



**Mildmay Infant & Nursery School**

# Homework Survey

**Summer Term 2012**

## Your views about learning at home

*We asked feedback to us about learning at home by completing a survey. Thank you to all the parents who returned the survey. Even if you didn't complete the survey you may find the outcomes of interest. We have been working on your suggestions!*



### What you told us

We were very pleased to find that parents feel very positively about children's learning at home.

In Reception and Key Stage 1 it was really great that nearly all parents told us that their children read their own materials at home and also that they find the time to hear their children read three times a week or more. We are really pleased that the majority of parents find the new reading record book information and the teachers comments useful to them. About half of parents share the library book their child brings home but over half of parents tell us that children do also look at and read this on their own which is really pleasing.

In Key Stage 1 teachers give out a challenge for the holiday which relates to a theme. Nearly all parents told us that their children enjoy doing this and virtually all of you thought it was a worthwhile activity.

Your comments were so positive and here are just a few.

They can explore different ways of presentation.

They can use their imagination.

It's something to be proud of.

It keeps their mind active in the holidays.

It increases motivation and is generally fun.

It is an opportunity for parents to get involved and for children to talk about what happens at school.

It gives them the freedom to do what they enjoy

It doesn't feel like homework.

It gives them an awareness about what they will be learning.

Nearly all parents in Key Stage 1 help with the learning of spellings and believe that having the spellings to learn helps them. In Reception parents told us that having to words to learn to read at home also helps their child.

In Key Stage 1 the strategies that are used most commonly for spelling practice are encouraging children to try again if they have not spelt the word correctly, using the look cover write check method and encouraging children to check spellings. These are all really good strategies to use.

Some parents revisit words that have been given previously and this is a really good strategy to ensure that they can still recall these words.

Some parents use 'copying out the words' as a strategy with their children. Other strategies which are more effective and useful to use are spelling quizzes, practising spelling the words when making a bingo or pairs game, helping them to find their own ways to recall spellings or reminding them about spelling rules

The majority of parents think their child gets the right amount of learning to do at home. Nearly all parents told us that this is marked by the class teacher. Nearly all parents also felt they could approach the class teacher for help and advice and that this had helped them.



## Responding to your comments



*In reviewing the surveys we were so pleased to see that parents feel happy with what teachers provide to support learning at home. A few parents had some general comments about certain topics related to learning at home so we would like to address these specifically.*

- There was one question asking if teachers find comments and information they write about reading and learning at home useful and the answer is we most definitely do!
- There were a couple of comments about activities not being sufficient and the children should be given more. The Government guideline for Key Stage 1 is 1 hour per week and generally the activities we provide should fit this recommendation. However we do recognise that children work at different paces. Parents can always speak to class teachers about this provision if they do not feel it is adequate. Parents can also revisit previous activities to ensure learning is consolidated. Don't forget the school day is really busy and there also is a lot of value in play and non-adult initiated activities.

- There were a couple of comments about activities being too much and it can be unfair to do these in the holidays. We accept and completely understand that family life outside school is busy and it can be difficult to fit in these activities at times. We never insist that holiday challenges are done. Please do chat to the class teacher if you are finding it a problem to complete activities. Children do work at different paces and there is a recommended guideline for time spent on these activities. We support the judgements you make about what your child should do outside school. However learning at home is an important part of education. In providing these activities we are preparing children for future expectations in their school life.
- One comment suggested that Reception children should have clearer homework guidelines. Children at this age should not have homework as such. Reception children have tricky words to learn and a reading book to read at home.
- There was a question about the reading focus set in Reception. The Literacy Subject Leader does monitor the provision for and assessment of reading across all year groups. Teachers do have guidelines about this and as a school we are always looking to improve our provision and procedures.
- In Key Stage 1 there were a couple of comments about homework not always being marked. As part of our focus on looking at provision for learning at home we looked at children's books and felt that homework was generally marked regularly. Please speak to your class teacher if you are concerned if a piece of homework has been missed.
- There was a suggestion that maybe we should do number and spelling tests in school. Spelling tests are not proven to be effective in the long term and the spelling and phonics program we follow in school advocates investigating and exploring spellings to be more beneficial. Teachers make on-going assessments all the time to ensure the provision for your child is right.
- There was one suggestion asking for a checklist of basics about what is expected in each year. It is hoped we will have an Assessment Workshop this year and you can also approach the class teacher to ask about your child's progress. You will also receive this information at Parent Consultations and in your child's end of year report.

## What we are going to do



*We can use your comments and views to further develop what we do in school.*

- From a school and parent perspective the learning at home challenges that link to the theme or time of year are a real strength in our school. We will ask teachers to provide more of this type of activity in Key Stage 1.
- We will run the Assessment Workshop for parents again at some point during the next academic year.
- We will look at ways to support parents with the learning of spellings and phonics.
- We will use our school systems for making improvements to give feedback to teachers about your views.
- We will provide homework guidance for parents on our website.

**Thank you once again.**

**Miss Bowyer and Miss Hart**