

Killermont Primary School Homework Questionnaire – Summary of Parents Comments

(Note: comments in *italics* are from parents who do not want homework to continue.)

Questions 1-4

The purpose of homework

- *Homework could also be to extend a little beyond what is being done in class, without going so far as to be things that are completely new. However, many parents would do this of their own accord without specific homework being set. I certainly do.*
- Additional purpose of homework – allowing parents to understand children's strengths and weaknesses and to see if additional support is required and to promote a good work ethic.
- We enjoy homework as a way of sharing what they learn in school.
- I think preparing the kids for secondary school, independent learning and time management is a key function of homework.
- Homework is useful for aiding kids learning but too much can sometimes be a hindrance – kids need time to relax and play too. There needs to be a balance between pupils' needs, teachers' time and parents' aspirations.
- Numeracy and literacy skills should be the main priorities for homework tasks. Shared learning activities are very time consuming and most of the time the tasks are completed by parents. Maths sheets and language activities are vital in order to enhance these skills.
- Homework is important and should remain part of the school year, but would be better over a 2 week period and with breaks of weeks off.
- Younger children should be offered the opportunity to focus on tasks/themes of their choice.
- Agree useful for keeping up to date but I think other means of communication e.g. bringing samples of work home is more useful.
- It will be helpful to get a copy of what is being covered and additional materials that can be used.
- The main benefit is to allow us to discuss what kids is doing in school and be able to show admiration for what they do/show an interest. Also helps work a bit more the areas they struggle with on a 1 to 1 basis.
- The term 'homework' should be changed. The focus should be on learning and developing not 'work'. It is an outdated term in my opinion.
- I expect my children to be 'taught' in the classroom and for their learning to be practiced or reinforced at home in support. I don't feel we're in a position to adequately teach new things on behalf of the teacher.
- Homework is essential, even at primary school. If kids don't get accustomed to doing homework they will not be adequately equipped to cope with secondary school. It also helps us as parents to understand what stage our child is at and provide additional support where needed.

- Only a very small amount of homework should be given, only to consolidate learning. None in holiday months, i.e. December, June and April.
- *While agreeing with some of the questions this is for homework overall, not P1 homework which I believe is not necessary, with sufficient research in this area providing its limited benefit.*
- Am aware how key homework will be in high school, even in covering new topics. Essential children and parents are prepared now. I remain unconvinced by studies which say homework doesn't increase attainment it's about so much more than that.
- We would be happy to complement the class based learning but would need guidance regarding curriculum and how the topics fit.

Question 5-9

What do you think about the current homework system

- Whilst I help her work out what the task is, I try to encourage her to carry out the task herself.
- *Homework is generally too easy for them and I feel we could spend the time more usefully doing something more challenging and engaging chosen by me. Most of their homework is extremely dry and not visually appealing. I offer them colourful puzzle books etc, which they're more enthusiastic about. Even black and white documents can be more appealing than what usually comes home.*
- Finding quality time to do homework is always a challenge.
- I felt at the start of P2 the homework was too simple and not challenging enough. However I have discussed with teacher and it seems to have altered as a result of the conversation, so I am pleased with that.
- I would also like to see worksheets which would help on some days that time is tight, we could still do homework.
- My P6 child finds the volume a challenge, but I think this is reflective of him and his ability to focus rather than the volume itself being too demanding.
- Sometimes the work can be uninteresting so struggle to get interest to do it. *Hard to get it all done by time all home from work and dinner. A lot to cover over a couple of days of weekend, usually all ends in tears – not just child's!*
- Unplanned homework for working parents can be a problem.
- Q9 – I only help sometimes as my child (p7) is usually capable of completing it on his own.
- Over a fortnight might be good, and maybe no homework in December and June.
- They cannot do homework alone so time consuming for parents.
- Need the weekend to help get it all done.
- Weekly homework is fine as long as we have the weekend to do it. Week only is impossible.
- *Work means I miss doing homework. Gran has to do it. If I did I would miss out on my only hour with him before he goes to bed during the week and I don't want Saturday, Sunday to be homework.*

