



**Evidence for
Excellence in
Education**

Phonics Screening Check Evaluation Findings from the second interim report

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Introduction

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- Background to phonics and the check
- Evaluation methods
- Summary of findings
- Linked NPD-survey analysis

Walker, M., Bartlett, S., Betts, H., Sainsbury, M. and Worth, J. (2014). *Phonics screening check evaluation*. London: DfE.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/phonics-screening-check-evaluation>



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Phonics and the check

- Systematic synthetic phonics in Key Stage 1 is central part of policy guidance since 2010
 - prime approach to decoding print: ‘first and fast’
 - pupils not expected to use other cueing strategies
- Phonics screening check introduced
 - Pilot in 2011, rollout in 2012.



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Aims of the assessment

- Encourage the widespread use of SSP as the prime approach to decoding print
- Identify struggling readers and give those pupils additional (phonics) support

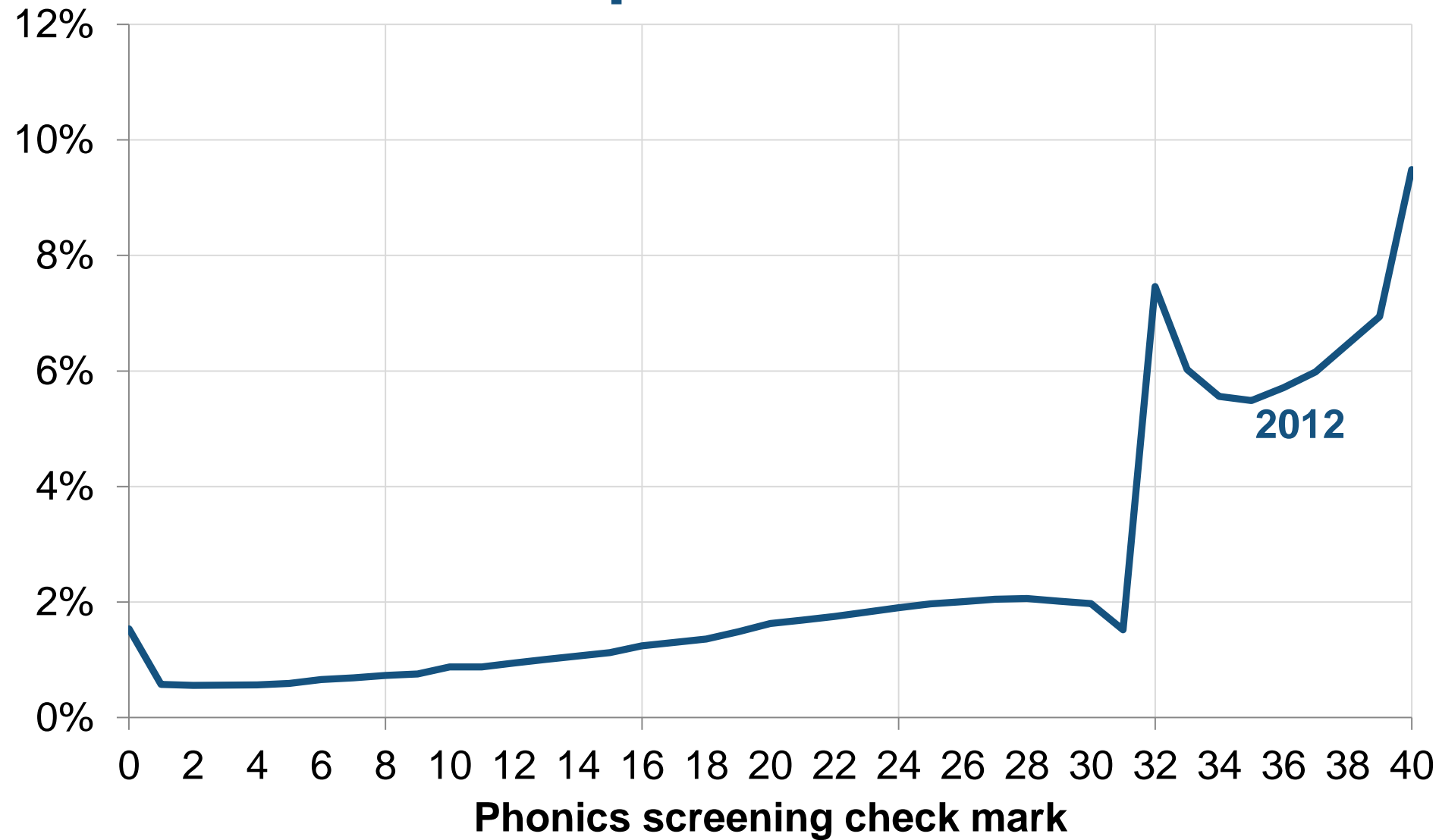


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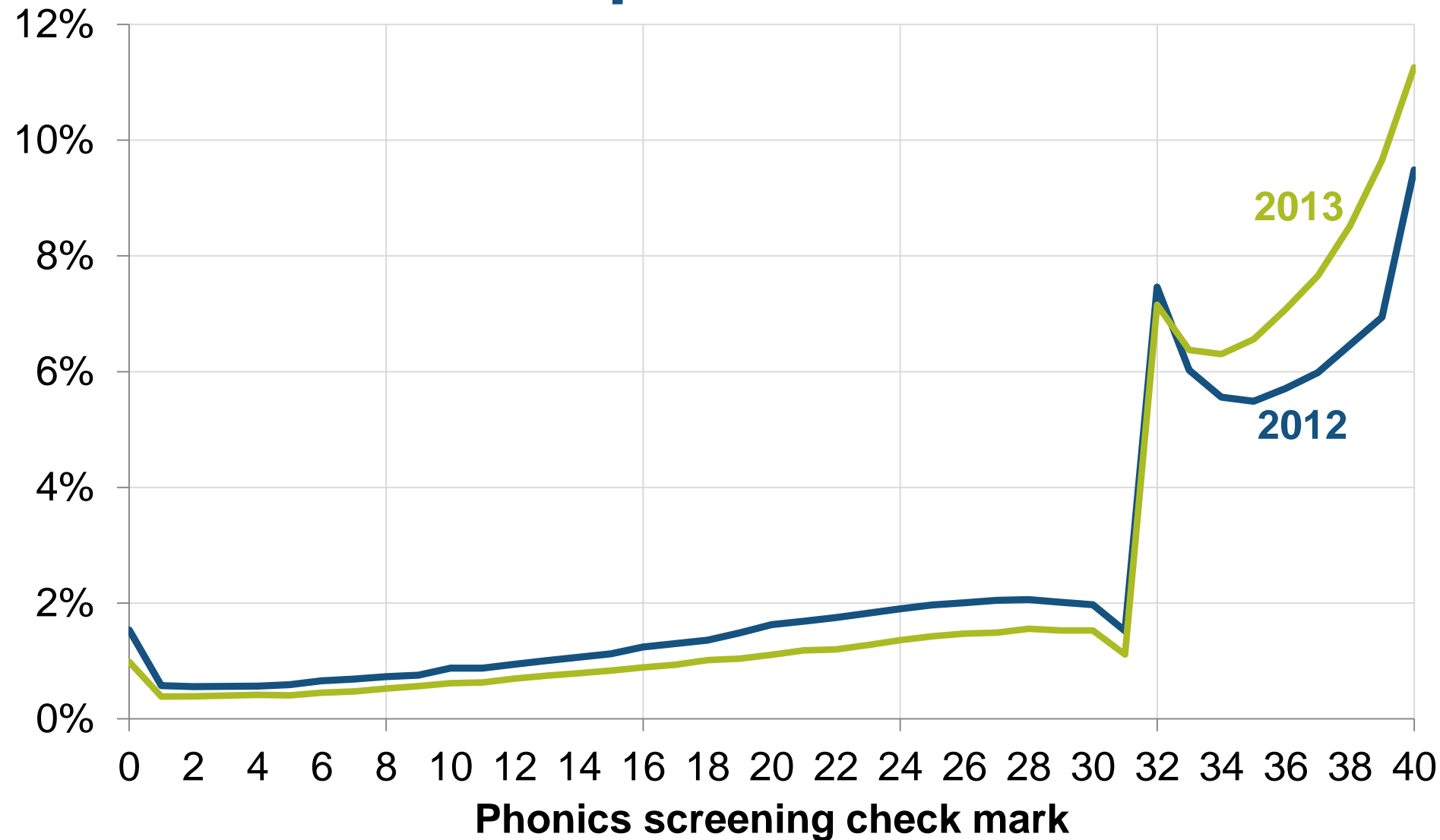
Phonics screening check

