

Oxgang Primary School



Parental Involvement, Engagement & Family Learning Guidance

'Family learning is a powerful method of engagement and learning which can foster positive attitudes towards life-long learning, promote socio-economic resilience and challenge educational disadvantage'

(Scottish Family Learning Network, 2016)

Work Hard  Be Respectful  Believe in Yourself 

Rationale

These guidelines provide recommendation to pupils, staff, parents and carers of Oxgang Primary School on the ways in which we seek to enhance learning and teaching through parental engagement, involvement and family learning opportunities. In addition to outlining our key approaches, this guidance also identifies our home learning policy.

This policy has been developed in line with Scottish Government's *National Improvement Framework and Improvement Plan* (2019) and *Learning Together: National Action Plan 2018-2021* (2018).

Aims

The aims of Oxgang Primary School's Guidelines are to ensure:

- Children are supported in their learning through innovative methods to involve and engage parents/carers;
- Parents feel empowered to be fully involved in the life and work of the school;
- Parents feel confident engaging in their child's learning and receive appropriate support for this if/when required;
- Quality and effective communication is facilitated between home and school;
- Teachers and support staff fully understand their role in supporting parents/carers to be involved and engaged in school life;
- The senior leadership team encourage and support collaborative partnerships between practitioners, parents and families through adoption of varied and bespoke approaches.

Part 1: Parental Involvement

What does effective parental involvement look like?

Parental involvement is effective when parents are represented in decision making and collaborate alongside school staff in matters such as school improvement planning. Parental involvement is all about building strong partnerships between home and school and facilitating meaningful opportunities for parents and families to get involved in the life and work of Oxgang.

What do we do at Oxcang to support parental involvement?

At Oxcang we are continuously looking for ways to strengthen parental representation in the life and work of the school, expanding opportunities for ALL parents to get involved rather than the few. In order to achieve this, we focus on the following key priorities:

Parental Representation

- We seek to create a whole school ethos which makes all families feel welcomed and supported to be involved in the life and work of the school;
- Our Parent Council facilitates joint working and collaboration between parents and staff, ensuring parents have their view represented on matters such as School Improvement Planning and budget spending decisions;
- We seek the views of wider parent forum by listening and responding to feedback both formally (e.g. through parental questionnaires) as well as informally (through daily interactions).

Parental Collaboration

- We look for opportunities to harness the strengths and expertise of our parents and wider family members so as to enhance the learning experiences of our pupils. Opportunities for this include: volunteering, participation in careers day, parent talks/presentations (e.g. linked to Developing the Young Workforce), learning teams, choir, school trips and using parents to link with opportunities in the wider community.

Communication

- Through Class Dojo, news, information and upcoming school events are communicated and are easily accessible to parents. In addition, we use social media (Twitter), and our school website to keep parents up to date and provide access to our key policies and school handbook. For more information on our Class Dojo policy, please see **Appendix 1**;
- Children's learning and progress is regularly and proactively communicated through the Class Dojo portfolio tool;
- Parents are provided with opportunities across the school year to meet with teachers to discuss progress, views and ask questions. As well as holding two parent's evenings (Term 2 and Term 4), a 'Meet the Teacher' afternoon is held in the first term of session as part of our transition process. Parents are also welcome to arrange for additional meetings with teachers out with these formal arrangements if required by contacting the school office. Parents of children with

additional support needs are invited to attend additional meetings (e.g. Support Planning / Team Around the Child meeting).

- Parents receive an accessible written report once every school year (Term 3) which outlines strengths and next steps. This report forms the basis of discussion at the parent appointments in April.

Staff awareness of barriers to Parental Involvement

- We place importance on getting to know our families in a meaningful way, in turn developing openness about potential barriers which may be present;
- Consideration is given towards the cost of school day and the impact that this can have on parent's involvement in the school;
- We seek alternative arrangements for families with limited access to digital communication;
- We provide appropriate support to families where a barrier is in place (e.g. EAL or disabilities), and work in collaboration with these families to facilitate communication and partnership.

Part 2: Parental Engagement & Family Learning

What does effective parental engagement & family learning look like?

