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Introduction

Homework can make an important contribution to children's progress at school. As well as reinforcing learning in the classroom, homework helps children to develop the skills and attitudes they will need for successful independent lifelong learning.

It is believed that there are enormous advantages in children spending regular periods of time, initially quite short, on different learning activities devised by schools as part of a homework programme which supports the work they do in class.

The main purposes of homework are:

- ◆ Reinforcement of classroom learning
- ◆ Encouragement of independent learning
- ◆ Teaching self-discipline
- ◆ Preparing for later educational experience

This policy reflects our commitment to working in close partnership with parents to extend high quality learning beyond the limits of the school day.

What is Homework?

Homework refers to any work or activities which pupils are asked to do outside lesson time, either on their own or with parents or other carers.

The Purpose of Homework

- Developing an effective partnership between the school and parents and other carers in pursuing the aims of the school. This is also, of course, the purpose of our Home-School Agreement.
- Consolidating and reinforcing skills and understanding, particularly in literacy and numeracy
- Exploiting resources for learning of all kinds, at home
- Extending school learning, for example through additional reading
- Encouraging pupils as they get older to develop the confidence and self discipline needed to study on their own, and preparing them for the requirements of the secondary school

The Type and Amount of Homework

The main focus of homework activities for all children will be on literacy and numeracy. Further subjects, including science will be added to the programme of homework as children move up the school.

Homework does not just mean formal exercises carried out by children without help from adults. Particularly in the case of younger children, it is the involvement of parents and carers in joint activities, which can be very brief, which is most valuable in promoting children's learning.

Reception and Key Stage One

For children in Class One regular reading is vital and homework will very largely consist of:

- Sharing books with parents and carers
- Reading out signs and notices
- Learning Key Words
- Letters & Sounds (Phonics)
- Talking about what they are learning

As children progress other literacy related homework will include

- Work on specific tasks, for example learning the alphabet, writing their name
- Learning spellings
- Practising correct punctuation
- Handwriting

In Numeracy:

- Number games and tasks, for example number bond practice, learning number facts

In Topic:

- Children in Class 2 will be given a half termly project to complete linked to their topic

As a Broad Guideline:

Children in Reception, Years 1 and 2 should spend about 10 minutes a day (one hour per week) on reading and other homework activities.

Key Stage Two

In Literacy:

- Reading Practice and listening to others read, or for fluent readers reading on their own for at least 10 to 20 minutes a day
- Handwriting
- Learning spellings
- Practising correct punctuation
- More formal exercises
- Book reviews and responding to books read

In Numeracy

- Number games and tasks, for example learning multiplication facts
- More formal exercises

In Addition

Older children will be given activities, gradually increasing in demand. These will be differentiated where appropriate to take account of individual pupils' needs and will include:

- Finding out information
- Reading in preparation for lessons
- Preparing oral presentations
- More traditional written assignments
- Extended research projects

As a Broad Guideline:

Children in Years 3 and 4 should spend about 20 minutes a day (one and a half hours per week) with demands increasing so that by Years 5 and 6 about 30 minutes a day (two and a half hours per week) should be spent on homework.

All children follow a regular programme of homework that is explained in termly class newsletters placed inside pupils' Home-School Link Book or Homework Books. Information given aims to ensure that parents and pupils know, for the term, what is expected, when homework will be set and when it should be completed.

Children in Class One have details of any specific homework tasks put into their Home-School Link Books. Children in Classes Two and three have Homework Books and are given a weekly Homework Activity Sheet on a Friday with the expectation that work is completed during the following week and handed in on a Wednesday.

Special Educational Needs

Homework activities are planned to meet the individual needs of all pupils, and take account of any specific targets being worked towards.

Homework for pupils on the Register of Special Educational Needs is not used as a means of catching up with their peers, rather it is used to practise and positively reinforce classroom learning. Tasks set may be specifically linked to targets in Individual Educational Plans.

Where appropriate, children are encouraged and further challenged to develop their thinking skills through extended tasks. These might be of an investigative nature or an enquiry led activity.

The Planning and Co-ordination of Homework

A regular pattern of homework is carefully planned and organised by class teachers so that:

- Children are not expected to do too much on one day and not enough on another
- Tasks are clearly realistic within the time available
- Tasks are clearly related to the work children are doing in school, and are not too easy or too hard
- Children and parents know what to expect, on what day, and when tasks should be completed
- The expectation for completion of tasks takes account of the nature of the task and out-of-school activities

The Role of Parents and Carers in Supporting Pupils

Homework expectations form part of our Home-School Agreement. Parents and carers are asked to encourage and support their children in homework and other opportunities for home learning. Ways in which this might be done are discussed with parents of new pupils as part of the School's Induction Programme. Suggested ways include:

- Providing a reasonably peaceful, suitable place in which pupils can do their homework - alone or, more often for younger children, together with an adult
- Ensuring pupils know that their homework is valued, and supporting the school in explaining how it can help their learning
- Giving encouragement and praise when homework has been completed
- Attending Curriculum Information Evenings and Workshops, and other opportunities to find out about the Work and Life of the School

Homework Support

Children are encouraged to ask for support from their teacher or a member of staff if they need help or guidance with homework tasks.

Feedback for Pupils, Parents and Teachers

Where homework is done together with adults, children will often receive immediate feedback on what they are doing. In the case of work they do on their own it is very important that children build on it, and/or receive appropriate feedback as soon as possible. This may be through:

- Class work, for example class discussion or feedback on work of which the homework assignment is a part
- Tests for example tables and spelling
- Individual comments from class teachers, for example on written tasks

Providing individual written feedback is, of course, demanding on teachers' time. The range of tasks set for homework takes this into account, with the aim of keeping the workload of teachers manageable. Other strategies to achieve this objective are also employed, such as pupils to review their own work in small groups. It is very important that children are given recognition for their efforts to maintain motivation.

Where parents and carers have carried out activities with children, as teachers we are interested in feedback from them, both on how well the children tackled an activity and on the nature of the activity, for example was it interesting, too easy, too hard. Regular dialogue with parents is encouraged through Home-School Link Books. These books are introduced to parents at Induction Evenings held termly for each new intake of children into the Reception Class.

At these meetings the work of the school is explained and advice is given to parents on how they can support their child's learning, particularly in the areas of literacy and numeracy. In addition, Workshops and Curriculum Information Evenings are held to help parents gain an understanding of the work and life of the school and to provide practical advice on how children can be supported and helped in their learning at home.

Arrangements for Monitoring and Evaluating

In addition to arrangements for day to day monitoring and evaluating by class teachers, the efficiency and effectiveness of our policy is monitored by the headteacher through the sampling of Homework Books and completed homework tasks. Evidence from the monitoring and evaluation, together with the views of staff, parents and pupils is recorded and used to inform the review process.

Success Criteria:

- There is consistent practice across the school in setting, managing and marking homework (as appropriate). There is a regular programme of homework so that everyone - teachers, children , parents and carers knows what to expect each week
- Parents and carers are treated as partners in their children's learning
- There are high expectations for the completion of homework
- Pupils receive prompt, clear feedback on their work
- Pupils develop independence and take increasing responsibility for their own learning