

Penns Primary School Teaching and Learning Policy

Penns Primary School

Homework Policy

Introduction

Homework is anything 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 to support the children's learning. For example, parents or carers who spend time reading stories to their children before bedtime are helping with homework.

Rationale for homework

Homework is a very important part of a child's education, and can add much to a child's development. We believe children can benefit greatly from the complementary learning that they do at home and value and appreciate the support, time and effort provided by parents/carers. One of the aims of our teaching is for children to develop as independent learners, and we believe that doing homework is one of the main ways in which children can acquire the skill of independent learning.

Homework plays a positive role in raising a child's level of attainment. However, we also acknowledge the important role of play and free time in a child's growth and development. We firmly believe time with the family is essential to a child's well-being. Also, whilst homework is important, it should not prevent children from taking part in the activities of various out-of-school clubs and of other organisations that play an important part in the lives of our pupils. We are well aware that children spend more time at home than at school, and we believe that they develop their interests and skills to the full when parents/carers encourage them to make maximum use of the opportunities available outside school.

Aims and objectives

The aims and objectives of homework are:

- to consolidate and reinforce the learning done in school, and to allow children to practice skills taught in lessons;
- to promote cooperation and communication between home and school in supporting each child's learning
- to help pupils develop the skills of an independent learner;
- to help children develop good work habits for the future in particular the skill of time management
- to enable pupils to make maximum progress by consolidating and extending learning introduced during the school day and rehearsing key skills, particularly those in literacy and numeracy.

Types of homework

Staff and pupils regard homework as an integral part of the learning experience – it is planned and prepared alongside all other programmes of learning.

We set a variety of homework activities. From the Foundation Stage, children take books home to read daily with their parents or carers. We give guidance to parents and carers on achieving the maximum benefit from this time spent reading with their child. This is delivered through annual parent workshops on reading. We also ask Key Stage 1 children to practice and learn spellings and basic maths skills as part of their homework. Again, each class will hold a maths parents workshop each year to share

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with parents the methods used in school. We also develop the skills of speaking and listening through weekly talk homework in preparation for a writing task in school. In year 2 comprehension also becomes part of the weekly cycle of homework. At Key Stage 2, we expect children to read daily as well as practise their set spelling for the week, work on basic maths skills eg via weekly probe sheets and tables practise. We also set weekly Abacus online maths homework and weekly SPAG practise. In key stage 2, we encourage children to do more tasks independent whilst still supporting parents to assist with homework by the delivery of annual reading and maths workshops for each class. We encourage all of our children to be independent, curious learners through tasks set related to their class topic through our half termly POW projects. These enable the children to select tasks that suit both their interest and skills in order to score a minimum number of POW points set by the teacher and age appropriate (tasks range from being worth 1 to 3 POW points). These POW points are then converted into appropriate reward points in line with the school's system of characteristics of effective learners, so depending on the nature of the task the child has selected, points might be given for curiosity, creativity and/or motivation.

Homework is marked according to the general school marking policy. Homework completed well is acknowledged and praised. There may be issues arising from the work, which the teacher will follow up in lesson time.

We recognise that children have individual learning styles, which means that some tasks can be completed in a number of different ways, while others demand a particular approach and we endeavour to cater for the wide range of learning styles, particularly through our POW projects.

Amount of homework

As they move through the school, we increase the amount of homework that we give the children. As a general guide homework should require no more each day than 20 minutes at KS1 and 30 minutes at KS2. There are opportunities for children to choose do more should they wish to pursue a particular interest or research further.

At KS1 children have a reading diary and at KS2 a homework diary in which the homework (including reading) is recorded, either by them, or by the teacher, or by the Teaching assistant (TA), and in which parents/carers and teachers make any relevant comments.

Inclusion and homework

We set homework 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. When setting homework to pupils who are named on the register of special needs, we refer to those pupils' individual education plans. We value and celebrate the cultural diversity of our pupils and their families, and we appreciate the enrichment that this brings.

The role of parents and carers

Parents and carers have a vital role to play in their child's education, and homework is an important part of this process. We ask parents and carers to encourage their child to complete the homework tasks that are set. We invite them to help their children as and when they feel it to be necessary and to provide them with the sort of environment that allows children to do their best. Parents and carers 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.

We ask parents and carers to check the Reading record Book or Homework Diary at least once a week, and to sign it as requested.

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If parents and carers have any questions about homework, they should, in the first instance, speak with the child's class teacher. If their questions are of a more general nature, they should contact the headteacher. Finally, if they wish to make a complaint about the school homework policy, or the way in which it is implemented, parents or carers should contact the governing body.

Use of IT

The use of IT and the Internet has made a significant contribution to the amount of reference material available at home, and the ease and speed with which it can be accessed. However, our teachers expect their pupils to produce their own work, perhaps by editing something they have found, or by expressing it in their own words. The children are not achieving anything worthwhile by merely downloading and printing out something that has been written by somebody else. Two of the key research skills for key stage 2 pupils are note making and combining/comparing information on the same subject from more than one source. The internet provides a rich bank of materials for them to practise these essential skills.

There are many websites containing highly educational material which can have a powerful effect on children's learning. Where relevant, teachers may signpost children and parents to appropriate sites which will best support the children's learning. Parents or carers are advised always to supervise their child's access to the Internet.

Some educational software/apps that we use in school can be bought by parents or carers on a home-user licence. This ensures that children are using age-appropriate software in their work at home. The school will supply interested parents or carers with details.

Increasingly children are using IT to complete/support their homework. Homework can be emailed in, brought in on a flash drive or uploaded to file sharing sites such as dropbox. No child will be disadvantaged if they do not have access to these facilities as homework does not have to be presented in this format. However, when requested, the school's IT facilities can be used, with supervision, by the children to complete any homework tasks. This includes the opportunity to complete the weekly online Abacus homework.

Monitoring and review

The lead for Teaching and Learning is responsible for coordinating and monitoring the implementation of this policy. The policy is presented for agreement to our governing body. This is done by the committee of the governing body that deals with curriculum issues i.e. Pupil and Curriculum Committee. At regular intervals parents and carers are invited to complete a questionnaire and we give careful consideration to any concern that is raised by any parent.

This policy will be reviewed in two years, or earlier if necessary.

Signed:

Date: 21st September 2015