

Thursday 5th September 2019

Dear Parents and Carers

Our school is becoming an evidence-led school. As professionals, we make choices based on what has been shown to have the biggest impact on children, particularly their learning.

You may remember that, a couple of years ago, we decided to stop 'setting' children (grouping them with children working at a similar level) for English and maths. This was as a direct result of a report published by the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF), which is a highly-regarded educational charity. This report highlighted the extensive research which showed that all children, including those with special educational needs as well as those with a gift for learning, perform best in 'mixed-attaining' classes. Indeed, this approach, which is called 'mastery', is now government policy.

Using the most up-to-date evidence, **we have now made a decision as a whole staff team to reduce the amount of homework we give to children.** The EEF found that 'overall the general benefits [of homework in primary schools] are likely to be modest'; 'there is stronger evidence that it is helpful at secondary level, but there is much less evidence of benefit at primary level.'

The statutory National Curriculum for England is knowledge-based, meaning that the learning of facts has become the most important strand of primary teaching. As such, we have moved towards using 'knowledge organisers', of which you will receive a copy by the end of this week, to present the key facts for each area of study succinctly and clearly, using the most up-to-date educational research. Children learn the information on these knowledge organisers in a way which makes it 'stick' in their long-term memory so that they can recall it with fluency.

It is the learning of the facts on these knowledge organisers which will form the bulk of the homework we expect children to complete. In class, children will learn lots of different, hopefully interesting, ways to engage with this information and learn it by heart, and teachers will encourage children to use these same strategies at home.

We still expect all children to read regularly out of school, for learning and for enjoyment. Research also shows that those **children who have a listening ear at home make much faster progress when being taught to read at school.** Also, remember the benefits of reading to children, as well as *with* them; listening to bedtime stories, for example, helps children to expand their bank of known words and gives them imaginative ideas for their own writing.

As always, we are willing to adapt our approach once we have given it a sufficient length of time to become embedded. The staff team will review the approach to homework on our next training day.

Thank you for your support.

Yours sincerely

Mr Danks and Mrs Wellsted
Deputy Headteacher and Headteacher

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