



Our Ref: DE20/06168  
Your Ref: 7895662

**Freedom of Information  
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Dr Susan Close MP  
Member for Port Adelaide  
Unit 1, 111 Lipson Street  
PORT ADELAIDE SA 5015

Via email: [ptadelaide@parliament.sa.gov.au](mailto:ptadelaide@parliament.sa.gov.au)

Dear Dr Close

**RE Freedom of Information - Determination**

I refer to your Freedom of Information application which the Department for Education received on 5 March 2020, seeking access to:

*'Any Ministerial briefings including attachments relating to the 2019 Phonics Screening Check. Time frame: 1 January 2019 – 5 March 2020.'*

Searches were conducted for information in relation to your request. There were 17 documents identified as matching the scope of your application. I have considered the documents with reference to the *Freedom of Information Act 1991* (FOI Act) and have determined to release all documents to you in full.

No costs have been levied for processing of your application as they are within the threshold prescribed by the Freedom of Information (Fees and Charges) Regulations 2018 allowed for Members of Parliament.

In accordance with the requirements of Premier and Cabinet Circular PC045, details of your FOI application, a copy of your notice of determination, schedule of documents and the documents to which you are given access, may be published in the agency's disclosure log. A copy of PC045 can be found at <http://dpc.sa.gov.au/what-we-do/services-for-government/premier-and-cabinet-circulars>. If you disagree with publication, please advise the undersigned at [education.foi@sa.gov.au](mailto:education.foi@sa.gov.au) within 30 days from the date of notice of determination.

Should you require further information, please contact Freedom of Information on telephone 8226 3231 or email [education.foi@sa.gov.au](mailto:education.foi@sa.gov.au).

Yours sincerely

Chrissie Argitis

**ACCREDITED FREEDOM OF INFORMATION OFFICER**

6 April 2020

Freedom of Information Document Schedule - DE20/06168						
Doc. No.	Dated	Author / From	Recipient / To	Title / Subject	Pages	Determination
1	18/02/2020	Chief Executive, Department for Education	Minister for Education	Briefing: Catholic Education South Australia Trial of the Phonics Screening Check	3	Full release
1A	18/02/2020	Department for Education	Minister for Education	<i>Attachment to Document 1</i> Transit sheet	1	Full release
1B	undated	N/A	N/A	<i>Attachment to Document 1</i> Summary document	1	Full release
2	30/10/2019	A/Chief Executive, Department for Education	Minister for Education	Briefing: 2019 Phonics Screening Check Results	4	Full release
2A	25/10/2019	Department for Education	Minister for Education	<i>Attachment to Document 2</i> Transit sheet	1	Full release
2B	2019	Department for Education	N/A	<i>Attachment to Document 2</i> 2019 Phonics screening check	26	Full release
2C	11/07/1905	Department for Education	N/A	<i>Attachment to Document 2</i> 2019 Phonics screening check This document is publicly available at: <a href="https://www.education.sa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2019-phonics-screening-check-fact-sheet.pdf">https://www.education.sa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2019-phonics-screening-check-fact-sheet.pdf</a>	2	Access refused
3	23/08/2019	Chief Executive, Department for Education	Minister for Education	Briefing: 2019 Phonics Screening Check Implementation	3	Full release
3A	20/08/2019	Department for Education	Minister for Education	<i>Attachment to Document 3</i> Transit sheet	1	Full release
3B	2019	Department for Education	N/A	<i>Attachment to Document 3</i> 2019 Phonics Screening Check Year 1 professional learning participant feedback	1	Full release
4	11/06/2019	Chief Executive, Department for Education	Minister for Education	Briefing: Non-exclusive licence to the South Australian Catholic and Independent schooling sectors for the use of the Department for Education phonics screening check 2019	3	Full release
4A	4/06/2019	Department for Education	Minister for Education	<i>Attachment to Document 4</i> Transit sheet	3	Full release
4B	June 2019	Minister for Education	Association of Independent Schools of South Australia	<i>Attachment to Document 4</i> Unsigned letter	2	Full release
4C	June 2020	Minister for Education	Catholic Education South Australia	<i>Attachment to Document 4</i> Unsigned letter	2	Full release

Doc. No.	Dated	Author / From	Recipient / To	Title / Subject	Pages	Determination
5	18/04/2019	Chief Executive, Department for Education	Minister for Education	Briefing: 2019 Phonics screening check implementation update	4	Full release
5A	16/04/2019	Department for Education	Minister for Education	<i>Attachment to Document 5</i> Transit sheet	1	Full release
5B	2018	Department for Education	N/A	<i>Attachment to Document 5</i> 2018 Phonics screening check This document is publicly available at <a href="https://www.education.sa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2018-phonics-screening-check-fact-sheet.pdf">https://www.education.sa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2018-phonics-screening-check-fact-sheet.pdf</a>	2	Access refused

OFFICE OF THE CE  
REF: DE2020/00254  
REC DATE 18/12/2020



Reference Number: DE 18/08944p2

DE20/06168 Doc.1

TO: MINISTER FOR EDUCATION

SUBJECT: CATHOLIC EDUCATION SOUTH AUSTRALIA TRIAL OF THE  
PHONICS SCREENING CHECK

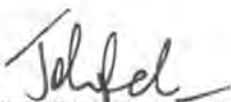
Endorsed by	Susan Cameron EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, LEARNING IMPROVEMENT	 Signature
Endorsed by	Rick Persse CHIEF EXECUTIVE	 Signature

#### RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that you:

1. Note the information in this briefing regarding the results of the Catholic Education South Australia trial of the Phonics Screening Check.

NOTED

 John Gardner MP Minister for Education Date: 20 / 12 / 2019	Comments:
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## **1. PURPOSE**

- 1.1 To provide the Minister with a summary of the results of the Catholic Education South Australia trial of the Phonics Screening Check.

## **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The implementation of the Phonics Screening Check in Department for Education schools for all year 1 students is one of the priorities under the government's Literacy Guarantee.
- 2.2 In 2018 and 2019 a non-exclusive licence agreement was extended to the Association of Independent Schools of South Australia (AISSA) and Catholic Education South Australia (CESA), making the Phonics Screening Check available to all South Australian schools.
- 2.3 The Phonics Screening Check being implemented in all South Australian government schools by the department was originally developed by the UK Department for Education, Standards and Testing Agency.
- 2.4 The UK Department for Education has granted permission for the department to use and modify their Phonics Screening Check materials in accordance with their Open Government Licence.

## **3. KEY POINTS**

- 3.1 CESA implemented a trial of the Phonics Screening Check using the 2018 resources in term 2, 2019 (6 – 10 May). The trial was conducted with 1138 students from 63 year 1 classes across 30 primary schools located in Adelaide and Port Pirie.
- 3.2 An evaluation of the trial was conducted by the Australian Industrial Transformation Institute, Flinders University (see summary at **Attachment 2**). This is the same team that conducted the evaluation of the South Australian government schools trial in 2017.
- 3.3 The trial showed students were able to decode an average of 21 words out of 40 correctly.
  - 3.3.1 This average is comparable to the results of the government schools trial in 2017 where year 1 students were able to decode an average of 22 words correctly.
- 3.4 CESA teachers were keen to use the PSC results to design differentiated learning and intervention processes and to understand more about the level of their students' phonics learning.
- 3.5 There was specific interest in being able to use the PSC to measure growth in student outcomes, potentially repeating the PSC in Reception and year 1 to observe student progress.
- 3.6 CESA have requested access to the 2020 PSC materials in order to make these available to all affiliated schools in South Australia for voluntary implementation.
- 3.7 A non-exclusive agreement with CESA and AISSA will be developed for 2020.

- 3.8 AISSA made the 2018 and 2019 Phonics Screening Check available to member schools through their online sharing platform. Due to the nature of the sector, AISSA do not collect data on the use of the PSC in independent schools however AISSA representatives have indicated informal teacher feedback has been positive.

#### **4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 Nil

##### *Attachments:*

1. Transit sheet
2. Summary of the Catholic Education Phonics Screening Check Trial evaluation



## ATTACHMENT 1 – TRANSIT SHEET

<b>To:</b>	MINISTER FOR EDUCATION		
<b>File Number:</b>	DE 18/08944p2		
<b>Subject:</b>	CATHOLIC EDUCATION SOUTH AUSTRALIA TRIAL OF THE PHONICS SCREENING CHECK		
<b>Purpose:</b>	To provide the Minister with a summary of the results of the Catholic Education South Australia trial of the Phonics Screening Check.		
<b>Decision:</b>	Noting	<b>Priority:</b>	Standard
<b>Critical date:</b>	Click here to enter a date.	<b>Reason:</b>	Click here to enter text.

<b>Key Contact:</b> Renee Malbut-McHale <i>This is the person who can quickly and authoritatively answer questions about the briefing.</i>	<b>Phone:</b> 84635866
<b>Business Unit:</b> Strategic Design, Learning Improvement	<b>Email:</b> renee.malbut-mchale@sa.gov.au

<b>Internal consultation undertaken:</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Audit and Risk <input type="checkbox"/> Communications <input type="checkbox"/> Customer Services and Business Support <input type="checkbox"/> Early Years and Child Development <input type="checkbox"/> Finance and Funding <input type="checkbox"/> Incident Management <input type="checkbox"/> ICT Services <input type="checkbox"/> Infrastructure	<input type="checkbox"/> Learning Improvement <input type="checkbox"/> Legal Services <input type="checkbox"/> Partnerships, Schools and Preschools <input type="checkbox"/> People and Culture <input type="checkbox"/> Strategic Policy and External Relations <input type="checkbox"/> System Performance <input type="checkbox"/> Other: Click here to enter text.
<b>Detail:</b> Click here to enter text.	

<b>Are there any financial, funding, budget or FTE impacts associated with this proposal?</b> No <small>If yes, Finance sign off is required</small>	
<b>Finance approval</b>	
<b>Comments:</b>	
<b>Name of approver:</b>	<b>Signature:</b> <b>Date:</b> / /
<b>Are there any industrial relations matters associated with this proposal?</b> No <small>If yes, sign off is required from P&amp;C.</small>	
<b>ED People and Culture (or delegate) approval</b>	
<b>Comments:</b>	
<b>Name of approver:</b>	<b>Signature:</b> <b>Date:</b> / /

<b>Are you seeking approval for execution of a grant agreement or procurement with a not-for profit organisation OR executing a grant agreement with another entity including for-profit, schools and preschools, universities and churches?</b> Yes/No	
If yes, I confirm that the grant agreement/contract is compliant with Treasurer's Instruction 15 and Department of Treasury and Finance approved templates for not-for-profit organisations OR an approved template from Legal Services for all other organisations (please tick).	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>Endorsement:</b>		
Ken Lountain Director, Strategic Design Signature:	Steve Stylianou Executive Director Signature:	Name Title Signature:
Date: 18/2/20	Date: 13/2/2020	Date:



## Summary of the Catholic Education South Australia Phonics Screening Check Trial Evaluation

Between 6 and 10 May 2019 Catholic Education South Australia (CESA) conducted a trial of the Phonics Screening Check.

The trial was conducted with 1138 students from 63 year 1 classes across 30 primary schools located in Adelaide and Port Pirie.

The trial utilised the words from the 2018 Phonics Screening Check in South Australian government schools which were shared through a non-exclusive licence agreement.

An evaluation of the trial was conducted by the Australian Industrial Transformation Institute, Flinders University. This is the same team that conducted the evaluation of the South Australian government schools trial in 2017.

Teachers and leaders reported very favourably about the preparation and support material provided for the PSC and were confident it could be administered with students. The main concern was the timing of the PSC trial in Term 2 which was before many of the sound blends in the Check had been taught to students.

Teachers and leaders assessed the PSC as able to accurately identify students needing additional help with their phonics skills and providing useful diagnostic information for designing future learning. The PSC was considered quick and easy to complement and a valuable complement to existing data collection processes.

Teachers were keen to use the PSC results to design differentiated learning and intervention processes and to understand more about the level of their students' phonics learning. There was specific interest in being able to use the PSC to measure growth in student outcomes, potentially repeating the process in Reception and year 1, or early and then later in year 1.

### Key findings from the 2019 CESA Phonics Screening Check trial

Year 1 students pronounced an average of 21 words correctly.

*This is comparable to the results of the government schools trial where year 1 students pronounced an average of 22 words correctly.*

Statistical differences for the average number of words pronounced correctly were not apparent according to: age, gender, metro/regional or Aboriginal background.

Only 1.8% of participating students were identified as Aboriginal. Whilst these students decoded fewer words correctly (an average of 17.2 words), this was not statistically significant due to the small sample size.

Students with a Culturally and Linguistically Diverse background (19% of the total year 1 students in the trial) decoded an average of 23 words, which was statistically significant when compared with all other students.





Reference number: DE18/08944p2

TO: MINISTER FOR EDUCATION

DE20/06168 Doc.2

SUBJECT: 2019 PHONICS SCREENING CHECK RESULTS

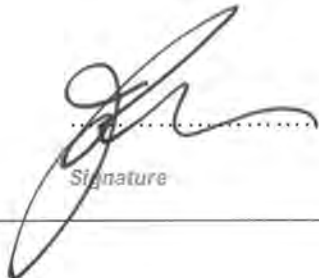
Endorsed by

Susan Cameron  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,  
LEARNING IMPROVEMENT

  
30/10/2019  
Signature

Endorsed by

Julieann Riedstra  
A/CHIEF EXECUTIVE

  
31/10/2019  
Signature

## RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that you:

1. Note the attached comprehensive report on the results of the 2019 Phonics Screening Check (Attachment 2) for internal use.
2. Note the attached 2019 Phonics Screening Check results fact sheet (Attachment 3) for public release.

NOTED

NOTED

 John Gardner MP Minister for Education Date: 31/10/2019	Comments:
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## **1. PURPOSE**

- 1.1 To provide the Minister with the comprehensive 2019 Phonics Screening Check (PSC) report and the 2019 PSC results fact sheet.

## **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The Phonics Screening Check (PSC) for all year 1 students in South Australian government schools is one element of the government's Literacy Guarantee.
- 2.2 The PSC was administered for the second time in South Australia between 5 and 30 August 2019.
- 2.3 In 2018 Dr Jennifer Buckingham, Research Fellow at the Centre for Independent Studies, determined it is reasonable to expect year 1 students to decode 28 items correctly out of the 40 items in the PSC. As this figure was determined by mapping the PSC to the Australian Curriculum the expected achievement will only require updating with changes to the curriculum.
- 2.4 In 2019 the data shows improvement in all student cohorts for the PSC when compared with 2018 data.

