



WOODLANDS PRIMARY SCHOOL

PARENT FORUM AGENDA - Homework

14th November 2017 (7:00 -8:30)

Staff Room, Oak Building

Welcome and introductions:

Marie Howe, Helen Comben, Ellie Cross, Alison Bain-Simmons, Katie Anthill, Gurhan Kalay, Juliet Bulman, Lucy Perry, Fay Hawkins, Emma Barr, Zoe George, Mary O'Neill, Hugh O'Neill, Neve Mann, Clare Brown, Nin O'Keefe (Governor), Sarah Hardcastle (Parent Support), Mary Priestley (Headteacher)

Terms of Reference:

These were explained to the group.

Current Experience:

MP explained that we revise our policy every three years and this discussion would feed into the new policy (as well as feedback from other parents, governors, staff and pupils)

The group split into smaller discussion groups which centred on current experience of homework in the school. These experiences were then fed back to the group as a whole.

- Many parents in the group liked simple worksheets that children could complete in 20 minutes independently. *MP's view is that homework should encourage learning and that these sheets did not achieve that.*
- Some parents reported that homework did not always come home on the published day – for example, maths should be sent home on Thursday and often did not come home until Friday.
- One parent mentioned that writing homework was not always marked.
- Some children find research-based homework very difficult and it is extremely time-consuming. What do children do who haven't got parent support to complete homework? *MP talked about homework club.*
- Should parents leave children to complete work independently or help them?
- Is having a suggested amount on homework helpful or not?
- Is suggesting that children leave a task after 30 mins helpful or not? Would it be better to have a smaller task that everyone can complete and then a challenge at the end?
- Could GPS terminology be stuck in writing books and put on the website please?
- Writing tasks having to be completed mid-week is difficult. Could they be completed during a weekend? *MP explained the difficulty with marking writing homework in one day.*

- Are the activities always based on learning that has already been completed in class? Should they be? Some parents felt that this wasn't always the case. It felt like new learning.
- In some year groups, the level of the homework seemed to be extremely variable – from being very easy one week (number sentences which add 2) to complex decimals the next.
- Could there always be a clear model/explanation of how to answer the questions?
- Reading books in some classes were not always considered suitable eg. Sarah Jane series in Y2. Are books suitably vetted?
- It would be great to have feedback from spelling tests (Y2 and Y3 both have good systems in place) so that parents can praise and also learn words which the children spelled incorrectly.
- If Lexia is so beneficial, could we use it in other year groups? *MP explained the finance implications.*
- There was a lot of half term homework - dragon story.
- Some parents found the writing tasks arduous and repetitive (lots of leaflets and posters)
- Could longer pieces of homework (for example research homework) have, at least one weekend or two, to complete?
- Schofield and SIMs – the last sections were difficult and took some children a long time. Do teachers feedback on corrections – or at least try to teach common errors? Some children were encouraged by parents to mark those that they had had help with – what is done about the misconceptions in school?
- There is currently a big jump in expectation between Y2 and Y3. Some parents thought that some year groups seem to be giving more homework than the policy – maths and writing every week?
- Some teachers expect all the corrections in writing to be completed - followed by the new piece of writing for that week. Some parents felt that this took too long.
- Is homework relevant to what the children are currently studying? *MP thought it should be.*
- Show and Tell was seen to be very beneficial but became more about the parent than the child at the end of YR. Could the balance be redressed?
- We should teach children to develop attention (particularly in the first three years of education). They need to 'fail well' and appreciate the joy that comes through labour. *MP agreed!*
- Could we run a lunchtime/playtime homework club?
- Parents who were struggling with homework appreciated being given time limits.
- Should children have homework?
- What is the benefit of homework?
- Is the Growth Mind-set approach coming through the homework?
- *MP said that about 89% Parents were positive about homework in the 2017 questionnaire but needed to check the data. Actually only 15 parents (6%) out of 204 responses disagreed that homework was appropriate.*

Actions:

Short Term

- MP to share these notes with staff team for discussion
- MP to remind teachers to ensure writing homework is marked
- MP to remind year group teams to stick to the published schedule for giving out homework
- MP to organise GPS vocab to be in books and on the website

- MP to suggest that a clear model/explanation is put at the top of each homework task.
- MP to suggest that results of spelling tests with incorrect words to be fed back to parents.

Longer term questions to be discussed

- Discussion in school about homework and impact on learning to include current research around home learning.
- Discussion in school around current research in finding the 'joy in labour' – and how to encourage this in children.
- School to formulate its rationale and philosophy behind homework (in consultation with all stakeholders) so that this is easily understood by everyone.
- Clear goals for homework to be formulated and shared with parents and pupils.
- Thought given as to how to encourage the same growth mindset at home and school.

Suggestions for future meeting – Term 4:

- Homework (again!). Look at the new policy, rationale and philosophy behind home learning.