



May 2023 – Homework changes from next term - Years 1 - 5

Dear Parents and Carers,

The setting of homework for primary school children has always been a contentious issue. Some parents like homework being set each week, whilst others find it creates a lot of stress and tension in the home trying to get it completed. Getting the balance right is not always easy! We appreciate that children often have many other clubs and activities after school and fitting in homework can be challenging.

The issue of the effectiveness of homework has been extensively researched. There is stronger evidence that it is helpful amongst older pupils who are able to self-regulate their learning and who have more background knowledge to draw upon. Evidence also suggests that at primary school, homework is most effective when it involves practice or rehearsal of subject matter already taught. The research also highlights that children completing homework develop better learning habits.

Given the above, we have decided to make some adjustments to the way in which we give homework by focusing on mainly reading and instant recall of times table facts. These changes will begin from Term 6 (6th June 2023).

Note – no changes for current Y6 Leopards as they are in a routine and only have one term remaining.

What is our homework expectation from Term 6?

Reading

There will be a much **greater emphasis on reading as a homework task** in order to reflect the importance of this subject. Evidence suggests that children who read for enjoyment every day not only perform better in reading tests than those who don't, but also develop a broader vocabulary, increased general knowledge and a better understanding of other cultures. In fact, reading for pleasure is more likely to determine whether a child does well at school than their social or economic background.

Children will be expected to read at least 3 times per week at home with an adult and different classes have different systems for recording / sharing this.

Times Tables

The second emphasis for homework will be **rapid recall of times tables or basic number work for year 1 and 2 children**. Without a good knowledge of times tables or a basic sense of number, progress in many areas of maths can be slow. The teaching and learning of number facts can be greatly enhanced with the support of parents and carers as part of children's home learning. Even a few minutes spent learning and recalling their times tables or number facts three times a week will make a huge difference to your child.

As a school we have access to TTRockstars and are currently trialling Numbots for KS1 children (more info to follow) – these are both brilliant game-based resource for learning (and then remembering!) times tables facts and number bonds. Both of these are building blocks for further maths teaching and

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the more easily that the children can remember and retrieve these facts, the easier they will find maths. We are expecting children to access and use these games regularly. Class teachers will check these apps for usage and we would recommend at least 15 minutes per week. Y1 and 2 parents will receive more information regarding Numbots from class teachers shortly.

Weekly spelling

We will continue to set weekly spellings across Years 1-6 and expect these to be part of your child's weekly homework. We recommend at least 15 minutes per week to practise spellings. Teachers will send these as they do currently for each class for the remainder of the year. We will look for a uniform way of sharing these from September.

Google Classrooms

In light of the above changes, we will not be setting any additional work via Google Classrooms. We will only use Google Classrooms in the event of a child self-isolating or if we ever need to revert to more formal remote learning.

Further opportunities

When speaking to the children, they said that they enjoyed homework that was based on research and in particular when it was linked to an upcoming topic. Our termly overviews are available on the website which show the topics the children will be studying. Please follow the link and then select your child's year group to locate the overview:

<https://www.sissinghurst.kent.sch.uk/page/?title=Year+Groups&pid=45>

If your child is keen to carry out some independent research, the class teacher would be delighted to see this and share it with the rest of the class.

Class teachers of course are also happy to speak with you if you would like to discuss any aspects of learning where you would like to help your child at home, please just ask.

We make sure that we use the time in school to focus on the subjects, content, knowledge and skills that the children need to know. We build in time to recap and revisit areas of learning so that the children embed them in their memory. We do not feel that it is a fair expectation for parents to take on the teaching burden, and so we take responsibility to make sure that the children leave us ready for the next stage of their journey. Within this, we will teach them about how to be responsible, how to manage their time and resources and how to apply their skills independently so that when they are faced with significant homework at secondary school, they are ready for the challenge.

Thank you for your continued support with your child's learning.

Yours sincerely,

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