

Staines Preparatory School



Homework Policy

September 2023

Homework is anything children do outside the normal school day that contributes to their learning, in response to guidance from the School. Homework encompasses a whole variety of activities instigated by teachers and parents to support the children's learning. For example, parents who spend time reading stories to their children before bedtime are helping with homework.

Rationale for homework

SPS recognises that pupils are often able to explore topics further if the time constraints of a busy school were to be removed, and as such children can therefore benefit greatly from the complementary learning that they do at home. The School sees homework as an important example of cooperation between teachers and parents. One of the aims of the teaching at SPS is for children to develop as independent learners, and the School believes that doing homework is one of the ways in which children can acquire the skill of independent learning.

Homework can play a positive role in raising a child's level of attainment. However, play and free time are equally important in a child's growth and development. While homework is designed to supplement the curriculum, it should not prevent children from taking part in the various in and out-of-school activities that play an important part in the lives of our pupils. SPS is aware that children spend more time at home than at school, and believes they develop their interests and skills to the full only when parents encourage them to make maximum use of the opportunities available outside school. However, whilst the School is eager to emphasise the importance of developing the entire individual, activities relating to external tutoring should not prioritise homework set by the School.

Aims and Objectives

The aims and objectives for setting homework at Staines Preparatory School is:

- to enable pupils to make maximum progress in their academic and social development
- to help pupils develop the skills of an independent learner
- to provide an opportunity for research and 'flipped learning'
- to promote co-operation between home and school in supporting each child's learning
- to enable all aspects of the curriculum to be covered in sufficient depth
- to provide educational experiences not possible in school
- to consolidate and reinforce the learning done in school
- to allow children to practise skills taught in lessons
- to help children develop good work habits for the future
- to provide an opportunity for the development of self-discipline

Types of homework

Staff and pupils regard homework as an integral part of the curriculum - it is planned and prepared alongside all other programmes of learning.

A variety of homework activities are set using SeeSaw and other online platforms such as Word Shark, Atom Learning and Times Table Rockstars. Reception, Lower School (Years 1 and 2) and Year 3 pupils are given reading books to take home and read. In Years 4-6, the reading scheme is continued until the child reaches the level of a free reader. The School gives guidance to parents on achieving the maximum benefit from this time spent reading with their child in Core Curriculum workshops at the beginning of the academic year. Children also learn spellings as part of their homework from Year 1 upwards. Sometimes the children are asked to talk about a topic at home prior to studying it in school in lessons. Occasionally, children take work home that they have started in school, when it is felt that they could benefit from spending further time on it. When studying a topic or researching a particular subject, children are encouraged to use the School library and their local library, as well as the Internet and other sources of information.

In Reception, children have a piece of homework each week which is usually practical in nature and reinforces work covered in class that week.

In Year 1, pupils have one piece of English or Topic homework each week that is linked to work covered in class that week. In addition to this, practical Maths activities are also suggested to help children embed important skills at home. The practical element of Maths is important for their relational understanding.

In Year 2, pupils have two pieces of homework each week. This may be a combination of English, Maths or a foundation subject such as Science, Art, History or Geography.

Upper School continues to give children homework activities as outlined in paragraph 4.2, but they are expected to do more tasks independently. Homework is set routinely each week, and the children are expected to consolidate and reinforce the learning done in school through practise at home. Homework is also set as a means of helping the children to revise for examinations, as well as to ensure that prior learning has been understood.

Homework tasks are varied. Some tasks will be written tasks, whilst others might be practical activities or project based tasks requiring research and use of the Internet. Homework tasks will be set using Seesaw and other online resources which the school subscribes to will be used to create homework tasks such as Word Shark, Atom Learning and Times Table Rockstars.

Homework is marked, where appropriate according to the general school Marking and Feedback Policy. Homework completed well is acknowledged and praised. Children can be awarded housepoints for a good standard of homework and when an outstanding piece of homework is produced, a merit can be awarded in recognition. There may be issues arising from the work, which the teacher will follow up in lesson time. Depending on the subject and type of homework set, homework is set in a variety of ways with Seesaw and online platforms being used regularly to set and mark homework to reduce the level of paper resources being sent home.

It is recognised that children have individual learning styles, which means that some tasks can be completed in a number of different ways, while others demand a particular approach.

As homework is a planned supplement to the curriculum, there is an expectation that pupils complete it as with any other piece of work within the School. However, as referred to above, circumstances may arise whereby tasks cannot be completed. In such circumstances, parents are asked to note this in a pupil's Homework Diary or via email to inform the teacher. Homework completed late will still be accepted by staff, but may result in limited feedback as the curriculum progresses. When homework is not completed by the pupil, a verbal reminder will be given by the teacher to the child and an opportunity given for the child to still complete the homework. On the second occasion of the child not completing the homework, the teacher will write a note in the child's homework diary or on SeeSaw for Lower School. For persistent non-completion of homework, the class teacher/tutor/subject teacher will contact parents to discuss homework completion.

