

Rationale for homework

Reinforcement of learning at home is an important aspect of children's education and development.

Homework is defined as any task, written or otherwise, set by the school for completion outside of school. As such, homework encompasses a variety of activities such as written work, learning spellings and times tables, ICT tasks and independent research. It is a very important part of a pupil's education, and can add much to a pupils' development. We recognise that the educational experience that any school by itself can provide is limited by the time and resources available; pupils can therefore benefit greatly from the complementary learning that they do at home. One of the aims of our teaching is for pupils to develop as independent learners, and we believe that doing homework is one of the main ways in which pupils can acquire the skill of independent learning.

Homework plays a positive role in raising a pupils' level of attainment. However, we also acknowledge the important role of play and free time in a pupil's growth and development. Work at home provides quiet and private conditions needed for creative and thoughtful work of all kinds. It can provide access to materials and resources and sources of information that are not always available in the classroom, and can provide opportunities and the incentive to 'find out' more and research topics with more open ended time frames.

Aims and objectives

The aims and objectives of homework are:

- to enable pupils to make maximum progress in their academic and social development;
- to help pupils develop the skills of an independent learner;
- to enable all aspects of the curriculum to be covered in sufficient depth;
- to provide educational experiences not possible in school;
- to consolidate and reinforce the learning done in school, and to allow pupils to practice skills taught in lessons;
- to help pupils develop good work habits for the future;
- to supplement pupils' notes.

Generally:

- It can help children to make more rapid progress in learning;
- It can allow children to develop the practice of working on their own without the constant presence of the teacher or other pupils. It promotes independence and resourcefulness and this way of working is vital in formal education beyond the primary stage;
- Work at home provides quiet and private conditions needed for creative and thoughtful work of all kinds;
- It can provide access to materials and resources and sources of information that are not always available in the classroom;
- It can involve parents and others in the children's work for their mutual benefit;
- It can provide opportunities and the incentive to 'find out' more and research topics with more open ended time frames;
- It can be an important part of pupil's notes;
- It gives children valuable experience of working to deadlines and provides routines, which aid teachers and children with their respective responsibilities.

Specifically :

- It provides vital extra practice in English skills and Mathematics leading to consolidation and reinforcement. This includes practising key words and sounds with their family, number bonds or tables.

- It provides additional practice in reading development - the key to development in all areas of academic study.
- It provides an opportunity to enhance spelling proficiency.
- It promotes observational skills, recording abilities, collection of information, memorisation, revision and the development of study skills.
- It gauges children's understanding of work learned and further promotes concentration and comprehension. All these activities are equally valuable to children's learning.

Types of homework

Staff and pupils regard homework as an integral part of the curriculum - it is planned and prepared alongside all other programmes of learning.

We set a variety of age-appropriate homework activities. In Reception and Key Stage 1 we give children books to take home and read with their parents. We give guidance to parents on achieving the maximum benefit from this time spent reading with their child. We also ask Key Stage 1 children to learn the spellings studied in class as part of their homework. Children from Reception and Key Stage 1 also have a literacy, numeracy or presentation task to do at home.

Sometimes, we ask children to talk about a topic at home prior to studying it in school. For example, in the history topic on toys, we ask children to find out what toys were popular when their grandparents were young, and, if possible, to bring examples into school to show the other children. Sometimes, we ask children to find and collect things that we then use in science lessons, and occasionally we ask children to take home work that they have started in school, when we believe that they could benefit from spending further time on it. When we ask children to study a topic, or to research a particular subject, we encourage them to use not only the school library but also the local library, as well as the Internet and CD-ROMs.

At each Key Stage we continue to give children increasingly extended homework activities but we expect them to do more tasks independently. We set literacy and numeracy homework routinely each week, and we expect the children to consolidate and reinforce the learning done in school through practice at home. We also set homework as a means of helping the children to revise for assessment, as well as to ensure that prior learning has been understood.

Homework is marked according to the general school marking policy. Homework completed well is acknowledged and praised. There may be issues arising from the work, which the teacher will follow up in lesson time. We recognise that pupils have individual learning styles, which means that some tasks can be completed in a number of different ways, while others demand a particular approach. Feedback is precise and positive, and is given to pupils within one week of the homework task being handed in to the teacher.

Amount of homework

Homework is given for language, maths and topic each week. It is difficult to specify the amount of time which pupils should take on homework assignments as different pupils work at different speeds. However, as a general rule, we would expect homework to take about 60-70% of the time spent in class.

We give all our pupils a diary where the homework is recorded, either by them, or by the teacher and where parents and teachers make any relevant comments. Comments on homework are written in the child's reading record or on the homework pieces themselves.

In our school a great deal of emphasis is placed on the importance of reading. From the Early Years upwards, children are given a reading book to read at home. They are expected to read this book to an adult at home every night and to change the book whenever necessary. This is monitored closely by the class teacher.

At Key Stage 2 children will continue on the reading scheme and begin to read to themselves instead of to a parent depending on their reading level. Some children will still read to an adult every night while others will read autonomously. We encourage parents to make sure that independent reading is supervised and to take an

interest in what their children are reading. Class teachers may suggest books to pupils which expose them to a greater variety of writing styles than they might otherwise choose. Our overall aim is to develop a love of reading in our pupils and this should be borne in mind in all cases.

Parents of pupils in the lower school - Reception to Year 2 will be encouraged to read with their children daily, play number or word games with them, and involve them in practical problems around the house. As pupils progress through Foundation Stage, Year 1 and 2, there will be spellings to be learned at home and weekly homework in English and Mathematics. The amount of homework will increase as pupils proceed through Years 3 to 6, and in these years homework will be set on a daily basis, allowing pupils to work and think independently of their teachers and to strengthen and extend the skills and knowledge which they have gained during their lessons.

