

CALDER HOUSE SCHOOL

Thickwood Lane, Colerne, Near Chippenham, Wiltshire, SN14 8BN

HOMEWORK POLICY: January 2018

In general homework will reinforce work covered in class, and **no** new or more advanced work is to be set as homework.

Reading Homework:

In term time, our readers will be set reading homework every day, including across weekends. Parents are expected to listen to their children read for the number of pages (or, in the case of more able readers, period of time) stipulated in the child's Reading Diary.

Where our priority is to build motivation levels, or to consolidate decoding skills taught in class, homework may consist of re-reading passages read with the teacher that day.

Parents are encouraged to discuss the key words contained on the inside of the book's front cover. Pearson Reading Scheme books frequently include supporting questions that guide reading. We urge parents to use such 'scaffolding' as aids to ensuring that the reading experience at home encompasses the processes of both comprehension and decoding. Parents are frequently kept informed of additional strategies and approaches they might adopt to enhance the reading experience with their child via the 'Learning2Learn' articles attached to the school's newsletters.

Older, more confident, readers will be expected to read at home with their parents for 10-15 minutes every day, including across the weekend.

The majority of our children will be asked to read on for two to three pages, depending upon quantity of text involved.

Children with low Reading Accuracy Ages but high Interest Ages, might be placed on the Barrington Stoke scheme. These books have generous margins and small page sizes. As such, the Reading Tutor may assess the child as capable of reading more than three pages.

Parents are expected to evidence that they have heard their child read by signing the Reading Diary on a daily basis. Where parents persistently fail to sign, it is the duty of the Reading Tutor to bring this to the Head of Department's attention immediately. Here, 'persistent' is to be defined as a failure to do so on three consecutive occasions.

Supplementing the Pearson Reading Scheme, ALL Calder House pupils complete High Frequency Word Lists, up to the first 1000 words. The Reading Tutor works through these lists until the first 1000 have been completed. Our readers must evidence that they are able to decode the word correctly on three separate occasions (i.e., days), excluding where the learner has no difficulties doing so, in which instance a single correct attempt is sufficient.

The Reading Tutor will make it clear (especially to new children and their parents) that daily homework is to include coverage of some of the words on these lists. The parent is asked to tick the words correctly decoded. They should not dot/cross where the child has made errors, as this impacts negatively upon motivation levels.

The number of words attempted by parents on the High Frequency Lists is left to their discretion, as they may gauge their time more profitably spent reading and discussing the book sent home. Teachers are expected to use a combination of teaching strategies (e.g., phonological, visual and morphological) to cover a minimum of five words from such lists with the child every day.



Class (Reading) Tutors maintain records of a child's progress through the Pearson Reading Scheme, as well as the pupil's selection of reading-for-pleasure texts. The latter enables the Reading Tutor to ensure the child is selecting from a 'varied genre diet,' as well as books of an appropriate level. All of our books are colour coded to support both tutor and reader in making this selection.

Before a child is permitted to progress to the next book in the Pearson scheme, s/he must evidence that they have completed the short, comprehension tasks at the back of their book. These tasks, where they are written in nature, are completed in an exercise book dedicated to this purpose. Some of these tasks (such as making a model) may be practical in nature.

The Reading Tutor may – with parental support – supplement reading homework with one or two columns from a specified page of Toe-by-Toe. The Reading Tutor will never request that the child attempt a pattern/sound that has not previously been introduced in class. Rather, the teacher may ask that the child attempt the second column (of three). This leaves the Reading Tutor to both introduce and review all patterns/letter combinations.

Before setting Toe-by-Toe homework, the Reading Tutor is bound to first consider the child's homework load for that evening. The Reading Tutor must remain sensitive to the child's level of resilience (and motivation levels) in terms of homework. This is especially true where the reader is already expected to cover (with their parent) words from the aforementioned High Frequency Word Lists.

The Reading Tutor must remain vigilant of, and sympathetic to, reasonable concerns raised by parents apropos homework workload (and the anxiety this can cause in our learners). Where the Reading Tutor has concerns in this regard, the Head of Department ought to be notified immediately. All written communications between Reading Tutor and parent should be retained.

About 10 minutes of English homework:

This may consist of a number of things – primarily aimed at improving spelling. Spelling homework will be set on 3 or 4 nights each week, using the 'Look, Read, Say, Cover, Write' method. Parents are asked to keep an eye on this at first to ensure that the words are written accurately. They are asked to supervise this part of the homework, until they are confident the correct method is being used.

Where parents have supported their child in completion of Spelling homework, they are asked to record an 'AS' (Adult Support) in the margin, alongside text where additional scaffolding was required. This helps the Spelling teacher to identify areas of difficulty.

Spelling homework also consists of covering words from the statutory word lists (taken from the National Curriculum). The Department for Education has been ambitious in setting these words, and we understand that some of our children will find them challenging.

Older pupils sitting Standard Attainment Tests (SATs) may be given additional homework to help them prepare. As with Spelling homework, parents should mark 'AS' where they have provided support, thereby supporting the English teacher in identifying areas of difficulty that require revisiting and consolidation.

Both English and Spelling teachers are eager that learners give their homework a 'good go,' but it is imperative that – where children (or parents) become unduly anxious about such tasks – the overriding principle is that the child does their best, and that is all we can ask. Our primary aims are

to develop in our learners a growing resilience for, and improved organisation of, such homework tasks as will be encountered upon leaving Calder House.

About 10 minutes of Maths homework:

Maths homework will be set each day and should take approximately 10 minutes. It will consist of Doodle Maths plus a few written questions or times table practice. All homework, including Doodle Maths, will be checked by the child's maths teacher the next day.

Doodle Maths has the advantage that it can be used on many devices and can be accessed and played in the car journey home. Every child has their own log in details which can be found in the back of their homework diary, and parents can create their own login too, so they can monitor how their child is progressing.

In addition to Doodle Maths, every child also has access to Doodle Times Tables which is an excellent method of improving recall and understanding of multiplication tables. The government will be introducing Times Tables tests in 2018 to be taken by Y4 children, so it is important that pupils use this app regularly. We advise parents that the journey to and from school is a great opportunity to practise singing or chanting tables.

We appreciate that parents may wish to support their child as they complete their homework tasks. To show if help was needed, parents should write AS (adult support) in their books. We use specific approaches and the pupil's books will show examples of how they are being taught. The Maths Calculation Policy found on our website will provide additional support. We ask parents not to confuse their child by introducing a method they may not know as this will lead to misunderstandings in class.

Maths homework is designed to be fun and beneficial; it is also intended to reinforce what your pupils are learning in class, so if a child is struggling, we ask parents to let us know and we will do our best to make the homework process easier.

Total homework time for all pupils is 30 mins a night.

Mrs Cottle (SLT), Mrs Laughlen (SLT) and Mrs Eccles (1:1 dyslexia teacher) may also set homework tasks to support their remedial work.

Children in the older groups will be set a little more homework to help prepare them for transition back to mainstream. The older children will be asked to produce a History or Geography extended learning task termly on an alternating basis. This is to assist those children moving to Secondary education in order to organise their work and 'pace' themselves. They are bound to find this difficult, which is why we want to start their training at Calder House.

Holiday homework will be set for the Easter holidays, and also for the Summer holidays for those pupils returning in the Autumn Term.

Note: It may be necessary to modify the homework requirement when children first join the school, but this must be agreed specifically with the Head.

***Reviewed January 2018 and approved by Management Team
Next review September 2018***

