

Helping your child at home

At Great Chesterford C. or E. Primary School, we believe that *Together We Are Great*. By working together with pupils and parents, children can have access to the best possible education. This leaflet offers some guidance on how to support your child at home.

Homework

What is homework?

At Great Chesterford, we view homework as being a supported or independent task which is undertaken outside of curriculum time and which reinforces, extends, or enriches current learning.

Why is it set?

The purpose of homework at Great Chesterford is:

- To enable children to practise and consolidate skills.
- To broaden the context of learning and provide enrichment and extension.
- To enable children to take responsibility for their own learning, become more independent and develop perseverance.
- To provide opportunities for parents to be involved in children's learning.

What does homework look like?

Homework involves a range of activities, which may include the following:

- Collecting items linked to a theme
- Speaking and listening tasks
- Spelling and word investigations
- Independent research
- Collecting data
- Reading comprehension activities
- Book reviews
- Maths Investigations
- Educational games
- Skills practice
- Learning vocabulary

Reading is an important part of homework and should be completed daily.

What should my child be doing?

The following table outlines the expectations for homework:

Reception	Daily reading with an adult Learning sight words Optional challenges	10 minutes per day
Year 1	Daily reading with an adult Learning sight words (for some children) A maths activity	10 minutes per day reading 15 minutes per week on a maths activity
Year 2	Daily reading with an adult A maths activity	10 minutes per day reading 20 minutes per week on a maths activity
Year 3	Daily reading with an adult	15 minutes per a day reading

	Daily times table practice A maths activity	5 minutes daily times table practice 20 minutes per week on a maths activity
Year 4	Daily reading with an adult Daily times table practice A maths activity	15 minutes per day reading 5 minutes daily times table practice 20 minutes per week on a maths activity
Year 5	Daily reading (at least once a week with an adult) Daily times table practice Two activities a week – typically maths and English	15 minutes per day reading 5 minutes daily times table practice 25 minutes on each task
Year 6	Daily reading (at least once a week with an adult) Daily times table practice Four activities a week – typically maths, English, French and science	15 minutes per day reading 5 minutes daily times table practice 30 minutes on each task

How can you help?

Routine

Establish a homework routine that works for you and your child. This will, of course, depend on many factors and differ from household to household. Some children benefit from having a break after school and then completing homework before dinner time whilst others perform better if completing first thing in the morning. Check your child's Home/School Link book or diary daily so that you can support them to organise their time effectively and avoid a last minute panic! Trying to get children to complete homework just before bedtime is rarely valuable as children are tired. The setting of homework several days in advance enables children to develop skills in organising their time. Younger children will need your support in moving towards this.

Quiet Environment

Provide a quiet, well-lit area for your child to complete their homework. Try to avoid distractions during this time, such as televisions or loud music. Encourage other family member to allow quiet time for the homework to be completed.

Resources

Ensure your child has the correct resources available for their homework. Basic equipment should be available – pencils, pens, a ruler, an eraser and paper. Novelty pencils (provided they are sharp and of a useful length) can be an effective way to encourage young children to write! Dictionaries and Thesauruses are available for all ages and by Upper Key Stage 2, children should be using these independently in class and at home. Other useful resources might include scissors, glue, a hundred square, multiplication square or numberline.

Praise

In school, pupils are taught to develop a positive mindset. To support this, it is vital to praise a child for their efforts. Positive comments are far more effective than critical ones. A child can become disaffected if continually reminded of shortcomings. For example, if a child spells a word incorrectly, praise the sounds that they did get right and help them correct it. If a child says they can't do something, make sure you establish that they can't do it yet.

Set a good example

Parents play a key role in helping their child develop a positive attitude to homework. When children can understand how skills fit into real life situations, they are more likely to be interested in learning. Any opportunities to involve your child in aspects of daily life which involve English or maths skills will have a positive effect. Visits to the library can also be a good opportunity to support topic work

and to access reference materials. Educational visits can also support learning and even a trip to the shops can support maths skills.

Presentation

Encourage your child to take pride in the presentation of written tasks. Work should be handwritten by your child in pencil or a suitable handwriting pen (if they have a pen licence) unless otherwise directed by the class teacher.

Developing independence

Monitoring the completion of homework is dependent on several factors: the child's age, how able your child is academically and how independent your child is. For younger children, offer your help and support to complete tasks. Expect older children to work independently but make it clear that you are there if needed. However, it is important to remember that the homework is your child's and not yours! We would expect to see homework completed to a similar standard to their school work.

