

Supporting Your Child's Home Learning

Our curriculum has been designed to provide your children with engaging learning experiences that promote excellent progress. Each of these experiences allows for a breadth of study by focusing on different subjects at different times. Reading remains a priority in every experience. In designing our curriculum at school we have a number of principles that underpin our thinking. These principles serve as a quality benchmark for teachers as they plan their work and it is some of these that we would like to share with parents.

1. Learning should be organised.

In school, teachers work to a timetable. This timetable is not set in stone as sometimes lessons overrun because children develop a real enthusiasm for what they are learning. At home, it is also a good idea to have a timetable for your child. This does not need to be rigidly stuck to, but should offer guidance about the learning that needs to be covered day by day. A breakfast meeting with your child to discuss the day's learning provides an excellent opportunity to clarify expectations and to identify any obstacles that may arise and what support you might be able to offer to help overcome these.

Whilst, we as a school are passionate that all pupils' learning should be independent, we also recognise that pupils have to be taught the skills necessary for this. As part of being organised, pupils have to be self-managing. To support your child with this, it is a good idea to create a ***designated work space*** at home. This space will be more effective if it enables your child to concentrate and engage in their learning without distraction. A shared discussion between children and parents/carers about where this space should be and what equipment is needed is a good way to demonstrate empathy and support. It is, of course, vitally important that your child working at home does not think that they can have immediate access to you whenever they want, just as in the classroom pupils do not have a teacher's attention all of the time. It also does not mean that if your child is struggling with a piece of work, they can just 'down tools' and go and play in the garden. Organised learning means that strategies to overcome difficulties are agreed prior to the lessons taking place. These strategies will include;

- Having a go
- Looking at the teacher's modelled example
- Looking back over previous work
- Asking a friend

- Looking things up on line
- Keeping a record of difficulties for discussion later
- Making their own learning wall (A board where they stick ideas that might help them with future learning)
- Asking for help from the teacher (via email)
- Asking for help from a peer or other adult

Organised learning also means that there needs to be time to **review the learning**. Parents/ carers can really support this at home by looking at the work that has been done and asking questions. For this to be really effective, it is better to ask the children to explain their learning to you, rather than to just ask questions about the facts that they have learnt. You will know if a child understands what they have learnt if they can teach it to you. We will explore questioning in a later document.

2. Learning should be first hand and active.

Whereas in school, we would always try and take the children on trips and visits and bring visitors with expertise into the classroom, we realise that given the current situation this is not possible. However, there are still a number of ways that you can support your child in this area. To start with draw up a list together, exploring what you might do to **make learning more active** in each subject area. For example, pupils may be asked to explore plants in science and there might be opportunities to grow plants in the garden over the next few weeks. Guidance from your child's teacher will make clear what aspect of growth needs to be studied. In design and technology, pupils can create things with a purpose. For example, a new flavour muffin or cake or perhaps a new invention to keep birds off the new plants they are growing. Opportunities for you, as parents and carers, to share your own expertise should always be capitalised upon. It's also a great idea to talk to the children about your own day to day work and share with them the challenges you are facing at the moment and how you are responding to these.

Reading still remains core to the curriculum and there are a number of things that can be done to ensure that reading too is first hand and active. Firstly, children in the main, love reading to an adult, so take the opportunity to **hear your child read** whenever you can. However, always take the time to talk to the children about what they are reading. Ask about the characters or the events that unfold in the text. Ask your child to predict what might happen next and share your own views. Talk about the causes of why something happened and possible consequences.

Helping make reading first hand and active also means providing them with a variety of texts to read such as recipes, newspaper articles, instructions, cards, posters etc. At all times questioning the children about what they have read serves to reinforce their understanding, engagement and enjoyment of reading. More guidance on how to make learning first hand and active will come from your child's teacher.

3. Learning should be meaningful and relevant

We always try and engage the children in ***designing learning experiences that interest them***. Whilst there are certain things that have to be learnt e.g. phonics, number bonds spellings etc., there is also flexibility in the curriculum for children to take control of their own learning and explore things that interest them. For example, when Josephine had to take an extended period off school, she followed her passion for reporting. Each day she would conduct fictitious interviews with people, writing them up and then producing her own news bulletin. Josephine is now a successful reporter for a well-known magazine. Karina spent her time, when not in school, choreographing dances which she practiced in the garden and in front of a mirror before putting on a show for the rest of the family. Karina is now a West End performer taking part in a number of high profile shows (temporarily laid off during this period). This period of time at home can be used to encourage your child to follow their own passions with your support. Painting, photography, cooking, building, programming, sport, writing, languages, whatever they show an interest in, think about how their interest in this area might be captured and shared with other people, including their teacher at a later date.

Creating a journal of this period of history is also a great idea. If we want learning to be experiential and meaningful, then there is no time like the present to create an historical document of what it was like to live at a time when, 'the world caught a virus'.

4. Learning should be varied

We are passionate about the development of each individual within the Inspire Federation and try to vary learning to ensure that as well as subject knowledge being taught; we are also providing experiences for the pupils to strengthen their own character traits. We have a set of core values in the school which are important to us. Right now there are so many opportunities to explore citizenship, support and loyalty in a real and relevant way. This is also the time to explore with your children what well-being in all areas means. We include in

well-being, mental health, emotional health, spiritual health and physical health. For ***learning to be varied***, aspects of this need to be included in the learning experienced at home.

At school we try and ensure that pupils have regular periods of physical activity each day. At home parents/carers should plan this in as part of the timetable. From daily walks, runs and bike rides to a simple exercise circuit set up in the garden. Even in the wet, a daily exercise regime will help maintain physical well-being.

Strong supportive relationships at home where worries and concerns can be shared help with both emotional and spiritual well-being. If the children understand how they can be supportive at this difficult time, then it helps them with their own character development. If we look at the strength of character shown by the way communities have come together recently, then this can be used as an example to get children to think about what they can do be supportive, both in the home and in the wider community.

Mental health relies on an interesting variety of experiences being offered at home. The daily timetable should ***allow for downtime*** and ***safe communication with friends*** as well as for ***structured learning***. Children do like consistency, they do flourish when they understand shared expectations and they do respond to an interest being shown in what they are doing.

Our children are tremendously resilient and with the support of the teachers and you at home they will continue to thrive and flourish.

I hope this has helped give you some guidance and ideas regarding supporting your child's learning at home. I will shortly be creating a document that will share some thoughts about how better to support children with their thinking. In the meantime please do not hesitate to contact the class teachers if you need further support.

Thank you for your continued support during these difficult times,

Mrs Mitchell