

# **St Mary's Catholic Primary School**

## **Homework Policy**

**September 2016**

### **Mission Statement**

St Mary's school community follows the teachings of Jesus Christ, working together to develop the whole child, in a spiritual, moral, academic, physical, social and emotional way, within a caring and supportive environment.

### **Ethos**

We recognise that there is a challenge in creating an enriching environment for all those involved at every level of school life. We take our lead and inspiration from Christ with regard to the Gospel values: the belief that all human beings are uniquely created and loved by God and worthy of respect. This challenge manifests itself in the way that we treat and value:

- Our relationships with each other and the wider community;
- Our respect for one another;
- Our welcome to and interest in all those who visit our school;
- Discipline inspired by forgiveness, healing and reconciliation;
- Our school environment.

Through rising to this challenge we aim to create an awareness of a sense of belonging to and being part of the life at St Mary's.

### **Through the implementation of this policy we aim to:**

Extend opportunities for learning, ensure a consistent approach throughout the school, encourage children to develop increasing independence and a sense of personal responsibility, meet the needs of all pupils, make expectations about homework clear to children, parents and other carers, improve the quality of the partnership between home and school, provide activities that encourage parents or other carers to work with their children and develop responsibility for homework, which prepares older pupils for transfer to secondary school.

### **The purpose of homework**

There are four main ways in which we believe that homework contributes to raising the standards of achievement:

*1. It can help to develop the partnership between home and school, which children need to be aware of, if they are to develop good attitudes to learning.*

To ensure successful learning we believe that children should see the values promoted at school being actively supported by parents:

- Children and parents should be very clear about what is to be completed at home. The Upper KS2 children have diaries where they list their homework. They are expected to have these signed by parents after completing and showing work at home. Signing the diary or the piece of homework lets teachers know that parents have supervised or checked work. If parents are not happy with the finished standard of homework, they should not avoid signing the diary, but rather write a quick note to the teacher instead.
- Children should be encouraged to do homework thoroughly. On occasions written homework has to be completed in school exercise books, and it is definitely a good idea for parents to look through the book to see what has been covered, and occasionally, if possible, to talk with children about the work. It is a good way for parents to see how children are getting on - e.g. can they remember what to do? Have they brought home the necessary materials?
- Homework is never intended to be exhausting, tiring, or upsetting, and, on the contrary, many children actually enjoy the tasks set! Tasks reinforce and extend class work, and teachers appreciate support from parents with homework. Some children need a lot of help with their homework whereas others can work happily alone. Please stop children attempting to complete homework if they have spent enough time, or have become tired or upset. It is important to let the teacher know about this the following day by sending a short note/writing in the diary.

*2. Homework consolidates and reinforces skills and understanding, particularly in literacy and numeracy, which the children are gaining at school.*

- In the youngest classes, the activities suggested will be centred on reading and the keynote will be enjoyment and sharing of books together; in fact, actively involving parents in children's learning is one of the main themes of 'homework' and it is the involvement of parents in joint activities which is most valuable in promoting children's learning.
- In the Infants, short activities of different kinds - simple games, reinforcing phonics, spellings and number facts and of course 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.
- In the junior classes children are asked to read each evening, and also to practise spellings, number facts and multiplication tables. They will often be asked to complete a maths task or a piece of Grammar, Punctuation or Comprehension. Written homework related to other curriculum areas e.g. Science, RE will also be given.

- We believe that the most important feature of homework is the quality of the completed task rather than the amount of time spent on it.

*3. It enables children to benefit from a wider range of resources of all kinds, than those available in school.*

- Besides providing children with the opportunity to talk to an interested adult about what they are learning, parents, and relatives can offer a wealth of experience from which children can benefit. They can also assist children to visit the library, and help them to access resources which may be found there.

*4. Homework encourages children as they get older to develop the confidence and self discipline needed to study on their own and prepares them for the requirements of Secondary school.*

- It is important that children should gradually get into the habit of regularly devoting periods of time, which may not always be long, to study on their own. Good routine and a set time and place for homework are important, as are encouragement, and praise when children have completed the task set.

Parents can help by making it clear that they value homework, and can support the school in explaining how it can help children's learning.

### **Homework Activities**

**Reception** Homework is sent home weekly and is based around something which the children have been learning in class. This might be maths or literacy related or may extend out to RE. The children are meant to consolidate their learning with these home activities. In addition to this the children have a reading book which they are encouraged to read and discuss with an adult at home.

**Year 1** Goes home once per week. Consists of spelling and maths. Reading should be taking place at home every day.

**Year 2** Homework in year 2 goes home once a week. It is intended to both consolidate the learning in the room and help prepare the children for their KS1 SATs. Homework here consists of weekly spellings, numeracy and a piece of literacy.

**Year 3** Homework goes out once a week. It is intended to consolidate the learning in the room. Weekly homework will consist of literacy, numeracy, RE mental maths, handwriting practise and spellings.

**Year 4** Homework goes out weekly. It consists of maths, literacy, spellings and RE. At time in Year 4 the children are set projects over the half term breaks to prepare the children for their Topic unit when they return.

**Year 5** Homework in Year 5 goes home once a week. It consists of a reading comprehension to refine reading skills, a piece of grammar work which is intended to consolidate learning which has taken place in the week. In addition to this the children will receive weekly spellings and times tables which they are required to learn. Finally the children will have numeracy work which will usually require some calculation skills to solve.

**Year 6** In year 6, homework is given out once a week and the children have 5 days to complete it. It is distributed on a Monday and needs to be back in school on a Friday. The homework is marked as a class so that children can address errors or misconceptions. Homework which goes home includes, spellings, punctuations and grammar activities, 2 reading comprehensions, handwriting and numeracy activities which all link to the learning in the classroom. Often RE homework is sent home as well to consolidate the learning that week.

### **Marking and Reviewing Homework**

Teachers will stress the importance of an independent approach to tasks- tasks support what has been learnt in class, or may involve research or preparing information. If necessary, parents are encouraged to mark homework with their children so they receive an instant response, but teachers will review homework, marking it and sometimes using it as a tool for discussion. With ‘My Maths’ homework, marking is automated. Where possible, pupils will be set tasks and investigations that are open ended and planned to extend their ability to direct their own learning. Lists of spelling words may be issued, along with number facts; these should be learnt in creative ways such as making games or patterns. Encouraging a regular homework time and space can establish a supportive environment for each child. Regular audits of the amount of homework set and its nature will be carried out. Parents will be consulted about homework and its suitability, including through parental surveys. Homework and its suitability will also be discussed with pupils and parents at parents’ evenings etc.

### **Homework Club**

The junior classes have a homework club time allocated to them after school. Children who may find the homework challenging or need a quiet place to complete the work can do so at homework club. Staff are available to both encourage and guide children through their work which enables children to complete more work and feel confident in doing so.

In any case, children are encouraged to approach their teacher if they are struggling with homework and together they can find a suitable time to go through it together.

### **Notes for Parents - How can I help my child?**

Here are some ways you can help your child do well at school:

- Make sure you know what homework is set and encourage your child to do it thoroughly
- Please sign homework diary Years 3 – 6 after checking completed tasks (or sheets).
- Encourage them to follow up interests and talk about them

- Try to keep up to date with what your child is learning at school - reading termly newsletter, attending open evenings, monitoring diary - and talk regularly about it
- Find opportunities for your child to use numbers in everyday situations and encourage problem solving mentally
- A regular routine is important. Help your child to be ready to learn when they go to school.
- At home, ensure that your child reads each night and sign the reading record book.