



Birches First School

Believe, Grow, Succeed

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Monday 9th September 2019

Dear Parents,

This year we have made some exciting changes to the way in which we approach homework. As a school it is important to us that any home learning tasks we set have a positive impact on the development of our children and their learning. We appreciate that it can, at times, be challenging for parents to support their children with some of the specific learning skills we teach the children in school. It is also a school priority to ensure that children are developing in all areas of the curriculum and are given opportunities to take ownership of their learning and direct it in their own way.

Therefore, homework will now be set as follows;

Weekly homework expectations

Reading

All children are expected to read regularly (recommended 10 minutes per day). Once a child has completed their reading book and it has been signed by a parent, they may change their book in school on the next day. In Years 2-4 children are asked to complete a short book review before changing their book (minimum once per half term.)

Children in Nursery should enjoy regular story times with adults to help foster a love of reading and experience a range of stories and books.

Phonics

Children who are developing their phonological awareness will be set target phonics each week to practise recognising, identifying and writing in a range of contexts.

Spelling

Children in Years 1-4 will be set spellings every other week (on a Monday). These words will follow a taught spelling pattern and will also include a small number of Common Exception Words. It is expected that children practise these spellings regularly in preparation for a spelling test and assessment by application to writing. Children may also be asked to identify other words than those given that follow the same taught spelling pattern. Children will have 2 weeks to practise their spellings before being tested (once again, on a Monday)

Mental Maths

Children (depending on year group/stage of development) will be tested weekly on their recall and application of timetables, mental maths skills (doubles, halves etc) or number

facts (number bonds). It is expected that children will practise these skills regularly at home to support their confidence and recall.

Children in Years 2-4 will also access T-T Rockstars to support times tables skills.

In Years 2-4, My Maths homework tasks will be set for children to complete at home across the term (Year 1 from summer term).

Additional (optional) home learning tasks may be set in Year 2 and Year 1 during the year to support and prepare children for Key Stage One SATs and the Year 1 Phonic Screening Check.

Reading books are collected in during Christmas and summer holidays.

Creative Curriculum tasks

In line with each class' curriculum theme, a Homework Grid will be uploaded to the school website containing a set of home learning tasks for children in all Reception and Years 1 to 4. These tasks will link to a range of curriculum areas. Children may select the tasks that they find most appealing and motivating for completion. Some tasks may specify an outcome whilst some may be more open-ended, leaving opportunity for the child themselves to choose the outcome. A 'showcase day' will be arranged on which children may bring in their completed task(s) and share them with their teacher and class (please see Information regarding 'Showcase Days' on your child's class homework grid).

In Nursery, home learning opportunities may be suggested on the weekly newsletter (uploaded on the school website) to further the learning experiences in class.

We expect children to maintain the same standards for presentation of homework as we set in school i.e. to use their best handwriting and a sharp pencil or pen if they have obtained their 'Pen Licence'.

We do not specify amounts of time that must be spent on a task. Individual children and families can set their own routines to suit their routines and additional, extracurricular activities.

We hope the children will be excited by this new approach and motivated by the tasks themselves. Children will not penalised if they fail to complete the work. However, discreet homework registers are kept. It is expected that children will complete weekly homework tasks set (as outlined above) and that parent's will support their child(ren) with this learning. If a child consistently fails to complete these weekly home learning tasks, this will be discussed with the child and their parents.

Please do speak to your child's class teacher should you have any questions or any issues in supporting your child with their home learning.

Best wishes

Miss S Varricchione

Headteacher

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