

Phonics Screen Check

Overview

- The check was introduced in 2012 as a compulsory assessment nationally. It tests children's ability to decode words using a single method, phonics.
- We acknowledge that children learn to read through a combination of methods, with phonics just being one of a set of tools at their disposal.



What is the Phonic Screening Check?

- It is designed to check children's phonic skills, to make sure they are working with what is age appropriate
- It is undertaken in June each year during a specified week. This year it will start on the **8th June 2026**.
- The pass mark is set annually and has been 32/40 in previous years.
- Children who fail it in Y1 receive support and sit it again in Y2.

What does the check look like?

- It consists of 40 words
- 20 are real words and 20 are pseudo words - these are referred to as 'nonsense words' in school and children are familiar with these since Reception.
- The words are clearly presented in groups of 4
- Real and pseudo words are not mixed
- Pseudo words are clearly indicated by an alien picture
- The words increase in difficulty as you go through it
- The words use sounds the children have already learnt in Reception and Year 1 so there will be no surprises and nothing the children have not already been taught in school.

Sample pages

Practice sheet: Real words

in

at

beg

sum

Practice sheet: Pseudo words

ot



vap



osk



ect



How is the check administered?

- The check is done on a 1:1 basis
- It will be administered by their class teacher, who they are familiar and feel comfortable with.
- Will be administered in a quiet room so the child can concentrate and feel comfortable.
- No time limit - children take as long as they need
- Teachers have a very specific set of guidelines to follow
- Children's answers are recorded as right or wrong
- Children do not get told their score

Technical Terms

- **2 letters, 1 sound:** a combination of two letters (grapheme) representing one sound (phoneme) like 'sh' in shop.
- **3 letters, 1 sound:** a combination of three letters representing one sound, like 'ere' in there.
- **Blending:** hearing individual phonemes (sounds) and being able to merge them together to make a word.
- **Segmenting:** using knowledge of sounds to break it down order to write the word, c/a/t .

What can parents do?

- Reinforce 'sounding out' and 'blending' for single words when practising and use the phrase 'say the sounds and read the word'.
- Read daily with your child
- Encourage your child to spot sounds in words as you read to them or they read to you



What happens if a child fails?

- First we look at how the child is doing in phonics and other areas of school work. They may already be receiving extra support if we think that it is needed. If not we will consider whether that is appropriate.
- It might just be that they didn't do well in the check and will monitor to see if there is a problem.
- They will receive extra phonic support in Year 2 and will take the test again this time next year.
- **Phonics doesn't end in Year 1.** Children in this school still do phonics daily in Y2, Y3 and it will then be part of their spelling lessons in KS2.

The Phonic Check week

- Try not to talk about the check as a 'test' to fail or pass, it is just something we are all going to do in Year 1.
- Your child will do the check at any point during that week, so it could be the start or end. This allows teachers to take their time and keep it as calm and relaxed as possible for the children.
- Try to have a good start to the day and get enough sleep that week 😊
- They will not know their result. You will get the results with their end of year report.



Special circumstances

No two children are the same, so everything will be put in place to ensure your child completes the check to the best they can.

There are some special circumstances that arise depending on different needs, so that will be discussed with you privately should that be applicable.

We would ask that your child is in school for the week of the check, but if something arises where they won't be, we are able to catch absent children up the week after only. Once your child has done the check, they cannot redo it.

Ways to support at home

Free training for parents in Sounds Write concepts / theory - you just sign up with your email:

https://www.udemy.com/course/help-your-child-to-read-and-write/?srsltid=AfmBOorIkbgCg8g_gb6PDnQq7Ho2csJI00K0zIDu2rthyNxwipmIzPaK

Sounds Write parent support information, with free downloadable books and information on purchasing phonics decodable books:

<https://sounds-write.co.uk/support-for-parents-and-carers/>