

The Phonics Screening Check

What is Phonics?

Phonics is a way of teaching children to read quickly and skilfully. They are taught how to:

- Recognise the sounds that individual letters make
- Identify the sounds that different combinations of letters make-such as 'sh' or 'oo'
- Blend these sounds together from left to right to make a word

Children can then use this knowledge to 'decode' new words that they hear or see. This is the first important step in learning to read. The children are taught to read words by blending, which means pushing all the sounds together to make a word. The children are taught to spell words by segmenting, which means sounding out words, using their 'phoneme fingers', and writing down the sounds they can hear.

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 required result when in Year 1. The phonics screening check is designed to confirm whether individual children have learnt phonic decoding and blending skills to an appropriate standard.

What Happens During the Screening?

There are two sections in this 40-word check made up of real and pseudo or nonsense words. The check assesses phonics skills and knowledge learned through Reception and Year 1. Your child will read the words for their teacher and will probably complete the check in one sitting of about 10 minutes.



(Nonsense / Pseudo / Alien Words)

These are words that are phonically decodable but are not actual words with an associated meaning e.g. brip, snorb. Pseudo words are included in the check specifically to assess whether your child can decode a word using phonics skills and not their memory. Children will come across these pseudo words in their daily phonics sessions and often find reading them fun.

Reporting to Parents

By the end of the summer term all schools must report each child's results to their parents as well as to the local authority. They will also confirm if the child has met the standard threshold. Children who do not achieve the expected level will retake the test when they are in Year 2.

How Can I Help My Child at Home?

- ~ Read as much as possible to and with your child.
- ~ Encourage and praise.
- ~ If your child is struggling to decode a word, help them by encouraging them to say each sound in the word from left to right.
- ~ Blend the sounds by pointing to each one, e.g. /ng/ in sing, /ee/ in been and then putting them together to read the word.