

Beaver Road Primary School

Homework - Learning at Home

The Government View

The Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) sets out guidelines for a Homework Policy for a school.

The purpose of homework

- *developing an effective partnership between the school and parents and other carers in pursuing the aims of the school.*
- *consolidating and reinforcing skills and understanding, particularly in literacy and numeracy;*
- *exploiting resources for learning, of all kinds, at home;*
- *extending school learning, for example through additional reading; and*
- *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.*

The Government believes that a sensible programme of homework activities for children:

- *In Key Stage 1 (Years 1 and 2) should be designed to take, on average, about 1 hour a week (reading, spellings, other literacy work)*
- *At Key Stage 2 (Years 3 and 4) 1.5 hours a week (as for Year 1 but with occasional assignments in other subject areas)*
- *At the end of Key Stage 2 (Years 5 and 6) children are spending about 30 minutes a day (two and a half hours a week on a regular schedule with continued emphasis on literacy and numeracy but also ranging widely over the curriculum)*

In the Government's view the main focus of homework for children at primary schools should be on literacy and numeracy.

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Learning at Home

At Beaver Road we believe that children's learning is strongly influenced by the home. Your interest and involvement in your child's learning and education is more important than anything else in helping your child fulfil their potential.

As parents, you are the people who go with your child on their lifelong learning journey, from the day they are born to the time they become an adult.

The time you spend in learning alongside your child at home is the best form of homework there can be.

There is no formal, timetabled homework for children before Year 5 and Year 6.

We ask parents and carers of children in Year Groups up to Year 4, to commit to reading with their children (see Helping your Child), for up to 20 minutes a day, every day.

Children in these Year Groups will be given on occasions, assignments to complete that will complement, support and extend their learning at School (e.g. maths facts, spellings, project themes).

Our School policy is **Learning at Home**.

The time you spend with your child away from school is very important to you both. This is when you can be relaxed and enjoy 'time off' together. By making the most of this time, you can also support your child's learning. Any time you spend with your child enjoying yourselves will help him or her to:

- build self confidence and self esteem
- build a strong relationship with you and others
- develop his or her strengths.

By spending time helping your child's learning you will provide him or her with a role model, showing that you appreciate learning and that learning is important for both children and adults alike.

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The best Learning at Home happens when you can enjoy each other's company uninterrupted.

It's a good time for talking, listening and just having fun.

These times are much more important to children than we sometimes realise. It gives your child the chance to talk to you and ask questions or raise things that are worrying them.

There are lots of ways you already have of enjoying family time, for example:

- Playing a sport together e.g. swimming, cycling, football, chess
- Enjoying a meal together at home sitting round the table, discussing things and exchanging news.
- Going out for the day e.g. to a museum, to the cinema, to a zoo.
- Watching a favourite television programme together and talking about it.
- Turning the television off for the evening and reading, talking, looking at photographs, listening to music, or watching family videos.
- Enjoying walks together locally or out in the countryside
- Looking after the garden and growing plants, vegetables, flowers
- Shared hobbies
- Playing computer games together

Learning at Home - Reading

Any reading you can do together with your child will help him or her in several different ways:

- it really helps you to get close, physically and emotionally
- your child has your whole attention while you are reading together - very important for his or her self confidence and self esteem
- you can help your child appreciate the pleasure of reading
- you can help him or her with any difficulties
- you are providing a good role model - an adult who likes to read

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Learning at Home - Mathematics

Mathematics is one of the most important subjects that your child studies at school. Numbers are all around us and even if you don't feel yourself to be a mathematics genius, there is plenty that you can do.

Current teaching methods for maths and even the way that sums are recorded appear very different from those used twenty years ago. As a result, parents are sometimes reluctant to help their children with maths homework for fear of doing things in the wrong way.

However, children do really benefit when parents take a keen interest in their mathematical learning. You can help your child to gain confidence and develop a positive attitude towards mathematics by talking about what has been taught at school and helping her to notice and use mathematics in an everyday context.

Learning at Home - Projects

One way of getting involved with your child's learning is to work on a specific project or topic.

Projects for each Year Group are published termly.

Children may come home with specific instructions for a Project from their class teacher for you to help with, but there are also many projects especially those involving practical work, you can initiate at home independently.

Looking at your world together

All children need to know who they are and how they and their family fit in to the world around them. Beaver Road is a multicultural school and children and their families are a rich resource for learning about other cultures. Learning about and participating in celebrations (e.g. Christmas, Eid, Diwali, Rosh Hoshannah, Chinese New Year) opens children's minds to the wider world in which they live.

