

# Crowan Primary School – Homework Policy



Ratified by the Governing Body -

Signed -

(Chair of Governors)

Review date -

## **Rationale -**

Evidence shows that children need to practice taught skills in order to become confident and proficient in their use. Whereas 'challenging' homework tends not to make a significant difference to learning, time spent out of school rehearsing strategies and consolidating methods introduced within the classroom, does contribute to a deepening understanding and to a better recall of information. Support and ready feedback to children engaged in the completion of homework will further enhance self-esteem and learning.

**The Purpose of Homework** - In general terms, the purpose of homework is to:

- develop an effective partnership between the school and a child's parents/carers in pursuing the aims of the school
- consolidate and reinforce taught skills and understanding, particularly in literacy and numeracy
- exploit resources for learning, of all kinds, within the home
- extend school learning (for example, through additional reading)
- encourage children as they get older to develop the confidence and self-discipline needed for independent study in preparation for secondary school

**Aims** – Crowan Primary School aims to provide a well-managed homework programme which:

- helps children to develop the skills and attitudes they will need for successful life-long learning
- supports the development of independent learning skills, including enquiry and investigation
- provides parents/carers with an opportunity to play a part in their children's education

**Objectives** - To achieve this end we will ensure that:

- individual tasks are carefully planned and structured to support progression in the children's learning
- there is consistent practice across the school in setting, managing and marking homework
- children and parents/carers are given appropriate information about each task so that the effort spent on the task is maximised
- parents/carers are treated as partners in their children's learning
- there are high expectations of children in completing their work on-time and to the best of their ability
- children receive prompt and meaningful feedback on their work with recognition for effort as much as success in completing tasks/activities
- parents/carers are consulted about changes to the school policy for homework and are kept informed of the school's expectations in this respect

**Expectations** -

**Support** - The School Standards Framework Act 1998 requires all schools to draw-up Home-school Agreements in consultation with parents/carers, and for schools to make expectations about homework known to all parents/carers.

**'Crowan Primary School's Home-School Agreement'** states -

- The school will to set and mark homework in accordance with the school's Homework Policy
- Parents/carers will support their children in homework and other opportunities for learning
- Pupils will do all class work and homework to the best of their ability

In general terms parents/carers should:

- *provide a suitable and reasonably peaceful place in which pupil can do their homework alone or, more often for younger children, together with an adult*
- *make it clear to pupils that they value homework, and support the school in explaining how it can help them with their learning*
- *encourage pupils, and praise them when they have completed set tasks and activities*

**Time Allocation** - The Department for Education recommends the following time allocation for homework:

*Years 1 and 2:*

*1 hour each week (reading, spellings, other literacy work and number work)*

*Years 3 and 4:*

*1.5 hours each week (literacy and numeracy as for Years 1 and 2 with occasional assignments in other subjects)*

*Years 5 and 6:*

*30 minutes every day (regular weekly schedule with continued emphasis on literacy and numeracy but also ranging widely over the curriculum)*

The precise amount of time spent on homework, however, is much less important than the effort made by the children in completing work to the best of their ability and extending their own understanding whenever possible..

**At Crowan Primary School the current agreed provision for homework is:**

**Early Years Foundation Stage** - Occasional activities related to current class themes/topics

**Key Stage 1:** To practice reading at home on a daily basis

To practice given spellings and number facts frequently in short bursts throughout the week

1 piece of literacy and numeracy per week

**Years 3 & 4:** To practice reading at home on a daily basis

To practice given spellings and number facts frequently in short bursts throughout the week

1 piece of literacy or numeracy per week

**Years 5 & 6:** To practice reading at home on a daily basis

To practice given spellings and number facts frequently in short bursts throughout the week

1 piece of literacy and numeracy per week

**Provision** - The Department for Education suggests that the main focus of homework for children of primary school age should be on **literacy and numeracy**.

**Reading** - Regular reading and 'book-talk' at home helps to further a child's general literacy skills and helps a child to succeed within all other areas of the curriculum.

For children in Key Stage 1 homework should largely consist of regular reading with parents/carers, sharing books together and engaging in meaningful 'book-talk'. Reading practice continues to be beneficial to the development of children's knowledge and understanding of literacy throughout primary school.

At Crowan Primary School the children are provided with reading targets to enable parent/carers to support the children in developing key skills appropriate to their ability. Children should be encouraged to read for pleasure, with growing fluency, independence and understanding (comprehension).

