



# Ark Blacklands Primary Academy

## Home Learning



## PRINCIPLES AND PURPOSE OF HOME LEARNING

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At Ark Blacklands we are passionate about equipping every child with the academic tools they need to be successful in secondary school and beyond. In order to do this in an informed way, we look at what research says about the most effective ways of doing things and shape our policies to match.

What does research say?

- Overall, homework in primary schools does not appear to lead to large increases in learning;
- The most effective thing any parent can do to help their child succeed at school is to read books to or with their child every night;
- Activities that involve the parent and child working together on something or talking about work in school can be effective;
- Regular daily homework in the form of worksheets, which a child is expected to do unaided, can have a negative effect. It can put children off learning as it can cause parents to have to nag about completing homework, rather than doing positive educational activities with their children.

Planning, collecting and marking homework takes a lot of staff time. Since research show that formal homework does not lead to increases in learning, we therefore consider it to be poor stewardship of the limited resource of staff time to waste it on something that is unlikely to be productive.

So rather than homework, we promote home learning. Home learning aims to:

- Recognise and celebrate learning that already happens at home;
- Promote parents and children reading and talking together;
- Providing opportunities for pupils to develop a growth mindset and to for pupils to feel proud about pushing themselves beyond what is compulsory;
- Encourage resilience, independence and pupils taking responsibility for their own learning;
- Enabling classwork to concentrate on those things that require the teacher's presence.

## HOME LEARNING IN THE EARLY YEARS

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In the early years, parents should read a story to their child daily. If parents cannot do this for some reason, then the parent should ensure that an older sibling, or older relative can do this on their behalf. There is nothing else a parent can do which will have more impact on their child's learning than this. Parents should make sure their child is a member of their local library and visit regularly together. Hastings library can be found in the town centre at Brassey Institute, 13 Claremont. Special events for children are held here regularly.

**Compulsory home learning: basic skills practice.**

All children will be expected to read their book and also be read to (see timetable for more detail). The more children practise reading, the easier and more enjoyable it becomes. There is not enough time during the school day for children to practise as often as they need to – so doing this at home is vital. Children also need to learn to persevere in reading longer texts as their reading skills develop. If children do not practise reading at home, they are very likely to fall behind and will then struggle throughout their school careers. The more parents read to their children, the larger their vocabulary will grow and the more they will develop their own love of reading. This is as true of children in years 5 and 6 as it is of children in year 1. We would expect parents to record daily reading in their child’s reading record in KS1 and for a child to begin to record their own reading as they move into KS2 and become more independent. Reading records should be brought into school every day by all children.

Here are some points for discussion to have with your child about their reading book:

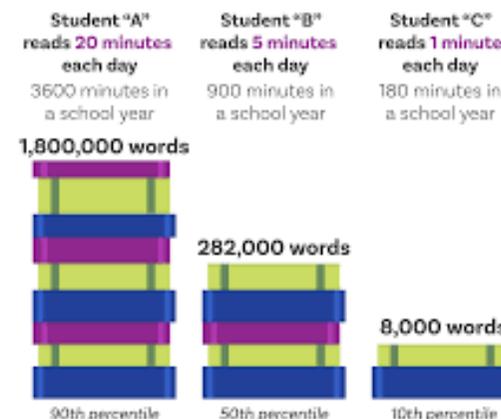
- Can you summarise the story so far?
- Why do you think that the author chose that word?
- What effect does this sentence have on the reader?
- Does this remind you of any other books you have read?

Children must spend a few minutes each day revising their number facts (number bonds and times tables) and spellings. Ten minutes every day is much more effective than an hour once a week. The more children practise these, the easier they will be to remember. The quicker they can remember them automatically, the more their brain has space to work on other, higher level things. Parents will be provided details of the spelling and number focus each term on the termly year group curriculum leaflet (Appendix 1). However, it is important to stress that if we do not practise maths facts and spellings regularly, we will begin to forget them. That is why even year 6 pupils will sometimes be given what appear to be easier number facts and spellings – just to check they can still recall these instantly!

