

Staines Preparatory School



Homework Policy

September 2024

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.

Rationale for homework

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 extra-curricular activities that play an important part in the lives of our pupils. 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
- 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 that are 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 schemes 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 which are assessed weekly in the form of a spelling test. 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.

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 house points for a good standard of homework and when an outstanding piece of homework is produced, a merit can be awarded in recognition. In addition, merits and house points for outstanding effort during homework tasks can also be awarded. There may be issues arising from the work, which the teacher will follow up in lesson time.

It is recognised that children have individual learning styles, which means that a variety of online and paper-based tasks will be set.

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, circumstances may arise whereby tasks cannot be completed. In such circumstances, parents are asked to contact the teacher via email. Homework completed late will still be accepted by staff but will not be marked and feedback will not be provided. 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. 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. 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 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 and Year 2, pupils have one-piece of homework each week that is linked to work covered in class that week.

In Year 3, the children should spend 15 minutes reading each day and homework is set on Monday, Wednesday and Friday each week. This may be a combination of English, Mathematics or a foundation subject such as Science, Art, History or Geography.

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 15 minutes every day and completing activities on Times Table Rockstars and Wordshark regularly each week.

In Years 5 and 6 they have one homework task per night, 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. 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 1 - 6, they will also be given spellings to practise via Wordshark and will be tested on these spellings weekly.

In Years 3 - 6 the children are given a homework timetable with subjects on set days and tasks will be recorded in more detail on Seesaw where needed.

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.

Inclusion and Homework

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.

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 a suitable learning environment that allows children to achieve their best.

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 opportunities which are vital in helping children to learn how to self-improve, correct and edit their work.

Parents are encouraged to check online platforms and homework timetables for set homework.

If parents have any questions about homework, they should, in the first instance, contact the child's class or subject teacher 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.

Some of the educational learning platforms used in schools to support learning can be subscribed to by parents 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.

The use of USB memory devices in school is not permitted. Work can be uploaded onto Seesaw or can be emailed directly to the class/subject teacher if required.

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.