



11th November 2020

Dear Parent / Carer

I am writing to inform you about the National Phonics Screening Test which will take place this half term for all Year 2 children.

Who takes the test?

Usually, all children in Year 1 take the test. However, the cancellation of the phonics screening check in June 2020 meant incoming Year 2 pupils did not take the check in Year 1. In the 2020/21 academic year only, it is statutory for schools to administer a past version of the phonics screening check to Year 2 pupils during the second half the 2020 Autumn term and return results to the LA.

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?

As you already know, the government introduced an annual phonics screening check for Year 1's every year. 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 in the end of year report.

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.

Examples of real words

*meet plan ships call
grit trains shin week
handy scrape trumpet surprise
newt slide brains finger*

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Examples of non - words

tox blan elt geck thazz sclak

steck clinp quemp shoik thene blust

jound strupe snemp stroft

The children will largely be unaware of it and will enjoy some one-to-one time with Mrs Sodhi and Miss Arshad.

What are non-words?

Your child will be told during the check which words are non-words (that he/she will not have seen before). Your child will be familiar with this because we already use 'non-words' or 'alien words' when teaching phonics in school. Non-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.

After the check

We will tell you about your child's progress in phonics and how he or she has done in the screening check as part of the end of year report. If your child has found the check difficult, we will also tell you what support we have put in place to help him or her improve. All children are individuals and develop at different rates. The screening check ensures that teachers understand which children need extra help with phonic decoding. If your child does not reach the required level, they will be re-tested in Year 3 and extra phonics/ extra support put in place.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Miss L Swann

Phonics Lead, EYFS and KS1 coordinator