



24th March 2026

Dear Parents/Carers,

I am writing to provide you with information about the Year 1 Phonics Screening Check, which will take place from Monday 8th June until Friday 12th June. All children must be in school during this week.

The Phonics Screening Check is a statutory assessment for all Year 1 children in England. Its purpose is to assess how well children can use their phonics skills to decode (sound out) words. Phonics is a key part of early reading, and this check helps us to identify how securely your child is applying these skills and whether any additional support may be needed moving forward.

The check consists of 40 words that your child will read aloud, one at a time, to a familiar adult. The words are split into two sections and include a mixture of real words and “alien” (nonsense) words. These alien words are accompanied by a simple picture of a made-up creature to help children understand that the word is not real and that they should use their phonics knowledge to decode it. This ensures the check is assessing decoding skills rather than memory or word recognition.

The assessment is carried out on a one-to-one basis in a quiet and comfortable environment within the school. It usually takes between 5 and 10 minutes to complete, depending on the child. The experience is designed to be low-pressure and supportive, and children are encouraged to try their best. If a child is unsure of a word, they are encouraged to use their phonics strategies, such as sounding out and blending.

Throughout the year, your child has been developing their phonics knowledge through daily phonics sessions, reading practice, and classroom activities. The screening check simply reflects the skills they use regularly in school, and no special preparation is required. However, continuing to read at home and practising phonics sounds can greatly support your child’s confidence and progress. Encouraging your child to sound out unfamiliar words, blend sounds together, and re-read for fluency will be particularly beneficial.

After the check has been completed, the results will be shared with you in your child’s end-of-year report. The government sets a national expected standard each year. If your child does not meet this standard, they will continue to receive additional phonics support in Year 2 and will have the opportunity to retake the check.

If you have any questions or would like advice on how to support your child at home, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Thank you for your continued support.

Kind regards,

Ms S Tomlinson

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