



Homework Policy

At Thorndown, we value and respect everyone in our community and work as a team to:

- Provide learning experiences which support and inspire high achievement for all
- Ensure a caring, safe and welcoming environment
- Promote co-operative and responsible attitudes to make a positive contribution
- Actively encourage independence and confidence to thrive in a changing world

“Happy, Healthy, High Achievers”

Approved at L&D committee meeting on: 12 November 2015

Review Period: 1 year in the first instance

Date for next review: Autumn 2016

HOMWORK POLICY

Aims and Objectives

Many children have busy extra-curricular lives and they should also have time to relax and time to play. We understand that for some children there will be circumstances, which on occasion, may prevent them from completing their homework. However, we consider homework to be important and aim:

- To use homework to aid pre-learning in the classroom before a lesson or topic.
- To help to raise standards of academic achievement throughout the school.
- To provide children with further opportunities, either independently or in the company of their parents/carers, to consolidate, reinforce and/or extend knowledge, skills and understanding.
- To encourage children to develop the confidence and self-discipline needed to study on their own and to foster a positive attitude towards learning out of school.
- To help develop an effective partnership between home and school, and to involve parents in their children's learning.

What is homework and why do we have it?

Homework refers to any learning activity which children are asked to do outside their normal school day, either on their own or in the company of their parents or carers. It can make a valuable contribution to learning when:

- Tasks are carefully planned and structured to support progression in learning, as part of a school's schemes of work. (A newsletter is provided at the beginning of each term to inform parents/carers of the work that the children will be covering.)
- There is a regular programme so that everyone: teachers, children and parents or carers know what to expect each week.
- Pupils and parents or carers are very clear about what they need to do and by when.
- Parents and carers are treated as partners in their children's learning.

The purposes of homework change as the 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. Short activities of different kinds: simple games, learning phonics/spellings and reading together provide a very important opportunity for young children to talk about what they are learning to an interested adult, and to practise key skills in a supportive environment. As far as possible, the activities are adapted for a variety of abilities.

As children get older, homework provides an opportunity for them to develop the skills of independent learning. 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 the children reach Year 6, their homework programme will 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, their transition to Year 7 at secondary school is as smooth as possible.

Organisation across the school

Beyond the activities which the class teacher organises for the children in his/her care, we would always encourage children to read, or to be read to, for 10-20 minutes per night. In addition, pupils are encouraged to access Skoolbo on a regular basis, as it has proved very effective in improving pupils' maths and English skills, especially mental maths.

Foundation Stage

Class teachers provide parents and carers with details of the week's learning activities so that pupils can extend and develop this learning at home. Such examples are: collecting a variety of healthy foods, counting pieces of fruit or looking for objects around the house beginning with a given letter. In school, pupils are also encouraged to share and celebrate their out of school achievements.

Year 1 and Year 2 (Approximately 20 minutes per task)

Pupils are given a selection of homework activities to choose from every half term. These activities are designed to take no more than 20 minutes and pupils are expected to complete at least ONE activity. If children wish to, they can complete more than one. At the end of the half term, pupils bring in their activities and projects. Homework is then shared with the teacher and class during a special show and tell session.

Year 3 and Year 4 (Approximately 20 minutes per day)

Children are expected to read regularly for about 20 minutes at least 4 times a week and should look at their spellings, which are in the back of the Home School Book. Pupils undertake weekly times table tests are therefore are expected to practise their times tables and corresponding division facts up to 12x 12. Regular use of Skoolbo will help with this.

Pupils are also given a selection of homework activities to choose from every half term. These activities are designed to take a minimum of 60 minutes each and pupils are expected to complete at least TWO activities. At the end of the half term, pupils bring in their activities and projects. Homework is then shared with the teacher and class during a special show and tell session. Marking will take the form of a certificate and/or verbal feedback from the teacher and other pupils in their class

Year 5 and Year 6 (Approximately 20 minutes per day)

Children are given half-termly projects to research and complete. The tasks are based on the learning for that period of time and include English, Maths, Art, DT and Topic. The tasks are designed to encourage independent learning and to foster good work management skills in preparation for secondary school life. Marking will take the form of a certificate and/or verbal feedback from the teacher and other pupils in their class.

Weekly homework tasks are in addition to the projects and include reading (20 minutes at least 4 times a week), Skoolbo and spellings.

THE ROLE OF THE TEACHER

1. The class teachers will provide regular, manageable activities for the children, with clear guidance about what is expected and when it should be completed.
2. Teachers will keep a summary record of the children's success at completing the tasks, which will be fed back to parents at the parent/teacher interviews (autumn and spring terms) and in the Annual Reports (summer term).
3. As far as possible, the teacher will set homework which he/she feels is appropriate to the needs and abilities of the children. All children, including those with special educational needs, should be set homework which gives them the opportunity to succeed. Tasks should be varied and not solely written assignments.
4. Positive celebration of good effort, rather than punishment for poor effort, forms the basis of teachers' responses to homework.
5. Where no homework has been completed over a sustained period, the teacher will contact the parent/carer to discuss the matter.

THE ROLE OF THE PARENT/CARER

1. Parents/carers should make it clear to the children that they value homework and support the school by explaining how it can help their learning.
2. The parents/carers will prompt the children to complete any homework which may have been set.
3. Where possible, parents/carers may choose to support their children in the completion of the tasks and learn more about their progress.
4. Parents/carers are expected to provide the children with a quiet area to complete their homework, away from the distractions of the TV or younger siblings.
5. When children ask for support to complete their homework, parents/carers should be careful to ensure that learning of skills and/or knowledge is not compromised by giving too much help.
6. Encourage children and praise them when they have completed their homework.
7. If, for any reason, homework activities become too difficult for the child to complete, or cause negative feelings, distress or unhappiness, parents/carers should contact the class teacher to discuss the matter before attempting to resume the work.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES, INCLUDING CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

1. At all times, each child's age, ability, cultural background or any special social arrangements will be taken into consideration when homework is set.
2. The same homework will be set for both girls and boys.
3. Particular care will be given to adapting homework tasks to suit individual special educational needs.
4. Opportunity for investigations to stretch and/or inspire higher attaining pupils will be provided. This work will frequently be more open-ended in style and involve the children analysing or synthesising different sources of information.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

1. Care should be taken to mention any potential health and safety risks when setting homework. For example, a reminder will be given about the dangers of mains electricity when setting the task of looking for sources of energy in the home.
2. Children should understand that they are not expected to undertake outdoor activities without the prior knowledge and/or supervision of a parent/carer.
3. Children should not be tackling unreasonable amounts of homework. The school considers the time allocations indicated previously as reasonable.

EXCEPTIONS TO THIS POLICY

If parents/carers decide to arrange for their annual holiday during term time, homework in the form of missed lessons **will not be provided**. Similarly, when children are unwell and unable to attend school, the class teachers will assume that they need to rest to recover from their illness and homework will not be given. In the final analysis, the Headteacher will use his/her discretion.