



# GATEHOUSE PRIMARY SCHOOL

## HOMEWORK

### School policy and arrangements

March 2005

#### 1: Introduction:

When schools and parents work together, children perform so much better. Activities at pre-school and school are important to your child – and you can add to their experiences and learning by supporting them at home in a variety of ways.

Between the ages of 5 and 16, children spend only 15% of their lives in school – which means the other 85% is mostly with you - the parents. Parents and families are by far the most important influences on children's lives. Therefore, supporting them at home really does improve their chances of success.

You, as a parent, can provide so many other opportunities for your child at home, which it is not always possible to develop properly at school. For example:

- regular visits to local amenities and places of interest;
- membership of local clubs and organisations;
- time for hobbies, interests, play and family games;
- undivided attention on a one-to-one basis - to talk, listen and read;
- time for your child to read books of his/her own choice.

This document sets out how we establish the routines of homework throughout the years your child/ren is/are with us. It outlines our expectations of you – and, equally, it sets out what you can expect from us – and how to go about contacting us if you have a query or difficulty. With support and encouragement from yourselves, children find it easier to get into the homework habit.

If you wish, we would welcome the opportunity to discuss with you how you can best help your child's education at home.

#### 2: Why is homework important?

Homework is a means of *regular* communication between the school and yourselves. In particular, it also helps your child to -

- practise and build upon what s/he has learned at school,
- take more responsibility for her / his own learning,

- learn how better to organise and manage his / her time,
- develop confidence to deal with difficulties, problems and frustrations – and
- learn and work more independently.

Children learn something well when they talk about it or explain it to someone else. *Please ask your child/ren about their homework – it really helps them.*

It also lets you find out more about what s/he is doing and learning at school - and to get involved with their learning.

### **3: What homework will your child receive?**

First of all, it's important to mention here that it's *quality* that counts – not quantity. For that reason, it is not always easy to define a hard-and-fast rule as to how much homework you can expect for your child in terms of *time*.

The important thing to remember is that you should ask what homework your child has – have a positive and encouraging attitude to it – and remember that it is for him/her to do – not you.

#### **In the early years (P1/2/3), a selection from / combination of:**

- Letter sounds and actions,
- Numerals to 10, later extended to 20 and then to 100,
- Number words ('Look & Say'),
- Word boxes – consonant-vowel-consonant words (e.g 'cat', 'dog', 'pin') and blending,
- Reading,
- Reinforcement of difficult words/sounds (from 'Look & Say'),
- Project work / Research (finding out),
- Learning poems by rote,
- Aspects of Mathematics,
- Spellings,
- Formal exercises in English Language – class-work consolidation.

#### **The mid-school (P3/4/5) pupils receive a selection from / combination of:**

- Reading – and talking about it on a regular basis,
- Spellings (practice and learning of) on a weekly basis,
- Maths and English Language – as consolidation and to complete unfinished class-work,
- Topic work research,
- Learning poems by rote,
- Practice in oral and mental maths – especially multiplication tables.

**For older pupils (P5/6/7), a selection from / combination of:**

- Reading (currently two/three times per week according to stage) and discussion of content,
- Mathematics – including tables – reinforcement work / activities according to stage,
- Spelling exercises / sentence construction / vocabulary work according to stage,
- Topic work,
- Recorder practice,
- completion of unfinished class-work,
- Topic research,
- Learning poems by rote, and, where appropriate,
- ICT activities.

**4: Where and when should homework be done?**

One important way in which you can support your child with homework is by helping to provide somewhere, and a time, that is suitable for him / her to complete it.

That simply means a regular *time* that becomes an accepted routine as the ‘homework time’, and which doesn’t conflict with other outdoor activities or favourite TV programmes. Listening to your child’s reading over breakfast isn’t really ideal. Equally, it means a *place*, hopefully free from distractions, with a table for completion of any written work.

**5: A word about *expectations*:**

The vast majority of our pupils and parents see the benefits of regular homework – and its completion - as a positive, worthwhile and serious part of school life. For a small minority, however, experience has shown that homework is seen as optional - and one which can be overlooked when convenient. However, *we at the school have an expectation* that homework needs to be given due respect, and should be undertaken with care and diligence.

Accordingly, *the school expects* that homework is completed carefully by each pupil and submitted on time. If not, we feel it is not unreasonable to expect a written note from you by way of explanation for this. At the same time, we also ask you to please ensure that all school materials are treated with care at all times.

In return, *you can expect* that appropriate homework tasks will be consistently given by the school – and that they will be corrected appropriately – either through individual correction (by the teacher) or by group discussion / correction (by pupil/s) - according to the nature of the task.

Of course, we appreciate there may be genuine reasons why homework is occasionally not done by a pupil. However, if it persistently fails to appear, (after 3 of 4 occasions) we will write to let you know about our concerns – and, if appropriate, invite you to come and discuss any problem with ourselves.

**6: Conclusion:**

We have outlined, above, the value of the completion of regular homework by your child/ren. We have also mentioned the importance of *your support* for your child in the completion of that

homework. It should not, however, become too onerous, difficult or demanding a task. If it is doing so, the pace, content or level needs to be reviewed.

However, if an on-going difficulty is being experienced, then the homework is serving the purpose of identifying an aspect about which we may need to talk with you, and we should all feel free to make contact with each other.

*And finally . . . .*

research has shown that children who do homework regularly throughout their time at school benefit from the equivalent of roughly an extra year's schooling!