

# Year 1 Phonics Screening Check: A guide for parents

## What is Phonics?

Phonics is a way of teaching children to read quickly and skilfully. Children are first taught how to recognise the sounds each individual letter makes and then identify the sounds that different combinations of letters make such as 'sh', 'oo'. Children are taught to read by breaking down words into separate sounds or 'phonemes'. They are then taught how to blend these sounds together to read the whole word. At Rolph we teach phonics following the Letters and Sounds Programme, further information about this programme can be found using the link below:

<http://www.letters-and-sounds.com/what-is-letters-and-sounds.html>

## Why Phonics?

Research shows that when phonics is taught in a structured way, starting with the easiest sounds and progressing through to more complex sounds, it is the most effective way of teaching children to read. It is particularly helpful for children aged 5-7. Almost all children who receive good teaching of phonics will learn the skills they need to tackle new words. They can then go on to read any kind of text fluently and confidently and to read for enjoyment.

## What is the phonics screening check?

The phonics screening check is a statutory assessment that was introduced by the government in 2012 to all Year 1 pupils and is a quick and easy check of your child's phonics knowledge. It was devised to confirm whether pupils have learned phonic decoding (breaking words down into the sounds that make them up and saying the word) to an age-appropriate standard at the end of Year 1. It involves your child sitting with their teacher and reading 40 words in total. It begins with practice words that are not scored and then moves onto the test where both real and pseudo-words are included. They will be asked to 'sound out' a word and blend the sounds together. The check is very similar to tasks the children already complete during phonics lessons.

## When will it take place?

All year 1 pupils will take the phonics screening check in 2020 during the week commencing Monday 8th June.

## Is it stressful to test such young children?

The assessment will be age appropriate and the adults involved will all be familiar. The children at Rolph are familiar with the set up as we are regularly reviewing children's progress in the same way. It should be an enjoyable activity for children which takes no more than 10 minutes. There will be a few practice words at the beginning to make sure your child understands the activity.

## What are Nonsense or Pseudo words and why are they included?

These are words that are phonetically decodable but not actual words with an associated meaning e.g. brip, snorb. These words are included in the check specifically to assess whether your child can decode a word using phonic skills and not their memory. The pseudo words will be shown to your child with a picture of an alien. Here is a selection of real and nonsense words that were used in the 2018 screening check:

vuss 	chop
quop 	sing
zook 	dart
chack 	shock

## What happens if my child struggles with the screening check?

The screening check will identify children who have phonic skills below expectations for the end of Year 1. We will provide extra help and support. It is necessary to note here that the test is not an indicator of how well children read, simply how well they decode words.

## When will I find out the results?

You will be informed of your child's progress in phonics and how they have scored in the screening check towards the end of the summer term in their end of year report.

## How can I help my child?

There are a number of things that parents can do to support early reading development:

- Let your child see you enjoy reading yourself. They are influenced by you and what you do!
- Immerse your child in a love of reading.
- Make time for your child to read their school reading book to you.
- With all books, encourage your child to 'sound out' unfamiliar words and then blend from left to right rather than looking at pictures to guess.
- Practise segmenting (sounding out) and blending (putting words back together) words.

## Online Practice

There are many online phonic games for children to access on the computer. Here are a few suggested sites that could help support learning at home:

<https://www.topmarks.co.uk/english-games/5-7-years/letters-and-sounds>

[www.letters-and-sounds.com/phase-3-games.html](http://www.letters-and-sounds.com/phase-3-games.html)

[www.letters-and-sounds.com/phase-4-games.html](http://www.letters-and-sounds.com/phase-4-games.html)

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/topics/zcqqtf>

<http://www.ictgames.com/literacy.html>

[http://www.familylearning.org.uk/phonics\\_games.html](http://www.familylearning.org.uk/phonics_games.html)

We hope this information is useful – if you have any other further questions or queries, please speak to your child's class teacher.