

Tuesday 6th October 2020

Phonics Screening Test in Year 2

Dear Parent/Carers,

The government have announced that all Year 2 children should undertake the Phonics Screening check in the second half of the Autumn Term, therefore your child will complete the check this academic year. This is something that your child would normally have completed in the Summer Term during Year 1 but unfortunately this check was postponed. We would like to reassure you that your child will not be put under any unnecessary pressure because of this. We will do all that we can to help each individual child to catch-up on missed learning whilst striving to create a nurturing and caring environment within school.

This letter aims to explain the Phonic Screening 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 take the test in June. Due to the coronavirus, children in year 2 will take the test in the second half of the Autumn Term.

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. We call these sounds 'special friends'.
- Blend these sounds together from left to right to make a word. We call this 'Fred Talk'.

Children can then use this knowledge to segment and blend new words that they hear or see.

What is the phonics screening check?

As you may have already heard, the government introduced an annual phonics screening check. This will further inform our continual Read, Write, Inc assessment of the children's knowledge and the results of the check will be shared with parents/carers.

It comprises of a list of 40 words that children read one-to-one with their class teacher. The list is a combination of both real and made up, non-words (nonsense 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 (alien) to help them.

The phonics screening check will take place on a one to one basis but the children will largely be unaware of it being a test and have already participated in some practice ones. The children are also very used to Read, Write, Inc assessments every half term.

What are nonsense words?

Your child will be told during the check which words are nonsense words. Your child will be familiar with this because we already use 'nonsense-words' when teaching Read, Write Inc in school.

Nonsense-words are important to include because words such as 'vap' or 'jound' are new to all children. Children cannot read the non-words by using their memory or vocabulary; they have to use their decoding skills. This is a fair way to assess their ability to decode.

After the check

We will share your child's results with you at the end of the Autumn Term. If your child has found the check difficult, we will also tell you what support we have put in place to help him or her improve. All children are individuals and develop at different rates. The screening check ensures that teachers understand which children need extra help with phonic decoding.

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.

Some simple steps to help your child learn to read through phonics:

- We have updated our Read, Write Inc page on our school website to include activities, videos and parent information on how to pronounce the letter sounds. Take a look to find out more.
- Listen to your child read their Read, Write Inc book each week. We encourage that your child reads this book more than once like they would in school to develop fluency and accuracy.
- With all books, encourage your child to 'sound out' unfamiliar words. Ask them to special friend, Fred talk, read the word. Once your child has read an unfamiliar word you can talk about what it means and help him or her to follow the story.
- Complete any phonics homework sent home with your child. Your child's class teacher may send a Read, Write Inc video link to watch on Class Dojo as part of their homework.
- 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.

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

Yours sincerely,

Miss Woodhouse
Read, Write Inc Lead |