



Year One Phonics Screening Check

Guide for Parents

What is Phonics?

Phonics is the process of teaching children how to read and write. It helps children hear, identify and use different sounds (phonemes) that distinguish one word from another in the English language.

Once children begin learning sounds, these sounds are used orally to identify and make words. Children then begin to learn the letters which make each of the sounds and these are used to read and spell words.

About the Phonics Screening Check

- A statutory check for Year 1 children which will take place during the week commencing 8th June 2026.
- Designed to confirm that children have learned phonic decoding to an age-appropriate standard.
 - Identifies children who have not learned to decode using phonics by the end of Year 1. These children will then receive additional support to ensure they can improve their decoding skills.
- Children in Year 2 will also take the check if they did not achieve the required result when in Year 1, or if they have not taken the test before.

What Happens During the Screening?

During the check, children are asked to read (decode) 40 words. The words are a mixture of real words and pseudo words (nonsense words). Pseudo-words are included to ensure that children are using their decoding skills and not just relying on their memory of words they've read before.

Each child will sit one to-one and read each word aloud to Miss Proctor. The test will take approximately 10 minutes per child, although all children are different and will complete the check at their own pace.

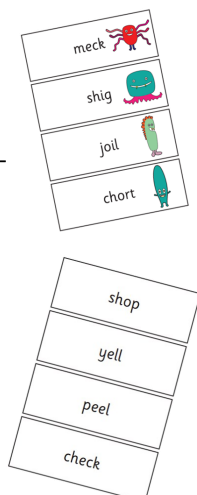
What if My Child Does Not Pass the Check?

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 (the children have previously had to read 32/40 words correctly, although the pass mark is not released for several weeks after the check). Children who do not pass the check in Year 1 will receive on-going support and will re-take the check in Year 2. If children do not pass the check in Year 2, they will not re-take the check again, but will continue to receive targeted support in KS2.

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.

Real words will be shown on a plain background.



How Can I Help My Child at Home?

- Play lots of games with your phonics flashcards.
- Read as much as possible with (and to) 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.
- Read the word by pointing to each sound and swoop your finger underneath to blend the sounds together.
- Discuss the meaning of words if your child does not know what they have read.
- Watch the phonics videos on the school website for the correct pronunciations of each sound.