- Sometimes my child can manage to do her homework without any help from me. I feel she can be given more difficult homework to learn better (P4)
- Reading is one of the most important homework tasks. Parents have a vital role in encouraging reading – it's not something to be seen as less important than written homework – it's absolutely crucial.
- Child is able to cope but often finds the volume too high. Biweekly (one deadline with two weeks work) would be more flexible and less stressful.
- I feel my child can cope with a lot more homework. Current homework difficulty level is too low for my child and he mostly manages to complete it on his own. (P6)
- Having several small tasks helps spread out homework. Not everything is considered 'work'. My child loves reading so he doesn't think that is homework.
- Often feel level of homework does not challenge them. I am aware it is difficult to set individual homework however, and that other parents may feel differently.
- I like the fact that homework is issued weekly but I find the volume difficult to manage round family life as a working mum.
- Sumdog is good but some questions quite advanced eg multiplication 9x2 for a P1. Had to explain to put 9 groups of 2 and then count them all.
- Sometimes very time consuming. Perhaps less frequently given out as more of a summary of learning.
- As a family with 2 parents working full time, with some working shifts being in the evening and weekends, finding time on some weeks to assist with homework can be tricky. Also fitting it in around sporting clubs can be an issue.
- I think the difficulty is right but the volume is sometimes too much.
- *I think there is a wee bit too much homework especially for older children. As a parent doing homework can be very stressful with all the out of school activities my children do and a need for positive family time.*
- Sometimes it is too easy – think that reflects less confidence when at school compared to home. Volume sometimes too much but there is no consequence to not completing so we don't stress about it. Weekly is good. Really like shared learning where we can choose.
- The homework is not individualised. This can lead to the volume being too high at times. I feel sorry for the teachers and the amount of time homework takes. Their time could be better spent.
- Sometimes the homework demands don't match well with extracurricular activities or work commitments, however it is up to us to juggle and I feel my children defiantly get more out of their learning on weeks they get homework.
- Our child has found it helpful to have homework so that she can ask additional questions about things she did not understand at school but was too shy to ask the teacher.
- Consolidating learning is a good tool. Helps to highlight any issues.
- *Again, while agreeing that the level of the work is about right, I don't believe in starting the mindset of working after hours is required at P1 level.*
- I am lucky kids 'just do homework', no fuss. However it feels like a tick box exercise. I really dislike that it is given on a Friday as it feels like we need to do it at the weekend in case Monday/Tuesday something unexpected pops up. It eats into our weekend.

- I appreciate having additional tasks suggested. I feel able to say if we haven't managed everything for some reason. Daily tasks would not be a good idea. I value this opportunity to understand what my child is learning and to see any areas where he might have difficulties. Sometimes I do not know what is expected e.g. maths questions are phrased differently from my day!
- Not overly keen on the grid for shared learning. Feel that it can be vague.
- Completing homework regularly takes more time than the estimates indicated in school documents. We don't object at all to the amount of homework but would like to point out that, in our experience, the school estimates are somewhat low.
- *There are too many different tasks and each task takes a very long time to complete. We have very busy lives and our time would be better spent doing fun, family bonding activities and not writing out 10 spelling words 3 times over.*

Question 10-15

Do you consider the following types of homework beneficial to your child's learning

