



Riverside Primary School

Ferry Road, Hullbridge, Hockley, Essex, SS5 6ND

Headteacher: Mrs Claire Smith

Tel: 01702 230911

Email: admin@riversideprimary.co.uk Website: www.riversideprimary.co.uk

Thursday 30th April 2026

Dear Parents/Carers,

Year 1 Phonics Screening Check

I am writing to inform you that all Year 1 children will take part in the statutory Phonics Screening Check in the week beginning Monday 8th June 2026. This check is not a formal test but a way for teachers to ensure that children are making sufficient progress with their phonics skills to read words. It helps us confirm that they are on track to become fluent readers who can enjoy reading for pleasure and learning.

How is the Check Structured?

The check consists of a list of 40 words, with a mix of real words and nonsense (pseudo) words. The nonsense words are shown to your child with a picture of an alien. This makes the check more engaging while ensuring that children apply their phonics skills rather than relying on memory.

Who Will Administer the Check?

The check will be carried out one-to-one by Mrs Beard (our Phonics Lead and Year 1 teacher) in a quiet and familiar environment. As this is a teacher-led assessment, it will be delivered in a way that makes children feel comfortable and confident. There will be a few practice words first to make sure your child understands the activity and feels comfortable.

Why Are Nonsense Words Included?

Nonsense words are an important part of the check because they assess children's ability to decode words using phonics rather than relying on their vocabulary knowledge or memory. This approach is widely used in phonics teaching to help children develop strong reading skills.

How Long Does the Check Take?

Each child is different, but most complete the check in around 10-15 minutes. If needed, the check can be split into shorter sessions with a break.

What Happens If a Child Struggles with the Check?

The Phonics Screening Check helps us identify children who may need extra support with early reading. If your child does not meet the expected standard, we will provide targeted phonics support at the end of Year 1 and into Year 2. They will also have the opportunity to retake the check in Year 2.

How Will the Results Be Used?

The check is designed to give teachers and parents information on how your child is progressing in phonics. It will help to identify whether your child needs additional support at this stage so that they do not fall behind in this vital early reading skill. Your child's Phonics Screening Check score will be included in their end-of-year report in July, as well as to the Local Authority.

How Can You Support at Home?

Here are some ways you can help your child build confidence with phonics:

- **Read together daily** – Encourage your child to sound out words and blend the sounds.
- **Make reading enjoyable** – Share books and magazines, visit the library, and point out words in everyday life.
- **Use phonics games** – Websites such as:
 - Phonics Play: <https://www.phonicsplay.co.uk/>
 - Alphablocks [Alphablocks - BBC iPlayer](#)
- **Encourage decoding** – If your child struggles with a word, encourage them to break it down sound by sound before blending.

What to Do If Your Child Struggles with Decoding?

- Say each sound in the word from left to right.
- Blend the sounds by pointing to each letter (e.g. /b/ in bat) or letter group (e.g. /igh/ in sigh) while saying the sound.
- Run your finger under the whole word as you say it together.
- Talk about the meaning of words to develop comprehension.
- Work at your child's pace and **have fun!**

Further Information

Please find attached to this letter a Powerpoint of information for parents about the Phonics Screening Check.

If you have any questions, please speak to your child's teacher. You can also find more details on the government website: [Phonics screening check: information for parents - GOV.UK](#)

Thank you for your support

Mrs Watts

Deputy Headteacher & Assessment Lead

