

To: All Parents and Carers
Date: Monday 4th September 2023
Re: Homework

Dear Parents and Carers,

A very warm welcome to the new school year. We hope you've had a good Summer, despite the rather mediocre weather!

There will be a full bulletin of reminders and updates later this week but for now, important news on homework.

Context – your views and the research

Both the parent/carer and pupil surveys at the end of last year brought very mixed responses around homework. As many love it as hate it, as many think we set too little as think we set too much... Whatever way we look at it, opinion is very divided!

Quite a significant number of respondents expressed a wish to reinstate the more creative homework menus which we used to have, with tasks and challenges to enjoy doing together at home. Again, as above, some used to love this whilst others did not!

There was a strong expression that children who have not done homework should not be sanctioned.



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The evidence in favour of homework is not strong. A meta-study by the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) , the main research body for the UK, suggests that children regularly doing homework **do** make some gains over those not doing, but this depends very much on the quality of task set.

However, there is some stronger evidence (EEF and the very influential educationalist John Hattie) that there are clear benefits where children spend time at home reading, practicing spellings and reinforcing recall of number facts such as number-bonds and times-tables.

Our View

Additional time spent reading and practicing key facts is invaluable. We can see a clear correlation between children in our setting who do both of these and academic outcomes.

We devote as much time as we can to hearing children read, making time to practice spellings, times-tables etc as we can, but we have to teach a broad curriculum and can never spend as much time on these as would be optimal. With 30 children in a class, we can never provide the level of personalised, individual intervention as we would wish to. For example, a teacher cannot hear 30 children read daily. Ten minutes per children would be six hours, the entire school day. Increasingly, schools do not have the support staff available to facilitate this either – we are luckier than most schools in this respect and do still have some (though fewer) TAs in this sort of general support role. Sadly though, this is gone in most schools now and is diminishing here.

While we consistently achieve academic results in the top 10-20% of the country in all subjects, it remains that nearly a quarter of our children leave unable to pass the test and meet the expected standard of reading. This presents these children with a disadvantage on starting Secondary school. The quality of our reading teaching is continuously monitored and is considered to be right at the leading edge of good practice and was highlighted as a strength by Ofsted. We will continue to develop this, but essentially, the children just need to read more.

We also recognise the social value of the more creative tasks and that these can play a role in interest, engagement, deepening knowledge and



understanding, following or developing interests, building vocabulary and generally having fun learning at home.

We agree philosophically that children should not be sanctioned when homework is not completed as it is generally not their choice whether it is done or not. We also recognize that there are some children with specific SEN who struggle when school crosses the boundary into home and that this can result in challenging behaviour and deteriorating relationships between parent and child. We would not wish to add to this.

Changes Arising From the Above

We will be clarifying and simplifying the general homework hopes and expectations.

- We hope that all children will read/be heard reading at home daily.
- We hope that children will be encouraged at home to regularly practice key skills, such as spellings and times-tables.

We will try to support with this.

- Each year group will send out (attached) clarification of the recommended times to be spent on home learning.
- Each year group will send home advanced notice of the key spellings and facts that children will be assessed on in the coming half term.
- Each year group (or phase) will host an event this half term to which you will be invited to hear about how to support with home learning; tips on learning spellings and number facts; advice and techniques on supporting reading

We will regularly assess progress with key fact knowledge in the form of quizzes and tests

- Of course, we will be continuing to teach! We will target teaching on the identified areas of need.



- Naturally, we will focus individual and group interventions where we can on children who need them.
- We will update parents/carers on children's progress and any gaps in their knowledge.

We will reinstate the popular menus of suggested home learning activities to support or extend learning in a range of subjects.

- **These will be optional**
- They will be related to current learning topics
- Children will be encouraged to share anything they have done in a regular class 'show and tell' type session.
- Children who completed tasks may receive praise, recognition and reward in the form of house points, awards from members of Senior leadership etc.
- Those who don't will not be sanctioned.

We accept that we cannot please all the people all of the time on this. We hope that the above is a proportionate and empathetic response to the feedback received. We really do try to listen!

There follows more detail from the teachers in your child's year group.

Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Peter Hillier'.

Peter Hillier, Headteacher



Revised Recommended Home-learning: Year 5

Reading: Children need to read for at least 10 minutes each day.

Spellings: These will be given out for the half-term and uploaded to Showbie. Keep an eye out for these over the next week. We will be practicing spellings in a weekly spelling lesson and will be testing on a weekly basis to track progress.

Maths: (optional homework on MyMaths). Key facts to recall:

- Continue practicing 2-12x tables and related division facts
- Recall prime numbers up to 29
- Recognise and use square and cube numbers and know the notation for squared ² and cubed ³
- Find related multiplication and division facts e.g. $3 \times 4 = 12$, $30 \times 4 = 120$
- Multiply and divide numbers by 10, 100 and 1000
- Round to the nearest 10, 100, 1000, 10000 and 100000
- Know how many mm in cm, ml in a l, g in a kg
- How to find factor pairs of a number

Homework Menu

The below activities are suggested in relation to our areas of learning and offer more practical and creative suggestions. We will be sending these out termly.

- Create an artistic representation of your family and culture
- Research and create a presentation about Olaudah Equiano
- Help to prepare and cook a healthy dinner for your family
- Review your favourite book: this could be written, recorded as a video or however else you might want to present this
- Learn to play a game of cards
- Plant a fruit, vegetable or herb that you can grow and eat later
- Create an infographic about a historical person who fought for equality and human rights. Some examples could be Harriet Tubman, Nelson Mandela or William Wilberforce.

We will be hosting a meeting to discuss the changes to homework and our plans for the Year 5 Residential on Thursday 14th September at 3:45pm in Maple.

Thank you for your support,

Miss Blatherwick and Miss Miller