

The Rydal Academy Homework Policy

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Introduction

At The Rydal Academy we believe that homework is any learning activity that pupils undertake outside of school lesson time, either on their own or with the support of family members or school staff. At our school, homework encompasses a wide variety of activities instigated by teachers and parents/carers to support the children's learning.

Research evidence

The current research findings in this area suggest that children's achievement is positively affected by completing homework in primary school. However, the research also acknowledges that the positive difference that homework makes to attainment and progress can be small. The Education Endowment Foundation currently lists the additional progress achievable via accessing homework as '2 months'. This means that individuals can add the equivalent of two months of progress to their current attainment level if completing homework regularly.

'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.'

Education Endowment Foundation (EEF),

<https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/evidence-summaries/teaching-learning-toolkit/homework-primary/> (website last updated 31st January 2018)

In the same summary article, the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) also explains: 'The broader evidence base suggests that short focused tasks or activities which relate directly to what is being taught, and which are built upon in school, are likely to be more effective than regular daily homework'.

As a school, we have taken the above research findings in to consideration; re-shaping our homework offer in the process.

Our rationale for homework:

- To consolidate and reinforce the learning done in school, and to allow children to practise skills taught in lessons.
- To support pupils in maintaining and developing the skills of an independent learner.

- To promote cooperation between home and school in supporting each child's learning.
- To enable aspects of the curriculum to be further explored independently.
- To provide further educational experiences not possible in school.

We know that homework can play a positive role in the areas above. However, we also acknowledge the importance of role of play and free time in a child's growth and development. While homework is important, it should not prevent children from taking part in the activities of various out-of-school clubs and of other organisations that play an important part in the lives of our pupils. We are well aware that children spend more time at home than at school, and we believe that they develop their interests and skills to the full only when parents/carers encourage them to make maximum use of the opportunities available outside school lessons.

We accept that not every activity will capture children and parents' imagination and that weekends can sometimes be busy. We believe that homework should be enjoyable and manageable for all concerned and that if it becomes a chore/burden/source of conflict it ceases to be a constructive aspect of teaching and learning. We do not specify amounts of time that must be spent on a task, preferring individual children and families to set their own routines. However, individual teachers are more than happy to give advice.

We hope that the children are motivated by positive incentives given and by the tasks themselves; children are not punished if they fail to complete the work. However, teachers will try to promote homework throughout the year and will discuss homework completion with parents during parental pupil consultations and/or when they feel additional access to homework would be beneficial for a specific area of children's learning

Types of homework

Staff and pupils regard homework as an integral extension of the curriculum. It is planned and prepared alongside all other programmes of learning and is high quality.

The homework we have in place across school is detailed below:

- Listening and language packs are available daily for Nursery children.
- Nursery rhymes to learn with family members go home weekly to all Nursery children.
- Talk Boxes (containing practical activities to be enjoyed by parents and children together) are available from Nursery through to Year 6.
- English speaking packs (to support children and families in learning the English language) are available to all pupils who speak English as a second language.
- **All children through Reception to Year 6 take a reading book home each night and read an appropriate amount of text based on their age and ability.**
- **In Years 2 – Year 6 all children receive weekly spellings to practice at home.**
- In Years 1 – 6 optional homework tasks, incorporating all areas of the curriculum, are selected by children from their termly homework grids.
- In Years 1 – 6 we also have optional maths and English homework tasks which are carefully linked to each year groups' curriculum.
- In Year 6 additional, targeted homework is given throughout the year to support individual children in revising for their SATs tests.
- We also have a wide range of afterschool clubs which offer weekly learning experiences across the entire breadth of the curriculum. Within this afterschool offer we have a club that is specifically focused on homework completion and both children and parents/carers are welcome to attend.

The two activities in bold above are the required homework we expect all children to complete every week. All other activities are actively encouraged weekly but they are optional.

Homework format

The next section shows our school's homework guidance to children and parents. This document is stuck in the front of all children's homework books and contains important information about the format of our homework. Please see the guidance for further information.

My Homework Book

- **My homework book will allow me to express my own learning and interests.**
- **I will choose from a range of open-ended activities to complete in my homework book.**
- **Once I have completed an activity I will tick the circle in each box in to show that it is finished.**
- **If I choose an activity which involves 3D models or IT, I will include evidence, such as photos, in my homework book.**
- **Every half term I can choose one WILD CARD from my homework grid. This allows me to carry out any activity that I want to do which is not listed on the homework grid. This can be completing any activity of particular interest to me.**
- **If they would like to, my parents/carers can comment on my effort and enjoyment of each task in my homework book and the level of support provided.**
- **My teacher will look at what I produce weekly and if I have completed homework they will send a Marvellous Me comment home to my parents and give me 5 points for my effort.**
- **My homework book will be given out every Wednesday and collected in on the following Monday**
- **I know that I don't need to have completed a piece of homework every week but I will try to whenever I can.**

Marking of homework

Homework completed well will be acknowledged and praised verbally, points may also be awarded. Homework of exceptional quality will be shared with the rest of the class. It may also be displayed in the classroom and viewed and praised by the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Lead and/or the Headteacher.

Inclusion and homework

We recognise that children have individual academic abilities and skills as well as different resources at home. This means that we understand that tasks can be completed successfully in a number of different ways. We ensure that all tasks set are open ended and appropriate to the abilities of the children. We endeavour to adapt any task set so that all children can contribute in a positive way. 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 and carers

Parents and carers have a vital role to play in their child's education, and homework is an important part of this process. We ask parents and carers to encourage their child to complete the optional homework tasks that are set as well as the required homework tasks (daily reading and spelling practice).

We invite parents and carers to help their children as and when they feel it to be necessary and to provide them with the sort of environment that allows children to do their best. Parents and carers 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. The talk boxes available from Nursery through to Year 6 also aim to support parents in engaging in meaningful learning conversations with their children.

If parents and carers have any questions about homework they should contact their child's class teacher in the first instance and then, if necessary, the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Lead.

Use of ICT

A copy of the school's E-Safety policy is available from the school office and may also be found on the school website. The child's safety is paramount in all matters regarding use of the internet and we advise parents and carers to always supervise their child's access to the internet.

Monitoring and review

Our homework policy will be reviewed annually by the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Lead in consultation with teaching staff. This review will take into consideration parental views gathered through the annual questionnaire to parents. This policy will be brought before the Local Governing Body for approval.