

ST WOOLOS PRIMARY SCHOOL



HOME LEARNING POLICY

OCTOBER 2019

Introduction



At St Woolos we believe that education is a partnership between home and school. We also believe that pupils should have a valuable say in their learning. We have responded to the changes in the new curriculum by consulting with pupils and taking their research and ideas into account.

Last year, we changed our whole approach to learning at home to enable pupils to have more choice.

Our Pow! Pupil Thinking Group consulted with their classmates, researched current home learning tasks and devised a system which they, and we, believe will motivate pupils in their home learning. The first change that they recommended was to change the name to Home Learning.

This is what they said:

"We changed the name because we wanted everyone to learn at home, not work. It has changed because the way we are learning is changing".

Pupils wanted more practical things to do with their family. They said, *"It helps us bond with our family."*

Our pupils value spending time with you and all parents play a very positive role in supporting their children with their home learning. The more you value learning at home, the more children will value it. The more meaningful it is for them, the more they will remember it. You make all the difference to your child!

As well as the usual spelling and reading, pupils will be able to choose from a menu of activities which will be worth either one, two or three house points. They will work towards collecting points, depending on the activities they choose. The Pow! thinking group believe that this will motivate more pupils to do home learning.

Home learning could be written, could be research and poster making or it may simply comprise of playing a particular game or performing an activity such as making an autumn leaf collection. It serves its purpose if it:

- challenges pupils
- consolidates or develops an area of knowledge and
- motivates them.

Home learning is most effective when it involves you and your child spending time together.

READING



Home reading continues throughout the school.

All children have either a reading folder or book bag in which to carry their individual home reading books and they are expected to bring these daily. These home reading books are read at home (or in school with reading volunteers) and they help children to practise skills learned at home.

Guided Group Reading levels are set at a higher level than home reading books to ensure that pupils read books at home that are at an independent level. Guided Group Reading, challenges and extends a child's comprehension, develops vocabulary and also generates reading enthusiasm. (See Guided Group Reading leaflet.)

The Reading Response book accompanies children's individual home reading books. These Reading Response books let your child's class teacher know that your child is reading at home regularly and give your child the chance to respond to what they are reading. This is an important reading skill.



Please sign your child's home reading book and make a comment if you would like to.

Individual home reading continues as a homework activity throughout the school and as children become more fluent, they have more choice in choosing books to bring home. When it is felt appropriate by the class teacher, a pupil may supplement their school home reading book with one borrowed from the library or from home. What is important is that the process of independent reading at home continues.



We want all children to have literacy skills for life and to develop a love of reading for pleasure. If you read to them, or they see you reading, this shares the enjoyment of reading.

It is important that parents are supportive and not critical in their reading guidance to their child. To view individual reading books merely as a race for your child to get through runs the risk of your child developing very narrow comprehension skills and limited knowledge of meanings within texts. It also takes away the very important principle of reading for pleasure.

All children are encouraged to join Newport Library Service and joining forms are available in school. There is no charge for this and children can borrow books for up to three weeks at a time

SPELLING



Children learn sounds (or phonics) from the very beginning of Reception. They follow the Jolly Phonics scheme (which teaches children to link an action with a sound) and teachers also use other methods and approaches. This is called a 'Synthetic' Phonics' approach because it pulls together (or synthesizes) other methods.

Children learn by seeing letters and words, by hearing sounds and by playing games with letters (eg rearranging them).

Spelling is an activity that continues throughout the school from Year One. Phonic and word lists are very carefully graded to ensure that the words are appropriate for the child's level of ability. In September, all Juniors are given the Single Word Spelling Test in order to determine their spelling age. These tests are given to Year 1 and Year 2 each January. Groupings based on these results ensure that pupils have spelling lists that are ability-appropriate and are linked to the National Literacy Strategy Framework.

The spelling strategy employed by the school is:

LOOK-COVER-WRITE-CHECK

Parents are encouraged to adopt this approach when helping their children with their spellings. (A leaflet is available in school.)

Children have:

- a list or a book to take spellings home to learn
- a separate test book in school.



Please sign your child's home spelling book when you have helped them with their spellings.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Languages, Literacy and Communication

General English homework may comprise any number of written activities such as story writing, questionnaires, reports, dialogues, comprehension, letters or personal journal writing. It is likely that this homework will also fulfil cross-curricular criteria by relating to other subjects or topics.

Children attending Catch-up Literacy sessions will also be given separate homework to be returned within the week or on a given date.

Maths and Mathematical Development



All classes are given termly maths objective sheets which detail areas to be covered during that year. Parents are encouraged to keep these targets and involve their child with things such as helping with measuring, weighing or counting money at home.

It is important that as children progress throughout the school they gain a secure knowledge of their times tables. Homework may be sometimes comprised of learning the tables appropriate for that age group. Please help your child with this. Parents are encouraged to test a child with random questions and to help them learn division tables facts at the same time.

Children attending Catch-up Maths sessions will also be given specific home learning tasks throughout the course of these sessions to be returned within the week.

Science and Technology



Like Maths, Science home learning may be set when it is felt to be appropriate. It will complement work covered in the class and will seek to develop children's skills and knowledge.

