



Prep School

Top Tips for Parents

English and Maths

Helping your child with English

Reading:

- Set aside a regular slot, which you know will not be interrupted.
- Decide what you feel is a realistic amount of time for you to hear your child read. (This will depend on the age of your child).
- Spend a third of the reading time asking your child questions about what they have just read.
You could ask your child about:
The plot, the characters, their favourite part, what they think might happen next and which words are exciting or interesting.
- Visit the library with your child and help them take part in the many reading initiatives that may be on offer, especially during the holidays.
- If your child is an avid reader, they may appreciate using a device, such as a kindle, to help them build up a library of interesting novels.
- A kindle can also help children that struggle with reading as the size of the font and colour of the background can be altered to make the actual reading of each word more accessible.



Spellings:



You may already have a good system that works for both of you: however, if your child is struggling to retain their spellings, here are a few ways that you might find useful.

- 1) Divide the list in to six days and then your child will only have a few words to learn each day. On the seventh day, test your child on the whole list or use the 'look, say, cover, write' sheets.
- 2) There are some super apps which will help your child to learn their spellings.
- 3) If your child is struggling with the spellings, then let their teacher know.
- 4) On your way to and from school make up sentences with the words from the spelling list on them. Try to make this light hearted and fun.
- 5) If your child is lucky enough to remember how to spell words easily, ask them to write the words in different sentences, remembering to use WOW words.

Handwriting:

- Encourage your child to hold their pen or pencil correctly.
- If they are using a pencil, ensure it is sharpened.
- Ask them to sit at a desk or a table, so that they are comfortable.
- Remind them to focus on writing neatly.



Homework:

Homework is the teacher's way of knowing if your child has understood a new concept, or if they require more support. It is so easy to over support your child, as looking at an obvious mistake can feel very frustrating.



Try to:

- Let your child try their homework by themselves.
- If they are confused by what they have been asked to do, talk through the instructions with them and help them understand what has been asked of them.
- Try not to give too many ideas, as it is important that your child writes down what they believe they have been asked to do.
- If your child asks for help to spell a word then support them; however, if they don't, then try not to correct them (the teacher needs to know which words they are struggling to spell correctly).
- Let your child know when their homework time is over. They may not have completed the homework and again, it is important for your child's teacher to know how much work they have completed during the time available to them.
- Also if your child whizzes through their homework, then it is also important that the teacher is aware of this, so that different work can be given out for the next homework.
- If your child is really struggling with their homework, don't force them to complete it, as this will simply make them fear all future homework. Let the teacher know.
- Your child might find it useful to join a prep club, where support and guidance can be offered.

Advice for you to give your child when they bring home the following types of homework

Creative Writing:

Check List:

- Planning will enable you to write a structured story.
- Ensure that you include a variety of sentence structures in each paragraph.
- Remember to check that you have punctuated each sentence correctly.



- It is important that your handwriting is neat and joined up.
- Take care with your spelling. You will be forgiven for spelling an exciting word incorrectly; however, always check that your high frequency words are spelt correctly.
- Always use your time carefully, so that you are able to check through your work without rushing.
- Choose a title that you feel most comfortable about, as you will find it easier to write your story.

Non-fiction writing:

Check List:

- When you use research from the computer, only write down the information that is really useful.
- Remember to write the information you decide to use in to your own words.
- Factual writing is different to writing a story. You may still use a paragraph to explain a topic; however, non-fiction writing is divided in to sections. Information can be presented in bullet points, diagrams, maps, different colours, website addresses and so many other ways.

Comprehension:

Check List:

- Read through the passage very carefully and slowly.
- When you read the questions, highlight the number of marks the question is worth.
- It may sound obvious but if a question is worth two points, then you must give two reasons in your answer.
- Every answer must include the question that you are being asked. Don't be tempted to include information that you believe might be useful if it cannot be found in the passage.
- If a question asks you to 'use evidence from the passage' or 'support your answer with evidence from the text' then this means you must use a quotation to support your answer.
- Read the question very carefully and make sure that you only give answers that can be found in the passage.
- If you find a question very difficult, leave enough space for it and return to it when you have answered the other questions.
- Timing is very important, so keep an eye on the clock.
- Ensure that you write neatly. If the teacher or examiner cannot read your writing, then you won't earn marks.

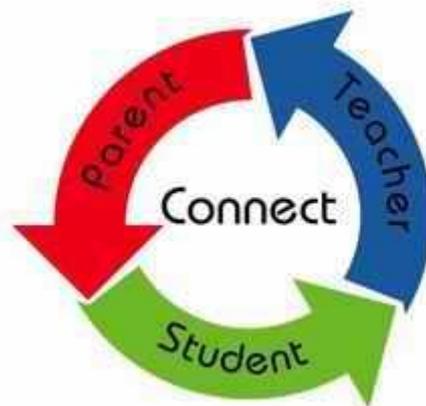


Verbal Reasoning:

There are many different sections on a verbal reasoning paper and you will find some questions easier than others.

