



October 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

You may have heard about the national Year 1 phonics screening check that usually takes place in June each year. Cancellation of this check in June 2020 due to the pandemic, means that our current Year 2 pupils missed out whilst in Year 1.

In the 2020/21 academic year only, it has recently been decided by the government that it is a statutory requirement for schools to administer a phonics screening check to Year 2 pupils during the second half of this autumn term with results returned to our Local authority in the usual way.

Year 2 pupils who meet the expected standard in phonics in the autumn term check will not be required to complete any further statutory assessments in phonics. Year 2 pupils who do not meet the expected standard in the autumn check will be expected to repeat the statutory check in June 2021.

We would like to outline what the check involves; how it will take place and what you can do to support your child:

What is the 'Phonics Screening Check'?

Children across the country will be screened for their phonics knowledge during the second half of the autumn term 2020. It is a quick and easy check and helps determine if your child has made expected progress.

How does the check work?

Your child will sit with a teacher that he/she knows and will 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 is expected to take 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 comprises two sections:

- The first section includes the easier letter sounds – single letter sounds such as 's' or 'a'.
- The second section includes more difficult sounds – letter sounds made up of more than one letter such as 'ch'; 'ar'; 'ou'; 'er'; 'ay' or 'air' etc. We call them 'special friends'.

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The check includes a mix of real words and made up or 'alien words'. Your child will be told before the check that there will be words that he/she will not have seen before. Children cannot read the 'alien words' by using their memory or vocabulary – they have to use their decoding skills.

How can I help my child prepare for the test?

Reading every day, little and often is key. It is especially important that when you support your child's reading that you and your child pronounce the sounds accurately to ensure words are read and pronounced carefully.

At St Thomas More, we follow the Letters and Sounds programme for teaching phonics. The children are very familiar with it and their home reading books are linked to the texts that they are reading in school. Follow this [link](#), and this [link](#) to access some helpful videos.

Once your child is fairly confident with the letter sounds, you can try playing word games. Create simple words including 'alien words'. Ask your child to make the word 'cat' into the word 'mat' or the word 'high' into 'fright'. Follow this [link](#) to access some online word games.

This week your child has also taken home a sound sheet, that identifies specific sounds for your child to focus their practice. Please concentrate on these sounds first.

If you would like any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

With kindest regards

Miss E Bradley