



Learn Together - **SHARE** success

**Brentry Primary School**

## **Homework Policy**



"The dog is eating my homework...Wow! I didn't realise they actually did that!" - Bart Simpson

### **Rationale**

At Brentry Primary School, we pursue our vision of Learn Together - **SHARE** success by supporting children's learning through the use of homework. This is made effective by our commitment to working in partnership with parents. This policy forms part of the home/school partnership.

### **Aims**

The undertaking of regular homework tasks should be beneficial in a number of ways:

- 1/ Homework can consolidate and extend knowledge and skills.
- 2/ Homework should encourage children to develop the skills of independent learning; encouraging self-discipline, motivation and personal organisation.
- 3/ Homework enables parents and carers to have direct involvement in their children's learning.
- 4/ Homework increases understanding parents and carers have of the content and level of their children's work.
- 5/ Homework helps prepare older children for secondary transfer.

### **Guidelines**

#### What should be set?

Guidelines given to schools on how much homework should be set per year group were scrapped in 2012. It was left to schools to decide what to set and how much. We have looked very carefully at the stated aims of setting homework and have looked at recent research into what type of homework has the most impact. We have also tried to consider the often active lives pupils have outside of school, and the demands on family time. Homework is important to the education of children at Brentry Primary, but we must try and ensure that our expectations in terms of frequency and amount set are manageable and reflect the age and needs of the child. We must also try and ensure what is set actually has an impact on the children's learning, and isn't just set for the sake of it.

The most valuable work pupils can do at home, based on research and our own experience, is **'learning things by heart' and reading**. We use 'learning things by heart' as an umbrella term for things such as learning key words and spellings as well as practising their phonics and times tables. Reading can include independent reading as well as reading to or with someone. When children and parents regularly undertake these activities, it has genuine impact on learning, and in the vital area of basic skills. Parents often do not consider this as actual homework, and it can be neglected. However, **this is the most important element of**

**homework in primary school**, and we want to reinforce this and encourage you to ensure it happens. We have chosen to focus on what actually makes a difference.

As a result, we have decided not to set regular, additional weekly homework in years R to 4. Some additional homework may be set in these year groups on an ad-hoc basis if the teacher deems it necessary and relevant. On the whole, additional weekly work will only be set in Year 5 and 6, as we begin to prepare pupils for the considerable demands of secondary education. Also, Year 2 & 6 may well have work set that is linked directly to their preparation for the SATs tests. **We want all pupils and parents to focus the majority of their time on reading and 'learning by heart'**. There will be a reward system in each class to incentivise reading, and the 30 and 100 Club system and certificates will encourage the learning of maths facts.

In addition, projects will be set for children in Years 2 to 6. These will be set on a seasonal basis, so three times a year, other than in Years 2 and 6, where SATS preparation will take the place of a project in the spring. They will link to the whole school topic theme - history in the autumn term, geography in the spring and creative arts in the summer. When projects are set, children will be given a choice of at least three tasks, which will vary in terms of what they are required to do and how to present results. For example, one choice may be linked to craft and design, one to research and presentation and one to imagination and writing (see Appendix 3). They need to select only one option. This is intended to provide greater flexibility and allow pupils, and parents, to select the task most appropriate to them; guided by their strengths, personal preferences, time available, support that can be offered and manageability.

What we consider to be sensible and purposeful homework for each Year group is set out in Appendix 1. It covers all years from Reception to Year 6. It should be noted that the guidelines given in Appendix 1 are general and there may be variations at different times of the year, as teachers match the homework to the needs of their class, and of individuals.

Appendix 1 no longer stipulates the amount of time children should be taking over homework set. Clearly, some children complete tasks more quickly than others. Some children are given more support than others, so to give actual times can be misleading. In reality, the older the children, the more time should be spent completing homework, as the demands of the curriculum and the knowledge they require increase. However, **please ensure the children read daily**, whatever their age.

### Homework Books

Children will have homework books, which will usually contain their spellings/ times tables to learn and information about that week's tasks. At the front of each book should be a Homework Guidance Sheet giving details about the approach to homework taken by the class teacher. This will include information such as what is being set, when any work is to be handed in and when any tests linked to homework are to be taken (eg spelling tests). An example sheet can be found as Appendix 2. Information about homework will also be available on the class website page.

## **Responsibilities**

Teachers should ensure that:

- Homework is planned and set according to the guidelines in this policy.
- Work matches, as far as possible, the abilities of the children.
- Information about expectations and tasks is communicated to the children and parents.
- Information about when homework is set and what may be set is communicated to parents via their class link on the school website, and via the Homework Guidance sheet in the Homework books.
- Homework is marked/ commented on where additional tasks are set.
- Records are kept of pupils not completing homework, especially reading.
- There is an area on the class page of the website that's directs pupils and parents to additional support and resources for those keen to help with or extend their child's learning.

Parents should ensure that

- They show interest in their child's homework and praise/ value efforts made by the child to complete it.
- Children are supported with their homework, where necessary.
- The work, where applicable, is completed and returned to the school at the appropriate time. Work may not be marked if it is not returned on time.
- The teacher is informed if there is a specific reason why the work has not been carried out.
- Any observations are noted in homework books that children take home.
- Homework Books are looked after and brought to school on the appropriate day.
- They source any additional homework they wish their child to complete (whilst teachers may differentiate work set according to ability, they will not set extra work at the request of parents).

## **Communication**

Homework will be discussed as part of 'Back to School' meetings during the first term of the new school year, making expectations, roles and responsibilities clear. The Homework Guidance Sheet in the Homework Books helps further outline expectations. Teachers also use their class link page on the website to clarify matters. Parents are encouraged to use the Homework Books to communicate observations, comments, concerns etc. about the homework to the teacher.

