

Elmwood Infant and Nursery School

Home Learning Policy

Updated Spring 2016



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Introduction

Homework is anything children do outside the normal school day that contributes to their learning and it certainly does not have to be limited to homework set by the school. It encompasses a whole variety of activities instigated by teachers and parents to support children in their learning. Parents can take an active part in enriching their child's learning at home through discussion and conversation, playing board games, visits out, reading together, writing shopping lists, cards and letters - the list is endless!

Rationale for Homework

Purposeful homework is an important part of education and can add much to a child's development. We recognise that the educational experience that a school can provide by itself is limited by the time and resources available; children can therefore benefit greatly from the complementary learning that they do at home. We see homework as an important example of cooperation between teachers and parents.

One of our teaching aims at Elmwood is for children to develop the skills to become inquisitive, independent learners and we believe that homework is one of the ways in which children can acquire these skills. Homework plays a significant role in raising a child's level of attainment and the progress made by that child as he or she moves through the school. For example, a child who reads at home on a daily basis is likely to become a confident, independent reader much more quickly than one who is not given the opportunity to read regularly at home. Equally, a child who is supported in learning their number bonds and multiplication facts at home, is generally a much more confident mathematician and able to apply their knowledge to other concepts.

While homework is important, it should not prevent children from taking part in after-school clubs and weekend activities as these play a crucial part in the lives of our pupils.

The Aims and Objectives of Homework are:

- 👉 to enable pupils to make maximum progress in their academic and social development;
- 👉 to help each pupil become an independent learner;
- 👉 to promote the partnership between home and school to provide help, support and encouragement for pupils;
- 👉 to consolidate and reinforce the learning done in school, and to allow children to practise skills taught in lessons;
- 👉 to help children develop good work habits for the future.

Types of Homework

Early Years: Nursery and Reception

For our youngest children the activities which teachers set may not be described as 'homework' but they will all support successful learning. The activities or tasks that young children bring home are designed, wherever possible, to involve some form of practical activity and with this in mind, invite parental interest and involvement.

In Reception we give children key words to learn. This practise should be fun. Practical and not a take long! 5-10 minutes daily playing a key word matching game or practising writing the words in foam, sand or bubbles is enough. Teachers/teaching support staff will check on the children's progress in learning these key words once per week in the form of an informal test in order to progress children to the next set of words.

Colour level reading books are taken home. We expect reading to take place every day and this should include:

- An adult/older sibling reading with and/or listening to their child
- Discussing characters or plot
- Asking questions
- Helping pupils to know sounds and basic punctuation.

We provide a homework exercise book so that the children may draw a picture and if appropriate write some words or a simple sentence in response to what they have read. They may make links with their own experiences, write about their favourite part of the book or describe a character.

We use 'Reading Journals' to keep a record of the books the children are reading. Parents have the opportunity to write a brief comment to the teacher after each read. This is optional but is a positive way to keep communication and encourage feedback between parents and teachers. Teachers will look at the journals once a week and respond if necessary.

Sometimes we ask children to bring things into school or find out something linked to a class topic and occasionally homework will focus on talk or a conversation e.g. Find out about animals that live in the jungle.

Year 1 and Year 2

We also ask Year 1 and Year 2 children to learn key words/phonic sounds. We expect the children to practise their words/phonic sound words but this should be fun and practical and not a take long! 5-10 minutes daily playing a key word matching game or practising writing the words in foam, sand or bubbles. Playing sorting games with real/alien words where the children are teacher and teaching their parent/carer something new may keep the task exciting! Teachers/teaching support staff will check on the children's progress in learning these key words/phonic sounds once per week in the form of an informal test in order to progress the children to the next set of words.

Colour level reading books are taken home. We expect reading to take place every day and this should include:

- An adult/older sibling reading with and/or listening to their child
- Discussing characters or plot
- Asking questions (see 'Reading Journals')
- Helping pupils to know sounds, discuss punctuation and grammar.

We provide a homework exercise book so that the children may draw a picture and write some words or a sentence in response to what they have read. They may make links with their own experiences, write about their favourite part of the book or describe a character.

We use 'Reading Journals' to keep a record of the books the children are reading. Parents have the opportunity to write a brief comment to the teacher after each read. This is optional but is a positive way to keep communication and encourage feedback between parents and teachers. Teachers will look at the journals once a week and respond if necessary.

Year 1 and Year 2 children have the opportunity to take a maths game home every week. This should be played with both adults and other siblings or family members in order to make it as fun as possible. While playing these games the children will be practising the same concepts/skills that they are learning at school.

In Year One regular homework will be set on 'Activ Learn' which direct links with the children's learning in numeracy that week. The aim is that children have the opportunity to practise and consolidate their understanding of that particular subject.

Year 1 topic based homework is set half termly which encourages the children to investigate more about a topic at home to deepen and consolidate their knowledge. Homework will be acknowledged and points calculated by class teachers. The children's achievements will be celebrated by displaying outstanding work, rewarding children with certificates and special assemblies.

Year 2 topic based homework is set weekly and is directly linked the topics of the class. When we ask children to study a topic, or to research a particular subject, we encourage them to use the library, as well as the Internet. The children should only study the topic at a level that they are confident with. For example, copying lengthy and complex literature from the internet may not be helpful or easy to take in. Handwriting practise is also given out weekly in Year 2.

On occasion we may ask children to take part in whole school project or competition. There may be occasions when we ask children to find and collect things that we will then use in science lessons, and occasionally we ask children to take work home that they have started in school.

In Year 1 children that take part in Early Literacy Support (ELS) may be asked to continue or practise an activity that they have started in their session. This is to be submitted on the next school day to their teaching assistant.

How Much Time?

As a guide, infant children should spend no longer than 20-30 minutes on each home learning task, unless it is a project or extended piece of work. Every evening, infant children should have the opportunity to read to an adult (or share a story).

We ask that parents continue to listen to their child read regularly right the way through their primary years, even if their child is a confident reader and, increasingly encourage discussions on the different aspects contained in books, such as the development of the storyline, vocabulary and issues.

The Role of Parents

Parents have a vital role to play in their child's education, and homework is an important part of this role. We have created a 'Top Homework Tips' sheet to support parents when helping with home learning tasks. Parents are also asked to support children with homework in the following ways:

- help your child when you feel it is necessary, and provide him/her with the sort of environment that will encourage them to do their best (turn the television off, negotiate a time and place for completing homework);
- make it clear to your child how important homework is and support the school in explaining how it can help their learning;
- praise your child and encourage him/her to take pride in their homework;
- encourage your child - whatever their age, to read as much and as widely as possible;
- ensure reading journals/homework exercise book are filled in as appropriate;
- communicate any difficulties with the class teacher;
- support children in ensuring homework is handed in on time.

Use of ICT

The use of ICT 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, teachers expect 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 has links to a number of recommended educational websites that can be used to support homework tasks and promote enjoyment and achievement. Parents should always supervise their child's access to the Internet.

Inclusion and Homework

We set homework 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 endeavor to adapt any task set so that all children can contribute to it in a positive way.