



Blanford Mere Nursery and Primary School

Mimosa Walk, Kingswinford, West Midlands DY6 7EA

Headteacher: Mrs N.J. Miller Tel: 01384 818365 Email: info@blanford.dudley.sch.uk

PARENT INFORMATION FOR THE YEAR 2 PHONICS SCREENING CHECK

Dear Parent / Carer,

You may already know that the Government introduced a Year 1 'Phonics Screening Check' to ascertain children's attainment in reading phonetically by the end of year 1. However, due to the school closures from March until September 2020 this will now take place the week commencing **Monday 30th November**. The check consists of 40 words, 20 of them are known words and 20 'alien' words that need to be sounded out by the child. It will be a quick and easy check of your child's phonic knowledge, which will help us to confirm whether he or she has made the expected progress.

This letter gives an overview of what the phonics screening check will entail.

When will the Year 2 phonics screening check take place?

The phonics screening check will take place during the week commencing **Monday 30th November 2020** - Please ensure you do not book any holidays within this period of time.

How does the check work?

- Your child will sit with a teacher and be asked to read the 40 words aloud.
- Your child may have read some of the words before, while others will be new.
- The check normally takes just a few minutes to complete and there is no time limit.

If your child is struggling, we will stop to check. The check is carefully designed not to be stressful to your child.

What are the 'Alien' words?

The check will contain a mix of real words and 'Alien' words (or nonsense words). Your child will be told before the check that there will be alien words that he or she will not have seen before. Many children will be familiar with this because we already use 'alien words' when we teach phonics. Alien words are important to include because words such as 'vap' or 'jound' are new to all children. Children cannot read the alien 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 before the end of the autumn term. Please remember that all children are individuals and develop at different rates and that the screening check ensures that your child's teacher understands which children need extra help with phonics decoding. If your child does not achieve the expected threshold they will re-take the test in **June 2021**.

LEARNING TO READ THROUGH PHONICS AT BLANFORD MERE

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 the 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.



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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. It is particularly helpful for children aged 5-7.

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. Children who have been taught phonics also tend to read more accurately than those taught using other methods, such as 'look and say'. This includes children who find learning to read difficult, for example those who have dyslexia.

If you would like to find out more about phonics, visit

www.education.gov.uk/schools/teachingandlearning/pedagogy/phonics or search for 'Phonics' on the Department for Education website at www.education.gov.uk.

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:

- Teaching how sounds match with letters starts with individual letters such as 's', 'a' and 't' and then will move on to two letter sounds such as 'ee', 'ch' and 'ck'.
- 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 to help him or her to follow the story.
- Try to make time to read with 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 shopping lists or road signs to practice phonics.
- Your child's reading diary is a great way for you to communicate about what your child has read and whether he or she has enjoyed a particular book.

Finally, we would like to stress that the children will be **under no pressure** and that we are looking upon the check as an assessment to inform teacher's planning.

If you have any further queries please do not hesitate to ask.

Many thanks

Miss Stanton

Deputy Head