



Phonics Screening Check

A Guide for Year 1 Parents What is Phonics?

Phonics is a way of teaching children to read quickly and skilfully. Children are first taught how to recognise the sounds each individual letter makes and identify the sounds that different contributions of letters make such as 'sh' and 'oo'. Children are taught to read words by breaking down words into separate sounds or 'phonemes'. They are then taught how to blend these sounds together to read the whole word. At Nova Primary Academy, we use Read Write Inc to teach phonics.

Why Phonics?

Research shows that teaching phonics in a structured way, starting with the easiest sounds and progressing through to more complex sounds, is the most effective way of teaching children to read. Almost all 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.

What is the phonics screening check?

The National phonics screening check is a statutory assessment that was introduced in 2012 to all Year 1 pupils and is a quick and easy check of your child's phonics knowledge.

Who is it for?

All Year 1 pupils will take the phonics screening check normally in June. Children who do not pass the Phonics Screening check in Year 1, retake the test in Year 2.

What is in the phonics screening check?

It comprises of a list of 40 words . Some of these are real words and some of them are pseudo (nonsense) words. It will assess phonics skills and knowledge learnt through Foundation and Year 1. Pupils will be asked to 'sound out' a word and blend the sounds together. The check is very similar to tasks the children already complete during phonics lessons.

Is it stressful to test such young children?

The assessment will be age appropriate and the adults involved will all be familiar to the children. The children at Nova Primary School are familiar with the process as we are constantly reviewing children's progress in the same way. It should be an enjoyable activity for children which takes no more than 15 minutes. There will be a few practise words at the beginning to make sure your child understands the activity.

What are Nonsense or Pseudo words and why are they included?

These are words that are phonetically decidable but not actual words with an associated meaning e.g., briip, snorb. These words are included in the check specifically to assess whether you child can decode a word using phonic skills and not their memory.

How will the results from the screening be used?

You will be informed of your child's progress in phonics and how he or she has performed in the screening check, towards the end of the summer term. All of the children are individuals and develop at different stages. The screening check ensures that teachers understand which children need support with decoding.

What happens if a child struggles with the screening check?

The screening check will identify children who have not yet reached the expected level for the end of Year 1 and who therefore need continued support. Schools are expected to provide extra help and children will then be able to re-take the assessment in Year 2