



Home Learning Policy

Member of staff responsible: Headteacher

Consultation: Formulated after consultation with staff, parents and governors, and presented to the full governing body

Date of policy formulation: March 2008

Rationale and aims

This policy has been formed to address the need for a clear, purposeful approach to homework in our school. Given the purpose and approaches to homework listed below, our school refers to homework as 'home learning'. This policy aims to set out the purpose of home learning, taking into account parental, staff and governor views and guidelines from the DCSF (1998). It also sets out clear whole school practices for home learning. This policy is underpinned by the aims of our school which are to:

- Develop in our children an understanding of Christianity and the place of God in our world and in our lives
- Provide each child with the ultimate learning experience to enable them to achieve the highest standards
- Inspire a love of lifelong learning
- Equip our children with the skills and tools to become global citizens
- Equip our children to deal with change
- Respect individuality and celebrate diversity
- Motivate and enable all to achieve their personal best
- Create a safe and trusting environment where children are encouraged to express opinion, be independent learners, take responsibility, and improve by learning from their experiences
- Praise all types of achievement
- Create in all a sense of belonging

The purpose of home learning in our school

Our school believes that home learning should:

- ✓ develop an effective partnership between our school and parents/carers in pursuing the aims of our school.
- ✓ consolidate and reinforce skills and understanding, particularly in literacy and numeracy.
- ✓ exploit resources for learning, of all kinds, at home.
- ✓ extend school learning and contribute to the challenge of raising attainment.
- ✓ encourage children as they get older to develop confidence and self-discipline needed to study on their own, and prepare them for the requirements of secondary school.
- ✓ be planned and prepared alongside other programmes of learning, and that effective home learning practices are established early on and develop progressively as children move through the school.

- ✓ support a range of settings in which children learn, for example through parental support and guidance, joint family learning tasks and independent learning.
- ✓ reflect developments within education and the range of learning styles, for example, the use of ICT and preferred learning styles.

Time allocation and type of home learning at different stages

Our school adheres to DCSF guidelines for home learning which are as follows:

Foundation Stage – 30 minutes per week

Key stage one – 1 hour per week

Years 3 and 4 – 1 ½ hours per week

Years 5 and 6 – 30 minutes per day

Of much more importance is the quality of home learning. We recognise that parents/carers must manage home learning time according to their child's needs or other things going on at any given time. These time allocations are therefore very much to be used as guidance for parents/carers, and for our school in the setting of home learning tasks.

We recognise that the type and purpose of home learning activities changes as children move through the school.

In **key stage one** it is important to establish partnerships with parents/carers and involve them actively in their child's learning. Learning activities can be brief and may include activities such as:

- Simple games
- Spellings
- Number facts
- Reading
- Activities to be shared together (family learning)

These activities give younger children opportunity to talk about what they are learning, and to practice skills in a supportive environment.

In **key stage two**, home learning provides more of an opportunity for children to develop the skills of independent learning, which should increasingly become its main purpose. By the time children reach year 6, home learning should cover a range of tasks and curriculum content. Activities may include:

- Reading
- More formal literacy or numeracy tasks
- Number games
- Times tables
- Spelling
- Activities to be shared together (family learning)

In addition, as children progress through **key stage two**, activities may also include:

- Finding out information
- Reading in preparation for lessons
- Preparing oral presentations
- Written assignments
- Longer literacy and numeracy tasks to be completed over the course of a week or a weekend
- Science tasks

Activities for all children will **not** include:

- Excessive 'finishing off' activities
- Excessive colouring activities

Following feedback from parents/carers (feedback form – January 2008), we recognise that home learning needs to be consistent and regular. Therefore, **we have produced the attached home learning routine for each class** which will be reviewed when necessary.

A note about reading

We believe that regular reading is vital. For children in key stage one, home learning will largely consist of regular reading with parents/carers, looking at books together. For more fluent readers, we encourage independent reading of at least 10 to 20 minutes per day. This may be done in the context of home learning (for example, reading a school reading book or reference book) or in the other contexts (such as reading from newspapers, comics, internet sites, signs etc).

It is important to note that on some days, reading will be done as part of the home learning tasks, but on other days, reading time may be in addition to other home learning tasks.

Co-ordination, monitoring and assessment of home learning

Class teachers are responsible for coordinating home learning. It is the class teacher's responsibility to ensure that the demands of home learning tasks are manageable for children and parents/carers on a day-to-day basis. It is also the responsibility of the class teacher to set regular patterns of home learning.

