



Updated: February 2019

Review date: July 2019

The Role of Homework

At St Nicolas and St Mary CE Primary School we believe that home learning both improves pupil progress and enriches the curriculum taught in school. Research shows that high-quality homework has an average impact of 2 months' additional progress in a year in primary schools and 5 months' additional progress in a year in secondary schools. The quality of the tasks is found to be more important than the quantity of work required from the pupil. Short focused tasks or activities which relate directly to what is being taught, and which are built upon in school, are likely to be more effective than regular daily homework. Our intent in setting homework is therefore to ensure that it is relevant, focused and engaging. We also want to prepare children for the transition to secondary school and the homework expectations that they may have.

Parent/Carer Support with Homework

Research shows that effective homework is associated with "greater parental involvement and support." Whilst we encourage all children to become independent in their attitude and approach to homework as they progress through the school, there is no doubt that strong support from parents/carers (eg encouraging their children to complete any tasks set, reading together, playing games, helping to test timestables and spelling and talking about their learning) has an immensely positive impact on progress. Some useful information on how to support children with their learning at home is listed in the Appendix below.

School Support with Homework

Some children find completing home learning tasks challenging and occasionally this can cause difficulties at home. We want children to be motivated, resilient and independent – but may need help to develop this. The school can offer additional advice or support if this is the case and welcomes parents/carers to approach the class teacher. You can also look at the materials provided by the teacher or posted on our website. Sometimes our Home School Link Worker, SEND team or a senior leader maybe able to give advice. From time to time teachers may offer Homework Clinics or clubs as required.

If children do not have access to a computer at home, parents/carers should talk to their child's class teacher. We can provide access to ipads or computers outside lesson time if children are unable to access the internet at home. We are an eco school and aim to be paper free where possible. If parents/carers do not have printing facilities for homework sheets, they should get in touch with the class teacher.

We expect all children who attend our Octopus after school club to read for around 10 minutes. We also give children a space to do homework independently if they need it.

Holiday Homework

We appreciate that children need a break from school work during the school holidays. However, we also need to ensure that children do not dip, particularly during the longer summer break. Children should read, or be read to, during all holidays. This should be for pleasure!

For half term holidays, children would normally be given the same amount of homework for a normal weekend. For Christmas, Easter and Summer holidays, children should also get a similar amount of homework as for a weekend but may have some optional research work to prepare them for the following term's new topic.

