

Brackenagh West Primary School Homework Policy

1 Introduction

- 1.1** Homework is anything that children do outside the normal school day that 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.

2 Rationale for homework

- 2.1** Homework is a very important part of a child's education and can add much to a child's development. The government has made clear its commitment to homework, saying that it is seen as 'an essential part of good education'. 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.*
- 2.2** 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 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.

3 Aims and objectives

- 3.1** 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 practice skills taught in lessons;
 - to help children develop good work habits for the future.

4 Types of homework

- 4.1** We set a variety of homework activities. At P1 stage and throughout Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 we encourage the children to read by giving them books to take home to read with their parents. We try to give guidance and information to parents to help them achieve the maximum benefit from this time spent reading with their child. We also ask some of the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 children to learn spellings or mathematical tables as part of their homework. Sometimes we ask children to talk about a topic at home prior to studying it in school. On occasions we ask children to find and collect things that we then use in science lessons, and from time to time we ask children to take home work that they have started in school when we believe that they would benefit from spending further time on it. When we ask children to study a topic or to research a particular subject, we also encourage the older children to use the school and local library and the Internet and CD-ROMs.
- 4.2** At Key Stage 2 we continue to give children the sort of homework activities outlined in paragraph 4.1 but we expect them to do more tasks independently. We set literacy and numeracy homework routinely each week and we expect the children to consolidate and reinforce learning done in school through practice at home. We also set homework as a means of helping the children to revise for examinations as well as to ensure that prior learning has been understood.
- 4.3** Both written and learning homeworks are set each week. Learning homework includes reading, spellings and learning of number facts etc. Written homework is usually set for literacy and/or numeracy.

5 Amount of homework

- 5.1** We normally increase the amount of homework that we give the children as they move through the school. A minimum of one written homework per week is set for P3 to P7 children. We expect Primary 1 and 2 children to spend approximately 10-15 minutes per night doing homework, although most of this may be **reading** with a parent. We expect children in Primary 3 and 4 to spend approximately 15 - 20 minutes per night on homework, and children in Primary 5, 6 and 7 to spend approximately 30 minutes per night. This is in line with DE guidelines.
- 5.2** We give the children a school homework diary where they or the teacher record the homework. Children in the P1 to P3 classes are not expected to record their own homework, as a printed page specifying their homework tasks will be stuck into their homework diary each week.
- 5.3** We try to be flexible with the time given to complete written homework, to take into account other commitments that children may have in the evenings. From P4 – P7 children are usually given more than one night to complete written homework tasks, with homeworks normally set by the teacher each Monday and handed in on Thursday.

6 Rewards

- 6.1** We encourage the children to complete their homework to the best of their ability and to hand it in neat and on time. Various incentives and rewards are used to help with this, and these vary from class to class.

7 Pupils with special educational needs

- 7.1** 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 (IEP's) where appropriate.

8 The role of parents

- 8.1** 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.
- 8.2** We ask parents with P1 to P3 children to check the homework diary every day, and those with children in P4 to P7 to check it at least once a week. All homeworks should be signed by a parent/guardian once completed.
- 8.3** 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 Principal. Finally, if they wish to make a complaint about the school homework policy or the way it is implemented, parents should contact the Principal.

9 Monitoring and review

- 9.1** It is the responsibility of our Governors to agree and then monitor the school homework policy. Parents complete a questionnaire during the school's inspection, and our Governors pay careful consideration to any concern that is raised at that time, or in between inspections, by any parent. Our Governors may, at any time, request from our Principal a report on the way homework is organised in our school.