



THOMAS'S BATTERSEA HOMEWORK POLICY

INTRODUCTION AND AIMS

This policy was written in September 2018, following – and in response to – surveys of staff, pupil and parent opinion.

Our aim is to offer a manageable and effective programme of homework to our pupils. We recognise the need to protect their mental health and well-being and believe that, at the end of a long school day (often extended by after-school clubs), children should be given the opportunity for adequate rest and 'down time'. This ensures that they can start the following day refreshed and ready to work.

If correctly understood and managed by teachers, pupils and parents, homework should contribute to the learning experience and instil good work habits for the future.

PURPOSES AND TYPES OF HOMEWORK

The purpose and type of homework will develop as a pupil moves through the school. This policy is designed to set out clear guidelines and to ensure an overall consistency of approach throughout the school.

The main purposes of homework are to:

- reinforce, consolidate or complete class work
- provide opportunities for pupils to practise or apply learning which has already taken place in the classroom – homework gives younger children the opportunity to 'show-off' at home what they have learnt at school
- assess the degree of understanding of class work
- provide time to memorise/practise/apply spellings, tables, number bonds and vocabulary
- encourage and develop independent study habits, organisational skills and self-discipline at home – ie give pupils experience of working on their own, and develop in them a sense of responsibility for, and commitment to, their own learning
- provide time for pupils to respond to feedback
- practise papers/example questions in the lead up to external examinations.

Research suggests that short, reinforcement tasks are usually the most effective and that long homework tasks for primary aged children are of little or no value. Homework tasks will therefore be kept to a minimum in the Lower and Middle Schools.

In order for spellings/vocabulary/tables, etc, to be learnt properly, it is necessary for learning and reinforcement to take place over a period of time – this will help to commit them to memory. For example, spellings ‘learnt’ the night before a test are unlikely to be retained. Ideally, a few minutes should be spent on them each night, using the *‘Look, Say, Cover, Write, Check’* method. Applying spellings/vocabulary/number facts in context is also a good way of committing them to memory.

Some SEND and EAL pupils, in particular, will benefit from specific ‘pre-teaching’ homework, such as the provision of topic vocabulary prior to starting a new unit of work.

We expect pupils to be able to complete homework tasks independently (even where the tasks are challenging). If this is not the case, then the school needs to be informed.

Pupils must be clear about what is expected of them. When extended written tasks, such as essays or creative writing, are set as homework, planning and preparation should already have been done in class, and success criteria shared with pupils; homework time should simply provide an uninterrupted block of time when the pupil may work independently. SEND and EAL pupils may require greater guidance and ‘scaffolding’ to be able to complete tasks on their own.

In the lead up to external examinations, pupils may be set practice questions or tasks, where they are required to put the skills and knowledge developed in the classroom into practice. In these instances, there will be less specific guidance about success criteria, etc.

Open-ended tasks can cause stress at home; therefore research tasks and project work should be kept to a minimum and only set when absolutely necessary. Clear guidelines about structure and success criteria will be set out by the teacher from the outset, and appropriate websites suggested, so that pupils may complete the work independently and without parental help.

Reading

The value of reading regularly cannot be overstated, and there is a wealth of evidence associating daily reading – and/or being read to – in childhood with a number of academic and economic advantages in later life. Daily reading (or sharing a book) is therefore a ‘non-negotiable’.

If homework tasks are getting in the way of reading, then this needs to be raised with the school. Similarly, teachers and librarians should be consulted for suggestions of suitable reading matter for reluctant readers.

Rather than assisting their children with homework (children should be able to complete tasks unaided), parents are encouraged to read with/to their younger children and to discuss with older children what they have been reading.

Recording Reading

- In the Lower School, parents are asked to record daily reading in the Pupil Planner.
- The Middle School is a time of transition. To begin with, in Year 3, the pupil or their parent should note the book title and pages read every day. Some pupils might like to write a brief synopsis of the content read. Once a child is a fluent, avid reader, rather than recording daily

reading, they will be permitted to simply keep a list of books read in the Reading Record section of the Pupil Planner. For some children this will start in Year 4.

- In the Upper School, pupils are required to record books read in the Reading Record section of the Planner.

Quantity of homework

The tables below provide a guideline for parents and pupils about how long should be spent on homework.