Check List:

- It is so important to read the questions slowly, as this will give you another chance to remember how this set of questions will need to be answered.
- Use scrap paper to help you work out the answer, especially when completing the codes. Remember, if the codes are not in straight lines and columns then they are so hard to answer.
- Answer the questions you like the most first. It will help you feel more comfortable about the rest of the paper.
- When spelling a word, check that you have used all the given letters. When you rush a question, it is easy to place the letters in the wrong order.
- If a question is difficult, put a star next to it and look at it after you have completed the questions you found easier to answer at the beginning.

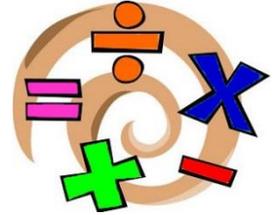


Helping your child with Maths

Top Tips for Prep School Maths at Oakwood

If you ever have any worries or concerns, or you are just not sure how to best support your child's maths work, then please always contact their teacher to discuss it with them. You can also discuss any maths related issues with the Head of Mathematics, Richard Bax (rbax@oakwoodschoo.co.uk)

It would be lovely to include your child in any day-to-day activities that include maths. This can be activities such as shopping, measuring, cooking and telling the time. This will help embed the mathematics involved in these important aspects of life. You can also play maths games when out and about, such as asking your child to add together all the numbers from the registration plate of the car in front.



Do not worry if your child has found a topic more challenging as the work covered in lessons will be revisited, reinforced and extended in later lessons. Do encourage them to speak with their teacher to go through the work with them again. Below are some other options available to compliment what has been covered in class.

Maths clinics: (held on several lunch times each week) an ideal opportunity for additional 1:1 support to sort out those tricky problems. It is also a great way of looking at extension material for those children wishing to look at more challenging mathematics.

MyMaths: This is an excellent online resource with all the prep school children having their own login (this should be stuck into their pupil planner, if it is not then do ask their teacher for another copy). This is a great way for your child to work independently and take control of their learning. Each homework task has its own lesson that can be used to develop your child's understanding of the topic. This is also an excellent resource for stretching those children who wish to challenge themselves.

SumDog: This is a fun online games based approach that can help embed mathematical concepts. Again, your child will have their own login. The program tracks how your child is doing and adapts the questions to suit their level of mathematics.

Homework

If your child is finding their homework challenging it may just require having the task read to them. If you decide to help them with their homework, please can you indicate which parts they received help with, as this will help their teacher to form a more accurate idea of what your child can and cannot do.

Exam preparation

Alongside covering the required mathematical content your children will receive guidance on exam technique and be encouraged to analyse their work to identify their own strengths and weaknesses. This will empower your child to focus on the areas they find more challenging. There will be some revision tips sessions undertaken with Year 5 and 6 children to help them prepare for their common entrance examination. Below are some ideas that will help.

Before the exam

- Work hard in advance to make sure that you are ready and keep asking questions when you are unsure
- Review the syllabus and make sure you are happy with all the concepts

- Do plenty of practice papers. Review the papers after they have been marked. What are careless errors and what are things you need to learn?
- Focus your revision on the areas that you can not do yet

In the exam

- Have all the equipment you need for the exam
- Read the questions very carefully
- If it helps you then do highlight / annotate key points
- Show full workings for every question
- Check your work, does it make sense? If it does not then you may have made a mistake
- Do the questions that you find easier first, circle your harder questions and do them after you have done all your easy ones
- If you are not sure what a question means then ask for it to be read to you as it sometimes can help by just hearing the question
- Make sure you have an answer down for each question
- Use the whole time for the exam, don't stop even if you think you have finished, go back though the paper, read the question and the recheck your workings and answer to see if they make sense.

Non Verbal Reasoning

Non Verbal Reasoning preparation begins in Year 5 and is consolidated in Year 6. Below are some ideas that can help with developing non verbal reasoning skills.



- Playing games like spot the difference and Sudoku.
- Developing spatial awareness and understanding how shapes interconnect with jigsaws and construction toys like Meccano and Lego.
- Drawing shapes on a piece of paper and then drawing their mirror image, using a mirror to check the results, or cutting them out and folding them in half to see how they look.
- Pay close attention to everything in the question. Read all the information very carefully, count the number of sides and angles, look at the colours, shapes, shading, line types, sizes, rotations, reflections, translations etc. This will help you to work out what is the same and what has changed.
- Look for the obvious in the shape/pattern e.g. the things that you notice immediately when you look at the picture such as the colour, shape etc.
- Try and find a rule about what you have noticed e.g. they all have 6 straight sides
- Try out your rule on all of the shapes in the question to see if it is always true. If it is then you have the pattern and you can now compare your rule to the answers.
- If it is a complicated shape then break it down by comparing just one part of it rather than trying to deal with the whole thing at once
- Some questions can use more than one rule so you may need to go back and find another rule and check that it also works
- Once you have found your rule try drawing what you think the shape should look like and compare it to the possible answers.

