



Year 1 Phonics screening test information for Parents (DFE)

What is the phonics screening check?

The phonics screening check is a quick check of your child's phonics knowledge. It helps your school confirm whether your child has made the expected progress.

In 2017 the check will take place during the **week commencing Monday 12th June.**

How does the check work?

Your child will sit with their teacher and be asked to read 40 words aloud. Your child may have read some of the words before, while others will be completely new. The check will contain a mix of real words and 'non-words' (or 'nonsense words' such as 'vap' or 'jound'). Non-words are included because they 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.

The check normally takes just a few minutes to complete and there is no time limit. If your child is struggling, the teacher will stop the check. The check is carefully designed not to be stressful for your child. If you were notified last year that your child had not met the required standard to pass the test in year 1, they will be retaking the test again in year 2.

What is phonics?

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

- recognise the sounds that each individual letter makes;
- identify the sounds that different combinations of letters make - such as 'sh' or 'oo'; and
- blend these sounds together from left to right to make a word.

Children can then use this knowledge to 'de-code' new words that they hear or see. This is the first important step in learning to read.

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.

If you would like to find out more about phonics, visit www.education.gov.uk/schools/teachingandlearning/pedagogy/phonics or search for 'phonics' on the Department for Education website at www.education.gov.uk.

After the check

You will be told about your child's progress in phonics and how he or she has done in the screening check **by the end of this half term.** If your child has found the check difficult, you will be told what support has been put in place to help him or her improve. You might like to ask how you can support your child to take the next step in reading. **Please remember: All children are individuals and develop at different rates.**





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:

- Help your child to learn the letter sounds, key words or phoneme frame games that are sent home.
- You can then highlight these sounds/key words when you read with your child. Teaching how sounds match with letters is likely to start with individual letters such as 's', 'a' and 't' and then will move on to two-letter sounds such as 'ee', 'ch' and 'ck'.
- 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.
- Your child's teacher will also be able to suggest books with the right level of phonics for your child. These books are often called 'decodable readers' because the story is written with words made up of the letters your child has learnt. Your child will be able to work out new words from their letters and sounds, rather than just guessing.
- Try to make time to read with your child every day. Grandparents and older brothers 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.

Your child's reading record could be used to communicate if they have enjoyed a particular book and have shown problems or successes with sounds/ key words or games either at home or at school.

If you need any further help or guidance, please do not hesitate to contact your child's class teacher or Mrs Taylor (Phonics Leader)

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Thank you for your support

KS1 Staff