Lower School

YEAR	ACTIVITY
Rec	Daily reading (10+ mins)
Year 1	Daily reading (10+ mins) Spelling list sent home each week Optional online Maths activities
Year 2	Daily reading (10+ mins) Reading comprehension exercises, once reading becomes fluent Spelling list sent home each week Optional online Maths activities

In Reception, the focus will be solely on reading.

In Years 1 and 2, in addition to reading, homework tasks will focus on developing basic skills and knowledge in the core subjects.

Middle School

YEAR	SUBJECT	TIME	READING <i>(daily - in addition to other homework tasks)</i>
Year 3	Maths Times Tables Spelling	30 mins a week Daily practice 30 mins a week + practice	20 mins
Year 4	Maths Times Tables English French Reasoning (alternating between VR and NVR) Spelling	30 mins a week Daily practice 30 mins a week 20 mins a week 30 mins a week (Summer Term only) 30 mins a week + practice	20 mins

Year 5	Maths English Science French Reasoning (alternating between VR and NVR) Spelling	30 mins a week 30 mins a week 30 mins a week 30 mins a week 30 mins a week (from Mich Half Term) 30 mins a week + practice	20 mins
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In the Middle School the tasks should be short, relevant and achievable within 30 minutes.

In Years 3 and 4, the children are given several days to complete a task to allow them to work around after school activities. In Year 5, homework is set for the next day. They have a task every night.

Upper School

YEAR	MON–THURS <i>(maximum in total per night)</i>	WEEKEND	READING <i>(daily – in addition to other homework tasks)</i>
Year 6	45–60 mins	120 mins in Mich Term* 60 mins in Lent & Summer Terms	20 mins
Year 7	60–70 mins	120 mins	20 mins
Year 8	60–90 mins	120 mins	20 mins

*Pupils taking ISEB Science at 11+ may receive weekend Science homework in addition to this.

In Years 6–8, detailed homework timetables will be published at the start of term. These timetables will set out the subjects and their time allocation. These may change from term to term. For example, when pupils are preparing for external examinations, the homework timetable will focus mainly on examined subjects. Similarly, in the lead-up to internal examinations, the focus of homework will shift to revision.

Homework may only be set if it is on the homework timetable. Similarly, homework should fulfil a specific purpose and there may be times when homework is inappropriate and on these occasions pupils will write “Not set” or “NS” in their diaries.

Upper School pupils should hand their homework in via the homework lockers/cubby holes. Unless otherwise specified, this will usually be on the next school day.

COMMUNICATION

In order for this policy to work effectively and for homework to be a positive and worthwhile exercise, open communication and honesty are essential between parents, pupils and the school.

All pupils have a Pupil Planner and pupils in Years 3–8 are expected to use this to make a note of homework set. In addition, teachers will communicate homework tasks digitally, via the relevant online platform: either the TLP, Seesaw, or (from Year 5) Google Classroom. When homework tasks are published online, this must be done by teachers by 1615 on the day the homework is set. Parents unsure where to find homework should look at the Pupil Planner or visit the TLP as their first port of call.

In the Lower School, expectations about homework will be shared with parents at the start of the academic year. Parents are requested to record daily reading in the Pupil Planner.

The teacher will make clear the date/day by which homework should be completed. This will usually be consistent from week to week. If a pupil is unable to meet a homework deadline for a good reason, parents should contact the teacher to let them know, as they will usually agree another deadline for the homework.

Pupils are expected to work for no longer than the allotted time. If work is not completed within this time, parents/carers should tell the child to stop working and then inform the teacher the next day.

As stated above, children should be able to complete all homework tasks independently. If assistance has been given, then teachers need to know this.

Parents of pupils in Years 3–8, please note that the Pupil Planner is only useful if you wish to communicate with your child's Form Teacher/Tutor. If there is an issue with homework set by a specialist teacher (or, in the case of Maths in Years 3–5, set by another teacher in the year-group), it is preferable either to email or to write a note directly on the work. In this way, you will ensure that the relevant teacher reads your message.

If problems with homework persist, then the relevant Head of School should be informed.

The school offers supervised prep clubs after school for pupils in the Middle and Upper Schools. These provide a quiet place and time for pupils to complete homework in school, and may be useful for families who, for whatever reason, may find getting homework done at home difficult.

Holiday Homework and Revision

In the lead-up to external examinations in Years 6 and 8, some preparation, practice papers and/or revision will be set for completion during the holidays.