Times Tables

The times tables are very important and it would be advantageous for your child to have a secure understanding of them. Here are some tips to develop a good understanding of the times tables.

- Initially recite the times table in sequence; for example 2-4-6-8-10. Learning the first five. Then look at adding 1 more, then one more etc. This will make the task more manageable. Some children will find clapping as each number is said helpful. Limiting the table to the first ten makes the task more manageable.
- Once the reciting of the number sequence has been consolidated move on to working on the ability to answer specific questions; for example 6×2 ; quickly. To make this easier make sure key points in the times tables are known. The best key points are 5 times, ten times and the square number. The child should then be encouraged to count up or down from the point closest. For example if 5×2 is known the adding a 2 brings you easily to 6×2 .
- Retention may require regularly revisiting the times tables.
- A very useful skill to learn is doubling. If you can double you have the two times table. Double again and you have the four times table. Double again and you have the 8's. A similar trick can be used starting with the 3's to get the 6's
- Mastery of the nines can be achieved with the finger trick. Using the ten fingers, if 2×9 is wanted, put down the second finger. On the left of the missing finger are the tens for the answer and on the right the units.
- Remember that each time you learn one times table you are really learning two e.g. 2×3 is the same as 3×2 .
- It is a good idea to learn the division facts that go with the times tables.

The four operations (addition, subtraction, multiplication and division) are a corner stone of primary mathematics. It is vital that work is set out carefully and with column work that the place value columns are lined up neatly. There are many methods (and different names) that can be used but the main written methods used in the prep school are as follows:

Addition: Column method

$$\begin{array}{r} 6 \quad 3 \quad 9 \\ + \quad 3 \quad 7 \quad 6 \\ \hline 1 \quad 0 \quad 1 \quad 5 \\ \hline 1 \quad 1 \quad 1 \end{array}$$

Subtraction: Adding on (lower KS2)

$423 - 357$ is

$$\begin{array}{ccccccc} & +3 & & +40 & & +23 & = 66 \\ & \text{---} & \text{---} & \text{---} & \text{---} & \text{---} & \\ 357 & 360 & & 400 & & 423 & \end{array}$$

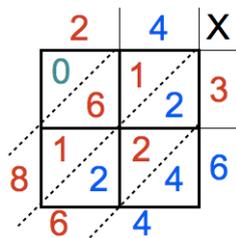
Subtraction: Column method

$$\begin{array}{r}
 61 \\
 765 \\
 - 592 \\
 \hline
 173
 \end{array}$$

Multiplication: Column method

$$\begin{array}{r}
 266 \\
 \times 36 \\
 \hline
 1596 \quad (6 \times 266) \\
 133 \\
 7980 \quad (30 \times 266) \\
 11 \\
 \hline
 9576 \quad (36 \times 266) \\
 11
 \end{array}$$

Multiplication: Napier's Bones

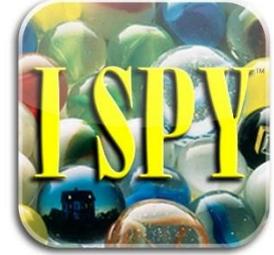


Division: Short Division (the bus stop)

$$\begin{array}{r}
 179 \\
 5 \overline{) 895} \\
 \underline{5} \\
 39 \\
 \underline{35} \\
 45 \\
 \underline{45} \\
 0
 \end{array}$$

Games to Improve Auditory Skills

- How many words can you think of to rhyme with
- I spy (using initial blends or final sounds)
- Listen to stories on a CD along with following the words in a book
- Following a series of instructions (start with a series of 2 then 3 etc)
- Memory Games
 - I went to the market and I bought
 - I went on holiday and in my suitcase I packed a
- Word Hunt – Can you think of 5 words with a given criteria
 - Beginning with br, gr, st, sh etc
 - Ending in -ock, -ash, -and etc
- Draw pictures and include items with given sounds
 - Draw a seaside picture with 3 'sh' and 3 'ch' things



Games to Improve Visual Skills

- Matching games eg: pairs, snap
- Spot the Difference puzzles
- Dot to Dot pictures
- Pattern completion/repetition
- Letter tracking - using old large print books choose a letter and track along the lines from left to right highlighting all of the chosen letters
- Lotto
- Dominoes
- Jigsaws
- Copying pegboard designs
- Word searches
- Patterns – lay a few objects out in a line for a short time, cover them and see if they can copy the pattern correctly. This works well if you start with smarties but gradually make the pattern more complicated!

