



West Rainton Primary School

Homework Policy

This Homework Policy has been reviewed and rewritten based on recent changes in curriculum and in the light of feedback from parents, staff and pupils.

1 Introduction

Homework is anything children do outside the normal school day that contributes to their learning, in response to 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 helping with homework.

2 Rationale for homework

Homework is an important part of a child's education, and can add much to a child's development.

We see homework as an important example of 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 never prevent children from taking part in the activities of various out-of-school clubs and of other organisations that play an important part in the lives of our pupils. We are well aware that children spend more time at home than at school, and we believe that they develop their interests and skills when they are encouraged to make maximum use of the opportunities available outside school.

3 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 promote cooperation between home and school in supporting each child's learning;
- to enable some aspects of the curriculum to be further explored independently;
- 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.

4 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.

In Foundation Stage children will have sounds/word books to take home. Once ready for a reading book they will be issued with one and we ask that children practise reading each school night for 5-10 mins. Once in Read Write Inc groups, children will also receive a set of weekly spellings to practise. Children will also get early number homework such as their mental maths target to practise. Please attend meetings on our mental maths target scheme to be fully aware of how they progress through school and how parents/carers can fully support their children at home. In this early stage where all learning concepts are being formed playing games, sharing experiences and simply having conversations will all support a child's learning. Sharing books is just as valuable in aiding a child's progress in reading as is your child reading to you or to their teachers.

In Key Stage 1 we ask parents to support their child through home learning. This includes reading each school day for about fifteen minutes. (Remember this can include sharing books and you reading to your child.) Reading records are checked daily by teachers in school. In addition, **Year 1** children will be given weekly phonics and maths activities as well as a set of spellings each week. **Year 2** children are set weekly spellings and will also receive maths homework on the days that our maths curriculum states but at least once a week. Children in Year 2 are also asked to read each night for around fifteen minutes. We also encourage parents to familiarise themselves with our curriculum maps and to discuss children's' learning at home.

This is in addition to all the wonderful opportunities parents/carers give their child which does not go unnoticed and school and all adds to the development of an independent learner. Practical activities such as handling money, weighing ingredients, telling the time, playing board games and physical activity all enhance the learning that is taking place in school.

At Key Stage 2 we continue to give children the sort of homework activities outlined for Key Stage 1, including the reading activities specified above but we expect them to do more tasks independently. Children will generally have a set of weekly spellings, 1-2 pieces of maths homework a week, an individual mental maths target to practise and a continuation of reading habits with at least fifteen minutes each school night expected. In Year 6 we also set homework as a means of helping the children to revise for examinations, as well as to ensure that prior learning has been understood.

5 The role of teachers

As a school we value highly the role of homework, and this is reflected in the teachers' responsibilities within this area.

- the teacher will provide weekly spellings where the pattern or rule will be taught that week;
- the teacher will check reading records each school day and acknowledge the effort of learners;
- the teacher will plan 1-2 pieces of maths homework to fit in with maths teaching and learning. This will be no more than 10 questions of the same skill;
- the teacher will test mental maths targets at least once a fortnight;
- the teacher will check and acknowledge homework at the first available opportunity;
- the teacher will put in place some guidance or tuition in the next available lesson to address any mistakes or misconceptions in homework;
- the teacher will hear children on any of our reading schemes read at least once a fortnight and all readers beyond the scheme as regularly as possible. This could be within English lessons but will be recorded in reading records;
- the teacher will test spellings weekly and report score to parents in homework books;
- It is the teachers' responsibility to oversee the changing of reading books and the sticking in of tasks into homework books.

6 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 no longer than half an hour per day on homework activities, and this may well include reading with a parent. We carefully plan for children in Key Stage 2 to spend no longer than 45 minutes per day on homework tasks including mental maths targets and reading for fifteen minutes.

7 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. Homework is carefully tailored, just as work in school is prepared and therefore should meet the needs of all pupils. Careful planning between teachers and our SENDCo ensures individual targets of our learners are met. We value and celebrate the cultural diversity of our pupils and their families, and we appreciate the enrichment that this brings.

8 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 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 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.

Ideally parents should read with their children every day to help them develop a love of books and stories and help them to grow in confidence. We ask parents and carers to sign their child's Reading Record to show that they have heard their child read and discussed their books with them each week night.

If parents and carers have any questions about homework, they should, in the first instance, contact the child's class teacher. Finally, if they wish to make a complaint about the school homework policy, or the way in which it is implemented, parents or carers should contact the Head teacher in the first instance and, should concerns still remain, the governing body.

Homework is seen in part as a preparation for the more independent learning undertaken at secondary school. If homework is not completed the class teacher will hold a conversation with parents/carers in the first instance. If this continues a standard format letter is sent home informing parents and asking for their support. If the situation is not resolved parents will be asked in to see the Head teacher and class teacher to discuss how we can assist in moving things forward.

9 Use of ICT

Children are very rarely set homework that requires use of the internet as we prefer to monitor all tasks of that nature within school. A copy of the school's E-Safety policy is available from the school office and may also be found on the school website. The child's safety is paramount in all matters regarding use of the internet and we advise parents and carers to always supervise their child's access to the internet.

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, we encourage children to be aware of the fact that sources of information on the internet can be unreliable and we rigorously educate our pupils on how they should use the internet safely.

There are many websites containing highly educational material which can have a powerful effect on children's learning and there is a list of useful web links on our school website. We also fund an annual license for the 'Busy Things' website which can be accessed at school and at home.

10 Monitoring and review

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. Our homework policy is reviewed every two years by the Head teacher in consultation with teaching staff.

September 2014