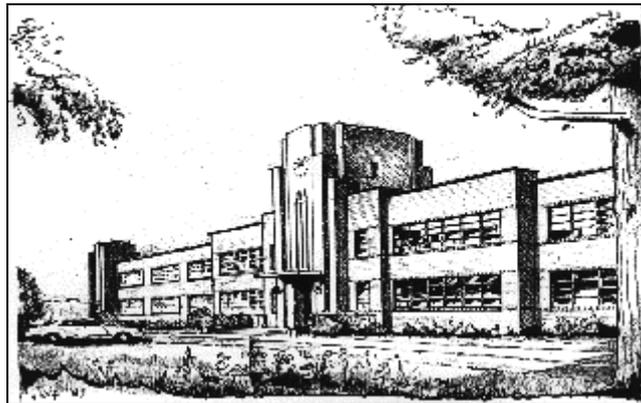


William Torbitt Primary School



HOME LEARNING POLICY

September 2017

What is home learning?

Home learning refers to any work or activities which pupils are asked to do outside lesson time, either on their own or with parents / carers. It is an important aspect of a child's education, encouraging them to see that learning can take place outside the classroom, and it promotes independent learning. It supports, prepares and consolidates school-based learning and allows parents, carers and the school to work in partnership for the benefit of the child.

Why have a Home Learning Policy?

This policy aims to ensure that:

- Parents and carers are treated as partners in their children's learning.
- There is a regular programme and a consistent approach throughout the school so that everyone - teachers, children and parents / carers - knows what to expect.
- Children and parents / carers are clear about what they need to do.
- There is a progression towards independence and individual responsibility.
- Tasks are carefully planned to support, prepare, consolidate and reinforce skills and understanding, particularly in English and Maths.
- Children receive prompt, clear feedback on their work in a form suitable to the task.
- Appropriate monitoring and evaluation takes place to support learning.
- The needs of the individual pupils are taken into account. (Learning needs, personal and social home contexts, learning styles).

What is the role of the school?

- To provide parents with a clear policy regarding home learning.
- To ensure this policy is fully and consistently followed.
- To provide support for parents with information about home learning to develop fluency in reading, writing and maths. (Website information, Parentmail, information on home learning)
- To make homework more responsive to the needs of the learner. (spelling for a topic or times tables for a maths lesson)
- To provide workshops / policies for parents/carers to help them support their children at home
- To provide support for children with the running of a Home Learning Club.

What is the role of the teacher?

- To plan and set activities linked to the National Curriculum and class-based work that are interesting and appropriate to the needs of the child.
- To ensure all children understand the home learning activities they have been given.
- To give prompt feedback on activities completed. This can be done in different ways, verbal feedback, sharing with peers and peer-assessment, self-assessment, presentation to the class.
- To be available to talk to parents and children about home learning activities.
- To inform parents if there is a problem regarding the completion of home learning activities.

What is the role of the parent / carer?

- To support the child in completing home learning activities.
- To ensure the child completes activities to a high standard and hands it in on time.
- To provide a suitable place for the child to carry out the work.
- To provide the appropriate resources for the child to complete the work.
- To encourage and praise their child whilst they are completing a task.
- To look for ways to extend home learning by visiting libraries, museums, websites etc.

We are very keen for parents to support and help their children with tasks. We take the view that children are likely to get more out of an activity if parents get involved, as long as they do not take over. However, there are times when we will want to see what children can do on their own. It is particularly important, as they get older, for children to become increasingly independent in their learning. If a parent is unsure about what their role should be, they should discuss it with their child's teacher.

What is the role of the child?

- To ensure they have everything they need to complete the activity each week.
- To ask their teacher for help if they are not sure what to do before the task is due in.
- To put in the same level of effort as would be expected of class work.
- To hand the work in on time.
- To take notice of any feedback about the work.

What is the school's guidance on the amount of time to spend on tasks?

