



Bandon Hill Primary School
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Phonics Screening Check 2026

Dear Parents and Carers,

Date: 06.05.26

National Phonics Screening Test

I am writing to inform you about the National Phonics Screening Test which will take place in Key Stage 1 during the weeks beginning 8th June 2026. This letter aims to explain this process, in addition to providing you with ideas to help your child with phonics at home.

Who takes the test?

All children in Year 1. In addition, any children in Year 2 who did not reach the required level when they took the test in Year 1 will take the test again in Year 2. If for any reason, we feel that there is a valid reason why your child should not take the test in Year 1, the class teacher will discuss this with you. Please note, this is only done in exceptional circumstances and your child would still be eligible to take the retake when they are in Year 2.

What is phonics?

Phonics is a way of teaching children to read. They are taught how to:

- Recognise the sounds that each individual letter makes.
- Identify the sounds that different combinations of letters make e.g. sh and oo
- Blend these sounds together from left to right to make a word.

Children can then use this knowledge to segment and blend new words that they hear or see.

Why phonics?

Research shows that when phonics is taught in a structured way – starting with the easiest sounds and progressing through to the most complex – it is the most effective way of teaching young children to read.

What is the phonics screening check?

The Phonics Screening Check will further inform our continual assessment of the children's phonic knowledge and the results of the check will be shared with parents/carers towards the end of the school year. It is a list of 40 words that children read one-to-one with a teacher. The list is a combination of both real and pseudo-words which rely purely on using phonics to decode. The pseudo-words are words that have been made up and will be shown with a picture of an imaginary creature to help them. The Phonics Screening Check will take place one to one but the children will largely be unaware of it being a test and have already participated in some practice ones.





What are pseudo-words?

Your child will be told during the check which words are pseudo-words (that he/she will not have seen before). Your child will be familiar with this because we already use 'pseudo-words' when teaching phonics in school. Pseudo-words are important to include because words such as 'vap' or 'jound' are new to all children. Children cannot read the pseudo-words by using their memory or vocabulary; they have to use their decoding skills. This is a fair way to assess their ability to decode.

After the check

We will tell you about your child's progress in phonics and how he or she has done in the screening check towards the end of Summer 2. If your child has found the check difficult, we will also tell you what support we have put in place to help him or her improve. You might like to ask your child's class teacher how you can support your child to take the next step in reading. All children are individuals and develop at different rates. The screening check ensures that teachers understand which children need extra help with phonic decoding.

Helping your child with phonics

Phonics works best when children are given plenty of encouragement and learn to enjoy reading and books. Parents play a very important part in helping with this. Some simple steps to help your child learn to read through phonics:

- Step 1 – Identify the sounds and let them add sound buttons
- Step 2 – Sound talk the sounds (say each sound separately)
- Step 3 – Read the word (blend sounds together)

- Use the grow the code chart. Point to a sound and ask your child to say the sound.
- Choose 4 sounds a week to display at home that your child is unfamiliar with. Use the sound phrases first to identify the sound and then move onto just saying the correct sound.
- You can then highlight these sounds when you read with your child.
- Practise a mixture of real and pseudo words for your child to practice. An example of a phonics screening check test has been included below.
- Make up pseudo words and ask your child to read. Then ask your child to make up a pseudo word for you to read.
- With all books, encourage your child to 'sound out' unfamiliar words and then blend the sounds together from left to right rather than looking at the pictures to guess. Once your child has read an unfamiliar word you can talk about what it means and help him or her to follow the story.
- Try to make time to read with your child every day. Grandparents and older brothers or sisters can help, too. Encourage your child to blend the sounds all the way through a word.
- Word games like 'I-spy' can also be an enjoyable way of teaching children about sounds and letters. You can also encourage your child to read words from your shopping list or road signs to practise phonics.
- Use the parents section on the Little Wandle website to watch videos.



- Lots of sound talking at home!!

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me or your child's class teacher.

Thank you for your continued support.

Yours Sincerely,

Miss Heinpuu

Phonics Lead/Class Teacher

Grow the code grapheme chart

Phase 2, 3 and 5

s ss c se ce st sc	t tt	p pp	n nn kn gn	m mm mb	d dd	g gg	c ck cc ch	r rr wr	h	b bb	f ff ph	l ll le al	j jg dge ge	v vv ve
w wh	x	y	z zz s se ze	qu	ch ture	sh ch ti ssi ci	th	ng	nk	a a	e ea	i y	o a	u u o-e ou
ai ay a a-e eigh aigh ey ea	ee ea e e-e y ey	igh ie i i-e y	oa o o-e ou oe ow	oo ue u-e ew ou ui	yoo ue u u-e ew	oo u* oul	or a* al*	or aw ou aur oor al a oar ore	ur er ir or	ow ou	oi oy	ear ere eer	air are ere ear	zh su si










Phonics and spelling words



How to say the Phase 5 sounds

At Phase 5, children learn alternative graphemes for sounds introduced in Phases 2 and 3.









