

A Guide for Parents of Reception, Y1 and Y2 Children

Phonics Screening Check

What is Phonics?

Children begin to learn phonics (sounds) in Early Years, both Nursery and Reception. When children begin learning sounds, these sounds are used to read and spell words. Children can then see the purpose of learning sounds. By the end of Year 1, most children will have consolidated all sounds up to Phase 5.

For this reason, the first initial sounds that are taught are 's', 'a', 't', 'p', 'i', 'n'. These can immediately be blended for reading to make simple CVC words (consonant, vowel, consonant) e.g. sat, pin. Children then develop segmenting for writing skills; breaking the word into sounds to spell it out.

What is the Phonics Screening Check?

Children in Year 1 throughout the country will all be taking part in a phonics screening check during the same week in June. Children in Year 2 will also take the check if they did not achieve the expected standard when in Year 1 or they have not taken the test before.

The phonics screening check is designed to confirm whether individual children have learnt sufficient phonic decoding and blending skills in line with age expectation.

What Happens During the Test?

The test contains 40 words. Each child will sit one to one and read each word aloud to a teacher. The test will take approximately 10 minutes per child, although all children are different and will complete the check at their own pace. The list of words the children read is a combination of 20 real words and 20 pseudo words (nonsense words). The children will have had plenty of practice before and often enjoy reading the individual words to an adult.

Pseudo Words (Nonsense words)

The pseudo words will be shown to your child with a picture of an alien to convey it is a pseudo word and children will be made aware of this prior to undertaking the check. Pseudo words are included because they will be new to all pupils; they do not favour children with a good vocabulary knowledge or visual memory of words.

Reporting to you

By the end of the summer term we will report your child's results and confirm if your child has achieved the expected standard. Children who do not achieve this standard will retake the test when they are in Year 2.

How Are The Results Used?

Results from the check will be used as an assessment tool to support your child's learning.

***Read as much as possible to
and with your child.***

How Can I Help My Child At Home?

- Play lots of sound and listening games with your child, focussing on what sound they can hear first, next and last in a word.
- Read as much as possible to and with your child. There is nothing more valuable!
- Encourage and praise – get them to have a 'good guess'. Ask, does that sound right?
- If your child is struggling to decode a word, help them by encouraging them to say each sound (segment) in the word from left to right.
- Blend the sounds by pointing to each letter, e.g. /c/ in cat, or the letter group, e.g. /ng in sing. Next, move your finger under the whole word as you say it.
- Discuss the meaning of words if your child does not know what they have read.
- Ask your child what sounds do they already know in the word? Can they spot a word within a word?
- Ask your child's class teacher if you have any questions.