- Reception 10 minutes a day reading with/to an adult -15/20 minutes on other task over the week
- Years 1 & 2 10 minutes a day reading with/to an adult – 30 minutes on other set tasks over the week
- Years 3 & 4 15 minutes a day reading with/to an adult – 1 hour on other set tasks over the week
- Year 5 20 minutes a day reading – 90 minutes on set tasks over the week
- Year 6 20 minutes a day reading – 90 – 120 minutes on set tasks over the week

NB: These times are for general guidance only, as some children will take longer than others to complete various tasks. If a parent or pupil is finding that they are spending too long on tasks, they are encouraged to speak to their class teacher, in the first instance.

What sorts of tasks will be set?

Fluency activities in Maths and English, times tables, spellings, handwriting, + -, number bonds, will be set to ensure this supports the learning across the curriculum. Project style activities to support learning in English, Maths and Topic (geography, history, science) may also be set by the class teacher. The school expects that reading should be a daily activity for all children from Nursery to Year 6 (details outlined below). The school also strongly encourages children to be involved in regular extra-curricular music and sporting activities, days out to museums, galleries, outdoor activities and practical first-hand experiences out of school.

NURSERY AND RECEPTION

Learning together is the emphasis for children in Nursery and Reception. There is a strong emphasis on learning through play and doing practical activities together. It is an ideal time to lay the foundations for continuing learning at home and develop effective communication and language skills.

What type of work will my child get?

Daily Reading

In Reception parents will be informed of the themes, letter sounds and high frequency everyday words that the children are learning in school each half-term. Starting in the autumn term and continuing all year, the main emphasis is on reading at home. This should be done in two ways:

- **Adults reading to children**
Parents should encourage children to point to words as they are being read. Discussion about the books is also important. A book at bedtime is an ideal opportunity in this aspect of their reading to share pictures, main characters and events in the book.
- **Children reading to an adult**
From the start of the year, children will start bringing appropriate books home to read to an adult. Again, encouraging the child to point to the words as they are being read is important. Discussing the story and the characters and asking questions about the book will help with the child's understanding of language.

Letter formation

At the beginning of the child's first term in Reception, the Reception teachers will provide parents with a sheet to support children with letter formation, which will also be available on the school's website. This shows where to start and finish when forming each letter and what each letter should look like. Giving children the opportunity to practise forming letters and also developing drawing skills with a variety of different tools will give them valuable practice. The important thing is to watch them and correct any mistakes sensitively so they don't fall into bad habits.

Tricky words (common words that are not easy to sound out, e.g. the, was) **and Phonics**

Children learn to read tricky words as part of 'Letters and Sounds'. Parents will be given a list of the words and sounds the children are learning to read and spell at the beginning of the year. Regularly practising reading them, reading and writing them in Reception, looking out for the words in reading books, and playing games with them will really benefit the child. For some children, it will be useful to practise writing the words as well as reading them. The teachers may send home games to give parents some ideas. It would be useful if these words were practised on a regular basis in the summer holiday before Year 1, as well as parents continuing to share books with their child.

Every Child a Talker (ECAT)

As a follower of the Every Child a Talker programme, we place great importance on the quality of talk that takes place between adults and children. Therefore, parents / carers should take every opportunity to talk with their children when involved in every day activities e.g. getting dressed, shopping, walking to school, in the garden, etc... Please note: evidence shows that it is just as valuable for the child's language development to have these conversations in the home language as it is to have them in English. Parents / Carers should aim to ask questions that require their child to give more than one word answers. Children should also be encouraged to speak in full sentences.

The school runs regular workshops to support parents / carers in helping their child's spoken language to develop well.

Termly newsletters give up to date information regarding children's themes for learning and will include ideas for home learning.

YEARS 1 & 2

For children in Years 1 & 2 we encourage parents to work together with their child to support them with their home learning. The emphasis remains on English and reading, but we include ways in which children can be supported with important maths skills.

What type of work will my child get?