**Compulsory Home learning**

	Reading	Other
<b>Early Years</b>	10 minutes daily: Adult sharing a library or other book/ bedtime story – recorded 5x a week in reading log	5 minutes daily on the following: Initial sounds High frequency words Counting to 20
<b>KS1</b>	15 minutes daily: Reading aloud to an adult or sibling a library/other book– recorded 5x a week in reading log	10 minutes daily on the following: Spellings Number facts – focus shared termly
<b>KS2</b>	20 – 30 minutes daily reading library/other book – recorded 5x a week in reading log	10 minutes daily on the following: Spellings Times Tables and related facts – focus shared termly

**Why Can't I Skip My 20 Minutes of Reading Tonight?**



## ENRICHMENT ACTIVITIES AND PROJECTS

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In addition to the reading, number facts and spelling we expect all children to complete, we also give children a range of optional enrichment projects and suggested activities that can be completed at home. These activities and projects provide families an element of choice; learning that gives options. Parents and children can work in partnership to choose how many – and which – projects or activities they choose to work on together. These will then be shared and celebrated at school.

We hope to inspire children to want to take on these enrichment activities and projects for themselves and so teachers should remind both parents and children about the importance of having a 'growth mindset'.

- The more you challenge yourself, the more your brain grows as you learn new things;
- Success comes from effort and practice;
- Success lies in our own hands.... we can choose the easy path, or we can choose to take on challenges;
- Success is optional. It is a choice you make. Stretch yourself and learn or take it easy and waste your talents?

These enrichment activities and projects are optional for an important educational reason. Success in life is entirely optional – we can choose not to push ourselves; we can choose to limit ourselves and only to do what is easy if we want. However, if we do that, we will never know what we could have achieved – if only we had really tried. We will never fulfil our true potential.

Children need to learn self-motivation – to do things because they are worth it and not because the teacher or their parent tells them they have to. Some children will embrace this straight away and others will not really appreciate this until they are much older; possibly not until they are themselves adults. However, at primary school level, our enrichment activities and projects provide a context for children to begin to value lifelong learning for its own sake.

## YEAR 6

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In order to prepare our year 6 pupils for secondary school where regular homework will be expected on a daily basis, year 6 class teachers will also send home additional compulsory tasks in English, science and maths, on top of the home learning outlined above. For example, they might be given a maths worksheet to do or a reading comprehension.

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

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We value the support of parents/carers and we believe that this policy will be successful if there is a strong partnership between home and school. We recognise that all children need leisure time and hope that our policy reflects a balance so children can extend and consolidate their learning with parental support while still allowing 'down time.'

### How can parents support Home Learning?

Parents have an important role to play in supporting this approach to Home Learning. Simply sending your child to their room with a pencil and their homework does not work. For our pupils to achieve success, we need parents to take an interest in what their children are learning.

Here are some tips from the Department for Education as to how parents can best support their children;

- **Make Time:** your child will benefit from you taking an interest in what they are doing.
- **Experiences:** Try and link life and leisure experience to your child's school work e.g. visits to the park, museum or days out.
- **Talk:** Make time to ask your child about what they are studying and what they have learned. Another great way to show you are interested is to attend school activities such as parents' evenings and sport events.

### Disadvantaged Pupils and Pupils with SEND

We set homework for all children as a normal part of school life. We aim to ensure that all tasks set are appropriate to the ability of the child. If a child has special educational needs, we endeavour to adapt any task set so that all children can contribute in a positive way. If a family does not feel able to provide resources for their child to complete homework or an enrichment project, we will endeavour to support children to take part positively.

## EQUALITY IMPACT STATEMENT

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We will do all we can to ensure that this policy does not discriminate, directly or indirectly. We shall do this through regular monitoring and evaluation of our policies. On review we shall assess and consult relevant stakeholders on the likely impact of our policies on the promotion of all aspects of equality, as laid down in the Equality Act (2010). This will include, but not necessarily be limited to: race; gender; sexual orientation; disability; ethnicity; religion; cultural beliefs and pregnancy/maternity. We will use an appropriate Equality Impact Assessment to monitor the impact of all our policies and the policy may be amended as a result of this assessment.

APPENDIX I – TEMPLATE FOR ENRICHMENT ACTIVITIES & PROJECTS

		<b>SPELLING FOCUS TERM *</b>
	 <b>ENRICHMENT ACTIVITIES</b>  <b>&amp; PROJECTS</b> <i>Term * - Name of Theme</i>	
		<b>NUMBER FOCUS TERM *</b>