# Parent Homework Survey – analysis

***Before the half-term break, an online survey was shared with families to garner opinions on homework and what forms it should take with a view to configuring how we as a school administer homework in the future. This is a very divisive subject and I felt that it was important that families were involved in the decision-making process given that they have a lot of involvement in this area. 90 responses to the survey were submitted, which we believe represents between 60-70% of our families.***

Over three-quarters of families said that they believed homework should be given. Those that didn't think it should be given, gave reasons for this including:

- that they thought the children were too young,
- that it was hard for working parents to find time to support their children,
- that work should remain at school
- that time spent at home should be spent on other pursuits
- that it causes arguments and stress at home

Although a large proportion of the parents believe that homework should be given, I think it is important that we consider these responses when considering future changes.

When asked what subjects they believe homework should be given for, a third of responses said it should be for English and Maths, with 18% saying Science should be given and a small number expressing interest in other curriculum areas. Off the back of this, I think that regular homework should be set for English and Maths, but that we should also look at wider projects that can be used to relate to other curriculum areas.

Families were asked how often they believed homework should be set. Half of families voted for it being on a weekly basis, with around a quarter voting for twice a week and less frequent than once a week respectively. I think it would be sensible to suggest that homework is given on a weekly basis so as not to put a burden on teaching staff administering work.

When asked what format homework should take (worksheets, online, workbooks, open-ended), there was no clear favourite, although online work and worksheets were marginally the most popular. A fifth of responses expressed no preference. We have gone down the road of using workbooks in the past; however, this can become expensive when having to replace books that have been lost or damaged. Using worksheets and online homework is what most classes are currently doing so wouldn't mean a significant change from current practice.

When asked if homework should be compulsory or optional, there was an almost 50/50 split. This proves the point about how divisive homework can be and I think it forces our play to make sure that homework is optional. Perhaps we could have more of a compulsory approach with the older classes as they approach secondary transition.

As the survey was going out, Mrs Smith was looking into adopting a new system for parents recording reading at home via an online platform. I included a question on the survey related to this and 50 of the responses expressed preference of a paper system with 40 opting for the online platform. I think that it is important that we consider the usability of the platform to ensure it is straightforward for parents to use as could easily lead to poor take-up. We also need to consider families that may not have internet access.

Families were asked if they thought children should have access to an optional lunch-time homework club that could be available for children to come and seek assistance with their work or have time to complete outstanding tasks. Over the lunch hour, I use the first 30 minutes for catching up on admin tasks in my classroom and I could potentially give two days a week into finding time for this so it should be relatively straightforward to sort out. This was a popular option with almost 90% of responses thinking it would be a good idea. Some responses expressed concern about how it might feel like detention and it is important that anything that is done is made explicitly clear that it is optional.

I invited families to express any further comments they wanted to make about homework, of which nearly half did. Other than similar comments already made about reasons not to have homework, other responses included:

- praise for Times Tables Rockstars and Spelling Shed
- homework being set that links to a topic
- children being given more than a weekend to complete tasks
- incentives, like Dojos, for doing homework
- parent workshops to instruct families on how tasks should be completed (mainly Maths)
- homework is good preparation for high school
- online homework has a lesser environmental impact
- parents being notified on Class Dojo when homework has been set

Finally, I think it is worth considering one of the responses that a parent gave at the end of their survey. They said that "*It's a tricky subject, and I don't think there's a right or wrong viewpoint on it. There are benefits to having it obviously, but equally it's not necessary for everybody*." This comment made me consider changes that we could potentially make as a school and that as much as we will make decisions with the best interests of the children and their families at heart, there isn't going to be a perfect way of doing this and we need to have conviction in what we do.

## Recommendations from the survey

Upon analysing the parent homework survey, here are the recommendations I would make regarding future changes to homework:

1. We should continue to set homework but this should be on a weekly, optional basis. This should be for English and Maths.

2. We should continue to use Spelling Shed and My Maths for the respective subjects. Families are familiar with these platforms and they've had a lot of positive praise.
3. I think that once a term (Autumn, Spring, Summer), year groups should look into putting out a topic-based optional project that children can be completing at home based on the significant area they'll be learning about that term. This can take whatever form the teaching team would like to take and would help enrich the respective subject both in school and at home. Ideally, this would be set towards the beginning of a term (or in the first-half) to allow plenty of time for children to take part.
4. A twice-weekly lunchtime homework club should be established, which I am happy to run. This would be just for children who have tasks to complete rather than for those who want to do extra as it could easily turn into lunchtime cover.
5. A new approach to recording reading at home and moving to an online platform needs to be trialled first to compare to current usage.

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