Reading

Reading on a regular basis is vital when children are in Years 1 & 2. Children will bring their reading books home every evening, and the role of the adult is to listen and support them. It is important to remind them to use different strategies to read new words - sounding out the word, looking at the pictures, and looking for words within words are ways in which the child can read an unknown word. Just as important is discussing the book to check that the child has understood what they have read. Children will have a reading journal which parents / carers should sign or comment in each time they read with the child. Children may be asked to complete a reading based activity in their journal. A list of the types of activities that they may complete can be found at the back of the reading journal.

Tricky words (common words that are not easy to sound out, e.g. the, was) **and Phonics**

Children learn to read tricky words as part of 'Letters and Sounds' and the National Curriculum. Parents will be given a list of the tricky words and sounds the children are learning to read and spell. Regularly practising reading them, reading and writing them in Year 1, looking out for the words in reading books, and playing games with them will really benefit the child. For some children, it will be useful to practise writing the words as well as reading them. The teachers may send home games to give parents some ideas. It would be useful if these words were practised on a regular basis in the summer holiday before Year 2, as well as parents continuing to share books with their child. Children should have the opportunity to practise their words over the summer holiday.

Mathematics

There are important skills that children should have in place by the time they leave Year 2. Parents can support their child by giving them a lot of opportunities to practise these skills:

Teachers will ask the children to complete a maths skills and fluency task at home.

Further information of what maths skills the children can practise can be found on the school's website, the termly newsletters, targets sent home during parent consultations and on the weekly home learning tasks' 'focus for next week' section.

MY MATHS/EASIMATHS:

William Torbitt Primary School also subscribes to an online home learning programme called My Maths and Easimaths. From the Summer Term in Year 2, each child receives a username and password, so they are able to access learning activities set by their class teacher.

Those children who do not have access to the internet at home, have an opportunity to come into school at 8:30am one morning during the week.

Junior Librarian

Our school library system can now be accessed online at home. This allows pupils and parents to reserve books, write reviews, keep up to date with competitions and events and even request books that they would like to see in the library.

The library catalogue, includes over two thousand books as well as many thousands of approved websites. You can access the system via the school website by clicking the Junior Librarian logo in the home learning tab. (The first time you access the system it may ask you to install Microsoft Silverlight; please allow this to be downloaded and installed on your computer as the system cannot run without it).

Projects

Projects, which may take longer to complete, may also be set by the class teacher. These tasks and activities could be linked to topic work e.g. Science, geography, history, or English and Maths, and will have a varied time scale. The project could take many forms: preparing a talk, completing a piece of research, or conducting an interview. The nature of this work may be more open-ended than in the weekly English and Maths home learning tasks and will encourage pupils to work more independently and creatively as they decide how they wish to prepare and present their project (e.g. photographs, video, Powerpoint, paintings). The projects will be introduced by the class teacher at the beginning of a new half term. The children will be given a completion date depending on the requirements of the project. Sometimes the teacher may provide some more information for pupils to add to their project each week to move the project forward. Pupils who find it difficult to organise their time and complete their projects may be given shorter deadlines.

How can parents find out more information about home learning?

To help parents / carers and children the shorter, fluency based Literacy and Maths home learning tasks will be set weekly on **Friday** and due in on **Wednesday**. The project style home learning tasks will have more flexible completion dates, but these will always be communicated to pupils and parents/carers when the task is given out. Information about places that pupils could visit with their families (museums, historic houses, places of interest etc.) and resources (stories, websites etc.), that they could access to support them with their project, will also be provided by the class teacher. If parents need advice on how to support their children with home learning, they can talk to the class teacher. Similarly, children who require help or further explanation about a task should also approach their class teacher, who will be willing to help.

YEARS 3 - 6

As children get older, home learning provides an opportunity for them to develop the skill of independent learning. It is important that parents support their children, but good habits of independent study should be encouraged. The main focus for activities in Years 3 - 6 continues to be English and numeracy; however, children will be given more varied tasks in other areas of the curriculum.