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Learning at Home - Years 5 and 6

Monday Spellings from PRG groups (tested on Thursday)

Mental mathematics

Tuesday Mathematics (returned by Friday)

Friday English

Science (returned for Monday)

Each day Personal Reading (20 - 30 minutes)

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Learning at Home - Special educational needs

Setting the right type and amount of homework for children with special educational needs is not always easy. Some children in mainstream schools may benefit from special tasks separate from the homework set for other children in the class.

On the other hand, it is important that they should do as much in common with other children as possible. Setting appropriate homework, which does not demand too much or too little of children and their parents, needs close co-ordination between class teachers, special needs co-ordinators and parents.

Tasks should:

- have a very clear focus and time-guideline;
- give plenty of opportunities for pupils to succeed;
- help develop social as well as other skills where necessary;
- be varied and not purely written assignments;
- be manageable for teachers.

However homework is set, it is very important to monitor the demands on pupils so that they are as even and balanced as possible.

The responsibility for monitoring the Homework - Learning at Home policy in action is with the Assistant Headteachers.

This Policy was endorsed by the Governing Body in March 2008

It is reviewed annually.

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Ideas for Learning at Home

These ideas are aimed at supporting parents and carers in helping their children to learn at home.

Many of you will see the ideas as common sense and obvious, but some parents and carers have asked for simple guidelines so they can be confident they are 'doing the right thing'.

Reading

Helping 5 to 7 year olds

- Read yourself! Set a good example by sharing your reading. Let your children see that you value books and keep them at home.
- Keep books safe. Make your child their own special place to keep their books. Show them how to turn pages carefully.
- Point out words all around you. Help your child to read the words around them: on food packets in the supermarket, on buses, in newspapers, in recipes.
- Visit your library - it's free to join! All libraries have children's sections. Many also have regular storytelling sessions.
- Make time to read. Read a bedtime story with your child every night. Encourage them to share reading with grandparents, brothers and sisters and aunts and uncles.
- Keep in touch with school. Make sure your child swaps their home reading books regularly at school and try to make a regular time to hear them read.
- If English is not your family's first language: You can buy dual language books. You can talk about books and stories in any language.

When they are reading to you:

- Be positive. Praise your child for trying hard at their reading. Let them know it's all right to make mistakes.
- Turn off the TV! It's easier for your child to concentrate if there are no distractions.
- Give them time. Let them make a guess before you tell them the word. Help them to get the first sound or try breaking the word up into smaller sections.

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- Point with a finger. Encourage them to follow the words with their finger.
- Don't make them try too hard! It doesn't matter if you have to tell them the word sometimes.
- Let them read their favourites. It's good practice to read the same books over and over again.
- Ask lots of questions. Check they understand the story by asking them questions about what happens. Use the pictures to explain what's happening.
- Don't read for too long. A good ten minutes is better than a difficult half hour.

Helping 7 to 11 year olds

- Read yourself! Show a good example by talking about the reading you do at work and at home. Let your child know that reading is an important part of your life.
- Keep books safe. Make your child their own special place to keep their books in their bedroom.
- Visit your library - it's free to join! As well as taking out story books, use visits to the library as a time to find books and CD ROMs about your child's hobbies and interests.
- Make time to read. Set aside a time for reading for the family - after school or before bedtime. Encourage independent reading but don't be afraid to still tell a bedtime story.
- Don't just read books. Encourage your child to read newspapers, TV guides, comics and magazines. Ask your child to find out information from the Yellow Pages, the Internet, cookery books, etc.
- Let your child read with younger children. Encourage them to read to other members of the family.
- Keep in touch with school. Make sure your child swaps their home reading books regularly at school and try to make a regular time slot to hear them read.
- If English is not your family's first language: You can buy dual language books. You can talk about books and stories in any language.

When they are reading to you:

- Be positive! Praise your child for trying hard at their reading. Let them know it's all right to make mistakes.
- Give them time. Let them make a guess before you tell them the word. Let them read to the end of the line before correcting their mistakes. It doesn't matter if you have to tell them the word sometimes.

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- Spot words inside words. Help them to spot words they know within larger more complicated words.
- Let them read their favourites. Don't worry if they only read one kind of book. If they are really stuck, ask the librarian or teacher to suggest something else they might like.
- Make the story come to life. Encourage your child to read with expression. This will help them read more fluently.
- Ask lots of questions about the story. What would you have done if you were.....? Does this book remind you of any thing that has happened to you? Can you guess what is going to happen next?
- Use a dictionary. Buy a simple dictionary and use it to check the meanings of new words.

