

# Scarcliffe Primary School



# Homework Policy

May 2024

## **DEFINITION OF HOMEWORK**

Homework refers to any work or activities, which the pupils are given to do outside of lesson time, to consolidate, extend or enrich learning or to encourage greater independence with learning.

## **PRINCIPLES OF HOMEWORK AT SCARCLIFFE PRIMARY SCHOOL**

- Homework should link to work completed in class.
- Some homework tasks allow children to develop fluency of crucial skills – such as recall of number facts.
- The amount of time spent on homework should increase as pupils move through school in order to prepare children for secondary school.
- Completing homework should not cause undue stress or frustration at home.
- Homework should develop pupil independence and desire to strive to shine by;
  1. Motivating pupils to complete extra activities.
  2. Encouraging personal organisation.
  3. Encouraging pupils to take responsibility for and develop a positive attitude towards their own learning.
- Homework should raise standards of pupil achievement, particularly in fundamental skills, by:
  1. Involving parents in their child's learning, giving extra individual support and encouragement.
  2. Practising or consolidating basic skills and knowledge, especially in maths, reading and spelling.
  3. Reinforcing and extending learning.

## **AIMS OF THE HOMEWORK POLICY**

Through the application of this policy we aim to:

- Provide opportunities for parents and pupils to work in partnership with school to enjoy learning experiences together.
- Make our expectations around homework – as well as our rationale – clear.
- Ensure that opportunities exist for clear communications between all parties.
- Promote play and talk as vehicles for learning.
- Ensure consistency of approach.
- Ensure progression towards independence and individual responsibility. Help children recognise that learning is a lifelong process.
- Ensure individual pupil needs are taken into account.
- Ensure that homework does not cause undue stress on the pupil, family or the teacher.

## **DIFFERENTIATION**

- Most homework activities are not differentiated. They reflect the age expected standard of work.
- Some online tasks – such as Numbots and TTR – make use of technology to differentiate questions that are set. For example, TTR will focus questions on timetable facts children aren't secure in progressively over time.
- Reading books are closely matched to a child's reading ability. We use Accelerated Reader to provide children with reading bands that are appropriate for each child.
- Where open tasks are set, differentiation may be by outcome.
- Where children are given choices within homework tasks, differentiation may also be by preferred learning style.
- Children with special educational needs may be set separate tasks specifically linked to Individual Education Plan (IEP) targets. This will usually be via dialogue with their parents.
- There will be an increasing expectation as children progress through school.

## PLANNING AND ISSUING HOMEWORK

Homework will be issued in 2 ways:

### 1. **Core** homework activities

- The most important homework you can do with your child is **listen to them read and read to them regularly.**
- AR book quizzes can be taken online. These quizzes check the child's understanding and (as long as they answer enough questions correctly) contribute to their total number of words read. Each year we celebrate any pupil who reaches the milestone of reading 1,000,000 words!

#### Weekly activities:

- Each class has a range of homework activities set on Seesaw every week. Many of these activity types stay the same each week so children should soon understand the routines and expectations.
- Children will have spellings each week. These will have been introduced and explored in class but children will benefit from practicing them at home.
- Number bonds and times tables need to be learned and maintained throughout school, these will also be set weekly, almost solely through use of apps such as Times Tables Rock Stars and Numbots.
- Weekly maths tasks will be set on Mathletics. These relate to recent work completed in class and give children further chance to revisit their learning.
- Teachers remind the children about the importance of reading at home and regularly remind children to complete quizzes.

### 2. Termly **optional** homework tasks.

- At the beginning of each new topic, children will be given a 'menu' of tasks related to that topic.
- The tasks will be varied in how they are completed. Children might choose to bring something in to school or responses might be submitted on Seesaw.
- For all ages, some of the tasks will be appropriate for children to complete independently but others might require adult support.
- Completion of these tasks are optional, but will be promoted by teachers and some work will be celebrated together with the rest of the class to reward effort and inspire others.

## ACTIONS TAKEN WHEN CORE HOMEWORK IS INCOMPLETE

- Ultimately, we do not have the power to enforce the completion of homework out of school and rely on children to be self-motivated to do this (or on adults at home to support with this).
- We appreciate how precious time at home is and understand the pressures many parents and carers are under. Therefore, if homework is causing high levels of stress or conflict at home, please don't hesitate to talk to a member of school staff. We really want to avoid homework or learning becoming a negative experience as this can have an adverse impact on progress.
- Some parents and carers sometimes find other ways of supporting their child's learning. This might include working through maths booklets or learning times tables without the use of TTR. Please make your child's class teacher aware if this is the case – either via Class Dojo or Seesaw so they are aware of the plan.
- When deciding what actions to take when pupils do not complete mandatory homework, staff will consider the individual circumstances for pupils – such as events or situations out of school.

- Staff may request that children complete homework at homework clubs – during break and lunchtimes. These clubs are not a 'detention' or a punishment, but rather a calm learning environment in which to complete the work they would have otherwise done at home.
- Staff may decide instead to spend time talking to the child about the importance of doing homework and then monitor their progress in the following weeks. During the discussions, staff will try to ascertain whether there are barriers which can be overcome together – such as access to resources (including technology).
- As children get older, staff will be stricter on children completing mandatory homework in order to support children in their transition to secondary school.

