Homework Policy

Throughout this policy, a reference to "parent" encompasses carers and guardians.

What is it?

Homework encompasses a whole variety of activities instigated by teachers and parents to support children's learning outside of the classroom/school day.

Why do we do it?

- To motivate and inspire learning beyond the classroom and instil a love of lifelong learning.
- To encourage children to take more responsibility for their own learning and develop good working habits.
- To support or prepare for work in class.
- To involve parents in their children's learning and foster this partnership.
- To prepare older children for the transition to secondary school

Principles

This policy is underpinned by educational research from the Education Endowment Foundation and other sources which state that:

"Overall homework in primary schools does not appear to lead to large increases in learning."

But there is evidence that suggests that:

"Short focussed tasks or activities which relate directly to what is being taught, and which are built upon in school, are likely to be more effective than regular daily homework."

Policy

- Children work incredibly hard during the school day. Therefore, teachers are expected to take into account children's well-being when setting homework.
- We acknowledge the important role of play and free time in a child's growth and development. We recognise that children should be able to take part in other activities outside the school day in order to develop fully in their own areas of interest, as well as spend valuable time with family and friends.
- To this end, frequent reading (both by and to your child) and regular number activities are the best way to support your child's learning. These fundamentals are the foundations or the basics that children need to learn such as keywords, spellings, number bonds, times tables and telling the time. Every year group will make it clear to parents and pupils which word and number work to focus on at home (e.g. via maths packs). They should be learnt and practised little and often and with regular repetition.
- Teachers are delighted to learn about children's success in other aspects of their lives out of the classroom and will seek to celebrate this in school.
- Homework should not place onerous demands on children or their parents. We recognise the critical role that parents play in their child's learning and we will always work to support parents in supporting their child. A guide for parents is available in Appendix 1.

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- We recognise that homework can enhance pupils' learning when it is short, focussed and relevant to current learning. Therefore teachers might set preparatory work to support future learning in school or respond in a dynamic way to the learning that has already occurred and set homework to consolidate, support or challenge. This will be communicated to parents via email. In addition to this, teachers may give out more personalised homework to support children with their specific targets or gaps in their learning. This additional homework will be brief and highly focused.
- Our philosophy is that teachers prioritise time on the things that have the greatest impact on children's learning. Therefore homework should not place onerous demands on teachers' time. We acknowledge the guidance from the Department of Education on Workload Challenge in reducing teacher workload. (Updated March 2016)
- Teachers will endeavour to ensure that all children are able to work on the homework given and with increasing independence. If a child has SEND or EAL, then teachers will adapt the task so that pupils can contribute in a positive way. If children struggle with homework we encourage them to bring their work in to school and the teacher will find time to help them to understand the task. Parents are welcome to contact teachers about any issues regarding homework.
- When setting homework, due consideration will be given to ensure we comply with the Equality Act 2010. We try to make sure homework and activities are accessible to all children irrelevant of background; where resources, such as IT or art materials are needed, these can be borrowed or used in school.
- If homework is set, all children are expected to complete it or spend at least a reasonable amount of time on it. If this is not possible then time will be made available in school time for children to complete.
- We expect children to maintain the same standards of presentation for homework as we set in school i.e. to use their best handwriting and a sharp pencil or black pen.
- Time spent on homework should increase as children get older.
- Homework will be acknowledged in a timely fashion and recognition will be given for a child's effort.
- A challenge for pupils as they move to secondary school is that the homework comes on different days with different deadlines rather than a set piece on a set day. Therefore, to help prepare children for this transition, it is beneficial for homework in primary school to also be set in this way.
- Broadly speaking, teachers should not set homework over school holidays.
- If a family takes a holiday in term time, it is not expected that teachers will prepare work for pupils to take with them.

Appendix 1: Parental Expectations and Guidance

- Provide a quiet, calm space for children to work in with the relevant resources.
- Hear your child read aloud, ideally daily. Evidence clearly shows that the enjoyment of reading has significant impact on the achievement of pupils. [i]
- Read TO your child. A book that is slightly above the child's reading ability will develop good language, vocabulary and sentence structure and will also feed into their writing skills. This has shown to be highly beneficial[ii] and is relevant for all ages and just as important when children can read themselves. Suggested book lists are on the website. Audio books can also support here.
- All reading experiences and activities are recorded in the school Reading Record by either parent or child. Make sure this is in school every day and check it at the end of the week to see if the child is a gold, silver or bronze reader.
- Keep practising the fundamentals little and often.
- Think creatively when supporting your child, particularly when learning the fundamentals which need over learning. Try alternative approaches such as games, using post-it notes around the house, special pens etc.
- Use IT where it is appropriate and supportive.
- Check emails and the website regularly for updates and communication regarding homework. Use the year group resources on the website regularly (maths packs, red words and spelling guide, reading lists and longer term topic homework for years 3-6).
- For Years 3-6 feedback to teachers about how your child has engaged with and applied themselves to the topic homework using the feedback form (provided with the homework.)
- Support your child with their homework, get involved but don't take over!
- Help your child manage the time they spend on homework. If they are enjoying it then keep going but do not force your child to keep slogging away if they are not engaged. Feedback to the class teacher if there is an issue.
- Encourage your child to join in other activities and clubs outside of the school day.
- For all pupils, there is always alternative homework on the school newsletter.

Appendix 2: Year Group Expectations

EYFS:

- Daily reading with Reading Record brought in each day. Practice of 'red words'
- Maths challenge cards available in the EYFS department.

Years 1&2:

- Daily reading with Reading Record brought in each day.
- Practice the 'red words' for the year group and spelling patterns, which are available on the website.
- Maths targets are sent home linked to non-negotiables, maths packs available on the website and Mathletics.
- Periodically enrichment work related to the topic, current affairs or relevant learning. This will be communicated to parents via email.

Years 3-6:

- Daily reading with Reading Record brought in each day.
- Weekly spelling patterns with suggested words or vocabulary extension will be emailed home to practice. Parents are expected to reinforce these patterns through regular activities such as Look, Say, Cover, Write, Check.
- Maths packs and Mathletics.
- Topic work will be set at the start of each term encompassing a range of activities from which pupils are expected to select and complete a minimum number.

Preparatory work or follow-up work to support, consolidate or challenge related to current work in class. This will be communicated to parents via

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[1]Clark (2011) in a large scale survey of over 18,000 young people found that those who reported enjoying reading very much were six times more likely than those who did not enjoy reading to read above the expected level for their age. Evidence from OECD (2002) found that reading enjoyment is more important for children's educational success than their family's socio-economic status. Clark and Rumbold (2006) argue that reading for pleasure could be one important way to help combat social exclusion and raise standards.

[2]Research from the Read On. Get On. Campaign by Newcastle University found that if a parent reads daily to her child at the age of 7 then at 11 the child is significantly ahead in language skills.