



Home Learning Policy



1. RATIONALE

This policy has been written in consultation with children, parents and staff. We believe that homework is important in developing independence, resilience, responsibility and resourcefulness in our children as well as reinforcing the learning which takes place in school. We also believe that it should not be onerous to children, parents or staff and we acknowledge the importance of children taking part in activities with their families and developing other interests outside of school as a means of developing the 'whole' child. We believe that parents/carers should be empowered to achieve a happy homework/life balance for their child/ren. Therefore, children at Acorns Primary School will be set compulsory weekly homework as well as additional homework which will run throughout each term.

2. PRINCIPLES OF OUR HOMEWORK POLICY

- Ensure a consistent approach throughout the school.
- Offer clarity about expectations and responsibilities.
- Provide opportunities for home and school to work in partnership.
- Encourage children to develop independence and confidence as life-long learners.
- Provide opportunities for children and adults to enjoy learning together.
- Expected homework is based on retrieval of previous learning and practice.

3. EXPECTATIONS

We expect all children to: read, practise their phonics/spellings and practise for Total Recall badges every week, inline with our 3Bs and Values (appendix 1). Children should be supported to complete this practice at home by parents/carers (guidance is provided in section 4 of this policy).

Table showing each year group's homework:

Class & Year Group	Expected (Compulsory) Activity & suggested timings	Additional Activity & details
Reception	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sound Book - letter sound recognition • Word Boxes - sounding and blending • Tricky word reading • Reading • Dictation lists • Numbots 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rhyme Challenge (Spring term onwards) • Topic related discussions - looking at books, objects and homemade items to support the topic
Class 1 - Years 1 & 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading & verbal questioning/discussion - 10 minutes at least 4x/wk (see guidance & appendix 2). • Y1/Y2 phonic word lists: Jolly Phonics sound patterns & personal next steps. Word lists sent home on Monday in reading folders. Cut into flashcards and play games throughout week. • Y2 from October, to replace phonic lists: No Nonsense spellings. 7 words each week, 1 from the previous spelling pattern, 3 from learning that week and 3 from National Curriculum common exception/statutory word lists. Spelling books sent home each Friday; children to practise the 7 words (see guidance & appendix 3) and return books the following Wednesday. • Total Recall practice: Numbots/Times Table Rockstars and Total Recall prompt sheets. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Athletics - x2 activities per week • Termly Cornerstones topic homework ideas & knowledge organiser retrieval
Class 2 - Years 3 & 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading & verbal questioning/discussion - 15 minutes at least 4x/wk (see guidance & appendix 2). • No Nonsense spellings. 7 words each 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CGP Grammar books - x1 activity every 2 weeks • Athletics - x2 activities per week • Termly Cornerstones

	<p>week, 1 from the previous spelling pattern, 3 from learning that week and 3 from National Curriculum common exception/statutory word lists.</p> <p>Spelling books sent home each Friday; children to practise the 7 words (see guidance & appendix 3) and return books the following Wednesday.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total Recall practice: Times Table Rockstars and Total Recall prompt sheets. 	<p>topic homework ideas & knowledge organiser retrieval</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mathsframe - Multiplication Tables Check preparation (Y4 only)
Class 3 - Years 5 & 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading & verbal questioning/discussion - 20 minutes at least 4x/wk (see guidance & appendix 2). • No Nonsense spellings. 7 words each week, 1 from the previous spelling pattern, 3 from learning that week and 3 from National Curriculum common exception/statutory word lists. <p>Spelling books sent home each Friday; children to practise the 7 words (see guidance & appendix 3) and return books the following Wednesday.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total Recall practice: Times Table Rockstars and Total Recall prompt sheets. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CGP Grammar books - x1 activity every 2 weeks • Mathletics - x2 or 3 activities per week • Termly Cornerstones topic homework ideas & knowledge organiser retrieval • Y6 SATs activities/revision

4. GUIDANCE

Reading: sharing books and reading is an extremely important homework practice and we encourage children to read daily with their parents/carers. This should be a mixture of a child reading a book to an adult as well as a parent/carer reading to a child. Parents/carers are encouraged to discuss books with their child to develop their understanding as well as fluency (appendix 1 will help support this discussion along with the resources on our school website: <https://www.acornsprimary.co.uk/reading-at-home/>). All reading should be recorded in the child's school reading record by the child and/or parent.

