

St. John's School

Homework Policy- July 2019

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 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 homework.

Much of the work most valued by teachers is a product of pupils' own initiative, motivated by classroom learning, 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 can by itself 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 and 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
- 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:

Foundation and Key Stage 1

In Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 we encourage the children to read by giving them books to take home to share with their parents. We give guidance information to parents to help them achieve the maximum benefit from this time spent reading with their child.

Reception: practising sight words or letter sounds brought home from school is expected. This will vary depending on the child. When all of the 100 words can be read, children will move onto spelling them.

Year 1: children will begin to take home weekly phoneme and sight word spelling.

Year 2: children will be introduced to more challenging sight words and phonemes. They will also be expected to use and apply these words in sentence form.

Years 1 & 2: maths sheets may be sent home to reinforce skills being taught in class. Depending on the needs of the children, mental maths activities may also be sent home to learn/revisit i.e. number bonds and times tables.

Key Stage 2

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:

- English/topic research/reading/homework routinely
- Maths homework routinely - especially related to learning tables.
- 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 expect the children to consolidate and reinforce learning done in school through practice at home. 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.

Amount of homework

We increase the amount of homework that we give pupils as they move through the school as set out below:

Foundation Stage: 5-10 minutes/day - shared book, letter sounds, sight words

Key Stage 1: approximately 10-15 minutes a day including reading, and practising sounds and sight words

Years 3 and 4: approximately 20 - 30 minutes per night. This should include independent reading time.

Years 5 and 6: approximately 45 minutes per night. This should include independent reading time.

Most classes provide pupils with a school diary or reading record where the pupil, teacher or learning support assistant (LSA) can record homework, and where parents and teachers can make 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
- provide them with the sort of environment that allows children to do their best
- provide a distraction free working space at home
- enabling them to visit the library regularly
- discussing the work that their child is doing

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