What type of work will my child get?

Reading

Children should read to an adult, with an adult, or to themselves in the presence of an adult. The story and characters should be talked about, and new words discussed. Older children need a clear understanding of the story that sometimes will go beyond the literal meaning of the text. Children will read texts that are more detailed and will take longer to read. They should be encouraged to read all types of texts, including non-fiction. Even though reading may not be a directed task from the teacher, it should be engaged with on a daily basis.

Reading Journals:

For children to make good progress in their reading, they should read for a short period of time every day. To help the children keep track of what they read and develop their independence, each child will receive a reading journal.

How to use the Reading Journal:

What your child should do:

- Choose something to read every day. This could be their school reading book, their library book, newspaper, and magazine or even perhaps letters they have read.
- After reading, write down the date, title and author of the text.
- Bring the reading journal to school and take them home every day.
- Children may also choose to complete a reading activity. These activities can be found at the back of the reading journal and help develop the children's thinking and literacy skills based on the text they have been reading.

What you should do:

Sign or initial in your child's reading journal to agree that you child has completed their reading that day.

What the teacher will do:

Children will be asked to regularly share their reading journal with their teacher and discuss what they have read. This would also be an opportunity for the pupils to share their chosen, completed reading activities.

English

This will be based around what the children will have been learning in class. Tasks will usually be skill and fluency based and may include spelling, punctuation, grammar or use of vocabulary.

Mathematics

This will also be based around what the children will be learning in class and will usually require pupils to practice a particular skill in order to develop fluency. The work could be linked to lessons on shape, measures or handling data. A lot of the activities will be based around number work. Children will be asked to make sure they know their tables from 2 to 12. They should be able to recite them and answer mixed questions of x and the related \div , e.g. $7 \times 4 = 28$ and $28 \div 4 = 7$.

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Why will children sometimes be given extra tasks?

Children who take part in specialised lessons or booster groups may sometimes be set extra tasks to reinforce the work being done. Additionally, children who work in a one-to-one situation with learning support assistants will sometimes be given extra tasks. In both cases children should complete this work alongside their normal tasks unless the child or the parents have been told otherwise. If the child is finding that they have too much work, then parents should speak to the child's teacher or the person running the extra sessions.

What about children who don't complete home learning tasks?

The expectation is that children will complete all home learning tasks. Teachers will keep records of children completing tasks and these records will be checked on a regular basis. If there are any problems with children not completing tasks and projects, the teacher will speak to the parents to find out why. There may be occasions when a child will miss playtime or some of a lunchtime if they have not completed tasks, so that they can be done then. For children who are reluctant to complete tasks or prepare projects at home, and for whom this is causing a real problem at home, may be referred by the class teacher to attend a home learning club at lunchtime, where the tasks can be completed then. Also, to ensure equal opportunities, teachers may also refer a child who for one reason or another is not receiving the necessary support they need at home to complete tasks satisfactorily. All referrals will be for an agreed fixed period of time.

What if a child says they have not received any home learning tasks?

If there is any reason why a child will not receive a task to do at home, the teacher will inform parents in a letter. If parents have not received a letter, they should check with the child's teacher. There may be occasions when homework is not set if the teacher is away, but we will try to avoid that happening.

What if a child is absent from school?

If a child is absent due to short term illness, the school will not send work home. However, if a child is absent for a length of time (more than 15 days a RIP referral will be made), e.g. with a broken leg, the teacher will arrange for some work from across the curriculum to be sent home for the child to complete. In such circumstances the teacher should consult the headteacher first.

It is not possible to give work for children to complete when parents take their children out of school for holidays during term time.

Who will monitor and evaluate the Home Learning Policy?

Senior staff regularly review the Home Learning Policy. This is an ongoing process where pupils, teachers and parents are asked for their views on its effectiveness. As part of the process a sample of home learning books and reading record books will be checked from time to time.