Spelling: No Nonsense Spelling focuses on the teaching of spelling, embracing knowledge of spelling conventions - patterns and rules. Integral to the teaching is the opportunity to promote the learning of spellings, including National Curriculum statutory words, common exception words (where phonics does not work because it is spelt in an unusual or uncommon way) and words that children personally find difficult. No Nonsense Spelling focuses on the application of spellings into writing.

Within class sessions a range of strategies for learning spellings are introduced and practised. This enables pupils to choose the strategies they find most effective for learning different words. Each week the children (Y2-Y6) will bring home a list of spellings which they have been learning in school (in their homework books). We ask that the children learn the spellings and practise in their homework books or on any suitable spelling app, such as Spelling Shed & Squeebles Spelling Test (if your child practises on an app rather than in their book, please just write a quick note in the homework book under that week's spelling list to inform the teacher of this). Appendix 2 shows examples of the ways children might choose to practise - these techniques have been taught in school. Throughout the school week, children will be quizzed on these words to ensure that the words have transferred from their short term memory to their long term memory, resulting in spelling fluency and accuracy when writing. There will be no formal weekly spelling tests, but a spelling test at the end of every half term, the results of which will be shared with parents.

Total Recall: children are requested to regularly practise times tables on Times Table Rockstars using their individual log in provided to them. Prompt sheets (<https://www.acornsprimary.co.uk/homework/>) may also be provided from time to time/when requested to assist - see appendix 3. Children in Reception are encouraged to use the Numbots app for 5-10 minutes three times a week to support the development of their maths fluency. Numbots provides opportunities to practise number activities, including subitising, counting, addition and subtraction, and supports children in working towards gaining their Total Recall badges.

5. ADDITIONAL HOMEWORK

Children in Years 3 to 6 will be provided with a CGP Grammar book for their year group at the start of the academic year. Teachers will set an activity every 2 weeks in line with the writing processes & grammar taught in school. The activity set will reinforce learning that has already happened/is happening currently. Parents/Carers are asked to work through the answers (provided in the book) to help their child mark their work and discuss any errors. CGP books can be handed in to the class teacher at any point within the 2 week period, and teachers will be on hand during that time to answer any queries and provide support.

Mathletics: maths is set for every child in Years 1 to 6, using an online platform - 'Mathletics'. This gives children and parents immediate feedback on progress. Each child is given a personal login. Please use the back of the homework book provided for jottings and calculating; whilst the questions are asked via the online platform, children are not expected to answer mentally - they will need to write down and calculate answers. Opportunities will be provided to allow children who cannot access the internet at home to complete activities at school at theirs/parents'/carers' request. If you experience any problems with Mathletics, please contact them directly to resolve the issue.

Cornerstones Topic Homework Ideas: at Acorns we use the Cornerstones Curriculum which we have found to be very engaging and successful. At the end of each term, children will be provided with a 'Homework Ideas' sheet for their next topic. Children are free to choose any activity from the sheet or create their own similar activity which can be brought into school any time after the holiday in which it was sent. Pupils can complete as many of the activities as they wish and work can be brought in at any time during the new topic. All projects completed at home will be shared with class members. Paper Knowledge Organisers will also be provided for the main topic and companion project knowledge organisers will be sent electronically. These knowledge organisers are a great resource for quizzing and checking knowledge on a regular basis.

SATs: Year 6 children may be given additional booklets/activities to complete in the Spring term which will help them to revise for end of key stage tests. These activities provide an excellent means for consolidating learning and for identifying next steps; parents' and children's engagement is paramount.

6. HOMEWORK LOGISTICS AND EXPECTATIONS

Reading, times tables and spellings are ongoing activities throughout the week and should be practised as often as possible with a minimum expectation of reading 4x per week. Spellings will be given out on Fridays and are to be returned by the following Wednesday, with evidence of practice or a written comment to say spellings have been practised on an electronic device/app. Spelling patterns will be checked during informal quizzes throughout the week; there will be a spelling test at the end of each half term.

For weekly homework, we recognise that people prefer to complete work at different times to others (often depending on other commitments) and therefore our schedules always include weekends and weekdays so the most suitable time can be chosen by the family.

Cornerstones Topic homework can be returned at any point during the term in which that topic is being studied.

Mathletics marks automatically and gives the pupil instant feedback; activities will be set each Monday, to be completed by the Sunday of that week.

Teachers may give verbal praise, stickers and stamps as well as house points for completing homework activities. In Years 1 to 6, for every Mathletics activity attempted/completed, children will be awarded 5 house points and similarly, in Years 3 - 6, for every Grammar activity attempted/completed, children will be given 5 house points. Headteacher reward slips will be awarded to all children completing any Cornerstones project homework.