Apart from this, although pupils are encouraged to continue to read (and/or be read to) daily and to practise number bonds/tables, specific holiday homework will not be provided by teachers.

Visits to museums, galleries and places of interest are encouraged, though, to supplement the work that your child does in school. The following fun activities also constitute useful holiday 'homework':

- Talk about surroundings, including culture, language, similarities and differences to the UK/London

- Find out more about the place(s) visited
- Look at guides/maps for the place visited
- Share stories about the place visited – e.g. Greek myths if visiting Greece
- Read a book set in the place visited
- Gain new experiences through sport, leisure or culture and discuss these experiences
- Taste new foods
- Learn basic words and phrases in a new language
- Keep a holiday diary with collected entrance tickets, photos and other memorabilia
- Solve real-life mathematical problems – e.g. convert between British and foreign currencies; compare times of day/time zone difference; work out distances travelled; work out how much a bill might cost in a restaurant and how much to tip
- Follow recipes – including weighing out the ingredients
- Play board games
- Write letters or postcards.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

In order for homework to be a useful and effective activity, pupils, teachers and parents must all be aware of and agree to their roles and responsibilities.

Pupils:

- To read (or be read to) daily
- To carry the Pupil Planner to every lesson in which homework may be set (Years 3–8 only)
- To write down in the Planner the necessary details about homework set (Years 3–8 only)
- Take home everything required to complete the homework
- To remember to use any notes, resources, success criteria or class work provided by the teacher to assist with the completion of the task
- To concentrate and persevere for the required amount of time
- To request a parent/carer to sign the Planner
- To hand in the completed homework at the appropriate time*
- To note and act upon feedback (written or verbal) from the teacher.

*If a pupil in Years 6–8 repeatedly fails to hand in homework in a subject on time, then this will incur a first break detention. If the problem persists, then the sanction will be a lunch break detention. If this does not bring about a change in habits/attitude, then the pupil will be required to discuss the matter with the Head of Upper School.

Teachers:

- To adhere to the Homework Policy
- To set homework tasks which are a relevant and coherent part of the work in hand
- To only set homework tasks which can be completed independently
- To ensure pupils are clear about what they are required to do and by when
- To adhere to the homework timetable, except in cases where no task is appropriate
- To ensure that the work set is reasonable in terms of the time allocation
- To allocate class time to planning and preparation in advance of setting an extended writing task, and to the sharing of success criteria

- To ensure that, where possible, the needs of individual pupils are taken into account, either by setting differentiated tasks, providing additional scaffolding (or challenge), or by setting tasks which allow for differentiated outcomes
- To allow sufficient time in class for homework to be explained and recorded in the Pupil Planner
- To follow the school's Marking and Feedback Policy
- If a Form Tutor/Teacher, to check and sign the Pupil Planner daily
- In the Middle and Upper Schools, to ensure homework is published online by 1615 on the day homework is set.

Parents

- To provide a suitable working environment and a regular routine
- To encourage and promote independent work habits
- To provide assistance during a task, if necessary, by reading aloud and questioning, but not teaching/doing the work for your child
- To ensure that the time allocation is adhered to. If a task is not completed within the time, or if there is anything the teacher should be aware of, communicate this either via email, a note on the work itself, or in the Pupil Planner (see section on Communication)
- To sign the Pupil Planner daily to indicate that your child has worked satisfactorily for the required amount of time
- To communicate with the school if problems arise (see section on Communication)
- To inform the school of any exceptional circumstances which may impact on homework
- To establish an understanding that homework is an important and serious aspect of school life and the pupil's responsibilities.

MONITORING

Homework will form part of the body of work scrutinised by Heads of Department in their ongoing subject monitoring and evaluation.

We hope that this policy will help to make the experience of homework a positive one for all concerned. If, however, for any reason homework is becoming problematic, parents should avoid confrontation with their child and seek advice from their child's teacher or the relevant Head of School.

See also: [Thomas's Curriculum Policy](#), [Thomas's Battersea Feedback and Marking Policy](#), [Thomas's Battersea Teaching and Learning Policy](#)

This policy will be reviewed annually		
Rewritten: September 2018	By:	Clare Oswald, Deputy Head Academic
Next Review: September 2019	By:	Clare Oswald, Deputy Head Academic and Heads of School