



Rt Hon Nick Gibb MP
Minister of State for School Standards

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Mrs Marian Haines
Thomas Johnson Lower School
Hurst Grove
Bedford
MK43 0SB

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Dear Mrs Haines,

I would like to congratulate you, your staff and your pupils on your school's outstanding achievement in the 2018 phonics screening check.

Achieving early fluency in decoding is a necessary first step in acquiring the key skill of reading.

There is a significant body of evidence, which demonstrates that systematic phonics is the most effective method for teaching early reading. We want to ensure that every child develops a firm grasp of phonics, which is why I was delighted to see your results. With 100 per cent of pupils at Thomas Johnson Lower School reaching or exceeding the pass mark in the check, your school is in the top 3 per cent of all primary schools in the country.

This year's figures show that 89 per cent of pupils who achieve the expected standard in the check go on to achieve at least the expected standard in key stage 1 reading teacher assessment, which underlines the importance of developing the ability to decode words effectively at an early age.

Your success in teaching phonics and early reading so effectively means your pupils are developing a firm foundation in reading, from which they can become increasingly fluent and develop a lifelong love of reading.

Thank you for your work in this vital area of a child's early education and congratulations again to you and your staff for all you have achieved.

With best wishes.

Yours sincerely,