- Light-touch assessment of phonic decoding
- 40 phonically regular written words – pupils asked to sound words out
 - 20 words e.g. thin, peck, torn, cheek
 - 20 pseudo-words e.g. poth, quorg, drap, flarm
- Re-taken in Year 2 if not at expected standard
- Not used for formal accountability, but results communicated to parents and submitted to DfE

Distribution of phonics check marks



Distribution of phonics check marks





NFER evaluation

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- Aims to identify and track the impact of the check on teaching and learning
- Mixed methods evaluation:

Surveys of Literacy coordinators and Year 1 teachers

Case study interviews with staff and parents

Quantitative analysis of NPD data

Value for money assessment



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Summary of findings

- Teachers were positive about phonics as an approach to teaching reading
- 60% of schools teach SSP 'first and fast'
 - 87% agreed that 'a variety of different methods should be used to teach children to decode words'



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Summary of findings (2)

- Teachers had made changes to practice since introduction in 2012:
 - 63% had started teaching pseudo-words
 - increase in teaching time, assessment and setting for phonics
- Costs of training, resources and supply cover associated with the check:
 - £270 per school, or £5 per pupil

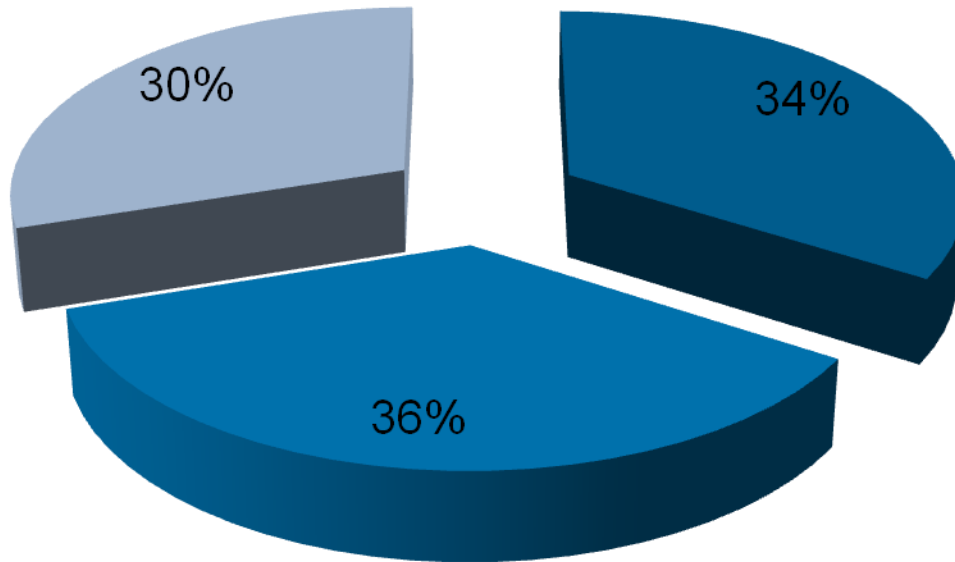


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Impact analysis

- What has the impact of the check been on reading (at Key Stage 1)?
 - difficult to analyse because no comparison group
 - will look next year at time trends
- Looked at cross-sectional differences in phonics practice & association with outcomes:
 - cluster analysis of schools based on survey responses
 - Latent Class analysis identified three clusters:

Typology of schools



- Type 1: Supporters of synthetic phonics and of the check
- Type 2: Supporters of synthetic phonics but not of the check
- Type 3: Supporters of mixed methods