Parental engagement is about parents' and families' interaction with their children's learning. Where this takes place is not important - It can take place in the home, at school or in the community. The important thing is the quality of the parent's engagement with their child's learning and the positive impact that it can have.

Family learning is the opportunity for family members to learn together. Family learning activities are often designed to upskill and empower parents to support their children's learning.

What do we do at Oxcang to support parental engagement and family learning?

At Oxcang we know that parental engagement leads to better educational outcomes for our children. This is why we work hard to ensure that parental engagement & family learning is embedded within our ethos as a school. To do this, we take forward the following:

Supporting Parents

- We ensure that parental engagement & family learning is visible within our whole school ethos, with all staff having a role in supporting this;
- Through our interactions with parents and families, we emphasise the key role that they play in supporting children's learning. We have an inclusive model for family learning which can be accessed by any parents if/when needed and conduct awareness raising to ensure that parents are aware of this resource;
- We work with families and community partners to identify specific needs within families and work collaboratively in order to support these;

Homework

- We have worked collegiately and linked with key stakeholders to ensure that parental engagement & family learning is central to our homework approach and includes family learning grids and family learning packs to facilitate this (see **Appendix 2** for more specific information about our Homework Policy);
- We use Class Dojo portfolios to record and communicate important home learning from families, which is then recognised at school (e.g. Home Learning Certificates at Assembly);
- We have consulted parents and devised a series of Class Dojo/School Website homework help videos to support learning at home, based around key themes parents wanted to see featured;
- We use Learning Diaries for children to share their learning targets with parents and further engage them with school events and weekly learning.

Opportunities for family learning

- For new families with children entering P1, we hold a robust induction programme annually which, as well as introducing children to the school, helps to develop key relationships with our new parents and families (see **Appendix 3** for Primary 1 Induction Overview)
- We hold regular open events available to all parents to help develop skills and confidence to support child's learning (e.g. Book Bug, 'homework help' afternoons, information evenings);
- We run targeted sessions to support family learning (e.g. Families Connect programme, parent and child cooking club, homework club)
- We have a responsive approach to parental events/sessions and hold when specific needs arise, using community links to assist with these and enhance learning (e.g. Community Police Officer, East Dunbartonshire Leisure & Culture).

Parental Engagement Events

- Throughout the school year, we provide regularly opportunities to welcome families into the school in an informal and relaxed manner. Examples of such opportunities we run annually include: Special Person's Lunch, class assemblies, Oxfang's Got Talent, Scottish afternoon, Leaver's show, Christmas show, Family Fun Afternoon and Stay and Play sessions (P1).

Reporting to Parents and Carers

Throughout the school year, we embrace opportunities to share learning with our parents and carers. Taking guidance from the Education Scotland document 'Reporting to Parent and Carers' we use both formal and informal methods. This is to ensure that reporting opportunities are regular throughout the school year and are meaningful and purposeful. Some examples include:

- Open days/events
- 'Meet the teacher' sessions
- School concerts and shows
- Achievement wall displays/Wall displays showcasing learning
- Class assemblies
- Curriculum workshops
- 'Soft starts' where parents can join their children in class
- Class showcase events
- Social media (school website, Twitter etc)
- Curriculum workshops led by learners and/ or staff
- Pupil Council meetings
- Parent Council meetings

Review of Guidance:

Parental Involvement, Engagement & Family Learning Guidelines will be reviewed during session 2022-2023



