



Abbots Farm Junior School

Home Learning Policy



Re-written to be in line with Teaching and Learning
policy: March 2023

Reviewed: March 2024

1. Rationale

Studies show that the impact of homework in Primary Schools is, on average, an additional 3 months progress per pupil or 6+ months progress per pupil when using digital technology.



There is a great deal of very strong evidence that **retrieval practice** is an essential part of the learning process. **Retrieval practice** is the process of calling information to mind that you have been previously exposed to. By using **retrieval practice** as a learning strategy (not an assessment tool), we strengthen our memory. Research demonstrates that this improvement in memory and long-term learning is flexible: it improves students' complex thinking and application skills; it improves students' organization of knowledge; it improves students' transfer of knowledge to new concepts. In other words, **retrieval practice** doesn't just lead to memorization – it increases understanding! **Homework** is a great opportunity for independent **retrieval**.



2. The Scientific Evidence behind Retrieval Practice

Learning is about committing knowledge to long-term memory, not just immediate performance or recall. When paying attention to new information, the brain places this information into the short-term memory. Then, for the information to be made sense of, the brain needs to link this information to prior knowledge. After this, the knowledge must be regularly **retrieved** and rehearsed in order to commit it to long term memory. **Retrieval practice** simply means being expected to remember and recall that same piece of information again and again!

Research shows that **retrieval practice** enables children to know more and remember more. Retrieval practice, and the securing of key facts and knowledge in the long term memory, creates fluency and automaticity of knowledge, basically an instant recall of key facts which frees up space in the brain to be able to think in a more focused way when applying knowledge to other contexts. Having automatic recall of facts prevents Cognitive Overload. Cognitive Overload is a situation where the brain is given too much information or expected to perform too many tasks simultaneously that it becomes unable to process the information or perform the task.

If children know key Maths facts off by heart, their brain does not become overloaded when faced with trying to solve problems and their focus can be on how to interpret and solve the problem. Also, if children develop automatic recall with spelling, their focus can be on the content and quality of what they are writing.

3. High Impact Homework Activities

According to the Education Endowment Foundation, one of the leading providers of educational research in the UK, homework that provides instant feedback on answers (for example when using technology) has higher impacts on learning, with common activities in Primary Schools comprising of number facts and spelling along with separate additional reading activities.

In line with research, homework at Abbots Farm will therefore be focused on Maths, Spelling and Reading.

1. **Maths**

Maths Homework will be in the form of Time Tables Rock Stars games so that children can become fluent in times tables facts

2. **Spelling**

Spelling Homework will be in the form of Spelling Shed games so that children can practice the spellings they have been working on in class.

3. **Reading**

Reading homework will be in the form of independent reading or reading to an adult at home.

4. Quantity of Homework

| Year Group | Maths | Spelling | Reading 4+ nights per week |
|------------|---------------|---------------|----------------------------|
| Year 3 | 20 minutes | 20 minutes | 10-15 minutes |
| Year 4 | 20 minutes | 20 minutes | 15-20 minutes |
| Year 5 | 20-30 minutes | 20-30 minutes | 20+ minutes |
| Year 6 | 20-30 minutes | 20-30 minutes | 20+ minutes |

Although the times above are a **weekly** suggestion, research shows that practising little and often is more beneficial to learning. Therefore, it would be useful to break the Maths and Spelling sessions up over a week. For example, a Year 5 child could spend 10 minutes three times a week practising both their Maths and Spelling, rather than completing them in just one block of time.

In addition to the above, Year 6 will have additional home learning in the Spring and Summer term to support them in preparation for SATs and the transition to secondary school.

5. Homework Incentives

1. **Maths**

Year Group Rewards - The Year group with the most points **each half term** will earn an extra playtime. Year group totals will be shared each week in Friday's Celebration Assembly so that children can see where their year group are in the league tables.

Pupil Rewards – The pupils with the top 5 point scores **each week** will receive an extra 5 house points. League tables will be shared once a week in class during a Maths lesson.

2. **Spelling**

Year Group Rewards - The Year group with the most points **each half term** will earn an extra playtime. Year group totals will be shared each week in Friday's Celebration Assembly so that children can see where their year group are in the league tables.

Pupil Rewards – The pupils with the top 5 point scores **each week** will receive an extra 5 house points. League tables will be shared once a week in class during a Spelling lesson.

3. **Reading**

Pupil Rewards - Reading Night Rewards will be voted for each term within classes. Those children completing 4+ nights reading per week will access the reward afternoon.

6. Further Challenges

Below are some additional web resources for those wishing to extend their learning further.

English

- <https://classroom.thenational.academy/subjects-by-key-stage/key-stage-2/subjects/english-reading-for-pleasure>
- <https://classroom.thenational.academy/subjects-by-key-stage/key-stage-2/subjects/english-grammar>
- <https://classroom.thenational.academy/subjects-by-key-stage/key-stage-2/subjects/english-spelling>
- <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/subjects/zv48q6f>

Maths

- <https://classroom.thenational.academy/subjects-by-key-stage/key-stage-2/subjects/maths>
- <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/subjects/z826n39>
- <https://www.rigb.org/learning/activities-and-resources?type=30>
- <https://www.egfl.org.uk/sites/default/files/maths%20puzzles%20all.pdf>
- <https://mathsphere.co.uk/resources/MathSphereMathsPuzzles.htm>
- <https://brilliant.org/daily-problems/>

Wider Curriculum

- <https://classroom.thenational.academy/subjects-by-key-stage/key-stage-2>
- <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/levels/zbr9wmn>
- <https://pstt.org.uk/resources/curriculum-materials/Science-Fun-at-Home>
- <https://www.stem.org.uk/primary/resources/collections/home-learning-support>

For those wishing to carry out additional homework challenges linked to the year group Topic curriculum, website suggestions will be provided on the school web page.

7. Roles and responsibilities

Homework and its role in pupil progress is a shared responsibility and everyone in our school community has an important role to play.

7.1 Role of the teachers

The teachers at AFJS will:

- follow the expectations set out in this policy to ensure that high-impact Homework activities are set weekly
- ensure all children have logins for TTRS and Spelling Shed
- ensure weekly Spelling Shed activities match objectives covered in lessons
- ensure regular monitoring of pupil times tables knowledge and amend times tables set as appropriate
- ensure SEND children are allocated appropriate Spelling and Maths activities
- ensure all pupils have regular opportunities to visit the school library and are supported with selecting appropriate books/moving between book bands
- provide a weekly Homework club at lunchtime to support children's access to appropriate technology and devices
- monitor pupil attainment and engagement with homework activities, liaising with parents where appropriate

7.2 Role of SLT

SLT at AFJS will:

- have a clear and ambitious vision for providing high-quality, high-impact homework based on research evidence
- monitor pupil attainment and engagement with homework activities
- monitor the effectiveness of this policy and hold staff to account for its implementation

7.3 Role of Governors

The Governors at AFJS will:

- monitor the effectiveness of this policy and hold staff to account for its implementation

7.4 Role of Parents/carers

The parents and carers of AFJS pupils will:

- value and give importance to homework activities
- support children with managing their time/routines to develop good homework habits
- liaise with school staff where lack of access to appropriate technology is a barrier to completing homework activities
- liaise with school staff if additional login details are required
- complete pupil reading records

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed **every year** by the most appropriate member of SLT, or if there are any significant changes to school procedures, UK law or Government guidance.

9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies and procedures:

- AFJS Teaching and Learning Policy