## **3. KEY POINTS**

- 3.1 To support the PSC schools received 3 TRT days per year 1 teacher to
  - attend the PSC full-day professional learning,
  - implement the PSC 1-on-1 with students, and
  - analyse and respond to results.
- 3.2 Schools collected data throughout the PSC window and reported the number of words decoded correctly by each student through EDSAS. Results were due by 6 September and a data cut-off date of 24 September was applied.
- 3.3 The most valuable use of the PSC data is at the classroom level. For this reason in-depth detail on individual student answers was not collected at a system level. Schools were given access to resources to assist in their analysis of in-depth data at a school level.
- 3.4 14,227 student records were documented in the 2019 PSC with 13,899 students considered to have actively participated in the check, 93 students recorded as absent and 235 exempted from participation mostly for reasons related to language and developmental delay or recent arrival EALD.
- 3.5 A comprehensive review of the 2019 PSC data has been conducted by Learning Improvement Division with assistance from System Performance.
- 3.6 The 2019 PSC report (attachment 2) includes analysis of results and improvement from 2018 by the following students and school characteristics;
  - Age
  - Gender
  - Aboriginal students
  - Students with a disability

- English as an additional language or dialect
- Metropolitan and non-metropolitan schools
- Socio-economic disadvantage

3.7 The report details a number of key findings including;

- Fifty-two per cent of all students who actively participated in the 2019 PSC scored at or above the expected achievement score. This is an improvement of 9 percentage points from 2018 to 2019.
- The average score for students identified as Aboriginal was 15.8 words decoded correctly. Twenty-four per cent of Aboriginal students scored at or above the expected achievement score. This is an improvement of 3 percentage points from 2018 to 2019.
- Fifty-four per cent of students from metropolitan schools scored at or above the expected achievement score compared to 46% from non-metropolitan schools. This is an improvement of 9 percentage points for students from metropolitan schools and 10 percentage points for students from non-metropolitan schools from 2018 to 2019.
- There was a 6 percentage point increase in the number of students from the most disadvantaged schools reaching the expected achievement compared to an 8 percentage point improvement for students from schools with the least disadvantage.

3.8 The 2019 PSC results fact sheet (attachment 3) provides a high level summary of the comprehensive report for public release subsequent to any media announcements by the Minister.

3.9 The 2019 Phonics Screening Check results demonstrate the improvement that can be achieved in a short space of time when teachers are supported through release time and high quality professional learning to implement systematic synthetic phonics programs as part of a comprehensive reading program in the classroom.

3.10 The Phonics Screening Check was developed in the UK where it was first implemented in 2012. The second year of implementation saw an increase of 11 percentage points of year 1 students meeting the expected standard of 32 out of 40 from 58% in 2012 to 69% in 2013. The UK expected standard (32 out of 40) is higher than the South Australian expected achievement (28 out of 40) as differences in the UK and Australian curriculum mean year 1 students in the UK have had more exposure to phonics when they undertake the check as compared to South Australian students.

3.11 Year 1 teachers were provided with a range of resources to ensure they are equipped to analyse and respond to results and design differentiated learning for students. These resources will continue to be built upon in 2020.

3.12 It is expected the ongoing focus on explicit phonics instruction will lead to a greater improvement in the overall state average in the Phonics Screening Check for 2020.

## **4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 Nil

*Attachments:*

1. Transit sheet
2. 2019 Phonics Screening Check report
3. 2019 Phonics Screening Check results fact sheet



## ATTACHMENT 1 – TRANSIT SHEET

<b>To:</b>	MINISTER FOR EDUCATION		
<b>File Number:</b>	DE18/08944p2		
<b>Subject:</b>	2019 Phonics Screening Check results		
<b>Purpose:</b>	To provide the Minister with the comprehensive 2019 Phonics Screening Check (PSC) report for information and the 2019 PSC results fact sheet.		
<b>Decision:</b>	Approval	<b>Priority:</b>	Standard
<b>Critical date:</b>	NA	<b>Reason:</b>	Click here to enter text.

<b>Key Contact:</b> Renee Malbut-McHale <i>This is the person who can quickly and authoritatively answer questions about the briefing.</i>	<b>Phone:</b> 8463 5866
<b>Business Unit:</b> Strategic Design	<b>Email:</b> renee.malbut-mchale@sa.gov.au

<b>Internal consultation undertaken:</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Audit and Risk <input type="checkbox"/> Communications <input type="checkbox"/> Customer Services and Business Support <input type="checkbox"/> Early Years and Child Development <input type="checkbox"/> Finance and Funding <input type="checkbox"/> Incident Management <input type="checkbox"/> ICT Services <input type="checkbox"/> Infrastructure	<input type="checkbox"/> Learning Improvement <input type="checkbox"/> Legal Services <input type="checkbox"/> Partnerships, Schools and Preschools <input type="checkbox"/> People and Culture <input type="checkbox"/> Strategic Policy and External Relations <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> System Performance <input type="checkbox"/> Other: Click here to enter text.
<b>Detail:</b> Debbie Dennis, Manager Data Projects, has verified all data.	

<b>Are there any financial, funding, budget or FTE impacts associated with this proposal?</b> No <small>If yes, Finance sign off is required</small>	
<b>Finance approval</b>	
<b>Comments:</b>	
<b>Name of approver:</b>	<b>Signature:</b> <b>Date:</b> / /
<b>Are there any industrial relations matters associated with this proposal?</b> No <small>If yes, sign off is required from P&amp;C.</small>	
<b>ED People and Culture (or delegate) approval</b>	
<b>Comments:</b>	
<b>Name of approver:</b>	<b>Signature:</b> <b>Date:</b> / /

<b>Are you seeking approval for execution of a grant agreement or procurement with a not-for-profit organisation OR executing a grant agreement with another entity including for-profit, schools and preschools, universities and churches?</b> Yes/No	
If yes, I confirm that the grant agreement/contract is compliant with Treasurer's Instruction 15 and Department of Treasury and Finance approved templates for not-for-profit organisations OR an approved template from Legal Services for all other organisations (please tick).	<input type="checkbox"/>

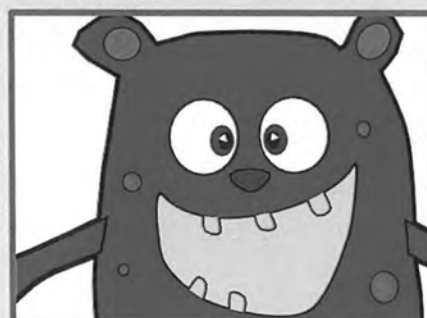
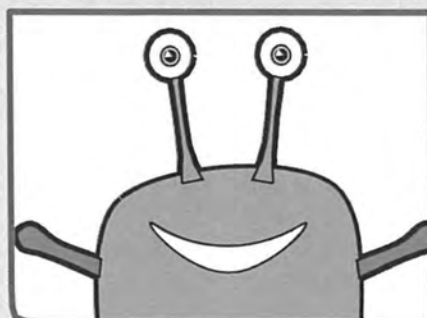
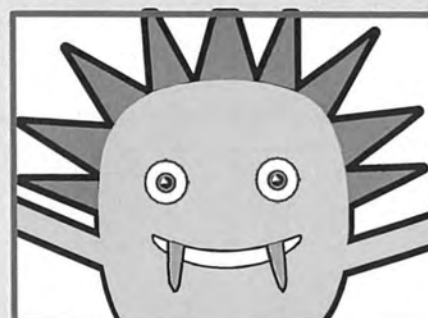
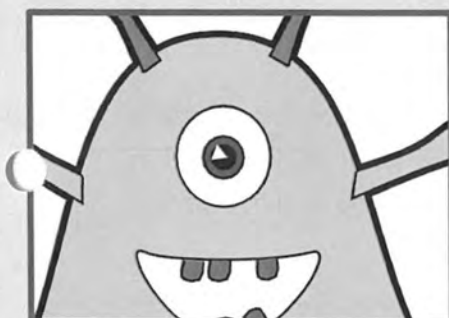
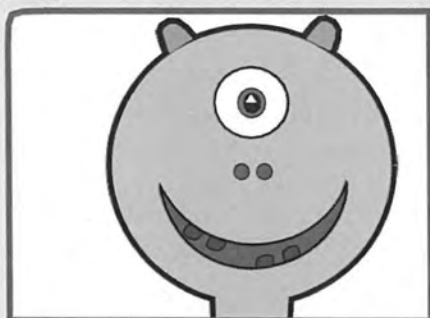
<b>Endorsement:</b>		
Ken Lountain A/Director, Strategic Design Signature: Date: 25/10/19	Name Title Signature: Date:	Name Title Signature: Date:



2019

# Phonics screening check

## 2019 Phonics Screening Check



## Key Findings

- In 2019 the data shows improvement in all student cohorts for the Phonics Screening Check when compared with 2018 data.
- 14,227 student records were documented in the 2019 Phonics Screening Check (PSC) with 13,899 students considered to have actively participated in the PSC.
- The expected achievement score was **28 items decoded correctly out of the 40 items** in the PSC.
- Fifty-two per cent of all students who actively participated in the 2019 PSC scored at or above the expected achievement score. *This is **an improvement of 9 percentage points** from 2018 to 2019.*
- The average number of words decoded correctly by all students was **25.5**. *This is **an improvement of 2 additional words correctly decoded** on average.*
- Fifty-three per cent of females scored at or above the expected achievement score compared to fifty per cent of males.
- The average score for students identified as Aboriginal was **15.8** words decoded correctly. Twenty-four per cent of Aboriginal students scored at or above the expected achievement score. *This is **an improvement of 3 percentage points** from 2018 to 2019.*
- The average score for students with a verified disability was **14.5** words decoded correctly. Twenty per cent of students with a verified disability scored at or above the expected achievement score. *This is **an improvement of 6 percentage points** from 2018 to 2019.*
- Forty-five per cent of all students who did not successfully decode any words correctly (scored 0) had a verified disability.
- The average score for students identified as speaking English as an additional language or dialect was **25.8** words decoded correctly. Fifty-four per cent of students identified as speaking English as an additional language or dialect scored at or above the expected achievement score.
- Fifty-four per cent of students from metropolitan schools scored at or above the expected achievement score compared to 46% from non-metropolitan schools. *This is **an improvement of 9 percentage points** for students from metropolitan schools and **10 percentage points** for students from non-metropolitan schools from 2018 to 2019.*
- The average score of students with the most educational disadvantage<sup>1</sup> (**15.6** words decoded correctly) was significantly lower than the average score of students with the least educational disadvantage<sup>2</sup> (**28.9** words decoded correctly).

<sup>1</sup> Index of Educational Disadvantage 1

<sup>2</sup> Index of Educational Disadvantage 7



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## Phonics Screening Check project 2018 – 2020

The Phonics Screening Check (PSC) is one important element of the Government of South Australia's Literacy Guarantee, ensuring that all students have the best possible start in reading. The PSC project will:

- implement the PSC for all year 1 students in 2018, 2019 and 2020
- support implementation of the PSC by the provision of release time for year 1 teachers
- provide an online suite of support materials, developed in consultation with external academic phonics development experts, for use by government schools from 2018 onwards to support effective and differentiated teaching of phonics
- make PSC resources available to Catholic and Independent schools within South Australia.

By December 2020 the PSC will:

- provide useful information for school leaders and teachers about how year 1 students are progressing in their phonics development
- enable and improve the early identification of students who are struggling with phonics development
- support schools with effective and differentiated teaching of phonics
- improve reading outcomes for year 1 students
- improve reading and literacy outcomes at every level of schooling
- improve consistency and quality of teaching and assessment of phonics in schools
- improve parent confidence about the teaching of reading in schools
- increase public confidence that schools are getting the fundamentals of reading right.

### The Phonics Screening Check

The Phonics Screening Check (PSC) is a short, simple assessment that tells teachers how students are progressing in phonics. The PSC identifies how well year 1 students have acquired the phonics knowledge and skills they need to make a secure start to reading. The PSC is not a reading test, but simply assesses the student's ability to decode, which is a prerequisite for learning to read for meaning and pleasure.

The PSC contains 40 words. These words are divided into two sets of 20 words. Both sets contain a mixture of real words and pseudo words. All pseudo-words in the PSC are accompanied by a picture of an imaginary creature. This provides a context for the child, to name the type of imaginary creature, so as to ensure they are not trying to match the pseudo-word to a word in their vocabulary. Children who can decode pseudo-words should have the skills to decode any other unfamiliar words using similar patterns of consonants (C) and vowels (V).

The words in section 1 have a variety of simple word structures (eg CVC, VCC, CCVC and CVCC) using:

- single letters (a, b, c, d, e, f, g, h, i, j, k, l, m, n, o, p, q(u), r, s, t, u, v, w, x, y, z)
- some consonant digraphs (ch, ck, ff, ll, ng, sh, ss, th, zz)
- frequent and consistent vowel digraphs (ar, ee, oi, oo, or).

The words in section 2 have a variety of more complex word structures (eg CCVCC, CCCVC, CCCVCC and two syllable words) with some:

- additional consonant digraphs (ph, wh)

- less frequent and consistent vowel digraphs, including split digraphs (a-e, ai, au, aw, ay, ea, e-e, er, ew, i-e, ie, ir, oa, o-e, ou, ow, oy, ue, u-e, ur)
- trigraphs (air, igh).

The PSC takes 5 to 7 minutes to administer and is carried out by classroom teachers with each student individually. Teachers then analyse the results and, if necessary, plan for any additional support that students might require.

### **2019 PSC implementation**

The Phonics Screening Check (PSC) was implemented in all South Australian government schools with year 1 enrolments between term 3 week 3 (5 August) and term 3 week 6 (30 August) 2019.

Schools were supported in the implementation of the PSC through the allocation of 3 days release time for every year 1 teacher to enable:

- face to face training in the administration of the phonics screening PSC
- time to administer the phonics screening PSC 1:1 with each student
- time to analyse the results of the PSC and design interventions for each student in response to their achievement on the PSC.

In 2019 the Phonics Screening Check full day professional learning was differentiated with an introductory session for teachers new to the check and an advanced session for returning year 1 teachers. 43 professional learning sessions were delivered in 22 locations across South Australia throughout term 2 and 3.

Teachers were also supported by a range of online and hardcopy resources including;

- 2019 Phonics Screening Check administration guide (hardcopy and online)
- 2019 responding to PSC results booklet (hardcopy and online)
- 2019 Guide to analysing results booklet (online)
- 2019 PSC Scoring Guidance (hardcopy and online)
- Resource materials booklet to support the teaching of systematic synthetic phonics (hardcopy)
- PSC analysis spreadsheet (online)
- PSC analysis: guiding questions (online)
- Instructional routine- systematic synthetic phonics (online)
- The Big 6 of Reading (hardcopy and online)
- Practice scoring the Phonics Screening Check interactive Plink module (online)

1,814 department teachers and leaders completed the in-depth professional learning and a feedback survey was distributed with an 80% (1,457) response rate. The survey found;

- 95% of respondents felt confident administering the Phonics Screening Check to their students
- 87% of respondents felt they knew how to differentiate using the Phonics Screening Check as a formative assessment tool
- 90% of respondents felt they had a greater understanding of the importance of systematic synthetic phonics after completing the professional learning
- 82% of respondents felt the professional learning had improved their confidence to plan and teach a systematic synthetic phonics program.