Oxgang Primary School

Class Dojo Policy



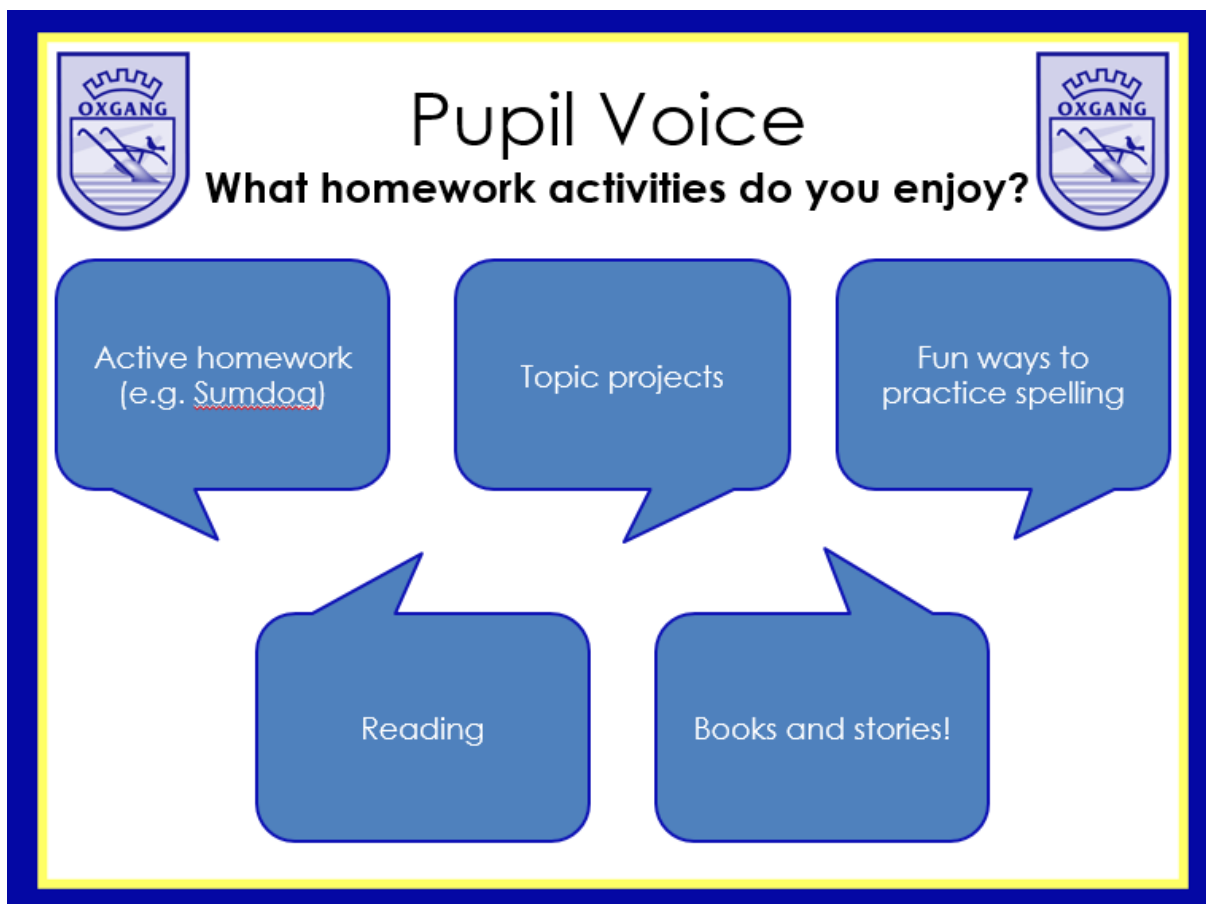
At Oxgang we use the Class Dojo application to support communication between school and home, as well as to showcase key learning. To ensure that this application is used appropriately, we adhere to the following:

1. All new children to the school will be assigned a Dojo account which will be shared with parents. If parents decide to share this more widely (e.g. with grandparents) this is at their discretion, however we must insist this isn't shared out with immediate family. Any users who join who are not recognised will be queried and removed where appropriate;
2. Staff in the school will assign 'Dojo Points' to children who uphold the school values. When a child earns 10 points they can then sign up to their Friday Learning Team of choice. Negative points can be taken off children, within reason, for those who are not upholding school values. It is teachers' discretion as to whether the gaining or loss of Dojo points is visible to parents at home;
3. Teachers only use Class Dojo during working hours and cannot be expected to upload onto portfolios or respond to messages out with this time;
4. Parents are welcomed and encouraged to showcase home learning via the application. For parents who require additional support with this will receive this upon request;
5. Parents may only use the messaging system to alert teachers to unurgent information or to ask reasonable questions. The messaging system should not be used for complaints or for any questions which require an immediate response. Teachers have up to 48 hours to respond to messages where one is warranted;
6. Parents should not communicate instances of absence through the Class Dojo application. They should follow procedure outlined in our **Attendance Policy** and speak to the school office directly;
7. All users of Class Dojo should refrain from positing negative or critical comments on posts on the School Story. If any users fail to adhere to this then comments for posts will be switched off and, in some instances, users may be blocked from using the system. If there are any complaints or queries these should be communicated formally to the Head Teacher.

