



St Bernadette's Catholic Primary School

'Doing our best for God'

Dear Parents/ Carers,

The week beginning the 13th June, your child will take part in the phonics screening check.

What is the phonics screening check?

The National Phonics Screening Check was introduced in 2012 to all Year 1 pupils. It is a short, statutory assessment that takes place every year, during the summer term, to ensure that children are making sufficient progress in the phonics skills to read words and are on track to become fluent readers who can enjoy reading for pleasure and for learning.

The check is not about passing or failing but checking appropriate progress is being made. If children do not reach the required standard, then we will be in touch to discuss plans and offer additional, tailored support to ensure that your child improves their reading skills. Children progress at different speeds so not reaching the threshold score does not necessarily mean there is a serious problem. Your child will re-sit the check the following summer term.

How is the check structured?

The check consists of a list of 40 words, half real words and half nonsense words, the nonsense words will be shown to your child with a picture of an alien. This not only makes the check a bit more fun, but provides the children with a context for the nonsense word which is independent from any existing vocabulary they may have.

Is it stressful to test such young children?

The assessment will be age-appropriate, with children sitting **with myself and reading one-to-one**

Does a teacher have to carry out the screening check?

Yes, it is important that a teacher carries out the check with the pupils in our school.



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Why are nonsense words included in the screening check?

Nonsense words are an established assessment method of all schools as a national requirement, and are included in all phonetic programmes. The children are used to Alien word recognition within their daily phonics lessons. This is a test of a child's ability to decode using phonics. Children who can read non-words should have the skills to decode almost any unfamiliar word.

How long does the check take?

Every child is different but in most cases the check should take approximately 15 minutes per child. We tailor it to each child, depending on need, with an optional break if it takes a while.

How will the results from the phonics screening check be reported to us?

We inform parents with their child's end of year report. Do not worry if your child has not reached the threshold mark (32/40 in previous years) as we will provide extra phonic help at the end of Year 1 and in Year 2 and children will then be able to re-take the assessment in Year 2.

How can I help my child?

In school we are continually checking your children's phonic development within our approach to the assessment of reading. This screening forms part of our overall assessment procedure. However, there are a number of things that parents can do to support early reading skill development:

- 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, point out texts around you, e.g. in the street etc.
- Make time for your child to read school books to you regularly - encourage them by pointing to the words and ask them about the story they are reading
- Access our school website - The Year 1 class page has much information and videos about the scheme that we follow 'Letters and Sounds - Little Wandle.'
- Use phonics play www.phonicsplay.co.uk. This is a website which is packed with interactive phonics games to help children to learn to hear sounds and blend sounds.
- Ensure you are saying the correct sounds.



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What shall I do if my child is struggling to decode?

Say each sound in the word from left to right.

Blend the sounds by pointing to each letter, i.e. /b/ in bat, or letter group, i.e. /igh/ in sigh, as you say the sound, then run your finger under the whole word as you say it.

Talk about the meaning if your child does not understand the word they have read. Work at your child's pace and have FUN!

Yours sincerely,

Alexis Satterthwaite

Head teacher



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