



Homework Policy

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1. Introduction

Although homework is not a statutory requirement, homework partnerships with parents, carers and pupils can extend high quality learning experiences beyond the limits of the school day. They also provide opportunities for parents and carers to take part in their children's education. At Woodloes Primary School we believe that the early sharing of ideas between school, parents and carers promotes a culture of inclusive learning where all involved are partners in the learning process. This is likely to raise both expectations and standards. Consequently, our homework policy was developed following consultation with parents; teachers and governors (see Appendix 3).

What is Homework?

Any learning activity that pupils are asked to do outside of normal lesson time can be regarded as homework. The homework task is generally related to work that pupils are doing in school, often as preparation, consolidation, follow-up or to expand knowledge and apply skills.

Good attitudes to learning need to be established early. Practical guidance and support given to parents can help them to understand how children learn and the role of play activities in that learning. This early 'homework' often takes the form of talking and playing with children as well as singing nursery rhymes together.

For young children in school, the most valuable form of 'homework' is where parents or carers play a key role in working with them. This can involve sharing books or learning spellings but also using role-play or games to develop a range of skills and helping children collect information and materials for displays.

Homework is now well established in many primary schools and is regarded as a necessary support for learning in all secondary schools. Homework content will change and develop as pupils' learning progresses. For older pupils and students, homework will include preparation and following up the activities which have been undertaken in class. It will also involve topics and independent out-of-school learning activities which allows pupils to work more independently, at their own pace.

We acknowledge the value 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 a wide range of out-of-school clubs.

Aims and Objectives

The aims and objectives of homework are to:

- Enable pupils to make maximum progress in their academic and social development;
- Help pupils develop the skills of an independent learner;
- Promote cooperation between home and school in supporting each child's learning;
- Enable all aspects of the curriculum to be covered in sufficient depth;
- Provide educational experiences not possible in school;
- Consolidate and reinforce the learning done in school, and to allow children to practice skills taught in lessons;

- Help children develop good work habits for the future.

When working towards these aims and objectives, staff will:

- Ensure tasks are purposeful and worthwhile.
- Plan work to meet the changing needs of pupils at each stage of their development.
- Support the school's policy of personal and social education by seeking to encourage and develop a positive attitude to learning, perseverance, initiative, qualities of self- discipline and responsibility.

And in turn, parents/carers can:

- Support their child's learning in a positive manner.
- Support the school by ensuring that tasks set are completed carefully (see Appendix 2).

2. Procedures and Practice

Equal Opportunities

We set homework activities 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.

Organisation

Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception)

Parents are sometimes surprised that such young children receive homework. However, the activities given are simple and fun to do with the family and help the children learn important skills in an enjoyable way.

Regular reading to, and with children is encouraged and makes a huge difference to the development of this important and enjoyable activity.

Key Stage 1

For children in Key Stage 1, developing a partnership with parents or carers and involving them actively in children's learning is the key purpose. Short activities of different kinds of simple games, learning spellings, phonics and number facts and, of course, reading together provide a very important opportunity for young children to talk about what they are learning to an interested adult, and to practise key skills in a supportive environment.

Key Stage 2

As children get older homework provides an opportunity for children to develop the skills of independent learning, and this should increasingly become its main purpose. It is important that children should gradually get into the habit of regularly devoting periods of time, which may not be long, to study on their own. By the time children reach Year 6 their homework programme will cover a wide range of tasks and curriculum content, with a regular weekly schedule. This approach will benefit their learning and also ensure that, in relation to homework as much as to other aspects, their transition to Year 7/secondary school is as smooth as possible.

All the homework activities prepared for the children are linked to work currently being undertaken at school and are planned to support and reinforce important learning; with the emphasis on English and mathematical skills. We believe that children who regularly read to and with parents benefit by gaining confidence and fluency as readers. Reading for pleasure from a variety of authors is an important activity for all children and should be actively encouraged by all parents. Similarly, number facts learnt and practised at home will help benefit mathematical development.

Our homework tasks include:-

Reception:

- Phonics pre-learning
- Practising skills learnt at school e.g. reading, numbers etc.,
- Home/School Diary regularly
- Marvellous Me / Culture Boxes (once per year)

Key Stage 1:

Use a book for weekly homework including:

- Reinforcing learning with a range of materials and bespoke homework to meet the needs of individual learners
- Reading (at least 3 times a week)
- '*Mathletics*' practice

In addition:

- '*Tic Tac Toe*' – half termly

Key Stage 2:

- Regular reading practice - independently / with an adult (at least 4 times a week)
- Spelling in Years 3 – 6
- Times Tables – Multiplication and Checkpoint Challenge
- Weekly maths or English activities (years 5 & 6)
- A project / theme based activity per half term / term e.g. research, design and technology etc.,
- *Use of 'Mathletics'* weekly and '*Bitesize* (year 6) to consolidate school learning*
- An additional English or Maths activity (In year 6, this is linked to CGP books).