Oxgang Primary School

Homework Policy

During school session 2017-18, through our school improvement planning we identified the need to review our Homework Policy. To begin this, we sought feedback from pupils, parents and staff about their feelings about our current approach. From this, we collated the following





Pupil Voice



Why do we have homework?

To show parents what we know and to keep learning outside of school!

To share learning at home and say what you're stuck with.

Learning at home is important

Parents can help us too – not just teachers!

So we can get better and better!



Pupil Voice



What do you dislike about homework

Too much of it

Too much spelling

Sometimes it is boring

I fall out with my mum and dad about it

You have to work all day and then also at home



Pupil Voice



What homework activities would you like to do with your family?

I like reading the books with mum and dad

Projects

Books and reading

Maths questions

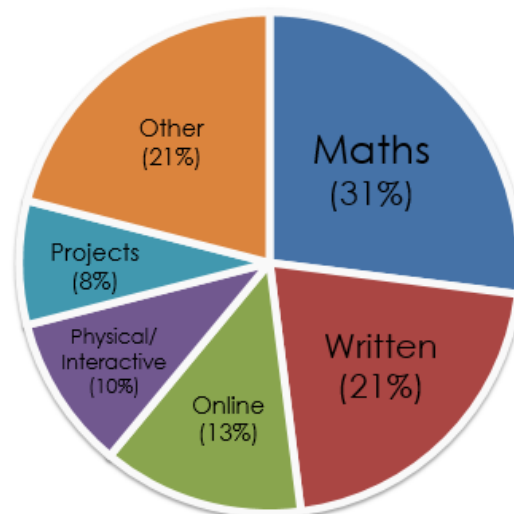
I like doing my homework with my family



Parent Views



What activities would you like to see more of?

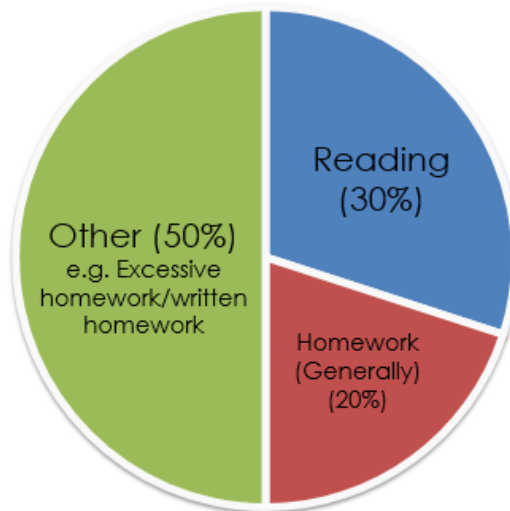




Parent Views



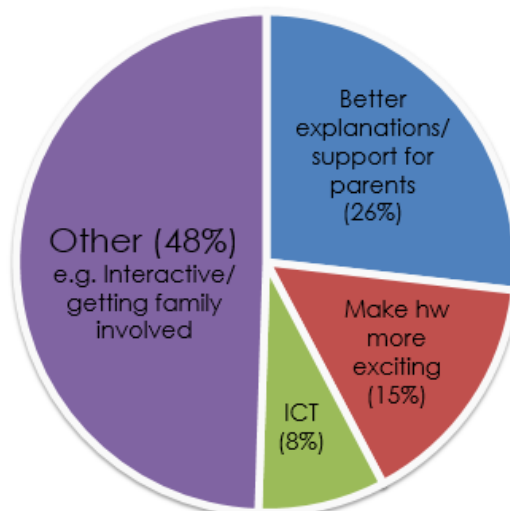
What activities would you like to see less of?



Parent Views



How can we improve homework tasks?

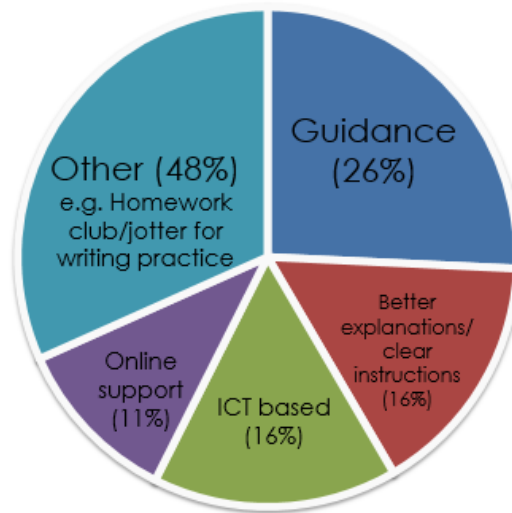




Parent Views



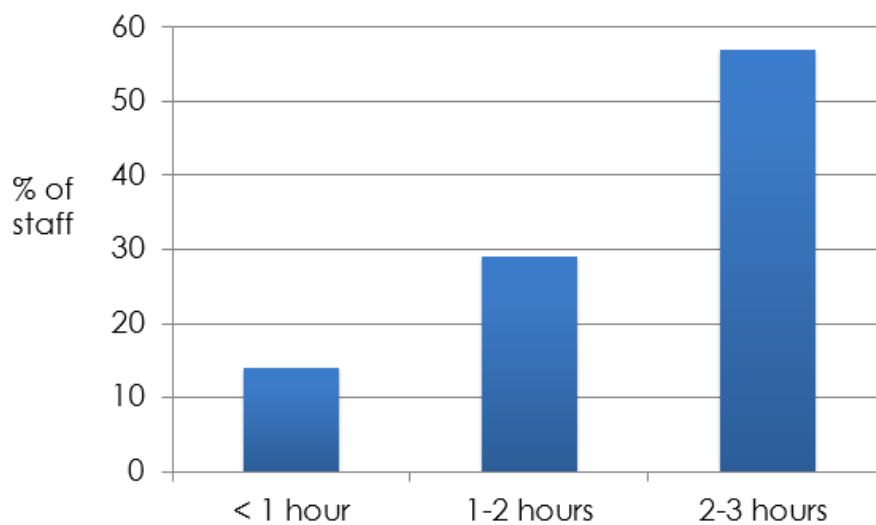
What support/resources can we offer you to help with learning at home?



Teacher Experience



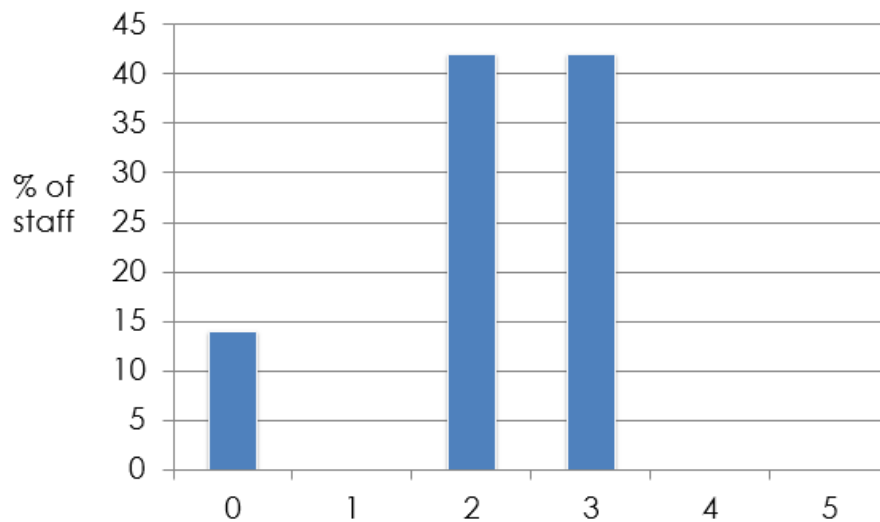
How long does it take to plan and mark homework per week?



