

# Chellaston Junior School

## Homework Policy

### Introduction

Homework can be a useful way of consolidating and extending learning. It can be a regular example of home and school working together to support children's learning. In Year 6, it can also be a very useful way to introduce children to the expectations of secondary education, where homework will be a daily requirement.

Whilst we recognise that homework has an important part to play in helping children to achieve their best, CJS is not a school where homework dominates home and school life. We understand that weekends can sometimes be very busy and family time is precious.

Homework should be appropriate for the age of the child and not be too stressful or time-consuming. Children need space and time to play and the school recognises the need to achieve the right balance. We believe that homework should be enjoyable and manageable for all concerned and that if it becomes a chore, burden or source of conflict at home, it ceases to be a constructive aspect of teaching and learning.

### The purpose of Homework

Through this policy we aim to:

- establish a pattern of regular homework
- 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 of expectations from themselves and their child
- improve the quality of the learning experience offered to pupils
- extend and support the learning experience through consolidation and revision
- provide opportunities for parents and pupils to work together to enjoy learning experiences
- provide opportunities for parents, pupils and school to work in partnership
- at Year 6, to prepare children for SATs and transfer to secondary school

### Types of Homework at Chellaston Junior School

Parental surveys have demonstrated that it is difficult to meet the expectations of all parents. Some feel that we give too much homework; some parents feel we do not give enough homework. As we aim to achieve the right balance, we provide a range of homework tasks. There are daily tasks such as spellings, times tables and reading that we feel children should complete on a regular basis each week. Other homework tasks may include literacy and numeracy tasks to consolidate basic skills. We also feel it important to give children the opportunity to be more creative by giving more open-ended tasks linked to the theme for that half term. Further to recent feedback from a number of parents, creative homework, linked to the theme, will be optional.

### How to support your child at home

#### Reading

We know that children become better readers and writers if they read to their parents at home. They benefit from the extra practice and from the opportunity to enjoy the uninterrupted time and attention of their parent or carer. For home reading to be successful, parents should try to make sure that the reading sessions are always enjoyable. The following guidelines may be helpful:

- Choose a time each day when you can be with your child on your own – possibly just before bedtime when you can sit comfortably together on the bed or settee, making the time special.
- Never allow tension to creep in.
- Make sure the books are not too difficult or the child will become frustrated and give up. (Neither should they be too easy as there is no challenge and little progress will be made)
- At the start of each session and especially at the start of a new book you should read aloud for a few minutes to capture and stimulate the child’s interest and imagination. Always retell the story so far.
- Never allow your child to struggle for long over words they do not know or they lose track of the story.
- Correct mistakes gently and praise every session
- At the end of the session look at the words that were wrong or difficult together. Split the word up e.g. con/ver/sa/tion then build it together and get your child to say it.
- If the word is irregular (doesn’t conform to the normal rules) e.g. though, rough etc, it must be learned and sight-read i.e. recognised on sight. Make a list of all these words and then during each session get your child to read the words. Tick them off as your child succeeds and keep the words until you are sure that they are known.
- Make sure your child understands the meaning of the words they are reading.
- Occasionally read the book aloud at the same time as the child so they learn to read with expression and see where and when to pause at punctuation marks, full stops, commas etc.
- Please sign the Reading Record to show that you have read with your child at home.

## Spelling

### What are the expectations for spelling?

The new National Curriculum sets out key words that pupils should be able to spell at Year 2, Year 3/4 and Year 5/6. These lists will be covered in school and children will be expected to try and use them correctly in their writing. We will try to teach the words in small chunks, rather than learn the whole list at one time. The lists will be on the school website and will also be copied out to all parents. The new Curriculum is a clear step up and there will be many words from the appropriate list that present a real challenge to most pupils of that age group. Indeed, in the short term, it may seem that pupils are practising words that are expected for younger children, but this is nothing to worry about, as we are all implementing a new system and filling in the gaps that are bound to be evident.

### How do we teach spelling in school?

We use a planning resource that has broken down the words into a termly and weekly focus. Weekly lessons will involve pupils working on the key words, while investigating spelling patterns and rules and using various strategies and activities to help them achieve success. While it is important to learn spellings, the main focus is to ensure that pupils use their spelling knowledge in their writing. Pupils will be encouraged to use the words of that week or term in their writing and show that they understand the meaning of the word by using it and linking the word with the correct grammatical use. Pupils are also expected to have a range of strategies to attempt the spelling of new words and will be taught groups of words that follow certain patterns. Pupils will be encouraged to build up their own lists of words that they find tricky and think about how they can break the word down and use their words skills to spell a word correctly. Pupils will regularly revise previous words, learn new words or patterns, practise spellings and apply the words to show they understand the meaning. Teachers will assess pupils in spelling on a regular basis, through spelling activities and working with their spelling partner (peer assessment).

