

St. Thomas of Canterbury Church of England Junior School



“Realising the potential of every child within a caring, Christian community”

Homework Policy

Revised May 2021

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Introduction – The Purpose of Homework?

Homework at St Thomas of Canterbury C of E Junior School refers to any activity undertaken by children that enhances their learning outside of school hours. It can take many forms, discussing a current topic of study or reading the instructions for a game is as valid a homework exercise as completing worksheets or producing a piece of written work. Our website provides further up to date guidance and suggested activities.

As such, 'homework' remains an essential part of school life at St Thomas of Canterbury C of E Junior School, providing an opportunity for effective partnership between parents/carers and the school. It also encourages the consolidation of key skills, particularly in English and Maths. Homework also promotes the personal skills of organisation and independent learning, which are in keeping with the school's Character Education Policy.

Rationale

We believe that in addition to children learning whilst in school, they also have, wide, varied and valuable opportunities to engage in learning experiences beyond the classroom, often facilitated by parents and carers. As a school we feel it is important that increasing acknowledgement is given to the role of parents as co-educators of their children. The vast majority of parents want their children to do well at school and have tried to help at home, but all too frequently have been frustrated by either not knowing what to do, or how to help.

St. Thomas of Canterbury C of E Junior School is aware of the base of goodwill amongst many homes, and has sought, through a range of practices, to enable parents to help their children at home.

Homework and home learning can provide an excellent opportunity for parents to become actively involved in their children's learning, giving them a window into school life and work. Increasing recognition has been given to the role of parents as life long enduring educators of their children and schools can do a great deal to help to involve parents in homework and home learning by:

- ✓ being aware of, and sensitive towards, children's home backgrounds and taking these into account in shaping both the nature of homework tasks and the resources that are required for their completion;
- ✓ providing a positive approach and constructive alternatives for children who need special help to enable them to work well.

Aims and Objectives

Through this policy we aim to:

- ✎ Ensure that parents are clear about what their child is expected to do.
- ✎ Ensure consistency of approach throughout the school.
- ✎ To use homework as a tool to help continue to raise standards of achievement.
- ✎ Improve the quality of the learning experience offered to children and to extend it beyond the classroom environment.
- ✎ Provide opportunities for parents, children and the school to work together in partnership in relation to children's learning.
- ✎ Encourage children and their parents to share and enjoy learning experiences.
- ✎ Reinforce work covered in class by providing further opportunities for individual learning.
- ✎ To practise or consolidate basic skills and knowledge, especially in Mathematics and English.
- ✎ Encourage children to develop the responsibility, confidence and self discipline needed to study independently.
- ✎ To steadily prepare all children for the transfer from Year 6 to secondary school.

Responsibilities

Teachers, pupils and parents all hold a responsibility in ensuring homework is meaningful and moves the learning forward.

Pupils will:

- Read regularly, neatly recording their views and opinions about what they have read in a well-kept and highly valued school homework diary;
- Practise mental maths skills, especially times tables and also learn key spellings in order to apply these consistently and accurately to their maths and writing;
- Undertake independent research projects to further explore areas of interest.

Teachers should provide pupils with the following:

- Two books appropriate for the pupils' ability: A library book (for reading) and a 'coloured' scheme book (to particularly support writing and reading comprehension);
- A homework diary that is used to support and encourage communication between home and school;
- Activities to practise and consolidate key maths skills (with a focus on times tables) differentiated to suit the abilities of the pupils and the opportunity to apply these skills in lessons;
- Spellings to practise and learn from (differentiated to suit the abilities of the child) and the opportunity to apply these skills in lessons.

Teachers will:

- Provide parents with updates via pupils' homework diaries at least once a week;
- Meet with parents, where necessary, to discuss homework arrangements and to provide feedback and support;
- Suggest research projects at the start of each term/half term, linked to the curriculum for the academic year (also available on the website);
- Value homework undertaken by pupils.

Parents will:

- Read regularly with their child/children;
- Provide feedback in the school homework diary at least once a week;
- Practise spellings and mental maths skills (especially times tables) with their child/children;
- Approach class teachers if they have any queries regarding homework;
- Support the completion of research projects and topic based activities at home for sharing in school;
- Give appropriate praise and recognition for pupils' efforts.

Organisation and Implementation

In **Key Stage 2** children are set English and Maths homework every week. In Year 5 and 6 this may also include some weekly homework for Science or another foundation subject. Children will also be set spellings to learn based around the '**Support for Spelling**' document and guidance. The amount of spellings will be determined by the ability and need of the child. All spellings will be appropriate to the needs of the child. All children are expected to read regularly within Key Stage 2 and record this in their Homework Diaries. Homework may be used to consolidate work undertaken within the curriculum theme/ topic.



Recommended Time Allocation

Homework should never be too onerous nor should it ever create undue stress within the child's family. If parents have concerns they should not hesitate to contact the school. Normally there will be reasonable and sufficient time allocated to the completion of homework tasks, except where daily practise is to be encouraged, e.g. reading, spelling and times tables. We expect all children to engage in and complete homework tasks which are set in line with the Government recommendations below.

The Government's recommended time allocation, based on current good practice is set out in '**Homework: Guidelines for Primary Schools and Secondary Schools**', as follows:

Year 3 and 4 1.5 hours per week (English and Mathematics as for Key Stage 1, with occasional assignments in other areas)

Year 5 and 6 30 minutes per day (regular weekly schedule with continued emphasis on English and Mathematics, but also ranging widely over the curriculum)

NB: The daily reading recommended by the Government for all primary children can be done as part of the homework.

