

## **Phonics Screening Check – Information for Parents**

### **What is the Year 1 phonics screening check?**

The phonics screening check is taken individually by all children in Year 1 in England. It is designed to give teachers and parents information on how your child is progressing in phonics. It will help to identify whether your child needs additional support at this stage so that they do not fall behind in this vital early reading skill.

### **What is in the phonics screening check?**

There are two sections in this 40-word check and it assesses phonics skills and knowledge learned through Reception and Year 1. Your child will read up to four words per page for their teacher and they will probably do the check in one sitting of about 5-10 minutes.

### **What does it check?**

It checks that your child can:

- Sound out and blend graphemes in order to read simple words.
- Read phonically decodable one-syllable and two-syllable words, e.g. cat, sand, windmill.
- Read a selection of nonsense words which are referred to as pseudo words

### **What are nonsense or pseudo words and why are they included?**

These are words that are phonically decodable but are not actual words with an associated meaning e.g. briip, snorb. Pseudo words are included in the check specifically to assess whether your child can decode a word using phonics skills and not their memory.

The pseudo words will be shown to your child with a picture of a monster/alien. This not only makes the check a bit more fun, but provides the children with a context for the nonsense word which is independent from any existing vocabulary they may have. Crucially, it does not provide any clues, so your child just has to be able to decode it. Children generally find nonsense words amusing so they will probably enjoy reading these words.

### **Is there a pass mark?**

The check is not about passing or failing but checking appropriate progress is being made. If children do not reach the required standard, then the teacher will be in

touch to discuss plans and offer additional, tailored support to ensure that your child can catch up. Children progress at different speeds so not reaching the threshold score does not necessarily mean there is a serious problem. Your child will re-sit the check the following summer term when they are in Year 2.

### **What can I do to help my child?**

Check with your child's teacher if there are any particular areas that you should focus on at home so that you are working together to support your child.

### **What should I do if my child is struggling to decode a word?**

- Say each sound in the word from left to right.
- Blend the sounds by pointing to each letter, i.e. /b/ in bat, or letter group, i.e. /igh/ in sigh, as you say the sound, then run your finger under the whole word as you say it.
- Talk about the meaning if your child does not understand the word they have read.
- Work at your child's pace.
- Always be positive and give lots of praise and encouragement.

### **Where can I find support for my child?**

- There are lots of websites available to help your child with their phonics.
- <http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/wordsandpictures/phonics/>
- <http://www.ictgames.com/literacy.html>
- [http://www.familylearning.org.uk/phonics\\_games.html](http://www.familylearning.org.uk/phonics_games.html)
- <http://www.letters-and-sounds.com/>
- <http://phonicsplay.co.uk/>
- <http://www.mrthorne.com/>
- <http://www.oxfordowl.co.uk/>

**Don't forget about your reading books and library books.  
Practicing reading daily automatically helps with decoding!**

**Decoding words can be done anywhere!**