The children should be engaged in reading activities for around 20 minutes every day at home.

Other literacy related homework will also include learning **spellings** (frequently encountered words, topic spellings, word lists where particular patterns or rules are exemplified etc), letters and sounds (phonics), and practising correct **grammar and punctuation** as appropriate the child's needs.

**Mathematics** - The report of the Numeracy Task Force has recommended that schools set number games and tasks for all primary children to complete with the involvement of their parents/carers with more formal exercises provided to the older children.

*At Crowan Primary School all of the children from Year 1 to Year 6 have their own unique log-in/password to the on-line 'Mathletics' site. Tasks may be assigned to pupils by their class teachers for them to complete on-line, and the site also offers the children the opportunity to practise mental arithmetic skills from home. The teachers can remotely monitor the success of the pupils' efforts and adjust the level of tasks and problems accordingly. We strongly recommend that parents/carers encourage the use of this facility by their children on a regular basis.*

Tasks may also be posted on each class page of the school learning platform and the children may also be set mathematical challenges through the on-line **Abacus 'active learn' resource**.

In addition to these regular activities, older children should be given some homework, gradually increasing in its demands, of other kinds, including:

- finding out information for class topics
- reading in preparation for future lessons
- preparing oral presentations on various themes
- creating PowerPoint presentations

During the Summer Term usual homework routines (except for reading) may be suspended with a greater emphasis upon more long-term or creative home-school projects.

**Monitoring** – Our Homework Policy will be reviewed every 2 years and staff and parents will be consulted over any changes. A paper copy of this and other curriculum policies can be requested from the school office or downloaded from the school's website.

The homework policy and practice is periodically monitored and evaluated by the subject leaders and governing body to ensure that children's knowledge and understanding is supported in the most effective way

#### **Children with Special Educational Needs & Disabilities –**

All homework activities should be carefully designed to meet children's individual needs, including any special educational needs.

Appropriate homework will be provided to all pupils at the school. We will take into consideration the additional needs of any pupil (and home circumstances) when determining the nature of the homework set, and will liaise with parents/carers to ensure that the tasks effectively support the learning for each individual.

The teaching staff will seek support from the SENCo where necessary to provide modifications or resources to assist children with special educational needs or disabilities.

*For example:*

- *providing coloured overlay sheets or photocopying work onto manila coloured paper for children where there are indications of dyslexia*
- *providing ICT resources to enable children to record or word-process their work where children find the physical act of writing or structuring their work difficult*
- *providing flash cards or to assist children in learning spellings, number facts etc*

Children benefit most from activities matched to their individual learning needs. Extra homework alone will not help children to 'catch-up' unless it is engaging, achievable and relevant, linking to previous learnt knowledge and skills. The willing effort of the individual and the quality of feedback are key elements.

Through these on-going discussions we will attempt to ensure that homework tasks:

- have a clear focus and objectives which build on children's prior learning
- are engaging and enable the children to practice key skills and to consolidate their knowledge and understanding of previously taught concepts
- help the children to apply their learning to new situations and to make cross-curricular links between subjects
- excite curiosity and further independent enquiry
- enable the children to reflect on their personal learning and to understand the importance of the skills and concepts being developed
- support the children in developing important personal and social skills, *such as communication, resilience, problem-solving, time-management...*
- provide opportunities for children to present their learning in a variety of different ways
- give plenty of opportunity for each child to succeed

Each class teacher will produce a homework timetable and provide this for the children and their parents/carers. This will show the days when homework is set and the days when the homework is due to be collected for marking. Teachers will want to allow more than one evening for some homework to be completed, for example, to allow sufficient time for information to be collected or to take account of any after school activities the children may be doing.

Each family will receive a copy of '**The Crowan Primary School Guidance for the Completion of Homework**' which shows how parents can best support their children in completing homework.

Staff will mark the homework in accordance with the school's '**Marking & Feedback Policy**' and where appropriate, children and their parents/carers will be invited to comment on the activity.

***Sanctions*** - *Inevitably, children who do not routinely complete their homework to an acceptable standard and on-time may well be disadvantaged in future lessons and fail to make the same progress as their peers. To counter this, staff will endeavour to determine if additional support, guidance or expectations might be appropriate, but ultimately the pupil's involvement in Golden Time, or play-time, might need to be sacrificed so that the work is successfully undertaken. Parents will be invited to discuss possible solutions before any sanctions are imposed. Encouragement and reward for effort will be the preferred stance of the school.*