Homework Expectations Per Year Group*

| Year Group | Homework |
|------------|---|
| R | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children will take home a reading book most days. (5-10 minutes reading per day) • Phonics Packs (Phase 2 and 3) will be sent home when children are ready. • A Maths Pack (with activities to be completed on an ongoing basis) will be sent home in the Autumn term. • Occasional topic related work is set. Alternatively a child may be asked to find and bring something to school to support learning. |
| 1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children will take home a reading book most days. (5-10 minutes reading per day) • High frequency words and other relevant spellings to read and spell most weeks. • One homework activity is set every week for the following week. It usually relates to Literacy, Maths, Reading or Topic work. This could include a a maths activity or undertaking a set online game (eg Sumdog); a reading task (eg discussing the book you are reading together) or talking about a particular topic with their family. (10-15 minutes per week) <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Total: Up to 1 hour/week</i></p> |
| 2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children will independently change reading books (with guidance) to take home as needed. As children progress in their reading, these books will be under the Accelerated Reader scheme. (10 minutes reading per day) • High frequency words and other relevant spellings to read and spell most weeks. • On-line Maths games may be recommended. • Most children may be asked to start learning multiplication facts (see table below for year group expectations). • One other homework activity is set most weeks for the following week. It usually relates to literacy, maths, reading or topic work. This could include a a maths activity or undertaking a set online game (eg Sumdog); a reading task (eg discussing the book you are reading together) or talking about a particular topic with their family (15-20 minutes) per week. <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Total: 1 hour/week</i></p> |
| 3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children will independently change their AR reading books to take home as needed. All children should read most nights (10+ minutes per day). • One homework activity, usually Literacy or Maths, is set each week for the following week. This may include an online task. (20-30 minutes per week). • Children should be learning multiplication facts and practicing their tables regularly (see table below for year group expectations). • 10 spellings set most weeks. <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Total: Up to 1.5 hours/week</i></p> |
| 4 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children will independently change reading books to take home as needed. Children should read most nights. • One homework activity, usually Maths or English, is set each week for the following week. This may include an online task. (25-30 minutes per week) • Children should be learning multiplication facts and practicing their tables regularly (see table below for year group expectations). • 10 spellings set most weeks. <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Total: 1.5 hours/week</i></p> |
| 5 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children will independently change reading books to take home as needed. Children should read most nights. Some Guided Reading homework may be set once a week. • Literacy/Topic homework (20-30 minutes per week) • Mathematics homework (20-30 minutes per week) • Science homework – on an occasional basis (instead of Literacy/Topic) • Children should be learning multiplication facts and practicing their tables regularly (see table below for year group expectations). • 10 spellings set weekly • Research work and finishing off work – as required <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Total: 2.0 hours/week</i></p> |
| 6 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children will independently change reading books to take home. Children should read regularly. • Guided Reading homework (20-30 minutes per week) • Literacy homework (20-30 minutes per week) • Mathematics homework (20-30 minutes per week) • Children should be learning multiplication and related division facts, if not secure. • Science work or a Foundation Subject (20-30 minutes per week) • 10 spellings set weekly • For part of the year, homework will link into preparation and revision for Year 6 SATs. • Research work and finishing off work – as required <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Total: 2.5 hours/week</i></p> |

* Homework will be shared via a letter and the school website. Please note that occasionally some homework tasks may be set over 2 or 3 weeks in order to complete a more extended project. Some additional optional homework may be undertaken by pupils to extend the time available for a project or piece of research. Other homework may be set to support a child with specific need. Occasionally there may be additional homework to support a special class or whole school initiative.

Homework Expectations

As a school, it is our expectation that any homework set should be completed by children and delivered on time. If a child is absent from school then any weekly homework can be accessed on line. Parents/carers should speak to the class teacher if there is a problem with the homework being completed eg illness or a lack of understanding. Teachers may get in touch with Parents/Carers if homework is not being completed regularly either in person or by letter. Completion of regular homework in Upper Key Stage 2 is important preparation for the transition to secondary school, where the homework expectations are more rigorous and there are usually sanctions for uncompleted work.

APPENDIX

Additional Guidance for Supporting Children with Maths

Resources

On our website ([Home](#)»[Parents & Carers](#)»[Curriculum](#)»[Maths](#)) there is lots of useful information to support home learning including video tutorials made by our teachers for the different stages of mathematical operation, information guides and links to on line games which improve pupils arithmetic skills.

We would also like to encourage parents and carers to make the most of the many different opportunities to develop mathematical skills when pupils are out and about and within the home environment such as: looking for numbers and shapes in the environment (older pupils can look for prime and square numbers and 3D shapes); measuring, weighing and calculating quantities when cooking; visiting shops with an adult and helping to handle money; calculating a restaurant bill; looking at train or bus timetables etc. By applying the skills learnt in class within a real context children, not only improve their maths but build independent skills to take into their adult life.

