

MANORBROOK PRIMARY SCHOOL
Aiming for Excellence
Policy Statement – Home Learning
September 2019 Edition

Rationale:

The school regards a child's education as a partnership between school and family.

Purposes:

- To consolidate the learning that takes place in school
- To involve the parents actively in their children's education
- To help children develop a sense of responsibility for their learning

Our Expectations for Completion of Home Learning Tasks:

We value home learning as a way of consolidating key skills and knowledge. We also consider it to be a way to help children develop a sense of being responsible for their own learning and for helping to develop good working habits.

With these priorities in mind, we have identified three key areas in which home learning tasks will be set regularly:

- 1) Reading**
- 2) Times tables or number bonds**
- 3) Spelling and handwriting (combined)**

These tasks can be completed with a family member, or alone. We expect parents to support their children's learning by ensuring they complete their home learning tasks. This can be done by working with the child, or by providing the child with a suitable time and space to enable them to complete the tasks on their own. We also understand that some families may require support to help their children in this way.

Home learning tasks should be done to the same standard as in school, and we ask parents to remind their children of this before and/or during their tasks. This is particularly important in terms of the handwriting and presentation of their work.

Optional Home Learning Tasks

We appreciate that many families enjoy working together on home learning activities and that some children enjoy opportunities to do additional learning.

MyMaths: Teachers will continue to set 'Mymaths' tasks, which will provide additional opportunities for learning. As well as the teacher-set tasks, pupils can also choose from a wide variety of other learning activities to develop their maths skills. These Mymaths activities will be optional.

Project work: Some teachers set projects as home-learning tasks, and these are very popular with some (but not all) families. Pupils will still have the opportunity to do projects as part of some topics, but these will be optional activities.

1) Reading

We hope parents will share our view that reading at every age should be encouraged and supported, as it is the key skill children need to enable them to access information independently in every area of life.

It takes considerable time, and frequent, regular practice, to become a reader, but schools are limited in the frequency and length of sessions they can give children to develop their reading skills due to other demands on learning time. Therefore, the partnership of parents, offering regular reading opportunities, is a hugely important factor in a child's journey towards becoming an independent reader.

For this reason we ask that, for the entire duration of their time at Manorbrook, all parents hear their children read or discuss their children's books with them as often as possible. We also encourage parents to model the act of reading themselves, to talk about books they have read, stories in newspapers, etc., so that children begin to appreciate reading as something that can enrich the lives of people of all ages, rather than just a task they need to do at school.

Frequency of Reading

Children are expected to read every day. While they are learning the basics of reading, this should be to an adult. As children become more capable, they may read with increasing independence, but even in the upper juniors when they may prefer to read independently, children will still benefit from discussing their reading regularly with adults at home.

After hearing their child read or discussing their child's reading with them, or when a more proficient child has read independently at home, parents are asked to write a brief comment in the child's reading record.

As a minimum, we ask that parents date and initial the reading record, to let the teacher know when reading happens at home.

Vocabulary Development

A key role parents can play in their children's development as readers is in the area of broadening their vocabulary. Explaining unfamiliar words to children helps them to access more challenging texts in the future and to express themselves more precisely. Furthermore, praising children for asking the meaning of words they don't know rewards their curiosity and makes them more likely to keep enquiring about what unfamiliar words mean.

Recognising and Rewarding Regular Reading

In all classes, pupils will receive certificates for completing multiples of 50 reads (50, 100, 150, etc.). They will also be acknowledged in commendation assemblies.

A motivational system will accompany the certificate system. After every 5 reads, pupils will receive a raffle ticket to go into the Class Book Draw. (A maximum of two reads per day will be counted.) At the end of every term (i.e. six times per year) each class will draw a winner, to receive a book prize.

Supporting Families with Reading

We appreciate that some families may need support to enable them to help their children read. We will offer support in a range of different ways:

Reading mornings:

On Monday, Tuesdays and Wednesdays, the Infant Hall will be open from 8.25am, to allow parents to enjoy a reading session with their child, before they go into class. We hope this will help some families to build a start-of-day reading session into their morning routine.

Technical reading advice:

We will provide parents in all classes with a booklet containing suggestions for the types of questions they can ask, and techniques they can use. If parents require additional support, teachers can offer help, for example by modelling effective techniques for sharing books and developing children's reading skills.

Additional reading support:

Some children need more support or practice than even their parents and teachers can provide. In these cases, we will aim to supplement our in-class reading sessions by allocating the child to a 'Reading Buddy', who can give them an additional reading session, usually once per week. Reading Buddies are volunteers (Parents, other relatives, people from the local community) who spend time in school working one-to-one with children, helping them master the skills they need to become more independent in their reading. We always welcome additional reading buddies, so parents who wish to join the team are encouraged to let their child's teacher know.

Book Selection:

Teachers can recommend books to suit children's interests or abilities, and support parents who are unsure whether particular books are suitable for their children or not. If parents are uncertain whether a book is appropriately matched in terms of difficulty or whether the content / subject matter is suitable, they are welcome to ask their child's teacher for advice.

2) Times Tables and Number Knowledge:

A sound grasp of the key basics of number helps children solve maths problems at any age. Home learning will be focused on regular practice of the basics.

In the lowest years, this might be basic counting and number bonds. This leads into times tables work. We expect children to practise their multiplication tables knowledge every week. Times tables empower children as mathematicians by giving them instant recall of number facts as multiplications ("Six twos are twelve.") and as divisions. ("How many twos are twelve? Six.")

