



Department  
for Education

# **Phonics screening check data collection 2016**

**Collection guide**

**May 2016**

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1. Purpose of this document

This guide is provided to outline the main requirements and submission arrangements for the phonics screening check data collection 2016. The check will be administered during the week commencing 13 June 2016. The deadline for submission of results to the Department for Education (DfE) by local authorities is Friday 29 July 2016.

This document is provided so that staff in local authorities can:

- understand the rationale behind and purpose of the phonics screening check (section 1);
- populate their systems with the required data for children and schools (section 2);
- complete the phonics screening check return for 2016 (section 3)

It relates to the collection of data for:

- children who are in national curriculum year group 1 in the 2015 to 2016 academic year and as such are eligible to take part in the phonics screening check;
- children in national curriculum year group 2 who have not previously met the expected standard for phonics decoding and as such are required to take the check.

This document is published on the gov.uk [phonics screening check data collection: guide to submitting data website](#) and local authorities may choose to use it directly with their schools or amend it to suit their local needs. Software suppliers and developers of in-house systems may also find it a useful reference document.

## 1.2. Who is in the scope for the phonics screening check data collection?

All state-funded schools (including academies and free schools) are within the scope of the phonics screening check data collection if they have:

- a year 1 cohort in the 2015 to 2016 academic year;
- year 2 pupils in the 2015 to 2016 academic year who did not meet the expected standards for phonics decoding in year 1, including those who were absent or disapplied from the check or did not take the check for other reasons

All state-funded schools (including academies and free schools) should report pupil-level phonics screening check results to their local authority. Local authorities will submit phonics check results data to the DfE via COLLECT. Independent schools are out of scope for this collection.

### **1.3. Rationale behind the phonics screening check data collection**

The phonics screening check is a statutory assessment for all children in year 1, designed to confirm whether individual children have learnt phonic decoding to an appropriate standard. Children who do not achieve the appropriate standard in year 1 should receive support from their school to ensure they can improve their phonic decoding skills. These children will then be expected to retake the check the following year.

The phonics screening check data collection will provide information at school level via RAISEonline for schools to analyse their own performance; and at national and local authority level to allow schools to benchmark their children's performance. National results will also be used to track standards over time.

### **1.4. Statutory basis of phonics screening check data collection**

The individual level data collection from state-funded schools (including academies and free schools) is a statutory requirement of the Education (School Performance Information) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014.

Since the collection of the phonics screening check data is statutory:

- schools do not need to obtain consent for the provision of information from parents of individual children. They must, however, meet their obligations to data subjects under the Data Protection Act 1998;
- schools and local authorities are protected from any legal challenge that they are breaching a duty of confidence;
- it helps to ensure that returns are completed by schools

### **1.5. Legal duties under the Data Protection Act: privacy notice**

The Data Protection Act 1998 puts in place certain safeguards regarding the use of personal data by organisations, including the Department for Education (DfE), local authorities and schools. The Act gives rights to those (known as data subjects) about whom data is held, such as pupils, their parents and teachers. This includes:

- the right to know the types of data being held
- why it is being held, and
- to whom it may be communicated

A 'privacy notice' is a good way to be able to meet data subjects rights and therefore DfE recommend they are used to explain to pupils and staff how their data is being used in the Census collections and the phonics and key stage 1 results collection. DfE have drafted template [privacy notices](#) that schools and local authorities may like to use, however, they should be reviewed, amending as necessary to reflect business need. In order to make

these individuals fully aware of our use of their data we strongly advise you reference our use in the national pupil database and onward sharing, retaining the link to [Data protection: how we collect and share research data](#).

We suggest that you make relevant privacy notices available to parents on your school website. In order to ensure parents remain informed, some schools also choose to refer to this in their communications to parents.

## 1.6. Legal duties under the Data Protection Act: data security

Schools and local authorities have a legal duty under the Data Protection Act to ensure that any personal data they process is handled and stored securely. Further information is available from the [Information Commissioners Office](#).

If personal data is not properly safeguarded it could damage your reputation and compromise the safety of individuals. Your responsibility as a data controller extends to those who have access to your data beyond your organisation if working on your behalf, eg if external IT suppliers can remotely access your information. The '[10 steps to cyber security](#)' and '[Responsible for information](#)' pages provide further guidance and advice.

It is vital that all staff with access to personal data understand the importance of protecting it; that they are familiar with your security policy; and that they put security procedures into practice. So you should provide appropriate initial and refresher training. Further information on handling data securely can also be found in the [DfE guidance on data protection for schools consider cloud software services](#).