Sumdog

We are one of thousands of schools worldwide which use the maths section of the website Sumdog to support children's mathematical learning at home. On-line games from Sumdog are often set by teachers to reinforce learning which has happened in the classroom. As children play, they answer personalised questions and teachers are able to track their progress. Sumdog activities may be set as homework and children gain access to them using their own log in provided by the school. For more information please visit: <http://www.sumdog.com/en/parent/>

Times Table Practice

From Year 1 upwards, children are expected to practice their times table facts regularly as per the chart below so that they meet the challenges set by the National Curriculum. The order in which tables are learnt and progress expectations per year group are outlined in the table below:

| | |
|--------|---|
| Year 1 | Count in multiples of 2,5 and 10. Recall and use doubles of all numbers to 10 and corresponding halves. |
| Year 2 | Recall and use multiplication and division facts for the 2, 5 and 10 multiplication tables, including recognising odd and even numbers. |

| | |
|--------|--|
| Year 3 | Recall and use multiplication and division facts for the 3, 4 and 8 multiplication tables. |
| Year 4 | Recall multiplication and division facts for multiplication tables up to 12×12 |
| Year 5 | Recall of all times tables and division facts up to 12×12 in mixed order. |
| Year 6 | Quick recall of all times tables and division facts up to 12×12 in mixed order. |

In order to fully know a times table, children must be able to state times table facts (eg $2 \times 3 = 6$ and $3 \times 2 = 6$) in order, out of order and recall the relevant division facts (eg $6 \div 3 = 2$ and $6 \div 2 = 3$).

The national curriculum states, 'By the end of **year 4**, pupils should have memorised their multiplication tables up to and including the **12 multiplication table** and show precision and fluency in their work'. Year 4 children will be given an online multiplication test and 6 seconds to answer each question. This only happens when they get enough practice! This can happen independently but works best when tested by an adult. Little and often is best!

Times Table Rockstars

In KS2, children also have access to a series of online games and challenges which help improve their speed and agility in recalling times table facts using the computer program, *Times Table Rockstars*. Teachers can set the level of challenge to match and stretch pupil ability and may set homework tasks using the website. Children may access the site at home using their own log in and we have found that regular practice increases their progress. Please visit: <https://trockstars.com/home>

For more information on how parents/carers can support children in learning their tables, please visit the Times Table page of our website for more ideas and our our useful Parent Handbook:

[Home](#)» [Parents & Carers](#)»[Curriculum](#)»[Maths](#)»[Times tables](#)

Additional Guidance for Supporting Children with Reading

If a child is able to read with an adult for 10 minutes each day, this has a huge impact on their progress and also helps to foster a love of reading for the future. Here are some tips on how to make this valuable process a positive one for both parties:

Reading Together

Choose a quiet time

Set aside a quiet time with no distractions in a comfortable place. Ten minutes of focused time is usually long enough.

Make reading enjoyable

Make reading an enjoyable experience. Before you start the book, ask them why they chose it to read and show interest in their choice. Try to make reading a special time together. If your child is tired or reluctant, try taking it in turns with them to read a page.

Maintain the flow

If your child mispronounces a word do not interrupt immediately. Instead allow opportunity for self-correction. If your child does try to 'sound out' words, encourage the use of letter sounds rather than 'alphabet names'. Sometimes it is better to tell a child some of the trickier or unknown words to maintain the flow rather than insisting on trying to build them all up from the sounds of the letters.

Be positive

If your child says something nearly right to start with that is fine. Rather than correcting them it is a good idea to say, "Let's read it together" and point to the words as you say them. Boost your child's confidence with constant praise for even the smallest achievement.

Success is the key

Parents anxious for a child to progress can mistakenly give a child a book that is too difficult. Sadly, this can have the opposite effect to the one they are wanting. Until your child has built up his or her confidence, it is better to keep to books which are within their comfort range. Struggling with a book with many unknown words is pointless. Flow is lost, text cannot be understood and children can easily become reluctant readers. Your child should be bringing home books at the right level with guidance from their teacher. If your child is interested in more challenging books then this is something you could read to them, taking time to develop their *comprehension skills*, as per below.

Frequency of reading

Try to read with your child on most school days. 'Little and often' is best and if you are able to do this it will have a very positive impact on their progress.

Communicate with the School

Your child will most likely have a reading diary from school. Try to communicate regularly with positive comments and any concerns. Your child will then know that you are interested in their progress and that you value reading. Teachers value any information you are able to give about pupils' reading as there is only limited time available to hear individual readers each week.