In line with our 3Bs & School Values, it is expected that children and families will try their very best to establish effective homework routines for reading, spelling and number practice. Children will be supported in school when needed and time can be given to use devices at the request of the child/parent/carer.

To further support families with homework, class teachers will share expectations and model strategies at the beginning of the academic year in Meet the Teacher Meetings.

Appendix 1: 3Bs & Values



From Little Acorns, mighty oaks grow.

Learn, Grow, Succeed Together.



Compassion, Curiosity, Courage

Be ready.



Be respectful.



Always do my best.



Be ready: embrace high standards in all we do; come to school with a ready to learn attitude (properly equipped and wearing school uniform); ensure high attendance and punctuality; be ready for learning; attend parents' evenings and workshops to support learning and wellbeing; communicate effectively.

Be respectful: value, respect and include everybody; care for all children in school; create a safe and happy environment in which every child matters; move around school safely; support school's policies.

Always do my best: be compassionate, curious and courageous; celebrate successes; learn from mistakes; support home learning; work in partnership; stay safe online; make the most of every minute of learning and social times; enjoy being part of the school team.

Appendix 2: Reading Guidance (<https://www.acornsprimary.co.uk/homework/>)

Reading with children

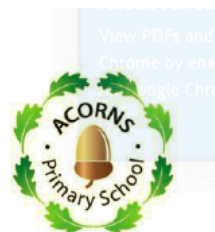
Top tips:

Regularly. Read regularly for short bursts of time.

Enthusiastic. Show your enthusiasm and enjoyment, children look up to you to model.

Ask. Take the time to discuss and ask questions, let the children ask you questions too.

Divide. Share the reading, listen to them but let them listen to you read too.



Choose a skill focus for your reading session, you can choose more than one:

Decoding & fluency

Expression & Intonation

Comprehension

Every session	Step 1 is always the same, no matter the reading focus. 1. Introduce the book to child. Tell them how much of the book they will read during this session.
Decoding & fluency <i>Practise 'sounding out' words than are unknown to the child.</i>	2. Phonics book: Look inside front cover and point out the sounds evident in this book / tricky words. AR book: point out any tricky words/sounds within the text they will be reading. 3. Child to begin reading. Support any words they are unsure of by helping them to break the word into sounds, and 'sound out'. Blend together and repeat word. 4. Adult could model whole sentences, child can repeat the sentence (echo reading). 5. Finish with a discussion about what you have read together (you could ask some questions) and congratulate child. 6. Write & share comment with child relating specifically to this skill. Eg: Child A read the tricky words, but needed support with 'aw' and 'ch' sounds.
Expression & Intonation <i>Practise varying tone & speed to create a reading flow.</i>	2. Share the reading focus with the child. Eg. to increase speed/use different voices for the different characters/to notice punctuation etc. 3. Spot and share any words that the child may struggle with. 4. Adult to read to child first (model) demonstrating expression/intonation. This could be spotting the punctuation, using voices for characters etc. Child to repeat sentence/passage before reading an unseen sentence. 5. Finish with a discussion about what you have read together and congratulate child. 6. Write & share comment with child relating specifically to this skill. Eg. Child A copied my expression when modelled, great angry voice!
Comprehension <i>Practise the understanding of the text.</i> Vocabulary Retrieval Prediction Explanation Inference Summarise / Sequence	2. Share the reading focus with the child. Eg. While reading, we will focus on retrieving the main points of the story. 3. Child to begin reading. Use a mixture of adult reading and child reading (adults reading to the child models fluency and aids the comprehension, reducing brain overload). 4. Stop at different points and use specific questioning to check understanding. 5. Finish with a discussion about what you have read together and congratulate child. 6. Write & share comment with child relating specifically to this skill. Eg. Child A was able to retrieve the main points of page 10-12, when read aloud with an adult.


Examples of question stems / tasks

These questions will support when you have chosen a reading focus for your session.
However, through discussion, you can use a mixture to help children discuss all aspects of the text you have read together.

