

# **PHONICS SCREENING CHECK**

**A GUIDE FOR PARENTS**

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# WHAT IS PHONICS?

- Children begin to learn phonics (sounds) in early years, both nursery and reception.
- We follow a scheme called 'Letters and Sounds'.
- This scheme groups the sounds into Phases.
- The children learn sets of letters/sounds as they progress through this scheme.
- Once familiar with the letters/sounds, they begin to blend the sounds to make words.

# WHAT IS THE PHONICS SCREENING CHECK?

- Children in Year 1 throughout the country will all be taking part in a phonics screening check during the same week in June.
- Children in Year 2 will also take the check if they did not achieve the required result when in Year 1 or they have not taken the test before.
- Headteachers should decide whether it is appropriate for each of their pupils to take the phonics screening check.
- The phonics screening check is designed to confirm whether individual children have learnt 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.

# REPORTING TO PARENTS

- By the end of the summer term all schools must report each child's results to their parents.
- They will also confirm if the child has met the standard threshold.
- Children who do not achieve the expected level will retake the test when they are in Year 2.

# 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.



# 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 one, e.g. /c/ in cat, /p/ in pat, /ng/ in sing, /ee/ in been. 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.

- **Other activities to do at home with your child:**
- Google '*Letters and Sounds games*' – interactive games for all phases
- Google '*Letters and Sounds resources*' – worksheets and other resources that you may find useful
- Google '*Year 1 phonics screening test resources*' – *lots of mock tests to do with your child*
- *Please – KEEP READING WITH YOUR CHILD*