Children who know their times tables can more quickly and easily solve the multiplication and division components of a huge range of maths problems, such as questions involving fractions, percentages, ratio and proportion, and real-life problems in a wide range of areas such as money and measures.

The importance of mastering times tables has been acknowledged by the Department for Education, who, from 2020, will expect all pupils in Year 4 to be tested on their times tables knowledge. The expected standard is that all tables up to 12 x 12 are to be known by the end of Year 4.

From September 2019, pupils from Y2 onwards will be able to use the Times Tables Rock Stars program (TTTRS) to practise their tables. If children or their families do not favour a screen-based approach to learning tables, children may complete paper-based times tables grids at home instead. A combination of both methods is also perfectly acceptable if preferred. Teachers in all classes will make sure that children have access to sheets of appropriate times tables grids to use at home.

Our expectation is that all children from Y2 onwards will practise their times tables every week, either on Times Tables Rock Stars or on paper.

Recognising and Rewarding Times Tables Learning

Children will be rewarded with times tables certificates from Y2 upwards. These are awarded in the first instance for mastering new times tables, then when children know all their tables, they are awarded for completing tables grids within certain time limits. Certificate winners are also acknowledged in Commendation assemblies.

3) Phonics and Spelling:

Accurate spelling is a key component of writing. Regular practice allows pupils to consolidate their knowledge of the main phonic patterns that are needed to spell phonically regular words, and alongside this, to practise and learn the many irregular words that form a large part of day-to-day writing.

There is also an expectation within the National Curriculum that all children should learn to write in a consistent, joined and legible style at primary school.

From Year 1 onwards, children will be given regular sheet-based spelling homework, with one word presented at the start of each line, to learn and copy. These sheets will always model the words in the required handwriting style, showing the expected letter formations and (where appropriate) the correct joins between letters. The spellings are printed on handwriting lines. This allows pupils to master their handwriting while they practise their spellings. The handwriting component of this task is as important as the spelling component.

We understand that some children find handwriting easier to keep neat than others, but we expect all pupils to form letters correctly, then to move on to using correct joins, to help them master a consistent, fluent style. Therefore, the expectation is that, although the number of words to be written will not be large, children will take time to ensure every word is written with well-formed, correctly-joined letters.

When are Home Learning Tasks Set?

In all classes, the spelling tasks will be given out on a Friday, and are expected in by the following Wednesday. Times tables learning will be checked on a Wednesday, so any paper-based times tables sheets must also be returned by the Wednesday.

What if Home Learning is Not Done?

Parents will know that the second of our three school values is 'responsibility', and that this includes taking responsibility for the things we are expected to do. With this in mind, we will make it clear to all children that they are expected to complete the tasks whenever they are set. We ask parents to support us in this. A good way to ensure the work is not handed in late is to aim to bring it in early, on the Tuesday. We understand that there will at times be exceptional circumstances which lead to homework not being completed, or being returned late. Therefore, on the first occasion in a term when homework is not brought in, the child will be given a reminder. On subsequent occasions, the child will need to complete the task during the second half of Wednesday lunchtime. A staff member will supervise and support them as necessary. Our intention is to help children develop good working practices, but in easily manageable ways that do not require large amounts of time. This requirement to catch up with work will not apply to children in Reception class.

Support with Completion of Home Learning Tasks

As with the reading homework, parents of children in all classes are welcome to make use of the Infant Hall on Monday, Tuesday or Wednesday morning to quietly complete the homework with their child before the school day begins. There will always be a staff member on duty, who will be happy to assist if there are any questions regarding the homework. Pupils who walk to school alone may also come in to complete homework by themselves or to access teacher support.

Reception Home Learning

Our youngest pupils, in Reception class, will be expected to read regularly at home, as explained above. As the year progresses, there will at times be other home learning tasks, such as phonics activities and number-based activities.

Year 6 Homework

In Year 6, pupils will receive additional homework. This has two principal benefits:

1. It enables the pupils to gain confidence by consolidating learning in preparation for the Y6 Statutory Assessments;
2. It helps the children to prepare themselves for the increased quantity and frequency of homework they will receive in secondary school.

If there is sufficient demand, a pre-SATs homework club might be offered, to support children who would like additional help with certain areas of learning.

Children with Special Educational Needs

We will ensure that home learning tasks are tailored to suit pupils with Special Educational Needs. Here are some examples of how the expectations might be adjusted:

Spelling and Handwriting:

The number of words on a sheet might be reduced, as might the number of times each word should be copied out.

Where physical motor difficulties occur, a child might have larger lines, or might be able to dictate the spellings to a scribe at home, or might be allowed to type the spellings instead.

Children with Special Educational Needs (Continued)

Times Tables:

Teachers will set the particular times tables on Times Tables Rock Stars (TTRS) to match the learning needs of each child.

If children are prone to anxiety about speed or competition, their teachers will direct them to the particular TTRS activities that will minimise these elements, to help them avoid any unnecessary worry.

Paper-based grids will likewise be pitched to the requirements of different children. This might happen by focusing only on certain times tables, or by reducing the number of grids to be completed.

Overview of Home Learning Activities

Home Learning Activity	YR	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6
Reading book	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Phonics / Spelling activities	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Number bonds / times tables	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
SATs preparation workbooks							*

Review of Policy:

Adopted by Teachers: September 2019

Adopted by Governors: September 2019

Date of next review: September 2020