



26th January 2024

Dear Parent / Carers

Phonics Screening Check

As you may already be aware children in Year 1 and children in Year 2 who did not pass their phonics screening check last year will carry out their reading assessment in June. The phonics screening check is a statutory reading check that all Year 1 children take during a particular week in June. The check is designed to assess if each child has reached the age appropriate standard of decoding by the end of Year 1.

The check is completed by the child on a 1:1 basis with a teacher. It usually takes 5-10 minutes for the child to complete. However, there is no time limit and the child can take as long as they need. The teacher can also allow the child a rest break if it is necessary. The children will have worked on similar activities in their phonics lessons and will be familiar with the format. The only difference will be that the teacher will be unable to help the children on this occasion.

What does the check consist of?

The check contains 40 words - 20 real and 20 pseudo words (nonsense words). The words are presented to the child in the form of a booklet with 4 large words per page. The words gradually get more difficult from 2 and 3 'sound' words such as 'it' and 'vap', to longer words with more complex 'sounds', such as the a-e sound in the word 'same'. The nonsense words are presented with a picture of an alien. This tells the child that this word will not make sense to them. It will instead be the name of the kind of alien. This has been added so that the child does not attempt to turn the words into real words.

It is expected that, by the end of year 1, children are able to recognise the grapheme-phoneme correspondences up to the end of set 3 (Read Write Inc sounds), segment words (split into sounds) and blend them back together to be able to read them. For the last few years, the expected standard for the screening check has been set at 32 out of 40 words correctly decoded. However, this can change and the Department for Education does not release the 'pass' mark until a few weeks after the children have completed the check. Children who do not meet the expected standard in year 1, complete the check again in year 2.

How can you help?

- The most important thing you can do, to help support your child with their reading, is to read with them. Listening to your child read is important but reading to them is just as important. If they hear you read, they are hearing how to pronounce unfamiliar words and are developing new vocabulary.
- Along with this letter, you will receive sound flash cards, words and practise phonics screening checks. Please access these at home regularly for short periods of time. Practise speed reading the sounds/words.

· When you listen to your child read, allow them time to attempt to decode unfamiliar words themselves, before stepping in to help them. If you find your child is struggling to decode a word, you can help by asking them to find the 'special friends' or by pointing out the sounds (not the letters) in a word. For example, the word 'keep' would be 'k-ee-p' and 'light' would be 'l-igh-t'.

· When you listen to your child read, pick out words from the book and ask them to say which graphemes/'special friends' (letters) are making a certain phoneme (sound). For example, the 'ee' sound (phoneme) in 'reaching' is represented by the letters (grapheme) 'ea'.

· If you have access to the internet, there are many free phonics games the children can play.

· Keep reading activities short. It is much better to read little and often, than to read a lot infrequently!

Attached to this letter you will find some phonics sound cards and activities that you may wish to use at home. The phonics sound cards can be cut up and used as part of a game, or simply for your child to recall the sounds.

Thank you for your continued support and please do ask your child's class teacher if you need any support with this or if you have any questions.

Yours sincerely



Lauren Hay
KS1 Phase Leader

