

Interim Guidance for Statutory National Curriculum Assessment 2020-21

**Key stage 1:
administering the
phonics screening check
to year 2 pupils**

October 2020



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Introduction

Key Points

This guidance is for schools administering the phonics screening check to year 2 pupils during the second half of the 2020 autumn term.

Head teachers have a duty to ensure that the National Curriculum assessment arrangements are implemented in their school and to comply with the data collection processes conducted by the LA Data and Intelligence Team.

Schools must report any issue with the administration of the check, or any allegations of maladministration, by contacting the national curriculum assessments helpline on **0300 303 3013** or assessments@education.gov.uk

Headteachers at maintained schools and academies must:

- identify which pupils should take the autumn check
- consider whether any pupils will need braille versions and, if required, contact the national curriculum assessments helpline on 0300 303 3013 by Friday 23 October
- ensure all check administrators are appropriately trained
- ensure a past version of the check (from 2017, 2018 or 2019) is administered to each eligible pupil during the second half of the 2020 autumn term
- ensure pupils' responses are scored accurately and consistently
- ensure that any year 2 pupils who do not meet the expected standard in the autumn check continue to receive support in phonics, and take the statutory check in June 2021 (alongside year 1 pupils)
- submit check results to the LA for all eligible pupils by the end of the 2020 autumn term
- report any incident that affects the integrity of the autumn check results by contacting the national curriculum assessments helpline on 0300 303 3013 as soon as possible

LAs must:

- ensure training and advice is available to schools on all aspects of the check
- following the phonics data collection and submission guidance to collect results from schools, quality assure and submit data to DfE for checks administered in the 2020 autumn term

Services For Education on behalf of Birmingham LA **are not** required to conduct monitoring visits to schools administering the autumn check.

Relevant guidance:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/key-stage-1-administering-the-phonics-screening-check-to-year-2-pupils>

Phonics Screening Check Overview

All children in Year 2 must be considered for the phonics screening check and most children are expected to be able to access the check.

You may need to adapt the check for some pupils. Adjustments must be based on normal classroom practice for pupils with specific needs. You do not need to request permission to make adaptations, but you should ensure that any modifications do not advantage or disadvantage pupils. These materials can be downloaded from GOV.UK

It is possible for Head teachers to withdraw children from the check, if the child has not shown any understanding of grapheme-phoneme correspondences.

Schools should explain their decision to parents, providing any relevant documentary evidence, and explaining how their child is being helped to learn to decode using phonics. The Head teacher does not need to inform STA nor follow a formal process to withdraw a child from the check. Where a child has been withdrawn, schools should record code D for that child.

Any child currently in Y2 who is not assessed in the autumn term should be considered for the phonics screening check in June 2021.

Pupils must only attempt the check once during the autumn term check window.

Check administration window

The KS1 phonic check does not have set days for its administration, but schools must administer the checks during the second half of the 2020 autumn term (between the October half term and Christmas).

Schools are advised to consider the timing of the check administration to minimise the risk of unforeseen circumstances, such as illness or holidays, adversely affecting the potential for pupil participation in these.

Pupils in the same cohort can take the check on different days.

If a pupil is absent when the rest of the cohort takes the check, schools can administer the check to the pupil at any point up until the end of the 2020 autumn term.

Any pupil who is absent from school for this entire period should be recorded as 'A' (absent) in the results data. This pupil would then be eligible to take the statutory check in June 2021.

Head teacher's declaration forms (HDFs)

Headteachers do not need to complete a separate headteacher's declaration form (HDF) for the autumn check. The phonics screening check HDF submitted by schools in June 2021 will cover both checks.

Phonics Check Materials

Schools can choose from the past phonics screening check materials used in **2017**, **2018** and **2019**.

If pupils have already seen all the past materials available, schools should choose the version that the pupils are least familiar with or the version that they completed the longest time ago.

Schools can use check materials from different years for pupils in the same cohort, if required.

Phonics screening check resources

Resources include:

- scoring guidance
- pupils' materials
- answer sheets

Materials can be downloaded from gov.uk - there is no need to register children.

You can order braille versions, if required, by contacting the national curriculum assessments helpline on 0300 303 3013 by **Friday 23 October 2020**.

Security

Head teachers are responsible for the validity of the checks in their school. They or a delegated senior member of staff should:

- Ensure the materials are downloaded and stored securely including in between sessions / throughout the weeks the checks are being administered. For example, if the checks are administered to pupils in the mornings, at the end of the session, all materials must be returned to be stored securely.
- Ensure confidentiality of the materials is maintained until the end of the administration window.

The STA Assessment and Reporting Arrangements 2020, Phonics screening check section 8.4 states that:

School staff, including check administrators, must not discuss the content of the check with anyone or use question-specific information to prepare pupils for the check. Content that could compromise the check must not be discussed.

Resources

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/national-curriculum-assessments-practice-materials#phonics-screening-check-resources>

Training Video

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/phonics-screening-check-sample-materials-and-training-video>

Preparing for the phonics screening check

- A member of staff who is trained in phonics and has experience delivering phonics sessions to pupils must administer the check on a one-to-one basis.
- The checks should be administered in a room that is free from excessive noise and provides a comfortable space for the child.
- Any displays or materials that could help the children in the check must be covered or removed.
- Check administrators should familiarise themselves with the guidance and training video to understand how to score the check consistently.
- Check administrators should introduce the check as consistently as possible, bearing in mind some pupils may require more explanation to understand the instructions.
- Check administrators must ensure that nothing they say, or do, during the check could be interpreted as giving pupils an advantage.

