



# Shapla Primary School Home Learning Policy September 2012

## Rationale

Parents often ask us 'What is Shapla's homework policy?' We know that parents want their children to do well at school, are keen for them to learn at home, and want to know what the school expects.

We also know that parental involvement in children's learning makes a big difference to their success at school and we want to work in partnership to encourage active, happy and interested learners, both in school and at home. However, research and experience tell us that homework does not always help young children to make extra progress, and can sometimes make children switch off from learning. It is therefore important to think about the purpose of home learning and how it will help children's work in school. We also need to consider the impact that homework can have on family life, especially in larger families. The majority of our children attend mosque after school from 5pm until 7pm and it is often difficult to find time to complete homework.

During the Spring term 2012 we worked with a group of parents who regularly attend Curriculum workshops to help us write this Home Learning policy. The policy will explain what you can do to help your child to continue their learning at home, and how we can support you.

## Aims

To:

- clarify what we mean by 'Home Learning'
- focus on the quality and purpose of learning at home
- explain Shapla's expectations of home learning
- provide support and guidance for parents
- provide materials for parents to use at home with their children

## What is Home Learning?

Home Learning is usually one of 3 types:

1. It can be linked to something your child has been learning at school and may be an activity set by the teacher, for example checking labels to find out where our food comes from as part of the IPC Food and Farming topic.
2. It can be something that parents organise for their children which links to a topic they are learning about, or something they need to practice for English and Maths, for example spellings or multiplication tables.

Visit a museum, gallery or place of interest as a family and learn something about a topic	Use activity packs or ideas and materials from curriculum workshops to try out at home	Visit the Idea Store or library to research information about the topic
Go for a walk somewhere that links to a topic e.g. River Thames, buildings, insects, food,	Read instructions and try to make something linked to the topic e.g. a cake, a model of a boat etc	Use the 10 top tips activities for spellings and multiplication tables at home (see booklet)
Ask your child to tell you what they have learnt about their topic, listen carefully and ask them questions	Ask questions and use the internet to research information about a topic; make a book	

3. It is also really effective when it links to every day activities (see examples below)

Cooking is a good way to follow instructions, also to weigh and measure and discuss ingredients	Reading magazines, newspapers, comics, instructions etc	Shopping; read labels and ingredients, discuss healthy eating, read and add cost of shopping, guess how much bill will be...
Holidays, trips, picnics, city landmarks; use the Out and About booklet to visit new places, talk about what you see and learn new words...	Talk about pictures in books and relate to own experiences	Read instructions from the internet or watch on television and try to make something together
Telling the time: use different types of clocks, how long until...?	Walking to school: look for shapes and numbers, practice times tables, learn spellings, count backwards and forwards	Money; count total of coins, how much change will you get? How much will two cost (doubling)?

1. Talk to your child every day. Ask them what they have been **learning** rather than what they have been **doing**. Listen and ask open questions that don't have a yes or no answer. This will encourage them to explain.
2. Read the class letter that tells you about the International Primary Curriculum (IPC) topic each term. It explains what your child will be learning in each area of the curriculum. It will give you ideas of things that you can learn together. Also check the class page on the school website:

[www.shaplaprimary.co.uk](http://www.shaplaprimary.co.uk)

3. Make learning fun and interesting for your child. For example, if you all like football, you can read score tables, make a booklet about your favourite players, plan your fantasy team and explain your choices, write out the rules etc.
4. Try to make learning practical, as this is often the way that children learn best (especially younger children). Make something, paint or draw something, play a board game, build a model, make a book.
5. Make a quiet place for older children to work independently. This will help them to think and concentrate.
6. We are lucky to live in a great city with opportunities for learning all around us. Children will always remember exciting experiences they have had. Try to make the most of learning outside...
7. If you are not confident to speak or read English with your child do not worry. It will help if you ask them questions and get them to explain their learning to you in your home language. This shows your child that you are interested in their learning.
8. Remember not to compare your children. All children are different, learn in their own way and are good at different things. Try to think about how they learn best and encourage them. They will not all be good at everything!
9. Agree with your child the best time, and where to work. Agree together how much time their home learning will take so there is a time limit. Children also need free time to play and learn on their own.
10. Don't put too much pressure on your child. Remember that they have worked hard at school all day. Praise and encourage them when they want to learn at home and stay positive.

# Early Years Activity Packs

Children in Nursery and Reception classes (Yellow and Mauve) take an Activity Pack home every week. Each pack is designed to help children develop one of the **six learning areas** that cover the **Early Learning Goals**. These are:

- Personal, Social and Emotional development
- Knowledge and Understanding of the World
- Communication, Language and Literacy
- Mathematical development
- Creative development
- Physical development

Every child should take a pack home weekly as part of the Home Learning policy. This is a good way for children to learn through play at home, and for parents to find out how play helps your child to learn. It is a good way to develop language skills and vocabulary, and older children often like to play too!

## Reading

We believe that reading is the key to learning and is the most important home learning that children can do. Reading feeds the mind, and children need lots of practice so they can eventually read independently and really enjoy a range of books and reading materials. They will learn about most school subjects by reading.