The survey also showed that 65% of teachers utilise School Services Officers (SSOs) in the classroom to provide additional targeted support for struggling readers, while 66% of teachers utilise SSOs to implement targeted intervention programs. As such two additional sessions on the role of phonics in primary classrooms targeted to SSOs were offered. Over 140 Reception and year 2 teachers also attended 1 of 4 modified sessions on the Phonics Screening Check offered throughout August and September.

### **2017 Phonics Screening Check trial**

Between 7 and 18 August 2017, the then Department for Education and Child Development conducted a pilot of the UK Phonics Screening Check for Reception and year 1 students across South Australia. The department collected the data of 4406 students from 268 teachers across 56 primary schools.

The Australian Industrial Transformation Institute, Flinders University, undertook an independent review of the 2017 PSC trial. Teachers and leaders reported very favourably about the preparation and support material provided for the PSC and were confident it could be administered well with students. The PSC was assessed by teachers and leaders as able to identify students needing additional help with their phonics skills and teachers reported using the results to design differentiated learning and intervention processes and to understand more about the level of their students' phonics learning.

The key PSC administration issue in the 2017 trial involved a lack of clarity in instructions for stopping the PSC. This resulted in a divergence of approaches as to when to stop the PSC, if and when to restart the PSC and how to score it. In response to the concerns and confusion from teachers in administering the stopping rule and with consideration for the quality of data even from incorrect answers, the stopping rule was removed from the 2018 implementation. Teachers also had some concerns about applying the PSC for Reception students and accordingly the 2018 PSC was adjusted to only include year 1 students.

### **2018 PSC implementation**

In 2018 the Phonics Screening Check (PSC) was implemented for the first time in all South Australian government schools with year 1 enrolments between term 3 week 3 (6 August) 2018 and term 3 week 6 (31 August) 2018.

Schools were supported in the implementation of the PSC through the allocation of 3 days release time for every year 1 teacher to enable:

- face to face training in the administration of the phonics screening PSC
- time to administer the phonics screening PSC 1:1 with each student
- time to analyse the results of the PSC and design interventions for each student in response to their achievement on the PSC.

Teachers were also supported through the provision of a number of print and online resources.

The face to face training program provided an opportunity to collect feedback from year 1 teachers and school leaders to develop an accurate statewide picture of explicit synthetic phonics teaching in government schools. 1688 year 1 teachers and school leaders responded to the feedback survey. A majority



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of the survey respondents felt their school only partially implemented a systematic synthetic phonics program, while 14% of respondents felt their school did not deliver synthetic phonics at all.

In response to feedback, additional face to face training was offered for Reception and year 2 teachers and SSOs on Synthetic Phonics and the Phonics Screening Check.

## 2019 Phonics Screening Check data

### Expected achievement

The expected achievement for the Phonics Screening Check in South Australia is 28 words decoded correctly out of 40.

In 2018 the Department for Education engaged an external expert, Dr Jennifer Buckingham, Research Fellow at the Centre for Independent Studies to provide advice regarding the expected achievement of year 1 students in the PSC. Dr Buckingham mapped the items in the 2018 PSC against the content of the Australian Curriculum and the National Literacy Learning Progression. This enabled her to define the kinds of items children would be expected to learn by the middle of year 1.

Dr Buckingham advised that, according to analysis, it is reasonable to expect year 1 students to decode **28 items correctly out of the 40 items** in the PSC. As this number was determined against the Australian Curriculum and the National Literacy Learning Progression it will only require updating in line with any changes to these documents.

This is not a pass/fail mark- it is an indication of the score a student might achieve if their phonics learning is progressing as expected.

### Data collection

The most valuable use of the PSC data is at classroom level. For this reason, in-depth detail on individual student answers was not collected at a system level.

Schools collected data throughout the PSC window of 5 to 30 August 2019. Schools reported only the number of words a student decoded correctly, their overall PSC score entered into EDSAS by 6 September 2019. This allowed the department to confirm year 1 student participation in the PSC and to develop a state-wide picture on phonics in South Australia. A data cut-off date of 24 September was applied and only data entered on or before this date has been utilised in this report.

### Data definitions

The PSC contains 40 words and students received one mark for every word decoded correctly. Students answers were scored as correct or incorrect based on the following considerations;

Score as correct	Score as incorrect
Sounds out the phonemes, or names the letters, and then says the word	Sounds out the phonemes but does not blend the word (no prompting allowed)
Elongates the phonemes but then blends them to form the word	Elongates the phonemes but leaves gaps and doesn't blend them
Uses alternative pronunciations of graphemes in pseudo-words	Inappropriate pronunciations of real words, eg reading 'blow' to rhyme with 'cow'
Corrects initial attempts and finishes with the correct pronunciations	Correctly attempts a word but then recorrects and finishes with an incorrect pronunciation



Pronunciation difficulties, eg student usually says 'fw' for 'th'	
Words pronounced with the student's accent	

### Absent

Students who were absent for the PSC window were recorded as an 'A'.

Students recorded as an 'A' are not considered to have actively participated in the 2019 PSC and are therefore excluded from mean score calculations.

### Did not complete

All students should be included in the PSC unless:

- they have no understanding of grapheme-phoneme correspondences, eg the student has recently arrived in Australia from a non-English speaking background; a student has a language or developmental delay
- they are in Intensive English Language Programs and not due to exit the program by the end of year 1
- the principal, with advice from the classroom teacher, decides it is not appropriate for a student to participate in the PSC.

Where the principal determined it was inappropriate for a student to take the PSC a 'D' was recorded.

Students recorded as a 'D' are not considered to have actively participated in the 2019 PSC and are therefore excluded from mean score calculations.

## 2019 Year 1 student profile

In South Australia in 2019 14,227 year 1 student records were entered into EDSAS from 431 schools for the Phonics Screening Check (PSC)<sup>3</sup>.

Of these records, 13,899 students actively participated in the PSC, 93 students were absent and 235 did not complete the PSC.

In 2019 males made up 51% of year 1 students with a record in the PSC compared to 49% female students. Twenty-three per cent (3228) of student records in the PSC spoke English as an additional language or dialect (EALD)<sup>4</sup>. Six per cent (870) of student records in the PSC were identified as Aboriginal. Nine per cent (1297) of student records in the PSC were identified as students with a verified disability. Seventy-two per cent of year 1 students were from metropolitan schools while the remaining 28% attended schools in non-metropolitan areas.

<sup>3</sup> As at the data cut-off date of 24 September 2019

<sup>4</sup> EALD status determined by EDSAS student data, based on whether the student receives English as a Second Language (ESL) support as reported by schools.

#### Changes to student profile

In 2019 there were 183 more student records than 2018. Distribution remained the same for most student and school characteristics including gender, students speaking English as an additional language or dialect, students identified as Aboriginal, and students attending metropolitan and non-metropolitan schools,

There was a 2 percentage point increase in students with a verified disability. In 2018 several disability units assessed their students to determine their participation in the check and those that were found not suitable to participate had no data entered. In 2019 the management of these students' data was clarified and these students were recorded as a 'D' allowing us to confirm all students were considered for participation and analyse reasons for non-participation. This also explains the increase of 121 additional students recorded as 'Did not complete' ('D' in EDSAS).

## 2019 Phonics Screening Check results

### State PSC results

The average number of words decoded correctly by all students actively participating in the 2019 PSC was 25.5<sup>5</sup>.

Figure 1 shows the distribution of PSC scores for all students collected in 2019. The red line indicates the expected achievement of 28 words decoded correctly while the green dotted line indicates the average number of words decoded correctly in 2019. The purple dotted indicates the average number of words decoded correctly in 2018, demonstrating the improvement from 2018 to 2019.

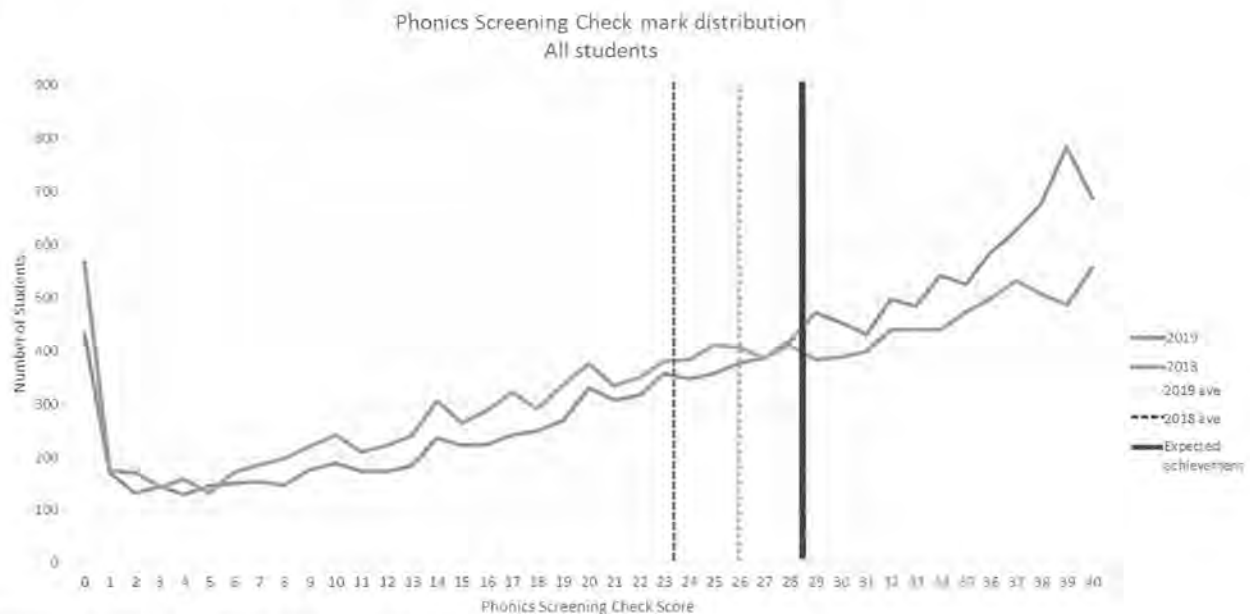


Figure 1: Number of students achieving each score in the 2018 and 2019 PSC

Phonics knowledge is considered a constrained skill to be mastered, preferably early in life<sup>6</sup>. While a bell curve would be expected for unconstrained skills such as vocabulary and comprehension which are learned across a lifetime, constrained skills should be expected to be mastered early and therefore expected to have the highest representation in the uppermost and lowermost points. The peak at 0 and the steady upward trend from 1 towards 40 displayed in Figure 1 can therefore be understood through this lens as phonics knowledge is considered a constrained skill. The consistency in shape from 2018 to 2019 supports this interpretation.

In 2019 the number of students successfully decoding 39 words exceeds the number of students decoding 40 words. This can be explained by the inclusion of a particularly difficult word in the 2019 PSC. The department do not collect data on which words students decoded however the expertise of the Literacy Guarantee Coaches as well as anecdotal evidence from teachers support the theory that a majority of students struggled to correctly decode the pseudo-word "quigh" ("qu" as in "quite", rhymes with "high").

<sup>5</sup> Excluding students recorded as 'Absent' and 'Did not complete'

<sup>6</sup> Paris SG (2005) 'Reinterpreting the development of reading skills', *Reading Research Quarterly*, 40(20), 184 – 202

### Expected Achievement

Fifty-two per cent (7181) of all students who actively participated in the PSC scored at or above the expected achievement score of 28 words decoded correctly (Figure 2).

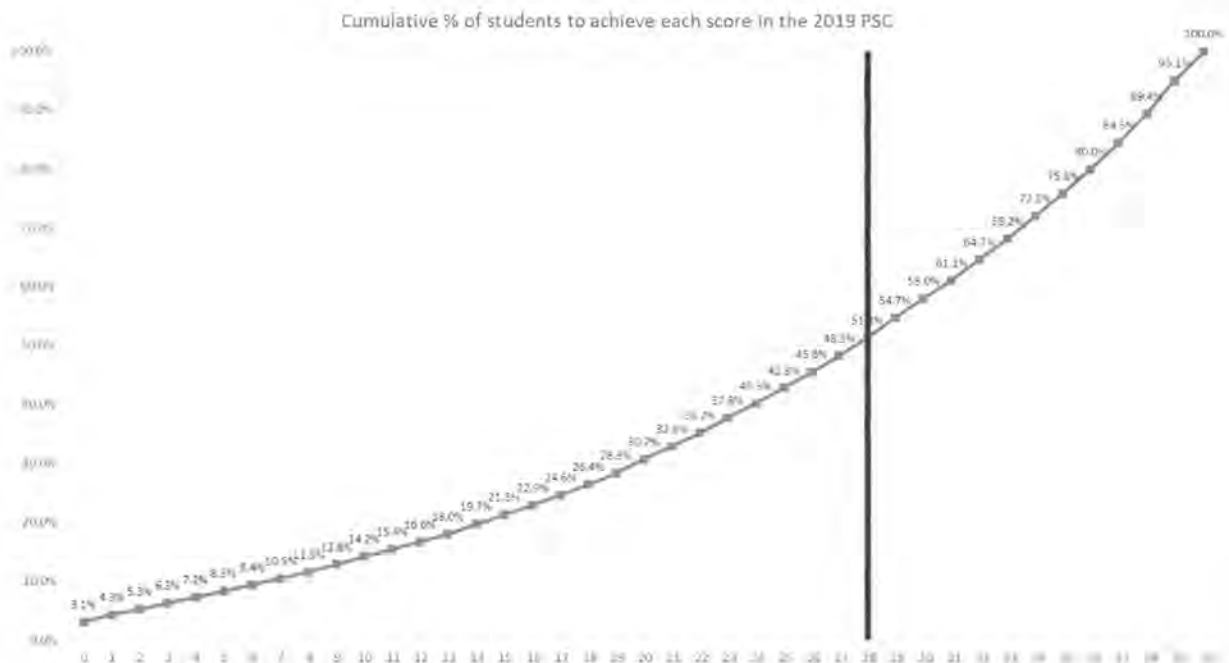


Figure 2: Cumulative % of students to achieve each score in the 2019 PSC

### Improvement

In 2018 only forty-three per cent (5951) of all students who actively participated in the PSC scored at or above the expected achievement score of 28 words decoded correctly. This represents a **9 percentage point improvement** in the number of students reaching or exceeding the expected achievement score.

The distribution of scores (Figure 1) showed a reduction of students unable to decode any words correctly (scoring 0) between 2018 and 2019, in 2018 4% (566) students recorded a score of 0 which reduced to 3% (432) in 2019. However the score of 0 remains overrepresented.

