



A Guide for Parents...

Year Two

Phonics Screening Check



What is Phonics?

Children begin to learn phonics (sounds) in Early Years. Once children begin learning sounds, these sounds are used to read and spell words.

The first initial sounds that are taught are 's', 'a', 't', 'p', 'i', 'n'. These can immediately be blended for reading to make simple CVC words (consonant, vowel, consonant) e.g. sat, pin. Children then develop segmenting for writing skills; breaking the word into sounds to spell it out.

What is the Phonics Screening Check?

Due to COVID-19 cancelling the phonics check last year, Children in Year 2 throughout the country will all be taking part in a phonics screening check during December. Children in Year 2 will also retake the check in June if they do not achieve the required result in December.

The phonics screening check is designed to confirm whether individual children have learnt sufficient phonic decoding and blending skills to an appropriate standard.

What Happens During the Test?

The test contains 40 words. Each child will sit one to one and read each word aloud to a teacher. The test will take approximately 10 minutes per child, although all children are different and will complete the check at their own pace. The list of words the children read is a combination of 20 real words and 20 pseudo words (nonsense words).

Pseudo Words (Nonsense words)

The pseudo words will be shown to your child with a picture of an alien. This provides the children with a context for the pseudo word which is independent from any existing vocabulary they may have. Pseudo words are included because they will be new to all pupils; they do not favour children with a good vocabulary knowledge or visual memory of words.

How Are The Results Used?

Results from the check will be used by schools to analyse their own performance and for Ofsted to use in inspections. Parents will be informed of their child's result after the check has taken place.

“Read as much as possible to and with your child.”

How Can I Help My Child At Home?

- Play lots of sound and listening games with your child.
- Read as much as possible to and with your child.
- Encourage and praise – get them to have a 'good guess'.
- If your child is struggling to decode a word, help them by encouraging them to say each sound in the word from left to right.
- Blend the sounds by pointing to each letter, e.g. /c/ in cat, or the letter group, e.g. /ng in sing. Next move your finger under the whole word as you say it.
- Discuss the meaning of words if your child does not know what they have read.
- Online games: Teach a Monster to Read, Phonics Play and Oxford Owl.