Amount of homework

As the children move through the School, the amount of homework given increases.

Children in the Lower School are expected to spend 15 minutes reading each day plus their weekly homework. In Years 1 and 2, they will also be given spellings to practise via Word Shark. As children develop and make progress through Reception and when they are able and ready to do so, books will be sent home to support their reading.

In Year 3, the children should spend 15 minutes reading each day and homework is set on a Monday, Wednesday and Friday each week. They will be given spelling lists and weekly assignments to complete in Maths, English and other subjects.

Years 4 – 6 work to a regular homework timetable and homework is set by subject teachers.

In Year 4 the children have one subject per night, these include English, Mathematics and Science. Each homework task should take 20 - 30 minutes and the children should be reading for at least 10 - 15 minutes every day and completing activities on Times Table Rockstars and Wordshark regularly each wee. In Years 5 and 6 they have one subject homework per night, each of which should take 20 - 30 minutes in addition to at least 20 minutes of reading at home every day and completing activities on Times Table Rockstars and Wordshark regularly each week. Each

week, children will be set one Mathematics and English homework and the other subject areas will set homework on a two-week cycle, these subjects include: Science, History, Classics, Geography, MFL and Religious Education.

In Years 3 - 6 the children are given a homework diary where the homework is recorded, usually by themselves, but sometimes the teacher or Learning Support Assistant (LSA) will record homework tasks when needed. Class teachers and tutors will check each week that the homework diaries are being filled in and check homework is completed and will sign them weekly, usually on a Friday. The school asks that parents also sign the diary each week to ensure that children are completing homework to a good standard.

No homework will be set in the final week of each half term or during holiday time except for reading or revision material, if required.

On occasion, if a child persistently does not complete set homework tasks (without valid reasons), teachers can contact parents to ask if any further support is required to help the child complete the set tasks.

Inclusion and homework

Homework is set for all children as a normal part of school life. Teachers ensure that all tasks set are appropriate to the ability of the child, and endeavour to adapt any task set so that all children can contribute in a positive way through effective differentiation.

When setting homework to pupils who are named on the register of special needs, reference is made to their Individual Support Plans (ISPs).

We value and celebrate the cultural diversity of our pupils and their families, and we appreciate the enrichment that this brings.

The role of parents

Parents have a vital role to play in their child's education, and homework is an important part of this process. Parents are asked to encourage their child to complete the homework tasks that are set. Parents may help their children as and when they feel it to be appropriate, and are asked to provide them with the sort of environment that allows children to achieve their best. Parents can support their child by providing a good working space at home, by enabling their child to visit the library regularly, and by discussing the work that their child is doing.

Whilst some support may be required to complete elements of homework, it is important to encourage a child's independence by allowing them to use their critical thinking skills and develop their own ideas for responses as much as possible. The School normalises making errors and mistakes as these provide organic opportunities which are vital in helping children to learn how to self-improve, correct and edit their work.

It is hoped that all parents will spend some time on a regular basis reading with their children, even when they have become independent readers.

In Pre-Prep and Lower School parents are asked to check SeeSaw for set homework.

In Years 3 - 6 parents should check their child's Homework Diary for homework tasks as the tasks can be set across different online platforms or be paper-based activities. Each week the school asks for the parent to sign the diary and check homework is completed. Parents, and teachers, can make any relevant comments in the Homework Diary.

If parents have any questions about homework, they should, in the first instance, contact the child's class or subject teacher, through the homework diary or via email. If parents wish to make a complaint about the School Homework Policy, or the way it is implemented, they should contact the Headmistress.

Use of Computing

The use of Computing 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, our 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 acquiring new learning or consolidating knowledge effectively by merely downloading and printing out something that has been written by somebody else.

Each child has secure access to Seesaw (the School's virtual learning platform) and other relevant learning platforms where log in details have been provided, and will find work, activities and games uploaded by the teaching staff, as well as links to other educational websites. Children in Years 3-6 will have pupil logins for online accounts in the children's homework diaries for them to access at home.

There are many websites containing highly educational material, which can have a powerful effect on children's learning. Parents are advised always to supervise their child's access to the Internet.

Some of the most important educational software we use in school can be bought by parents on a home-user licence. This ensures that children are using age-appropriate software in their work at home. The School is happy to advise parents on software.

Children are discouraged from bringing USB memory devices into school, unless permission is given by a teacher. Work can be uploaded onto Seesaw or can be emailed directly to the class/subject teacher.

Monitoring and review

The governing body may, at any time, request from the Headmistress a report on the way homework is organised in the School.

The Senior Leadership Team, Subject Co-ordinators and Year Co-ordinators will also monitor and review homework on a regular basis.