

St. Mary's Church in Wales School

Homework Policy

Introduction

Homework is anything that children do outside the normal school day, which contributes to their learning in response to guidance from the school. Homework encompasses a whole variety of activities instigated by teachers and parents to support children's learning. For example, a parent who spends time reading a story to their child before bedtime is 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 recognise that the time and resources available limit the educational experience that any school by itself can provide; children benefit greatly therefore from the mutual support of parents and teachers in encouraging them to learn both at home and at school. Indeed we see homework as an important way of establishing a successful dialogue between teachers and parents. One of the aims of our school is for children to develop as independent learners. We believe that 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. 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 wide range of out-of-school clubs and organisations that play an important part in the lives of many children. We are well aware that children spend more time at home than at school, and we believe they develop their skills, interests and talents to the full only when parents encourage them to make maximum use of the experiences and opportunities that are available outside of school.

Aims and objectives

The aims and objectives of homework are:

- to enable pupils to make maximum progress in their academic and social development;
- to help pupils develop the skills of an independent learner;
- to promote a partnership between home and school in supporting each child's learning;
- to enable all aspects of the curriculum to be covered in sufficient depth;
- to provide educational experiences not possible in school;
- to consolidate and reinforce learning done in school and to allow children to practise skills taught in lessons;
- to help children develop good work habits for the future.

Types of homework

We set a variety of homework activities. In the Foundation Phase we encourage the children to read by giving them books to take home to read with their parents. We give guidance information to parents to help them achieve the maximum benefit from this time spent reading with their child. We also ask Foundation Phase children to learn spellings or complete mathematical tasks as part of their homework. Sometimes we ask children to talk about a topic at home prior to studying it in school. For example, in the history topic on toys, we ask children to find out what toys were popular when their grandparents were young and, if possible, to bring examples into school to show the other children. Sometimes we ask children to find and collect things that we then use in science lessons, we sometimes encourage them to use the school and local library and the Internet and CD-ROMs, to gather information.

At Key Stage 2 we continue to give children the sort of homework activities outlined above but we expect them to do more tasks independently. We set literacy and numeracy homework routinely and we expect the children to consolidate and reinforce learning done in school through practice at home.

Reading books are sent home weekly. It is expected that parents will write a comment in the record book. Homework projects are set to build and develop research and organisational skills. These are valuable life skills.

The following table shows how projects develop through KS2.

Y3	One Homework Project
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Y4	Two Homework Projects + one Homework Research Assignment (max 1000 words).
Y5	Two Homework Projects + one Homework Research Assignment (max 1500 words).
Y6	Two Homework Projects + one Homework Research Assignment (max 2000 words).

Homework Projects - tasks are built up over several weeks. Pupils are expected to spend about 1 hour per week on the project. Homework Research Assignments are open tasks. Years 5 & 6 should include contents page and bibliography. Projects may be handwritten or produced using Word or a similar programme. Completed Projects should be submitted as a hard copy not on a memory stick. Pupils are expected to write up their projects in their own words - printed internet sheets or cut/paste is not acceptable. Pupils are expected to spend about 1 hour per week over several weeks to complete the project.

Pupils with special educational needs

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. If a child has special needs, 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 the Individual Education Plans (IEPs) if appropriate. Spelling homework is differentiated where necessary.

The role of parents

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

If parents have any problems or questions about homework, they should, in the first instance, contact the child's class teacher. If their questions are of a more general nature, they should contact the Headteacher.

Monitoring and review

It is the responsibility of our governing body to agree and then monitor the school homework policy. The Governing Body may, at any time, request from our Headteacher a report on the way homework is organised in our school.

This Policy will be reviewed in the line with our review cycle.