



# Phonics Screening Check Year 1

## A guide for parents

Phonics is a way of teaching children to read quickly and skilfully. Children are taught how to recognise the sounds each individual letter makes and to identify the sounds that different contributions of letters make such as 'sh' and '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 St Joseph's School we teach phonics, following the Ruth Miskin, Read Write Inc. Programme. Children participate in RWI every day and practise phonics, writing and reading.

### 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 for enjoyment.

### What is the phonics screening check?

The National Phonics Screening Check is a statutory assessment which was introduced in 2012 to all Year 1 pupils and is a quick and easy check of your child's phonics knowledge.

### Who is it for?

All Year 1 pupils and some pupils in Year 2 will take part in the phonics screening check. This year's assessment will take place during the week beginning **12<sup>th</sup> June 2017**.

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

It comprises of a list of 40 words and nonsense words. It will assess phonics skills and knowledge learnt through Reception and Year 1.

## **What happens?**

Your child will read one-to one with their class teacher. Each child will read up to 4 words per page and the whole check will take no longer than 10-15 minutes.

During the check they will be asked to 'sound out' a word and blend the sounds together. The check is very similar to tasks the children complete during phonics lessons.

## **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 St Joseph's School are familiar with the style of activities as we are constantly reviewing children's progress in a similar way. It should be an enjoyable activity for children which takes no more than 15 minutes. There will be a few practice words at the beginning to make sure your child understands the activity.

## **What are nonsense 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 nonsense words will be shown to your child with a picture of an alien. The children will be asked what the aliens name is by reading the word. This will make the check a bit more fun and provides the children with a context for the nonsense word. Crucially it does not provide any clues, so your child has to be able to decode it. Children generally find nonsense amusing so they will probably enjoy reading these words.

## **How will the results from the screening be used?**

You will be informed of your child's progress in phonics together with the results of the screening check as part of the end of year report.

Please remember that all of the children are individuals and develop at different stages. The screening check ensures that teachers understand which children need support with decoding.

## **What happens if a child struggles with the screening check?**

The screening check will identify children who have phonic decoding skills below the level expected for the end of Year 1 and who therefore need further support. Appropriate additional help will then be provided and children will be able to retake the assessment in Year 2.

## **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 book to you
- Encourage your child to 'sound out' unfamiliar words and then blend from left to right rather than looking at pictures to guess
- There are many phonics games for children to access on:

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

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

[mrthorne.com](http://mrthorne.com)

