

Redmile Church of England Primary School



Homework Policy

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This policy was written in collaboration with staff, governors and parents.
- 1.2 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.

2 Rationale for homework

- 2.1 Homework is a very important part of a child's education and can add much to a child's development. The government made clear its commitment to homework in the 1997 White Paper, '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 main ways in which children can acquire the skill of independent learning.
- 2.2 "Research over a number of years has shown that homework can make an important contribution to pupil's progress at school. There is evidence that pupils in the highest achieving schools spend more time learning activities at home, than pupils in other schools." (DCSF 1998)
- 2.3 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.

3 Aims and objectives

- 3.1 The aims and objectives of homework are:
- to enable pupils to make maximum progress in their academic and social development;
 - 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 enable all aspects of the curriculum to be covered in sufficient depth;
 - to extend 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.

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4 Amount of homework

4.1 Recommended time for homework

The class teacher will consider how much time is appropriate for pupils at each stage, according to their age and aptitude. The following guidelines are based on the Government's recommended time allocation, (based on current good practice, and is set out in 'Homework: Guidelines for Primary Schools and Secondary Schools' DCSF 1998):

| Year Group | Homework Activity | Frequency* |
|--|---|--|
| <p>Reception</p> <p>No recommendation made by DCSF</p> <p>We suggest 10 mins per day</p> | <p>Sharing books at home</p> <p>NB Some children may bring spellings home; class teacher will advise accordingly</p> | Daily |
| <p>Years 1 and 2</p> <p>1 hour per week:</p> <p>10 minutes per day</p> | <p>Reading</p> <p>Spelling/Spelling investigation</p> <p>Other maths or literacy work</p> <p>NB Times tables may also be set in Class 2</p> | <p>Daily</p> <p>Class 1: all set on Weds; test/work handed in the following Weds</p> <p>Class 2: all set on Friday; test/work handed in the following Friday</p> |
| <p>Year 3</p> <p>1.5 hours per week:</p> <p>10-15 minutes per day</p> | <p>Reading</p> <p>Spelling/Spelling investigation</p> <p>Times tables may also be set</p> <p>Other maths or literacy work</p> | <p>Daily</p> <p>All set on Friday; test/work handed in the following Friday</p> |
| <p>Year 4</p> <p>1.5 hours per week</p> <p>10-15 minutes per day</p> | <p>Reading (individual) and/or reading (with an adult)</p> <p>Spelling Investigation</p> <p>Times tables</p> <p>Maths, literacy or topic based work</p> | <p>Daily</p> <p>Spelling focus introduced on Monday- activities throughout the week.</p> <p>Weekly tests/ activities</p> <p>Maths, Literacy or topic work set on Monday; handed in the following Monday.</p> |

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| <p>Years 5 and 6</p> <p>30 minutes per day</p> | <p>Reading (individual) and/or reading (with an adult)</p> <p>Spelling Investigation</p> <p>Times tables</p> <p>Regular weekly schedule with continued emphasis on maths and literacy, but also ranging widely over the curriculum</p> | <p>Daily</p> <p>Spelling focus introduced on Monday- activities throughout the week.</p> <p>Weekly tests/ activities</p> <p>Maths, Literacy or topic work set on Monday handed in the following Monday.</p> <p>Project work and revision for Y6 SATs will also be included periodically.</p> |
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***School guideline. This is likely to vary, so parents will be informed accordingly.**

Knowing your child is the key to homework success; the amount and frequency, as well as the when/where/for how long, etc will vary according to each child's individual needs. It is important that parents and teachers work together to get it right for each child.

5 **Types of homework**

5.1 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. We also ask Key Stage 1 children to learn spellings or mathematical tables as part of their homework. Sometimes we ask children to talk about a topic at home prior to studying it in school. For example, in the history topic on toys, we ask children to find out what toys were popular when their grandparents were young and, if possible, to bring examples into school to show the other children. Sometimes we ask children to find and collect things that we then use in science lessons, and occasionally we ask children to take home work that they have started in school when we believe that they would benefit from spending further time on it. When we ask children to study a topic or to research a particular subject, we encourage them to use the school and local library and the Internet and CD-ROMs.

5.2 At Key Stage 2 we continue to give children the sort of homework activities outlined in paragraph 4.1 but we expect them to do more tasks independently. We set literacy and maths homework routinely each week* and we expect the children to consolidate and reinforce learning done in school through practice at home. In Key Stage 1&2 written homework is given weekly*. Children are expected to read every night for an increasing amount of time as they progress through school.

*Unless the teacher decides differently.

5.3 **Reading**

Children need the experience of looking at a wide range of books and other publications; this includes talking about books, looking at the pictures, talking about what has happened, predicting what might happen, empathising with the characters – are all very valuable activities which greatly assist the teacher in the task of teaching reading.

The reading scheme is only one part of the child's reading experience. Shared, Guided and Individual reading are all integral parts of the child's daily Literacy activities in school.

Guided, Shared and Independent Reading

Shared reading is where the whole class or group read a piece of text together. This is led by the teacher and forms the basis for many writing activities that follow.