Comprehension Skill	Question stems/tasks
Vocabulary	What does ' <i>this word</i> ' mean? Can you use ' <i>this word</i> ' in another sentence of your own? Which word in this sentence is most important? Why do you think that? Why is ' <i>this word</i> ' repeated? Find a word in this sentence that shows the character is tall/angry/shy. The text shows that the character had done a ' <i>decent job</i> ', what does that mean?
Retrieval of facts	Why/when/who/where/how...? Give one piece of evidence to show that... Name 2 problems <i>this character</i> came across in <i>paragraph 2/this book</i> . Is this statement true or false? ' <i>The dragon enjoyed meeting the princess.</i> ' Name two things that <i>the character</i> found <i>hard/easy/tiring</i> . Where is the paragraph/book set? Tell me 2 facts you have learnt from our reading today.
Prediction	What does the <i>front cover/title</i> tell you? What do you think will happen next? What will happen after...? (George closes the door) Which of my suggestions is more likely to happen next? How could the story have ended differently? What can we learn from this story?
Explanation	What genre of book is this? Has this story reminded you of something that has happened in your life? How is <i>this character</i> similar/different to you? What is the main <i>problem/event/feeling</i> in the book? Who is the most important character at this point? Why? Is this book/character similar to another story you have read? What happens in paragraph 2 that is different to paragraph 1? According to the text, give one way in which ... are similar to ... and one way they are different.
Inference	Find a word that shows ... (Dan was afraid). What impression do you get of ... (the main character/ the way Sam moved)? Give an example of when humour has been used on page 3. Why? What is the one thing that did not change as <i>Grannie got older</i> ? How do you know that <i>the character was determined to finish the game</i> ? Which of <i>the character's</i> actions show you that he was <i>afraid/amazed/happy</i> ?
Summarise / Sequence	Which of these things happened first/second in the story? Put <i>these events</i> in the order in which they happened in the story. Pick <i>two</i> emotions the main character has felt and explain. Which of my examples is the most suitable summary? Why? Which section tells the reader...(about bumblebees/how Sam fixed the problem)? What was the main point of the story?

Appendix 3:

Look, say, cover, write, check	<p>This is probably the most common strategy used to learn spellings.</p> <p>Look: first look at the whole word carefully and if there is one part of the word that is difficult, look at that part in more detail.</p> <p>Say: say the word as you look at it, using different ways of pronouncing it if that will make it more memorable.</p> <p>Cover: cover the word.</p> <p>Write: write the word from memory, saying the word as you do so.</p> <p>Check: Have you got it right? If yes, try writing it again and again! If not, start again – look, say, cover, write, check.</p>
Trace, copy and replicate (and then check)	<p>This is a similar learning process to 'look, say, cover, write, check' but is about developing automaticity and muscle memory.</p> <p>Write the word out on a sheet of paper ensuring that it is spelt correctly and it is large enough to trace over. Trace over the word and say it at the same time. Move next to the word you have just written and write it out as you say it. Turn the page over and write the word as you say it, and then check that you have spelt it correctly.</p> <p>If this is easy, do the same process for two different words at the same time. Once you have written all your words this way and feel confident, miss out the tracing and copying or the tracing alone and just write the words.</p>
Segmentation strategy	<p>The splitting of a word into its constituent phonemes in the correct order to support spelling.</p>
Quickwrite	<p>Writing the words linked to the teaching focus with speed and fluency. The aim is to write as many words as possible within a time constraint. Pupils can write words provided by the teacher or generate their own examples. For example, in two minutes write as many words as possible with the /i:/ phoneme.</p> <p>This can be turned into a variety of competitive games including working in teams and developing relay race approaches.</p>
Drawing around the word to show the shape	<p>Draw around the words making a clear distinction in size where there are ascenders and descenders. Look carefully at the shape of the word and the letters in each box. Now try to write the word making sure that you get the same shape.</p> <div data-bbox="651 1682 1166 1839" data-label="Image"> </div>

Drawing an image around the word	<p>This strategy is all about making a word memorable. It links to meaning in order to try to make the spelling noticeable.</p>  <p>You can't use this method as your main method of learning spellings, but it might work on those that are just a little more difficult to remember.</p>
Words without vowels	<p>This strategy is useful where the vowel choices are the challenge in the words. Write the words without the vowels and pupils have to choose the correct grapheme to put in the space. For example, for the word field:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">f_____ld</p>
Pyramid words	<p>This method of learning words forces you to think of each letter separately.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"> p py pyr pyra pyram pyrami pyramid </p> <p>You can then reverse the process so that you end up with a diamond.</p>
Other strategies	<p>Other methods can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rainbow writing. Using coloured pencils in different ways can help to make parts of words memorable. You could highlight the tricky parts of the word or write the tricky part in a different colour. You could also write each letter in a different colour, or write the word in red, then overlay in orange, yellow and so on. • Making up memorable 'silly sentences' containing the word • Saying the word in a funny way – for example, pronouncing the 'silent' letters in a word • Clapping and counting to identify the syllables in a word.