

Ph

KEY STAGE
1

National Curriculum assessments

Check administrators' guide

Phonics screening check

2013



Standards
& Testing
Agency

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2013 Key Stage 1 *Check administrators' guide: Phonics screening check*

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This publication is also available for download at www.education.gov.uk/ks1.

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1. Introduction

This *Check administrators' guide* (CAG) has been produced by the Standards and Testing Agency (STA), an executive agency of the Department for Education. It should be read by anyone who is involved in the administration and scoring of the phonics screening check, referred to in this document as 'the check'. It contains important information about what to do before, during and after the check. A copy of this document should be taken into the room where the check will be administered.

This guide must be followed to ensure the correct and consistent administration of the check for all schools. Schools which do not comply with the guidance in this document could be subject to investigations of maladministration. A full guide to the statutory requirements is available in the 2013 Key Stage 1 *Assessment and reporting arrangements* (ARA).

All references to academies include Free Schools as in law they are academies.

1.2 Changes for 2013

This year the check must be administered to children in Year 2 if they did not take the check in Year 1 or if they did not reach the expected standard. Headteachers may still decide that a child in Year 2 should not take the check. More information is provided in section 2.3.

2. Planning for the check

You should consider which teacher(s) will administer the check, any adaptations that may be needed and where the check will be administered. Consideration must also be given to any Year 2 children taking the check (see section 2.3).

2.1 What the check looks like

The check contains 40 words divided into two sections of 20 words. Each page contains either four pseudo-words or four real words; real words and pseudo-words will not be mixed up on a page. All letters are in lower case. An example of the check can be found in the sample materials which are available from the Department's website at www.education.gov.uk/ks1.

The words in the standard version of the check will be printed on white paper and written in the font 'Sassoon Infant', font size 60. You may modify the materials to meet the needs of specific children, for example by changing the font or font size. Further information is provided in section 2.4.1.

Each pseudo-word will be accompanied by a picture of an imaginary creature. The picture is used to provide children with a context for the word they are being asked to decode. This means that the child is being asked to decode the type of imaginary creature so that they are not trying to match the pseudo-word to a word in their vocabulary. An example of what you could say to introduce the check is available in section 4.1.

Schools will receive one set of materials per 30 children in Year 1. If your school has any Year 2 children taking the check you will receive extra materials. Each set of materials will contain:

- one copy of the Phonics screening check children's materials;
- 30 copies of the Screening check: Answer sheet;
- one copy of the practice sheet; and
- one copy of the 2013 *Phonics screening check scoring guidance*, which includes the threshold mark.

There is no need to contact STA for additional materials. If there are not enough copies of the Answer sheet, you may photocopy one or download and print copies from the Phonics section of the NCA tools website at www.education.gov.uk/nca_tools.

2.2 Preparing check administrators

The check must be administered on a one-to-one basis by a teacher who is known to the child. It should not be administered by a teaching assistant because the role requires a teacher's professional judgement about which responses are correct. The teacher must not be a relative or carer of the child taking the check.

STA encourages schools to hold training sessions, or attend those run by local authorities, to ensure those involved in administering the check are fully prepared.

To prepare for the check, teachers should familiarise themselves with sections 9–13 of the Key Stage 1 ARA. The following materials are available on the Department's website at www.education.gov.uk/ks1 and provide further support:

- *Phonics screening check sample materials*. This document explains how the check is constructed and what the materials will look like.
- *Year 1 phonics screening check training video*. This includes examples of children attempting the check and provides guidance on how to score responses. Teachers should watch the video before administering the check so that they fully understand the scoring rules.
- The international phonetic alphabet.
- Guidance for schools on monitoring visits will be available on the Department's website from April. It will outline what you should expect during a local authority monitoring visit.

Schools will receive a copy of the 2013 *Phonics screening check scoring guidance* in June with the check materials. This will also be available to download from the NCA tools website at www.education.gov.uk/nca_tools. This guidance provides the threshold mark that children need to achieve to meet the expected standard. It also provides guidance for teachers on acceptable pronunciations of the pseudo-words in the check. The 2013 *Phonics screening check scoring guidance* must not be opened before the week of the check (week commencing Monday 17 June). For further information on scoring the check see section 4.2.