Humanities (Geography and History)/Art/ICT



Homework may be given in these subjects as and when necessary and may be part of class project work.



Class Home Learning Information

FOUNDATION PHASE

Nursery	<i>Children will be encouraged to gather collections of items or to make something at home. These activities develop collaboration between the parent and child and will be given at various times throughout the year.</i>
RD and RH	<i>Phonics Keyword sets and Phonics Word Sets are sent home in a bag are sent home regularly to practise Reading scheme books taken home daily and returned daily Occasional activities to develop a topic.</i>
1D, 1/2D and 2S	<i>Reading book taken home daily. Spelling taken home on <u>Tuesday</u>. <u>Test the following Monday</u>. Occasional activities to develop a topic or practise sounds.</i>

KEY STAGE 2

A menu of home learning tasks will be provided on a half termly basis. In addition, the following is set:

3J, 3/4B and 4P	<i>Reading book taken home daily. Spelling taken home <u>Monday</u>. <u>Test on Friday</u>.</i>
5P, 5/6M and 6W	<i>Reading book three times a week Spelling taken home on <u>Monday</u>. <u>Test on Friday</u>. Additional tasks may be given at points during each term.</i>

- Where appropriate, unfinished work in class will be sent home to be finished.
- All homework must be neatly presented.



Children in Foundation Phase classes will have a spelling book.
Junior classes have a separate home learning book and spelling book.

All home learning is marked regularly and may be discussed at Parental Consultations.



Please sign your child's homework book or sheet.



How can I help?

- Listen to your child read or practise their sounds and spellings regularly.
- Ask your child regularly about their home learning.
- Please sign your child's spelling and home learning books weekly.
- Praise your child for settling down to their home learning (Even if they are having problems, it is better that they have tried in the first place.)
- Be positive and praise them for anything that they try hard with. Let them know that you are pleased with them.

What if my child is struggling with home learning?

- By all means help your child with their home learning, but please do not do it for them. Teachers need to know whether a child has been able to complete the work or not so that they can give appropriate help.
- Please do not push your child if they are finding the work difficult. It's better to have a chat with their class teacher so that they know where the child is having difficulties. Home learning is a positive learning tool as long as it is not causing the child to be upset at home.

How can I find out more?

- Ask your child's class teacher for advice, either at Parental Consultations, or at other pre-arranged appointments after school.
- The school regularly runs Family Learning Workshops throughout the year to help parents find out about ways to help their child in school. Please join them if you can.

- If you think that an additional information session or course would be helpful for parents please let us know.
- If your child has an Individual Development Plan because they need support in a particular area, join us at one of our parent coffee mornings for children on IDPs.

It is only by working together that we will get the best for your child.

BUILDING LEARNING POWER AND GROWTH MINDSET



Building Learning Power helps children to think about the ways in which they learn and think (meta-cognition) and it is based on the work of Guy Claxton. It helps them develop effective learning and thinking behaviours. They learn that finding things difficult or making mistakes are very important parts of the learning process and they mustn't give up.

We are teaching children about having a **Growth Mindset**. They may talk about being in the **Learning Pit**. This means that they may be stuck but are developing strategies to get themselves out and develop new learning behaviours.

These behaviours help them to stick at learning, even when it is tricky and to understand that even if they can't understand or do something yet, they soon will. We want children to develop learning behaviours that will equip them for life.

Children are taught the four key aspects of Building Learning Power. These are:

RESILIENCE

Managing Distractions
Absorption
Noticing
Perseverance

RESOURCEFULNESS

Questioning
Making Links
Imagining
Reasoning
Capitalising

REFLECTIVENESS

Planning
Revising
Distilling
Meta-learning (Thinking about Thinking)

RECIPROCITY

Interdependence
Collaboration
Empathy and listening
Imitation

When children understand about how they learn best, it helps them to become confident and creative thinkers. We teach children that it's ok to fail first, because we learn a lot through our mistakes just like James Dyson or David Beckham.

It's only by failing or getting stuck, that we learn to get better and become more creative thinkers.

(Read books or see films about by Carol Dweck to find out more about Mindset.)

CREATIVE HABITS OF MIND



Our Involvement in the Arts Council For Wales Lead Creative Schools school has led us to introduce the 'Creative Habits of Mind' approach across the school. The Creative Habits of Mind are based on the work of Guy Claxton, Art Costa and Bill Lucas.

All children from Nursery upwards are developing skills in mapping the change in their Creative Habits of Mind (Thinking Skills) as they follow new learning.

These Creative Habits of Mind are:

INQUISITIVE	Wondering and Questioning/Exploring and Investigating/ Challenging Assumptions
PERSISTENT	Tolerating Uncertainty/Sticking with Difficulty/Daring to be Different
IMAGINATIVE	Playing with possibilities/ Making Connections/Using Intuition
DISCIPLINED	Crafting and Improving/Developing Techniques/Reflecting Critically
COLLABORATIVE	Co-operating appropriately, Giving and Receiving Feedback Sharing the 'Product'

At the beginning of a topic, children map where they think their thinking skills are, they focus on ones to improve and they then revisit these at the end of the topic, to plot their improvement.

Children are encouraged to refer to these Creative Habits of Mind when they are evaluating their own work, and that of others.