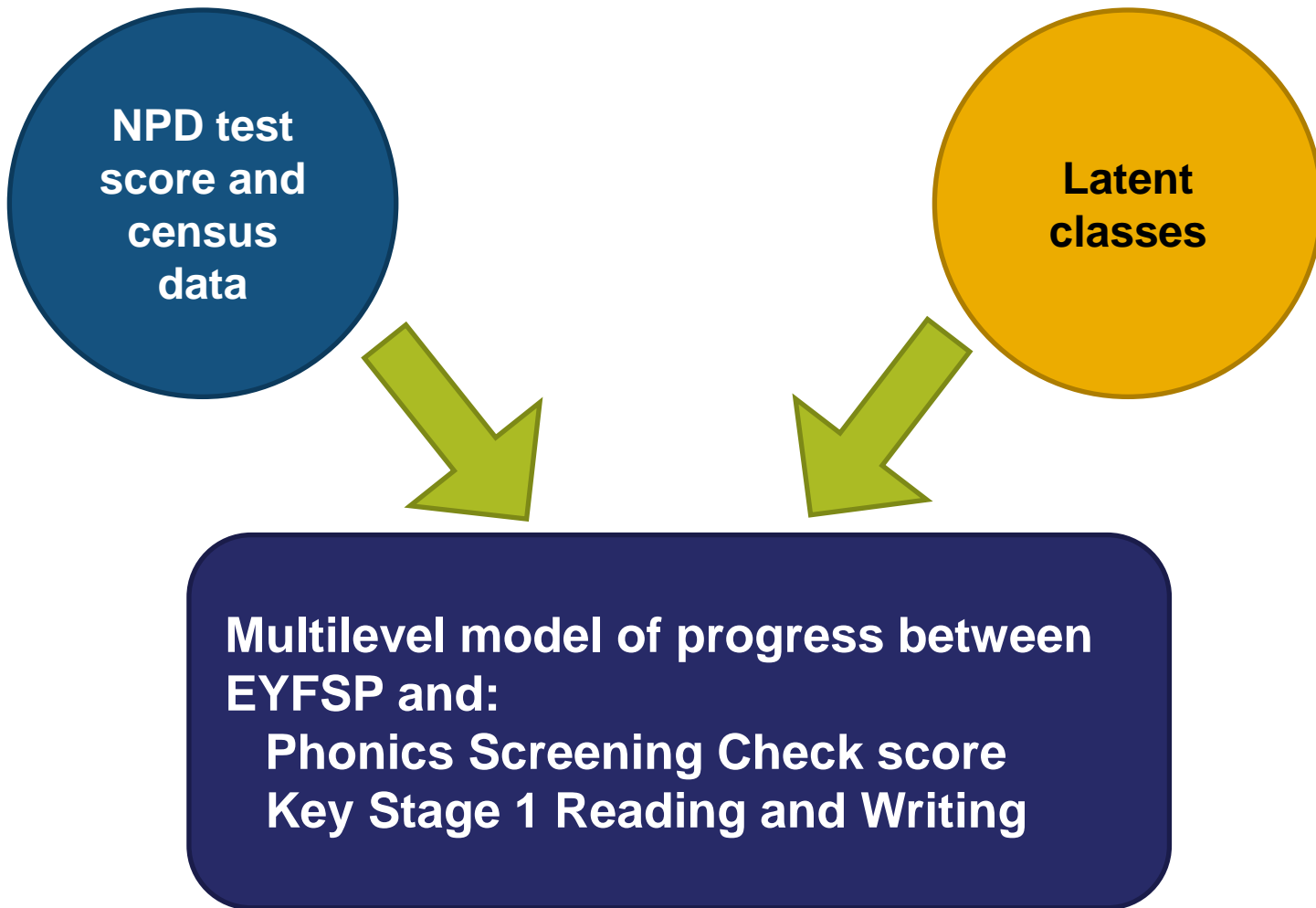


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Typology of schools

	Type 1	Type 2	Type 3
SSP is taught 'first and fast'	85%	86%	0%
A variety of different methods should be used to teach children to decode words: Agree	80%	93%	97%
Phonics has too high a priority in current education policy: Agree	20%	34%	46%
The PSC provides valuable information for teachers: Agree	56%	7%	23%
The PSC provides valuable information for parents: Agree	49%	0%	17%

Multilevel modelling





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Analysis of test scores

- Multilevel modelling takes account of correlation of pupil scores within the same school
- Variables:
 - Phonics score and KS1 Reading and Writing
 - Prior attainment (EYFSP)
 - Background characteristics (gender, FSM, EAL, SEN, ethnicity)
 - School characteristics (size, region, %FSM)
 - School typology



Pupil factors

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	Progress from EYFSP to phonics screening check	Progress from EYFSP to KS1
Girls	Non-significant	Positive
Free school meals	Negative	Negative
IDACI	Negative	Negative
SEN	Negative	Negative
EAL	Positive	Positive
Gypsy/Roma/Traveller	Negative	Negative
Asian, Black, Mixed, Other	Positive	Positive
Chinese	Non-significant	Positive