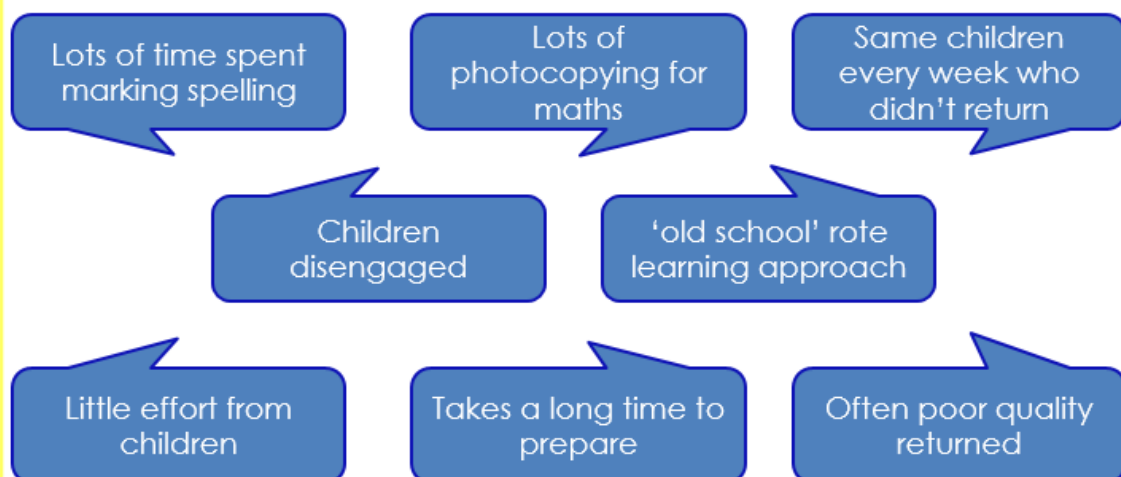


Teacher Experience

In your opinion, what impact did this have on learners' attainment?



Teacher Experience



Our Rationale:

Through the analysis of this feedback and consultation process, we decided to refresh our approach to homework at Oxbang with a view to make this more meaningful and worthwhile for all stakeholders. Our new policy focuses on the following key aspects

- The promotion of 'family learning' as central to home learning tasks;
- Opportunities for some independent tasks for learners as they move up the school, ensuring readiness for high school;
- A more flexible approach so that activities can be completed around families differing schedules/busy family life;
- A balance of weekly/monthly/yearly tasks;
- Information provided to families about topics across the year (e.g. out with Literacy and Numeracy).

Our New Approach:

We have devised a universal approach to homework across the school, with the exception of Primary 1 and Primary 2 which has slight differences.

Whilst the homework layout from P3-7 remains the same, there may be differing expectations set by class teachers as children move through the school.

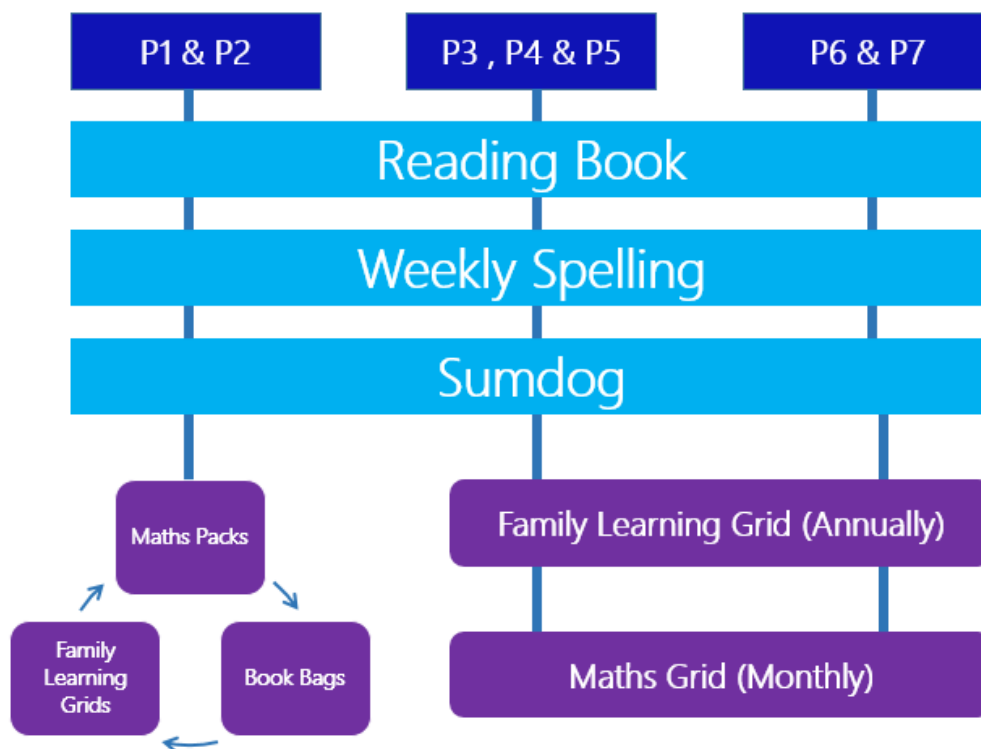
Each child is given a homework pack to help them to keep their homework organised. As some key learning within the pack is reinforced daily (e.g. reading books), we ask that children bring their homework pack to school with them daily.

