

# Homework Support for KS1 & KS2

## Introduction to Teachers

Hamilton Homework Activities draw upon the following:

**1. Key Objectives and Pivotal Skills** – the homework activities focus on practising and developing skills in English and maths which are crucial to each Year group. Skills such as the study of verbs in Y3 and of number bonds to 10 and 20 in Y2 are so important that it almost does not matter when these are sent as homework, since no week will pass without their being mentioned in the teaching and learning in class!

**2. Shared activities** – rather than children doing their homework in isolation, these activities are intended to be shared! Evidence strongly suggests that children sharing an activity with a parent or carer is of far more use than their doing more individual exercises or skills- practice of the type more helpfully done in class, where, if the child is stuck, a teacher or trained professional is the best person to support them.

**3. Use the home!** –The best homework activities use the home-context. They encourage children to take skills they have learned or developed in class and to transfer these skills to real-life scenarios. This helps children to deepen their understanding and take ownership of the skills.

**4. Play the game** – the other aspect of learning, which is ideally situated in the home is playing games – there are never enough adults to go round in class – home is the perfect one-on-one context!

## Sending Homework

Homework is the main contact for parents with their child's work at school. This partly explains why parents tend to set so much store by homework. A few tips about sending homework can prevent many problems:

- **It is crucial that the children understand what they have to do!** Nothing is more destructive to parent-school relations than a child who is persistently confused or worried about their homework. Go through the homework with children very carefully before it is sent. Tell children that at home, 'they are the teacher' and they can explain what is to be done! Give them an inkling – perhaps with a 'Blue Peter' style pre-done model – of what the finished homework will look like.
- **Shared homework.** Stress to parents at parent evenings and in a letter or leaflet (see Hamilton documents) sent home at the start of the year that homework is to be SHARED! Point out that very little gain comes from a child sitting alone and practising a skill they could equally well practise at school. LOTS of gain comes from children explaining something they have learned to a parent and sharing an activity in a relaxed and enjoyable way.
- **Follow-up the homework in class.** This makes all the difference to how children feel about their homework and also to how many children do it! The key here is in the choice of homework – try to choose something that you will still be doing when the homework comes back, e.g.

if you are studying powerful verbs, send the homework sheet on this mid-week so that what they do at home can feed directly into Thursday's or Friday's teaching and class work. A few suggestions for follow-up work include:

- a. Use what the children have done at home to kick-start or inform the whole-class teaching, e.g. If children have generated synonyms for 'said', use these to start the discussion on how we can use more elaborated language. If they have created 2-digit numbers from a telephone keypad, use these to start the work on ordering or comparing numbers.
- b. Play the homework game children learned to play at home, or do the activity they shared at home in class as one of the activities. Hopefully most children will already know how to do it, having shared this at home, and they can help those who are not so sure.
- c. Create a display of children's work at home – displaying their tangram puzzles, their scale drawings, their packing lists or their favourite sayings. Preferably position this display where parents can see it when they collect their children. This shows the parents that work done at home is valued and important – and hopefully encourages more parents to participate!

## About the Hamilton Homework on offer

There are twelve activities a term – that is one a week taking into account festivals and school trips and allowing a little flexibility! Choose the activity to fit work you are doing. We envisage one activity being sent mid-week, usually but not always the English. The other activity, usually the Maths, is sent for the weekend. It is important that both activities lead in to the work you are about to do with the children so that you can do adequate follow-up in class. The activities are linked to key skills.

We have tried to arrange the activities so that if you have a mixed year class there are matching activities for each year-group, e.g. there is a 'Bingo for Learning' activity for both Y1 and Y2. Look out for these pairs – they make the introduction to the homework you do with the children much easier.

**Letter formation** – we provide a sheet on how to form letters. This is hugely helpful to parents. We suggest you send it with any activity where how children form their letters is important.