### Zero scores<sup>7</sup>

Of the 432 students to record a 0 score in 2019, 45% (n=193) were students with a disability suggesting the overall proportion of students scoring 0 is strongly influenced by the number of students with a disability actively participating in the PSC. It is to be expected that students with a disability are highly represented among students scoring 0 as some of these students will take longer to master their phonics skills. However

<sup>7</sup> This references students who actively participated in the PSC but did not correctly decode any words. It does not include students recorded as 'Absent' or 'Did not complete'.

participation of students with a verified disability in the PSC can still provide teachers with valuable information on individual students to develop differentiated learning and encourage high achievement.

While 45% of students scoring 0 had a verified disability, it is expected that some proportion of the 55% of students scoring 0 without a verified disability will be in the process of disability verification. The process of verification can take time and the age of year 1 students means some students will not yet have completed this process.

Twenty-eight per cent (120) of students who scored 0 were students for whom English as an additional language or dialect (EALD). Of these EALD students, 48% (n=58) were also Aboriginal. 8% (34) of students who scored 0 were Aboriginal students with English as a first language and without a disability.

Given the ongoing additional support schools are receiving for synthetic phonics teaching through the PSC we would expect the volume of students scoring 0 to continue to decrease in future years.

## Analysis of results by student and school characteristics

The subsequent sections of this report will examine the results of the 2019 PSC for the following student characteristics:

- age
- gender
- Aboriginal decent
- disability
- English as an additional language or dialect.

The section will also examine the results of the 2019 PSC for metropolitan and non-metropolitan schools and the Index of Educational Disadvantage.

### Age

Participants in the 2019 PSC ranged in age from 5 years and 8 months (68 months) to 9 years and 2 months (110 months). The average age of students participating in the 2019 PSC was 83 months, or 6 years 11 months.

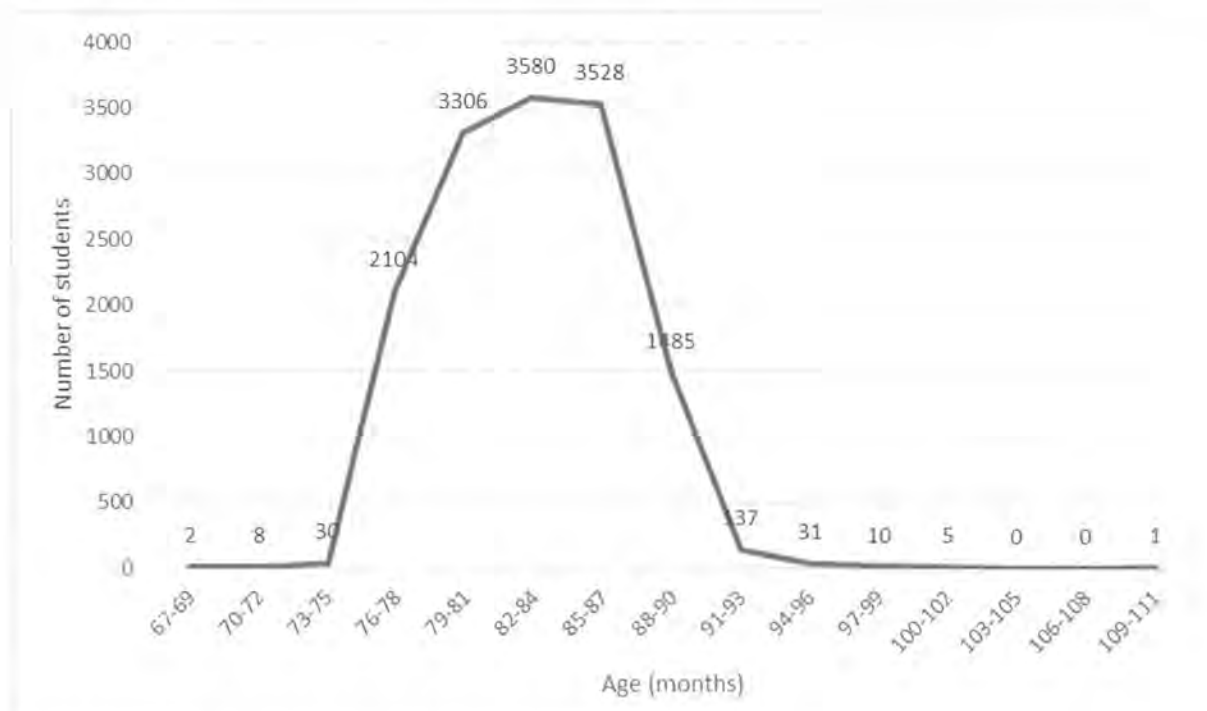


Figure 3: Age distribution of student records for the 2019 PSC

Figure 3 shows a majority of students (10,414) were aged between 6 years 7 months (79 months) and 7 years 3 months (87 months).

Figure 4<sup>8</sup> shows students in the 6 years 10 months – 7 years (82-84 month) age bracket were most likely to meet the expected achievement of 28 words decoded correctly. Students in the oldest and youngest age brackets were generally less likely to meet the expected achievement of 28.

<sup>8</sup> Cohorts with less than 5 students are not represented graphically to ensure student confidentiality.

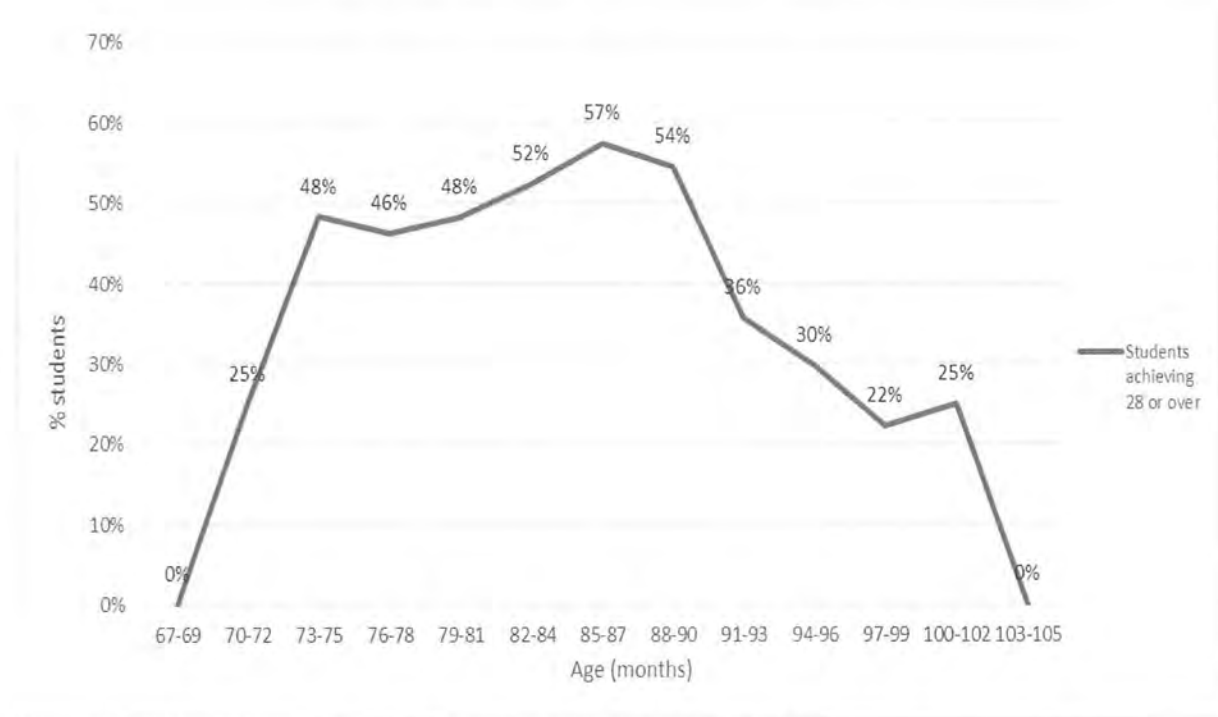


Figure 4: Percentage of students to achieve 28 or more in the 2019 PSC based on age



## Gender

Of the 14,227 year 1 students with records for the 2019 PSC there was an even gender distribution of 51% (7292) male and 49% (6935) female students, consistent with 2018.

Only small gender differences were evident in the 2019 PSC results (Figure 5).

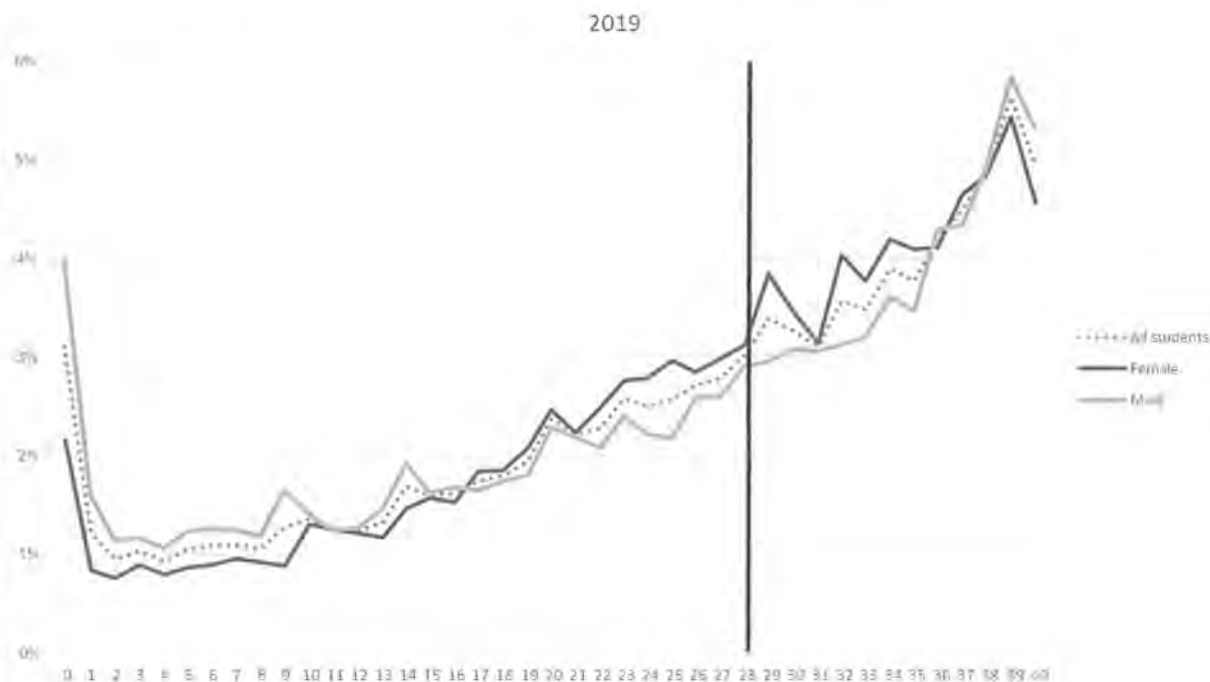


Figure 5: Percentage of students to achieve each score in the 2019 PSC by gender

## Females

Of the 13,899 students to actively participate in the 2019 PSC 49% (6815) were female.

Females who actively participated in the PSC decoded an average of 26.2 words out of 40 correctly. Fifty-three per cent of females who actively participated in the 2019 PSC attained the expected achievement of 28 words or over.

## Males

Of the 13,899 students to actively participate in the 2019 PSC 51% (7084) were male.

Males decoded an average of 24.8 words out of 40 correctly. Fifty per cent of males who actively participated in the 2019 PSC attained the expected achievement of 28 words or over.

## Comparison

In 2019, females decoded nearly 1.5 more words correctly than males on average.

Of the total students to meet the expected achievement of 28 or higher, 51% were female and 49% male.

This nearly equal gender distribution was not present in the lowest band of achievement. Of the total students to decode 0 words correctly, only 34% were female and 66% were male. This gap has widened slightly since 2018 where males represented 62% of students scoring 0 for the PSC.

**Improvement**

From 2018 both genders showed improvement however females showed slightly greater improvement.

Females showed an increase in the average number of words decoded from 23.9 to 26.2 (2.3 words) as compared to male improvement of 1.7 words (23.1 to 24.8).

The number of females to reach the expected achievement of 28 words increased by 9 percentage points (from 44% to 53%) and the number of males by 8 percentage points (from 42% to 50%).

### Aboriginal students

Of the 13,899 students to actively participate in the 2019 PSC 6% (827) were identified as of Aboriginal descent<sup>9</sup>.

The average score for students identified as Aboriginal was **15.8** words decoded correctly. This is 9.7 words less than the overall student population average of 25.5 words decoded correctly.

Twenty-four per cent (196) of Aboriginal students scored above the expected achievement of 28.

Figure 6 shows that Aboriginal students were less likely to reach the expected achievement of 28 words and more likely to decode no words correctly than the overall student population. The red line indicates the expected achievement of 28 words decoded correctly while the purple line indicates the average number of words decoded correctly.

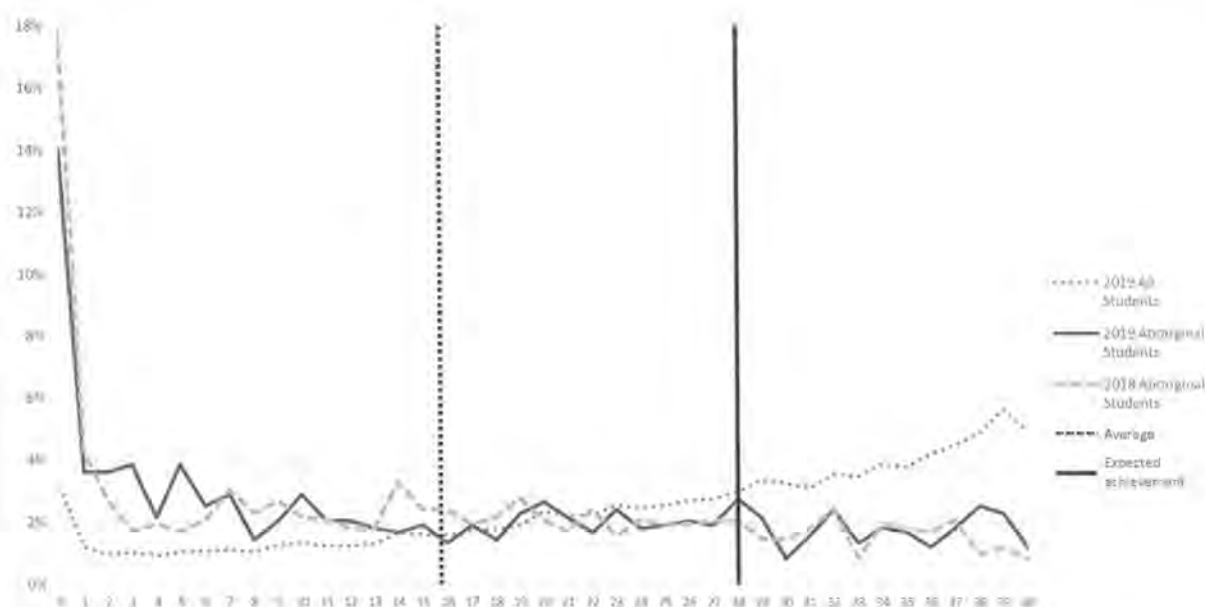


Figure 6: Percentage of Aboriginal students to achieve each score in the 2018 and 2019 PSC

### Improvement

In 2018 the average score for students identified as Aboriginal was 15.1 words as compared to 15.8 words in 2019. This is an improvement of 0.7 words on average.