Class teachers are responsible for allowing sufficient time for home learning tasks to be completed, which take into account time for information to be collected and other after school activities which children may be involved in. Although this may be different for individual children, the class teacher will ensure that demands are as even and balanced as possible.

Following feedback from parents/carers (feedback form – January 2008), we recognise the importance of home learning tasks being marked and feedback being given.

Marking may be written (teacher/teaching assistant marks home learning task) or verbal (teacher discusses home learning task with the child or with the whole class). Feedback may also be written (in the child's personal learning log or on their home learning task) or verbal (to the child individually or to the whole class).

Feedback to children on home learning

We recognise that completed home learning should be acknowledged and praised. As outlined previously, feedback will either be written or verbal. In addition, effort with home learning will be rewarded through our school merits system.

Feedback to parents/carers and teachers on home learning

Feedback on home learning tasks will be given through personal learning logs, unless parents/carers approach teachers in person.

Where there is evidence of home learning tasks not being completed on a consistent basis, teachers will contact parents/carers to discuss any issues surrounding tasks. Parents will be given the opportunity to comment on home learning through the personal learning log, or in person on an informal basis, or at parents evenings as set out in a later section of this policy.

Differentiation

We recognise that home learning tasks should be differentiated (where applicable) and appropriate to the needs of individuals.

Special Educational Needs

We recognise that setting the right type and amount of home learning for children with SEN is not always easy. There may be some occasions when SEN children may benefit from special tasks separate to the tasks set for other children in the class. On the other hand, we also recognise that it is important for these children to do as much in common with other children as possible.

We recognise that setting of home learning for these children, as with all children, requires close coordination between teachers, parents/carers and our SEN coordinator. Our SEN coordinator will regularly monitor home learning tasks set for SEN children and offer guidance and support to teachers in setting appropriate tasks.

Home learning tasks for SEN children (and indeed all children) will, where possible,

- have a very clear focus and time guideline
- give plenty of opportunities for children to succeed
- help develop social as well as other skills where necessary
- be varied, and not purely written tasks
- be manageable for teachers

Home learning for children with SEN will **not** be viewed as simply a means for these children to 'catch up'.

The role of parents/carers

We believe that the support of parents/carers with home learning is essential. Parents/carers can assist in many ways, for example, **helping their children at home, monitoring home learning, providing encouragement, and even assisting in the marking of home learning where applicable.** We believe that the benefits of parental support with home learning are as follows:

- ✓ Contact can be established with all parents, regardless of catchment areas
- ✓ Parents provide a significant amount of quality time with their children through shared home learning
- ✓ Parents become more knowledgeable about the school curriculum
- ✓ Parents become more involved in the assessment of their child's progress
- ✓ Standards are raised
- ✓ Home-school agreements become more meaningful
- ✓ Esteem between parents, children and teachers is enhanced
- ✓ Equal value is given to the contribution of all parents/carers

However, we also recognise that home learning:

- ✓ Need not be supported parents/carers only, but can be supported by an older brother/sister, grandparent or neighbour
- ✓ Does not require specialist knowledge on the part of the parent, but rather the child should take the role of the teacher and explain what is expected (where more information is needed to support learning, this will be sent home as outlined below)

Following feedback from parents/carers (feedback form – January 2008), we recognise that information needs to be provided with some home learning tasks to enable parents/carers to support their child. **In addition to the attached supporting your child with home learning booklet, information to help with support of tasks will be sent home in personal learning logs.**

In addition, we believe that it is the role of parents/carers to support home learning practices by:

- Asking to see their child's personal learning log frequently
- Providing a reasonably suitable place for their child to complete their home learning
- Valuing home learning and supporting the school in explaining its benefits to their child
- Praising their child for effort with home learning
- Contacting the school if there have been problems with home learning tasks or recording it in personal learning logs

Monitoring and evaluation of home learning practices

We believe that it is vitally important to monitor, evaluate and review home learning practices at regular intervals in consultation with parents and children.

As well as feedback through the annual parents questionnaire sent out in February, **we aim to invite formal feedback termly from both parents and children. This will be done at the formal parents evening in the second half of each term. We also invite informal feedback verbally, or through the personal learning log whenever necessary.**

Dissemination of the policy

Each teacher has a copy of this policy and a copy can be found in the Headteacher's office.

The school prospectus contains a statement about home learning, and it is sent to all parents of children new to the school.

A copy of the policy is available to any current or prospective parent, on request to the Headteacher.

Monitoring and evaluation of the policy

The policy will be reviewed every three years, unless significant changes are made to home learning approaches.

Reviewed

Signed (Headteacher):

Signed (Chair of Governors):

Date: