



FITZJOHN'S PRIMARY SCHOOL

# HOMework

A Guide for Parents

**Homework will be set every Wednesday and collected on the following Monday.  
Homework will be written in or stuck into your child's purple homework book.**

## WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF HOMEWORK?

- Working at home helps to develop a child's self-discipline and self-motivation for study.
- Homework reinforces skills learnt at school and provides further practice.
- Learning spellings, tables and maths facts increases children's speed of recall.
- Homework helps children to appreciate the value of learning and study.
- Year 6 homework prepares children for the discipline of secondary school homework.
- Homework emphasises the partnership between home and school.

We are aware, however, that children need a balance of work and play. We expect the children to work hard when they are at school and also believe that they need time when at home to play, chat and relax with their family. With our homework schedule we have tried to help you form this balance. To help you support your child all homework will be set on a Wednesday and collected on a Monday.

## WHAT ARE THE GOVERNMENT'S RECOMMENDATIONS?

The Government's recommendations on Homework indicate that Key Stage 1 homework should focus on :

- Reading, spellings, other literacy work and number work

The Government's recommendations on Homework indicate that Key Stage 2 homework should focus on :

- English, particularly Reading to an adult for about 20 minutes each night and Maths

Recommended time allocations:

- Years 1 and 2 1 hour a week
- Years 3 and 4 1.5 hours/week
- Years 5 and 6 2.5 hours/week

## WHAT TYPES OF HOMEWORK ARE SET?

The homework we set is listed below in order of priority:

- Reading
- Spellings and Multiplication Tables/Maths Facts
- Written English and Maths
- Project/Topic work

## HOW WILL I KNOW WHAT HOMEWORK IS SET?

- All written homework is set on Wednesday. Homework must be handed in on the following Monday.
- Spellings will be set and tested on a day decided by the class teacher.
- Every child has been given a purple homework book. Homework will be written or stuck into this book before it is brought home. Most homework will be done in this book.
- Homework is set in the first full week of each term.
- No homework is set in the last week of term or during holidays.
- Check your child's school bag and the purple homework book for homework.
- Year 6 children preparing for tests for Independent schools will be exempted from written English and Maths homework in the Autumn term, at *parents' request*, until they have taken their tests.
- Year 6 will have homework that focuses on revision during the term of their SAT tests.
- Year 6 children will not receive homework after the SAT tests. They will be expected to complete their school journey project and learn their lines/songs for the play.

## **MAY I HELP MY CHILD?**

We welcome your help.

- Help by reading the question, giving advice, suggestions, and guidance but don't do the work for your child.
- If necessary, show your child how to do the work, then ask your child to do it alone.
- Do not confuse your child by teaching a different maths method
- Your help is essential for Reading, Spellings, Tables, Maths Facts.
- Look at your child's written work when it is finished, and make *constructive* remarks or suggestions.
- Help with practical work
- Let your child's teacher know if you experience any problems regarding your child's homework.
- Check the homework is done and taken to school on time.
- Help by encouraging your child to take responsibility for his/her homework programme, and completing it on time.

Your **interest** and **support** with homework will have a positive and significant influence on your child's attitude to learning, reading and writing.

## **ORGANISING A HOMEWORK ROUTINE**

Establish a homework routine, e.g.

- It is sensible to create a homework timetable so that your child's homework is spread through the week and weekend and not just rushed on Sunday.
- Ask your child, when he/she arrives home, what he/she has to do.
- Provide a snack and a drink before starting homework.
- Provide a comfortable and quiet place to work, without any distraction, e.g. TV.
- Provide a suitable table.
- Encourage your child to start homework as soon as possible after arriving home.
- Plan the week's tasks. This is relevant if a task will take more than one session (this is an important skill to learn for secondary school).
- Insist the day's homework is completed when your child gets home, before other interests are pursued for the rest of the evening.
- Discuss with your child the work set and strategies suggested by the teacher.
- Set aside some of your own time to help with Reading, Spellings, Tables, Maths/Science Facts.
- Do not do the work for your child.
- Encourage your child by providing support and by asking questions such as -How, What, When, Where, Why and Who?
- Where appropriate, encourage your child to do research using printed or electronic encyclopaedias, the internet, or at a local library. When appropriate, provide access to a computer (if one is available). Discourage copying of chunks of text from the internet. It is best to paraphrase or summarise.
- Show your child how to use reference books, e.g. the contents list, index, alphabetical order.