## **MARKING AND FEEDBACK ON HOMEWORK**

- Feedback may be verbal or written, to the class / group or to individuals as necessary. It will be given in lessons relating to the homework or in flexi periods in the timetable. When relevant feedback will include what and how to improve.
- Often feedback will be given via Seesaw. This may be by approval of the post or through an additional comment.
- Many online homework platforms provide instant feedback to children.
- Spelling and multiplication tables will be assessed through spelling tests and scores on Times Table Rockstars.

### Rewarding Homework

- Completing homework tasks on its own will not automatically result in rewards. This is because we are aiming to help children become intrinsically motivated (that is, they complete the task and the reward is learning and getting better at things – they are not merely doing it to get a Dojo or a sticker).
- Sometimes staff may reward particularly pleasing examples of homework in individual ways – in the same way that achievements are rewarded in class. This will rely on a staff member's professional judgement.
- This might sometimes include:
  - Displaying homework in the classroom
  - Sharing it with others
  - Words of praise and encouragement
  - Dojo points
  - Certificates shared in celebration assemblies – these relate to Numbots, TTR, AR Reader and Athletics.

## **WHY USE SO MANY ONLINE PLATFORMS?**

We are aware that it is difficult to write this homework policy to suit everyone. Some people enjoy completing homework online, some do not want any homework and some are very much against screen time.

Much of the homework we set is online. Some reasons for this are set out below:

- Online homework often provides instant feedback for children so they know if they have got something right or wrong. This can avoid reinforcing misconceptions.
- We no longer have to buy, send home and replace homework tasks and books. This is better for the environment and saves money.
- Setting homework online is more time-efficient for staff and also means it can easily be linked to work completed in class.
- Algorithms in online systems – like TTR – can differentiate questions children get – resulting in them having targeted questions and making better progress.
- Setting homework online and encouraging children to move from Seesaw, to TTR, Athletics and AR all helps to prepare children for the technological world they will grow up in. They also have to learn to store and use passwords and a range of accounts.

## **MONITORING HOMEWORK**

### Parents Monitoring

We want parents and carers to understand that homework is for the pupil and would like them to encourage their children to take responsibility and ownership of completing it as far as possible.

#### ➤ Foundation Stage/ Key Stage One:

For some tasks, parents are asked to work closely with children, this includes listening to reading regularly, spelling work and working on number bonds.

Some tasks will be set which can be done mostly independently.

#### ➤ Key Stage Two:

Parents are asked to encourage, monitor and continue to support their children where they need it, but also to encourage more independence where possible.

### Staff Monitoring

Staff constantly monitor the progress children are making in school and recognise that homework plays a part in this.

- Staff often check which children have completed online tasks like Mathletics, TTR and Numbots.
- Staff monitor reading using Accelerated Reader and celebrate the children who have achieved their targets.
- Teachers administer spelling tests to determine the extent to which they have been learnt.
- Staff look at homework projects when they arrive in school.
- Staff monitor Seesaw and acknowledge receipt of homework.

## **THE ROLE OF PARENTS AND CARERS IN SUPPORTING CHILDREN**

Parental involvement (and that of other adults or older siblings) with homework is encouraged through parents' evenings, open days and written communications. The expectations around homework will be explained at the start of each year in a meeting with parents and carers. In general terms parents and carers are encouraged to:

- Make completing homework a positive experience in which effort is praised.
- Provide a quiet place for homework.
- Provide basic materials needed.
- Provide explanations/guidance as required by the child.
- Fit homework into a family routine.
- Encourage and praise their child for completion, effort and achievement with homework.

If you feel your child has made a particularly big (praise-worthy) effort with their homework, please send a Dojo message to staff in class and they will make an effort to praise this in the hope of encouraging continued effort.

## **RECOMMENDED TIME ALLOCATION**

Homework should never be too onerous nor should it ever create stress within the pupil's family. If parents have any concerns, they should not hesitate to contact the school. Normally, more than one day will be allowed for the completion of a homework task, except where daily practice is to be encouraged e.g. reading, spelling and times tables. Government guidelines used to suggest about 1 hour per week for children in KS1, then rising to 30 minutes per day for KS2 children, but schools have since been given more freedom to decide themselves.

## **GENERAL**

- If children are absent due to illness we will not send homework home. We would assume the child was too ill to work. If they can do some work, we would encourage parents/carers to guide them towards the core and optional homework tasks set out in this policy.

- For long-term illnesses/absences, please see the *Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions* policy.
- Parents/Carers who have queries about homework should not hesitate to make an appointment to see their child's class teacher or should contact them via Class Dojo.
- Parents / carers should make contact with their child's class teacher to discuss homework if they want more or less than the given amount. Teachers will respond to reasonable wishes if it is in the best interests of the child, provided it is also agreed by the Head Teacher.