

What to expect in Year 1

Light-touch learning and plenty of fun!

Leaving Reception behind and moving into Year 1 can feel like a big step for both children and their parents. Your child's Year 1 teacher is there to make this transition easier for everyone by supporting the children (and their parents!) in their next learning step. Year 1 teachers remark about how the children return from their summer break looking taller and wiser and ready for a challenge.

A good school will make the transition into Year 1 a smooth one. The children will still be learning through play, they will still be exploring, discovering and making plenty of use of their role-play corner. Your child's will be more structured than it was in Reception and they may have to sit at a table for a little longer than they are used to, but they will still also be learning in a variety of ways; while moving, exploring outdoors, in groups, on the carpet or walking around the school!

What will my child do in Year 1?

Your child will have left the EYFS behind in reception, although some goals may be carried on with them as they move into Year 1. This will be their first year of the National Curriculum. Like all year groups, Year 1 has government statutory schemes of learning to follow. The children will be assessed at the end of the year to see if they have reached the expected standard. All children are supported in order to achieve this and are given extra support and guidance if needed.

There is a Year 1 phonics screening test in June/July, which helps your child's teacher to identify if your child is secure in sounding out and blending graphemes. It also detects if they can read phonically decodable words. Don't be worried about this test. Your child's teacher will be assessing your child daily and will have identified any areas they need to focus on well before the test date.

Phonics

Phonics is a big part of Year 1. Your child will continue to expand on their knowledge of phonics and will probably surprise you with just how quickly they develop their reading. They will continue to do phonics sessions, just like they did in Reception. These are fun, pacy sessions which involve games and tasks. They will learn tricky words, spelling rules and how to sound out and blend to aid them with their reading and writing. They will be encouraged to 'have a go' at

What to expect in Year 1

spelling when writing independently, by phonetically sounding out words. The teacher may well ask them to 'write it like it sounds' and, as the weeks go by, they will learn the correct sounds to replace those guesses.

Topics and stories

Your child will be learning through a topic this year, which makes lessons relevant and exciting. They will learn English through all sorts of wonderful stories and they will also act out stories that may be familiar to you at home. They will plan and write their own wonderful creative stories, design posters and leaflets. They will learn to write in sentences and to use exciting language — all while improving their handwriting. You will probably be amazed at their development on your first parents' evening!

Maths skills

Maths lessons this year tend to be enjoyable, with plenty of hands-on activities. Your Year 1 child will count with objects and work in groups to explore shapes and pattern. Now that they are using numbers over 20, they will learn to use a 100 square to help with their adding and subtracting. Number bonds will also be reinforced. They will learn to count forwards, backwards, in 2s, 5s, 10s, 20s, and they will double and halve. They will do maths inside and outdoors and, because we work in a very cross-curricular way in Year 1, he/she will be talking about maths during other subjects, for example; while measuring ingredients for cooking (DT), drawing tables to record experiments in science or drawing maps in geography.

Beyond literacy and numeracy

There are a wide range of topics covered in Year 1, and your child will undoubtedly have their personal favourites. Some of the Year 1 activities include: experiments (science) product design (DT); learning the history of things (history) and about the local area we live in (geography); dancing, playing games and using gym apparatus (PE); painting, drawing and more creative processes (art). We also develop their social skills and empathy for each other during RE and circle times. Year 1 is an important year for your child's increasing independence. The days are so varied and busy, the hours just fly by!

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How can I help my child in Year 1?

Carry on reading

Reading at home with your child is so important. It helps them to develop their learning in lots of areas. Your child's teacher will probably send a reading book home each evening, and, apart from spellings (and the odd bit of research), this is likely to be the only homework your child will get this year.

You may not always have time to read the whole book (schools understand home life is busy — lots of teachers are parents too) but just a few pages a day can increase their confidence and get them into the routine of practising and applying their phonic knowledge. Sometimes parents say 'Oh my child wanted to read a book from home'. As long as they are reading, that's fantastic. Most children this age really love to read new and familiar stories.

Keep everyday learning light

Otherwise, try to keep any home learning light, and don't push it if they seem tired or reluctant. School is exhausting for a child in Year 1. They are learning so many new things at school, and may well also be starting to join activities after school as well. If you do want to do more than reading and spellings, ask your child to write an email to their auntie, count out the cutlery for dinner or help you measure up for a new blind. Disguise the learning. They won't want to sit at a table and focus quietly after such a busy day. Remember, your child is only 5 or 6 and still so young. There is plenty of time for them to worry about homework ... in the future.