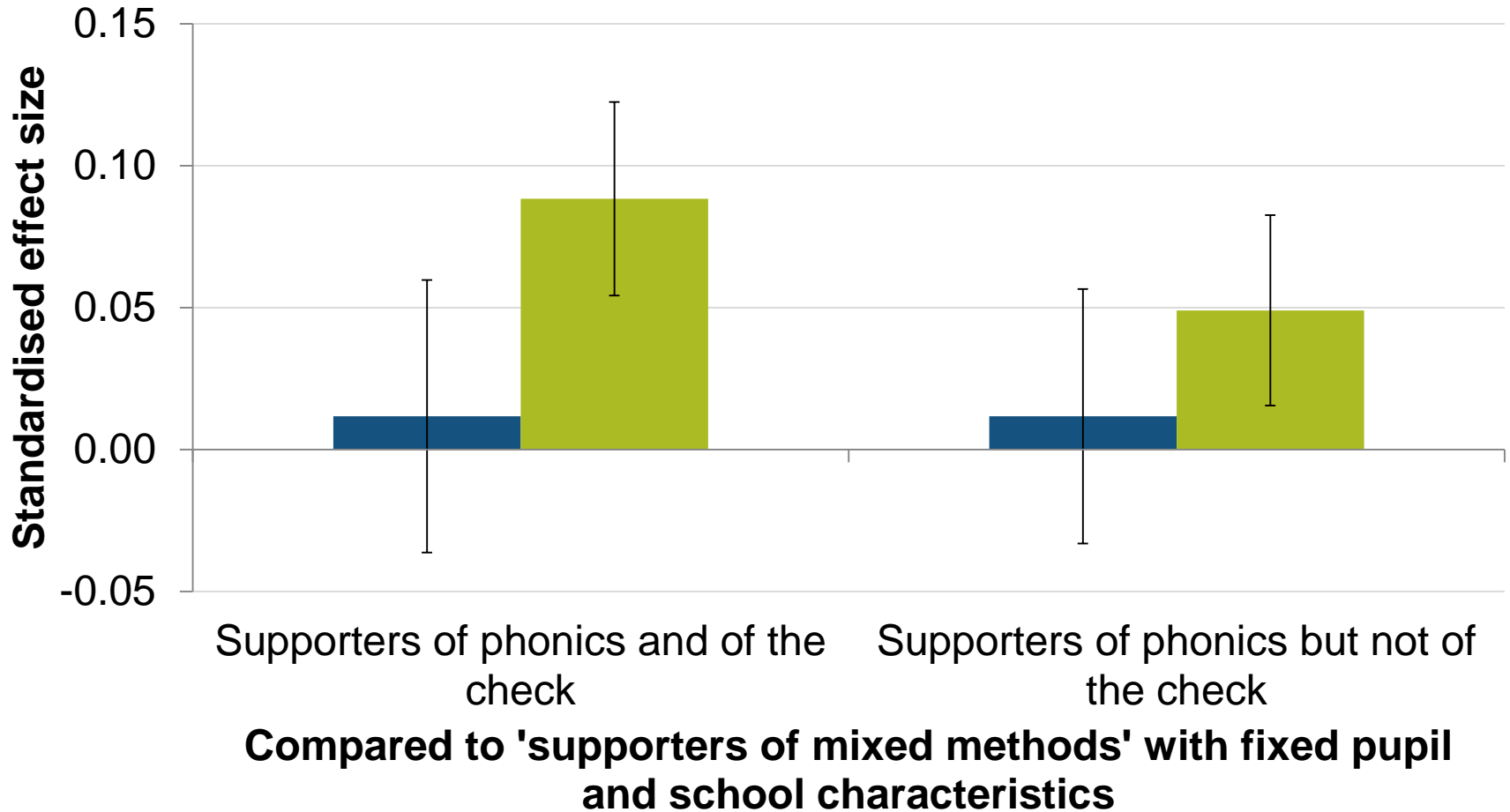
School typology

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	Progress from EYFSP to phonics screening check	Progress from EYFSP to KS1
Supporters of synthetic phonics and of the check	Positive	Non-significant
Supporters of synthetic phonics but not of the check	Positive Cohort 1 (2012), not Cohort 2 (2013)	Non-significant
Supporters of mixed methods	'Base case'	'Base case'

Standardised effect size

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■ Key Stage 1 Reading and Writing ■ Phonics screening check mark



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Conclusions of NPD-survey analysis

- Pupils in schools that support phonics perform better in the phonics check...
- ...but this has not translated into stronger reading and writing skills at Key Stage 1
- However:
 - not causal, problem of selection bias
 - 80% believe a variety of methods should be used, so are they really phonics enthusiasts?



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NFER provides evidence for excellence through its independence and insights, the breadth of its work, its connections, and a focus on outcomes.

Any questions?

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