What do I do if I have a query?

If your child has a problem completing the homework or you have any questions, please contact the class teacher or write a note. We will do all that we can to resolve the problem. Your support in the process is vital for children's success in developing self-study skills as they move on up through the school.

Remember that by showing an interest in your child's homework, you are showing your child that school work and education is important and needs to be taken seriously. Encouraging your child, whatever their age, to complete homework to the best of their ability helps to establish high expectations. Further information about our approach to homework can be found in our homework policy document which is available on our school website.

Reading

At Great Chesterford C. of E. Primary Academy, we believe that reading has a vital role to play in a child's intellectual development and emotional well-being, and we continue to promote the participation and enjoyment of reading.

To support your child's reading at home, we strongly advise and encourage you to hear your child read for a short time on a daily basis, regardless of their age and ability. As well as listening to your child read, reading with them poetry, factual books or more challenging stories helps to promote a love of reading. Ways to do this could include: taking it in turns to read a page of a more challenging book, reading to your child, discussion of a text having both read it or using audio books to listen to a story before a discussion. Once again, finding a suitable environment, establishing a routine and modelling good reading behaviour will all contribute to positive reading habits being formed. The aim is for reading together to be an enjoyable experience for both you and your child.

Tips for a reading session

At the beginning of a reading session, ask your child what the book is called. If they have already started the book, ask them what the main events of the story have been so far. Encourage your child to sound out any unfamiliar words and try to blend the sounds. You may need to repeat back the correct pronunciation of the word. If a phonics approach doesn't work, encourage your child to read to the end of the sentence and see whether it is possible to work out the unfamiliar word. If the book contains pictures, discuss these and see if they can give clues to unfamiliar words. If a child hesitates, be patient! Given time, the child will often be able to work out the words successfully.

Read the word to the child if none of the previous strategies work and the flow of reading has halted.

If a child misreads a word but the meaning is not altered, allow them to read on. However, if they are rushing and making mistakes that are crucial to the understanding, encourage them to slow down and look carefully at the words. Using a finger or ruler to help the eyes track the words may be a useful strategy. At the end of a page or chapter, ask questions to check that your child understands the context of the text and new vocabulary (see below for question prompts). For early readers, it may be beneficial to re-read the whole sentence to aid understanding of the text.

As children develop fluency with their reading, encourage them to read with expression and note the punctuation used. You may need to model this to them so they can hear the difference between a sentence/paragraph read with intonation and one without.

Finally, finish any reading session with praise and encouragement. If your child has finished the book, ask them if they enjoyed the text. This will help them to develop reading preferences.

Developing comprehension skills

Reading is not just about being able to decode the words. It is about understanding what is being read – comprehension. The following areas are important in developing a child's understanding of what they have read:

- **Explaining** - explaining the meaning of vocabulary in context, predicting what might happen later on in the story and discussing the understanding of whole texts.
- **Retrieving** - finding information in the text to answer straight forward questions.
- **Interpreting** - using inference skills (with an emphasis on using evidence from the text).
- **Author's Choice** - focus on the author's choice of words and layout of the text.

In the early stages of learning to read, the decoding skill is the main focus. However, even with children in Key Stage 1, discussion of vocabulary and retrieval skills need to be practised. As children's reading skills progress, the inference skills should be practised regularly.

Useful questions to support KS1 and Lower Key Stage 2 pupils develop comprehension skills:

Where is the story/event taking place? How do you know that?

What happened in the story?

How is ... feeling? How do you know that?

What was ... wearing? What does ... look like?

What do you think might happen?

What would you do?

How would that make you feel?

Can you think of another word that means ...?

Can you think of a character from another book that ...?

What did you think of the story? Why?

Who was your favourite character? Why?

What other adventures could ... go on?

Can you find an adjective that describes ...?

What did ... do/ask?

Who spoke to ...?

What were the problems with ...?

Useful questions to support Upper Key Stage 2 pupils develop comprehension skills:

Who did...?

Which words / phrases does the author use to reinforce ...?

How does this compare to [other source] ...?

At which points does...?

