

FINEDON SCHOOLS

HOMEWORK POLICY

At Finedon Schools, we believe that there should be a positive partnership between home and school and homework is a key part of this. It offers children the opportunity to become independent learners, to practise and apply skills learned in the classroom, to develop attitudes that they need for successful lifelong learning and to prepare children for secondary school. Homework is an opportunity to extend learning beyond the classroom and make connections with 'real life' contexts. It is also important that homework is seen as an enjoyable complement to what happens at school. We aim to provide opportunities not only to reinforce key skills in Literacy and Mathematics, but also for children to learn more across a range of subjects.

Our Aims and Principles

- As part of our partnership with parents we encourage them to take an active role at home in promoting their child's learning.
- Homework actively involves parents in the learning process and increases their knowledge and understanding of the curriculum
- It promotes a home/school link and promotes liaison
- It generates discussion at home amongst family members, encouraging a positive attitude and approach to learning
- That children will further develop and reinforce skills that have been taught in school, through home based additional activities.
- It encourages self-motivation and the development of organisational skills and independent learning
- Ideally, we suggest that children practise 'little and often', rather than giving a set twenty minutes homework on certain evenings, for example.
- We stress that particularly if the child seems tired or just unwilling, to return to the homework at a more appropriate time when he/she is more responsive.
- If a child seems uncertain or over anxious about work sent home, we encourage discussion between the parents and the child's class teacher.
- We encourage all children to reach their full potential, and promote recognition and praise of their efforts at all levels of attainment.
- Parent information sessions will be held at the start of each academic year to give ideas on ways on how to support children at home.

Learning Logs

Learning Logs are a key element of our homework in Key Stage One and Two.

In Key Stage One, children are given a weekly activity on a Friday which alternate on a weekly basis between Maths and English/topic activities. Topic homework aims to be open ended in approach, to allow for all pupils to access the task and for individuals to respond in whatever way they prefer. Maths homework tends to be a more closed activity with opportunities to extend if required, this reinforces the learning experienced in Maths sessions during that week. Learning Logs are due back in school by Wednesday at the very latest, to enable the work to be marked and the following week's activity to be stuck into the Log. The activity is always explained to the children and the explanation in the Learning Log strives to give a variety of suggestions which may be followed if wished, or to serve as a starting point for children to develop their own response to the task.

In Key Stage Two the suggested learning log tasks are printed in a grid for the whole topic, so that parents and children can choose which task to do on which week. There is a range of activities such as cooking, producing a model and producing a leaflet or a PowerPoint presentation. The tasks are always explained to the children, so that they have some possible ideas for each task. The work is due in for sharing by Wednesday.

Opportunities are given in school for the children to view the work of their peers and Learning Log work is given a high profile in school with work and effort being regularly celebrated, including in the Star of the Week Assemblies.

The Key Benefits of Learning Logs

- They are a personal reflective journal for the child to record their knowledge and understanding in whichever way they feel most helpful. Children can use pictures, photographs, collage, lift up flaps, writing, diagrams, labels, mind maps or whatever style they wish to choose to present their work.
- They are an opportunity for children to extend and consolidate their learning in the classroom.
- They encourage children to be creative and independent.
- They encourage children to be actively engaged in their own learning and to take a pride in their work.
- They encourage a partnership between home and school, and serve as a useful means of informing parents of class based learning.
- As learning Logs are personalised, there is no right or wrong way to approach a task.
- They are 'inclusive' and cater for abilities and learning styles.
- They are child-directed, rather than teacher-directed and so give children 'ownership'.

- Children can be as creative and imaginative as they like.
- Children can use them to refer back to and remind them of their learning.
- They are an assessment tool for teachers.

Other Homework Activities

Books for Sharing and Reading

We wish to foster an enjoyment of books and stories and to encourage shared and independent reading at home.

Early in Foundation Stage, children begin to take home a 'reading book' along with a 'Home/School diary'. During the initial stages of starting school children use pre-readers, which are books with no or very few words, to develop their pre-reading skills. These early stages of book sharing lay the foundations to enable children to become successful readers and should not be undervalued.

As we teach the children letter sounds through daily phonics lessons the children move onto the 'Oxford Reading Tree' scheme and colour coded supplementary books.

Children continue to take home reading books from the various reading schemes, throughout the school. They also select a book from the school library so that they get the experience of reading a variety of 'real books'.