There was also a 3 percentage point improvement in the number of students to achieve 28 or over, increasing from 21% in 2018 to 24% in 2019.

The number of students identified as Aboriginal to score 0 on the check also decreased by 4 percentage points from 18% in 2018 to 14% in 2019.

This data shows small improvement for this cohort of students.

<sup>9</sup> Of the 14,227 year 1 students with records for the 2019 PSC 6% (870) were identified as of Aboriginal descent.

### Students with a disability

Of the 13,899 students to actively participate in the 2019 PSC, 8% (1144) have a verified disability<sup>10</sup>. Data on the specific nature of disabilities is unavailable and this information should therefore be treated with caution.

Teachers were again instructed to administer the PSC to all year 1 students, including those with special needs, unless the student has no understanding of grapheme-phoneme correspondences due to language or developmental delay or the principal, with advice from the classroom teacher, decides it is not appropriate for a student to participate in the PSC. These students could be recorded as 'Did not complete'.

As expected, students with a disability represented a high proportion (57%) of students marked as 'Did not complete'. Despite the high representation of students graded as 'Did not complete', 88% (1144) of students with a disability with a record in the 2019 PSC actively participated and recorded a score out of 40. Teachers of students with special needs were advised to make adjustments for students based on normal classroom practice. PSC materials were available for adaptation for students with special needs including changing the font or font size, having fewer words per page, removing pictures and using a coloured overlay.

The average score for year 1 students with a verified disability actively participating in the PSC was 14.5 words. Forty-five per cent (n=193) of all students who scored 0 on the PSC had a verified disability. Figure 7 shows the high representation of students with a verified disability who did not decode any words correctly in the 2019 PSC. The red line indicates the expected achievement of 28 words decoded correctly while the purple line indicates the average number of words decoded correctly.

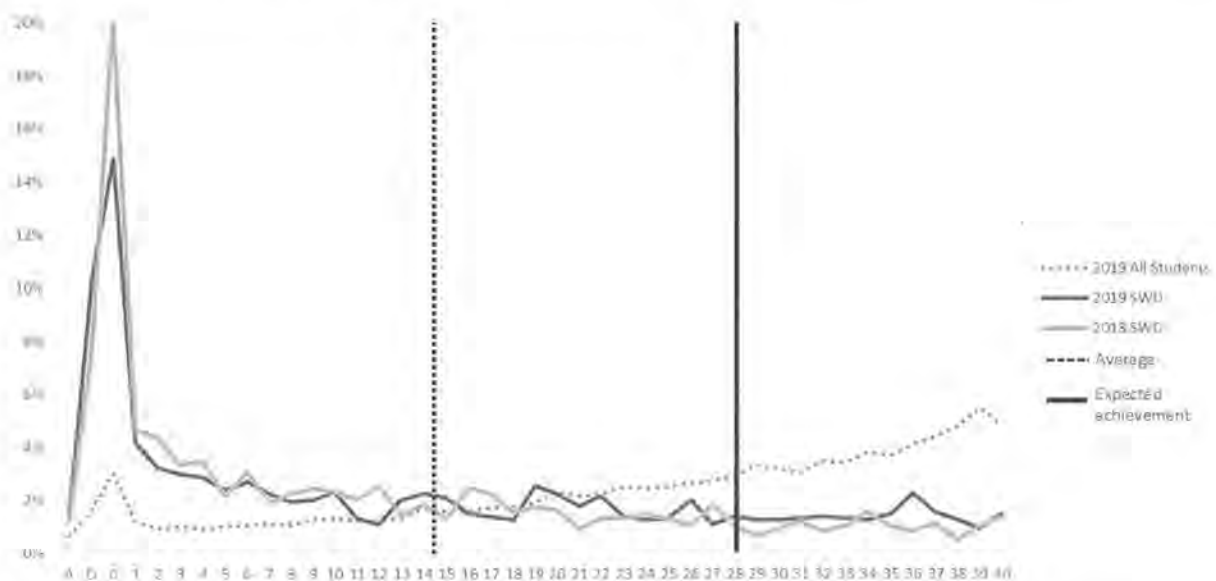


Figure 7: Percentage of students with a verified disability to achieve each score in the 2018 & 2019 PSC

A lower average achievement and higher prevalence of students scoring 0 on the PSC is to be expected from students with a verified disability as some of these students will take longer to master their phonics skills. However participation of students with a verified disability in the PSC can still provide teachers with valuable information on their individual students to develop differentiated learning and encourage high

<sup>10</sup> Of the 14,227 students with records for the 2019 PSC 9% (1297) have a verified disability.

achievement. Explicit teaching of phonics is also considered a good method to improve literacy outcomes for all students including many with a disability.

Of those students actively participating in the PSC with a verified disability, 20% (233) of students scored at or above the expected achievement of 28. The number of students with a verified disability scoring at or above the expected achievement of 28 demonstrates both that it is possible for students with a disability to achieve in the highest bands and also the importance of high expectations for all students.

### **Improvement**

The 2019 data shows increased participation of students with a disability in the 2019 Phonics Screening Check as well as good improvement in the performance.

In 2018 895 students with a disability participated in the Phonics Screening Check representing 6.5% of all students to participate. In 2019 this figure increased to 1144 students participating which represents 8% of all students.

The average score for students with a disability increased by 2.5 words from 12 in 2018 to 14.5 in 2019. There was also a 6 percentage point increase in the number of students to achieve 28 or over from 14% in 2018 to 20% in 2019.

### English as an additional language or dialect<sup>11</sup>

Of the 13,899 students who actively participated in the 2019 PSC 22% (3125) are considered to have English as an additional language or dialect (EALD)<sup>12</sup>.

The average score for students identified as EALD was 25.8 words decoded correctly. This is slightly higher than the overall student average of 25.5 words. The higher average score for students with English as an additional language or dialect may be explained by the bilingual language skills of these students as well as the focus on explicit synthetic phonics teaching for these students.

Of those students actively participating in the PSC that were identified as EALD 54% (1692) scored at or above the expected achievement of 28. Figure 8 shows the percentage of EALD students to achieve each score in the 2019 PSC compared to all students. The red line indicates the expected achievement of 28 words decoded correctly while the purple line indicates the average number of words decoded correctly.

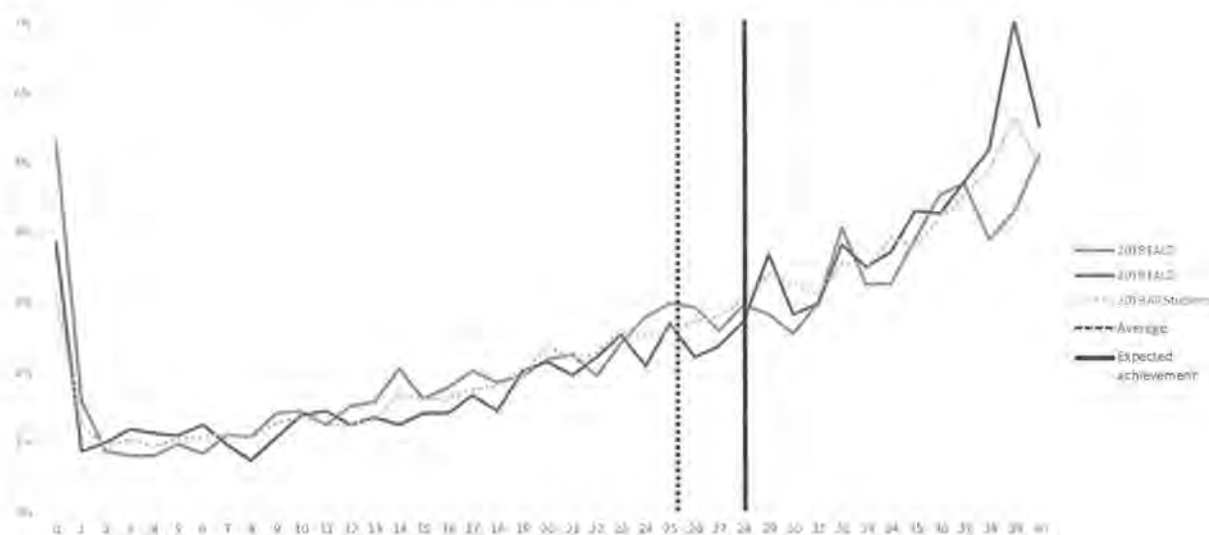


Figure 8: Percentage of EALD students to achieve each score in the 2018 and 2019 PSC

### Improvement

The average score for students identified as EALD improved by 1.4 words decoded correctly, from 24.4 in 2018 to 25.8 in 2019. The number of students to score at or above the expected achievement of 28 also increased, showing an improvement of 6 percentage points from 48% in 2018 to 54% in 2019.

<sup>11</sup> EALD status determined by EDSAS student data, based on whether the student receives English as a Second Language (ESL) support as reported by schools.

<sup>12</sup> Of the 14,227 students with records for the 2019 PSC 23% (3228), are considered to have English as an additional language or dialect (EALD).

### Metropolitan and non-metropolitan schools

Of the 13,899 students who actively participated in the 2019 PSC 72% (10,042) attended schools in metropolitan areas while the remaining 28% (3857) attended schools in non-metropolitan areas<sup>13</sup>.

Students from metropolitan schools were generally able to successfully decode more words than students from non-metropolitan schools (Figure 9).

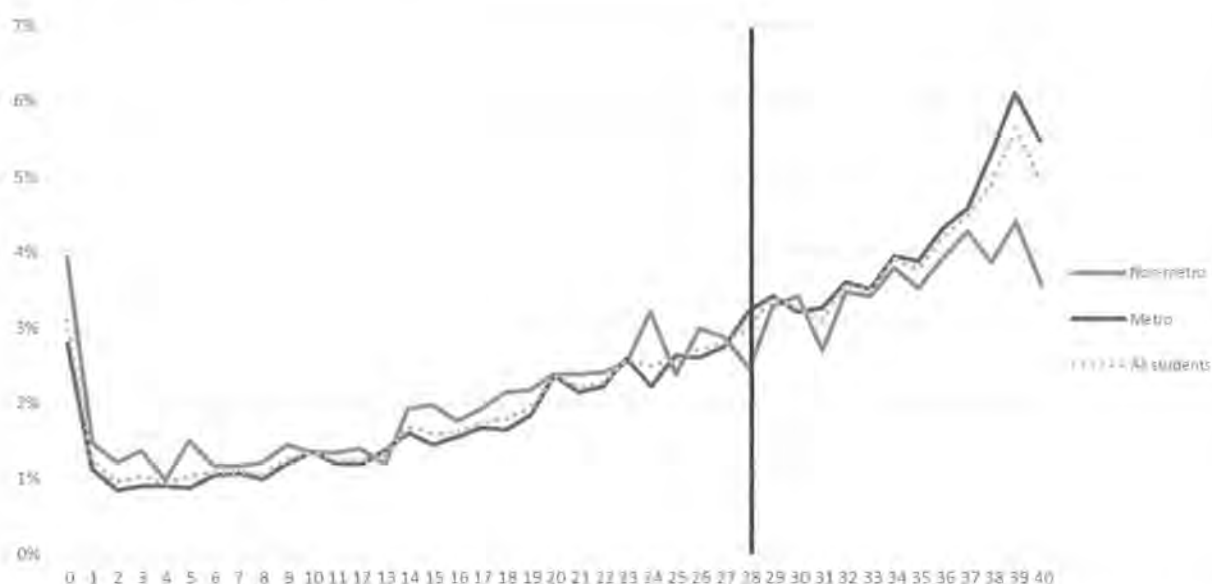


Figure 9: Percentage of students from metropolitan and non-metropolitan schools to achieve each score in the 2019 PSC

The average score for students from metropolitan schools was 26 words decoded correctly. The average score for students from non-metropolitan schools was 24 words decoded correctly.

Fifty-four per cent of students from metropolitan schools scored at or above the expected achievement score of 28 words decoded correctly compared to 46% from non-metropolitan schools.

### Improvement

Both students from metropolitan schools and non-metropolitan schools have shown improvement from 2018. The average number of words decoded by students in metropolitan schools has improved by 1.8 words on average (from 24.2 to 26) and by 2.2 words for students from non-metropolitan schools (from 21.8 to 24). Similarly the percentage of students from metropolitan schools to achieve 28 or over increased from 45% to 54% while for students from non-metropolitan schools this improvement was slightly greater growing from 36% to 46%.

<sup>13</sup> Of the 14,227 students who with records for the 2019 PSC 72% (10,299) attended schools in metropolitan areas while the remaining 28% (3928) attended schools in non-metropolitan areas.



### Socio-economic disadvantage

Using the Index of Educational Disadvantage<sup>14</sup> we can observe the impact of educational disadvantage related to socio-economic status on 2019 PSC results.

Table 1 shows the average score of students with the most educational disadvantage was **15.6** words. This was significantly lower than the average score of students with the least educational disadvantage, **28.9** words.

Index of Educational Disadvantage <sup>15</sup>	Year 1 students actively participating in the 2019 PSC	Average score in the 2019 PSC
1 ( <i>most disadvantaged</i> )	613	15.6
2	1681	21.0
3	1314	24.0
4	1652	23.5
5	2334	26.0
6	3267	27.6
7 ( <i>least disadvantaged</i> )	3038	28.9

Table 1: Average Score in the 2019 PSC by index of educational disadvantage

The PSC results data suggests a relationship between socio-economic status and average score in the 2019 PSC, with the average score steadily increasing as the index of disadvantage decreases. This relationship is further supported by the % of students achieving 28 or over at each level of disadvantage.

The percentage of students scoring above the expected achievement of 28 steadily decreases according to the greater the score of disadvantage. Figure 10 shows students from the lowest socio-economic cohort are over represented amongst students who achieve lower scores and underrepresented in students who reached the expected achievement score of 28 or higher.

