



Scammonden Road, Barkisland, Halifax, W. Yorkshire, HX4 0BD  
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Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> September 2019

### HOMEWORK

Dear Parents/Carers,

The way in which homework will be set this year is changing at Barkisland School!

From Friday 20<sup>th</sup> September, homework from school will be in the form of TALKING HOMEWORK.

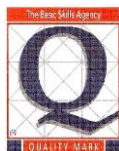
Homework is always an aspect of school life that has the most divided opinion amongst parents and carers. Some families would like more and some would like less or even none at all! Recent research by the Education Endowment Foundation (2019) states that “...pupils who do homework tend to be more successful, however it is not clear whether the use of homework is a reason for this success.” The research also goes on to state that “There is stronger evidence that it is helpful at secondary level, but there is much less evidence of benefit at primary level.”

Useful discussions around homework were had at the parental forum held last term. Benefits, pitfalls, frustrations and success were discussed around the current structure of homework at Barkisland. I spoke to parents and carers about the potential introduction of Talking Homework and parents and carers were keen to see this implemented at school.

### What is Talking Homework?

This style of homework is an approach that has proven success at other primary schools. Some schools have entitled this approach as ‘learning conversations’. Each class teacher will set 4 pieces of talking homework each Friday which will cover a variety of subjects and topic areas that your child has been learning about e.g.

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<b>Year 2</b>	
PE	We have been learning to balance using 2 or 3 points of contact with the floor (a point of contact maybe a knee, elbow, hand, foot etc). How many different poses can your child (and you!) make. Maybe you could do this as a game of musical statues.
English	We have been studying poetry this week. Share together favourite poems – it may be tongue twisters, a song, a traditional poem or a rhyming story book. This is a great bedtime activity.
Science	We have been learning about food chains. Ask you child to tell you about one food chain e.g. grass is eaten by a rabbit who is eaten by a fox
Maths	We have been practising telling the time -m o'clock, half past, quarter to and past. Can your child tell the times are certain points during the day/evening?

Each Friday, your child will bring home a sheet which details the Talking Homework (as above). These will also be placed on our website too (In case of lost/forgotten sheets).

There is no expectation at all that children will produce any evidence for this homework. All the homework is entirely verbal or practical. The emphasis should be that your child leads the conversation/activity which will support further consolidation of learning in school that week. It may be that the talking homework opens up further opportunities to extend what has been learnt e.g. debating key ideas, extending knowledge or skills. *The emphasis is on extending and consolidating through thinking and discussion*, not being dependant on writing, recording, making or producing.

All activities should be *no longer than 10 minutes*, but families could extend learning if desired. It is hoped that this style of homework decreases the pressure on family time but facilitates families to extend learning beyond the classroom and raise the profile of learning differently.

It is not expected that children will bring any evidence of their talking homework into school to be marked or awarded. If your child has extended their learning further, they are welcome to bring evidence in to show the teachers and other pupils but by taking away the need to bring evidence of homework into school helps to support the idea that much learning can be done away from the classroom.

Once families become familiar with this style of homework, you will find that it will become part of natural family dialogue e.g. at mealtimes, bath time, bedtime, in the car or walking to school etc.



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**Key Benefits**

- Encourages dialogue between children and families in ever increasing busy family lives.
- Reduces pressure on family time to find a slot to complete homework.
- Minimises pressure times between parents/carers and children when trying to encourage to complete homework.
- Supports children who find recording their work more challenging.
- Increases vocabulary for children –‘A child’s vocabulary is a big predictor of future success.’
- Children don’t see it as homework and are glad to be able to engage with their families about their time at school
- Parents/Carers have specific prompts to open up dialogue with their child/ren and find out more about their daily life in school and learning.

**Reading**

Reading will still be an expectation for all children at home. Research states that reading regular has a direct impact on attainment and progress as well as having a positive impact on well-being.

*‘Children who read for pleasure daily or nearly every day are a year ahead in reading performance versus those who never do.’* OECD (2010), PISA 2009 Results: Learning to Learn: Student Engagement, Strategies and Practices (Volume III)

*‘If all Key Stage 2 children read for pleasure daily, 75% of them would reach the level at the end of primary school that predicts 5 or more passes at GCSE.’* Department for Education analysis 2015, in relation to Mullis, I.V.S., Martin, M.O., Foy, P., & Drucker, K.T. (2012). PIRLS 2011 international results in reading.

Children will have a home school reading book that they can take home and a book from their class library (if not yet on free reading books). Teachers will expect that every child will read regularly at home. For younger children starting on their reading journey, this will be to an adult but will progress to reading independently as they become more fluent.

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Reading is an area of the curriculum which we will be focussing on in school this year and we will be sending further details about the developments in this area in the near future.

If at any point, you are having difficulties in encouraging your child to read at home, please speak to you child's class teacher for advice and support.

### **Projects**

For a number of years now, we have set project style homework for children to complete with their families. We are always impressed by the creativity and effort that children and their families put into these projects. Discussing this at the parental forum generated a mixed response. Some families reported that their children love to complete the project and the freedom they allow for children to explore a topic in any way they like, it was also mentioned that families enjoy completing the projects with their children. Other families felt that we set too many projects and completing these took up too much precious family time. Listening to this feedback, we agreed at the forum that we would still continue to set project homework, but this would be limited to two projects per year group each academic year. We will shortly be sending out an overview of these projects for each year group. We will also endeavour to organise the timings of the projects so that they do not fall over a school holiday period or all at the same time as



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parents expressed that it can be difficult to fit in over the holidays if you work or actually go on holiday and to complete more than one project if you have siblings is challenging.

Projects will be celebrated in class and some children may even receive merit awards for their projects. We recognise that completing a project as a family is an extremely worthwhile learning experience and it is always lovely to see the team efforts that arrive in school.

### Year 1 Pupils

Our Year 1 pupils will still receive some Phonics specific homework to support this aspect of their learning.

### Year 6 Pupils

Our Year 6 pupils will still receive formal homework each week as this is good preparation for secondary school.

I hope that these changes to our homework procedures are welcome news. Please speak to a member of our staff team should you have any questions.

Kind regards,

Mrs Becky Schofield

Headteacher

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