- Can you sum up...with an example?
- What words / phrases support this idea?
- What are the most important points in...?
- Can you choose the best example of/for...?
- What images do these words create, and why?
- What else might all this add up to?
- How does...add to the overall meaning?
- What do you think ...is thinking now?
- What do you think... thinks later on?
- Why does...act like this?
- What does this word / line / section tell us about...?
- What makes you think that?
- Which of these pieces of evidence is more important in understanding...?
- Why do/don't you agree with ...'s view?
- How does this idea / character develop throughout...?
- How does the way that...is arranged help to...?
- What words / phrases are being used in [section] to reinforce the writer's point?
- How do you know the writer's views on [subject]?
- How does the writer feel about...? How can you tell that?
- Compare the style of writing in this text to.... What do you notice?
- Can you explain how these texts are similar / different?
- Why do you think the author set the text in...? How does it affect...?

Spellings

The school's phonics programme, which is taught from Reception, enables the pupils to develop skills in both reading and spelling. Children are encouraged to sound out words to enable them to write. However, as well as learning this phonetic approach to spelling, there are also a number of sight words which the children need to learn to read and spell. These words do not necessarily follow a phonetic pattern and so the children should just learn them by sight.

Sight words (taught from Reception)

a	because	for	I	my	our	the	up
about	big	from	in	new	out	their	us
after	but	get	into	next	over	them	very
all	by	go	is	not	put	then	was
am	call	got	it	now	said	there	we
an	can	had	last	of	saw	they	went
and	came	has	like	off	see	this	were
are	come	have	little	old	she	three	what
as	could	he	live	on	so	time	when
at	did	her	look	once	some	to	will
away	do	here	made	one	take	today	with
back	down	him	make	other	that	too	you
be		his	me			two	

The national curriculum includes statutory word lists for Key Stage 2 pupils. The lists are a mixture of words commonly used in writing and those which are often misspelt. Ways in which you can help

your child learn spellings include: ensure any words copied are spelt correctly, say or clap the syllables in each word, regular practice of the words to learn, encourage children to think of the root word when spelling unfamiliar words, look for words within words, find words which follow the same pattern and to use a dictionary to check spellings. Joined handwriting can also support spelling.

Years 3 and 4 word list (taken from the National Curriculum):

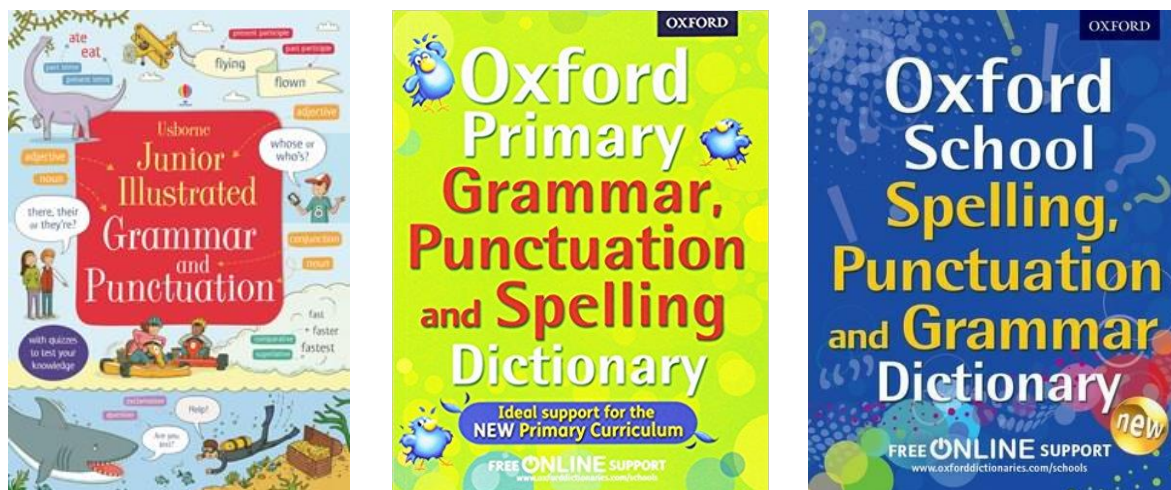
accident(ally)	continue	group	natural	question
actual(ly)	decide	guard	naughty	recent
address	describe	guide	notice	regular
answer	different	heard	occasion(ally)	reign
appear	difficult	heart	often	remember
arrive	disappear	height	opposite	sentence
believe	early	history	ordinary	separate
bicycle	earth	imagine	particular	special
breath	eight/eighth	increase	peculiar	straight
breathe	enough	important	perhaps	strange
build	exercise	interest	popular	strength
busy/business	experience	island	position	suppose
calendar	experiment	knowledge	possess(ion)	surprise
caught	extreme	learn	possible	therefore
centre	famous	length	potatoes	though/although
century	favourite	library	pressure	thought
certain	February	material	probably	through
circle	forward(s)	medicine	promise	various
complete	fruit	mention	purpose	weight
consider	grammar	minute	quarter	woman/women

