



Department  
for Education

# **Year 3 Phonics Screening Check pilot**

**Ad-hoc Notice: Headline results from  
the year 3 Phonics Screening Check  
pilot, 2016**

**February 2017**

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## Introduction

The National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) was commissioned by the Standards and Testing Agency (STA) to pilot the Phonics Screening Check with year 3 pupils who had not met the required standard by the end of year 2.

As well as testing year 3 pupils' phonics standard, the pilot also asked schools to complete a teachers' questionnaire.

This report presents headline phonics results from the pilot, as well as a summary of responses to the teacher questionnaire.

## Methodology

A representative sample of schools was randomly selected to trial materials for the year 3 Phonics Screening Check pilot.

The pupils who were eligible to take part in this trial were those year 3 pupils who had not met the required standard by the end of year 2, as well as children who were absent or disapplied.

Participation was voluntary, although all sampled schools were encouraged to take part.

The year 3 Phonics Screening Check pilot took place during the week commencing 13 June 2016, 282 of the 300 sampled schools took part in the pilot.

This note reports on the headline results from the year 3 Phonics Screening Check pilot, it is not however an assessment of the pilot itself.

More detail on the Phonics Screening Check can be found in [Phonics Screening Check and key stage 1 assessment](#) statistical first releases.

Further detail on the NFER methodology can be found on the [NFER Phonics Screening Check year 3 Pilot](#) website.

## Key findings

- Of the 1,625 year 3 pupils who took part in the year 3 Phonics Screening Check pilot, 51% met the expected standard.
- 59% of pupils who took part in the pilot with a first language other than English met the expected standard.
- 39% of pupils with special educational needs support or statement met the expected standard, compared with 65% of pupils with no special educational needs.

Table 1 provides more information on pass rates and pupil characteristics.

Table 2 provides a summary of the answers given in the teacher questionnaire

**Table 1. Pupils meeting the expected standard in the year 3 Phonics Screening Check pilot by pupil characteristic**

	<b>Number of pupils who took the year 3 Phonics Screening Check</b>	<b>Number of pupils who met the expected standard in the year 3 Phonics Screening Check</b>	<b>Percentage of pupils who met the expected standard in the year 3 Phonics Screening Check</b>
Overall <sup>1</sup>	1,625	834	51%
Male	950	488	51%
Female	621	314	51%
Pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	448	205	46%
Pupils not eligible for free school meals	1,123	597	53%
Pupils with English as a first language	1,118	537	48%
Pupils with a first language other than English <sup>2</sup>	450	264	59%
Pupils with special educational needs support or statement	846	329	39%
Pupils with no special educational needs	725	473	65%

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<sup>1</sup> Pupil characteristics could not be matched from the spring school census return for the school at which they took part in the pilot for 54 pupils. The characteristic sub categories will not therefore sum to the overall total

<sup>2</sup> A further 3 pupils had their first language unclassified

## Table 2. Summary of responses to the teacher questionnaire issued alongside the year 3 Phonics Screening Check pilot<sup>3</sup>

212 of the 282 schools which took part in the pilot responded to the teacher questionnaire. A further 3 schools responded to the questionnaire but subsequently dropped out of taking part in the year 3 Phonics Screening Check pilot. These schools' responses have not been included in the following tables.

The below tables summarise the responses given to the main questions. Free text 'other' responses have been omitted from this analysis.

**Have you made any changes to phonics teaching across the board in your school in the current 2015/16 academic year in anticipation of piloting the year 3 Phonics Screening Check? Please tick all that apply**

Response	Number of schools
No, we have not made any changes	97
New mainstream phonics programme	16
Using phonics more systematically	29
Increased the amount of time spent on phonics teaching	42
Increased the frequency of phonics teaching	37
Increased the pace of phonics teaching	20
Increased amount of one to one tuition and small group teaching	75

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<sup>3</sup> Note that the sum of responses in the tables will not always equal the total number of schools which responded to the questionnaire. This is because some schools did not respond to every question and some schools ticked more than one box when only one was required.

**Has the extension of the Phonics Screening Check into year 3 had any positive impact on teaching of phonics to pupils who have fallen behind? Please tick one option**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Number of schools</b>
No, no impact at all	77
Yes, minimal positive impact	35
Yes, moderate positive impact	37
Yes, significant positive impact	10
Don't know	48

**How have teachers been preparing for the year 3 Phonics Screening Check pilot in your school? Please mark all that apply and the single method they found most useful**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Number of schools</b>	
	<b>Used</b>	<b>Found most useful</b>
Individual familiarisation with the Check Administrator's guide	102	27
Watching the online video	76	24
Scoring the Phonics Screening Check	71	14
Discusson with other teachers	139	62
Training (internal)	35	19
Training (external)	13	4
Other	10	3

**What effect has the extension of the Phonics Screening Check into year 3 had on your workload? Please tick one option**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Number of schools</b>
Major decrease	0
Minor decrease	0
No effect	78
Minor increase	120
Major increase	5





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email [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk)

About this publication:

enquiries Sam Tuckett, Education Standards Evidence Dissemination Division,  
Department for Education, Sanctuary Buildings, Great Smith Street,  
London, SW1P 3BT  
Tel: 0207 2275372

Email: [Attainment.STATISTICS@education.gov.uk](mailto:Attainment.STATISTICS@education.gov.uk)

Download: [www.gov.uk/government/publications](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications)

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