We would like every child to read at home **every day with an adult or much older sibling**, because we know that this will really help them. This is the amount of time we would recommend to read with your child, depending on their age:

Yellow Class (Nursery) - 10 minutes

Mauve, Red and Blue Class (Reception and Year 1) - 15-20 minutes

Pink and Orange Class - 20 minutes

Purple Class - 30 minutes (some of this will be on their own)

Green Class - 30 minutes (some of this will be on their own)

**Reading should be fun and enjoyable.** Try to make reading something to look forward to. Stop and discuss the book, ask questions and talk about the pictures. Always check if your child understands what they read. Parents often think that they don't need to read with older children because they can read by themselves. Older children can often read the words, but

may not understand the meaning of words, understand complicated ideas or be able to explain what they have read. So it is important to read with older children too - even Year 6! Try to do this once or twice a week and it will really help your child. (See Reading Together booklet).

Parents often find that bedtime is a nice quiet time to read together. Some parents prefer to read with their child after tea. Find the best time and place to suit you and your child, and agree with them how long you will read for. If children are of a similar age you can sometimes read together. If they do not want to read, stop and try again the next day. If you have any difficulties about reading with your child please come to a parent's Reading Workshop or speak to your child's class teacher.

## Spelling

Children need to learn spellings to help them with reading and writing.

The best way to learn spellings is to try and make it as much fun as possible! Remember that some children find it easy to learn spellings because they have a good memory. Other children find it extremely difficult and may still need to learn words from an earlier year group. Some children may need a little bit of practice, and others may need a bit more. Please do not panic if your child is finding it really hard to learn their spellings. They will just take longer to learn fewer words and will need to keep practicing. Your child's teacher will understand this. It is **very** important that your child feels confident about learning their spellings so stay positive and give those lots of encouragement.

At the beginning of the term your child's class teacher will give you a spelling booklet that each class should learn during the term. They are usually words that are used most often in writing (High Frequency Words and spelling rules). **These spellings are for your child to practice and learn at home with your support. Your child's class teacher will not test them on these spellings because they will be learning spellings in the classroom too. But you can check if they have learnt them yourself.**

Do ask to speak to your child's teacher if your child is finding it difficult to learn their spellings at home.

## Top tips for learning spelling:

- 1 Look for letter patterns in words and use this to remember words. For example the letter ending 'ight' is found in the words light, might, fight, right etc.

2. Pronounce words as they are spelled, not how they are said! This can help with some spellings that have silent letters or look completely different to the way that they sound, such as listen, knife, and cupboard.
3. Choose some words from the class word list. Get some paper and cut it into small pieces. Write spelling words on the pieces of paper. Play some word games with them, such as word bingo, snap, pairs games.
4. Try these websites for some good spelling games

### **Key Stage 1**

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/wordsandpictures/index.shtml>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/ks1/literacy/>

<http://www.ictgames.com/hybrid.html>

<http://www.ictgames.com/literacy.html>

### **Key Stage 2**

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/ks2bitesize/>

<http://www.woodlands-junior.kent.sch.uk/interactive/literacy.html#7>

<http://www.timesspellingbee.co.uk/Training/Default.aspx>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/spellits/index.shtml>

<http://www.learner.org/interactives/spelling/index.html>

## 5. Look Say Cover Write Check



*LOOK* at the word carefully.  
What letter patterns can you see?  
Are there any small words within the word?



*SAY* the word aloud and listen to the sounds in it.



When you think you know the word, *COVER* it.



*WRITE* the word from memory.

Look back and *CHECK* if you are correct.  
If yes - do it twice more to fix it in your memory.  
If not - go back to step one.

## Number bonds

Number bonds are pairs of numbers that add up to 10, 20, 30 or 100. Children need to learn number bonds so that they can use them in calculations and to solve number problems. For example if we know that 3 and 7 = 10, then it is much easier to work out  $13 + 7 = 20$ , or  $33 + 7 = 40$  without having to count it. We would like children to learn the following number bonds in each year:

- Year 1: all number bonds to 10 ( 1+9, 2+8, 9+1, 8+2 etc)
- Year 2: all number bonds of 30 ( 1 +29, 2+28, 29+1, 28+2 etc)
- Year 3: all number bonds of 100 (51+49, 32+68, 49+51, 68+32 etc)
- Year 4: all number bonds of 100 (51+49, 32+68, 49+51, 68+32 etc)
- Year 5: numbers to 1000
- Year 6: numbers above 1000

# Multiplication Tables (times tables)

Children need to learn multiplication tables because they are used in many number calculations. They also help children to solve number problems quickly. We would like children to learn the following tables in each year:

- Year 1: counting in 2s
- Year 2: 2x and 5x and 10x tables
- Year 3: 4x and 3x tables
- Year 4: 9x and 11x tables
- Year 5: 6x and 7x and 8x tables
- Year 6: practice all tables

Remember that some children find it easy to learn tables because they have a good memory. Other children find it extremely difficult and may still be learning tables from an earlier year group. Please speak to your child's teacher if your child is finding it difficult to learn their tables at home.