For further support, contact the National Curriculum assessments helpline on 0300 303 3013 or email assessments@education.gov.uk.

2.3 Who should take the check

Section 9.1 of the 2013 Key Stage 1 ARA provides an overview of which children should take the check. The information below explains what to do in specific circumstances.

Children in Year 1

All children in Year 1 in the school year 2012/13 must take the check, unless they have no understanding of grapheme-phoneme correspondences.

Eligible children in Year 2

The following children in Year 2 should also take the check.

- Those who did not take the check in Year 1 because they were absent, disapplied or withdrawn.
- Those who did not reach the expected standard in Year 1.
- Those who entered the schooling system in Year 2.

This is the first year in which children in Year 2 who did not previously meet the standard will need to retake the check. Children can be disapplied for a second consecutive year if they still have no understanding of grapheme-phoneme correspondences or are unable to access the materials.

If a child joins a school in Year 2 the common transfer file should include information about whether the child reached the expected standard in the phonics check in Year 1. If this information is not provided, the school should either contact its local authority or use the Key to success website at www.keytosuccess.education.gov.uk/schools to search for the child by their Unique Pupil Number. Children who do **not** need to take the check again will be indicated by a phonics outcome of 'Wa' (child took the phonics screening check and met the expected standard). If you are unable to establish whether the child took the check in Year 1, the child should take the check in Year 2.

The check must be administered to Year 2 children during the week commencing 17 June and in the same way as to Year 1 children. When planning for the check, you should consider the following:

- **Who will administer the check?** This could be either the Year 2 teacher or the Year 1 teacher, providing the teacher is known to the child.
- **Where will the check be administered?** More than one room may be needed if the check will be administered to more than one child at the same time.
- **What materials will be needed and will they require modification?** Schools administering the check to Year 2 children will be provided with additional materials.

Children who move schools

If a child arrives at a school just before check week they should still attempt the check, unless they have no understanding of grapheme-phoneme correspondences.

Children with selective mutism

Children with selective mutism will be unable to participate in the check because they cannot give verbal responses. They may be able to identify the words in the check but will not be able to demonstrate that knowledge by speaking out loud.

Children with selective mutism may instead informally demonstrate their knowledge at home with a family member who can discuss the outcome with the teacher. This arrangement will ensure the child has had a similar experience to their peers and give them an opportunity to show their knowledge. In order to avoid potential security issues regarding the check materials, this option must not happen until Saturday 29 June, as the latest date a child can take the check in school is Friday 28 June (see section 4).

For reporting purposes, the child should be recorded as 'D' (child did not take the phonics screening check) as the results cannot be validated.

2.3.1 Disapplying a child from the check

The headteacher may decide that a child should not participate in the check and should, therefore, be disappplied. There is no formal process to follow to do this. The child should be recorded as 'D' (child did not take the phonics screening check) when reporting results to the local authority (see section 5.5). Any Year 1 children who are disappplied in 2013 should be reconsidered for the check in 2014.

If the headteacher decides that the child should not take the check, they should explain this to the child's parents. The headteacher's decision regarding participation is final.

You may want to provide a similar check experience for children who have been disapplied. You could do this by modifying the practice sheets to include only single letters or simple two letter blends so children can demonstrate the skills they have learnt. The practice sheets and live check will be available on the NCA tools website at www.education.gov.uk/ncatools on Monday 17 June.

If a child is unable to access the check it is important that teachers are aware of that child's progress in phonics so they can plan the next steps in their teaching.

2.4 Adapting the check

You may need to adapt the way the check is administered for some children, however this should neither advantage nor disadvantage individual children. Some examples include use of:

- rest breaks
- coloured overlays
- cued speech
- visual phonics
- 'sound buttons'

You should refer to section 11 of the 2013 Key Stage 1 ARA for more information about these adaptations.

If a child uses 'sound buttons' to help them decode words as part of normal classroom practice they should be allowed to adapt the check materials accordingly. The child must be provided with a clean copy of the check so that they can mark the sound buttons against the graphemes themselves. You must not mark the graphemes for the child.

