St Mary's C of E Primary – Overview of Learning at Home

Intent: At St Mary's, we believe that our approach to learning at home can have a significant impact on children's attitudes to learning and their academic progress. Pupils will engage more with the curriculum in school if activities designed to be completed at home are relevant, creative and inspiring. Learning at home that is not exciting or carefully matched to experiences in school can actually be a barrier to improved learning. Tasks must never be set for the sake of it and great consideration must be given to designing activities that are challenging but achievable. Pupils are also likely to perform well in school if their parents or carers are appropriately engaged in their learning. Consequently, activities should be accessible to parents and appropriate to be completed together. Home learning should provide opportunities to create 'beautiful work', through open-ended experiences linked to learning in school. This should include encouraging children to interact with the wider world through research or practical, active learning and outdoor experiences. This will build confidence and self-esteem, which in turn will support children's mental health and wellbeing.

Home-learning activities are created with consideration for children's different backgrounds and no child should feel excluded from an activity through lack of resources or opportunities outside school. Whilst home support in learning is highly valued, it is recognised that every child's experience is different. Underpinning children's learning in school is an emphasis on the importance of reading. We believe that reading every day and access to a wide range of reading material Should be a source of genuine enjoyment. Furthermore, research shows that, "Reading for pleasure is the single most important indicator of a child's future success." (OECD, 2002)

The 'Big Ideas': Learning at home is designed to address three 'big ideas', which are **inspiration**, **engagement** and **reading**. Children will be **inspired** by the exciting world around them, developing natural curiosity and a life-long love of learning. Children and their families will be **engaged** by fun, creative experiences and opportunities to explore learning together, including outdoor activities. Reading widely and fluently will allow children to access present and future learning, giving them the vocabulary to understand and communicate their ideas.

Implementation:

- **Exceptional Year Groups** – please note that certain year groups will have slightly different or additional homework:
    - **Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 – home-learning is focused on developing children's love of books and stories through sharing a variety of picture books with them regularly; parents should also listen to children read their Little Wandle phonics books each day and celebrate their success; in Year 2, children will begin to move on from Little Wandle phonics and will bring home books shared in group reading sessions instead;**
    - **Year 1 – additional phonics practice may be sent home as this is vital in developing pupils' reading skills for future learning;**
    - **Year 6 – pupils are asked to work through revision guides on a weekly basis to ensure that learning throughout Key Stage 2 has been secured and reinforced before transfer to secondary school.**
- For all year groups, learning at home will be valued appropriately through positive feedback.
- Parents are asked to give reading for pleasure a high profile at home through reading and sharing a variety of books with children of all ages, through reading in front of children and informally chatting with your child about reading material, such as stories, non-fiction books, comics and newspapers. Children are expected to read at home every day.

- Regular reading is identified through the Little Wandle phonics programme in the Early Years and Key Stage 1 and the Accelerated Reader programme in Key Stage 2. Reading at home and school is celebrated in lots of ways in the classroom, e.g. with certificates.
- In Early Years and Year 1, children will bring home a Little Wandle phonics book that they have already read at school and should be confident in reading to an adult. Practising with a familiar book builds confidence and fluency. The role of the adult is to celebrate the child's success in reading the phonics book. They will also bring home a picture book that an adult should share with the child and chat about informally. This will help to develop vocabulary and reading for pleasure at home.
- The approach in Year 2 is similar to Year 1 although children will begin to move on from Little Wandle phonics books. Children will still bring home two books: one that they have practised reading in group reading sessions in school and one book they are interested in to share for enjoyment.
- Children from Year 2 up keep logs or journals to record their reading. Parents are encouraged to sign and comment in the log when they read with their child. In Key Stage 2, teachers use the results of Accelerated Reader quizzes, 'Star' reading tests and conversations with pupils to ensure that they are reading appropriately challenging books and that there is evidence of understanding.
- Children are encouraged to engage with texts through responsive activities, such as mind maps, book reviews and character profiles.
- Teachers inform parents what spelling rules and words will be studied the following week so that parents can practise these at home in a way that suits the ability and needs of the child; children are actively taught different strategies for learning spellings in lessons.
- Teachers inform parents what multiplication tables will be studied the following week so that parents can practise these at home in a way that suits the ability and needs of the child. The main method for learning multiplication tables at home is the Times Tables Rock Stars website. Children and parents are encouraged to find other suitable ways to learn their tables.
- Children are asked to engage in one activity each half term, alongside their parents or carer, which is inspiring and exciting. For example, this could be a creative activity, a research project or outdoor learning. This may relate to an aspect of learning in school or could be linked to the school's Enrichment Passport. Sufficient time will be allowed for the completion of each activity, so that families can choose when it is best for them to engage with it: evenings, weekends or holiday periods. This flexibility reduces barriers to parental engagement.

Impact: Appropriate homework will engage children and families in learning, leading to improved attitudes and learning behaviour. Children will begin to take ownership and leadership over learning outside school as they pursue their own interests and develop greater curiosity about their curriculum and the world beyond school. By the time children leave St Mary's, they will see learning outside school as a positive addition to their experiences here. Children will be secure, fluent readers, who read a range of material confidently both for information and enjoyment. Children will be able to apply spelling rules consistently in order that their spelling is accurate in all their writing. Children will have secured the multiplication tables to 12 X 12 by the end of Year 4.