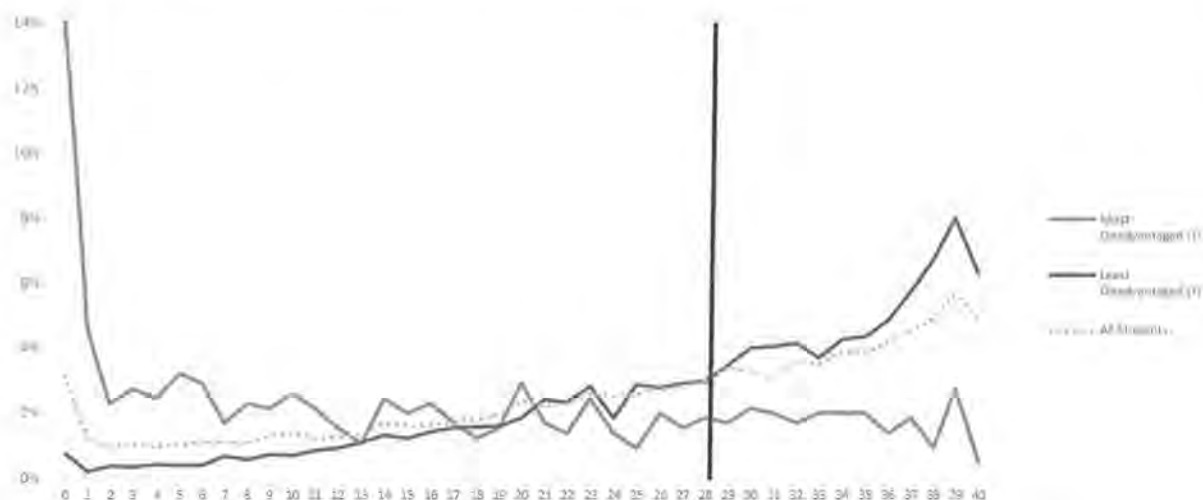


Figure 10: Percentage of students to achieve each score in the 2019 PSC by Index of Educational Disadvantage

<sup>14</sup> The Index of Educational Disadvantage is a socio-economic index, used to allocate resources to schools to address educational disadvantage related to socio-economic status.

[https://www.education.sa.gov.au/sites/g/files/net691/f/educational\\_disadvantage\\_index\\_explanation.pdf](https://www.education.sa.gov.au/sites/g/files/net691/f/educational_disadvantage_index_explanation.pdf)

<sup>15</sup> Schools in category 1 serve the most socio-economically disadvantaged communities, category 7 the least disadvantaged.

### Improvement

Schools at all levels of educational disadvantage demonstrated improvement in the 2019 Phonics Screening Check compared to the 2018 Phonics Screening Check.

Index of Educational Disadvantage <sup>16</sup>	Percentage point improvement of students to achieve 28 or over from '18-'19	Improvement in average number of words decoded correctly from '18-'19
1 ( <i>most disadvantaged</i> )	6%	2.0
2	8%	1.9
3	14%	3.3
4	7%	1.6
5	12%	2.5
6	7%	1.5
7 ( <i>least disadvantaged</i> )	8%	1.5

Table 2: Improvement from 2018 to 2019 PSC results by index of educational disadvantage

The largest improvement was seen in category 3 schools, with an increase in the average number of words decoded correctly of 3.3 words and an improvement in the number of students to achieve 28 or over of 14 percentage points.

Some of the smallest improvements were seen in schools with the least disadvantage (category 6 and 7), where there was an increase in the average number of words decoded correctly of 1.5 words and an improvement in the number of students to achieve 28 or over of 7-8 percentage points.

<sup>16</sup> Schools in category 1 serve the most socio-economically disadvantaged communities, category 7 the least disadvantaged.

## Conclusions

The 2017 Phonics Screening Check trial indicated a need to implement the PSC in order to leverage its potential to improve phonics instruction in South Australia while the 2018 Phonics Screening Check indicated a need to explicitly teach phonics particularly in schools with high socio-economic disadvantage and with a focus on Aboriginal students.

The 2019 Phonics Screening Check results demonstrate the improvement that can be achieved in a short space of time when teachers are supported through release time and high quality professional learning to implement systematic synthetic phonics programs as part of a comprehensive reading program in the classroom. Improvement was shown in the data of all student and school characteristics with the greatest improvements shown in the data for Category 3 schools (facing high socio-economic disadvantage) and non-metropolitan schools, demonstrating all students can benefit from explicit phonics teaching.

The PSC is designed to help teachers identify how well year 1 students have acquired the phonics knowledge and skills they need to make a secure start to reading. The PSC draws attention to the need for explicit phonics teaching and the value of the PSC lies in the information the results provide teachers to analyse and plan phonics-based literacy instruction appropriately within a systematic reading program.

Teachers were provided with a range of resources to ensure they are equipped to analyse and respond to results and design differentiated learning for students. These resources will continue to be built upon in 2020. It is expected the ongoing focus on explicit phonics instruction will lead to a greater improvement in the overall state average in the Phonics Screening Check for 2020.

## 2019 Phonics Screening Check

The 2019 Phonics Screening Check results show statewide improvement in the ability of year 1 students to decode and blend letters into sounds.

The Phonics Screening Check was introduced for year 1 students across the South Australian public education system for the first time in 2018. The check is a short, simple assessment that helps teachers to measure how well students are learning to decode and blend letters into sounds- one of the building blocks for reading.

The Phonics Screening Check contains 40 words. Words at the beginning of the check are the simplest and then become increasingly complex. More information about the check can be found at:

<https://www.education.sa.gov.au/teaching/curriculum-and-teaching/literacy-and-numeracy/phonics-screening-check>

By providing information about how year 1 students are learning phonics, the department aims to:

- ensure that students who are struggling in learning to read are identified early
- support schools to teach and assess phonics in schools
- improve reading and literacy for students throughout their schooling
- ensure that parents and the wider community are confident about the teaching of reading in schools

### Participation and training

In 2019 the Phonics Screening Check was implemented between 5 and 30 August in every South Australian public school with year 1 students enrolled.

To support schools to undertake the Phonics Screening Check, an additional 3 temporary relief teachers days for each year 1 teacher were again made available. This release time enables teachers to attend professional learning, implement the check with students and respond to the results.

Over 1,800 teachers and school leaders attended full-day differentiated Phonics Screening Check professional learning.

Teachers were provided with a range of resources to ensure they are equipped to respond to the results of the check and design learning for students. These resources were built on from 2018 and will continue to be enhanced in 2020.

### Student results

Schools undertook the Phonics Screening Check and entered data for more than 14,000 year 1 students enrolled across 431 schools. 13,899 year 1 students actively participated in the check.

In 2018 the Department for Education engaged an external expert, Dr Jennifer Buckingham, Research Fellow at the Centre for Independent Studies to provide advice regarding the expected achievement of year 1 students undertaking the check by mapping the items to the Australian Curriculum. Dr Buckingham advised that, according to analysis, it is reasonable to expect year 1 students to decode **28 items correctly out of the 40 items**

in the PSC. As this number was determined against the Australian Curriculum, it will only require updating in line with any changes to the curriculum.

Across South Australian public schools, 7,181 year 1 students (52%) showed that they met the expected achievement by correctly decoding 28 words or more out of 40. This is an improvement of nine percentage points from 2018 where 5,951 (43%) of students were able to correctly decode 28 words or more out of 40.

There was also a decrease in the number of students unable to decode any of the words in the Phonics Screening Check correctly. In 2019 this number was 432 students (3%) reduced from 566 students (4%) in 2018.

In 2019 the data shows improvement in all student groups.

#### Key findings from the 2019 Phonics Screening Check

- 52% of year 1 students scored at or above the expected achievement score. This is an **improvement of nine percentage points** from 2018 to 2019.
- Fifty-three per cent of females scored at or above the expected achievement score compared to fifty per cent of males.
- Twenty-four per cent of Aboriginal students scored at or above the expected achievement score. This is an **improvement of 3 percentage points** from 2018 to 2019.
- Twenty per cent of students with a verified disability scored at or above the expected achievement score. This is an **improvement of 6 percentage points** from 2018 to 2019.
- Fifty-four per cent of students identified as speaking English as an additional language or dialect scored at or above the expected achievement score. This is an **improvement of 6 percentage points** from 2018 to 2019.
- Fifty-four per cent of students from metropolitan schools scored at or above the expected achievement score compared to 46% from non-metropolitan schools. This is an **improvement of 9 percentage points** for students from metropolitan schools and **10 percentage points** for students from non-metropolitan schools from 2018 to 2019.
- In schools serving the most advantaged communities, 63% of students demonstrated the expected achievement compared to only 24% in schools serving the lowest socioeconomic communities. This is an **improvement of 8 percentage points** for the most advantaged communities and **6 percentage points** for the lowest socioeconomic communities.

OFFICE OF THE CE  
REF: CE2019/01254  
REC DATE 23/08/2019



Reference Number: DE 18/08944p2

DE20/06168 Doc.3

TO: MINISTER FOR EDUCATION

SUBJECT: 2019 PHONICS SCREENING CHECK IMPLEMENTATION

Endorsed by

Susan Cameron  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,  
LEARNING IMPROVEMENT

  
Signature 23/8/2019  
for Susan Cameron

Endorsed by

Rick Persse  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

  
Signature 23/3/2019

### RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that you:

1. Note the information regarding the implementation of the Phonics Screening Check in this brief.

87  
**NOTED**

 John Gardner MP Minister for Education Date: 2/9 /2019	Comments:
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## **1. PURPOSE**

- 1.1 To provide the minister with an update on the implementation of the Phonics Screening Check for all year 1 students in South Australian government schools in 2019.

## **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 A Phonics Screening Check for all Year 1 students in South Australian public schools is an important element of the government's Literacy Guarantee focused on the important aim of improving our education system as a whole by putting literacy first for all of our students.
- 2.2 The Phonics Screening Check was implemented in all South Australian government schools for the first time in 2018 with 13,817 students actively undertaking the check.
- 2.3 The 2019 Phonics Screening Check was administered to year 1 students in public schools between 5 and 30 August.

## **3. KEY POINTS**

- 3.1 In 2019, schools have again received 3 days TRT funds per year 1 teacher to;
- attend a full day of professional learning,
  - implement the phonics screening check with students, and
  - analyse and respond to the results.
- 3.2 In 2019 the Phonics Screening Check full day professional learning was differentiated with an introductory session for teachers new to the Phonics Screening Check and an advanced session for returning year 1 teachers.
- 3.3 43 professional learning sessions were delivered in 22 locations across South Australia.
- 3.4 1,814 department teachers and leaders completed this in-depth professional learning.
- 3.5 A feedback survey was distributed to all professional learning participants with an 80% (1,457) response rate. Attachment 2 includes a graphic summary of the results. The survey found;
- 95% of respondents felt confident administering the Phonics Screening Check to their students
  - 87% of respondents felt they knew how to differentiate using the Phonics Screening Check as a formative assessment tool
  - 90% of respondents felt they had a greater understanding of the importance of systematic synthetic phonics after completing the professional learning
  - 82% of respondents felt the professional learning had improved their confidence to plan and teach a systematic synthetic phonics program.
- 3.6 The survey also showed that 65% of teachers utilise School Services Officers (SSOs) in the classroom to provide additional targeted support for struggling readers, while 66% of teachers utilise SSOs to implement targeted

intervention programs. As such, two additional sessions on the role of phonics in primary classrooms targeted to SSOs were offered on 12 and 15 August to a maximum of 120 participants.

- 3.7 Up to 180 interested Reception and year 2 teachers will also have the opportunity to attend 1 of 4 modified sessions of the Phonics Screening Check professional learning throughout August and September.
- 3.8 The department's Literacy Coaches are available to provide support to teachers and support staff in regional and remote areas who may be unable to access these additional sessions.
- 3.9 The Literacy Guarantee Unit has also received a high volume of requests from schools for support in analysing and responding to the results of the Phonics Screening Check. This support will be provided on an as-needs basis in addition to the following supports offered to all year 1 teachers;
  - Online interactive 'Practice scoring the phonics screening check' Plink module
  - 2019 Responding to Results booklet to assist in the design of targeted, differentiated learning
  - 2019 Guide to Analysing student results online booklet to help interpret the results of the PSC and apply this analysis to future planning
  - 2019 results analysis spreadsheet to provide a colour-coded visual snapshot of student performance and errors
  - Resource materials booklet to support the teaching of systematic synthetic phonics
  - Sample instructional routine for systematic synthetic phonics lesson.
- 3.10 Approximately 14,000 year 1 students undertook the Phonics Screening Check between 5 and 30 August 2019.
- 3.11 As in 2018, the department will collect the overall achievement score out of 40 for every year 1 student, with de-identified data to be analysed to provide a statewide picture of achievement in the 2019 Phonics Screening Check.
- 3.12 Results are due from schools by 7 September. Some preliminary analysis will be available by October 2019 with full analysis completed before the end of 2019.

#### **4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 Nil

##### *Attachments:*

1. Transit sheet
2. Participant feedback summary



## ATTACHMENT 1 – TRANSIT SHEET

<b>To:</b>	MINISTER FOR EDUCATION		
<b>File Number:</b>	DE18/08944p2		
<b>Subject:</b>	2019 PHONICS SCREENING CHECK IMPLEMENTATION		
<b>Purpose:</b>	To provide the minister with an update on the implementation of the Phonics Screening Check for all year 1 students in South Australian Government schools in 2019.		
<b>Decision:</b>	Noting	<b>Priority:</b>	Standard
<b>Critical date:</b>	NA	<b>Reason:</b>	Click here to enter text.

<b>Key Contact:</b> Renee Malbut-McHale <i>This is the person who can quickly and authoritatively answer questions about the briefing.</i>	<b>Phone:</b> 8463 5866
<b>Business Unit:</b> Strategic Design, Learning Improvement	<b>Email:</b> renee.malbut-mchale@sa.gov.au

<b>Internal consultation undertaken:</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Audit and Risk <input type="checkbox"/> Communications <input type="checkbox"/> Customer Services and Business Support <input type="checkbox"/> Early Years and Child Development <input type="checkbox"/> Finance and Funding <input type="checkbox"/> Incident Management <input type="checkbox"/> ICT Services <input type="checkbox"/> Infrastructure	<input type="checkbox"/> Learning Improvement <input type="checkbox"/> Legal Services <input type="checkbox"/> Partnerships, Schools and Preschools <input type="checkbox"/> People and Culture <input type="checkbox"/> Strategic Policy and External Relations <input type="checkbox"/> System Performance <input type="checkbox"/> Other: Click here to enter text.
<b>Detail:</b> Click here to enter text.	

