



3rd June 2024

Phonics Screening Check Information for Parents

Dear Families

We are writing to inform you about the National Phonics Screening Check which will take place in Choughs in June. This letter aims to explain this process and answer any questions you may have.

What is the phonics screening check?

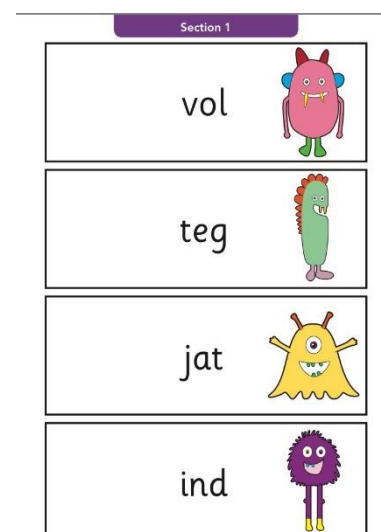
The national phonics screening check was introduced in 2012 to all Year 1 pupils. It is a short, statutory assessment to confirm whether individual pupils have learnt phonic decoding to an appropriate standard. It aims to identify the children who need extra help so that they can be given support by school to improve their reading skills. At St Levan Primary School we already identify children and provide early intervention support, however we must comply with the statutory requirement.

Who is it for?

Year 1 pupils will take the phonics screening check in June. In addition, any Year 2 children who did not reach the required level in Year 1 will need to re-take the assessment.

How is the check structured?

It comprises a list of 40 words and non-words (alien words), which a child will read one-to-one with a teacher. Half the words cover phonic skills which are usually covered in Reception, and half the words are based on Year 1 phonic skills. The list is a combination of real and made-up words. These non-words will be shown with a picture of an imaginary creature (see examples, right). We call them alien words so that there is a context for reading them.



Examples of words

Real words

meet	plan	ships	call
grit	trains	shin	week
handy	scrape	trumpet	surprise
newt	slide	brains	finger

Alien words

tox	blan	elt	geck
thazz	sclak	steck	clinp
quemp	shoik	there	blust
jound	strupe	snemp	stroft

Why are non-words included?

Non-words are an established assessment method of many schools, and are included in many phonics programmes including the Read Write Inc phonics scheme we use at St Levan. They are included because they will be new to all pupils, so there won't be a bias to those with a good vocabulary knowledge or visual memory of words. Pupils who can read non-words should have the skills to decode almost any unfamiliar word.

Is it stressful to test such young children?

The assessment will be age-appropriate, with children sitting with their teacher and reading one-to-one. The check is very similar to tasks the children already complete during their daily phonics lessons. Therefore, children will be familiar with the format and with the idea of alien words. It should be an enjoyable activity for children which takes no more than a few minutes. There will be a few practice words at the beginning to ensure your child understands the activity.

Does a teacher have to carry out the screening check?

Yes, the class teacher will carry out the check with the pupils.

If you have any further questions, please contact Jessica Ferguson via the school office.

The St Levan Team