Sounds introduced in Phase 2

Grapheme and mnemonic	Pronunciation phrase	Phase 5 Graphemes
	Show your teeth and let the s hiss out: ssssss ssssss	c se ce st sc
	Open your lips a bit; put your tongue behind your teeth and make the nnnnn sound nnnnn	kn gn
	Put your lips together and make the mmmmm sound mmmmm	mb
	Open your mouth into a little smile; make your tongue flat and move it up towards the top of your mouth to say c c c	ch
	Show me your teeth to make a rrrr sound rrrrr	wr
	Open your lips a little; put your teeth on your bottom lip and push the air out to make the sound ffff fffff	ph
	Open your mouth a little; put your tongue up to the top of your mouth, behind your teeth, and press tttt tttt	le al
	Pucker your lips and show your teeth; use your tongue as you say jjj	g dge ge
	Put your teeth against your bottom lip and make a buzzing sound vvvv vvvv	ve



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Grapheme and mnemonic	Pronunciation phrase	Phase 5 Graphemes
	Pucker your lips and keep them small as you say w w w	wh
	Show me your teeth and buzz the z sound zzzzz zzzzz	se ze
	Pucker your lips and show your teeth; use your tongue as you say ch ch ch	tch ture*
	Show me your teeth and push the air out shshshshshsh	ch ti ssi si ci
	Open your mouth wide and say e e e	ea
	Pull your lips back and make the y sound at the back of your mouth yyy	y
	Make your mouth into a round shape and say o o o	a
	Open your mouth wide and say u u u	o-e o ou




*Note that the pronunciation of 'ture' has a slight schwa sound at the end.



Sounds introduced in Phase 3

Grapheme	Catchphrase	Pronunciation phrase	Phase 5 Graphemes
ai	 <p>tail in the rain</p>	Open your mouth wide and say ai ai ai	ay a a-e eigh aigh ey ea
ee	 <p>sheep in a jeep</p>	Smile with your lips apart and say ee ee ee	ea e e-e ie y ey
igh	 <p>a light in the night</p>	Open your mouth in a relaxed way and say igh igh igh	ie i i-e y
oa	 <p>soap that goat</p>	Make an 'o' with your mouth and say oa oa oa	o o-e ou oe ow







Grapheme	Catchphrase	Pronunciation phrase	Phase 5 Graphemes
oo	 zoom to the moon	Open your mouth just a bit, put your hand on your tummy, pull your tummy in and say oo oo oo	ue u-e ew ou ui
yoo		Pucker your lips and keep them small as you say yoo yoo yoo	ue u u-e ew
oo	 hook a book	Open your mouth just a bit, put your hand on your tummy, pull your tummy in and say oo oo oo	u* oul
ar	 march in the dark	Open your mouth wide, push your tongue down and say ar ar	a* al*



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Grapheme	Catchphrase	Pronunciation phrase	Phase 5 Graphemes
or	 born with a horn	Make an 'o' with your mouth, push your tongue down and say or or or	aw au aur oor al a oar ore
ur	 curl the fur	Open your mouth in a relaxed way, push your tongue down and say ur ur ur	er ir or
ow	 wow owl	Open your mouth wide then move your lips together as you say ow ow ow	ou
oi	 boing boing	Make an 'o' with your mouth then move your lips out as you say oi oi oi	oy





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Grapheme	Catchphrase	Pronunciation phrase	Phase 5 Graphemes
ear	 get near to hear	Smile with your lips apart, push your tongue to your teeth as you say ear ear ear	ere ear
air	 chair in the air	Open your mouth wide, push your tongue down as you say air air air	are ere ear
zh		Pucker your lips and show your teeth; push the air over your tongue as you say zh zh	su si

*depending on regional accent





Examples of phonics screening check assessment. Please note these are from the answer sheet for the teacher administering the test. This is not the sheet children will read from.

Section 1			
Word	Correct	Incorrect	Comment
dup			
hib			
gox			
ags			
yech			
quog			
loip			
chuss			
clen			
stizz			
pult			
heeft			
quiz			
sell			
form			
shark			
snip			
clang			
bunk			
boils			

Section 2			
Word	Correct	Incorrect	Comment
jigh			
saunt			
virp			
phope			
sleft			
thresk			
spleg			
strume			
pie			
found			
boom			
shake			
spelt			
floats			
scrub			
scribe			
delay			
statue			
counter			
grateful			



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Section 1			
Word	Correct	Incorrect	Comment
nop			
yim			
zeg			
ild			
jick			
sheb			
deeg			
quish			
brop			
sleen			
sint			
doilt			
shin			
fang			
sort			
chill			
fled			
speck			
ramp			
corns			

Section 2			
Word	Correct	Incorrect	Comment
bew			
clune			
baup			
cheve			
blenk			
froast			
scrup			
sprace			
bar			
sneak			
curl			
doze			
plank			
shrimp			
split			
stripe			
relay			
ending			
dolphin			
crackers			



Information for parents and carers



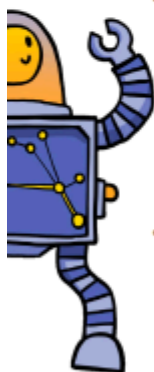
Your child's reading journey Year 1 Phonics Screening Check

Your child has now learned most of the Year 1 phonics in *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* and will soon be preparing for the nationally required Phonics Screening Check, which will take place in June.

What is the Phonics Screening Check?

- The Phonics Screening Check is a quick check of your child's decoding skills.
- Your child will be asked to read 40 words – 20 are real words, 20 are known as 'alien words' (made-up words).

Why do the children read 'alien words'?



- Reading alien words checks children's decoding skills and knowledge of graphemes in a fair way – it mirrors what the children have to do when they read a word that they have not read before.
- Your child will not have seen the alien words before. They will have to use their knowledge of letters and sounds to work out how to read them.

How does the check work?

- Your child will be asked to read 40 words independently.
- The check has been designed to not put your child under stress. It will be carried out by a member of staff who knows your child well.
- It should only take a few minutes to complete, but there is no time limit.

Do I need to do anything to further support my child?

- Continue to listen to your child read their phonics books and read to them daily.
- Your child's teacher will let you know if any additional practice is needed.
- Always ask if you need any further support!



All for the love of reading

- Teaching children the skills of reading will increase their will to read. Children who love reading, choose to read.
- Reading develops children's vocabulary, understanding of the world and empathy.
- A love of reading is the biggest indicator of future academic success! To develop a love of reading, children must have the skills to read, which is why we teach them using phonics.