Developing comprehension skills

There is more to being a good reader than just being able to read the words accurately. It is just as important for a child to be able to understand what has been read. Always talk to your child about the book as you are reading eg about what is happening in the pictures, what the characters are like and how they are feeling, how they think the story will end and which is their favourite part. You will then be able to see how well they have understood and will help them to develop good comprehension skills. In addition, as children build their vocabulary, they may not always understand the meaning of a word which they have read. If you come across a more complicated word when you are reading, ask your child if they know what it means. If they know the word then they will be able to practice explaining the meaning and if they do not you will be able to teach them something new!

Independent Readers

As children make progress in their reading they will be able to read books independently and this should be encouraged. Children are rewarded at school for their independent reading through the Accelerated Reader Scheme (see below) and can even become Word Millionaires when they have read over a million words! If your child is a confident reader, it is still really good practice to still hear them read from time to time. You could take it in turns to read a section of the book each, or discuss the story (as above). Older children also enjoy it when an adult has read/or is reading the same book so that you can have a conversation about it as you would do in a Book Group.

Visit the Library

Where possible, pay regular visits to the local library to foster a love of reading and gain access to a huge variety of different types of text. Our local library offers a Summer Reading Challenge which is a free and fun way to get reading during the holidays!

Variety is important

Remember children need to experience a variety of reading materials eg. picture books, hard backs, comics, magazines, poems, and information books. Older children should also be encouraged to look at wider genres (as per the National Curriculum) including poetry, myths and plays.

Accelerated Reader

At St Nicolas and St Mary CE Primary School, from Year 2 upwards, children access the Accelerated Reader Program. Accelerated Reader is an online system that helps teachers manage and monitor children's independent reading practice. With support from school staff, each child picks a book at their own level and reads it at their own pace. When finished, the child takes a short quiz on the computer.

(Passing the quiz is an indication that your child understood what was read.) Accelerated Reader gives children and teachers feedback based on the quiz results, which the teacher then uses to help each child set goals and direct ongoing reading practice.

Children using Accelerated Reader choose their own books to read, rather than having one assigned to them. This makes reading a much more enjoyable experience as they can choose books that are interesting to them. In school we celebrate AR reading success with special assemblies and rewards. Parental interest in AR and how children are doing with their independent reading has a very positive impact. For more information, please visit our website: [Home»Parents & Carers»Curriculum»Literacy](#)

Additional Guidance for Supporting Children with Writing

Writing for a Purpose

At St Nicolas and St Mary CE School, we are firm believers in the importance of writing for a real purpose. We build lots of opportunities for this into our curriculum and have seen the positive impact it has when children are writing for a specific audience or outcome eg a story competition, letter or creating booklet for an exhibition. It is fantastic if children can be encouraged to write for a purpose at home as well and some useful ideas include: keeping a diary, writing letters, postcards or emails, having a pen pal, helping to make a shopping list, writing a short story, making a comic, writing a prayer to share in assembly or entering a competition.

English Games

There are lots of games which children enjoy playing which encourage writing such as crosswords, word searches, Scrabble and Boggle. Younger children also enjoy playing 'I spy' and searching for items and writing down words as they find them.

Using different materials

Children love experimenting writing and drawing in different materials and it is fantastic if they can have access to equipment such as chalk, coloured pens and felt tips. It is also great fun to write with a stick in the sand, or mark make in a tray of shaving foam or salt! Older children also enjoy being able to write something using a tablet or computer.

Handwriting Practice

Some children may be given additional handwriting activities or tasks to support their progress in handwriting. Forming letters correctly is so important as it prepares children for joining their handwriting effectively and improves writing confidence and agility. As a school we follow the Nelson Handwriting Scheme.

English Resources

- For more information on how English can be supported at home, including useful games and resources, please see the English section of our website:
- [Home»Parents & Carers»Curriculum»English](#)