2.4.1 School-based modifications to the check materials

The following versions of the check will be available to download from the NCA tools website at www.education.gov.uk/ncatools from Monday 17 June.

- A PDF of the standard materials for printing onto different coloured paper.
- Word versions of the standard materials with colour pictures, black and white pictures, and no pictures.
- A PDF of the practice sheet.
- Word versions of the practice sheet with colour pictures, black and white pictures, and no pictures.
- A PDF of the Screening check: Answer sheet.
- A PDF of the 2013 *Phonics screening check scoring guidance*.

These materials are designed to be modified by teachers to meet the needs of individual children and their own approach to teaching phonics. Examples of modifications include:

- changing the font;
- changing the font size;
- having fewer words per page; or
- removing the imaginary creatures for any children that might find them distracting.

The online versions are also provided if teachers need to print additional materials.

2.4.2 Braille versions of the check

Braille versions of the check are available on request. They will be provided in grade 1 Braille without pictures of imaginary creatures. You may order Braille versions by contacting STA's modified test helpline on 0300 303 3019. To comply with the Data Protection Act 1998, you must not send these requests by email.

Braille orders placed by Monday 13 May will be delivered during the week commencing 3 June. If a child is identified as needing Braille materials after 13 May, you should telephone STA's modified test helpline. Materials will be sent within three working days.

2.5 Preparing the room

The check should be administered in a room which is quiet and provides a comfortable, well lit space for the child. Rooms must be prepared before children are admitted. Displays or materials that could help children in the check must be removed or covered for the duration of the check.

2.6 Schools selected to provide item level data

A sample of schools will be selected to provide STA with item level data. These schools will receive further information, including instructions on how they should record and submit children's responses.

Schools selected as part of the sample have a statutory obligation to return the required data. STA will use the information to inform a technical analysis of the check.

3. Receiving and storing check materials

3.1 Security of check materials

It is the headteacher's duty to ensure check materials, in particular the check booklet and 2013 *Phonics screening check scoring guidance*, are kept secure at all times. It is important that the security of the check materials is maintained until the end of the check period on Friday 28 June (the last date a child may take the check). This ensures the confidentiality and integrity of the check is maintained so that no child has an unfair advantage over another.

Those with access to the check materials must not share the check words with anyone not directly involved with the administration of the check. This includes other staff at the school or other schools and family members.

If you suspect a breach of security regarding the check materials, the incident must be reported immediately to the National Curriculum assessments helpline on 0300 303 3013. STA will then investigate the incident and take action where appropriate.

3.2 Deliveries of check materials

Check materials will be delivered to schools by Friday 14 June.

When you receive the materials you should open the outer packaging and check the number of packs against the delivery note. Where possible this should be witnessed by a second member of staff. Keep the signed and annotated delivery note in an accessible place as it will be requested if you receive a monitoring visit. The inner packs must be left unopened and stored securely until Monday 17 June.

If you have not received your check materials by 5pm on Thursday 13 June you should contact the National Curriculum assessments helpline on 0300 303 3013. Service Children's Education (SCE) schools can contact the National Curriculum assessments helpline on +44 161 234 9226.

If the delivery is found to be incomplete, or if it contains more packs than shown on the delivery note, you must report this immediately to the National Curriculum assessments helpline.

If any of the packs are unsealed or damaged on arrival you must report this immediately to STA. You may be asked to send a photograph of the damaged packages to STA.

The following advice will help to ensure the check materials are kept securely:

- After checking the materials against the delivery note, place them back into their original boxes, reseal the boxes and store in a secure, locked location.
- Keep the annotated copy of the delivery note in an accessible place in case your school receives a monitoring visit.

- Conduct regular checks of the materials to ensure they have not been tampered with.
- Ensure individual packs of check materials are not opened until the week commencing Monday 17 June.
- Ensure anyone handling the check materials understands their sensitivity.
- Ensure the check materials are stored securely when not in use.

Detailed guidance on storing check materials securely is available on the Department's website at www.education.gov.uk/ks1.

4. Administering the check

The check can be administered on any day during the week commencing Monday 17 June. It must be administered by a teacher on a one-to-one basis.

