

Home Learning at St Helen's

Developed in conjunction with 'Parents in Partnership' group
Launching September 2017



Effective Home learning – an introduction

At St Helen's Primary School we recognise that parents make an enormous contribution in supporting the education of our children. Parental encouragement is a key factor to raising attainment and fostering a love of learning.

At St Helen's we believe learning is a lifelong journey, which begins at home and is nurtured in a range of contexts and settings, including school. The most effective learning takes place in a fun, stimulating and exciting context – often through play. For example; story telling, playing games, talking with their child and by celebrating the sense of wonder in our world.

Some of the most meaningful learning experiences which take place in a young person's life come from within the home setting. These can take the form of helping on shopping trips, discussing the content of a television programme, playing a game in a local park or simply sharing a story before bedtime. We believe that these routines play as important a part in child development as formalised classroom learning.

Within this context, school homework has a role to play in supporting learning, since it gives pupils the opportunity to practice at home the tasks done in class, and helps the pupils work towards improving important skills. It also helps children to become confident and independent in their learning, which will help throughout their time at school, and in adult life.

Purposes of 'homework'

At St Helen's, we see the primary purpose of homework as the following:

- Consolidating and reinforcing skills and understanding, particularly in core areas of English and maths. This will be the main focus (in line with DfE guidance)
- Extending school learning, for example through additional reading or opportunities to explore their topic
- 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.

What we expect

When we give homework to children, we encourage children to complete it to the best of their ability but do not punish children for failing to complete homework. Rewards ~~Certificates~~ are given to children for completing homework tasks but children are not penalised for failing to hand in homework.

We do not feel compulsory homework supports families in promoting good learning behaviour. Compulsory homework can create tension within households or cause pupils to feel stress. Some families feel that it is not appropriate for their child to complete homework because they already do enough to support learning at home. Other families like the regularity and consistency of being given homework at set times.

Foundation Stage / Reception

Learning happens everywhere and in foundation stage, we like this to be captured whether it be through bringing in show and tell or recording it on a 'Wow' slip, we love to hear about it.

Each night, we appreciate reading books and key words being shared. Every term when the curriculum overview is sent home with the children there are a couple of optional home learning opportunities (including numeracy activities).

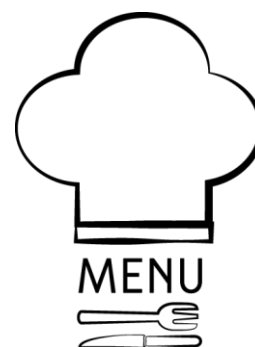
During the course of the year, in line with the rest of the school (see below) there will be three 'Learn its' – Maths facts for the children to learn each week.

Homework in Years 1-6

At St Helen's, we have decided to set homework a little like a 'menu'. We believe a balanced diet of regular home learning will be most successful and would encourage parents and children to prioritise the 'Main Event' above the 'Side orders'.

Main Event

A weekly 'main event' will be set by class teachers. This will consist of three key ingredients of home learning:



Maths – this will consist of a 'learn-it' each week. These are some key mathematical facts which we would like children to learn off by heart. There will not be a lot for children to learn each week, normally three facts each week, but if children can learn these each week from Year 1-6, they will leave St Helen's with a real agility in the core elements of maths which they can then apply in different contexts. This will fit as part of our 'Big Maths' programme which we will fully launch in September 2017.

Reading – When children are reading books on the school's reading scheme, they have a home-school record. Reading regularly and updating the reading record is expected. Then the children can be supported in changing their book and progressing through the reading scheme, finally achieving free-reader status in KS2.

All readers, whether on the reading scheme or free-reading, will benefit from 'book talk': the opportunity to read to their parents; discuss their book or exchange views; some key questioning about the book to check their understanding; talking with a sense of excitement, enquiry, discovery, joy so that books and reading are pleasurable, joyous: a hobby that children acquire as a 'life-long' pursuit that is fun!

Spelling – A good level of spelling is important for clearly communicating ideas in writing. Skills in spelling are progressive across the school and in-school learning is effectively complemented with regular practise at home. Each year group teacher will talk to the children about their spellings and will also communicate with parent about how home learning can support progress.

Words are fascinating, enormously varied and spelling words is a really creative skill. Look at words, read words, talk about words, breakdown words, create funny rhymes to remember words. Like all effective learning that has a lasting impact on children's learning, spelling needs to have a sense of excitement, joy and fascination. Children can set themselves learning challenges to make progress in class. Probably most importantly, the children can use them in writing to engage, inform and wow their readers!

Side Orders

Alongside the 'Main Event' there will be a number of optional 'Side Orders' which children can choose to work on. The teacher will communicate some ideas in Terms 1, 3 and 5 to run alongside the topic that is being studied in class. These could often be activities that children and families can do together and will aim to allow opportunities for children to really extend their learning and enthusiasm for the learning that they are doing in class.



The role of the parent and carer in supporting pupils:

In order that homework be successful in developing children's learning it is important that parents / carers make it clear to children that they value the process of homework and explain to children how it can help their education. Talking about the homework set is essential. This could take the form of the child explaining what he or she has to do to complete the homework. Equally, it could mean working with the child to complete the homework.

Parents, (particularly of younger children or children with Special Educational Needs), should support children with all homework activities. This means:

- Checking the child has remembered their homework.
- Discussing what the child has to do.
- Supporting the child with the homework itself.

Additionally, parents should try to ensure children have a suitable place to complete their homework, and encourage children with praise once they have completed homework.

How homework will be planned and co-ordinated:

Class teachers are responsible for ensuring the demands of homework are manageable and achievable for pupils.

The senior leadership team of St Helen's Primary School will take responsibility for monitoring homework across the school