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HOMWORK

Thank you to the 23 families who replied to our recent request for feedback on homework. This amounts to 31% of our school pupils' parents responding.

All replies were in favour of the principle of homework: 69% of replies were satisfied with the type and level of homework currently set; 14% wanted their children to have more whilst 19% wanted less to be sent home. You may be interested in this teachers' newspaper article: "Is it time to scrap homework?" <http://www.tes.co.uk/article.aspx?storycode=6319948> This highlights that there is no recent research to show that spelling lists or lots of homework at primary school age improves attainment. A printed copy will be available at the office if you wish to read a paper copy.

Parents' responses varied greatly, reflecting each parent's different view on how and what should be set, considering their own child's needs, personality and family circumstances. There was a general consensus that homework should increase with the age of the child and requested that it would be helpful if homework was set on a regular day, with clear expectations. The staff agree with this.

Some parents are concerned that there are not sanctions for those who fail to do homework and not enough reward for those who do. We would like to re-emphasize that, as a primary school, it is not compulsory and we do not feel we can punish young children who, for whatever reason, do not do their homework. We will award house points to children who do complete the work.

A few parents were interested in whether spelling lists leading to tests in class would be appropriate. You may be interested by <http://www.education.com/reference/article/teaching-spelling/> which, although of American origin, emphasizes the varied approach teachers use to teach spelling. (Take care not to adopt the American spelling list though –we shall shortly be sending home the new Department of Education's list of required spellings for your information. As a school, we shall send home spellings/ phonics to learn; there will be no formal weekly test, but weekly practice.

At a recent staff meeting, after discussing the parents' responses, the teachers wish to stress the most important homework is reading, but have decided to set additional voluntary homework after half term:

Coots: A topic-based half-termly creative homework. Phonics will be updated regularly to reflect the current learning in class. There may be on-line maths games or worksheets.

Bitterns: A topic-based half-termly creative homework. English and maths will alternate; maths may be a sheet or set on-line (with opportunities for children to do in a lunchtime if wished) and English will be spellings that the class have been misspelling, with an opportunity to practise writing them in their diaries.

Grebes and Herons will have a fortnightly Big Talk (Wednesday) and weekly maths practice sheet on Mondays. **Year 6** will have extra homework in the Spring term for SAT revision.

This information is going to be discussed further by the Federation governors and Neatishead staff prior to making a new homework policy, so we will let you know how things progress.