## **Initial Assessment**

Children will be given an assessment of 20 words taken from the list of spellings. The assessment will be consistent across each year group. This will then inform teacher assessment and determine which group of weekly spellings to give each child.

### **How will we “test” spellings?**

During each week, pupils will be given a list of words to learn. There will also be a spelling activity related to the list to help pupils learn the spelling and understand the meaning. Pupils will have an informal test to check their understanding. In Year 5 and 6 pupils will have spelling partners to test each other and undertake “peer assessment”. The teacher will monitor the outcomes of the test and then plan further spelling work as appropriate. In Year 3 and 4, school staff will oversee the assessment of spelling, with pupils in Year 4 being trained to be spelling partners later in the year.

### **How can parents support spelling at home?**

Parents are welcome to support their child by practising and using the key Y3/4 or Y5/6 words at home, but please do not put too much pressure on your child. The weekly list of spellings given by the teacher will help tackle the list in smaller chunks. The weekly list will be between 5 and 15 words, depending on the age and ability of the child. Parents are reminded that pupils will be expected not only to spell the word correctly but also use the word in sentences to reflect the meaning. The spellings will be given to the child, recorded in the home/school diary, with a date when given and a date for completion. As these words evolve through the teaching during that week, they may be different for different classes and groups across the school. The weekly lists will therefore not be uploaded on to the website, but given to the child. Each class will ensure that all children have access to the spelling lists in the classroom. The lists of words will be taken from the Y2, Y3/4 or Y5/6 lists, with spelling lists also taken from other spelling resources. The teachers will match the relevant spelling list to the pattern/rule covered in lessons.

### **Multiplication Facts or “Times Tables”**

The New Mathematics Curriculum states that children should know all their times tables confidently by the end of Year 4. They should be able to answer random questions at reasonable speed.

There are a number of games and websites to help your child learn their times tables and CDs to sing or chant along to. Chanting times tables is a really good way to learn them as well as asking random questions. This activity is best done in short bursts. We really appreciate your support at home to help your child learn their times tables. The following websites may be useful:

[www.topmarks.co.uk](http://www.topmarks.co.uk)

[www.mad4maths.com](http://www.mad4maths.com)

[www.woodlands-junior.kent.sch.uk](http://www.woodlands-junior.kent.sch.uk)

### **Literacy or Numeracy**

Literacy tasks will focus on Handwriting where needed, Spelling, Grammar and Punctuation; Numeracy tasks will mainly focus on consolidating methods for mental and written calculations, while giving some opportunity for applying these skills to answer questions and solve problems. There may also be activities that involve pupils and parents playing a maths game together. We will also use Education City in Y3, 4 and 5, or other online resources, to provide some activities for children in Literacy or Numeracy. In Year 6, there will be specific revision tasks and work to prepare the children for the SATs.

## Theme-Based Homework

Once each half term, children will be given the opportunity to complete an OPTIONAL research-based homework. This is aimed at providing opportunities to be creative, develop further independence, use the internet effectively and present work in a variety of ways. This work will link to the skills and knowledge covered in that theme and may be displayed in the classroom. Children may complete this task at any time during that half term and are expected to complete the majority of this independently, with a little support from parents where needed. While teachers will recognise the efforts and creativity of this homework, by giving team points and displaying the work, the school will not nominate the child for “Pupil of the Week” for Theme-Based Homework. In this way, the task does not become competitive, with children or parents feeling under pressure to produce over-complicated work. Rather, any contributions from pupils will be recognised by forming part of the display in the class. Children will not be expected to complete this in a certain book, but may present the work in the way they choose.

