

Temple Ewell Primary School



Home Learning Policy

HOME LEARNING POLICY

Introduction

At Temple Ewell Church of England Primary School we believe home learning should be a pleasant experience.

There is a growing lobby of opinion that challenges the effectiveness of traditional homework and its value in a young child's life, but others take a more conservative view and would be concerned if it was discontinued. Until there is more concrete evidence either way, we feel that taking the middle line is best.

Home learning can take many forms, such as practising an instrument, joining a club such as Dover Lifeguards or belonging to Cubs and Brownies. Anything that contributes to life skills and thinking skills will have value, especially something that involves solving a puzzle or problem, and even climbing a tree or playing a board game can provide a learning opportunity. Creative activities help with fine motor skills and neater handwriting. Daily life activities such as baking a cake bring home the importance of maths.

The aims and approaches described below are both realistic and sensible. As in all areas of school life, it is essential that parents and school are clear about what is to be achieved, and are mutually supportive.

Aims

- To build basic skills in reading, writing and maths for success in life.
- To complement and extend learning done at school.
- To provide interesting and challenging tasks with an obvious purpose.
- To meet individual children's needs or difficulties.
- To provide appropriate and timely feedback on work that has been done.

Approach

Homework builds on learning done in the classroom. If a teacher sets homework, there is an expectation that this will be completed by the set date and then promptly marked by the teacher (following the school's agreed marking and feedback policy). Children always want to know how they are doing; parents can also be kept in the picture throughout the school year.

Most homework will focus on the core subjects - English, mathematics and science. Occasionally other subjects, such as RE, history or geography will also be set. Homework should be provided on a consistent basis, with sufficient time allowed for the completion of the task. Children will be given clear instructions about the activity to be undertaken. The amount of time taken on a piece of homework will vary according to the age and ability of the child. *In general about 30 minutes for a task should be seen as the norm, less for younger children, sometimes more for older children.*

Every class teacher will give a briefing to parents within a few weeks of the start of the academic year, to explain the curriculum and related home learning for the year ahead. This is an important

part of the communication process, giving parents the opportunity to ask questions about any aspect of class activity. Teachers may feel this is an appropriate opportunity to offer advice or hints on how parents can help their child to learn spellings and tables. Parents should be aware that learning by rote from a spelling list is never a good substitute for learning words in context in class writing, but some children do appreciate additional help from a regular list.

Homework is given out on a Friday and should be handed in by Wednesday of the following week. It is not intended that the amount of homework given should prevent children being able to take part in other activities beyond the school day or to impact on the quality of family life at weekends – so, if there is a particular problem then the parent/carer should let the teacher know. The teacher should also be told if a child is taking much longer to complete the task set or seems to be finding it unduly difficult. The same applies if the task is too easy – every child is different and should be challenged accordingly. If homework is causing a hostile home atmosphere, then again the teacher should be informed, as the purpose of the home learning is to create independent learners with a cheerful thirst for knowledge.

The following shows what basic home learning to expect:

Year R

Daily reading recorded in reading record book; also stories to be read by parents to enrich vocabulary and promote a love of reading.

Years 1 and 2

Daily reading recorded in reading record book. Talking and discussing with parents about daily life to develop vocabulary and thinking skills. Creative activities and projects linked to class learning. Spellings to practise.

Years 3 and 4

Daily reading recorded in reading record book. Learning times tables. Activities and projects linked to and supporting class learning.

Years 5 and 6

Reading daily, weekly spellings to learn. Weekly maths activity, occasionally supplemented by a science or topic activity. Challenges set should reinforce learning how to find and retrieve information and how to become independent students. Children should aim to develop their own opinions and ideas, and be resourceful in their approach to a problem. Reading should stimulate their thinking skills which should translate into more interesting and extended written work.

Children in year 5 and 6 will spend longer on home learning activities as they will have the capacity to be stretched. This should not exceed 50 minutes total in any evening and should always include reading for enjoyment and enrichment of topic work.

Meeting the needs of all pupils: our inclusive approach

All provision at Temple Ewell Church of England Primary School reflects our commitment to inclusion. Home learning activities and tasks reflect the needs of each learner and a personalised approach is applied. For example, for pupils who benefit from pre-teaching and concept familiarisation, vocabulary, mind maps and pictorial discussion prompts are sent home with clear direction for the parents/carers where appropriate. It is also appropriate for Home Learning to be guided as a context for over-learning or reflection, whether as a scaffolded review activity or as a discussion. Home learning activities, where used effectively, can be positive and reinforcing and

at Temple Ewell Church of England Primary School we are mindful of the potential for Home Learning activities to cause anxiety for some children and their parents and of the impact that this can have on school life and engagement. We keep at the forefront of our planning and preparation of Home Learning activities the intention of impact and engagement for all pupils, regardless of their abilities or needs.

Role of the Parent

The parent is expected to support and encourage the child by making the best time and setting for the home learning activity. The class teacher will, as far as possible, ensure that the child is completely clear on what they are expected to do at home, so that junior children in particular, are able to communicate this to the parent. Children should be encouraged to tackle their task independently, and parents should not be tempted to do the task in their place!

Children benefit enormously from being able to discuss what they have done with their parents. This is not to suggest that the parent should spend time altering or correcting the child's work but rather discuss it and suggest how it might be done differently or improved. Constructive comments enable the child to develop a better understanding of the work and reinforce what is taught in school.

After speaking and listening, reading is the most crucial skill and needs to be encouraged at all times. A child's writing will reflect their reading habits. A child who reads widely and with enthusiasm is often able to translate this into written work. It is not always possible for an adult to hear a child read at school every day. It is most important, therefore, for a parent to try to hear their child read as often as possible, to discuss the story line and characters and ask the child questions about what has been read. Younger children need to be heard on a regular daily basis, older children should be encouraged to do some silent reading to themselves. Inspiring reading lists for all ages and abilities will be provided at the beginning of each academic year, so that children have the opportunity to read books other than 'school' books, and widen their interests.

It is of great benefit to children of all ages to discuss issues of all kinds with their parents. Talking about things is a precursor to great writing, and will make the process a lot easier for your child especially when it comes to extended writing.

A weekly 'Homework Club' is run by the school to support children and parents if required.

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