## **HOMEWORK CLUB**

To help support your child's learning and homework we have set up a homework club. This club will be free and will be advertised in the clubs letter.

**If your child does not complete their homework in time or forgets to bring it in they will be given the opportunity to complete it during playtime. Remembering to complete and bring in homework helps your child to develop skills of independence and responsibility.**

## HOW MUCH TIME SHOULD BE SPENT ON HOMEWORK?

The time involved will vary according to:

- the age of the child.
- the ability of the child.
- the subject.

The time spent in total each week should be about (this includes reading, learning spellings and tables, etc):

- Year 1 – 1 hr 25 minutes
- Year 2 – 1 hr 25 minutes
- Year 3 - 1hr 55 minutes
- Year 4 - 1hr 55 minutes
- Year 5 – 2 hr 30 minutes
- Year 6 - 2 hr 30 minutes

Although homework must be done, it should not take hours. If it does, please ask yourself:

- Is my child settling and getting on with the work?
- Does my child understand what the task requires?

Children will sometimes want to spend more time on their homework because they are:

- aiming for high standards.
- very interested in the subject.
- enjoying the work.

If your child spends longer on their work, keep an eye on the situation and make sure it is not taken to extremes. It may also be appropriate to discuss the matter with your child's teacher.

We would like to see children completing tasks to the same standard that they would do in school. Presentation and appropriate layout of work is a skill they need to practise at home also.

**If you find that your child is frequently taking longer on his/her work please indicate this by writing a note under the homework. Let the teacher know if the homework was not pitched correctly. If it is obvious that the homework will take much longer than the suggested time then enable your child to work to this time limit, stop, make a note to the teacher that they worked to the time limit and send the homework in uncompleted. This way teachers know that they have set too much.**

***Homework should not be so time consuming that it prevents children from taking part in out-of-school activities. At primary school age it is very important for children to attend recreational and social activities. Children need to learn social as well as academic skills.***

## ENGLISH

### ***Reading***

Our aim is to develop reading comprehension beyond the literal, and to develop a love and appreciation of a wide variety of texts.

If your child is not a confident, fluent reader, hear him/her read aloud every evening.

### ***Helping your child to develop Reading Comprehension skills***

As your child reads, ask the following types of questions (but not all at once) which involve:

- **Defining** the meaning of words
- **Analysing** the behaviour and motives of characters

- **Summarising** what has previously happened in the story
- **Deduction:**  
“By applying general principles to facts A and B I have decided that C is true.”
- **Inference:**  
“From facts D and E I think the meaning could be F.”
- **Prediction:**  
“Because P and Z have happened I think R will happen next.”
- **Opinion:**  
“I think / like / dislike X because .....(give reasons)”

Ask ‘open-ended’ questions which require an explanation. Avoid ‘closed’ questions which only require a ‘yes’ or ‘no’ response.

If your child is a good reader:

- he/she should still read silently every day, just for pleasure, from a wide range of texts, not just stories, of his/her own choice.
- hear him/her read aloud for expression once or twice a week and ask questions.

Reading just before bedtime is a good habit to encourage.

Talk about the book that your child is reading, get them to tell you the story. Encourage your child to really engage with the text by asking questions about it.

### ***Spelling tasks***

Our aim is to develop children’s knowledge of spelling patterns, word families and topic words, and to get children to apply these in their written work. Spelling is ‘for life’, not just for the test.

Spellings lists are sent home once a week, to be learnt for a test on the day indicated. The number of spellings will be around 10 words and personal spellings, depending on your child’s needs.

### ***Helping your child to learn spellings***

Little and often is best. Our timetable has suggested timings but feel free to do shorter amounts more often. Chat about spellings on the way to and from school, get children to find words with a similar spelling, challenge your children to find the words in their reading books.

- Use the “Look, Say, Cover, Write, Check” method
- Break down the list of words into manageable sections
- Break up the words into syllables
- Put the word into context i.e. say the word in a sentence
- Learn the meaning/definition of the words
- Make up actions/memorable phrases (mnemonics) to memorise ‘tricky’ words
- Ask the child to identify the word from within words
- Ask the child to look at the “shape” of the word
- Identify spellings within reading and writing activities
- Try the activities in different places e.g. in the car
- Make it fun and varied - use visual, oral and written strategies

Don’t leave practice until the evening before the test!

