

St. John's School Homework Policy- July 2015.

Introduction

Homework is anything that 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 to support children's learning. For example, a parent who spends time reading a story to their child before bedtime is helping with homework.

Much of the work most valued by teachers is a product of pupils' own initiative, motivated by classroom learning and carried through by pupils in their own time and sustained by their own enthusiasm.

Rationale for homework

Homework is a very important part of a child's education and can add much to a child's development. The U.K. government made clear its commitment to homework in a White Paper called 'Excellence in Schools', where homework was seen as 'an essential part of good education'. We recognise that the time and resources available limit the educational experience that any school by itself can provide; children benefit greatly therefore from the mutual support of parents and teachers in encouraging them to learn both at home and at school. Indeed we see homework as an important way of establishing a successful dialogue between teachers and parents. One of the aims of our school is for children to develop as independent learners. We believe that homework is one of the many ways in which children can acquire the skill of independent learning.

Homework plays a positive role in raising a child's level of attainment. 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 the wide range of out-of-school clubs and organisations that play an important part in the lives of many children. We are well aware that children spend more time at home than at school, and we believe they develop their skills, interests and talents to the full only when parents encourage them to make maximum use of the experiences and opportunities that are available outside of school.

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 demonstrate mastery over their work;
- to promote enquiry in pupils and engagement in their own learning;
- to help pupils develop the skills of an independent learner;
- to promote a partnership between home and school in supporting each child's learning;
- to help develop time management and planning skills;
- 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 learning done in school and to allow children to practice skills taught in lessons;
- to help children develop good work habits for the future.

Indicators of Quality

Research and best practice suggest that homework should be;

- Varied and interesting
- Planned
- Differentiated
- Purposeful and clear
- Linked closely to coursework
- Spread evenly as possible over the school week and year
- Readily resourced
- Within pupils capabilities, but not so trivial so as to appear a waste of time
- Seen as an integral and important part of the curriculum by all
- “Finishing off” is kept to a minimum
- Both pupils and parents should know where and how to get help
- Sanctions for homework not done should be clearly understood by parents and pupils

Types of homework

We set a variety of homework activities. In the Foundation Stage and at Key Stage 1 we encourage the children to read by giving them books to take home to read with their parents. We give guidance information to parents to help them achieve the maximum benefit from this time spent reading with their child. Practising key words brought back from school and mental maths strategies sent by the class teacher following the mental maths test at the start of each term, is encouraged.

At Key Stage 2 we continue to give children the sort of homework activities outlined in the paragraph above but we expect them to do more tasks independently. We set literacy/topic and numeracy homework routinely and we expect the children to consolidate and reinforce learning done in school through practice at home. We also set homework as a means of helping the children to consolidate their understanding, prepare for future tasks as well as to ensure that prior learning has been understood.

We aim to check that homework has been done by talking through tasks, checking, monitoring, marking against the Learning Intention etc. Parents are encouraged to provide feedback regarding homework difficulties.

We will often make reference to homework in our termly curriculum profile letters and suggest general ways in which parents can support learning, and in ways specific to the work in the current term. i.e. additional or follow up family visits to places of interest, Internet websites, and additional activities that pupils can share with their parents.

Amount of homework

We increase the amount of homework that we give the children as they move through the school. We expect Key Stage 1 children to spend approximately 10 minutes a day doing homework, including reading with a parent and practising sight words. We expect children in years 3 and 4 to spend approximately 20- 30 minutes per night on homework and children in years 5 and 6 to spend approximately 45-60 minutes per night. This could include independent reading time.

We provide the children a school diary where they or the teacher or learning support assistant (LSA) records the homework, and where parents and teachers make any relevant comments.

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 they feel necessary and provide them with the sort of environment that allows children to do their best. Parents can support their child by providing a distraction free working space at home, by enabling their child to visit the library regularly, and by discussing the work that their child is doing.

In KS2 we ask parents to check the home/school diary at least once a week and to sign it as requested. If parents have any problems or questions about homework, they should, in the first instance, contact the child's class teacher.