Year 1 Phonics Screening Check:
a parents' guide

We explain what the Year 1 phonics 'test' is and how you can help support your child's phonics learning at home.

they feel fully prepared.

What is the Phonics Screening Check?

The Phonics Screening Check was introduced in 2012 in primary schools in England. All children in Year 1 take it in the summer term.

Worried that your five or six year old is way too young to be tested at school? Don't be! The Year 1 Phonics Screening Check was designed to identify which pupils need additional support with certain areas of phonics as they progress. Teachers are assessing pupils on a daily basis – it's part of the job! The Check is simply a formalised extension of this, and it's really nothing to be concerned about. That said, a little focus on phonics at home will help your child recall the strategies they already know, and boost their confidence so

How does the Phonics Screening Check work?

The Check consists of 40 words and non-words that your child will be asked to read one-on-one with a teacher. Non-words (or nonsense words, or pseudo words) are a collection of letters that follow phonics rules your child has been taught, but don't mean anything – your child will need to read these with the correct sounds to show they understand the phonics rules behind them.
● The 40 words and non-words are divided into two sections – one with simple word

Most children progress from learning letter sounds in Reception to reading fluently in Year 2
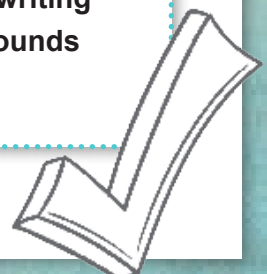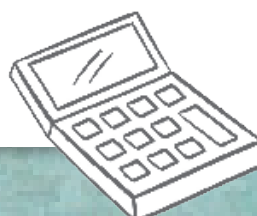
What is phonics?

● **Phonics is a method of teaching children to read by linking sounds (phonemes) to the symbols that represent them (graphemes, or letter groups).**
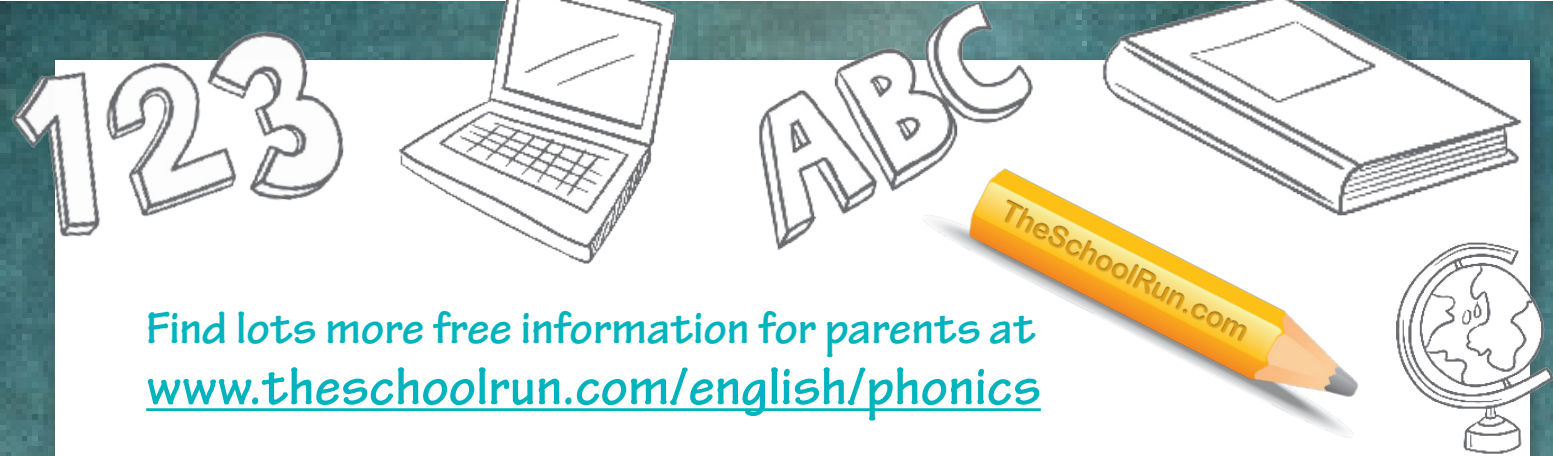
● **Decoding is the process of seeing written words and being able to say them out loud. Decoding is about reading sounds, not understanding meaning.**

● **After learning to read letter sounds, children start to blend sounds and say whole words.**

● **Encoding is the process of writing down the sounds we hear.**

structures of three or four letters, and one with more complex word structures of five or six letters.

- The teacher who is administering the Check with your child will give them a few practice words to read first – including some non-words – so they understand what they have to do.

- Each of the non-words is presented with a picture of a monster / alien, as if the word were their name (and so your child doesn't think the word is a mistake because it doesn't make sense!).

When does the Y1 Phonics Check take place in 2023?

Schools will administer the Year 1 Phonics Screening Check the week beginning Monday 12 June 2023.

What do the Screening Check scores mean?

Your child will be scored against a national standard, and the main result will be whether or not they fall below, within or above this standard. Since 2013 the "pass threshold" has been 32, which means children had to read at least 32 words out of 40 correctly. You will be told how your child did,

but schools' results will not be published. If your child's score is below the standard, they will be given extra phonics help and can re-take the Check in Year 2.

Supporting phonics learning at home

● Your child's school will provide information on how they teach phonics. By familiarising yourself with the

sounds and teaching methods you can reinforce their school work with some at-home practice.

- Songs, apps, games... there are loads of resources on offer to help with phonics.

- Follow your child's teacher's advice about good reading books for their level.

Should I stop reading to my child?

No! Reading is all about stories and enjoying them. It's vital not to lose sight of this when your child is using phonics to learn to read, so keep going with the bedtime stories. If you're reading aloud to your child, you could ask them to read one sentence per page. This will ensure they're coming into contact with words they probably won't have read before and they'll have to use their decoding skills; they'll be motivated to do so as they'll be enjoying the story.