Inclusion and homework

To some extent, homework assignments can be varied in line with the competency of the pupil. However, scope for this is limited by the nature of the courses in which outcomes are similar for all members of a class.

The role of parents

Parents have a vital role to play in their child's education, and homework is an important part of this process. We ask parents to encourage their child to complete the homework tasks that are set. We invite them to help their children as and when they feel it to be necessary and to provide them with the sort of environment that allows children to do their best. Parents can support their child by providing a good working space at home, by enabling their child to visit the library regularly, and by discussing the work that their child is doing.

Regular homework carried out over the years is an important factor in a child's educational development and attainment. Inevitably, part of the task of monitoring and supervising falls on the parents. Parents are asked to please see their child's homework diary each day (Year 3 and above), to check on work set and sign it. Younger children have a Reading Record Book (e.g. space to write a note following pages read from the child's 'reader'). Parents are encouraged to communicate with teachers about homework in these books.

We also ask parents to help us develop the children's reading by gentle encouragement. Many of our children are eager readers and require no direction from their teachers or parents. However, some children are reluctant readers and may be disinclined to read. All children, regardless of their disposition to books, should make a habit of reading daily. Infants can start with ten minutes a day and by the time the children reach Year 6, it needs to be a minimum of twenty minutes. Reading should be an enjoyable activity, which can be shared between children and parents. It is important to discuss the material, not only to ensure understanding but to enable children to develop critical reading habits in which they interact with the text so as to prevent a passive orientation. If parents have concerns regarding reading, we ask that these be discussed with the class teacher.

In respect to homework it is best if children develop a routine. Parents should help children to organise his or her time to best advantage so that assignments are not all left to the last minute or forgotten altogether. Teachers should be informed if there are problems with homework that children cannot resolve. Child(ren) should present their work to the highest standard. We ask parents to check and sign their child's homework diary or reading record regularly.

Teachers' Role

Teachers are responsible for setting homework regularly according to the published timetable. They also have a responsibility to check that homework is handed in on time and is marked as soon as possible.

Use of ICT

The use of ICT and the Internet has made a significant contribution to the amount of reference material available at home, and the ease and speed with which it can be accessed. However, our teachers expect their pupils to produce their own work, perhaps by editing something they have found, or by expressing it in their own words. The pupils are not achieving anything worthwhile by merely downloading and printing out something that has

been written by somebody else. There are many websites containing highly educational material which can have a powerful effect on pupils' learning.

Problems

Homework should be done by the child. If a child cannot finish the set homework, parents should write an explanation as to why the work has not been completed. This is an important part of the home / school liaison process. If a child cannot undertake the homework set because of a special family occasion (wedding etc) or has been ill, please inform the teacher in writing.

If homework is of a consistently inadequate standard, or is often handed in late or not at all, the child concerned may be asked to do his / her work under supervision at playtime or after school lunch. Parents will have due warning of the latter, but full parental involvement should make the implementation of this unnecessary.

We encourage pupils to view homework in the best possible light and encourage time to complete it in a quiet atmosphere.

Homework Timetable

As a general rule, homework should be done for the following day.

Time

The times below are a guideline only and different types of homework may vary in timings:

Reception	10 minutes
Year 1	20 minutes
Year 2	25 minutes
Year 3	30 minutes
Year 4	35 minutes
Year 5	45 minutes
Year 6	up to 60 minutes
Year 7-9	45-90 minutes
Year 10-11	60-120 minutes

Class by Class Homework Schedule

Nursery

We involve parents in what their child is learning during their day in the Nursery by asking them to encourage their child to look for items at home that relate to the theme or the letter/sound of the week. Their child can then bring the item into the nursery and talk about it in front of their peers. This is a fun activity to enable their child to develop their language and literacy skills and also to aid their personal and social development. Information about the theme and letter/sound of the week is passed onto parents via a weekly Newsletter. Phonic sheets are also sent home for parents to complete or discuss with their child. It is emphasised that this is not compulsory and should always be a fun activity.

Reception

In Reception, Literacy and Numeracy homework is given every Monday-Thursday to be completed by Friday, so that each child has plenty of time to complete it. Each piece of work supports the learning that has been happening in the classroom that week and usually pertains to the relevant sound/number of the week. The homework allows parents to support their child with their learning. Reading homework is given every day.

Year 1-5

Pupils are given homework Monday – Thursday which will cover their spelling words as well as comprehension, grammar and punctuation exercises and maths. Science, along with History and Geography, will also be set once a week.

Year Six

In Year 6, children have homework Monday - Thursday. This can comprise of spellings, Maths, English, Reasoning, Science and Humanities. There is a greater emphasis given to project based and investigative tasks. Children are additionally required to hand in homework at specific times and locations to other members of staff. This is to prepare them for the additional responsibilities towards homework at Secondary School.

Year 7-11

Homework for senior pupils will be handed out in accordance with an individual's timetable. At the beginning of the year subject teachers will nominate one or more days when they will give homework. Teachers will also give a specific day when the homework should be handed in. Due to unforeseen circumstances a subject teacher may change the hand out or hand in day at any time. If there is a change then pupils will be informed at the earliest opportunity.

Monitoring and review

The Headmaster is responsible for co-ordinating and monitoring the implementation of this policy. They inspect samples of the pupils' work and of the teachers' planning.

This policy will be reviewed in two years, or earlier if necessary.

Signed:

Date: January 2016

Mr J Shipp
Proprietor

Mr N Dawes
Headmaster