If a child is absent during the check week, the school can administer the check up to Friday 28 June. Any child who is absent from school for this entire period should be recorded as absent when submitting the results data for the check.

It is important that the security of the check materials is maintained until the check period ends on Friday 28 June. This ensures the confidentiality and integrity of the check is maintained so that no child has an unfair advantage over another.

4.1 At the beginning of the check

Teachers should introduce the check as consistently as possible, bearing in mind some children may require more explanation in order to understand the task.

The check materials include a double-sided practice sheet with four pseudo-words and four real words on each side. This can be used to familiarise children with the task. If a child is struggling to decode the words on the practice sheet you should stop the check and discuss with your headteacher whether the child should be disapplied, (see section 2.3.1).

During the practice, you can give further guidance to ensure children understand the task. For example, you may remind the child that the word must be blended, which would not be allowed during the check itself.

The following text provides an example of how you could introduce the check.

- In this activity, I am going to ask you to read some words aloud.
- You may have seen some of the words before and others will be new to you.
- You should try to read each word but don't worry if you can't. If it helps you, you may sound out the letters before trying to say the word.
- This practice sheet shows you what the words will look like.
- Have a go at reading out loud these four words which you should have come across before [at, in, beg and sum].
- The words on this side [turn over practice sheet] are not real words. They are names for types of imaginary creatures. You can see a picture of the creature next to each word.
- Can you read out the words on this page for me [ot, vap, osk and ect]?
- Ok, now we are going to start reading out the words in this booklet and I'm going to write down what you say on my sheet.
- In this booklet there are four words on each page. I will tell you at the start of each page whether they are real words that you may have seen before or words for imaginary creatures.
- The first page has words for imaginary creatures and you can see their pictures.
- Can you start reading the words to me?

It is important to tell the child whether they are real words or types of imaginary creatures on each page.

You can point to whole words to indicate which word comes next but you must be careful not to point to the words in a way that indicates how to decode them, for example, pointing from left to right or hovering over letters.

4.2 Scoring the check

You should score the check as the child works through each word in order. For each word, you should make a record on the Answer sheet of whether the child said the word correctly or not, considering the following points:

- Children may choose to sound out phonemes before blending. If a child sounds out the phonemes but does not blend the word, they must not be prompted to do so. This must be scored as incorrect.
- Children may elongate phonemes as long as they are blended to form the word. However, if children leave gaps between phonemes and do not blend them, this must be scored as incorrect.
- Alternative pronunciations must be considered when deciding whether a response is correct. For real words, inappropriate grapheme-phoneme correspondences must be marked incorrect (for example, reading 'blow' to rhyme with 'cow' would be incorrect). However, alternative pronunciations of graphemes will be allowed in pseudo-words.
- A child's accent should be taken into account when deciding whether a response is acceptable. There should be no bias for or against children with a particular accent.
- Any pronunciation difficulties for a child should be taken into account when deciding whether a response is acceptable (for example, a child who is unable to form the 'th' sound and instead usually says 'fw' should have this scored as correct).
- If a child shows their ability to decode by correcting an incorrect attempt, this should be marked as correct. However, children should not be prompted to 'have another go'. If a child makes several attempts at a word the final attempt should be scored, even if this is incorrect and a previous attempt had been correct.
- You should not indicate whether a child has decoded a word correctly or incorrectly during the administration of the check, but you may offer encouragement or support to ensure the child remains focused on the task.
- Children should be given as long as necessary to respond to a word, although in most cases ten seconds should be sufficient. You should decide when it is appropriate to tell the child to move onto the next word, taking care not to try to move the child on if they are still trying to decode the word.

For more guidance on how to score the check, watch the Year 1 *phonics screening check training video* available on the Department's website at www.education.gov.uk/ks1.

The 2013 *Phonics screening check scoring guidance* gives detailed guidance on acceptable pronunciations of the check's pseudo-words. It provides two explanations of how words are pronounced. For example:

- **blan** This uses the 'bl' from 'black' and rhymes with 'pan' /blæn/

The 2013 *Phonics screening check scoring guidance* will be sent to schools with the check materials in June. It must not be opened until Monday 17 June when it will also be available from the phonics section of the NCA tools website at www.education.gov.uk/ncatools.

