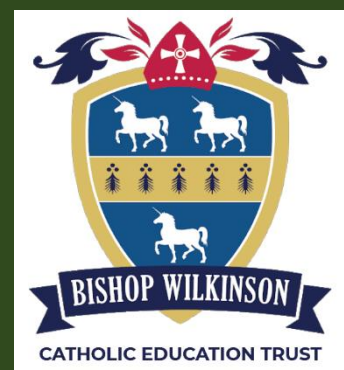




**St. Joseph's Catholic  
Infant & Junior Schools  
Birtley**

**Homework  
Strategy**

**September 2022**



## **Introduction:**

The guidance has been written to help teachers, parents and pupils consider the purpose of homework and understand how it can have a positive impact on children's learning.

The EEF (2018) state the following:

### **Homework (Primary)**

*Homework refers to tasks given to pupils by their teachers to be completed outside of usual lessons. Common homework activities in primary schools tend to be reading or practising spelling and number facts, but may also include more extended activities to develop inquiry skills or more directed and focused work such as revision for tests.*

### **How effective is it?**

*It is certainly the case that schools whose pupils do homework tend to be more successful. However, it is not clear whether use of homework is a reason for this success. A number of reviews and meta-analyses have explored this issue. There is stronger evidence that it is helpful at secondary level (approximately 5-6 months progress), but there is much less evidence of benefit at primary level.*

*There is some evidence that when homework is used as a short and focused intervention it can be effective in improving students' attainment, but this is limited for primary age pupils. Overall, the general benefits are likely to be modest if homework is more routinely set.*

*The quality of the task set appears to be more important than the quantity of work required from the pupil.*

### **How secure is the evidence?**

*Homework has been extensively researched. There is a relatively consistent picture that pupils in schools which give more homework perform better, although for primary age pupils the difference is small. However, there are only a small number of studies which have investigated whether this relationship is due to the homework itself, rather than other school factors. These studies compare classes where homework is introduced to similar classes where homework is not given. They tend to show that homework can be beneficial, but this finding is less secure than the first, because of the smaller number of studies and the quality of the evidence*

There are various types of homework which can be given to fulfil the above philosophy. In primary school, homework will typically form part of the teaching and learning cycle and will attempt to deepen, refine and revise skills taught in class. St. Joseph's believe that homework helps to develop studiousness, independence, time management skills and self-discipline and helps parents to understand what their child is learning in the classroom, or needs to know.

## **What type of homework will St. Joseph's set?**

### **1. All pupils are expected to read books on a daily basis.**

*The annual Understanding the Children's Book Consumer survey from Nielsen Book Research, interviewed 1,596 parents of 0 to 13-year-olds, and 417 14 to 17-year-olds in the UK last autumn. It found that while 69% of preschool children were read to daily in 2013, that figure had dropped to just 51%.*

*As for why they were not reading to their children, 19% of parents of three to four-year-olds said "the struggle to find energy at the end of the day" was a factor, while 16% cited "the child's preference to do other things". (The Guardian, February 21<sup>st</sup> 2018)*

Regardless of the child's preference, St. Joseph's request that children and parents enjoy quality time together, to develop and instill good reading habits. All pupils should bring their book into school on a daily basis – whether they have finished reading the book or not (see Appendix I for notes to parents).

### **How will the teacher/parent document the child's home reading?**

The class teacher will sign and comment in your child's reading diary as and when is necessary.

Parents are invited and are expected to comment in this book and sign it to indicate that they have participated in a reading activity with their child, or their child has read independently.

Using a class list, teachers will then record and document the children who bring in their home/school book.

### **2. All pupils are required to know their times tables. The national expectation is for pupils to know up to 12 x 12 by Year 4.**

A secure knowledge of times table facts is essential, in order for pupils to understand the different aspects of the mathematics curriculum. Children will be asked to learn their times tables and corresponding division facts for a weekly test. One week may be '6x table test', the next may consist of '6 division facts'.

As children become more familiar with the calculations (e.g.  $6 \times 6 = 36$ ), the language will become more complex e.g. *What is six squared equal to? or There were six children with six sweets each. How many sweets were there altogether?*

### **How will the teacher document the child's progress in times table testing?**

The class teacher will record and document the child's results and they will expect to see pupils' marks improving as the year progresses.