We encourage children to read at home daily and they may change their reading books as regularly as they wish, providing an adult has signed the home/school reading diary. All children have reading diaries and it is important that these are used in school and at home as part of the communication between teachers and parents. The Home/School Diary will include areas that the child particularly needs to develop in their reading so they can be practised whenever reading.

In order to promote the importance of regular reading at home, the Infant School children are rewarded with stickers and prizes for the reading they do outside of school – a star for every time a book is read, a sticker for every five times they read, a small prize for every twenty times they read and a book for every one hundred times they read.

Tricky Words

Alongside phonetically decodable words, children in Foundation Stage are sent home with a list of 'Tricky Words' on a fun key ring. Children need to learn these Tricky Words by sight as they are 'irregular' words and are therefore not phonically decodable. Once all 10 sets of Tricky Words are known by sight, children are encouraged to spell these irregular words so they can include them in their writing.

Sounds

As children are introduced to phonemes (sounds) in Foundation Stage, they are sent home in a 'Phonic Book' so that they can be practised at home through the reading and writing of them. The new sounds are sent home weekly, alongside the correct letter formation which needs to be practised in, short, sharp ten minute bursts. We

encourage children by lots of praise for trying, having a growth-mindset and using the correct pencil grip.

As the number of sounds the children learn increases, they will be sent home with words that are for blending. For example; m-a-t and d-o-g. These words can be sounded out in a 'robot voice' or via puppets and soft toys. No written outcome is required, however parents can use our online system, Tapestry to record their child's progress.

In Key Stage One, children take home graphemes learnt and a list of decodable words on a "fun key-ring". They are also used in school during phonic and Guided Reading sessions so that children are confident in using them independently and are regularly able to practise the skill of grapheme recognition and blending.

Rhymes and Phrase of the Week

A rhyme or 'phrase of the week' will be sent out via Tapestry for Foundation Stage children to practise at home. This is to develop their communication and language skills. Singing songs and extending children's sentences builds on their vocabulary and supports their development of rhythm, rhyme and alliteration.

Maths

A fun, practical maths activity is sent home on a weekly basis in reception. There is usually no written outcome for maths homework as we focus on 'hands on' learning using concrete objects to fully grasp the concepts being taught. However parents can record their child's learning on our online system, Tapestry.

In Key Stage One maths homework is an aspect of the Learning Log homework (see section above).

In Key Stage Two the children are given a piece of maths homework on a Friday that is designed to consolidate their learning for the week. It is to be completed in maths homework books and returned to school on the following Wednesday for marking.

Spellings

In Year One, children are taught the spellings of Common Exception words. 'Look, cover, write, check' spelling sheets are sent home weekly for children to practise with opportunities to include them within sentences. Further suggestions of activities are provided for parents.

In Year Two, children are taught the spelling of Common Exception words and spelling patterns and rules. Children have spelling books, which include a weekly sticker stating the current learning. Children are encouraged to practise these spellings and return books for marking.

In Key Stage One, children will be regularly tested on the spelling of these Common Exception words so that gaps can be addressed and catered for during interventions.

In Key Stage Two, the focus of our spelling programme is on the teaching of spelling, which embraces knowledge of spelling conventions, patterns and rules. It is vital that along with the teaching of spelling is the opportunity to promote the

learning / practise of spellings, including statutory words, common exceptions and personal spellings. Therefore, children are provided with weekly word lists that are to be practised at home. Children will then be tested on these words in differing ways. This includes standard word tests or dictation tests.

Times tables

Knowing times tables (and their associated division facts) supports mathematical learning and understanding. Children who have a strong grasp of them can use this knowledge across a wide range of mathematical concepts. The national curriculum states that children should know all the multiplication facts up to 12 x 12 by the end of Year Four. Children at the Junior School practise times table knowledge and understanding daily at home. This is to be done on the times tables sheet and they can also use their log in to Times Tables Rockstars to gain speed and fluency.

Special Educational Needs

It is expected that children on an Individual Education Plan will work on their targets at home to support their learning in school.

In circumstances where a child is absent for any length of time, for example, following recovery from an operation, or due to an infectious disease, home and school will discuss suitable work for the child to complete at home.

This policy was discussed and agreed by the Governing Body on 8.11.17 .

This policy will be reviewed annually.