

KS1 PHONICS SCREENING 2026

We often get asked about children with SM and the KS1 Phonics Screening which takes place in June for children in Year 1, so we thought it would be useful to put together a document. All the photos are screenshots from the Government website. [KS1 Phonic Screening Gov Website](#)

Section 4.1 states that it is the headteacher's decision as to whether a child should take it or not (*in reality, we would like to think this has involved a discussion with parents, teacher & SENCO*) Specifically, it also says they should "make a judgement on whether pupils are in a fit physical and mental state to take the check". We believe that extreme anxiety means a child is **not** in a fit mental state to take the test.

Section 5.2 also specifically mentions children with SM as being exempt under the heading "Pupils who should not take the check".

However, Section 9.2 gives the Special educational provision and reasonable adjustments, which say that "Mainstream schools must use their best endeavours to ensure that special educational provision is made for those pupils who need it.

"All schools must make reasonable adjustments, including the provision of auxiliary aids and services, to ensure that disabled pupils are not at a substantial disadvantage compared to their peers." I would therefore argue, that "reasonable adjustments" could be put in place for a child with SM.

Some schools already are quite generous with their accommodations for a child with SM around this screening, which is great, but hopefully, this information will give you what you need to have a conversation with your teacher or SENCO should you require it.

Remember, these tests are nothing major and a pass or fail is not really going to affect your child's future. As a teacher myself, I would hope that colleagues would not base their teaching on a single assessment! They are really an indicator, to the Government, of how well the school are teaching phonics. So, whatever the outcome, don't let it worry you!

Extracts From Gov.co.uk

Section 5.2

Pupils who should not take the check

Pupils should not take the check if they:

- have shown no understanding of grapheme-phoneme correspondences
- have not completed the first year of the KS1 English programme of study
- have recently moved to the country and are unable to understand letters and sounds in English
- use British Sign Language or other sign-supported communication, such as communication boards, to spell out individual letters
- are non-verbal or selectively mute
- have been absent during the entire check window, including timetable variation week
 - they must be recorded as absent

9.2 Special educational provision and reasonable adjustments

Mainstream schools must use their best endeavours to ensure that special educational provision is made for those pupils who need it.

All schools must make reasonable adjustments, including the provision of auxiliary aids and services, to ensure that disabled pupils are not at a substantial disadvantage compared to their peers.