



Scammonden Road, Barkisland, Halifax, W. Yorkshire, HX4 0BD
 Email: admin@barkisland.calderdale.sch.uk
 Headteacher: Mrs B. Schofield (B.Ed (Hons)NPQH, NPQEL)

Tel: (01422) 823324
www.barkislandcofeschool.org.uk

10th September 2026

2026-27 Homework Approach Y1-Y6

Dear Parents/Carers,

As we begin the new academic year, we have been reviewing the way in which we support learning beyond the classroom.

This year, we are making a change to our approach to homework. We are returning to Talking Homework as our main approach to home learning, alongside our continued expectation that children read regularly at home. Talking Homework is not a new approach for our families. We have used it at Barkisland alongside formal homework for a number of years, so many of you will already be familiar with the idea. Following the disruption to education caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, we reintroduced more formal homework alongside Talking Homework. Having reviewed our current approach, we have decided that now is the right time to return to Talking Homework as the main way in which we encourage learning beyond the classroom.

This is not about removing learning at home. Instead, it is about re-establishing the expectations around Talking Homework and making it the consistent approach across school, whilst also supporting our Oracy focus.

Why are we making this change?

We know that homework is something about which families have different views. For some children, completing formal homework is an enjoyable opportunity to practise and extend their learning. For others, it can become a source of frustration, particularly when families are trying to find the time, motivation or the right moment to complete it alongside busy family life.

Research into homework in primary schools is also less conclusive than it is for older pupils. The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) identifies a positive average impact from homework overall, but notes that the impact is smaller in primary schools than in secondary schools, and that the evidence base is relatively limited. The EEF also highlights the importance of the quality and purpose of homework, rather than simply the amount of work children are asked to complete.

We have therefore considered carefully what we want our home learning to achieve and whether formal written homework is always the best way of achieving this.

Our aim is to make opportunities for learning at home worthwhile, purposeful and enjoyable, rather than creating additional work simply because it is expected.

*Working with the Diocese of Leeds and the Metropolitan Borough of Calderdale
 May he give you the desire of your heart and make all your plans succeed Psalm 20:4*



This is particularly important because one of our key priorities this year is oracy. We want to continue to develop children's vocabulary, confidence, ability to explain their thinking, listen to others, ask questions and engage in meaningful conversations.

Talking Homework provides a natural way of extending this work beyond the classroom. The evidence supporting oral language approaches is strong, with the EEF identifying purposeful talk, discussion, vocabulary development and opportunities for children to explain their thinking as important approaches to supporting learning.

What will Talking Homework look like?

As Talking Homework is already familiar to many of our families, the approach will remain straightforward.

Each week, teachers will provide some simple suggestions for things children can talk about, discuss, explore or do together at home. These will usually link to learning taking place in school and may cover a range of subjects.

For example, your child might be asked to:

- explain something they have learnt that week;
- teach you a new word and explain what it means;
- discuss a question linked to their learning;
- explain how they solved a problem in maths;
- talk about a character, event or idea from a book;
- spot examples of their learning in everyday life;
- discuss an idea or question and give reasons for their opinion;
- investigate something together and find out more.

The important part is the conversation, the thinking and the opportunity to revisit and extend learning.

There is no expectation that children will produce written work, make something, print something or bring evidence into school as a result of their Talking Homework.

If your child becomes particularly interested in something and wants to take their learning further, that is fantastic. They may wish to bring something into school to share, but this will be entirely optional.

We also want to be clear that Talking Homework should not simply become formal homework by another name. There is no need to find a particular time each week to sit down and "complete" it. The prompts are intended to create opportunities for learning and conversation when they fit naturally into family life.

This might be around the dinner table, in the car, while walking, at bedtime or simply when an opportunity arises.

The Talking Homework will be upload onto Dojo each Wednesday by the class teacher.

Reading at home

Although we are moving away from formal written homework, reading at home remains an important expectation for every child.

We want children to develop both the skills to read confidently and, just as importantly, a genuine love of reading. Children should read regularly at home, either independently or with an adult, depending on their age and stage of reading development.

Reading does not always have to mean sitting down with a school reading book. Sharing a story, reading a comic or magazine, looking at a non-fiction book, following a recipe or instructions, reading information online or listening to an audiobook can all provide valuable opportunities to develop language and a love of reading.