## 1.7. Data quality

In order to properly ascertain whether individual pupils have learnt phonic decoding to an appropriate standard, it is important that the data collected by schools and local authorities, for onward transmission to the DfE, is both accurate and complete.

Please note that in addition to the year 1 cohort, the check must also be administered to year 2 pupils who have not previously met the expected standard for phonics decoding. Schools must return all check outcomes for these year 2 pupils (along with those for their year 1 cohort) to their local authority. Schools that do not follow a national curriculum year group such as nursery schools and some special schools need to submit data for pupils who turn 6 by the end of the school year. These pupils should be entered as year 1 for data submission, and similarly those pupils who turn 7 and are re-taking the check should be entered as year 2. Local authorities will submit all phonics check results data to the department via COLLECT.

The department wrote to local authorities in March 2016, providing them with the indicative number of year 2 pupils, by school, who are expected to take the phonics screening check

in their area. Local authorities were advised to share this information with their schools and to use it to validate returns from their schools.

In section 2 there is a complete list of data items that schools need to submit to their local authority, and then the local authority to the DfE, together with an explanation of each of them.

Local authorities can download a copy of the [key stage 1 assessment and reporting arrangements \(ARA\)](#) handbook from this website and also find information in section 7 for carrying out assessments and moderation to ensure that practitioner judgements are consistent with nationally agreed assessments.

[Further information](#) on the technical aspects of the data collection is available on the gov.uk website.

## 2. Data required

Schools need to submit the following data items to their local authority:

Local authority number

Estab number of the school: this is a 4-digit number

Academic Year: This year will be 2016

### Pupil data

Pupil's surname

Pupil's forename

Pupil's unique pupil number

Pupil's date of birth

Gender

National curriculum year group

Phonics mark: Please enter the phonics mark between 0 - 40

Phonics outcome: This field should only be used if the pupil did not take the check for any reason such as absence, not being able to take the check and leaving the school. One of the following codes can be entered: 'A', 'D', 'L' and 'Q' (please see detail in the section below). It can be left blank if the pupil took the check.

### Phonics screening check results

Schools must report the phonics mark as recorded for all pupils who have taken the check.

The phonics mark is the actual mark from the screening check and should be a number in the range 0-40.

An outcome will only need to be reported if a pupil has left the school (L), is absent (A), did not participate in the check (D), or if the result is affected by maladministration (Q). In all other cases, the marks obtained in the phonics screening check must be shown. We no longer require the return of a 'Wt - working towards' or 'Wa -working at' outcome for phonics as information about the threshold mark for pupils to be considered as working at the expected standard will not be available until 27 June.

Schools will be informed by their local authorities on when and how to submit data to them, but this will be before the end of the summer term. Local authorities will then submit pupil level phonics check results data via COLLECT.

## 3. Requirements

This guide is provided to outline the main requirements and submission arrangements for the 2016 phonics screening check collection. The 2016 year 1 phonics screening check COLLECT system will be available on Monday 13 June 2016.

The department will not be providing a COLLECT school blade. There will be a single blade that local authorities can use to submit phonics screening check data.

The department will continue to collect full individual child level data. COLLECT will be the means by which data is collected from local authorities.

### 3.1. Local authority data reporting format

Please note that the department has no requirement for data in aggregate forms (eg local authority aggregate data); rather a single XML file for each school, containing all eligible pupils, will be created by local authorities' central processing system software.

The separate school XML files will need to be zipped (we would suggest using an identifiable filename eg local authority name. Please note that the .zip suffix is required) and imported into COLLECT where the respective school files will be extracted.

Successfully loaded data is subjected to validation. For more details of the specific validation rules that will be applied, please see the [phonics screening check technical specification](#).

After validation is complete you will be able to view your data return, observe the validation outcomes and decide if there is any further action on your part in response to the validations. For example, you may need to query something with a school and return to COLLECT to make a change to the data. You must approve the data so that the department can consider it to be finalised.

For the options available to you to create phonics screening check data see section 3.4.

### 3.2. Data collection timetable

The department is committed to providing national and local authority level analysis of performance as quickly as possible. We therefore ask that local authorities make their phonics check submissions by Friday 29 July 2016.

There will be a limited opportunity for local authorities to submit late and/or corrected results but any late results will not be included in RAISEonline. These will only be used to update the national pupil database (NPD).

Amendments will not be accepted after the database is closed.