### **3. All pupils are expected to learn spellings for a weekly test.**

National Curriculum (2014) states: *'Most people read words more accurately than they spell them. The younger pupils are, the truer this is.'*

*By the end of year 1, pupils should be able to read a large number of different words containing the GPCs (grapheme, phoneme correspondence) that they have learnt, whether or not they have seen these words before. Spelling, however, is a very different matter. Once pupils have learnt more than one way of spelling particular sounds, choosing the right letter or letters depends on their either having made a conscious effort to learn the*

words or having absorbed them less consciously through their reading. Younger pupils have not had enough time to learn or absorb the accurate spelling of all the words that they may want to write.

*This appendix provides examples of words embodying each pattern, which is taught. Many of the words listed as 'example words' for years 1 and 2, including almost all those listed as 'exception words', are used frequently in pupils' writing, and therefore it is worth pupils learning the correct spelling. The 'exception words' contain GPCs which have not yet been taught as widely applicable, but this may be because they are applicable in very few age-appropriate words rather than because they are rare in English words in general.*

*The word-lists for years 3 and 4 and years 5 and 6 are statutory. The lists are a mixture of words pupils frequently use in their writing and those, which they often misspell. Some of the listed words may be thought of as quite challenging, but the 100 words in each list can easily be taught within the four years of key stage 2 alongside other words that teachers consider appropriate.'*

School will consciously focus on teaching new words to pupils, during EY/KS1 phonic-based vocabulary sessions. In KS2, handwriting will become a vehicle for introducing new vocabulary and spellings. Pupils will work with staff to understanding the etymology (a word's history) and will practice the words in preparation for a test.

### **How will the teacher document the child's progress in spellings?**

The class teacher will record and document the child's results and they will expect to see pupils' marks improving as the year progresses.

### **4. All pupils will engage in independent reading comprehension to enhance inference, retrieval and identify themes and conventions.**

National Curriculum (2014) states:

*'The focus should continue to be on pupils' comprehension as a primary element in reading. The knowledge and skills that pupils need in order to comprehend are very similar at different ages. This is why the programmes of study for comprehension in years 3 and 4 and years 5 and 6 are similar: the complexity of the writing increases the level of challenge.*

*Pupils should be taught to recognise themes in what they read, such as the triumph of good over evil or the use of magical devices in fairy stories and folk tales... They should be reading widely and frequently, outside as well as in school, for pleasure and information. They should be able to read silently, with good understanding, inferring the meanings of unfamiliar words, and then discuss what they have read.'*

Schofield and Sims have produced standardised comprehension books for KS1 to KS2. Using the books promotes consistency amongst class teachers and helps to ensure that all pupils access texts, which are age appropriate and the questions suitably engaging and challenging.

Additionally, the questions help to prepare and support pupils to be 'Year 6 ready' and address all aspects of the English reading curriculum e.g. word reading, form, structure, inference and retrieval.

### **How will the teacher document the child's progress in comprehension?**

First and foremost, children need to be made aware of their mistakes/errors so that they know how to improve. When comprehension activities are returned to school, children will usually mark the work themselves, with clear guidance from the teacher, who will oversee the process. They will discuss how to derive the answer. The class teacher will record and document the child's results and they will expect to see pupils' marks improving as the year progresses.

## **5. All pupils will engage in mathematics tasks to develop the skills of independent application outside of the classroom.**

National Curriculum (2014) states:

*'The principal focus of mathematics teaching in key stage 1 is to ensure that pupils develop confidence and mental fluency with whole numbers, counting and place value.*

*By the end of year 6, pupils should be fluent in written methods for all four operations, including long multiplication and division, and in working with fractions, decimals and percentages.'*

School use the Power Maths scheme to support high-quality teaching and learning mathematics activities. The practice workbooks complement the weekly teaching sequence and allow children to engage in homework activities independently, outside of the school environment. The purpose of this is twofold: a) to allow the child an opportunity to revise and practice skills taught b) to ensure parents are engaged in their child's learning.

### **How will the teacher document the child's progress in mathematics?**

First and foremost, children need to be made aware of their mistakes/errors so that they know how to improve. When mathematics activities are returned to school, children will usually mark the work themselves, with clear guidance from the teacher, who will oversee the process. They will discuss how to derive the answer and understand that there are often a number of suitable methods for calculating the answer to a problem. The class teacher will record and document the child's results and they will expect to see pupils' marks improving as the year progresses.

### **What are the consequences for pupils who do not adhere to the homework guidance?**

There may be some cases where books are genuinely lost or pupils have been unable to complete tasks e.g. through illness. Each case will be considered on merit by the class teacher and if needs be, alternative arrangements for completion agreed.

The class teacher will document when a child fails to return their homework – and ensure that parents are informed when a recurrent issue has been noted.

