is usually whole class teaching (a one size fits all approach). It is not best practice to have every child in the class learning the same list of words."* (Brendan Culligan 1997)

If you want to learn more about Spellings for Me, you can visit their website [www.spellingsforme.ie](http://www.spellingsforme.ie). Here there are an abundance of videos and information explaining the programme. They also have a downloadable 'Parent Guide' to help you support your child in spellings. At long last, we have a totally meaningful way of teaching spellings. *Spellings for Me* will revolutionise the way children learn spellings and what's more, they will have fun!

### Instructions on how to log in

<b>Option 1:</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Go to <a href="http://www.spellingsforme.ie">www.spellingsforme.ie</a></li> <li>2. Click 'Login'</li> <li>3. Change your URL by clicking ' change'</li> <li>4. Type in your school personal URL (ours is <b>enter school personal URL here</b>)</li> <li>5. Click 'save'</li> <li>6. Enter your username and password</li> </ol>
<b>Option 2:</b>	<p>Our personal school link to Spellings for Me is:  <a href="https://yourschoolpersonalURLhere.spellingsforme.ie/account/login">https://yourschoolpersonalURLhere.spellingsforme.ie/account/login</a>              With this link you only need to enter your child's username and password.</p> <p><i>*You may wish to put this link on your school website.</i></p>

		Traditional Spelling Workbooks
Children's spelling are differentiated according to individual ability. (Tailor made spellings for each child)		
Children are challenged appropriately according to their ability not simply their age or class.		
Exercises included are best for learning and based on words the child doesn't know how to spell.		
Spellings that are most common and relevant to the child will be mastered first before moving on to the more difficult, less frequently used words.		
Individualised tests for each child.		
Tests can be self corrected by the child and checked instantly to see if they are marked correctly.		
Incorrect words are stored for the children to work on in future.		
Spelling is linked to writing. Spelling tests and vocabulary pertaining to each of the writing genres are included.		
Dictation sentences corresponded to each spelling list/level.		
Different variations of testing- Dictation Sentences tests/ Spelling tests/ Learning Words tests/ Mastered Words tests/ Writing Genres tests.		
Children can test themselves on words they have previously mastered.		
Learning is based on a visual approach-identifying pictures, letter strings, mnemonics in words the child specifically doesn't know how to spell.		
Children who are struggling with spelling (or may have a specific learning difficulty in relation to spelling) are very apparent to the teacher.		
Section specifically studying etymology included.		

## Research on Spelling

Self-correcting their spelling and dictation has proven successful for improving spelling performance.

Viel-Ruma et al., 2007, Alber and Walshe, 2004

LSCWC as advocated by Peters (1985).

A multi-sensory approach is advocated by Alderman & Green, 2011; Masterson & Apel, 2006; Wanzek et al. 2006.

Self-correction, a procedure in which students learn to spell by comparing a misspelled word to a model and then rewriting it correctly, has been identified as the most critical element contributing to spelling achievement (McGuffin, Martz, & Heron, 1997; McNeish, Heron, & Okyere, 1992; Okyere et al., 1997; Wirtz, Gardner, Weber, & Bullara, 1996).

The two main functions of assessment are to assist and improve learning. Assessment of learning and assessment for learning are ongoing processes and the foundation stones of effective teaching but only if the test findings are acted upon. (Culligan 2009)

Short term gains of rote memorisation are not permanent and soon diminish over time (Culligan 2009)

From a professional viewpoint, a weekly spellings test tells the teacher nothing that s/he does not already know about the children in her/his care. It is more beneficial to judge spelling improvement from their own personal or creative writing. (Culligan 2009)

Spelling instruction must be well planned, individualised as much as possible and effectively implemented. (Anderson and Lapp 1988)

As already stated, I believe the Friday test is of very little benefit to the child, teacher or parent. The weekly spelling test has its roots in tradition rather than in educational theory or research. (Culligan 2009)

It is also true that many parents expect a weekly spelling test. This is a throwback to their own school days and they expect similar for their children. It would be far more beneficial if good practice was explained to parents and if they were shown how to help children get these words into long-term memory. (Culligan 2009)

Although individualised reading programmes are now a fairly common part of the language curriculum, individual spelling needs of children do not seem to have been afforded similar attention. There is plenty of evidence in research literature to indicate that the real solution to spelling difficulties lies in individual help (Culligan 2009)

# Carrigeen NS

[www.carrigeenns.com](http://www.carrigeenns.com)

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