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Dear Parents/Carers,

In Year 1 children across the country will be sitting the Statutory Phonics Screening Check and whilst this will not be until June this letter will hopefully explain the process and it's intended outcomes.

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

Children begin to learn phonics (sounds) in Early Years both Nursery and Reception. Once children begin learning sounds, these sounds are used orally to identify and make words. They will then begin to learn the letters which make each of the sounds and these are used to read and spell words.

Children in Year 1 throughout the country will all be taking part in a phonics screening check during the same week in June. Children in Year 2 will also take the check if they did not achieve the required result when in Year 1 or they have not taken the test before.

### **What Happens During the Screening?**

The test contains 40 words. Each child will sit one-to-one and read each word aloud to a teacher. The test will take approximately 10-15 minutes per child, although all children are different and will complete the check at their own pace. The list of words the children read is a combination of 20 real words and 20 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 2.



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## 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.

## 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 help. Schools are expected to provide extra help and children will then be able to re-take the assessment in year 2.

## How Can I Help My Child at Home?

- Read as much as possible to and with your child.
- We will be sending home a weekly sheet of real and nonsense words for you to read together or for your child to read - these will be very similar to the words that will be in the Phonics Screening Check
- If your child is struggling to decode a word, help them by encouraging them to say each sound in the word from left to right.
- Discuss the meaning of words if your child does not know what they have read.
- Phonics cards are available from Amazon: <https://amzn.to/2JjxAB3>



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