

WESTFIELD PRIMARY SCHOOL

Homework and Family Learning Policy

Review date: October 2025

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Reviewed October 2022



"Love of Learning Love of Life"

Westfield Primary's PRIDE

Positivity
Respect
Independence
Diversity
Excellence



The Department for Education trust individual schools and leaders to set the policy and expectation for homework. They understand that it is not in anyone's best interest for children to be spending inordinate amounts of time doing homework every night, and it is important children also get to do other things, such as playing outside, family time and eating together.

However, homework is an integral part of learning, beyond the chance to practice and reinforce what has been learnt in class, it is also an opportunity to develop a child's independence and perseverance.

Good homework policies focus on quality rather than quantity (avoiding excessive time requirements), making sure there is a clear purpose to any homework set.

Westfield's Homework and Family Learning Policy

We believe homework consolidates and reinforces skills, knowledge, vocabulary and understanding in Mathematics and Literacy, helps raise the level of achievement of individual pupils, provides opportunities for parents and children to work together, whilst also developing independence and perseverance.

We value the support of parents/carers and work in partnership to ensure the best outcomes for the children.

We recognise that all children need leisure time and hope that our policy reflects a balance so children can extend and consolidate their learning with parental support, and independently, while still allowing 'down time'.

Introduction

At Westfield Primary school, we believe that support from home is an important aspect of a child's education. Primary School homework is an opportunity for a shared family learning experience, which can inspire further learning and interest.

Our homework is divided into **compulsory** and optional tasks to allow the flexibility to suit each family's circumstances.

Compulsory homework consists of the activities which we consider will have the maximum impact on children's learning;

1. Reading.
2. Spelling.
3. Mathematics - time tables or practical activities

All other homework will be optional.

Aims:

Homework should:

- provide children with an opportunity to share their learning with their parents and/or other family members;
- motivate children to extend their learning and interests beyond the school day;

- promote independence and a Love of Learning to make children lifelong learners;
- allow parents, carers and the school to work in partnership for the benefit of their child;
- be an enjoyable, inspirational and stress-free experience for all concerned;
- focus on the basic skills of Reading, Writing and Mental Mathematics or application of mathematical knowledge and understanding.

Reading

Daily reading is compulsory homework for all children in the school. This reflects our belief that reading is of fundamental importance to a child's education and our desire to promote a *love of reading* in every child. This reading session should be more than just reading the print. We encourage parents and carers to share the books with their child, discussing and questioning at a level appropriate for their age and stage of development. Guidance is provided for the parents/carers of each child. As children develop, their daily reading experience will be different, but will always include an element of shared experience with an adult to ensure that there is understanding of their book as well as accurate reading. This may include a book sent home from school, or an online book, such as Bug Club and Oxford Owl (KS1).

Spelling and Phonics

Spelling is a compulsory part of our homework for every child and we expect them to be **practised at least 5 times a week for a short, sharp burst of time.** Every child in the school receives spelling/phonics for them to learn. The words sent home will generally follow a particular spelling pattern, and also Year Group specific words, taken from the Statutory Word Lists.

In addition to this, spelling errors from each child's written work may be given to them if they continue to spell them incorrectly, thus ensuring that the words they are learning are both relevant and necessary. Therefore, the number and competency of words given may vary depending on the needs of the child.

When children enter the school in Reception, our first concern is to teach them the sounds and letters which will enable them to read effectively. Thus, each child will be provided with a phonics book, with the key sounds to learn to recognise, read and write independently. Once the children are blending CVC words confidently we send home common exception words each Friday (virtually via Seesaw) for the children to practise recognising and reading. Writing is encouraged to be practised hand in hand as the children practise and build their reading skills.

Mental Mathematics Facts and Mathematics homework

Each child in the school will have Mental Maths homework appropriate to their individual needs, this may be practical tasks (lower down the school) or times tables practice (e.g. via TT Rockstars/ Seesaw). In Reception, this is likely to involve counting objects, moving on to number bonds and then the early stage of multiplication as children progress. Daily practice of these facts can enhance children's mathematical ability and increase their speed and accuracy in other areas of Maths work. Any pictures/ photos can be sent to class teachers via Seesaw if parents wish to share home learning.

As children progress through the school, the homework may consolidate class work with written activities, word problems or problem-solving activities, enabling pupils to apply their mental maths facts, as optional or compulsory homework.

Non-completion of Compulsory Homework

We hope that parents will recognise the importance of these homework tasks and will support their child by finding regular time in their daily routine to complete these activities. Where parents are unable or unwilling to support their child with daily homework at home, we will endeavour to provide time within the school day for those children, so that they are not put at a disadvantage. Due to timetable constrictions, this is likely to be during their break or lunchtime.

We hope that parents/carers will understand the benefit of these short, compulsory homework tasks and appreciate the balance the school has aimed for between compulsory and optional learning tasks.