4.3 Dealing with queries and issues during the check

You must ensure that nothing you say or do during the check could be interpreted as giving children an advantage. For further help and guidance, contact the National Curriculum assessments helpline on 0300 303 3013.

Most children should be able to attempt all words in the check. However, it is important that children should not become distressed or have a negative experience during the check.

If a child is struggling with the check, you should give careful consideration to stopping it before the end.

Similarly, if a child is showing signs of fatigue, you should consider using a rest break. Rest breaks should be taken once the child reaches the end of a page. If a child requires frequent lengthy rest breaks, think about stopping the check completely.

When making the decision to stop, you should ensure that the child has been given the full opportunity to show what they can do. If the check is stopped before the end, use the child's score to establish whether the child met the expected standard. The relevant outcome code should be reported to the local authority (see section 5.5).

4.4 Completing the Screening check: Answer sheet

You should use the Answer sheets to record each child's responses during the check to ensure you have an accurate record of how many words a child read correctly. You can also use them to record your own comments, for example any graphemes a child did not recognise or when blending was difficult. This may help when planning future phonics teaching.

A sample Answer sheet can be found within the sample materials, available from the Department's website at www.education.gov.uk/ks1.

5. After the check

5.1 Storing the Screening check: Answer sheets and check materials

The Answer sheets must be stored securely, ensuring they are accessible for any monitoring visits.

The other check materials must be securely stored until the end of the check period on Friday 28 June so that the integrity of the check is maintained (see section 3.1).

5.2 Completing the headteacher's declaration form

It is the headteacher's statutory duty to ensure the correct implementation of the check in their school. Headteachers must ensure that their school complies with all aspects of the Key Stage 1 ARA. Completion of the headteacher's declaration form (HDF) is statutory and must be completed by the headteacher, or another authorised member of staff, after the last check has been administered. Submission of the form confirms the check has been administered in accordance with the statutory requirements set out in the Key Stage 1 ARA and that the security and confidentiality of the check have been maintained.

The HDF will be available from the Phonics section of the NCA tools website at www.education.gov.uk/ncatools from Monday 17 June. It must be submitted by Friday 28 June.

It is important that the headteacher is fully briefed about any incidents that arise during the check. Any incident that may affect the integrity, security or confidentiality of the check must be reported to STA.

If for any reason the headteacher, or other authorised member of staff, cannot complete the HDF they should notify the National Curriculum assessments helpline on 0300 303 3013.

What to do if all children are working below the level of the check

The headteacher must submit the HDF to confirm that all children are working below the level of the check and that the materials were stored securely throughout the check period.

5.3 Establishing results and informing parents

Teachers should check each child's score against the threshold mark on the 2013 *Phonics screening check scoring guidance* to establish whether they have achieved the expected standard. The 2013 *Phonics screening check scoring guidance* will be included with the check materials, and will be available to download from NCA tools at www.education.gov.uk/ncatools from Monday 17 June.

Teachers must report to parents whether or not their child has met the expected standard to ensure they are aware of their child's progress in developing phonics skills. This must be

done by the end of the summer term at the latest. You can choose how to communicate results to parents. You may wish to include additional information, for example any additional support the school is putting in place for their child or how parents can help their child progress with phonics and reading at home. A template for reporting results to parents can be downloaded from the Department's website at www.education.gov.uk/ks1.

5.4 What to do if a child does not meet the expected standard

If a child does not reach the expected standard, the school should remind and reassure the child's parents that the check is used to provide an indication of whether or not their child is meeting the expected standard of phonics decoding. The school should outline the support that will be put in place to help the child progress.

The Department has published guidance on the action schools should take if a child does not meet the expected standard. *Responding to the results: planning what to do next* is available from the Department's website at www.education.gov.uk/schools/teachingandlearning/pedagogy/phonics.

Children who have not reached the expected standard in the check at the end of Year 1 must be considered for a retake in June 2014. If children have not reached the standard in Year 2, it will not be necessary for them to retake the check in Year 3 or beyond. However schools will be expected to maintain the programme of support for these children.

