

Clarice Cliff Primary School
Homework Policy
October 2009

The purpose of homework

The purpose of homework is to develop an effective partnership between Clarice Cliff Primary School and parents and other carers in pursuing the aims of the school. It is also:

- consolidating and reinforcing skills and understanding, particularly in Literacy and Numeracy;
- exploiting resources for learning, of all kinds, at home;
- extending school learning, for example through additional reading;
- and encouraging pupils as they get older to develop the confidence and self discipline needed to study on their own, and preparing them for the requirements of secondary school.

In Clarice Cliff Primary School the purposes of homework change as children get older. For children in Key Stage 1, developing a partnership with parents or carers and involving them actively in children's learning is the key purpose and the activities children do at home may not be described by schools as homework. Short activities of different kinds, simple games, learning spellings and number facts and, of course, reading together provide a very important opportunity for young children to talk about what they are learning to an interested adult. They should also practise key skills in a supportive environment.

As children get older homework provides an opportunity for children to develop the skills of independent learning, and this should increasingly become its main purpose. It is important that children should gradually get into the habit of regularly devoting periods of time, which may not be long, to study on their own. By the time children reach Year 6 their homework programme should cover a wide range of tasks and curriculum content, with a regular weekly schedule. This approach will benefit their learning and also ensure that, in relation to homework as much as to other aspects, their transition to Year 7/secondary school is as smooth as possible.

Aims

Through this policy we aim to:

- ensure consistency of approach throughout the school;
- ensure progression towards independence and individual responsibility;
- ensure the needs of the individual pupil are taken into account;
- ensure parents/guardians have a clear understanding about expectations from themselves and the pupil;
- improve the quality of learning experience offered to pupils;
- extend and support the learning experience via reinforcement and revision;
- provide opportunities for parents, pupils and school to work in partnership;
- provide opportunities for parents and pupils to work together to enjoy learning experiences;
- encourage children to develop long term strategies for future needs;
- at Year 6, to prepare children for secondary transfer.

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

Again, homework does not just mean formal exercises carried out by children without help from adults. Particularly in the case of younger children, it is the involvement of parents and carers in joint activities, which can be very brief, which is most valuable in promoting children's learning. Regular reading is vital. For children in Key Stage 1 homework should very largely consist of regular reading with parents and carers, looking at books together. Reading practice and listening to others read then continues to be essential right through primary school. All primary school age children should either read to their parents or carers, listen to them reading or, if they are fluent readers, read on their own for at least 10 to 20 minutes a day. This may be done in the context of homework, for example, a six year old reading her school reading book to a parent or a ten year old reading a reference book for a history project. Or it may be done separately, parents reading stories to children or children reading out signs or notices on the way to school.

Other literacy related homework will include, of course, learning spellings and practising correct punctuation. In numeracy, homework will be in the form of number games and tasks, and more formal exercises for older children that they can do at home, involving parents or carers. There will be more substantial or more challenging activities set at the weekend for children in Key Stage 2. All these and other homework activities will be carefully designed to meet children's individual needs, including any special educational needs.

In addition to these regular activities, older children will be given some homework, gradually increasing in its demands, of other kinds. Again, this will be differentiated where appropriate to take account of individual pupils needs and might include:

- finding out information;
- reading in preparation for lessons;
- preparing oral presentations;
- more traditional written assignments.

How homework will be planned and co-ordinated so that the demands on pupils are balanced and manageable

Homework time is not meant to be for finishing off written work carried out in class. This can often place too heavy a burden on some pupils and too light a demand on others.

The precise amount of time spent on homework is much less important than the quality of tasks set and the way they are planned to support learning.

A regular pattern of homework is also important. A familiar routine will be introduced, for example, setting tables to learn on Tuesdays and spellings on Wednesdays; this is very helpful for children, parents and teachers.

Clarice Cliff Primary believes that a sensible programme of homework activities for children in

Key Stage 1 should be designed to take, on average, about 1 hour a week. At Key Stage 2 the demands should gradually increase so that by Years 5 and 6 children are spending about 30 minutes a day (two and a half hours a week) on homework.

Reception word recognition or daily reading

Years 1 and 2 1 hour/week (reading, spellings, other literacy work and number work)

Years 3 and 4 1.5 hours/week (literacy and numeracy as for Years 1 and 2 with occasional assignments in other subjects)

Years 5 and 6 30 minutes/day (regular weekly schedule with continued emphasis on literacy and numeracy but also ranging widely over the curriculum)

On days when the homework activity is something other than reading children should be encouraged, in addition, to read on their own or with others for at least 20 minutes (less for infants).

Teachers will want to allow more than one evening for some homework to be completed, for example, to allow sufficient time for information to be collected or to take account of any after school activities the children may be doing.

Special Educational Needs

Setting the right type and amount of homework for children with special educational needs is not always easy. Some children may benefit from special tasks separate from the homework set for other children in the class. On the other hand, it is important that they should do as much in common with other children as possible. Setting appropriate homework, which does not demand too much or too little of children and their parents, needs close co-ordination between class teachers, special needs co-ordinators and parents.

Tasks should:

- have a very clear focus and time-guideline;
- give plenty of opportunities for pupils to succeed;
- help develop social as well as other skills where necessary;
- be varied and not purely written assignments;
- be manageable for teachers.

Homework should not be seen as the way of attempting to get these pupils to catch up with the rest of the class.

The role of parents and carers in supporting pupils

In general terms parents and carers will be encouraged to provide:

- a reasonably peaceful, suitable place in which pupil can do their homework alone or, more often for younger children, together with an adult or help pupils attend other places where homework can be done, such as homework clubs or study support centres;
- make it clear to pupils that they value homework, and support the school in explaining how it can help their learning;
- encourage pupils and praise them when they have completed homework.

Beyond this parents and carers of younger children, in particular, will be encouraged, as far as possible, to become actively involved in joint homework activities with children.