

Whickham Parochial Church of England Primary School



Homework Policy

"For I know the plans I have for you ... plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." — Jeremiah 29:11

Mission Statement

At our Parochial school we aim to provide a stimulating and caring environment in which every child flourishes, with Christianity at the heart of all we do.

Aims

At Whickham Parochial we believe that every child is entitled to enjoy their childhood, celebrate their individuality and reach their full potential. We aim to do this through:

- Creating a caring school family living by Christian values.
- Celebrating everyone's strengths and efforts.
- Valuing the opportunities we have to contribute to our community and the wider world.
- Offering wide ranging quality experiences that stimulate children's minds.
- Encouraging respect for others, positive behaviour and good manners, enabling all children to feel secure and valued.
- Building strong links between school, home and church.
- Preparing children for future challenges in a changing world

We wish every child to take with them happy memories of Whickham Parochial into their future life.



1. Rationale

Since June 2020, we have implemented changes to our previous homework policy. The changes were made in response to parent feedback. We heard from parents that homework was often a catalyst for discord in the household, and that as the child moved into more complex work, some parents felt ill-equipped to help with new methods. This is understandable as education evolves at a rapid pace and parents worry about teaching alternative methods. As homework became more complex, children often became less willing to engage independently, but the technical nature of our mathematics and grammar curriculum had made it difficult for parents to support their children confidently.

Studies suggest that schools that set homework have more successful children than those which do not – though it is unclear whether homework is the effective factor in the success ([Educational Endowment Foundation](#)), and the difference is modest and the evidence limited. Research from educationalist Professor John Hattie indicates that current homework practices have an effect close to zero in terms of years of progress gained and that we need to look more carefully into what works.

We were also aware that in our community, children are very active in their afterschool clubs and participation in hobbies. We wanted our homework to be manageable, purposeful and have an impact on progress.

In our experience, children who are supported at home make better progress than those who don't. Children who read regularly (and are read to), who practise basic skills and whose parents are actively promoting progress and success at home by asking about outcomes, are the children who become more successful learners. We therefore decided to make our homework more manageable and formalise the expectation for support that we know will have an impact: **practice of reading, spelling and basic maths skills.**

2. Aims and objectives

Homework is an important part of a child's education, and can add much to a child's development. We see homework as an important example of cooperation between teachers and parents/carers.

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. While 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 only when parents/carers encourage them to make maximum use of the opportunities available outside school.

Our homework policy aims to:

- Reduce the burden of excessive content knowledge on parents who are unfamiliar with technical academic methods or vocabulary
- Allow focus on tasks which require consolidation and embedding
- Allow time for children to play and take part in hobbies and sports
- Eliminate the need for teachers to feedback (as the previous format meant it was difficult to assess security and independence from homework tasks and therefore did not contribute to gap analysis)
- Formalise the expectation of parent/carers and children completing practice tasks, especially home reading
- Improve the wellbeing of staff by streamlining the content and reducing time spent on marking.



Our re-designed homework also supports the development of our curriculum intent:

Our curriculum is driven by our Christian values and our strong desire to develop in our pupils the characteristics of successful learners.

At Parochial we recognise that the majority of our pupils come from an area of low deprivation, from loving and successful families who are supportive and encouraging but often limited in the time they can spend with their children due to pressure from work etc. We also recognise that our pupils have very little experience of diversity of all types and that lack of this exposure could lead to lack of understanding or tolerance. As a Christian school, we want our children to be happy and nurtured, but we need them also to be challenged and to be supported in developing a resilient and robust attitude to learning.

Through our carefully planned curriculum, we intend to represent and celebrate the diversity we see in the UK, including diversity of race, culture, religion, ability, finance and family.

Additionally, we want our pupils to see themselves as powerful and precious, providing them with opportunities to develop their self-worth and find ways to keep themselves safe and happy in our changing world. An aspect of this is encouraging pupils to see how powerful they are in their ability to serve others in their school, their community and in the wider world. We do this by building and celebrating opportunities to serve others throughout the school year, and by providing models of advocacy through our curriculum.

3. Statutory requirements

Homework is not a statutory requirement in primary schools, and it is not mandatory that parents complete it. However, we feel (and studies show) that it is good practice to encourage a home-school partnership in a child's learning and development, and that homework is an important part of this.

4. Curriculum Design and organisation

The content of the homework curriculum will be:

- Reading aloud from their home reading book and answering questions
- Practicing and discussing spellings / phonemes
- Practicing a maths rapid recall skill from a previous year group
- Spending time on Times Tables Rockstars (from Year 2) and Numbots (From Reception)
- Completing tasks on Reading Plus (Year 4 final half of summer term)
- Completing the Christian reflection task
- Doing at least one act of kindness
- Carrying out a 'find out about' task related to foundation subjects.

This will be presented on a Task board (see example – Appendix 1). The homework task board will be both sent home and returned on a Monday.

5. Assessment for Learning

Although we do not return the homework task to the parents, feedback is mutual through the use of the reading diary. Spelling skills will be tested, as will maths rapid recall skills, which will give an indication of the success of the work at home. The 'Find out about' task will be fed back to peers in school. From Year



2, children will use Times Tables Rockstars and from Year 4 they will use Reading Plus, both of which are online learning tools from which progress and will be tracked.

6. Inclusion

We strive hard to meet the needs of those pupils with special educational needs, those with disabilities, those with special gifts and talents, and those learning English as an additional language, and we take all reasonable steps to achieve this. For further details, see separate policies: Special Educational Needs; Disability Discrimination; Gifted and Talented Children; English as an Additional Language (EAL).

7. Equal Opportunities.

All children are provided with equal access to the homework task. We aim to provide suitable learning opportunities regardless of gender, ethnicity or home background. Where parents struggle to complete the tasks, support will be offered.

8. The role of the senior leaders

The senior leadership team will seek the views of parents about the design of our homework. They will support class teachers in following up individuals who are not being supported at home and help them to encourage increased participation. They will also review the design in terms of its contribution to children's progress.

9. Parental Involvement

The involvement of parents and carers is the most important component of a successful homework system. Parents will be fully informed about the routines and content of homework and will be encouraged at parents' evenings and through letters to give it their full support. Parents will be given opportunities to give their views on homework.

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. Ideally parents should read with or to their children every day to help them develop a love of books and stories and help them to grow in confidence. We ask parents and carers to sign their child's Reading Record to show that they have heard their child read and discussed their books with them on four occasions during each week.

10. Conclusion

This policy is in line with other school policies and therefore should be read in conjunction with the following:

Teaching and Learning Policy
Assessment and Record Keeping
Feedback / Marking policy
Equal Opportunities Policy
Health and Safety Policy

This policy will be reviewed every two years or in the light of changes to legal requirements.

Signed *R Walton*
September 2022

Appendix 1 – sample task board

<p>Spelling Your spell far rid he ad ou</p>	<p>Please learn check on Look up the would be definition in a sentence</p>	<p>Reading Please read tick the book comment Read aloud Read aloud Read aloud</p>
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