Optional Homework/ Family Learning Sheets

Each term or half-term, the class teacher will send home a topic web, outlining all the areas they intend to cover with the class during that topic. Along with this, they will send home a family learning sheet ('Optional homework tasks'), connected to the work being covered. This will provide ideas for a variety of cross-curricular, practical homework activities, ranging from suggested places to visit and Art/D.T. projects to ideas for extending the Mathematics and Literacy work being learned. These activities can be undertaken at a time to suit the family and children can choose from the list whenever they wish to engage in a homework activity.

Again, the focus here is on Family Learning time and our aim is to provide ideas for quality educational experiences that can be enjoyed by all. For our younger children, the experiences are likely to be 'play based' and will provide a wealth of opportunities for parents and carers to develop essential language skills. Optional homework completed can be shared with the class teacher, through physically showing the teacher or letting the teacher know they have uploaded it virtually via Seesaw.

From time to time, teachers may add suggestions to the optional list, perhaps in response to something which was discussed in class, or from an idea provided by a child or parent. In these circumstances, the teacher will provide the additional tasks via Marvellous Me or Seesaw. There may also be occasional additional learning tasks set, such as a written comprehension task or maths activity, these should be brought back into school or uploaded to Seesaw when/if completed.

The School Website

Each class has a class page which has useful information for parents. To further support our children's learning, links are provided on our school website to other appropriate resources, such as links to websites and other activities.

Inclusion and Equal Opportunities

All children will have access to homework that is relevant to their current age and stage of development. In addition, we aim to provide suitable learning opportunities regardless of gender, ethnicity or home background. The flexibility of our homework programme takes account of

individual needs and of children's other interests and commitments outside of school.

The type and amount of homework which is appropriate for pupils of different ages

The recommended time allocation for homework is set out below. These are broad expectations and provide a framework for teachers, pupils and parents/carers, whilst also keeping in mind the focus on quality rather than quantity.

All timings below are approximate, remembering the focus should be on quality rather than quantity.

Compulsory		
Year R	10 mins per night	Share a book to encourage daily reading (Autumn 1 ongoing) Phonic focus (Autumn 1 & 2) A weekly reading book to practise orally blending using Fred talk and then blending independently using Fred talk. Common exception and high frequency words (Spring 1 ongoing) Practical Maths activity focus (Autumn 2 ongoing)
Years 1 and 2	20 mins a day (rotating between spelling / phonics and tables/ number bonds) 1 x maths activity per week (20 mins).	Reading (10 mins) and regular Spelling linked to phonics (set weekly to be practiced at home regularly in small amounts of time e.g. 10 mins) * Practical Maths activity linked to current term's learning.
Year 3	20- 30 mins daily	Reading and spellings daily
Year 4	20 - 30 mins daily (min)	Tables daily.

Years 5	Up to 45 mins daily min	Reading (20 minutes) spelling and times tables at least 5 times a week
Year 6		

Independent, optional family learning work - this is set $\frac{1}{2}$ termly or termly with an opportunity to share the outcomes with the whole class.

Consideration for special needs and equal opportunities

1. Some children with Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) may benefit from special tasks separate from the homework set for other children in the class.
2. It is important that they should do as much in common with other children as possible.
3. When setting homework for SEND children they may be helped through scaffolding, e.g. a specialised frame for the children to work to, typed or written instructions and enlarged sheets etc.
4. Use of a child's Provision Map in setting homework should be taken into consideration
5. Homework should be made accessible and relevant to all children regardless of ability, faith or creed.

The role of parents and carers in supporting pupils

Parents and carers should be encouraged to:

1. Provide a reasonably peaceful, suitable place in which pupils can do their homework - alone or, more often for younger children, together with an adult.
2. Make it clear to their children that they value homework and support the school in explaining how it can help their learning.
3. Encourage pupils and praise them when they have completed homework.
4. Keep to a routine.
5. Ask their child to explain what the homework is that they have to do.
6. Use the homework diary/ reading record to build up a home/school partnership. Parents and teachers can use it to write comments.
7. **Become actively involved in joint homework activities with children. These may include -**

- ✓ Listening to their child's ideas and allow them plenty of time to talk. This allows the child to think through ideas and problems and often solves concerns they may have.
- ✓ Question the child about the homework instead of providing answers.
- ✓ Provide challenges
- ✓ Talk through ideas and explain concepts.
- ✓ Give examples and suggestions.
- ✓ Set aside time to work together.

Information and feedback for pupils, parents or carers and teachers

In addition to the after school welcome meeting to prepare for the new academic year and the topic web (at the start of each new topic), which will be both applicable to Early Years/ KS1 and KS2, there will be differing arrangements for providing information and giving feedback to parents over the three key stages.

- Welcome meetings in the summer term before the new academic year explains how homework will be set, including the optional homework (family learning sheets and occasional written tasks) and what feedback can be expected.
- Topic webs at the start of each term/topic.
- A timetable indicating what homework will be set and when it needs to be completed by. It will also indicate a recommended amount of time to do it in.
- Curricular workshops and presentation evenings will happen regularly to keep parents informed e.g. ICT/ Times tables/Reading/Phonics.
- All teachers are available to discuss matters with parents after school, at a mutually convenient time.