



## Home Learning Policy

This policy represents the agreed principles for the provision of Home Learning within Shepherd Primary School. This policy has been agreed by Teachers representing the Foundation Stage, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 and the Headteacher.

### School aims

Our school community (children, staff, parents and governors) aims to:

- Learn and grow together within a safe, caring and happy environment;
- Continually encourage achievement in all aspects of school life;
- Motivate all children with a broad and challenging curriculum;
- Treat everyone with honesty and respect;
- Ensure opportunities for all.

### Introduction

Home Learning is anything children do outside the normal school day that contributes to their learning, in response to guidance from the school. Home Learning encompasses a whole variety of activities instigated by teachers and parents to support the children's learning. For example, parents who spend time reading stories to their children before bedtime are helping with Home Learning.

### Rationale for Home Learning

Home Learning 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 Home Learning in the 1997 White Paper 'Excellence in Schools', in which Home Learning 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 Home Learning as an important example of cooperation between teachers and parents. One of the aims of our teaching is for children to develop as independent learners, and we believe that doing Home Learning is one of the main ways in which children can acquire the skill of independent learning.

Home Learning 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 Home Learning 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 encourage them to make maximum use of the opportunities available outside school.

## **Aims and objectives**

The aims and objectives of Home Learning 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 sufficient 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 Home Learning**

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

We set a variety of Home Learning activities. In the Foundation Stage and at Key Stage 1, we give children books to take home and read with their parents. We give guidance to parents on achieving the maximum benefit from this time spent reading with their child. We also ask Key Stage 1 children to learn spellings or times tables as part of their Home Learning and to complete Mathematics activities and games.

Sometimes, we ask children to talk about a topic at home prior to studying it in school. For example, in the history topic on toys, we ask children to find out what toys were popular when their grandparents were young, and, if possible, to bring examples into school to show the other children. When we ask children to study a topic, prepare a project 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.

In Key Stage 2, we continue to give children the sort of Home Learning activities outlined above but we expect them to do more tasks independently. We set English and Mathematics Home Learning routinely each week, and we expect the children to consolidate and reinforce the learning done in school through practice at home. We also set Home Learning as a means of helping the children to revise for examinations, as well as to ensure that prior learning has been understood.

Home Learning is marked according to the general school marking policy. Home Learning completed well is acknowledged and praised. There may be issues arising from the work, which the teacher will follow up in lesson time.

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 Home Learning**

As pupils move through the school, we increase the amount of Home Learning that we give the children. We expect children in Key Stage 1 to spend approximately one hour a week doing Home Learning, although this may well include reading with a parent. We expect children in Years 3 and 4 to spend approximately 15–20 minutes per night on Home Learning, and children in Years 5 and 6 to spend approximately 30 minutes per night. This is in line with the DfES guidelines that were issued in 1998. Home Learning will be set by the class teacher and the children will have at least two nights to complete it.

## **Inclusion and Home Learning**

We set Home Learning 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 Home Learning to pupils who are named on the register of special needs, we refer to those pupils' Individual Provision Plans (IPPs). We also take account of those children on the Most Able Register. 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**

Home Learning Guidance will be given to parents at the start of each academic year, outlining the Home Learning expectations for that academic year. A copy of this guidance will be placed in each child's Home Learning Journal.

Parents have a vital role to play in their child's education, and Home Learning is an important part of this process. We ask parents to encourage their child to complete the Home Learning 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 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 to check their child is completing their Home Learning on time and to sign any home/school record as requested.

The expectation is that Home Learning is completed at home. However we understand that on some occasions this may be difficult. If a child does not complete their weekly Home Learning, they will be given an opportunity to attend our weekly lunchtime Home Learning Club – this will be run by a member of the Senior Leadership Team. Each child will be given support to complete their work and will attend the club for no longer than 15 minutes - we acknowledge that the child may not complete their work in that time.

If parents have any questions about Home Learning, they should, in the first instance, contact the child's Class Teacher. If their questions are of a more general nature, they should contact the Head Teacher.

## **Use of Computing**

The use of Computing 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.

There are many websites containing highly educational material which can have a powerful effect on children's learning. Our school website and blog provides links to the sites which will best support the children's learning. Parents are advised always to supervise their child's access to the Internet.

## **Monitoring and review**

The Key Stage Leaders and Deputy Head are responsible for coordinating and monitoring the implementation of this policy. To do this, they will inspect samples of the children's work and of the teachers' planning.

The Governing Body will monitor the implementation of the school Home Learning policy, via the School Improvement Committee. Parents complete a questionnaire during the school's Ofsted inspection, and our Governing Body pays careful consideration to any comment made by any parent. Our Governing Body may, at any time, request from our Head Teacher a report on the way in which Home Learning is organised in our school.

This policy will be reviewed in two years, or earlier if necessary.