### **3.3. Expected list of schools submitting results**

The Data Collections Helpdesk will update the expected list of schools on COLLECT with an extract taken from the spring school census. The expected list includes all schools with year 1 and year 2 pupils expected to take the check in 2016. Local authorities can view the expected list on COLLECT when the collection goes live on 13 June. We would appreciate it if local authority contacts could check the lists for any schools that are missing or incorrect and advise the Data Collections Helpdesk using the [data collections service request form](#).

If the COLLECT system is not updated with the correct schools you will be unable to load their data returns.

Local authorities will need to ensure that phonics screening check results are collected from every expected school and include all eligible pupils, including those disapplied (which could include whole cohorts in special schools) or absent from the check.

### **3.4. School recording and reporting options**

#### **3.4.1. School Management Information System (MIS)**

State-funded schools including academies, free schools and special schools should report pupil-level phonics screening check results to their geographical local authority. Schools will be able to use their (updated) management information system (MIS) to enter and export phonics data to their local authority in common transfer file (CTF) XML format, or as agreed with the local authority.

The department has provided software specifications to commercial suppliers of local authority database processing systems, and to those local authorities that have indicated they wish to design their own systems for this purpose. The local authority processing software will accept a school management information system CTF export file and the DfE spreadsheet CSV export file and create the necessary DfE export file. Local authorities will fully meet the statutory requirements for the submission of its phonics screening check results by using appropriate software that will enable them to create the necessary file.

The department will only accept phonics screening check results created from software that can produce the information in the correct format to upload onto the COLLECT system.

#### **3.4.2. Phonics screening check spreadsheet**

The department will provide local authorities with a DfE phonics screening check data collection spreadsheet for state-funded schools that, in exceptional circumstances, are unable to use their management information system for the recording and submission of 2016 phonics screening check results. This is available on request from the department and can be obtained by contacting the Data Collections Helpdesk using the [data collection service request form](#).

The spreadsheet Export option creates a CSV file containing the relevant pupil data for loading into the local authority's central processing system. Please be aware that this CSV file cannot be imported directly into COLLECT and needs to be loaded into the local authority central software.

If the spreadsheet is used to return data to the local authority, then this must be done in a secure way to safeguard pupils' personal data.

## **3.5. Use of COLLECT**

### **3.5.1. Live system**

The department will make the live 2016 phonics screening check COLLECT system available on Monday 13 June 2016.

A COLLECT user guide will be available on the department's [website](#).

### **3.5.2. Secure Access and COLLECT access**

User names and passwords for COLLECT are managed by the [Secure Access](#) system. Your local authority has a delegated approver(s) who can allocate you access to departmental systems that use Secure Access. If you require access to the phonics screening check data collection on COLLECT, please contact the approver in your local authority.

More information is available on the [Secure Access help screen](#).

You can also get help using the [Secure Access service request form](#).

### **3.5.3. General issues**

If you have any COLLECT or phonics queries of a general nature, please contact the Data Collections Helpdesk using the [data collections service request form](#).

# Appendices

## Appendix: glossary

RAISEonline	Reporting and Analysis for Improvement through school Self-Evaluation ( <a href="#">RAISE online</a> ) provides interactive analysis of school and pupil performance data to schools.
COLLECT	Collections On-Line for Learning, Education, Children and Teachers (COLLECT) is a web based data collection tool which will be familiar to those who participated in School Census. It has been developed and made available by the DfE and facilitates the data collection process. It enables the transfer of data between Local authorities and the department. It supports the management of the collection process, with various reports that monitor the quality and completeness of the return. Validation checking and error reporting is also built into COLLECT.
CSV	A CSV format data file is a text file consisting of a number of text records. Text values are separated by a comma and can optionally be enclosed in double quotes.
CTF	A common transfer file (CTF) is a file that contains statutory information about a child that should be transferred when they move schools and includes unique pupil number (UPN), surname, forename, date of birth, gender, together with other information, for example, assessments, attendance, special educational needs (SEN) and contacts. A complete list of fields can be found in the <a href="#">CTF guide notes</a> .
MIS	Management information system(s) – propriety software system(s) used by schools and local authorities to collect, validate, store, and analyse a range of pupil, school, and workforce data.
XML	XML is the ‘EXtensible Markup Language’. It improves the functionality of the web by letting you identify your information in a more accurate, flexible, and adaptable way. XML contains a header followed by a repeating group of data. Government Interoperability Framework encourages the use of XML for data.



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