We ask that contents of the homework pack are looked after to the best of each family's ability due to the cost of the contents. To support this, teachers and support staff keep a note of which items are being used by pupils for home learning. We ask that any lost or damaged items are replaced where possible.

If parents have any queries about lost or damaged items we ask them to contact the Head Teacher or Depute Head Teacher as soon as they can in order to find a solution.

Each child in P4 – 7 will have a personal homework diary to record specific homework instruction, as well as to record and reflect upon their learning targets. Children in P1 – 3 will complete a class learning diary together, with key messages for parents being communicated via Class Dojo.

Home Learning Overview:



Reading: Every child in Oxbang will receive a reading book to practice with at home. In the infant and junior department, children will usually receive a new book weekly, however this might change depending on need. As children move up the school and begin to read chapter books then they may be asked to complete, for example, a chapter or two weekly. Information about this will be shared in children's learning diaries (see above).

Our core reading scheme is the Oxford Reading Tree (Biff, Chip and Kipper stories) for the lower school, however children may access a range of bespoke reading programmes such as Story Sparks, Dandelion Readers and Fuzz Buzz.

As children move up through the school they will begin to access a wider range of texts based around different authors such as Sally Gardner, Louis Sachar and Michael Morpurgo. For readers in the upper school who require support with Literacy, we also have a range of adapted reading schemes such as Totem and Storyworld Bridges.

Weekly Spelling: Children across the school will be given a selection of spelling words to practice at home each week. These will be stuck into their personal home learning jotter and consist of a range of 'sound' words (phonemes - for example a range of words beginning with 'd') as well as some 'common words'. These words are usually too tricky to

sound out and parents should support their children to recognise these words by sight through regular reinforcement.

Sumdog: All children will be given a Sumdog log in for numeracy practise at home. Sumdog is a free app that you can download onto a tablet, or it can be accessed on a computer through www.sumdog.com. Through playing Sumdog, the application adapts to each child's developmental level so we ask that parents do not complete the sums for their child as this will result in it continuing to generate more challenging questions.

P1 & P2 – Specific Homework

In addition to the universal reading and spelling homework, as well as access to Sumdog, P1 and P2 will also receive a family learning pack home. This will rotate weekly between Maths Pack, Book Bag and Family Learning Grid.

Maths Packs: The Maths Packs will be given to each child specifically to suit their learning needs. Each pack should have a set of instructions as well as resources to complete a range of tasks. Each skill within the pack is arranged as a 'chilli challenge' which means that there is a range of tasks to suit a variety of abilities. Whilst there are 10 different packs that a child may get over their time in P1 and P2, they will receive each pack more than once to reinforce key skills.

Book Bags: We have a wide selection of book bags, each with a story book (or two), a game as well as a toy/puppet inside. When it is a child's turn to have a book bag they have choice over which book they choose. As the books cover a range of levels the children are not expected to read these independently, rather they are to be enjoyed as a family. Within the book bag there is also a card about 'The Thinking Reader' approach to supporting reading which we encourage parents to use during their reading sessions.

Family Learning Grids: These short grids are based on key skills that we wish children to develop in P1 and P2. When it is a classes turn for the Family Learning Grid, these will be stuck into each child's home learning jotter. We do not ask for any formal evidence for completing these skills, however parents are welcome to write in the jotter, or take pictures to upload onto Class Dojo to share with the teacher/class.

