



Standards
& Testing
Agency

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06/08/2021

Dear Martin,

**STATUTORY CONSULTATION: LEGISLATIVE CHANGES RELATING TO
THE PHONICS SCREENING CHECK FOR YEAR 2 PUPILS IN ENGLAND
FOR THE 2021/22 ACADEMIC YEAR**

Thank you for your response to the Standards and Testing Agency (STA) consultation on the proposed legislative changes relating to phonics screening check (PSC). I am writing to inform you of the outcome, and actions taken in response to your email.

The legislative changes to the KS1 Order, making provision for a Year 2 Autumn PSC, will be made and will come into effect from 01 September. STA notes that Voice Community opposes the legislative changes to the KS1 Order as your view is that the 2021/22 Autumn PSC will be counterproductive at this time. Thank you for your feedback, this view was taken into consideration when advising ministers in relation to options for an Autumn PSC for the 2021/22 academic year.

We recognise that pupils will have missed a critical period of their learning due to partial school closures in the 2019/20 and 2020/21 academic years. The Year 2 Autumn PSC assessment will contribute to education recovery by helping schools to identify which pupils require more support with learning to decode using phonics, allowing schools to put that support in place as early as possible. The equivalent exercise in 2020 worked well and, taking all views into account, Ministers believe that it is appropriate to undertake an Autumn PSC in 2021. Although schools should encourage all pupils to work hard and achieve well in the Autumn PSC, we do not recommend that they devote excessive preparation time to the assessment, and certainly not at the expense of pupils' mental health and wellbeing.

Given the potential for further disruption caused arising from Covid-19 pandemic, the Department will continue to keep legislative amendments under review and will continue to engage with all stakeholders, keeping stakeholders informed on further developments as the academic year progresses.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C Watson'.

Colin Watson

Deputy Director – Assessment Research and Development