



# Phonics Screening Check

## Parent Information Sheet

### What Is Phonics?

Children begin to learn phonics (sounds) in the Early Years, both at Nursery and in Reception. Once children begin learning sounds, these sounds are used to read and spell words.

### What Is The Phonics Screening Check?

Children in Year One throughout the country will be taking part in a Phonics Screening Check. Children in Year 2 will also take the check if they did not achieve the required test result in Year One or if they haven't taken the check before.

The Phonics Screening Check is designed to confirm whether each individual child has learnt the phonic decoding and blending skills to the expected standard. (Decoding is the pupil's ability to apply their knowledge of letter-sound relationships to correctly pronounce written words. Blending is the ability to string together the sounds that each letter stands for in a word.)

### What Happens During The Phonics Screening Check?

The check contains forty words. Each child will sit one to one with their teacher and read each word aloud. The test will take approximately ten minutes per child, although all children are different and will complete the check at their own pace. The list of words that the children read is a combination of twenty real words and twenty pseudo words (nonsense words).

### Pseudo Words (Nonsense Words):

The pseudo words will be shown to your child with a picture of an alien. This provides the children with a context for the pseudo word which is independent from any existing vocabulary they may have. Pseudo words are included because they will be new to all pupils; they do not favour children with a good vocabulary knowledge or visual memory of words.

### Reporting To Parents:

By the end of the Summer Term, all schools must report each child's results to their parents. They will also confirm if the child has met the standard threshold. Children who do not achieve the expected level will retake the test when they are in Year Two.

### How Are The Results Used?

Results from the check will be used by schools to analyse their own performance and for Ofsted to use in inspections.

The pass mark in previous years has been thirty-two words read correctly out of forty. However, this is subject to change and could increase for the 2018-19 academic year.

### How Can I Help My Child at Home?

- Use your child's Phonics Intervention Pack at home regularly. The children need to be able to recognise all of the sounds on the Sound Mats to confidently pass the check.
- Blend the sounds by pointing to each letter, e.g. /c/ in cat, or the letter group, e.g. /ng/ in sing. Next, move your finger under the whole word as you say it.
- If your child is struggling to decode a word, encourage them to say each sound in the word from left to right, looking carefully for digraphs and trigraphs (*letters which, together, make one sound*). E.g. 'air' in stairs and 'oi' in spoil.
- Words containing split digraphs (*two letters which work as a pair to make one sound but are separated within the word*) are often the trickiest for children to decode so practise lots of these in both real and made up words. E.g. game or pone.