

## **National Phonics Screening Test**

Dear Parent / Carer

I am writing to inform you about the National Phonics Screening Test which will take place in Key Stage 1 during the weeks beginning Monday 10<sup>th</sup> June, the second week back at school after the May half term holiday.

This letter aims to explain this process, in addition to providing you with ideas to help your child with phonics at home.

### **Who takes the test?**

All children in year 1. In addition, any child in year 2 who did not reach the required level when they took the test in year 1 will take the test again in year 2. If for any reason, we feel that there is a valid reason why your child should not take the test in Year 1, the class teacher will discuss this with you. Please note, this is only done in exceptional circumstances and your child would still be eligible to take the retake when they are in Year 2.

### **What is phonics?**

Phonics is a way of teaching children to read. They are taught how to:

- Recognise the sounds that each individual letter makes
- Identify the sounds that different combinations of letters make e.g. sh and oo
- Blend these sounds together from left to right to make a word. Children can then use this knowledge to segment and blend new words that they hear or see.

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

The government introduced an annual phonics screening check in September 2011. This will further inform our continual assessment of the children's phonic knowledge and the results of the check will be shared with parents/carers in the end of year report. It comprises of a list of 40 words that children read one-to-one with a teacher. The list is a combination of both real and made up, non-words which rely purely on using phonics to decode. The non-words are words that have been made up and will be shown with a picture of an imaginary creature to help them. The phonics screening check will take place on a one to one but the children will largely be unaware of it being a test and have already participated in some practice ones.

### **What are non- words?**

Your child knows these words as alien words. Your child will be told during the check which words are the alien words (that he/she will not have seen before). Your child will be familiar with this because we already use 'alien words' when teaching phonics in school. Children cannot read the non-words by using their memory or vocabulary; they have to use their decoding skills.

### **After the check**

We will tell you about your child's progress in phonics and how he or she has done in the screening check as part of the end of year report. All children are individuals and develop at different rates. Your child's class teacher will have already talked to you at parent's meeting about your child's progress in reading and what your child is doing in school to support them in developing their knowledge and skills in phonics.

### **Helping your child with phonics**

Phonics works best when children are given plenty of encouragement and learn to enjoy reading and books. Parents play a very important part in helping with this:

- With all books, encourage your child to 'sound out' unfamiliar words and then blend the sounds together from left to right. Once your child has read an unfamiliar word you can talk about what it means and help him or her to follow the story.
- Try to make time to read with your child every day. Grandparents and older brother or sisters can help, too.

- Encourage your child to blend the sounds all the way through a word.
- Word games like 'I-spy' can also be an enjoyable way of teaching children about sounds and letters.
- You can also encourage your child to read words from your shopping list or road signs to practise phonics.

This is an example of a phonics screening check test:

Section 1				Section 2			
Word	Correct	Incorrect	Comment	Word	Correct	Incorrect	Comment
dat				tay			
cag				sloam			
rin				zued			
ept				meve			
jash				clend			
quib				braits			
coid				scrug			
quass				splue			
glog				high			
blard				feast			
disp				goal			
murbs				shape			
chum				trunk			
kick				groups			
reef				straw			
short				scribe			
blot				model			
greet				person			
dust				chapter			
parks				reptiles			

The government publish a new phonic screening sheet each year so the one this year will not be the same as this one.

There is more information on our web site about how we teach phonics in school and how you can support at home. Please click the following link to access it:

[Our approach to phonics](#)

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact myself or your child's class teacher.

Kind regards

Tracy Cruickshank

Deputy Headteacher