<b>Are there any financial, funding, budget or FTE impacts associated with this proposal?</b> No <small>If yes, Finance sign off is required</small>	
<b>Finance approval</b>	
<b>Comments:</b>	
<b>Name of approver:</b>	<b>Signature:</b> <b>Date:</b> / /
<b>Are there any industrial relations matters associated with this proposal?</b> No <small>If yes, sign off is required from P&amp;C.</small>	
<b>ED People and Culture (or delegate) approval</b>	
<b>Comments:</b>	
<b>Name of approver:</b>	<b>Signature:</b> <b>Date:</b> / /

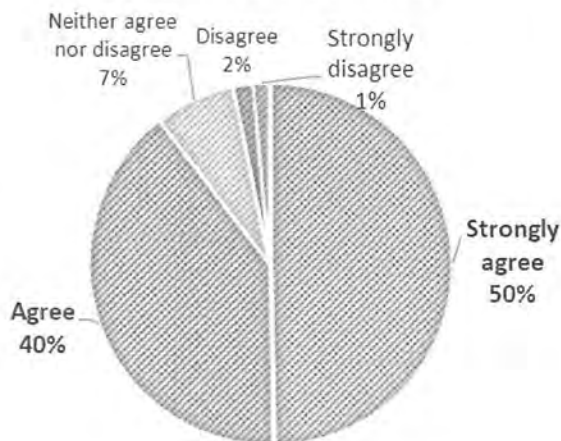
<b>Are you seeking approval for execution of a grant agreement or procurement with a not-for-profit organisation OR executing a grant agreement with another entity including for-profit, schools and preschools, universities and churches?</b> No	
If yes, I confirm that the grant agreement/contract is compliant with Treasurer's Instruction 15 and Department of Treasury and Finance approved templates for not-for-profit organisations OR an approved template from Legal Services for all other organisations (please tick).	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>Endorsement:</b>		
Deonne Smith Director, Strategic Design Signature: <i>Deonne M. Smith</i>	Name Title Signature:	Name Title Signature:
Date: 20/8/19	Date:	Date:

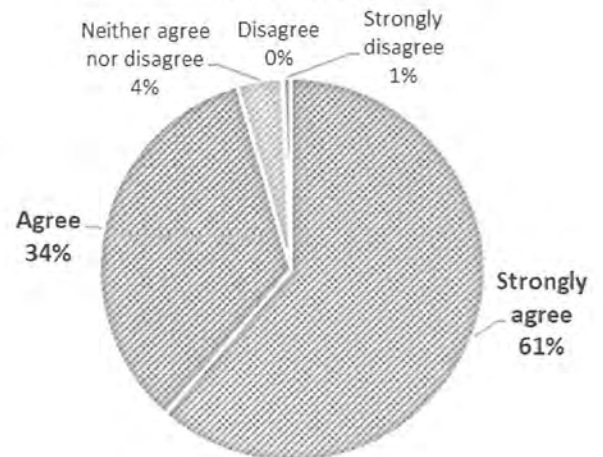
## 2019 Phonics Screening Check Year 1 professional learning participant feedback

- 43 sessions over 3 months in 22 locations across SA
- 1814 total attendees

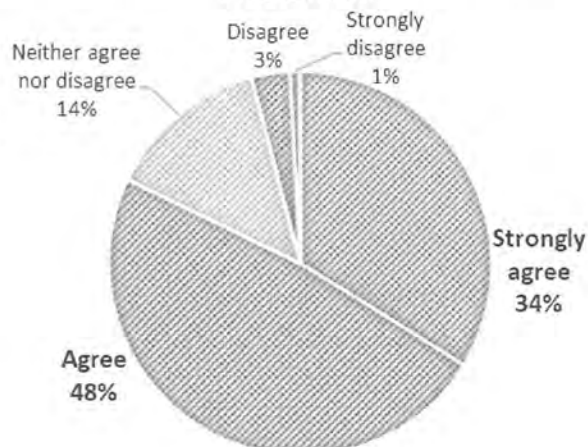
THIS SESSION HAS PROVIDED ME WITH GREATER UNDERSTANDING OF THE IMPORTANCE OF SYSTEMATIC SYNTHETIC PHONICS



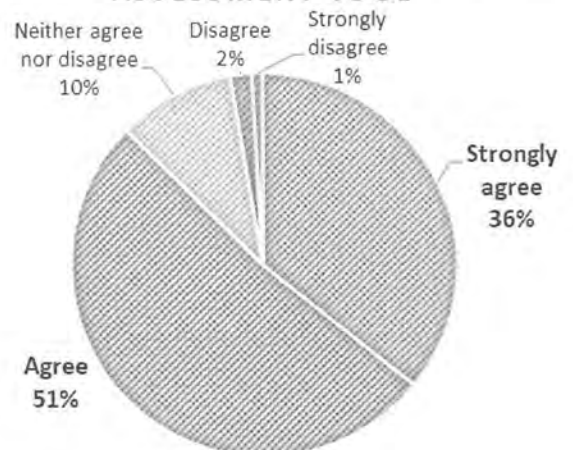
I NOW FEEL CONFIDENT TO ADMINISTER THE PHONICS SCREENING CHECK TO MY STUDENTS



THIS SESSION IMPROVED MY CONFIDENCE TO PLAN AND TEACH A SYSTEMATIC SYNTHETIC PHONICS PROGRAM



I KNOW MORE ABOUT HOW TO DIFFERENTIATE USING THE PHONICS SCREENING CHECK AS A FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT TOOL



# PHONICS SCREENING CHECK



Government  
of South Australia  
Department for Education





OFFICE OF THE CE  
REF:.....CE2019/00825  
REC DATE .....11/6/2019



Government of South Australia

Department for Education

Minister's Reference Number: 18/08944p2

DE20/06168 Doc.4

TO: MINISTER FOR EDUCATION

**SUBJECT: NON-EXCLUSIVE LICENCE TO THE SOUTH AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC AND INDEPENDENT SCHOOLING SECTORS FOR USE OF THE DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION PHONICS SCREENING CHECK 2019**

Endorsed by

Susan Cameron  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,  
LEARNING IMPROVEMENT

 11/6/2019  
Signature

Endorsed by

Rick Persse  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

 13/6/2019  
Signature

### RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that you:

1. Note the content of this briefing regarding the granting of a non-exclusive licence to the Catholic and Independent schooling sectors for the use of the Department for Education Phonics Screening Check.
2. Approve and sign the letters to the Association of Independent Schools of South Australia and Catholic Education South Australia (Attachment 2) granting a non-exclusive licence for use of the Department for Education Phonics Screening Check.

**NOTED**

**APPROVED / NOT APPROVED**

 John Gardner MP Minister for Education Date: 18/6/2019	Comments:
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## **1. PURPOSE**

- 1.1 To provide the Minister with draft letters to the Association of Independent Schools and Catholic Education South Australia (Attachment 2) granting a non-exclusive licence for the use of the Department for Education Phonics Screening Check, as adapted with permission from the UK Phonics Screening Check.

## **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The implementation of the Phonics Screening Check in Department for Education schools for all year 1 students is one of the priorities under the government's Literacy Guarantee.
- 2.2 In 2018 a non-exclusive licence agreement was extended to the Association of Independent Schools of South Australia (AISSA) and Catholic Education South Australia (CESA), making the Phonics Screening Check available to all South Australian schools.
- 2.3 The Phonics Screening Check being implemented in all South Australian government schools by the department in term 3 2019 was originally developed by the UK Department for Education, Standards and Testing Agency.
- 2.4 The UK Department for Education has granted permission for the department to use and modify their Phonics Screening Check materials in accordance with their Open Government Licence.

## **3. KEY POINTS**

- 3.1 In 2018 the Minister for Education requested that the department's Phonics Screening Check be made available to the South Australian Catholic and Independent schooling sectors.
- 3.2 AISSA made the 2018 Phonics Screening Check available to member schools through their online sharing platform. Data is not available on the number of schools to utilise the check, however general feedback received has been positive.
- 3.3 CESA implemented a trial of the Phonics Screening Check with 30 schools using the 2018 resources in May 2019 and have engaged Flinders University to conduct an evaluation. Outcomes of this evaluation are expected to be available by July 2019.
- 3.4 Both AISSA and CESA have informally expressed a wish for continued sharing of Phonics Screening Check resources in 2019.
- 3.5 The UK Department for Education has confirmed that they do not view any conflict with the department allowing other South Australian schooling sectors to use the department's modified Phonics Screening Check materials.
- 3.6 The draft letters to the Association of Independent Schools of South Australia and Catholic Education South Australia (Attachment 2) grants a non-exclusive licence from the Minister for Education (as Licensor) to the Independent and



Catholic schooling sectors (as Licensees) for use of the 2019 Phonics Screening Check materials.

- 3.7 Legal advice on the non-exclusive licence provided in Attachment 2 has been provided from the Crown Solicitor's Office confirming the terms of the draft letter are acceptable and do not raise any legal issues.

#### **4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 Nil

##### *Attachments:*

1. Transit sheet
2. Draft letters to the Catholic and Independent School sectors



## ATTACHMENT 1 – TRANSIT SHEET

DE20/06168 Doc.4A

<b>To:</b>	MINISTER FOR EDUCATION		
<b>File Number:</b>	DE18/08944p2		
<b>Subject:</b>	NON-EXCLUSIVE LICENCE TO THE SOUTH AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC AND INDEPENDENT SCHOOLING SECTORS FOR USE OF THE DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION PHONICS SCREENING CHECK 2019		
<b>Purpose:</b>	To provide the minister with draft letters to the Association of Independent Schools and Catholic Education South Australia (Attachment 2) granting a non-exclusive licence for the use of the Department for Education Phonics Screening Check.		
<b>Decision:</b>	Approval	<b>Priority:</b>	Standard
<b>Critical date:</b>	Click here to enter a date.		<b>Reason:</b> Click here to enter text.

<b>Key Contact:</b>	Renee Malbut-McHale	<b>Phone:</b>	8463 5866
<b>Business Unit:</b>	Strategic Design, Learning Improvement	<b>Email:</b>	renee.malbut-mchale@sa.gov.au

<b>Internal consultation undertaken:</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Audit and Risk <input type="checkbox"/> Communications <input type="checkbox"/> Customer Services and Business Support <input type="checkbox"/> Early Years and Child Development <input type="checkbox"/> Finance and Funding <input type="checkbox"/> Incident Management <input type="checkbox"/> ICT Services <input type="checkbox"/> Infrastructure	<input type="checkbox"/> Learning Improvement <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Legal Services <input type="checkbox"/> Minister's Office <input type="checkbox"/> Partnerships, Schools and Preschools <input type="checkbox"/> People and Culture <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Strategic Policy and External Relations <input type="checkbox"/> System Performance <input type="checkbox"/> Other: Click here to enter text.
<b>Detail:</b> Legal advice on the non-exclusive licence provided in Attachment 2 has been provided from the Crown Solicitor's Office confirming the terms of the draft letter are acceptable and do not raise any legal issues.	

(Non-Gov  
Sign  
guill  
12/6 mr)

<b>Are there any financial, budget or FTE impacts associated with this proposal? No</b>	
Is the expenditure in the briefing in the unit's approved budget <u>for this purpose</u> ? Yes/No If no, Finance sign off is required.	
<b>Finance approval</b>	
<b>Name of approver:</b>	
<b>Comments:</b>	
<b>Signature:</b>	<b>Date:</b> / /
<b>Are there any industrial relations matters associated with this proposal? No</b>	
If yes, the Executive Director, People and Culture, or delegate <u>must</u> sign below	
<b>Comments:</b>	
<b>Signature:</b>	<b>Date:</b> / /

<b>Endorsement of briefing:</b>		
Ken Lountain Executive Leader, Strategic Design	Deonne Smith Director, Strategic Design	Name Title
Signature: <i>Deonne M. Smith</i>	Signature:	Signature:
Date: 4/6/19	Date:	Date:

Reference No: 18/08944p2

Mrs Carolyn Grantskalns  
Association of Independent Schools of South Australia  
128 Greenhill Road  
UNLEY SA 5061

Dear Mrs Grantskalns

The Phonics Screening Check (PSC) was implemented in all South Australian government schools with year 1 enrolments in 2018. A non-exclusive licence agreement was extended to the Association of Independent Schools of South Australia, making the PSC available to all South Australian schools. I was pleased to hear the resources were well received by your member schools.

The Phonics Screening Check will again be implemented for every year 1 student in South Australian government schools during August 2019. The UK Department for Education is the original copyright owner of the PSC materials and South Australia has accessed and modified these materials in accordance with the UK Department for Education Open Government Licence.

I, as the Licensor, agree to grant the Association of Independent Schools of South Australia/ Catholic Education South Australia (the Licensee) a non-exclusive licence for the use of the 2019 PSC materials. The grant of this non-exclusive licence is subject to the following terms:

1. The Licensor's 2019 PSC materials are defined as the:
  - a. Student materials
  - b. Practice sheet
  - c. Answer sheet
  - d. Scoring guidance
  - e. Administration guide
  - f. Responding to Results booklet.
2. The 2019 PSC materials will only be accessed and used by the Licensee for the purposes of supporting literacy learning improvement in the Licensee's schools or education centres.
3. The Licensee is permitted to:
  - a. Edit, modify and reproduce the administration guide and responding to results materials to suit the Licensee's context.
  - b. Reproduce the student materials, practice sheet, answer sheet and scoring guidance materials and only edit or modify these to the extent of changing the colour scheme, replacing any department logo and any contact details as applicable.

4. The Licensee will include in any reproduction of the 2019 PSC materials:
  - a. Written acknowledgement that the 2019 PSC materials were adapted by the Government of South Australia Department for Education with the permission of the Standards and Testing Agency of the UK Government;
  - b. The statement: "Contains public sector information licensed under the Open Government Licence v3.0"; and
  - c. Where possible, a link to the UK Government's Open Government Licence, available at: <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3/>.
5. The Licensee is permitted to publish the 2019 PSC materials in hard copy for use by the Licensee's employees and for the purpose of supporting literacy learning improvement in the Licensee's schools or education centres.
6. The Licensee is permitted to electronically publish the 2019 PSC materials on the Licensee's school staff intranet for the purpose of supporting literacy learning improvement in the Licensee's schools or education centres.
7. The Licensee is permitted to electronically publish the 2019 PSC materials on the Licensee's internet website after the conclusion of the department's PSC window being 30 August 2019.
8. The Licensee is not permitted to grant or create any sub-licence or to grant to any third part any other rights in relation to the 2019 PSC materials.
9. The application of this non-exclusive licence to future PSC materials beyond 2019 may be granted at the Licensor's discretion following the Licensor's receipt of a written request from the Licensee.
10. The term of this non-exclusive licence will be for a period equivalent to the use of the 2019 PSC materials. The Licensor will notify the Licensee, confirming termination of this non-exclusive licence.
11. If this non-exclusive licence is terminated the Licensee will immediately:
  - a. Cease using the 2019 PSC materials and remove them from any of the Licensee's school intranet or interne sites.
  - b. Remove the 2019 PSC materials from any other location or place in which the Licensee has placed or stored the 2019 PSC materials and destroy any copies of the 2019 PSC materials in its control or possession.

