



**Rt Hon Nick Gibb MP**  
Minister of State for School Standards

Sanctuary Buildings, 20 Great Smith Street, Westminster, London, SW1P 3BT  
tel: 0370 000 2288 [www.education.gov.uk/help/contactus](http://www.education.gov.uk/help/contactus)

Mr David Haley  
Director of Children's Services  
Swindon Borough Council  
Civic Offices  
Euclid Street  
Swindon  
SN1 2JH

12 December 2017

Dear Mr Haley,

I am writing following the publication of the 2017 phonics screening check results in the Department's Statistical First Release 49/2017.

Pupils who can read are overwhelmingly more likely to succeed at school, achieve good qualifications, and substantially enjoy a fulfilling and rewarding career. There is a substantial body of evidence, which demonstrates that systematic synthetic phonics is the most effective method for teaching all children to read.

I would like to congratulate you, your schools, their staff and pupils for the improvement made in your local authority's standard of achievement in the 2017 phonics screening check. Your authority achieved a 4 percentage point increase on its 2016 results and this represents one of the ten largest increases in results by local authority in the country.

Furthermore, it is encouraging to note that, as a result of this increase, your local authority has achieved the national average of 81 per cent of pupils meeting the expected standard at the end of Year 1.

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

With best wishes.

Yours sincerely,