### Homework Tasks and Time Allocations

Year Group	Homework Tasks	Time/Details
Year 3 and Year 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading</li> <li>• Times Tables</li> <li>• Spelling</li> <li>• Literacy or Numeracy</li> <li>• Education City</li> <li>• Theme Homework (OPTIONAL)</li> </ul>	<p>5-10 minutes at least 4 times per week                      5-10 minutes at least 4 times per week                      5-10 minutes at least 4 times per week                      1 piece of Literacy or Numeracy homework, to be given out towards the end of the week and to be completed within 7 days. (About 30 minutes maximum.)</p> <p>Tasks will be set from Education City on a regular basis.                      Each half term, the pupils will be encouraged to undertake some independent research, relating to the skills of the theme.</p>
Year 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading</li> <li>• Times Tables</li> <li>• Spelling</li> <li>• Literacy</li> <li>• Numeracy</li> <li>• Education City</li> <li>• Theme Homework (OPTIONAL)</li> </ul>	<p>5-10 at least 4 times per week                      5-10 minutes at least 4 times per week                      5-10 minutes at least 4 times per week                      1 piece of Literacy homework, to be given out during the week and to be completed the following week, within 5 days. (About 30 minutes maximum.)</p> <p>1 piece of Numeracy homework to be given out during the week and be completed the following week, within 5 days (About 30 minutes maximum.)</p> <p>Some Education City homework relating to Literacy or Numeracy will be set.                      Each half term, the pupils will be encouraged to undertake some independent research, relating to the skills of the theme.</p>
Year 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading</li> <li>• Times Tables</li> <li>• Spelling</li> <li>• Literacy</li> <li>• Numeracy</li> <li>• Theme Homework (OPTIONAL)</li> <li>• SATs Revision</li> </ul>	<p>5-10 minutes at least 4 times per week                      5-10 minutes at least 4 times per week                      5-10 minutes at least 4 times per week                      1 piece of Literacy homework, to be given out during the week and to be completed within 5 days. (About 45 minutes maximum.)</p> <p>1 piece of Numeracy homework to be given out during the week and be completed within 5 days (About 45 minutes maximum.)</p> <p>Each half term, the pupils will be encouraged to undertake some independent research, relating to the skills of the theme.                      In Year 6 pupils may get additional work to help them prepare for SATs</p>

## **Inclusion**

We aim to meet the needs of all pupils. Therefore, some children may benefit from tasks which are more suited to their ability, instead of the homework set for other children. This approach gives all pupils plenty of opportunities to succeed, or help develop social skills. However, we will try to keep all pupils integrated and included in the homework for the rest of the class where appropriate.

## **The Role of the School**

The school will ensure that:

- tasks set are reasonable and matched to the pupils' needs
- regular patterns of homework are established
- pupils are clear about the tasks which they are expected to complete
- sufficient time is allowed for information to be collected and tasks to be completed
- staff acknowledge completed homework, which may include self or peer marking as part of the learning process
- staff support and listen to parents who ask for our help
- there are systems in place in each classroom to ensure that staff are alerted if parents have written in the home-school diaries
- children are rewarded for their effort in completing homework tasks, with team points, stickers etc
- staff in the same year group work together to ensure that there is a consistent approach

## **The Role of Parents**

It is expected that parents will support their children:

- by taking an active interest in their child's homework
- by encouraging them and praising their efforts
- by supporting them in particular tasks
- by helping them to devise strategies for remembering facts
- by supervising and enabling them to complete tasks
- by keeping in touch with the class teacher through the Home/School Diary
- by reminding them to hand in their homework on time
- by noting when a reasonable amount of time has been spent on a homework task and making the decision to stop, if necessary, before completion (and informing the class teacher of this decision)

## **Support/Sanctions**

The school expect that parents support by ensuring that children complete the homework set and return to school by the specified date. This is in line with the commitment included in the Home/School Agreement. If a child does not complete and return homework, the school may ask that the child completes the homework at homework club during the lunchtime. Failure to complete homework, unless with very good reason, may result in a child receiving a yellow card.

If there is not the evidence in the Reading Record that a child is reading at home 4 times per week, staff may ask the child to go to Reading Club, which lasts for 15 minutes at a lunchtime.

## **School Holidays**

While we encourage parents to continue learning at home during holidays with regular reading and practice of times tables, we recognise that family time during the school holidays is very important and therefore at CJS we do not, in general, set specific homework over the school holidays. We recognise that there are many family activities and trips which are very educational and help children to learn a great deal about life, without the need for formal

homework. However, children in Year 6 will be asked to complete activities during the Easter holidays to help them prepare for the SATs in May.

### **Holidays during Term Time**

We strongly advise that parents do not take holidays in term time and can only authorise such absence in exceptional circumstances. If parents take their child out of school for holiday during term time, against the advice of the school, we do not set specific homework for that child for the duration of the absence, but would advise that parents continue to read, practice times tables and complete a holiday journal.

### **Flexibility**

Life in a junior school does not always conform to strict timetables. There will be certain occasions and weeks where school activities mean that homework may not be given exactly according to the timetable. Sports Days, Fundraising Days and more creative days in school may be structured slightly differently and it is important to get the balance between work and fun. However, we aim to keep to the homework timetable for most weeks of the school year.

### **Communication**

Children are expected to keep a record of results of spelling tests, times tables and arithmetic tests in the back of their Home/School Diary. Details of each week's homework expectations will be written in each child's home/school diary. Information regarding homework will include:

- The week the task was set
- The deadline for the task to be completed and returned to school
- Details of what the task entails and some guidance for parents

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