



BEARWOOD Primary and Nursery School

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Friday 18th September 2020.

Dear Parent/Carer.

RE: Phonics Screening Test - Year 2 parents.

Usually at the end of year 1, all pupils take part in a National Phonics Screening Check. This check assesses your child's ability to read words phonetically and enable teachers to identify areas of support if needed. Unfortunately, due to COVID these assessments did not take place. We have been informed by the Government that these assessments will take place just before Christmas to ascertain whether they have met the required standard.

What is phonics?

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

- Recognise the sounds that each individual letter makes.
- Identify the sounds that different combinations of letters make - such as 'sh' or 'oo'
- Blend these sounds together from left to right to make a word.

Children can then use this knowledge to 'de-code' new words that they hear or see. This is the first important step in learning to read.

What is the phonics screening check?

The phonics screening check is a quick and easy check of your child's phonics knowledge. It helps our school confirm whether your child has made the expected progress.

How does the check work?

Your child will work with myself and be asked to read 40 words aloud. Your child may have read some of the words before, while others will be completely new. The check normally takes just a few minutes to complete and there is no time limit. If your child is struggling, the teacher will stop the check. The check is carefully designed not to be stressful for your child.

What are 'non-words'?

The check will contain a mix of real words and 'non-words' (or 'nonsense words'). Your child will be told before the check that there will be non-words that he or she will not have seen before. Your child will be familiar with these as we already as we use 'non-words' when we teach phonics. Non-words are important to include because words such as 'vap' or 'jound' are new to all children. Children cannot read the non-words by using their memory or vocabulary; they have to use their decoding skills.

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. All children are individuals and develop at different rates. The screening check ensures that teachers understand which children might need extra help with phonic decoding.

We know that during COVID that pupils made different rates of progress and with this in mind we have carried out an assessment and will work with the pupils to ensure that they are prepared through catch up learning.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Sally Wall
Deputy Headteacher

