From Margaret M Clark Visiting Professor Margaret.clark@newman.ac.uk

Dear All,

The attached article was published on 23 June 2021 in the *Education Journal*. I hold the copyright for the article so you are welcome to circulate it.

I referred in the article to a recent more moderate comment by Nick Gibb in answer to a written question in parliament on 9th June 2021 than many of his previous comments. However, in the same issue of the journal as that in which my article has been published, I find that Nick Gibb on 15 June 2021 responded to another written question with an answer more similar to his previous comments , both about synthetic phonics and the success of the policy. I have therefore attached that question and answer to my article.

A recent dramatic increase in the number of children now off school with Covid related symptoms has been reported. Should this continue into the autumn term it will make it even more difficult for schools to administer both baseline assessment in reception class and the phonics screening check to pupils in year 2. As each class forms a bubble one must question who will be teaching the other children while the assessments take place. The PSC, an individual assessment, is administered to each child by a teacher trained to administer it, out of the hearing of the other children and takes about 15 minutes per child.

The editor of the *Education Journal* intends to reprint this article in other journals, including *Literacy Today* and the *Education Journal Review.* I intend to update and extend the article for the *Education Journal Review.*

NB The government website (GOV.UK) was updated on 16 June 2021 see: **The Phonics screening check data collection: guide to submitting data** It is a statutory duty for local authorities to collect and submit the phonics screening check data for year 2 pupils from all schools maintained by the local authority, academies, free schools and special schools. A past version of the check should be administered to all year 2 pupils during the second half of the 2021 autumn term. The deadline for submission by the local authorities is 21 January 2022.

**Information on two researches and related publications relevant to the government’s synthetic phonics policy**

*Independent research into the impact of the systematic synthetic phonics government policy on literacy courses at institutions delivering initial teacher education in England.*

The report of this research, the earlier research on the views of teachers and parents on the check and related articles can be read and downloaded from the [Newman University website](https://www.newman.ac.uk/knowledge-base/independent-research-into-the-impact-of-the-systematic-synthetic-phonics-government-policy-on-literacy-courses-at-institutions-delivering-initial-teacher-education-in-england/)

<https://www.newman.ac.uk/knowledge-base/impact-of-the-systematic-synthetic-phonics-government-policy-on-literacy-ite-courses/>

Margaret M. Clark 28 June 2021