Should a child lose their homework workbooks, then they will be asked to purchase new books from the school office.

### **Homework in the Early Years:**

Homework for pupils in Nursery and Reception will be communicated through the weekly newsletter, or on Tapestry which is sent home every Friday. The ideas/tasks suggested for parents to complete with their child, will be linked to that week's learning and the current topic being explored.

Any work or photos from the suggested home learning activities can be recorded on Tapestry. In addition to this, Reception pupils are expected to read and discuss their school reading book several times over the course of each week. As well as learning the 'common exception words' expected of their year group. These words will be given in a wallet for daily practice at home.

## The Homework Timetable

Year group	Phonics	Reading	Mathematics
Reception	Flashcards and phonics worksheets will be sent home.	<p><b>At least two books per week will be sent home – one on a Monday and one on a Friday.</b></p> <p>An additional book may be sent home to 'share' with a parent for inference work and may support sight reading vocabulary.</p> <p>Please bring in reading bags, books and diaries, daily, and read with your child at home, on a daily, basis.</p>	<p>Number formation worksheets, progressing to subitising</p> <p>(looking at a group of objects and knowing their worth)</p>

Year group	Core Subjects	Reading	Spellings	Number bonds, Times Tables and/or Division Facts
Years 1 – 5	Reading comprehension or mathematics task - usually linked to work taught in class	Daily reading – quantity dependent upon age	Weekly	Weekly
Given out	Given on a Friday to return on a Tuesday	Daily – signed by the parent on a daily basis and brought into school each day.	Given on a Monday, write out three times, for a test the following Monday	Given on a Friday to be tested the following Friday
Reading	<p><b>Books will be changed twice per week on Mondays and Fridays.</b></p> <p>Key Stage 1 books – Books, connected to phonics sounds taught in the classroom will be sent home.</p> <p>An additional book may be sent home to 'share' with a parent for inference work – it may also support sight reading vocabulary.</p>			

Year group	English	Mathematics	Reading	Spellings	Times Tables and Division Facts
Year 6	Reading comprehension or grammar and punctuation work.	Usually linked to work taught in class	Daily reading e.g. one chapter	Weekly	Weekly
Given out	Given on a Monday to return on a Friday	Given on a Friday to return on a Tuesday	Daily – signed by the parent on a daily basis – brought into school each day.	Given on a Monday to be tested on the following Monday	Given on a Friday to be tested on the following Friday
	N.B. As pupils approach end of key stage 2 assessments, it is likely that frequency of homework may change e.g. practice test papers may be sent home to consolidate and revise key skills.				
Reading	We recognise that as children grow, their reading habits change and they read more independently. It is still important that an adult signs their child's reading diary and children return this on a daily basis, to allow the class teacher an opportunity to read with children, during the week.				

## **Appendix I**

### **Notes to parents as written in the home/school book:**

*EYFS/KS1: Spending 15-30 minutes a day reading with your child will make a big difference. Parents should sign the home/school on a daily basis, recording any relevant comments e.g. new vocabulary that has been encountered.*

*KS2: As children's reading habits mature, they often prefer to read alone for enjoyment, but we ask parents/guardians to sign the home/school on a daily basis, recording any relevant comments. Alternatively, children may add their own comments and this can be signed by a parent or guardian. New or unfamiliar vocabulary should be documented – in order to allow the child a chance to explore definitions/context, when they have time.*

*Regular constructive comments from whoever hears the reader will be of great value in monitoring your child's interest and progress in reading. Remember: pause, prompt, praise! Every parent should aim to encourage their child to read as often as possible, showing support, motivation and encouragement when they are struggling and likewise when they are excelling.*

*'Mathematics is a creative and highly inter-connected discipline that has been developed over centuries, providing the solution to some of history's most intriguing problems. It is essential to everyday life, critical to science, technology and engineering, and necessary for financial literacy and most forms of employment (National Curriculum, 2014)'. However, a secure knowledge of times table facts is essential, in order for pupils to understand the different aspects of the mathematics curriculum.*

*It is national expectation that children can mentally recall times tables facts up to 12 x 12, by the end of Year 4. Inside this booklet, you will find a times table list up to 12 x 12. Children should be secure in the recall of multiplication facts, and the corresponding division facts (e.g.  $7 \times 4 = 28$ ,  $28 \div 4 = 7$ ). Practicing time tables does not have to be a laborious task; just remember the phrase: 'little and often'. A few minutes of practice each day will go a long way to preparing your child for future learning.*