

Media Release

The Hon Ben Carroll MP

Deputy Premier

Minister for Education

Minister for WorkSafe and the TAC



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POPULAR YEAR 1 PHONICS CHECK A TIME-SAVER FOR TEACHERS

The Allan Labor Government's Year 1 Phonics Check is helping teachers manage their workloads – with 94 per cent of Victorian government schools now choosing to use the assessment tool ahead of its mandatory rollout in 2026.

Deputy Premier and Minister for Education Ben Carroll said the check has already assessed the literacy skills of nine in 10 students in this year level since it was made optional in Term Three, with teachers describing the test as quick and easy to use.

The check replaces the previous English Online Interview test and helps teachers assess students' knowledge of phonics – the foundation of learning to read. This allows teachers to identify literacy learning gaps and provide early targeted support.

Teachers have said the average time taken to complete the assessment is 6.5 minutes – 35 per cent less than the 10 minutes originally expected. It is also significantly lower than the average 40 minutes it took to complete the previous test, slashing assessment times by 84 per cent.

Victorian students have also showed strong results, with nearly 60 per cent of students achieving the expected knowledge level two years ahead of the full rollout of phonics education in 2027, while a majority of schools are already teaching daily phonics as part of their reading program in prep to Year 2.

Teachers are also being supported in the transition to phonics with 450 lesson plans and hundreds of classroom resources supplied to schools. Phonics Plus lesson plans resources have been downloaded more than 50,000 times since February 2025.

All schools also received a share of \$5 million to purchase resources such as mini-whiteboards and decodable texts.

The success of the Labor Government's ongoing investment in the Education State is clear, with Victorian students topping the country in the 2025 NAPLAN results, ranking first or second in 18 of 20 measures and significantly improving on 2024 results.

Quotes attributable to Deputy Premier and Minister for Education Ben Carroll

"Labor knows strong literacy skills set up students for the future. That's why we're delivering phonics and reading checks to help them unlock their full potential and to give teachers the support they deserve."

"The new check is saving our hardworking teachers time, while giving them clear insights into their students' reading skills so they can provide targeted support to those who need it most."

Quotes attributable to Lyndale Greens Primary School Learning Specialist Danielle Watt

"The Year 1 Phonics Check is targeted and specific, assessing exactly what it says it does – the ability to decode real and nonsense words."

"Overall, it represents a significant improvement providing a practical, evidence-based screening tool that supports early reading success."

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