Years 5 and 6 word list (taken from the National Curriculum)

accommodate	competition	existence	muscle	rhyme
accompany	conscience*	explanation	necessary	rhythm
according	conscious*	familiar	neighbour	sacrifice
achieve	controversy	foreign	nuisance	secretary
aggressive	convenience	forty	occupy	shoulder
amateur	correspond	frequently	occur	signature
ancient	criticise	government	opportunity	sincere(ly)
apparent	curiosity	guarantee	parliament	soldier
appreciate	definite	harass	persuade	stomach
attached	desperate	hindrance	physical	sufficient
available	determined	identity	prejudice	suggest
average	develop	immediate(ly)	privilege	symbol
awkward	dictionary	individual	profession	system
bargain	disastrous	interfere	programme	temperature
bruise	embarrass	interrupt	pronunciation	thorough
category	environment	language	queue	twelfth
cemetery	equip	leisure	recognise	variety
committee	especially	lightning	recommend	vegetable
communicate	exaggerate	marvellous	relevant	vehicle
community	excellent	mischievous	restaurant	yacht

Grammar and Punctuation

The current curriculum has a significant amount of terminology for the children to become familiar with in terms of grammar and punctuation. This can be a cause for concern for many parents. Remember that it is always beneficial for children to hear their parents say, 'I'm not sure, let's find out together' rather than 'I can't do grammar.' Below are some recommended resources to support parents with this:



Please do not hesitate to ask your child's class teacher for any further guidance or clarification of grammar terminology.

Maths

As well as English, Maths is a core subject. At Great Chesterford C. of E. Primary Academy, we wish to instil a love of numbers and the ability to problem solve and reason. Fluency of key maths skills and facts will help your child to accurately solve problems and consider various approaches to such tasks. Discussing when you might use certain maths skills (e.g. telling the time, use of money etc.) and modelling these, will help the children's understanding of maths in real life situations.

Useful skills that could be practised at home include:

Reception	Counting forwards and backwards in 1s to 20 and beyond Counting forwards in 2s, 5s and 10s
Year 1	Number bonds to ten and within ten (e.g. $4+6=10$, $3+4=7$, $2+3=5$) Counting forwards and backwards in 1s Counting in 2s, 5s and 10s Recognising the value of coins Counting groups of coins (initially made up of 10p and 1p) Telling the time to the hour and half hour
Year 2	Number bonds to ten, twenty and 100 (multiples of 5) Counting in 3s and 4s Recalling 2, 5 and 10 times tables Counting groups of coins Telling the time to the quarter positions
Year 3	Number bonds to 100

	Recalling 2, 3, 4, 5, 8 and 10 times tables Calculating change in shops Telling the time to five minute intervals
Year 4	Number bonds to 1000 Recalling all times tables to 12x12 Calculating change in shops Telling the time to one minute intervals
Year 5	Number bonds to 1 (with up to 2 decimal places) Recalling prime numbers to 10 Recalling square numbers to 12^2 Calculating change in shops Reading timetables and working out time intervals
Year 6	Number bonds to 1 (with up to 3 decimal places) Recalling square numbers to 12^2 Recalling prime numbers to 100 Working out percentages of numbers Reading timetables and working out time intervals

Many of these skills can be practised through short games. Frequent short burst of practice is the best way to develop these skills. It is also important to revisit 'past' skills to ensure that these are fully committed to the long-term memory.

Other Learning Opportunities

As well as supporting your child with the core subjects of English and Maths, we believe that parents should encourage physical and creative opportunities during time outside of school. Limiting screen time and promoting engagement in outdoor physical activities (whatever the weather) have been proven to benefit the mental well-being of any individual. Opportunities for exploring creative arts (music, art, drama, dance) should also be encouraged as these again offer great benefits.

Useful Websites

The following websites are a useful point of reference for supporting your child with homework:

www.bbc.co.uk/education (formally known as Bitesize)

www.mathsisfun.com

www.primaryhomeworkhelp.co.uk

We hope this information has been useful. Please contact your child's teacher with any concerns or queries you may have. Further information about our curriculum can be found on our school website.