



There is a relatively consistent picture that pupils in schools which give more homework perform better

Cost

£££££

Evidence strength



Impact (months)

+2

Effect size

0.10

What is it?

Homework refers to tasks given to pupils by their teachers to be completed outside of usual lessons. Common homework activities in primary schools tend to be reading or practising spelling and number facts, but may also include more extended activities to develop inquiry skills or more directed and focused work such as revision for tests.

How effective is it?

It is certainly the case that schools whose pupils do homework tend to be more successful. However it is not clear whether use of homework is a reason for this success. A number of reviews and meta-analyses have explored this issue. There is stronger evidence that it is helpful at secondary level [see [Homework \(secondary\)](#)], but there is much less evidence of benefit at primary level.

There is some evidence that when homework is used as a short and focused intervention it can be effective in improving students' attainment, but this is limited for primary age pupils. Overall the general benefits are likely to be modest if homework is more routinely set.

The quality of the task set appears to be more important than the quantity of work required from the pupil.

Evidence of homework in primary schools for students learning outcomes has rarely been investigated in the Arab world. Studies in Jordan, Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia focused on the value of homework as a tool to increase parental involvement. However, these same studies showed that homework became less beneficial whenever parents are doing it on behalf of their children.

Researchers have highlighted some barriers for parents when supporting their children homework such as, parents level of education, the degree of difficulty of the curriculum, lack of communication channels and limited parents-teachers relationship.

To date, research on homework in primary schools is absent in this region despite the general belief of its importance in improving the learning process. More research is needed in this area and investigate ways to improve the quality of the homework and the best means to support constructive parental involvement with their children learning at home.

How secure is the evidence?

Homework has been extensively researched. There is a relatively consistent picture that pupils in schools which give more homework perform better, although for primary age pupils the difference is small. However, there are only a small number of studies which have investigated whether this relationship is due to the homework itself, rather than other school factors. These studies compare classes where homework is introduced to similar classes where homework is not given. They tend to show that homework can be beneficial, but this finding is less secure than the first, because of the smaller number of studies and the quality of the evidence.

What are the costs?

There are few costs associated with homework, though there are implications for staff time for preparation and marking. With younger children there may be additional resources required (such as reading books or games for children to take home). Overall costs are estimated as very low.

As yet there is no information about local costs.

What should I consider?

Overall, homework in primary schools does not appear to lead to large increases in learning.

Parents can have a positive effect on homework completion and help children to develop effective learning habits. How can you support parents to encourage good habits for homework?

The broader evidence base suggests that short focused tasks or activities which relate directly to what is being taught, and which are built upon in school, are likely to be more effective than regular daily homework.

Have you made the purpose of homework clear to children?