Please respond by letter to confirm your acceptance of the above terms of this non-exclusive licence.

Yours sincerely

Hon John Gardner MP  
**Minister for Education**

June 2019

Reference No: 18/08944p2

Dr Neil McGoran  
Catholic Education South Australia  
116 George Street  
THEBARTON SA 5031

Dear Dr McGoran

The Phonics Screening Check (PSC) was implemented in all South Australian government schools with year 1 enrolments in 2018. A non-exclusive licence agreement was extended to Catholic Education South Australia, making the PSC available to all South Australian schools. I was pleased to hear of the implementation of your trial of the Phonics Screening Check and look forward to hearing more about the results.

The Phonics Screening Check will again be implemented for every year 1 student in South Australian government schools during August 2019. The UK Department for Education is the original copyright owner of the PSC materials and South Australia has accessed and modified these materials in accordance with the UK Department for Education Open Government Licence.

I, as the Licensor, agree to grant the Association of Independent Schools of South Australia/ Catholic Education South Australia (the Licensee) a non-exclusive licence for the use of the 2019 PSC materials. The grant of this non-exclusive licence is subject to the following terms:

1. The Licensor's 2019 PSC materials are defined as the:
  - a. Student materials
  - b. Practice sheet
  - c. Answer sheet
  - d. Scoring guidance
  - e. Administration guide
  - f. Responding to Results booklet.
2. The 2019 PSC materials will only be accessed and used by the Licensee for the purposes of supporting literacy learning improvement in the Licensee's schools or education centres.
3. The Licensee is permitted to:
  - a. Edit, modify and reproduce the administration guide and responding to results materials to suit the Licensee's context.
  - b. Reproduce the student materials, practice sheet, answer sheet and scoring guidance materials and only edit or modify these to the extent of changing the colour scheme, replacing any department logo and any contact details as applicable.



4. The Licensee will include in any reproduction of the 2019 PSC materials:
  - a. Written acknowledgement that the 2019 PSC materials were adapted by the Government of South Australia Department for Education with the permission of the Standards and Testing Agency of the UK Government;
  - b. The statement: "Contains public sector information licensed under the Open Government Licence v3.0"; and
  - c. Where possible, a link to the UK Government's Open Government Licence, available at: <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3/>.
5. The Licensee is permitted to publish the 2019 PSC materials in hard copy for use by the Licensee's employees and for the purpose of supporting literacy learning improvement in the Licensee's schools or education centres.
6. The Licensee is permitted to electronically publish the 2019 PSC materials on the Licensee's school staff intranet for the purpose of supporting literacy learning improvement in the Licensee's schools or education centres.
7. The Licensee is permitted to electronically publish the 2019 PSC materials on the Licensee's internet website after the conclusion of the department's PSC window being 30 August 2019.
8. The Licensee is not permitted to grant or create any sub-licence or to grant to any third part any other rights in relation to the 2019 PSC materials.
9. The application of this non-exclusive licence to future PSC materials beyond 2019 may be granted at the Licensor's discretion following the Licensor's receipt of a written request from the Licensee.
10. The term of this non-exclusive licence will be for a period equivalent to the use of the 2019 PSC materials. The Licensor will notify the Licensee, confirming termination of this non-exclusive licence.
11. If this non-exclusive licence is terminated the Licensee will immediately:
  - a. Cease using the 2019 PSC materials and remove them from any of the Licensee's school intranet or interne sites.
  - b. Remove the 2019 PSC materials from any other location or place in which the Licensee has placed or stored the 2019 PSC materials and destroy any copies of the 2019 PSC materials in its control or possession.

Please respond by letter to confirm your acceptance of the above terms of this non-exclusive licence.

Yours sincerely

Hon John Gardner MP  
**Minister for Education**

June 2019



OFFICE OF THE CE  
REF: CE2019/00576  
REC DATE: 18/4/2019



Minister's Reference Number: DE2018/08944p2

DE20/06168 Doc.5

TO: MINISTER FOR EDUCATION

SUBJECT: 2019 PHONICS SCREENING CHECK IMPLEMENTATION UPDATE

Endorsed by	Susan Cameron EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, LEARNING IMPROVEMENT	 Signature 18/4/2019
Endorsed by	Rick Persse CHIEF EXECUTIVE	 Signature 28/4/2019

#### RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that you:

- Note the following information in relation to the upcoming 2019 implementation of the Phonics Screening Check in all department schools with year 1 enrolments.

NOTED

 John Gardner MP Minister for Education Date: 1/5/2019	Comments:
--	-----------

## **1. PURPOSE**

- 1.1 To provide the Minister with an update on the upcoming 2019 implementation of the Year 1 Phonics Screening Check.

## **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 A Phonics Screening Check for all Year 1 students in South Australian public schools is an important element of the government's Literacy Guarantee focused on the important aim of improving our education system as a whole by putting literacy first for all of our students.
- 2.2 The 2019 Phonics Screening Check will be administered to year 1 students in public schools between 5 and 30 August.

## **3. KEY POINTS**

### ***The Implementation of the Phonics Screening Check in 2018***

- 3.1 The successful implementation of the 2018 Phonics Screening Check was underpinned by the provision of three TRT days per year 1 teacher (for professional learning, one-to-one administration of the Check and the analysis and planning of specific differentiated interventions).
- 3.2 State-wide funding provision played a significant role in ensuring the positive attitudes of leaders and teachers to the implementation of the Check and the required training.
- 3.3 This positivity is also due to the positioning of the Phonics Screening Check as a formative assessment, the results of which are most useful at the classroom level, i.e. to help teachers assess the phonics skills of their students and to apply specific interventions to ensure that every child is progressing at an appropriate rate.
- 3.4 While schools were asked to provide de-identified student achievement data to the Department, this has not been made available beyond the school. Education Directors have been provided with average scores for each school in their Partnership(s) and only high level data has been provided publicly (Attachment 2).
- 3.5 The publication of this high level data did result in significant media coverage. This can be expected again in relation to the 2019 data and, indeed, every year.
- 3.6 Regarding the Check as a high stakes system assessment can result in unproductive practices such as teachers 'teaching to the test' and students (and their parents) becoming unhelpfully nervous about their performance on the Check.
- 3.7 This risk can be mitigated by a continued emphasis on the Check as an assessment that helps teachers understand how their students are progressing in phonics and to tailor appropriate strategies to further support their progress.
- 3.8 For 2018, the support of the South Australian Primary Principals Association and the Australian Education Union was secured on the basis that the Check

is a school-based assessment, with the most productive use of the results at school level.

- 3.9 In 2018, Year 1 teachers were provided with a variety of online resources adapted from the original UK Phonics Screening Check materials and supplemented by materials produced by the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER). These resources supported teachers to analyse and interpret the results from the Phonics Screening Check and to plan appropriate phonics instruction.
- 3.10 The total cost of the implementation of the 2018 Phonics Screening Check, including funding to schools for TRT, was \$2.84million.

### ***Implementation of the Phonics Screening Check in 2019***

- 3.11 For 2019, schools with Year 1 enrolments will again be provided with three days TRT per Year 1 teacher. In order to build on the 2018 success, a full day of professional learning for each Year 1 teacher is planned to build teacher knowledge of phonics within the Big 6 of reading.
- 3.12 In 2019, the professional learning will be differentiated. There will be an introductory session for teachers who have not previously administered the Phonics Screening Check and an advanced session for returning Year 1 teachers.
- 3.13 Both sessions will support teachers in how to use the Phonics Screening Check and best practice synthetic phonics to better tailor their teaching to the needs of students. The introductory session will retain more focus on how to administer the Check.
- 3.14 For 2019, 41 sessions have been scheduled across metropolitan, regional and remote locations
- 3.15 As in 2018, the additional two release days will enable teachers to administer the check in a one-to-one setting, and analyse the results and plan differentiated learning so that the strongest foundation is laid for successful reading.
- 3.16 It is important that the Phonics Screening Check is viewed as a check, without a pass/fail mark, as students are required to master phonics in order to be successful readers.
- 3.17 The check informs teachers where each Year 1 student is on their journey towards mastery of phonics and provides an indication of what interventions are required.
- 3.18 The documentation supporting the implementation of the Phonics Screening Check is currently being revised and, for 2019, leaders and teachers will have access to updated versions of:
- *the Phonics Screening Check Administration Guide*
  - *Analysing the Results*
  - *Responding to Results.*
- 3.19 The online professional learning module developed for teachers to practise scoring the Phonics Screening Check will be extended with a view to reducing

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the dependence on ~~phasing out~~ face-to-face training in the administration of the check.

- 3.20 From 2020, teachers will be able to access the entire module in the online Plink, and build their knowledge and skill base for implementing and analysing the Phonics Screening Check using the documentation being prepared this year.
- 3.21 The Expected Achievement level of 28 words correct out of 40 and recommended by Dr Jennifer Buckingham, will be maintained for 2019, given that this was established based on the phonics content in the Australian Curriculum to mid-Year 1.

#### **4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The cost of the Phonics Screening Check implementation is covered by funds made available in Learning Improvement Budgets 364, 192, 133 and 341.

##### *Attachments:*

1. Transit sheet
2. 2019 Phonics Screening Check media release



## ATTACHMENT 1 – TRANSIT SHEET

DE20/06168 Doc.5A

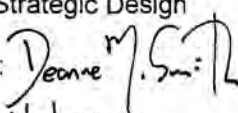
<b>To:</b>	MINISTER FOR EDUCATION		
<b>File Number:</b>	CE 2018/01539; 18DE/08944		
<b>Subject:</b>	Phonics Screening Check		
<b>Purpose:</b>	To provide the Minister with an update on the upcoming 2019 implementation of the Year 1 Phonics Screening Check.		
<b>Decision:</b>	Noting	<b>Priority:</b>	Standard
<b>Critical date:</b>	Click here to enter a date.	<b>Reason:</b>	Click here to enter text.

<b>Author:</b>	Ken Lountain	<b>Phone:</b>	84635932
<b>Business Unit:</b>	Learning Improvement Division	<b>Email:</b>	ken.lountain@sa.gov.au

<b>Key Contact:</b>	Ken Lountain	<b>Phone:</b>	84635932
<i>This is the person who can quickly and authoritatively answer questions about the briefing.</i>			

<b>Internal consultation undertaken:</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Audit and Risk <input type="checkbox"/> Communications <input type="checkbox"/> Customer Services and Business Support <input type="checkbox"/> Early Years and Child Development <input type="checkbox"/> Finance and Funding <input type="checkbox"/> Incident Management <input type="checkbox"/> ICT Services <input type="checkbox"/> Infrastructure	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Learning Improvement <input type="checkbox"/> Legal Services <input type="checkbox"/> Minister's Office <input type="checkbox"/> Partnerships, Schools and Preschools <input type="checkbox"/> People and Culture <input type="checkbox"/> Strategic Policy and External Relations <input type="checkbox"/> System Performance <input type="checkbox"/> Other: Click here to enter text.
<b>Detail:</b> Click here to enter text.	

<b>Are there any financial, funding, budget or FTE impacts associated with this proposal? No</b>	
If yes, the Chief Financial Officer or delegate <u>must</u> sign below.	
<b>Finance approval</b>	
<b>Name of approver:</b>	
<b>Comments:</b>	
<b>Signature:</b>	<b>Date:</b> / /
<b>Are there any industrial relations matters associated with this proposal? No</b>	
If yes, the Executive Director, People and Culture, or delegate <u>must</u> sign below	
<b>Comments:</b>	
<b>Signature:</b>	<b>Date:</b> / /

<b>Endorsement of briefing:</b>		
Deonne Smith Director, Strategic Design	Name Title	Name Title
Signature: 	Signature:	Signature:
Date: 16/4/19	Date:	Date:



## 2018 Phonics Screening Check

The Phonics Screening Check was introduced for year 1 students across the South Australian public education system for the first time in 2018. The check is a short, simple assessment that helps teachers to measure how well students are learning to decode and blend letters into sounds – one of the building blocks for reading.

The Phonics Screening Check contains 40 words. Words at the beginning of the check are the simplest and then become increasingly complex. The Phonics Screening Check has also been made available to non-government schools. More information about the check can be found at <https://www.education.sa.gov.au/teaching/curriculum-and-teaching/numeracy-and-literacy/phonics-screening-check>.

By providing information about how year 1 students are learning phonics the department aims to:

- ensure that students who are struggling in learning to read are identified early
- support schools to teach and assess phonics in schools
- improve reading and literacy for students throughout their schooling
- ensure that parents and the wider community are confident about the teaching of reading in schools

### Participation and training

The Phonics Screening Check was implemented between 6 and 31 August 2018 in every South Australian public school with year 1 students enrolled.

To support schools to undertake the Phonics Screening Check an additional 3 temporary relief teacher days for each year 1 teacher were made available. This teaching relief enabled teachers to attend face-to-face training sessions and gave them time to implement the check with students and respond to the results.

Over 1,900 teachers and school leaders attended the Phonics Screening Check face-to-face training.

In addition, after-school hours training was provided to approximately 200 reception and year 2 teachers and some school services officers to strengthen understanding about the 'Big 6' components of reading (phonological awareness, phonics, vocabulary, oral language, comprehension, fluency), the systematic teaching of phonics and the appropriate use of decodable readers.

Teachers were provided with a range of resources to ensure they were equipped to respond to the results of the check and design learning for students. These resources will be built on further in 2019 and professional learning and training for teachers will continue.



## Student results

Schools undertook the Phonics Screening Check and entered data for more than 14,000 year 1 students enrolled across 432 schools. 13,817 Year 1 students actively participated in the check and 227 students were absent or exempted by the school principal.

Dr Jennifer Buckingham, Research Fellow at the Centre for Independent Studies, defined the 'expected achievement' for students undertaking the check by mapping the items to the Australian Curriculum. Dr Buckingham found that by the end of year 1, students should be able to decode and read aloud 28 out of 40 words.

Across South Australian public schools, 5,951 year 1 students (43%) showed that they met the **expected achievement** by correctly decoding 28 words or more out of 40.

The results show progress in learning phonics for different groups of students, as summarised in the box below.

### Key findings from the 2018 Phonics Screening Check

- Forty-four per cent of females scored at or above the expected achievement score compared to 42% of males.
- In metropolitan schools 45% of students demonstrated the expected achievement compared to 36% from rural and regional schools.
- In schools serving advantaged communities, 55% of students demonstrated the expected achievement compared to only 18% in schools serving low socioeconomic communities.
- Forty-eight per cent of students who speak English as an additional language or dialect scored at or above the expected achievement score.
- Fourteen per cent of students with a verified disability met or exceeded the expected achievement score.
- 566 students (4%) did not answer any of the words correctly and a score of zero was recorded. Around one-third of these students had a verified disability.

