



St Patrick's RC Primary School, Dipton

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Headteacher: Mrs J Burgess

We follow in Christ's footsteps

Wednesday 2nd March 2022

Dear Parents/Carers

National Phonics Screening Test

I am writing to inform you about the National Phonics Screening Test which will take place during June. This letter aims to explain this process. We are working very hard in phonics every single day. These are just a few frequently asked questions that may be useful to you.

Who takes the test?

All Year 1 pupils. In addition, any child 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.

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?

This annual phonics screening check for Year 1 pupils will further inform our continual assessment of children's phonic knowledge and the results of the check will be shared with parents/carers in the end of year report.

It comprises of a list of 40 words that children read one-to-one with myself or Mrs Langley. The list is a combination of both real and made up words which rely purely on using phonics to decode. The non-words are words that have been made up and will be shown with a picture of an

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imaginary creature (see examples in table below). Other examples can be downloaded from <http://primarytools.co.uk>

Examples of words: real words

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

Examples of non - words

tox blan elt geck thazz slak steck clinp quemp shoik thene blust
jound strupe snemp stroft

What are non-words?

Your child will be told during the check which words are non-words (that he/she will not have seen before). Your child will be familiar with this because we already use 'non-words' or 'alien words' when teaching phonics in school.

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. This is a fair way to assess their ability to decode.

We are beginning some phonics booster classes after half term and these will begin to take place on Tuesday 8th March after school until 4pm. You will be notified by text if your child needs to be involved. During the sessions, your child will work in a small group with myself, Mrs Drummond, Mrs Langley or Mrs Burgess to ensure we have covered all sounds and that the children are confident with their phonics knowledge.

There is no need to be anxious regarding the phonics screening. Children will largely be unaware that this activity is an assessment and will enjoy some one-to-one time with their teacher.

We look forward to seeing you (virtually) at the phonics meeting on Monday 7th March at 4pm. You have already been sent the link (letter issued on Tuesday 1st March). During the meeting, we will take the opportunity to explain our approach to phonics teaching in more detail.

If you have any further questions please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully

Mrs J Evans
Class teacher

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