



What is the Year 1 phonics screening check?

The Year 1 phonics screening check is a short, light-touch assessment to confirm whether individual pupils have learnt phonic decoding to an appropriate standard.

It will identify the children who need extra help so they are given support by their school to improve their reading skills. They will then be able to retake the check so that schools can track pupils until they are able to decode.

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:

- Ask your child's class teacher about the school's approach to phonics and how you can reinforce this at home. For example, the teacher will be able to tell you which letters and sounds the class is covering in lessons each week.
- You can then highlight these sounds when you read with your child. Teaching how sounds match with letters is likely to start with individual letters such as 's', 'a' and 't' and then will move on to two-letter sounds such as 'ee', 'ch' and 'ck'.
- With all books, encourage your child to 'sound out' unfamiliar words and then blend the sounds together from left to right rather than looking at the pictures to guess. Once your child has read an unfamiliar word you can talk about what it means and help him or her to follow the story.
- Your child's teacher will also be able to suggest books with the right level of phonics for your child. These books are often called 'decodable readers' because the story is written with words made up of the letters your child has learnt. Your child will be able to work out new words from their letters and sounds, rather than just guessing.
- Try to make time to read with your child every day. Grandparents and older brothers 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.