Dear Parents/Carers,

Each year children in Year 1 complete the ‘phonics screening check’. We have put together a guide, see below, explaining what the check entails and ways in which you can support your child at home.

**What is the phonics screening check?**

The phonics screening check is a quick and easy check of your child’s phonics knowledge. It helps the school confirm whether your child has made the expected progress. The national phonics screening check was introduced in 2012 to all Year 1 pupils in the country. It is a short, statutory assessment to ensure that children are making sufficient progress in the phonics skills to read words and are on track to become fluent readers who can enjoy reading for pleasure and for learning.

**When will the phonics screening take place?**

In 2023 the check will take place during the week commencing Monday 12th June 2022.

**How does the check work?**

Your child will sit with the class teacher and will be asked to read 40 words aloud. The test normally takes a few minutes. If your child is struggling the teacher will stop the check. The check is carefully designed not to be stressful for your child. The check consists of a list of 40 words, half real words and half nonsense words, the nonsense words will be shown to your child with a picture of an 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.

**Why Pseudo Words/non- words / nonsense words / alien words?**

Non-words are important to include as they can’t be read using their vocabulary or from memory; they have to use their decoding skills. This is a fair way to assess all children’s ability to decode.

**After the check.**

We will inform you on your child’s progress through the end of year report. If your child found the test tricky we will inform you of what support we have put in place to help them improve and what you can do at home to help them as well. Children who have not met the standard will retake the check when they are in Year 2. All children are individuals and all develop at different rates.

The screening check ensures that teachers understand which children need extra help with phonic decoding.

**How can you help your child?**

In school we are continually checking your children’s phonic development within our approach to the assessment of reading. This screening forms part of our overall assessment procedure. However, there are a number of things that parents can do to support early reading skill development.

Let your child see you enjoying reading yourself – they are influenced by you and what you value!

Immerse your child in a love of reading: share books and magazines with your child, take them to the library to choose books, read to them regularly, point out texts around you, e.g. in the street etc.

Make time for your child to read school books to you regularly – encourage them by pointing to the words and ask them about the story they are reading.

**Games to play at home**

**Hoop Game -** Get 2 hoops, trays or plates and place a letter card on each of them e.g. s and a. Have a variety of objects beginning with these 2 sounds. Ask your child to select an object and say the name of it. Repeat it several times and then ask your child to place it on the correct tray.

**Sound Hunt -** Encourage children to hunt around the house or garden for objects beginning with a certain sound. This can also be done with words hidden around the house.

**Rogue Sound Game -** Show a variety of objects to your child. All of the objects have the same initial sound except one. Ask them to identify the rogue item.

**Bingo -** Bingo boards can be easily made and differentiated. Put letters, digraphs, words etc. in 6 spaces and make 6 cards that match. Can your child match them?

Can they be the ‘bingo caller’ and say what is on the card first?

**Letters/graphemes in the mud -** Encourage children to write letters/graphemes in different ways. Write them with a stick in the mud, with their finger in sand, a straw in paint. This is not only great for their sound/ letter correspondence but also for handwriting.

**Treasure/Trash -** Make some word cards with real and non-sense words using a variety of graphemes. Decode the word together, blend and decide if it is a real ‘treasure’ word or a ‘trash’ non-sense word (which can go in the bin).

**Websites**

There are lots of fantastic websites to support the learning of Phonics, lots have super games that the children love to play.

[www.phonicsplay.co.uk](http://www.phonicsplay.co.uk)

[www.galacticphonics.com](http://www.galacticphonics.com)

[www.oxfordowl.co.uk](http://www.oxfordowl.co.uk)

[www.ictgames.co.uk](http://www.ictgames.co.uk)

[www.phonicsbloom.com](http://www.phonicsbloom.com)

If you have any further questions, please talk to your child’s class teacher.

Many thanks for your support with this matter.

Kind regards

Reading Team