- Not entirely sure what is meant by shared learning.
- *Reading books, spelling and common words have always been far easier than what I give them at home. Shared learning can be good for challenging them, but usually the level is set too high in those cases, e.g. huge projects that take a month and the child can't complete much of it at all.*
- Not particularly keen on Sumdog and would prefer a more traditional way of doing maths. I think it would be good to have the option to try other ways of doing mental maths.
- I'm not a fan of shared learning. Feel it can turn into a parent lead competition.
- Both boys struggle with spelling, and the usual homework of copying words seems to be of limited benefit.
- Although we like the idea of shared learning, some tasks take too long to do well and often end up being done by parents!
- I'm a huge fan of shared learning and really feel this is an excellent tool for working on homework together.
- Books of own at home get more reading than homework book.
- *Reading and words are helpful, shared learning – I end up doing most of it!*
- Homework should not be too repetitive and the kids should enjoy doing them.
- I find shared learning is less beneficial as I end up doing most of it i.e. building castles.
- I would worry that my child was falling behind other schools if he had no homework.
- Sometimes the descriptions of what to do can be a bit confusing. Using more "for example...." would help make it clear.
- *These things are useful but I would be doing the useful stuff without needing the pressure of homework.*
- Big craft projects take up so much time – not sure of the benefit.
- Sumdog competitions can induce anxiety and over use of screens for some kids, difficult for working parents.

- All app devices are broken (p4 parent)
- 1000 (questions in Sumdog?) seems too much for P3. I wish P3 still got reading books home.
- Reading books and common work practice were invaluable learning tools for my children when they were in P1&2. I don't think shared learning is beneficial for younger kids P1-P4. It is time consuming for parents as we end up doing the whole project.
- It depends with shared learning especially early in school as the topics can be quite difficult for young kids and parents end up doing it and not the child.
- *He enjoys the Sumdog and reading. At home we do times tables and games together that encourage works and spelling.*
- Spelling activities too repetitive for strong spellers. Variety of types of homework is important. More specific to child would be better. Shared learning is fun for both parents and child.
- All the above tasks in homework helps my child sometimes as he is very confident in doing these tasks and finds it very easy when it is in the homework. (P6)
- Active tasks and engaging tasks are better than sitting down.
- I feel creative tasks are not a good use of time – at least 1 or 2 of these per child per year. Great for children (parents!) who enjoy this type of activity. Where are the active/sporty tasks?
- We tried to incorporate shared learning into family life eg we all went on a shape hunt and my younger daughter joined in too. Using apps like Sumdog is popular but can be challenging with a younger child.
- Any and all forms of learning can only be good. Homework also lets parents and teachers see what a child can do or struggles with so helps guide areas to practice.
- Sometimes the amount and repetitiveness is less beneficial but would value feedback from teachers if they see benefit.
- The reading scheme and getting books home stopped in the early years. That would have been something I'd have like to see continue up the school.
- I think this depends on how the homework is given – is it enjoyable or just repetitive? Times table and spelling practice can become a chore if given too often, shared learning is time consuming for parents.
- *It's not the types of homework but that it is all of the above at the same time. Too much. If we do child centred learning homework should focus on areas of improvement and enjoyment.*
- All – the variety is great.
- The current techniques used in spelling homework are not helpful for my children. Sumdog does not suit all children. A variety of apps are useful to ensure it remains fun and a game rather than 'work'. Shared learning should be thought through i.e. project based rather than what seems like random activities.
- I've found shared learning usually involves more work on my part than of my children – not always sure of its benefits in its current form. We get more out of more tailored forms of homework/learning.
- The practical homework, e.g. this week was to draw a golf course is a nightmare! It's the parents that end up doing that bit.
- Encourage reading and times tables at home.

- I really don't know if they make any overall difference, (except reading our own books). Only once in the last year have I explained something that my child didn't understand.
- Am not so keen on app based, as screen time is something I would prefer to reduce.
- Don't agree with spelling words into word searches, pyramids etc.
- *The shared learning tasks are very lengthy but I do see their benefits. I would much prefer a shared learning task each term and no other homework other than reading books.*

