

2023 phonics screening check summary

The phonics screening check is administered to all year 1 students in South Australian public schools.

It is a short, simple assessment of 40 words. It helps teachers measure how well students are learning to decode and blend letters into sounds. Words at the beginning of the check are the simplest and then become increasingly complex.

Key findings

The 2023 data shows improvement for all student cohorts when compared with 2022 results.

- Seventy-one per cent of all students who actively participated in the 2023 PSC scored at or above the expected achievement score. This is an improvement of **3 percentage points** from 2022 to 2023 and a **cumulative improvement of 28 percentage points** from 2018.
- Seventy-two per cent of females scored at or above the expected achievement score compared to 70% of males.
- Forty-four per cent of Aboriginal students scored at or above the expected achievement score. This is **an improvement of 4 percentage points** from 2022 to 2023.
- Seventy-two percent of students speaking English as an additional language or dialect scored at or above the expected achievement score. This is an improvement of 1 percentage point from 2022 to 2023.
- Seventy-three percent of students from metropolitan schools scored at or above the expected achievement score of 28 words decoded correctly compared to 65% from non-metropolitan schools. This is a **3 percentage point improvement** for both cohorts from 2022 to 2023.
- In schools serving the most disadvantaged communities, 47% of students scored at or above the expected achievement compared to 80% of students in schools serving the least disadvantaged communities. This is an improvement of 6 percentage points from 2022 for both cohorts.

Participation

The 2023 phonics screening check was implemented between 7 August and 1 September.

- 421 schools administered the check.
- 12,196 year 1 students actively took part (from 12,713 student records).

Teacher professional learning

Over 1300 teachers and school leaders attended online professional learning for the phonics screening check.

Teachers were provided with resources to ensure they can respond to the results of the check and design learning for students. The resources are built on and enhanced each year.



Support provided to schools

Schools were provided with temporary relief teacher days for each year 1 teacher. The release time allows teachers to:

- attend professional learning
- implement the check with students
- respond to the results.

Responding to the results

Teachers use the results to:

- identify students who are struggling in learning to read
- plan appropriate student learning
- improve reading and literacy for students that will continue throughout their schooling

Expected achievement score

In 2018 expert advice was engaged to map words in the phonics screening check to the Australian Curriculum. It was advised it is reasonable to expect year 1 students to decode 28 out of 40 words in the check.

Historical comparative findings

- There has been a cumulative improvement of 28 percentage points from 2018 when only 43% of students were able to correctly decode 28 words or more.
- Students unable to decode any of the words correctly remains steady at 2%.

See the department's [phonics screening check webpage](#) for more information.