In addition, from January to May, year 2 and 6 children may be set practice test papers / tasks to help them prepare for the SATs. Year 1 practise phonics skills from January to May in preparation phonics screening in June.

*Provision is made for use of online resources at school, where children do not have access to the internet at home.

Roles and Responsibilities:

Our teachers will ensure tasks are purposeful and worthwhile and plan work to meet the changing needs of pupils at each stage of their development. They are responsible for:

- setting and marking homework
- setting regular homework tasks e.g. learning spellings and times tables weekly or project based tasks given half-termly or termly
- providing homework books in which to record and complete tasks (dependent upon the age of the child)
- providing a weekly homework club in year 6 to support children who need time in school or have experienced difficulties with their homework.

We ask parents to:

- encourage their children to complete the tasks that are set,
- help their children as and when they feel it to be necessary,
- provide them with the work space / environment that allows them to do their best.
- support their children by discussing the work that their children are doing and encouraging them to complete the work independently and on time, and
- where possible, enrich the children's learning by using community facilities including libraries, museums, sports facilities etc., (see Appendix 1).
- Help children to take a pride in their work by using the correct tools for writing i.e. pencil and pen in their books.

Please note the following:

We like to encourage the children's independence and expect the children to look after their books and return them each week for marking. If your child loses or damages a CGP book or other resource, we will ask for a contribution towards the full cost of a replacement.

If parents / carers have any questions about homework, they should, in the first instance, contact the child's class teacher. If their questions are of a more general nature, they should contact the deputy / assistant headteacher.

We ask children to:

- bring their work into school when their teacher has asked for it,
- keep their work in books neat and tidy,
- always try their best,
- ask for help when they are unable to complete the task.

Monitoring

The SMT are responsible for monitoring standards at school and will, as part of the school's monitoring process evaluate the amount, content and standards of homework. At our school we want the children to enjoy learning, so it is important that we encourage our children to participate in a broad range of activities.

Homework should be purposeful, efficient, personalized, doable and inviting, and children should feel rewarded for their contributions.

It is the responsibility of our governing body to agree and monitor the school homework policy through the Performance and Standards Committee. Our governing body will pay careful consideration to any concern that is raised by any parent regarding homework.

Concluding Notes

Future Developments

The White Paper (2010) states that schools are expected “to set their own improvement priorities” and “as long as schools provide a good education” the Government “will not mandate specific approaches.” In a time of educational change when schools have greater autonomy, there is an opportunity for teaching professionals to evaluate and understand the impact of homework on children’s lives and to reassess the future of homework in schools. Consequently, our school will consult with all stakeholders regularly so that we will be able to provide the best learning for our children and prepare them for the future.

Appendix 1: 12 things you can do to help your child learn

1. Give your child confidence through lots of praise and encouragement.

- *You have tremendous power to strengthen your child's confidence - and confidence is vital to learning.*
- *Provide specific praise that focuses on a particular aspect of their work. Comments such as "I like the way you have..." is more effective than "you're clever".*

2. Read to, and with, your child as much as possible.

- *It is important to read to children, hear them read, or encourage them to read to themselves, for at least 20 minutes a day (10 – 15 minutes with the younger children).*

3. Encourage your child to observe and talk about what they see, feel, think etc.

- *Even young children can be helped to read notices and signs, for example, and understand what they mean.*

4. Make use of your local library.

- *Look out for special events and services for children.*

5. Visit museums and other places you think your child might find interesting.

- *Children now have free admission to major national museums and art galleries.*

6. If your child likes watching television, watch it together sometimes and talk about what has been watched. Children enjoy sharing their experiences and will gain a lot from the discussion.

7. Try to provide a reasonably quiet and suitable place where your child can work and show that you and all members of the family value and respect the homework activity.

8. Try to set time aside to support your child's homework activities whilst also allowing some independence where appropriate.

9. Encourage your child to discuss homework with you, including feedback from teachers.

10. Try to help your child to see the enjoyable aspects of homework.

11. Help your child to see the importance of homework and teach them to become more independent and take more responsibility for themselves as they get older.

12. Remind your children to complete and hand in homework on time.

Please contact us if you have any questions or concerns. We want your children to succeed