## Top tips for Learning Multiplication Tables

- When your child has begun to learn a table, chant the table for five minutes each day with them. It is important to say the whole table, not just the answers, again and again and again and again!
- Break down each table into manageable chunks. For example, ask them  $1 \times 5$ ,  $2 \times 5$  and  $5 \times 5$  until they know the answers. Then add the next one.
- Test your child by firing questions at them, in order first and then out of order.
- If they have learnt them, they should be able to answer straight away. If they are working them out in their heads, they haven't learnt them yet.
- Keep checking that they still know the facts they have learnt.
- Encourage your child to write out the table they are learning again and again. Keep chanting as often as possible.
- Display tables around different parts of the house so that your child sees them everywhere!
- Use a range of vocabulary—times, multiply, lots of, sets of.....
- Say tricky tables in silly voices or even try singing them. Even young children learn song lyrics very quickly and easily!
- See if you can remember your times tables! Let your child test you!
- Remember, practise makes perfect!



**Here are some helpful websites with times tables tips and games**

[http://homepage.ntlworld.com/meadowfarmcps/times\\_table\\_ks1.htm](http://homepage.ntlworld.com/meadowfarmcps/times_table_ks1.htm)

<http://www.oswego.org/ocsd-web/games/Mathmagician/mathsmulti.html>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/skillswise/topic/multiplication>

[http://www.activityvillage.co.uk/times\\_tables\\_games.htm](http://www.activityvillage.co.uk/times_tables_games.htm)

## **Number packs:**

Parents will be invited to a number workshop in Year 1. You will be given a number pack to take home to use with your child. It will include a bead string, 100 square, number bond strips and place value (hundreds, tens and units etc) cards.

# Helping your Child with their Learning

## The ten things you can say to your child... ...that will make all the difference

- 1. Say to your child the word 'yet' as often as you can.**  
For example, when your child says 'I can't do fractions' you say 'you can't do fractions yet'. Help them to see the possibility that they will be able to achieve it in the future.
- 2. Say to your child: 'you're getting better' whenever the opportunity allows.**  
Learning is all about improvement and learning a skill needs patience and practice and practice and practice to improve. Your child needs lots of support along the way.
- 3. Say to your child: 'what have you learned today?'**  
This question is a lot more specific than 'what did you do today?'
- 4. Say encouraging things as often as you can when your child is *beginning* to learn something new and encourage them when something still isn't perfect.**  
Remember how much encouragement you gave your child when they took their first wobbly steps? Children need that same encouragement whenever they start learning something new. Learning is always harder at the beginning.
- 5. Say things to your child to show you can see that there's improvement, however small. Compare 'then' and 'now' and praise the difference.**  
Learning is about getting better; lots of 'getting better' steps.
- 6. Say to your child: 'of course you've made a mistake, but keep going, you're learning.'**  
Every child needs to know that making mistakes is all part of the learning process. Mistakes can be good because you can learn from them. You never really learn something well if you don't make mistakes along the way. Make sure your child knows that mistakes are OK.
- 7. Say to your child: 'your brain is wired in lots of different ways, some ways are better than others. Let's try to make each part work as well as it can.'**  
Few of us will be brilliant at everything but we can get better at everything.
- 8. Say to your child: 'take a break, do some exercise, then start learning again.'**  
The brain needs blood, oxygen and rest to keep going. If it doesn't get them then it doesn't keep going.
- 9. Say to your child: 'if you find facts difficult to remember then it's ok to use a 'hook' to help you remember.'**  
There are just too many facts to remember so your child should only worry about remembering the ones that really matter. For those, it's perfectly fine to give their brain some help if they need to. For example VIBGYOR spells out all the colours of the rainbow. So does the rhyme *Richard Of York Goes By In Violet*; anything to trigger the brain to remember is good.
- 10. Say to your child: 'I found x easy to learn, but I had to work harder at y.'**  
Make sure your child knows you went through similar learning struggles as they are going through. Show your child realistic models of learning; don't fake your own excellence. On the other hand don't promote inabilities either – unless you are promoting how much better you *could* have been if only you'd kept trying.

## Class newsletters

Every time classes change their IPC topic your child will bring home a class newsletter to let you know what they will be learning in Art, Music, Geography, Science, PHSEE, RE etc. It will also include some ideas for home learning. It will also be on the website. It is really important to your child that you discuss this with them and ask them about their learning as the topic goes on.

## Learning goals - self assessment sheets

In KS1 and KS2 teachers help children to assess their own skills in reading and writing. Your child's class teacher will share the goals with you at the beginning of the year so you can speak to your child about them, and help your child to understand what they can do to help themselves get even better.

## Curriculum Workshops

At Shapla we know how important it is for parents to understand how children learn in our school. That's why we have Shopna, our Parent Support Partner, who runs curriculum workshops to give parents practical ideas and support for learning at home. Workshops may be linked to a class topic, or may help with subjects like reading or maths. **We would like all parents, including dads, to attend curriculum workshops when they are offered to make the best of learning at Shapla.** This is also the best way for parents who are not yet confident to speak English to find out how to help your child at home.