5.5 Providing results data to local authorities

All schools, including academies, must report pupil-level phonics screening check results to their local authority. Results must be submitted for all children, including those that took the check or were disapplied in Year 2.

The following codes should be used:

Description	Phonics outcome code
Child took the phonics screening check and met the expected standard	Wa
Child took the phonics screening check and did not meet the expected standard	Wt
Absent	A
Child did not take the phonics screening check	D
Child has left the school	L

STA is not responsible for phonics check data collection. Local authorities will provide details of how schools should provide data to them. Management information system suppliers have been advised of the data requirements for the check. Support for these

systems is often offered through a local authority or through the supplier, depending upon local arrangements.

If a child moves school after taking the check, their results should be submitted by the school in which they took the check and provided to the next school via the common transfer file.

Local authorities will submit check results data to the Department between Monday 17 June and Wednesday 31 July. Data received by the Department after Wednesday 31 July will not be included in the provisional statistics or initial release of RAISEonline data.

6. Checklists

6.1 Deliveries

Where possible the checks below should be carried out with a second member of staff:

- Check the contents of packages against the delivery note. This will be in the first box of the delivery. Ensure the correct quantities of check materials are included. If these do not match, contact the National Curriculum assessments helpline on 0300 303 3013. Service Children's Education (SCE) schools can contact the National Curriculum assessments helpline on +44 161 234 9226. If you are content that your delivery is complete, sign the delivery note.
- Check that the sealed packs have not been opened or damaged in transit. If any of the packs are unsealed or damaged, report this immediately to the National Curriculum assessments helpline. Take a photograph of any damage.
- Return the materials to their original boxes, reseal the boxes and store them in a locked cabinet in a locked room, until the check takes place.
- Ensure that the delivery note received with the check materials is kept in an accessible place as a record of the materials being stored in school in case the school receives a monitoring visit from the local authority.
- Check the security of the materials regularly.

6.2 Planning for the check

- Check your school's access to the NCA tools website at www.education.gov.uk/ncatools as you may need to use the website to download materials from Monday 17 June.
- If you will be administering the check, watch the Year 1 *phonics screening check training video* so that you fully understand the scoring rules.
- Prepare for a possible monitoring visit by reading the guidance on monitoring visits that will be available on the Department's website at www.education.gov.uk/ks1 from April.
- Make a note of any individual needs and consider any appropriate adaptations that may need to be made to the way the check will be administered or the check materials themselves. Modifications to the check materials must not be made before Monday 17 June.
- Make a note of which Year 2 children need to take the check (if necessary using the Key to success website at www.keytosuccess.education.gov.uk/schools).

- Order Braille versions of the check by contacting STA's modified test helpline on 0300 303 3019. (Braille versions should be ordered before Monday 13 May, but are also available on request.)
- Prepare the room, covering all displays that may help children with the check.

6.3 Administering the check

Teachers administering the check should:

- Take this guide, the 2013 *Phonics screening check scoring guidance* and the 2013 Key Stage 1 ARA into the check room for reference.
- Introduce the screening check consistently, ensuring children are clear about what they will be expected to do. An example of how to introduce the check can be found in section 4.1 of this guide.
- Score each child's responses clearly using the Answer sheets provided.
- Make their own judgements if they think the check should be stopped before the end for a particular child.

6.4 After the check

- Store the Answer sheets securely.
- Store the other check materials securely until Friday 28 June.
- Complete and submit the headteacher's declaration form by Friday 28 June.
- Report pupil-level results to the local authority by the deadline, ensuring that data is also submitted for any children that took the check in Year 2 or were disapplied.
- Ensure parents are informed of results.



About this publication

Who is it for?

Headteachers and teachers who will administer the phonics screening check. It is also sent to local authorities.

What does it cover?

- How to prepare for the check.
- Receiving and storing check materials.
- How to administer the check.
- How to complete the headteacher's declaration form.
- What to do with results from the check.

Related information

Visit the Department for Education's website at www.education.gov.uk/ks1 to access all related information.

For more copies

Additional printed copies of this CAG are not available. It can be downloaded from the Department's website at www.education.gov.uk/ks1.