P3 to P7 – Specific Homework

Family Learning Grid: Each child in P4 to 7 will be given a specific family learning grid to complete over the course of a school session. These are stuck into each child's home learning jotter in August and reviewed regularly by the teacher. Again, we do not ask for any formal evidence for completing these skills, however parents are welcome to write in the jotter, or take pictures to upload onto Class Dojo to share with the teacher/class.

Maths Grids: Each child in P3 to 7 will receive a maths grid roughly every month. These grids will be sent home in a laminated format with a sheet to record answers glued into each child's home learning jotter. Each maths grid covers a range of skills from across the Curriculum for Excellence level they are working at, and is tailored to their specific learning needs. Grids given should be revision for children and do not usually include concepts that children have not yet covered in class. Sometimes, the teacher will teach new concepts that month, and some examples may be included in the grid. Children are always encouraged to seek advice from the class teacher if they are finding any aspect of their homework difficult to complete or understand.

Barriers to homework

At Oxbang we are aware of the many barriers which many children and families face with regards to home learning. Some of these may include:

- Challenging behaviour/compliance at home;
- Lack of parental engagement;
- Challenging home circumstances;
- Low parental confidence/ability in literacy & numeracy
- Lack of access to key resources (eg stationery)

As a staff we are vigilant in monitoring home learning and identify children we feel are vulnerable and offer a range of supports wherever appropriate. Examples of these include the following:

- One-to-one or group family learning sessions;
- Advice to parents on challenging behaviour, including signposting to other agencies for support (e.g. EDC Supporting Families);
- Targeted after-school homework clubs run by Class Teacher and Support Staff.

Oxgang Primary School

Primary 1 Induction Programme

Overview

To ensure that children and their families get to know the school well and feel happy and confident with the new P1 start in August each year, we have devised a robust induction programme.

In addition to liaising with nurseries and other agencies to ensure that key information and ASN provision is in place, the core induction programme consists of the following four key parts:

1. Parents Information Session

(Approximate dates & timing – Mid May, 2pm – 2.40pm)

This session is for parents to come into the school to find out about school life in Oxgang as well as the transition arrangements for Primary 1. This session is intended for parents only, however parents are encouraged to bring along wider family members such as grandparents if they wish.

2. Stay and Play Sessions

(Approximate dates & timing – Late May to early June, 3.30pm – 4pm)

At these stay and play sessions both children and their parents will visit the primary 1 classroom and meet their P1 teacher(s). Lots of play activities will be set up in the classroom and parents are invited to come in and enjoy playing together whilst getting to know the school better. Sessions will be for small groups of children (between 5-8) and parents will be advised specifically of which session they can come to. Due to numbers we must ask that no more than two adults per child come along to this session.

3. Induction Morning (Part 1) & Lunch Experience

(Approximate dates & timing – Early June, 10.30am – 12noon)

This session is for children and their parents. On this day, children will find out their class teacher and will spend time with them in class whilst the adults go into the school hall for an information session. This session will be based around key school and community links.

At 11.30am parents will be invited to accompany their children into the lunch hall for a 'P1 lunch experience'. This will let the children see how lunches in our school work as well as let the parents see the range of choices available. Due to the additional cost, we must limit this to two adults per child for lunch, however extended family are welcome to join for the information session from 10.30 – 11.30am.

4. Induction Morning (Part 2)

(Approximate dates & timing – Early June (usually the day after part 1), 10.30am – 11.30am)

This is a drop off session for the children to spend more time in their class with their teacher and new friends. Children are asked to be dropped off through the P1 entrance and picked up from the same place at 11.30am.

During this induction morning, we organise coffee morning for parents whilst children are in school. We clarify this information to parents nearer to the time, but this is usually held across the road from Oxgang in Home Church, one of our community partners.

Induction – Additional Information:

All information is relayed to parents by letter following January induction. Children who require an enhanced transition in addition to the core programme will be given this through communication with the nursery. Parents who feel their child would benefit from this are asked to speak with the nursery to arrange this in the first instance.

For families of children who are registered at Oxgang through a successful placing request (April/May) we will ensure that key information regarding induction is relayed as soon as confirmation from the council is provided.