### ***Written tasks***

Our aim is to focus on the skills of construction and accuracy, and to develop enthusiastic and committed writers.

Homework may consist of a variety of tasks dependant upon the week’s activities and text type studied. This may include:

- Comprehension
- Note making

- Writing in a particular text type
- Writing part of a story
- Writing sentences
- Writing different parts of language e.g. simile, metaphor, parts of speech
- Book reviews

### ***Helping your child with Written English homework***

- Provide a quiet working environment with a suitable work surface and chair.
- Encourage independence by talking your child through the task, ensuring they understand what is required.
- Ensure your child focuses on the learning objective of the homework.
- Read through the homework upon completion and help your child to polish it (edit for any improvements)

## **MATHS**

### ***Multiplication Tables***

Our aim is to develop *instant* recall skills. Speed and accuracy are essential for maths calculations and problem solving. By the end of Y4 the government expects children to know all their tables up to and including 10 x 10. By Y6 children need to know their tables *very well* in order to achieve level 4 in Year 6 SATs.

Children are given tables (or Maths facts) to learn once a week. Practising little and often is more effective than one long session. Children initially need to know individual tables by heart, and move on to applying them to problems involving multiplication, division and fractions. This, along with an understanding of what the multiplication tables represent, will enable children to apply what they have learnt.

Some children practise their tables by counting-on, e.g. for the 3 x table counting “3, 6, 9, 12, 15”, etc. Children who do this are *not* learning their tables; they are learning to ‘count-on’, and this is of very little use when applying tables to multiplication and division questions. Children must learn to recite tables in full, by heart, e.g. “*no threes are nought, one three is three, two threes are six, three threes are nine*”, etc.

### ***Maths Facts***

Children are given Maths facts (or tables) to learn. Again, practising little and often is more effective than one long session. Children need to understand the facts, learn them, and know how to apply this knowledge to different situations. Try to involve them in discussions that relate the facts to everyday situations. The facts will come from a range of topics which the children will cover throughout the year.

### ***Written Maths/Problems***

Our aim is to focus on arithmetic skills, to develop accuracy, and the good practice of showing working-out.

Maths tasks may involve games, activities or problems, based around the topic of that week, using methods learnt in school. Children gain from discussion both before and after completion of their tasks, with a family member. This should be a supportive role, or for reinforcement of completed work.

### ***Helping your child with written Maths homework***

- Provide a quiet working environment with a suitable work surface and chair.
- Ensure your child reads the question(s) thoroughly.
- Encourage independence by talking your child through the task, ensuring he/she understands what the question asks.
- Read through the homework upon completion and check it for errors (you are welcome to ask your child to make corrections)

Activities should involve parents and children working together. This is important because it enables children to talk about their maths, to use maths vocabulary, and to transfer mathematical skills and knowledge to different situations. Some activities will involve children working more independently, but parental or family assistance is still encouraged.

## **PROJECT and TOPIC WORK**

### ***Topic tasks***

Children in Classes 5 and 6 will be given a longer term project.

Children are encouraged to research, finish, or add to their class topic work (usually History, Geography or Science).

They will be given a topic theme/title at the start of each half term and will be given the whole half term to complete the work. Projects will be collected in the last week of half term.

### ***Helping your child with Topic Work***

Help your child decide when Topic work can be done. Try to spread it out over a few sessions. You can help by assisting with:

- Research in printed or electronic encyclopaedia
- Research on the internet
- Visits to the local library
- Visits to places of interest

Children sometimes spend more time on their topic work than indicated because they are:

- very interested in the subject
- enjoying the work
- aiming for high standards
- trying to do more than necessary

***Keep an eye on the situation and make sure topic work is not taken to extremes.***

## **ADDITIONAL HOMEWORK**

There may be occasions when the class teacher sends unfinished schoolwork home to be completed that evening.

Please do not ask the teachers to set extra homework for your child.

If you want to do extra work with your child at home there are lots of activity books available from leading book stores.

You may also want to do extra research and work around the topics that they are learning in school as a way of extending their learning.

However, please remember that we are children for a very short time and children need to develop other skills.

We expect the children to work hard when they are at school and also offer a range of after-school clubs.

We value play and friendship as much as academic success so this homework guidance is hopefully our attempt to ensure that there is balance in your child's life.

Please talk to your child's teacher should you have any questions about homework.