Question 16-18

Is there any changes you would like to see made to the current system

- I think that it is important that conscientious parents don't take over or do their kids homework for them. Appreciate it's a difficult balance between avoiding this and encouraging spending time together.
- Yes, but only a very little in Primary 1. I think school all day, plus numerous activities (swimming, gymnastics, rainbows etc) is enough for 4/5 year olds.
- *I think for homework to be beneficial it should be very highly tailored to the individual and Killermont doesn't have the resources to do this. I am in a better position to provide suitable challenges for my own children. I never had homework myself other than a little bit of reading (age 5-6), spelling and times tables, which were to be memorized. I never had to write anything. It took about 10 minutes per week. (NO)*
- *Think they have enough at school, outside activities and then the additional pressure of homework.*
- I understand that there has been some opposition to homework. Perhaps there could be an 'opt in' system at the start of each academic year. Parents that want to do it will ensure children complete it and on time. Possibly reducing teachers workload. Personally I think homework is a good thing and enjoy being part of the learning process with my daughter.
- I don't think there needs to be homework every week. Keep it to reading and spelling.
- Sometimes better instructions as to what is required.
- More maths homework along with Sumdog.
- No shared learning.
- Possibly a little less, as sometimes it is a struggle to find the time to complete it all.
- Too much homework for junior pupils.
- I really like it and kids enjoy doing it with us.
- We had some initial teething problems setting my P6 child up with the email access. Whilst at the time, to be honest, it is a pain, having computer related tasks I absolutely support it as I can see that for the children it is a useful approach to enhance their ability to manage this medium.
- *Research shows it doesn't assist attainment.*
- Perhaps tasks which practice key skills in an active way. A list of appropriate tasks to choose from but not necessarily hand in weekly.
- To consolidate key skills such as phonics, number bonds etc.

- I think homework is valuable for the upper school but not for infants. I don't think it is necessary below p4. No homework on any holidays would also be great. Perhaps instead of repetitive homework, incorporate family tasks?
- For younger children the homework can be a bit difficult such as the Sumdog app as all questions need to be read to them.
- Some more web based activities like Sumdog would be good as it promotes use and sometimes the almost instant feedback is good for confidence.
- Would be happy for a bit less but happy to get the same. Takes up most evenings.
- No changes, keep up the good work.
- I think there should be less homework, maybe focus on the things they struggled with in class and more things that can be done as a family.
- Review shared learning activities and possibly introduce more online activities for spelling (e.g. spelling city?)
- Think there should be more homework.
- The instructions/structure seems a little unclear to me at the moment (p1), but perhaps that is because I've not had to do this before?
- Every second week would be fine.
- With many extra activities out with school, I believe minimum homework should be given to consolidate work done in the classroom.
- Not such strict repercussions for not returning – often parents issue, not child.
- More shared learning.
- If (the school) chose not to do homework some weeks that would be OK. Some more variety in types of homework would be good.
- Maybe once a month and something more project based.
- No shared learning.
- I feel the amount of homework is too onerous – a little less would be appreciated.
- I would drop the computer/app based homework unless more personalised.
- *We do lots of things at home and I find homework a burden. Sumdog and books are useful but we can do that on our own.*
- Less homework would be good as it can be difficult to find time to fit it in. It is equally good to spend time as a family or do other activities. Homework for younger children can be particularly demanding of the child and parent e.g. making a castle.
- Much of the homework P1B has been given so far includes things/games that most families in the Killermont catchment area would do – go for a walk, play eye spy. I would prefer to focus on other tasks.
- Less homework for little ones p1-p3.
- More app based homework and newer reading books.
- I think there is too much homework, especially for p1-p4 children.
- Appreciated the handout given in P2 with additional homework suggestions. I like being able to feedback to teachers if my child appears to be struggling with allocated tasks.
- Stick to spelling, maths and comprehension.
- Less frequent – in certain months or one term only?
- Less modelling/craft.

