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23<sup>rd</sup> May 2022

## National Phonics Screening Check

Dear Parent / Carer,

I am writing to inform you about the National Phonics Screening Test which will take place in Year 1 during the **week beginning 7<sup>th</sup> June 2022 (6<sup>th</sup> is an INSET day)**. This letter aims to explain this process, in addition to providing you with ideas to help your child with phonics at home.

### Who takes the test?

All children in year 1. The children will have an opportunity to redo the check in the autumn term of year 2 if they do not meet the standard this time round.

If for any reason, we feel that there is a valid reason why your child should not take the test, your child's class teacher will discuss this with you. Please note, this is only done in exceptional circumstances and your child may still be eligible to take the retake in the autumn term.

### What is phonics?

Phonics is a way of teaching children to read.

They are taught how to:

- Recognise the sounds that each individual letter makes
- Identify the sounds that different combinations of letters make e.g. sh and oo
- Blend these sounds together from left to right to make a word.

Children can then use this knowledge to segment and blend new words that they hear or see.

### Why phonics?

Research shows that when phonics is taught in a structured way – starting with the easiest sounds and progressing through to the most complex – it is the most effective way of teaching young children to read.

### What is the phonics screening check?

The government introduced an annual phonics screening check several years ago. This will further inform our continual assessment of the children's phonic knowledge and the results of the check will be shared with parents/carers. It comprises of a list of 40 words that children read one-to-one with a teacher. The list is a combination of both real and made up, non-words which rely purely on using phonics to decode. The non-words are words that have been made up and will be shown with a picture of an imaginary creature to help them. The phonics screening check

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will take place on a one to one but the children will largely be unaware of it being a test and have already participated in some practice ones.

### What are nonsense words?

Your child will be told during the check which words are nonsense words (that he/she will not have seen before). Your child will be familiar with this because we already use 'nonsense-words' when teaching phonics in school. Nonsense-words are important to include because words such as 'vap' or 'jound' are new to all children. Children cannot read the non-words by using their memory or vocabulary; they have to use their decoding skills. This is a fair way to assess their ability to decode. All children are individuals and develop at different rates. The screening check is another way to ensure that teachers understand which children need extra help with phonic decoding.

### Helping your child with phonics

Phonics works best when children are given plenty of encouragement and learn to enjoy reading and books. Parents play a very important part in helping with this.

Some simple steps to help your child learn to read through phonics:

Step 1 – identify digraphs and use sound buttons under each phoneme

Step 2 – sound out the letters (say each sound separately)

Step 3 – read the word (blend sounds together)

- Use the speed sounds chart. Point to a sound and ask your child to say the sound.
- Choose 4 sounds a week to display at home that your child is unfamiliar with.
- You can then highlight these sounds when you read with your child.
- With all books, encourage your child to 'sound out' unfamiliar words and then blend the sounds together from left to right rather than looking at the pictures to guess. Once your child has read an unfamiliar word you can talk about what it means and help him or her to follow the story.
- Try to make time to read with your child **every day**. Grandparents and older brother or sisters can help, too. Encourage your child to blend the sounds all the way through a word.
- Word games like 'I-spy' can also be an enjoyable way of teaching children about sounds and letters. You can also encourage your child to read words from your shopping list or road signs to practise phonics.
- Invest in a phonics game like 'Teach my Monster how to read'  
<https://www.teachyourmonstertoread.com/> The PC version is completely free.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me or your child's class teacher.



Mrs Megan Carter  
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