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Committee: Pupils and Curriculum

Signed: ___M Knight_____

Review: Two years __October 2017__

Website: Yes

Heron Hill Primary School

HOMWORK POLICY

Introduction

Homework is anything 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/carers to support the children's learning. For example, parents or carers who spend time reading stories to their children before bedtime are helping with homework.

Rationale for Homework

Homework is a very important part of a child's education, and can add much to a child's development. The government made clear its commitment to homework in the 1997 White Paper 'Excellence in Schools', in which homework was described as 'an essential part of good education'. We recognise that the educational experience that any school by itself can provide is limited by the time and resources available; children can therefore benefit greatly from the complementary learning that they do at home. Indeed, we see homework as an important example of cooperation between teachers and parents/carers. One of the aims of our teaching is for children to develop as independent learners, and we believe that doing homework is one of the main ways in which children can acquire the skill of independent learning.

Homework plays a positive role in raising a child's level of attainment. However, 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 the activities of various out-of-school clubs and of other organisations that play an important part in the lives of our pupils. We are well aware that children spend more time at home than at school, and we believe that they develop their interests and skills to the full only when parents/carers encourage them to make maximum use of the opportunities available outside school.

Aims and objectives

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 cooperation between home and school in supporting each child's learning;
- to enable all aspects of the curriculum to be covered in depth;
- to provide educational experiences not possible in school;
- to consolidate and reinforce the learning done in school, and to allow children to practice skills taught in lessons;
- to help children develop good work habits for the future.

Types of Homework

Staff and pupils regard homework as an integral part of the curriculum – it is planned and prepared alongside all other programmes of learning.

We set a variety of homework activities. In Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception) and at Key Stage 1 (Years 1 and 2), we give children books to take home and read with their parents or carers. We give guidance to parents and carers on achieving the maximum benefit from this time spent reading with their child. We also ask Key Stage 1 children to learn spellings, key words or mathematical facts as part of their homework. Sometimes, we ask children to talk about a topic at home prior to studying it in school. For example, in the science topic on electricity, we ask children to find out how appliances are powered. Sometimes, we ask children to find and collect things that we then use in science and/or Design Technology (DT). Occasionally we ask children to take home work that they have started in school, when we believe that they could benefit from spending further time on it. When we ask children to study a topic, or to research a particular subject, we encourage them to use not only the school library but also the local library, as well as the internet, newspapers and other appropriate sources. Any Year 5 and Year 6 children who do not have access to the internet are welcome to attend homework club on a Monday lunchtime and use school equipment to do so.

At Key Stage 2 (Years 3-6), we continue to give children the sort of homework activities outlined above, but we expect them to do more tasks independently. We set English, mathematics and creative homework and expect the children to consolidate and reinforce their learning in school through practice at home. We also set homework as a means of helping the children to revise for end of Key Stage 2 SATs, as well as to ensure that prior learning has been understood.

Homework is marked according to the school's Feedback and Marking Policy. Homework completed well is acknowledged and praised. There may be issues arising from the work, which the teacher will follow up in lesson time and liaise with parents whenever necessary.

We recognise that children have individual learning styles, which means that some tasks can be completed in a number of different ways, while others demand a particular approach.

Amount of Homework

As they move through the school, we increase the amount of homework that we give the children. We expect children in Years 1 and 2 to spend approximately 1 hour a week doing homework, although this is mainly reading with a parent. We expect children in Years 3 and 4 to spend approximately 1 to 1 ½ hours each week on homework and children in Years 5 and 6 to spend approximately 2 ½ hours each week. (This is in line with the DCSF guidelines that were issued in 1998. Which states: Years 1 and 2 1 hour per week, Years 3 and 4 15 – 20 minutes per night and Years 5 and 6 30 minutes per night)

We give all our pupils a home/school communication book in which the homework is recorded, either by them, the teacher, or by the Teaching Assistant (TA), and in which parents/carers and teachers make any relevant comments.

Inclusion and Homework

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, and we endeavour to adapt any task set so that all children can contribute in a positive way. When setting homework to pupils with special educational needs, we take into account their specific need, levels and targets. We value and celebrate the cultural diversity of our pupils and their families, and we appreciate the enrichment that this brings.

The Role of Parents and Carers

Parents and carers have a vital role to play in their child's education, and homework is an important part of this process. We ask parents and carers to encourage their child to complete the

homework tasks that are set. We invite them to help their children as and when they feel it to be necessary, and to provide them with the sort of environment that allows children to do their best. Parents and carers 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.

We ask parents and carers to check the home/school communication book at least once a week, and to sign it as requested.

If parents and carers have any questions about homework, they should, in the first instance, contact the child's class teacher. Finally, if they wish to make a complaint about the school homework policy, or the way in which it is implemented, parents or carers should contact a member of the school's leadership team through the school office.

Use of ICT

The use of ICT and the internet has made a significant contribution to the amount of reference material available at home, and the ease and speed with which it can be accessed. However, our teachers expect their pupils to produce their own work, perhaps by editing something they have found, or by expressing it in their own words. The children are not achieving anything worthwhile by merely downloading and printing out something that has been written by somebody else.

Due to system security and compatibility, we are unable to accept homework on external drives such as data sticks, DVDs or via e-mail.

There are many websites containing highly educational material which can have a powerful effect on children's learning. We will sometimes provide information about some websites which may support the children's learning. Parents or carers are advised always to supervise their child's access to the internet.

Some of the most important educational software that we use in school can be bought by parents or carers on a home-user licence. This ensures that children are using age-appropriate software in their work at home. The school will supply interested parents or carers with details.

Monitoring and Review

A named member of staff is responsible for coordinating and monitoring the implementation of this policy. We allocate special time for this vital task. The coordinator uses this time to inspect samples of the children's work and of the teachers' planning.

It is the responsibility of our governing body to agree and then monitor the school homework policy. This is done by the Pupil's and Curriculum Committee. Parents and carers are invited to complete a questionnaire each year, and during the school's Ofsted inspection, which specifically asks about homework and our governing body pays careful consideration to any concern that is raised by any parent. Our governing body may, at any time, request from our headteacher a report on the way in which homework is organised in our school.