

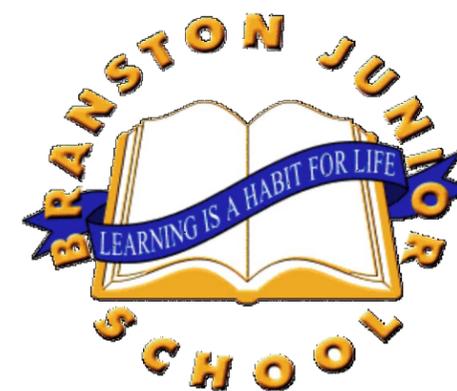
## MATHS

Maths has many different aspects to it and therefore many different skills....for example:

- Handling Data (graphs / averages etc)
- Shapes (properties of shapes / symmetry etc)
- Measures (capacity, measuring distances, telling the time etc)
- Fractions and Percentages

There are so many specific skills that it would be very difficult to come up with suggestions to help your child in every aspect of Maths! However there are some Mathematical Skills which are used during every 'Topic', which you can help your child with:

- Practising Times Tables. The sooner your child knows all the answers up to 10x10, the easier many Maths lessons will become for them....however, they do need to know the answers to any times table question, rather than simply being able to chant a whole Times Table.
- Carrying out fun activities whereby your child has to use different Mathematical Skills in real-life contexts; eg;
  - Playing games such as cards and dominoes, where counting is needed (or in the case of dominoes—number recognition)
  - Playing board games where mathematical skills are needed
  - Taking part in cooking activities where weighing is involved
  - Working out the price of the shopping before the shopkeeper (and then working out how much change will be needed)
  - Using Fractions in real life—eg; cutting half or a quarter of a cake, a piece of fruit or a pizza!
- Telling the Time—although this is taught in school, it is an important Life Skill which parents can help with reinforcing at home.....however do not be disappointed if your child seems unable to grasp the concept—it is a very difficult one to understand and some children do not fully 'get it' until they are much older!
- Be seen to be 'doing' Maths and try not to pass onto them any 'fear' you might have of doing Maths ! If you are seen to be working out a real-life mathematical problem, even if it is using a different method to that which your child has been taught, it shows your child that Maths Skills are needed in real life—particularly the four basic rules of number which are addition, subtraction, division and multiplication.



## *Helping your child at home!*

Some general suggestions on how you can help your child to progress in Maths, Reading, and Writing.



## READING

There are various stages to 'learning to read'. The first is actually being able to make sense of the letters and words printed on the paper. The next stage is making sense of what you have just read and the final stage is being able to analyse text in more detail by thinking about why the author used the words they did, for example.

There are, therefore, many different simple activities that you can do to help your child to develop their reading skills, no matter what stage they are at.

- Enrol in the local Library and spend time looking at books in the building with your child, as well as borrowing books to bring home. It doesn't matter if the books are too advanced for your child—if they are interested in the subject matter, the fact that they want to look at it, is great!
- Spend regular amounts of time listening to your child read, discussing books with them and even just letting them hear you reading to them. The last idea is particularly helpful to children who are not fluent readers and are still at the stage of trying to 'decode' the letters and words printed on the paper; as they get to hear what 'fluent reading' sounds like. (Don't forget to ask other family members to help with this last idea too.....dads, grandparents, aunts and uncles, older siblings etc!)
- Create situations whereby your children can take part in reading activities that have a definite purpose; eg; reading the shopping list for you, as you go round the supermarket or finding out how to play a computer game by reading the instructions etc.
- Playing games where reading is involved; eg; board games etc.
- When reading 'Reading Books' with your child, or indeed any text that you are looking at, ask questions about what has been read. These can range from the simple 'What was the boy wearing?' type of question (which is practising the skills of 'making sense of what has been read') to the more complex questions such as 'Why do you think the author wrote that word in bold?' or 'Find a word that shows us that the character was sad' or 'How do you know (from looking at the descriptive words) that it was raining?'. Even if your child is unable to answer these more complex type of questions, you could still look at a text critically together, to begin to model this more complex reading skill.
- Be seen reading! If your child sees you enjoying a book or a magazine; or reading for information (eg; the TV Times), then they will see reading as serving a purpose (ie; finding out information) rather than just something that they have to 'do' at school.!

## WRITING

If you think about it, we use writing skills in virtually everything we do—not just when we have an 'English Lesson'. Therefore the skills we need to write well, need to be practised every time we write. For example, using capital letters and full stops in the correct places is not something we only do when writing a letter, we do it every time we put pen / pencil to paper, or else our writing doesn't make sense.

The best way therefore, that you can help your child to develop their writing skills at home, is to ensure they have plenty of opportunities to write.....and each time they write, to encourage them to practice their individual writing targets. These targets might be to use certain bits of punctuation, or to form letters correctly or to use more descriptive words....whatever they are, if you help to remind and encourage your child to practice these targets whenever they are writing, they will soon remember to do them themselves!

Opportunities for writing could include:

- Writing a postcard to a relative, whilst on holiday
- Keeping a diary
- Writing the shopping list
- Writing when playing an imaginative game; eg; café / shops / school etc
- Doing school homework or own research linked to something being covered in school

Another way in which you can help your child develop their writing skills, is by being seen to be doing some writing yourself! If children see parents / siblings / relatives / family friends (etc) actually in the process of:

- Thinking of what to write (eg; for what purpose / what format is needed etc)
- Planning out the writing—making notes or little diagrams etc
- Writing and editing the work (eg; changing one word for a better word or deleting a sentence because it doesn't sound right)

then your child is more likely to see that there is a need to write and to write 'well'; otherwise what you wish to communicate to another person might not be what they understand.