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Guided reading is where a group of children read the same book with a teacher. The children read to the teacher, individually and then the teacher leads a discussion of the text. Guided reading texts are normally at a higher level than the books that the children are reading independently.

As teachers now have more direct whole class teaching to do and because shared and guided reading forms part of Literacy lessons, less one-to-one reading occurs in school, particularly in Key Stage 2. It is therefore vital that parents support the reading process as part of the child's homework, by reading with them and to them on an individual basis.

It is important that both parents and teachers use the child's Reading Record book, to communicate what learning has taken place: teachers will record Guided Reading sessions and parents should record individual reading at home. Older children will be encouraged to write in their diary on a regular basis as well.

5.4 **Spelling and Punctuation in the National Curriculum**

It should be noted that spelling is an integral part of the National and EYFS Curriculum. There are lists of 'key words' which children of different ages are expected to know. These are taught through Literacy lessons and reinforced through homework activities. Spelling homework is set in addition to the spelling work completed in school and will often be in the form of groups of related words to learn, sometimes with activities linked to reinforce them. Weekly tests, quizzes or sentence related work are often set (Y1-6) to monitor progress. Older pupils are being taught an investigative approach to learning spellings which includes learning phrases, sentences or short passages related to our topic work; this encourages pupils to learn the correct punctuation within the sentence as well. All spelling work is differentiated according to the child's ability. Children should be encouraged to have several short sessions of learning spellings rather than one long one and the 'Look, Say, Cover, Write, Check' method should be encouraged as an aid-memoir to learning as this is our preferred method for learning to spell isolated words.

Look, Say, Cover, Write, Check

The children:

1. Read the word, see how it is spelt and think about any tricky bits.
2. Say the word aloud or in their head.
3. Cover the word up
4. Write the word down
5. Check to see if they have spelt the word correctly.

The child repeats this process over a period of time until the spelling is fixed in his/her memory.

5.5 **Homework on Number Bonds and Tables – Instant Recall**

Number bonds are all the calculations – addition, subtraction, multiplication and division which one can make within a range of number e.g. 1 to 10. When children are set homework on number bonds and multiplication tables, the aim is that the child should have 'instant recall' i.e. they know the answer almost instantly, with minimal thinking time, without the need to use their fingers to count. Weekly practice will be built in to the timetable as appropriate (parents will be informed by the class teacher.)

5.6 **Support programmes**

Homework may be slightly different for those children involved in support programmes for Literacy and Maths, e.g. Early Literacy Support, Springboard Maths. If homework is set to support these sessions, additional homework will not be set by the class teacher, unless there are exceptional circumstances, e.g. on-going project work, revision for a test.

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5.7 **Presentation of homework**

Children should be encouraged to take pride in the presentation of all homework; this includes caring for reading books. Pencil (or school handwriting pen for Class 3 only), should be used and colouring should be done with pencil crayons (unless the teacher informs you otherwise). School will provide children with a homework folder and/or book to place their homework in, which fits in to their book-bag without getting creased.

Many older children will prefer to complete some homework using their computer. This is quite acceptable, providing the teacher is prior agreement with it. However, it is vitally important that children **avoid copying and pasting texts or merely printing great chunks of information** and presenting that as their homework; this after all is someone else's work! Interpreting information is the key to understanding it, so parents are asked to discuss the text, if necessary, with their child, who should then present their own work in their own special way.

5.8 **Feedback on homework**

Written tasks will be marked by the class teacher and sent home for parents to see the following week; these must be returned to school immediately so that they can be placed in the relevant folder at school.

Spellings/times tables/number bonds will be monitored via the weekly activities and books/sheets will be sent home for parents to see.

The teacher or support staff, will aim to monitor the reading record books at least weekly.

6 **Equal Opportunities**

6.1 We set homework for all children as a normal part of school life. We ensure that all tasks set are appropriate to the ability/stage of development of the child. If a child has special needs (e.g. learning/emotional difficulties, gifted and talented), we endeavour to adapt any task set so that all children can contribute in a positive way.

6.2 See Equal Opportunities policy.

7 **The role of parents**

7.1 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 good working space at home, by enabling their child to visit the library regularly, and by discussing the work that their child is doing. Where parents find it difficult accommodating quiet space within the home for their child/ren, we can provide undisturbed working space after school for the parent to sit with their child to complete homework tasks upon request.

7.3 If parents have any problems or 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 head teacher. Finally, if they wish to make a complaint about the school homework policy or the way it is implemented, parents should contact the governing body.

8 **Monitoring and review**

8.1 It is the responsibility of our governing body to agree and then monitor the school homework policy; this is done by the Curriculum Development committee. Parents complete bi-annual questionnaire/s which reference homework, as well as a questionnaire during the school's OFSTED inspection, and our governing body pays careful consideration

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to any concern that is raised at that time, or in between OFSTED inspections, by any parent. Parents are invited to review the policy every two years

Areas for further development

- Develop the use of the VLE to support homework
- Embed 'My Maths' in to the homework routine
- Look at how any new schemes purchased can be incorporated in to the regular routines for homework

J.V.Hopkins, 2011