



## What is phonics?

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

- recognise the sounds that each individual letter makes;
- identify the sounds that different combinations of letters make - such as 'sh' or 'oo'; and
- blend these sounds together to make a word.

Children can then use this knowledge to 'de-code' new words that they hear or see. 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 to read for enjoyment.

## How is phonics taught in school?

Children have a daily 25 minutes phonics session. They are grouped according to the phase of the letters and sounds programme that they are working at. Children are encouraged to use phonics strategies to read and write across the curriculum.

## What is the screening check?

Children in Year 1 take the phonics screening check in June. The aim of the check is to ensure that all children are able to read by the end of year two. The check will ensure that we have a clear understanding of what the children need to learn in year 2 and confirm whether they have made expected progress.

## How does it work?

Your child will sit with their teacher in a quiet area in school and be asked to read 40 words aloud. The check normally takes 5 to 10 minutes to complete although there is no time limit. The check is very similar to tasks the children already complete during phonics lessons. Children will be asked to 'sound out' a word and blend the sounds together. eg d-o-g - dog. The focus of the check is to see which sounds the children know and therefore the children will be asked to read made up 'non-words'.

## What are 'non-words'?

'Non-words' are included in the screening because children cannot read the non-words by using their memory or vocabulary; they have to use their decoding skills. Children will be familiar with 'non-words' as we use them when we teach phonics sessions.

## Helping your child with phonics

- Encourage your child to 'sound out' when reading or writing. Focusing particularly on spotting more unusual sound patterns, e.g. Digraph- 2 letters making one sound *c-ow*  
Trigraphs- 3 letters making one sound *n-igh-t*  
Split digraphs- 2 vowels with a consonant inbetween *spine - i\_e*
- Read the books allocated on bug club [www.bugclub.co.uk](http://www.bugclub.co.uk)
- Play games online [www.phonicsplay.co.uk](http://www.phonicsplay.co.uk)
- Practise reading and writing the sounds and words listed on your child's homework sheet

For more information see the DfE website

<http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/teachingandlearning/pedagogy/a00198207/faqs-year-1-phonics-screening-check>

Thank you for your support.