Homework Tasks

Listed below, for each phase of St. Thomas of Canterbury C of E Junior School, are a number of example tasks and activities that might be given as homework. This is by no means an exhaustive list and is open to constant change, although many of these tasks and activities will be used on a regular basis. Homework activities will change to meet the needs of the children involved and activities that might be occurring in class. All homework tasks and activities will have a clear purpose and assist children in the process of their academic development.

Lower School (Year 3 and 4)

These may include:

- Daily reading with regular comments and/or signature in the school homework diary (at least three times a week);
- Weekly spellings;
- English based activities;
- Mathematics activities including times tables and mental maths practice;
- Completion of topic based activities at home to be shared in school (non-compulsory);
- Some web based activities that support the above.

Upper School (Year 5 and 6)

They may include:

- Daily reading and reading aloud to an adult with regular comments and/or signature in the school homework diary (at least three times a week);
- Learning weekly spellings and/or punctuation and grammar conventions;
- One piece of written/recorded Maths and English homework to be handed in each week.

This could include:

- ‘Talk Homework’ that involves discussing the focus for a future piece of writing;
- Reading comprehension activities;
- Planning pieces of writing;
- Planning/researching topic based activities at home to be shared in school;
- Mathematics activities including times tables and mental maths practice;
- Appropriate revision materials in preparation for end of Key Stage 2 tests.

Homework at St. Thomas of Canterbury C of E Junior School is not intended to be used for the purposes of assessment or as a substitute for teaching any of the strategies it seeks to consolidate.

Inclusion (Pupils with Differing Needs)

As stated within the responsibilities of teachers, homework will be appropriately differentiated to meet the needs of the children. This includes adapting homework where necessary for children with barriers to their learning or who excel in Maths and English (academically more able) and children for who English is an additional language (EAL).

This may mean, for example, that a carefully planned worksheet is sent home to assist some pupils to consolidate the learning objective for that week. This would then be marked with the teacher, in class, as part of the learning experience.

Class teachers will ensure that homework is set consistently across the school and age phases and is purposeful with links to the current curriculum being taught. Reward and

praise will be given to children who regularly complete homework tasks and all homework will be marked/ acknowledged when necessary and verbal feedback given to children.

Disability Equality Scheme

At St. Thomas of Canterbury Church of England (VA) Junior School we recognise our duties and responsibilities under the Disability Discrimination Act as outlined in our Disability Equality Scheme and Action Plan. (December 2007)

It is our aim that through specific and accurate planning, resource allocation, differentiated teaching and use of adult intervention and support (where necessary), that every child, irrespective of disability, will have full access to the curriculum and feel and be enabled to participate actively in developing to their full potential, developing their skills, knowledge and understanding. We will ensure that all 'reasonable adjustments' are made to help both children and adults with identified special needs and disabilities to participate in the completion of homework.

Information and Involvement of Parents / Carers

Parents are expected to support the school's policy of homework and ensure homework is completed by their child and handed in on the correct day. Parents who fail to uphold this policy and the home school agreement dealing with homework will be contacted by the classteacher and reminded that their support is of paramount importance in their child's progress and attainment. Failure to improve the regularity of homework will result in the Headteacher contacting the parents if it is deemed necessary/appropriate.

Parents and carers will also be asked to:

- Support the school by ensuring that their child attempts the homework.
- Provide a suitable place for their child to carry out their homework.
- Encourage and praise their child when they have completed their homework.
- Become actively involved and support their child with homework activities.
- Make it clear that they value homework and they support the school by explaining how it can help learning.

We are keen for parents to support and help their children with homework. We take the view that children are likely to get more out of an activity if parents get involved as long as they do not take over too much. However, there are times when we will want to see what children can do on their own. It is particularly important, as they get older, for children to become increasingly independent in their learning.

ICT

Children may, if they wish, choose to complete their homework using ICT. Classteachers may arrange to accept homework via Google Classrooms or another school based learning platform.

Monitoring and Evaluation (including role of Governors)

The Governing Body will check the compliance of the policy by speaking to members of the Senior Leadership Team, classteachers, parents and children. Parent Governors will be able to monitor through the homework their children receive as well as feedback comments and observations from other parents around the school as appropriate.

The implementation of this policy is primarily the responsibility of the classteacher. Its application and how applicable it remains will be monitored by the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and School Development Committee.

Assessment and Record Keeping

It is the responsibility of the classteacher to assess the quality of the children's homework and keep a record of completed homework. All children failing to hand their homework in on time will be recorded by the classteacher. All homework set will have a clear completion and hand in date. If a child hands in poor quality homework this will also be recorded by the classteacher and parents will be spoken to if both issues persist.

Children producing homework that is of a poor quality, late or not handed in at all will be required to complete the work in their own time during school. This may mean they miss their break time or some of their lunchtime. In Upper School this will be on a specific day supervised by a member of staff. It is an expectation that homework is completed at home every week and handed in on time.

Review

This policy will be reviewed at least every 3 years, or as new guidance becomes available to schools from the Local Authority or Department for Education (DfE).

Policy reviewed **May 2021**

Next policy review date **May 2024**