If you are interested in finding out more about what to read with your child, try one of these websites:

www.literacytrust.co.uk

www.bookstart.org.uk (for pre-school children)

Mathematics

- A key part of every numeracy session in school is mental maths, so practise at home. Children must get used to solving problems in their heads, rather than resorting to a calculator. Play games with your child: throw two dice and multiply the numbers, then move on to multiplying the sum of two throws by the sum of another two throws. Try to get some pace into the game!
- Play snakes and ladders, cribbage, darts, dominoes and other games that depend on numbers, counting, calculation and scoring. 'Battleships' is a fun way to use graphs. Invest in a range of maths puzzle books.
- Talk about pocket money with your child. Help her to add it up week by week, and work out whether she can afford a particular toy or treat. Shop using money and calculate change.
- Capitalise on hobbies. If your child is car-mad, talk about relative engine sizes, fuel economy, speed and performance. If they have a favourite pop group, get her to compile a list of statistics such as the number of weeks each single is in the charts. Watch and play sports that involve scoring, timing, counting, measuring.
- Add number apparatus to your child's toy collection - counters, a purse full of change, dice, dominoes, a tape measure, ruler, pack of cards, timer, different shapes - and use them to make mathematics come alive.

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- Be creative. Ask your child to look out for patterns and shapes on floors, wallpaper, plants, animals, buildings - anything from the arrangement of tiles in the kitchen to the markings on the cat. Draw objects made entirely of triangles, rectangles or squares: make 'butterfly' pictures by painting on one half of the paper and folding it over so that the image is mirrored. Make mobiles by suspending objects from coat hangers and ensuring they balance.
- Think about time. Look at clocks, both digital and analogue. Estimate how long a certain activity will take to do and see if you are right! Work out how long it is until the next mealtime. Play games: how long is a minute, starting from now?
- Think about calendars and dates too. Make a timeline that includes the birthdays of each member of the family and work out how far apart each one is. Use different units: months, weeks and days, even hours, minutes and seconds. Add other important events, such as a family holiday, and encourage your child to count down to the big day.
- Cooking is great for helping your child get to know simple weights and measures. An old-fashioned set of balance scales is ideal. Count out spoonfuls of ingredients. Let your child help you set the timer and count down to teatime! Later on, this is a good way to introduce the idea of ratios and proportions, too. Bear in mind that your child will be learning the metric system at school, so try to measure amounts in grams and kilograms.
- Use learning games on educational websites: check out the [BBC Schools Games Machine](#) for lots of ideas.

Projects

- grow plants such as runner beans or sunflowers and making simple notes and measurements
- prepare for a family holiday by finding out more about the area you will be visiting - geography, history, culture and traditions
- find out more about your local area, in particular its geography and history - Manchester is rich in both
- research your family tree
- look at family expenditure and working out how much you spend and what on (e.g. food, bills, clothes, going out)
- talk to an older relative such as a grandparent about their life when they were younger and comparing it with nowadays
- find out more about a sport or hobby your child is interested in
- keep a scrapbook/diary of the year
- build or make things together - research using the internet

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If you decide to do a project with your child, you might want to plan it so that he or she can see how it will work out.

Start by asking yourselves these questions:

- What are we going to do and why?
- How are we going to do it?
- What can we do to make it as interesting as possible?

At the end of the project talk about:

- What did I do best?
- What did I enjoy most about doing the project?
- What have I learned?
- What can I do better next time?

Answers to these simple questions will help you identify your child's:

- interests and enthusiasms
- learning style (how he or she likes to learn)
- strengths and weaknesses.

Looking at your world

- Produce a cultural calendar together, marking family birthdays, religious holidays, cultural festivals, days of remembrance, and national holidays
- Celebrate special days together by playing music, writing poems, reading stories, making cards or painting a picture. Special days could be religious or cultural celebrations, or simply an anniversary of something special to your family, such as the day you moved to your home.
- Enjoy a special meal together on a certain date, either to mark an event, or perhaps to try food on a festival day from a culture that is different from your own.

If your child is invited to a religious or cultural celebration that you don't observe in your family, such as Easter Sunday, Eid or a Bar Mitzvah, help them find out more about the celebration and why it is important.

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- If you are going to a local carnival or traditional fair, find out about its history - how and why it started.
- If a charity has a special event, such as wearing pink ribbons or poppies, talk together about what the charity does and why people contribute to charities.

The ideas have been collected from many different sources. There are lots of websites available to help parents and carers with their children's learning.

www.bbc.co.uk/schools/parents

www.direct.gov.uk (follow links)

www.parentscentre.gov.uk

www.parentlineplus.org.uk

www.literacytrust.org.uk

and for children and parents:

www.bbc.co.uk/cbeebies (young children)

www.bbc.co.uk/cbbc