



# St Bartholomew's CE Primary School

Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> October 2020

Dear Parents/Carers

## National Phonics Screening Test: Year 2

I am writing to you to inform you that, in line with government guidance, we are required to administer a National Phonics Screening Test to all children in Year 2 during the second half of the Autumn Term. Over lockdown, the Government cancelled all assessments that were due to take place in the summer of 2020. 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 2 will undertake the National Phonics Screening Test.

### **What is phonics?**

Phonics is a way of teaching children to read and we do this at St Bartholomew's in Read, Write, Inc.

Children 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?**

As you may have already heard, the government introduced an annual phonics screening check. This will further inform our continual assessment of the 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 a teacher. The list is a combination of both real and made up, non-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 imaginary creature to help them.

The phonics screening check will take place in early December, on a one to one basis but the children will largely be unaware of it being a test and have already participated in some practice ones.

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### **What are nonsense words?**

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

### **After the check**

We will inform you of your child's progress in phonics and how he or she has done in the screening check prior to the Christmas Break. 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. 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 'special friends' - these are two separate sounds that when put together they make one sound. EG: 's' and 'h', when they are put together they make the sound 'sh' (children are allowed to underline the sounds)

**Step 2** - Fred (the frog we use to help us in Read, Write Inc. sessions) talk the sounds (say each sound separately)

**Step 3** - read the word (blend sounds together)

- Use the speed sounds chart attached/enclosed. 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 nonsense words for your child to practice. An example of a phonics screening check test has been included.
- With all books, encourage your child to 'sound out'/'Fred talk' 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 brother 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.
- Lots of Fred talk at home!
- Watch the clips of Mrs Suthers on Youtube, she is a teacher who delivers short phonics lessons online as a recap. <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCxq7PuIvKfV-q9UFuSZr6eg>

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

Yours sincerely,

Miss C Cox  
Palm Class Teacher