Phonics Screening Check

Parent workshop
February 2026

phonics screening check

KS1
2024-25

Grange Primary School

What is Phonics?

- The alphabet contains only 26 letters. Spoken English uses about 42 **sounds**. We call these **phonemes**.
- These phonemes are represented by letters (graphemes). In other words, a sound can be represented by a letter (e.g. 's' or 'h') or a group of letters (e.g. 'th' or 'ear')
- Once children begin learning sounds, they are used quickly to read and spell words.

How we teach phonics

- Children have a 20-30 minute phonics lesson everyday.
- Children are taught to read by breaking down words 'graphemes' into separate sounds or 'phonemes'.
- They are then taught how to blend these sounds together to hear and read the whole word.

Phonics is taught in phases:

What is the phonics screening check?

It is not a reading test!

It is a statutory phonics screening that every Year 1 child will be taking in June.

The check consists of a list of 40 words.

Half of these are real words and half nonsense words.
The nonsense words will be shown to your child with a picture of an alien.

This makes the check a bit more fun, and it also provides the children with a context for the nonsense word which is different to any existing vocabulary they may have.

- The check is very similar to tasks the children already complete during phonics lessons and it will be done by a familiar adult.
- The focus of the check is to ensure that all children can read by the end of Year 2.
- The Year 1 screening (mid point) will provide evidence to help teachers plan for Year 2.

plug
sweep
soft
yards

vaw
meast
waib
zome

Why Pseudo Words/non- words / nonsense words / alien words?

Non-words are important to include as they can't be read using their vocabulary or from memory; they have to use their decoding skills. This is a fair way to assess all children's ability to decode.

How it works...

- The check will take 4 to 9 minutes to complete.
- Children will be asked to 'sound out' a word and blend the sounds together. e.g. d-o-g – dog. sh-i-p - ship

The check consists of 40 real words and non-words. Children will be told if the word is a real or 'alien' word, with a corresponding alien image.

pab
vas
yon
ilt

shin
buzz
harp
third

How it will take place

The children will sit 1:1 with an adult in a quiet area of the school.

The children have completed a few of these already in order to support learning and are very familiar with this routine.

Teachers are not allowed to tell children at the time of the check whether they have correctly sounded out and/ or blended the word.

The results

We will inform you of the results on your child's end of year report in the Summer.

If your child's score falls below the national standard they will be supported and will complete the screening again in year 2.

What you can do to support...

- In school we are continually checking your children's phonic development through our approach to the assessment of reading. But there are a number of things that you can do to support early reading skill development at home.
- Let your child see you enjoying reading yourself – they are influenced by **you** and what **you value**!
- Immerse your child in a love of reading: share books and magazines with your child, take them to the library to choose books, read to them regularly
- Make time for your child to read school books to you regularly. These are decodable and at their phonics level.
- Encourage them by pointing to the words and ask them about the story they are reading.

Terminology

Digraph- 2 letters making one sound cow the children should say this as c-ow and not c-o-w

Trigraphs- 3 letters making one sound night the children should say this as n-igh-t and not n-i-g-h-t which does not sound like night.

Split digraphs- 2 vowels with a consonant in between. Sometimes this can be known as the magic e...

spine - i_e
home – o_e
cube – u_e

Encourage your child to use their knowledge of sounds to work out the words When reading and writing

Use reading strategies

Encourage your child to spot the tricky sound in the word first, before they read it.

Single sounds:	j a m
Digraphs :	c h i p
Trigraphs :	h a i r
Split diagraph:	s n a k e

Online games:

Children can practise their phonics by playing games online. They can choose phase 3, 4, or 5 e.g

- Buried Treasure
- Pop deck Pirates
- Dragons' den

Through Phonics Play https://www.phonicsplay.co.uk/

Questions?