- I think the current balance is fine as I understand my own responsibilities with regard to providing guidance and support to my children with regards to supporting their learning.
- I think it is currently nice and varied.
- Sometimes some challenge problems would be good for homework to encourage children.
- I feel that reading and maths revision is worthwhile and does consolidate learning. Larger projects are time consuming and often there is little interest from the child (sorry!)
- I think that homework before P6 is pointless. It puts too much pressure on young children. They have more to gain by playing and spending time with family at such a young age. Even in P5/6 the amount of homework is too much.
- We feel the volume of homework is excessive, and the shared learning tasks take up a huge amount of parent time. If the activity, build a castle, make a Roman costume etc is not something the parent is good at we risk teaching the children that 'fun' activities take too long, are stressful and/or not worth bothering with.
- We have a very busy family life and would prefer to keep weekends free of homework but there is too much to do in short focused sessions on only week days. We both work full time and it can be 7pm before we can start homework on week days – not ideal as the children are tired.
- P1 – my child can't read yet so the Sumdog app is difficult for her to follow unless I read it for her.
- Shared learning is very time consuming for parent and child.
- No shared learning for P1-P4.
- I sometimes find it difficult to get it all completed due to afterschool clubs etc but generally I do think homework is beneficial and is another opportunity to speak to your child.
- More flexibility with parents choosing what is appropriate to do.
- Maybe not so structured. Giving parents a structure of topics covered over the term and then up to parents to do what they want to do with their children. Maybe more experience learning. I feel children work hard through the day and sometimes homework is not always beneficial.
- *I think homework takes away from precious family time. The arguments and fallouts to do the homework make the time I do get not enjoyable. Maybe just send us what had been done in class and we can discuss it in our time instead of time restricted to do set tasks.*
- I would prefer if the difficulty level of homework can be increased a bit more for my child (P4).
- Maybe fewer tasks per week or one subject per week.
- More reading – it's a great way to increase general knowledge. Pupils need support from parents especially, backed up by teachers.
- No shared learning.
- Biweekly deadlines, breaks of weeks without homework. Keep homework as good prep for upper school and secondary.
- More challenging homework.
- Have children do a task of their choice or have a few options do A or B, maybe in a 14 day cycle. Shared activities and help for parents to understand how to help them.
- Less shared learning/big art projects.
- I feel less homework would be beneficial. Core subjects only! English, maths, science.

- A decrease in volume please. I enjoy being part of my child's learning.
- No, happy with the current system.
- Perhaps less frequently , to recap and area/topic.
- I believe it is a valuable learning too that helps me to pick up any issues, however I sometimes wish I could send my children out to play and have some fun rather than do homework. Perhaps homework once per fortnight may work better.
- Our children like the app based activities.
- I would like less homework, especially for younger children. It can be time consuming and repetitive and eats into time for other activities.
- *Too much! Rather than homework, options for "practice" rather than the prescriptive homework, focus on what kids enjoy out of school. Out of school they do so much that also aids their learning. Give parents guidance on how to help at home.*
- No, I really like (homework) as is. Maybe just have more communication about what kids do in school as they don't tell us, or give us advice on getting them to tell us so we can support them.
- Homework being given over a longer period. Project/problem solving based i.e. maths, literacy etc linked to their topic. Tailored to the individual pupil.
- Stop the creative type homework as this can be done at school rather than parents doing it.
- Only small amounts of homework should be given, no large projects.
- *There is no proven benefit at P1 level and just encourages a mindset of always working. The use of the library and books is a great thing though as not compulsory and aids learning.*
- I would like to see homework being given out less frequently. Tasks such as writing and spelling works appear to have little merit. Once a month would be fine to see progress. Or a suggestion to work on areas that my child is weaker in may have some merit. So homework is more tailored to the individual needs. One size fits all homework seems outdated.
- I hear two main complaints about homework from other parents. No1 – There's too much to fit in around their child's other activities, often trying to complete homework when already tired. No2 – Difficult to get child to settle down, be motivated to do homework. I get this but it applies to other things too, so maybe what we all need is some motivational tips! There is too high an expectation these days for schools to do everything for our children. Parents need to do their part and helping with homework gives us an opportunity to do that.
- I think homework should be sent home randomly if my children are struggling with any specific areas at school. Parents should help out here as the teacher can't always keep going over things. Also, I'd like to know more about these specific areas.
- *It causes more stress and anxiety to the whole family that we get from the benefits of keeping up to date with their current learning – this could be distributed in other ways.*