

Phonics Screening Check

YEAR 1 PHONICS SCREENING 2014 INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE FOR PARENTS

At school we teach your children phonics. Our approach to learning phonics in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 is through using Letters and Sounds: Principles and Practice of High Quality Phonics. We also follow a kinaesthetic approach in Reception where children are given an action to help them learn each different sound. This is an effective and interactive way for young learners to recall phonemes.

Letters and Sounds provides us with games and resources to support our teaching of phonics. It aims to build pupils' speaking and listening skills, as well as prepare pupils to learn to read, by developing their phonic knowledge and skills. It sets out a detailed programme for teaching phonic skills, with the aim of pupils becoming fluent readers by age seven.

What is the phonics screening check?

The national phonics screening check was introduced in 2012 to all Year 1 pupils. It is a short, statutory assessment to ensure that children are making sufficient progress in the phonics skills to read words and are on track to become fluent readers who can enjoy reading for pleasure and for learning.

The check is not about passing or failing but checking appropriate progress is being made. If children do not reach the required standard, then we will be in touch to discuss plans and offer additional, tailored support to ensure that your child improves their reading skills. Children progress at different speeds so not reaching the threshold score does not necessarily mean there is a serious problem. Your child will re-sit the check the following summer term.

Who is it for?

We will be able to administer the check during the week of the 16th to 20th June 2014. If a child is absent during that week, the school can administer the check up until Friday 27th June 2014.

How is the check structured?

The check consists of a list of 40 words, half real words and half non- words, the non - words will be shown to your child with a picture of a monster. This not only makes the check a bit more fun, but provides the children with a context for the nonsense word which is independent from any existing vocabulary they may have.

Is it stressful to test such young children?

The assessment will be age-appropriate, with children sitting with Mrs Ferrier and reading one-to-one. It should be an enjoyable activity for children which will take no more than 10 minutes.

Does a teacher have to carry out the screening check?

Yes, it is important that a teacher carries out the check with the pupils in our school.

Why are non-words included in the screening check?

Non-words are an established assessment method of many schools, and are included in many phonics programmes. They are included because they will be new to all pupils, so there won't be a bias to those with a good vocabulary knowledge or visual memory of words. This is a test of a child's ability to decode using phonics. Children who can read non-words should have the skills to decode almost any unfamiliar word.

How long does the check take?

Every child is different but in most cases the check should take approximately 10 minutes per child.

How will the results from the phonics screening check be used?

We have to inform parents towards the end of the summer term in Year 1 of their child's results. We will let you know in our end of year reporting how your child did and if there is anything that you need to do to help your child improve. If your child does not reach the required level, we will tell you what provision we are going to be making at the end of Year 1 and beginning of Year 2 to help this be addressed and also how you can support us in developing this key skill.

What happens if a child struggles with the screening check?

The screening check will identify children who have phonic decoding skills below the level expected for the end of Year 1 and who therefore need extra help. We will then provide extra help at the end of Year 1 and in Year 2 and children will then be able to re-take the assessment in Year 2.

If your child requires extra help then we will inform you of this. As parents you will continue to be kept well informed of your child's progress in all aspects of reading including phonic development in Year 2. This will be specifically commented on during parent consultations.

How can I help my child?

In school we are continually checking our children's phonic development within our approach to the assessment of reading. This screening forms part of our overall assessment procedure. However, there are a number of things that parents can do to support early reading skill development.

- Let your child see you enjoying reading yourself – they are influenced by you and what you value!
- Immerse your child in a love of reading: share books and magazines with your child, take them to the library to choose books, read to them regularly, point out texts around you, eg in the street etc
- Make time for your child to read school books to you regularly – encourage them by pointing to the words and ask them about the story they are reading
- Use phonics play www.phonicsplay.co.uk . This is a website which is packed with interactive phonics games to help children to learn to hear sounds and blend sounds. We use this in school and some aspects of it are free to use at home.
- Help your child to practice reading the pseudo words which will be sent home.
- Communicate with your child's teacher through their reading record

Remember! We are here to help your child to do their very best and develop a fluency and love of reading.

What shall I do if my child is struggling to decode?

- Say each sound in the word from left to right.
- Blend the sounds by pointing to each letter, i.e. /b/ in bat, or letter group, i.e. /igh/ in sigh, as you say the sound, then run your finger under the whole word as you say it.
- Talk about the meaning if your child does not understand the word they have read.
- Work at your child's pace and have FUN!