

Homework Policy

Introduction

By the term 'homework', this policy refers to anything children do outside the normal school day that contributes to their learning, in response to requests or guidance from the school. Homework encompasses a whole variety of activities instigated by teachers and parents/carers to support the children's learning. For example, parents or carers who spend time reading stories to their children before bedtime are supporting their learning in a very valuable way.

Homework is a very important part of a child's education, and can add much to a child's development. The government makes clear its commitment to homework, it regards it as an essential part of good education. We believe that homework can help to make links in pupils' learning and to enable them to become lifelong learners, not simply regarding learning as something which goes on at school.

We recognise that the educational experience that any school by itself can provide is limited by the time and resources available; children can therefore benefit greatly from the complementary learning that they do at home. Indeed, we see homework as an important example of partnership and cooperation between teachers and parents/carers. One of the aims of our teaching is for children to develop as independent learners, and we believe that doing homework is one of the main ways in which children can acquire the skill of independent learning.

Homework plays a positive role in raising a child's level of attainment. However, we also acknowledge the important role of play and free time in a child's growth and development. While homework is important, it should not prevent children from taking part in family and leisure activities, and participating in various clubs and organisations which play an important part in children's lives. We are well aware that children spend more time at home than at school, and we believe that they develop their interests and skills to the full only when parents/carers encourage them to make maximum use of the opportunities available outside school.

Aims and objectives

The aims and objectives of our homework policy are:

- To ensure a consistent approach to the use of homework across the school;
- To inform parents and carers about our approach to homework and to promote partnership and co-operation between home and school in supporting each child's learning;
- To help to enable pupils to make maximum progress in their academic and social development;
- To help pupils develop the skills of independent learners;
- To help children to understand that the world of learning extends beyond the school, and to make links between their experiences in school and those gained outside school;
- 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 children to practise skills taught in lessons;
- To help children develop good work habits for the future.
- To promote and encourage an enjoyment and love of reading at all ages.

Types of homework

Staff and pupils should 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 homework activities. In the Foundation Stage and at Key Stage 1, we provide books for children to take home and read with their parents or carers. We give guidance to parents and carers on achieving the maximum benefit from this time spent reading with their child. We also ask Key Stage 1 children to learn high frequency and tricky words and to work on mathematical concepts identified by the child's class teacher as part of their homework. Sometimes, we ask children to talk about a topic at home prior to studying it in school. We also set homework at the start of each term that is linked to the class themes. Children are provided with an outline of suitable homework tasks and are asked to complete at least one of the homework activities each week, to consolidate and reinforce the learning done in school through practice at home. These tasks will cover a variety of curriculum areas, including English and mathematics.

At Key Stage 2, we continue to give children the sort of homework activities outlined above, but we expect them to do more tasks independently. We might also set additional homework as a means of helping the children to prepare for assessments and tests, as well as to ensure that prior learning has been understood.

Homework is responded to by class teachers and 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 children have individual learning styles, which means that some tasks, for example, research, can be completed in a number of different ways, while others demand a particular approach or method, for example, mathematical calculations.

Amount of homework

As they move through the school, we increase the amount of homework that we give the children. We expect children in Key Stage 1 to spend approximately one hour a week doing homework, although this may well be in addition to reading and enjoying books with a parent. We expect children in Years 3 and 4 to spend approximately 15–20 minutes per night on homework, and children in Years 5 and 6 to spend approximately 30 minutes per night. This is in line with government guidelines, which can be seen on the Directgov website.

We give our pupils a book or folder in which the homework is recorded and in which parents/carers and teachers make any relevant comments.

Inclusion and homework

We set homework for all children as a normal part of school life. We ensure that all tasks set are appropriate to the ability of the child, and we endeavour to adapt any task set so that all children can contribute in a positive way. When setting homework to pupils who have special educational needs, we refer to those pupils' Individual Education Plans (IEPs), if applicable, and take their individual needs into account.

The role of parents and carers

Parents and carers have a vital role to play in their child's education, and homework is an important part of this process. We ask parents and carers to check what homework has been set and to encourage their child to complete the 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 and carers 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.

We ask parents and carers to check book bags, homework folders and/or homework books at least once a week, and encourage children to engage in homework tasks.

If parents and carers have any questions about homework, they should, in the first instance, contact the child's class teacher. If their questions are of a more general nature, they should contact the headteacher.

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 children 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 children's learning. Parents or carers are advised to always supervise their child's access to the internet.

We discourage children from bringing their own computer software or memory sticks into school, because of the risk of viruses. When asked to do so, children may use their school, protected email address to complete homework, which they can then access in school.

Monitoring and review

The SLT is responsible for co-ordinating and monitoring the implementation of this policy, by monitoring samples of the children's homework and teachers' planning.

It is the responsibility of our governing body to agree and then monitor the school homework policy. This is done by the committee of the governing body that deals with curriculum issues. Parents and carers regularly have the opportunity to complete a questionnaire, and during the school's Ofsted inspection, which asks questions about parents' views on homework. The governing body pays careful consideration to any concern that is raised by any parent. Our governing body may, at any time, request from our headteacher a report on the way in which homework is organised in our school.

This policy will be reviewed every three years or more often if necessary.

This policy has been checked and approved by governors.

Last reviewed: September 2016

Next review due: September 2018