Which pupils should be assessed?

Year 3 pupils, who were due to take the statutory check in June 2020 (when they were in year 2), are not formally required to take the autumn check. Schools are expected to maintain a programme of support for these pupils but do not need to return phonics data for year 3 pupils to the LA.

All children all pupils who will reach the age of 7 by the end of the 2020/21 academic year (usually in Year 2) must be considered for the phonics screening check and most children are expected to be able to access the check.

A pupil who has not shown any understanding of grapheme-phoneme correspondences may be withdrawn from the check at the discretion of the head teacher. They should, however, be considered for the check in June 2021.

Children who are recently arrived and not able to understand letters and sounds in English should not take the phonics screening check. They should, however, be considered for the check in June 2021.

Pupils who use British sign language or other sight-supported communication boards or who are mute or selectively mute, should not take the check.

Long Term Absence (including illness/hospitalisation)

- The statutory requirement for a child to follow the National Curriculum and to be assessed rests with the school. If a pupil is on roll at your school but is in hospital or is receiving home teaching, you should liaise with the teacher who is currently supporting the child to decide whether it is feasible for teacher assessments to be made. If it is possible to make these assessments, informed by the appropriate use of a check in line with the phonics check arrangements for Y2, the assessments should be made, and the outcomes included in your school's results.
- **Where it is not possible to make teacher assessments**, then the **A** code (standing for 'a secure level cannot be recorded because of long periods of

absence or insufficient information') should be used to record the outcomes of the statutory assessments for that pupil.

- If a child is absent for any other reason (for instance, **outside of the country** for an extended period), then the **A** code should be used to record the child's assessments.

Travelling Children

Travelling children are often absent from school for extended periods. You should make every effort to administer the check but where this is not possible then the child should be recorded as absent using the **A** code.

Pupils Who Change Schools

If an eligible pupil changes school:

- **before the October half term** – the receiving school should assess the pupil and submit data for them
- **after the October half term** – the receiving school should find out whether the pupil has already taken the autumn check (if not, they should assess the pupil and submit data for them)
- **after taking the check** – their result should be submitted by the school where they took the check and be provided to the new school in the common transfer file (CTF)
- **during the Christmas holiday** – the previous school should have assessed the pupil and should include the pupil in their data submission to the LA

Parental Requests

Parents may sometimes request that their child should not be included in the check. Headteachers would need to consider such a request but would only be able to meet it if satisfied that appropriate circumstances applied, such as those covered in these notes. Such a request cannot be met purely based on parental objections to the checks. Head teachers have a statutory duty to ensure that National Curriculum assessments are carried out as appropriate for each eligible pupil.

The Standards and Testing Agency Key Stage 1 Assessment and Reporting Arrangements (2020), Test participation, section 6.1 (and 8.2 Phonics) states:

'Head teachers make the final decision about whether it is appropriate for a pupil to take the tests/check'.

Reporting phonics results

To the local authority

Schools must report their pupils' check results to the LA by the end of the 2020 autumn term i.e. **strictly no later than Friday 18th December** however we **encourage schools to submit their results as soon as possible after tests have been administered**. Data must be submitted for all year 2 pupils who are eligible to take the check, using the following codes:

Pupil who took the check:	Score - the system will convert the pupil's score to an outcome (whether they met the expected standard).
Pupil who was Absent:	A
Headteacher decided it was not appropriate for pupil to take the check	D
Pupil who has left the school	L
Check subject to maladministration	Q

It is the head teacher's responsibility to ensure that the information sent to the LA is accurate. It is imperative that you take the time to check your results on input and as reported back to you from the LA and notify them of any errors as soon as possible. Failure to do so may cause incorrect data to be sent to the DfE which will not be amended after the DfE deadline.

For guidance about recording the assessments and creating the file containing the assessments, please contact your software support.

The LA Data and Intelligence Team will publish further guidance about how to return your assessments to the LA. This guidance will be posted to <https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/primarydata>.

We will be asking schools to submit the Phonics results file using Anycomms, which schools have previously used to submit assessment files to the LA.

Schools that no longer get support from Link2ICT - or that choose to use software that isn't supported by Link2ICT - should check with their IT support function that they will be in a position to record the outcomes and create the necessary file for submission of phonics to the LA.

To Parents

Headteachers must report pupils' results to parents in their annual reports. This should include whether their child has met the expected standard to ensure they are aware of their child's progress in developing phonics decoding skills.

For year 2 pupils who take the check in autumn 2020 and June 2021, schools must report both results to parents.

General enquiries

For general enquiries about check administration and access arrangements, contact the national curriculum assessments helpline on 0300 303 3013 or assessments@education.gov.uk

For enquiries regarding data entry and submission contact LA Data and Intelligence Team educationdata@birmingham.gov.uk

For enquires regarding test administration contact Services For Education, School Support Team, Andrew Cooper 0121 366 9950 or Denise Harris 07766923204.