Scammonden Road, Barkisland, Halifax, W. Yorkshire, HX4 0BD
 Email: admin@barkisland.calderdale.sch.uk
 Headteacher: Mrs B. Schofield (B.Ed (Hons)NPQH, NPQEL)

Tel: (01422) 823324
www.barkislandcofeschool.org.uk

We would particularly encourage you to talk about what your child is reading. Ask questions, discuss characters and events, make predictions, explore new vocabulary and encourage your child to share their opinions.

For younger children and children still developing their reading fluency, reading with an adult is particularly important. As children become more fluent and confident, we want them to increasingly enjoy reading independently too.

If you ever experience difficulties encouraging your child to read at home, please speak to your child's class teacher. We are very happy to offer advice and support.

Spelling

For children in Years 2–6, we will continue to teach spelling rules and patterns explicitly in school.

To help families know what children are learning, spelling bookmarks will be sent home regularly. These will provide an overview of the spelling rule or pattern being taught in school.

Families are very welcome to practise these words and spelling patterns at home if they wish. However, there is no expectation that children practise them at home or complete a spelling test.

The bookmarks are primarily intended to give parents and carers an insight into what their child is learning and to provide an opportunity for additional practice if this is something your child enjoys or would benefit from.

Supporting Maths at Home

Children will continue to have access to Arithmagians and Times Tables Rock Stars (TTRockstars) to support their mathematical learning and fluency at home if required.

These platforms provide children with opportunities to practise key mathematical skills and times tables in an engaging way. Again, we want these to be used positively and flexibly, rather than becoming an additional source of pressure.

Regular short practice can be beneficial, but there is no expectation that children complete a set amount of time or achieve a particular score at home.

If you would prefer some more formal homework

We recognise that, while we are moving away from formal homework as a whole-school expectation, some families may still prefer to have access to more traditional written activities to complete at home.

*Working with the Diocese of Leeds and the Metropolitan Borough of Calderdale
 May he give you the desire of your heart and make all your plans succeed Psalm 20:4*



For families of children in Key Stage 2 (Years 3–6), we will therefore hold a stock of CGP workbooks covering maths, reading comprehension and SPAG (spelling, punctuation and grammar). These will be available for parents and carers to purchase through the school shop on School Spider at a small cost, approximately £2–£4 per workbook.

These workbooks are entirely optional and will not form part of the school's homework expectations. They are simply an additional resource for families who would like their child to have some more formal opportunities to practise their learning at home.

Further information about the workbooks and how to purchase them will be shared shortly.

Year 6

We recognise that Year 6 is a particularly important year as children prepare for their SATs and their transition to secondary school.

Our approach to homework for Year 6 will therefore change after Christmas, when we will introduce some more formal activities to support children in preparing for their SATs and to help them develop the routines and independence needed for the transition to secondary school.

More information about the Year 6 approach will be shared with families in due course.

Until then, Year 6 pupils will follow the same Talking Homework approach as the rest of school, alongside reading and the opportunities available through our maths platforms.

What do we hope this approach will achieve?

Our aim is not to reduce opportunities for children to learn at home. It is to make those opportunities more meaningful.

We hope that returning to Talking Homework will:

- encourage children to be curious and want to find things out;
- develop children's vocabulary and confidence in speaking;
- give children opportunities to explain, reason, question and debate;
- strengthen the connection between children's learning at school and family life;
- give parents and carers opportunities to find out more about what their child is learning;
- reduce unnecessary pressure on children and families;
- avoid homework becoming a source of conflict or frustration;
- support children who find written recording more challenging;
- encourage children to see learning as something that happens everywhere – not just in a classroom.

We recognise that families are busy and that every family is different. There will be no expectation that families need to find a particular amount of time each week to complete Talking Homework. The suggestions are there to support learning and conversation, not to create another source of pressure.

We hope that, over time, Talking Homework will become part of natural family dialogue and that children will begin to see opportunities for learning everywhere – through conversations, questions, books, experiences and the world around them.

Most importantly, we want to encourage our children to read, talk, question, explore and be curious. Thank you, as always, for your continued support in helping your children to learn and flourish. If you have any questions about our approach to homework, please speak to your child's class teacher.

Kind regards,
Mrs Becky Schofield
Headteacher