Projects set in Key Stage 2 will be accompanied by a sheet explaining what is required, when it should be completed by and how the work will be marked.

Feedback to children on additional homework completed will be given, where appropriate, to individuals, groups or to the whole class. Not all homework will be marked formally. Much will depend on the nature of the work set.

Appendix 1

Class (Yr group)	Type of work set	Aims met
<b>Brunel (R)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• learning things by heart; key words, phonics, rhymes and songs</li> <li>• reading</li> </ul>	1, 3, 4
<b>Chaplin (1)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• learning things by heart; spellings, phonics, number bonds, key words</li> <li>• reading</li> </ul>	1, 3, 4
<b>Monet (2)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• learning things by heart; spellings, phonics, key words, number bonds, times tables</li> <li>• reading</li> <li>• project work 2 x a year</li> <li>• SATs preparation - as required</li> </ul>	1, 2, 3, 4
<b>Gandhi (3)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• learning things by heart; spellings, times tables, division facts</li> <li>• reading</li> <li>• project work 3 x a year</li> </ul>	1, 2, 3, 4
<b>Mandela (4)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• learning things by heart; spellings, times tables, division facts</li> <li>• reading</li> <li>• project work 3 x a year</li> </ul>	1, 2, 3, 4
<b>Freeman (5)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• learning things by heart; spellings, times tables, division facts</li> <li>• reading</li> <li>• one additional activity set per week - usually maths or English</li> <li>• project work 3 x a year</li> </ul>	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
<b>Darwin (6)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• learning things by heart; spellings, times tables, division facts</li> <li>• reading</li> <li>• two additional activities are set per week - usually maths and English</li> <li>• project work 2 x a year</li> <li>• additional SAT preparation</li> </ul>	1, 2, 3, 4, 5

## Appendix 2 - Example of a Homework Guidance Sheet

### Year X Homework Guidance:

This briefly describes the approach to the setting of homework in Year X. Outlined are our expectations and those you can have of us. Hopefully it will answer many of the questions parent/ carers frequently ask. Details can also be found on the class page on the school website.

#### **What work will be set?**

Each week, pupils are expected to:

- Learn and practise their spellings
- Practise their times tables (occasionally, we may ask pupils to practise a particular times table they have been learning in class, but more regularly, the expectation is that pupils will practise general time tables).
- Read - we expect pupils to read to parents or be read to as part of their homework, on a daily basis. There is a class based reward system that provides an incentive to read as often as possible at home.

Each seasonal term, pupils are expected to complete a project linked to the whole school theme.

During school holidays, work may be set but the completion, whilst encouraged, is entirely optional.

#### **On what days will it be set?**

Spellings will be handed out on \_\_\_\_\_.

Projects will be handed out close to the start of each term.

#### **What assistance will my child need?**

Ideally you will provide support for the child when required but encourage them to complete as much work as possible independently. Clearly there may be times that they need more help with projects in terms of research or organisation, for example, and this is actively encouraged. However, tempting though it may be to show off your inherent construction skills, please don't take over projects and do them yourselves! Parental help with spellings and tables is also very helpful.

Ultimately, showing your child that you appreciate the value of homework, encouraging them to complete it and showing interest in their efforts is motivating in itself. Please read with and to your child as often as possible.

#### **How will the work be marked?**

Spellings and tables will be tested regularly. The weekly Spelling Test will be on \_\_\_\_\_.

The weekly 100 Club Times Table Test will be on \_\_\_\_\_

When set, projects will be accompanied by a sheet which will explain the choice of tasks, what is required for each and how the work will be judged. Work not handed in on time may not be marked.

#### **What happens if my child does not do the work?**

It is not compulsory to complete homework. However, we do feel it is of great benefit to the child to do so in terms of preparation for secondary school and academic and personal development. Please encourage them to do so.

***There is a distinct correlation between those children who regularly complete homework and those who are most successful academically.*** Parents/ carers will be contacted if their child consistently fails to complete their homework.

Children who do not complete homework may be asked to complete the work in school, possibly during lunchtimes. It is at the class teacher's discretion whether this is the case and may vary depending on the perceived importance or contextual relevance of the work.

Children who require a little extra support with their homework should consult class teachers. The ICT suite may be used for research and/ or printing projects, but the child will need their class teacher's permission first.

#### **Where do children complete their work?**

Most work should be completed in the pupils' Homework Books. Please use this book to communicate with the teacher in note form who will check regularly for parental comments...on any aspect of homework. Guidance on how (and where) to complete projects will be given by the class teacher each time one is set. A4 paper will be available to children if required. Any further questions, please see your child's class teacher.

Appendix 3 - Example of Project Setting Sheet:

Year X Autumn Project - History Focus

Children are required to complete 1 of the following tasks:

Options	Marking
Design and construct a scale model of an Anderson Shelter - make it as real life and as strong as possible. It will be 'bombed'...	Quality of care and attention to detail - 5 marks  Realism - 5 marks  Strength - 5 marks
Create a Powerpoint (or similar presentational device) that you present to the class to show what life was like for a child living in targeted cities during the Blitz. You may wish to consider what life was like for those who stayed, and those who were evacuated.	Quality of research - 5 marks  Quality of Powerpoint - 5 marks  Quality of presentation - 5 marks
Imagine you are a child who has been evacuated from Bristol during the Blitz. Write a diary for the first month of your evacuation, starting from the day you leave.	Quality of recount (appropriate use of language features, chronology etc) - 5 marks  Imagination and engagement of reader - 5 marks  Historical realism - 5 marks

Please ensure the project is handed in by \_\_\_\_\_