

Bournes Green Infant School

Home Activity Guidelines

Our Vision

At Bournes Green Infant School the governors, staff, children, parents and carers work together in an atmosphere of mutual respect and trust in a community that is strengthened and enriched by a diversity of background, culture and religion. Our priority is to foster the self-confidence, self-esteem and independence of all in a climate of growth and opportunity that will enable us to achieve the highest standards. We actively promote a healthy environment in which children enjoy learning and develop the skills needed to become responsible members of society. We aim to bring learning to life.

'Strength Through Wisdom' was the original mission statement for our school. Today we nurture our children to be confident and articulate with an enjoyment of learning in the belief that this will enable them to gain strength from their developing wisdom.

Aims

- To develop a good working partnership between the school and parents/carers which will encourage the active involvement of all in supporting children's learning.
- To extend school based learning by helping to consolidate and reinforce skills and understanding, particularly in English and mathematics.
- To take full advantage of the resources outside school, both human and physical.
- To gradually encourage confidence and self-discipline; this is necessary for formal homework in later stages of education.

English

The Reception Year

A Curriculum Meeting is held in September for parents of the new intake, as part of our induction programme. This includes information on the prime areas of communication and language strands of The Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework, as well as the specific areas which include reading and writing.

Parents are given an overview of how these areas are addressed in school through our play-based approach to learning, as well as suggestions for how they might help at home.

We encourage parents to share books with their children on a daily basis and use a 'Reading Record Book' to enable parents and teaching-staff to communicate with each other about progress in reading. Three times a week, children are given the opportunity to select a book from our levelled book-boxes, to share with their friends and family at home. When a child moves onto a new reading level they are given a certificate of achievement. This certificate also advises parents on how to further challenge their child whilst listening to them read and how this can also have a positive impact on their writing.

Children in Reception visit our school library on a weekly basis. These books are also taken home to be shared and enjoyed.

In order to support children as they progress through the early stages of our main reading scheme, sets of flash cards are sent home to be practised in isolation. A book from the scheme may also be issued to enable the children to practise reading their 'envelope words' in context.

During the Curriculum Meeting, parents are also introduced to 'Jolly Phonics'. The resources from this scheme are used in our school to support the teaching of 'pure phonics'. As each set of sounds is taught, a flip-book is built up for each child. This is kept in his/her book-bag to enable parents to practise the related vocal sounds, actions and picture prompts with their children.

Each week, a sticker is placed in the Reading Record Book to inform parents which sounds and words from the high frequency word list have been given a whole class focus.

At the beginning of the year, parents are given an information sheet showing our school handwriting style. Each child is issued with a name card which can be traced over. Tracing books are supplied by the school and are replaced on a fortnightly basis. In the Spring Term, the children are also given a number card and when children are ready, letter families are sent home on tracing cards.

Year One

In Year One, children move onto the 'National Curriculum', where English is composed of 'Reading' and 'Writing'.

Children continue to be given the opportunity to select an appropriately levelled home-reading book, three times a week. Where appropriate, words are sent home for additional practice. Children continue to receive a certificate of achievement when they move onto the next reading level. Each child is expected to read regularly at home to an adult, three or more times each week as part of their English Homework.

Cross curricular English tasks are sent home from time to time. These activities are aligned to the English foci within the classroom, and may also link to another area of the curriculum. In this way, parents are given an insight into what their children have been learning and how they can help them further.

Teachers use their professional judgement to decide upon the most appropriate point in the Spring or Summer Terms to introduce weekly spelling tests. Each child is given a small list of words to learn each week. Spelling books are taken home so that results can be shared with parents.

At Parent Interviews, handouts may be issued, to further support children's next steps in learning.

Year Two

Home-school links from Year 1 are built upon in Year 2, but the emphasis on independence is increased. Children are expected to change their own reading books when necessary. On occasion, extra English activities may be sent home in addition to the expectation of regular reading homework, at least three times each week, and preparation for the weekly spelling test.

At Parent Interviews, hand-outs are provided which offer support and advice on topics as necessary.

Mathematics

The Reception Year

The elements of the specific areas of mathematics, which include number, shape and measures are again explained during the Curriculum Meeting in September, and suitable resources and activity ideas are shared.

In the reception year, when appropriate, a mathematics activity is sent home from the start of the Spring Term. All activities link to the class learning focus. An optional 'challenge' activity is also included and parents are encouraged to use their discretion as to whether or not they undertake this with their child, following their judgement of his/her performance during the main activity.

Tracing cards featuring numbers 1 to 20 are also sent home at this point.

Year One

In Year One, Mathematics is taught in accordance with the National Curriculum and comprises of several strands. These are Numbers and the Number System, Calculation, Geometry, Shape, Measures & Fractions.

A regular mathematics task continues to be set which links to class-work, and strategies and suggestions for the activities and challenges are added, where appropriate.

At Parent Interviews, differentiated hand-outs may be issued which give parents information on the mathematical knowledge, skills and understanding that their child is developing. Examples of calculation strategies for the four operations are also provided.

Year Two

The practices established in Year One, with the addition of Statistics, are continued in Year Two. A regular maths home activity is set based on the children's learning.

Curriculum Meetings

Year One and Year Two staff hold a curriculum meeting in September which informs parents of the key developments that can be expected in their children's English and mathematics skills and offers suggestions for how they might help at home. The Powerpoint presentations are available on our website and teachers are available after school to answer any queries, in person or via a telephone conversation, if any parent is unable to attend.

Other Curricular Areas

Teachers may set projects or tasks linked to other curricular areas throughout the year. Often these tasks are research based linked to the topics currently being covered.

Pupils with Learning Difficulties/Disabilities and Gifted & Able Learners

In order to ensure that tasks are differentiated where appropriate, children with identified learning difficulties or disabilities may undertake activities as specified in their provision maps, whilst those who are more able may be asked to complete challenge activities.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Meetings and handouts as described earlier, give parents an understanding of progression in learning, as well as providing them with some awareness of the teaching strategies that might be used by each year group. In this way, they are better equipped to support their children in English and mathematics.

Two-way dialogue is encouraged from the start, through strategies such as the 'Reading Record Book' and our open-door policy. Parents are able to share relevant experiences with staff at the end of the day to ensure a successful working partnership.

Formal appointments can be made with the class teacher, if this is felt to be more appropriate and written messages can be passed via the children or the school office. Parent Interviews are held in the autumn and spring terms with an informal open evening in the summer term. Prior to this evening of celebration, parents will receive their child's annual, written report.

Revised by staff and reviewed and approved by the Governing Body in Spring 2016

These guidelines will be reviewed in accordance with our 'Key Policies and Documentation' timetable.