



DOWNSWAY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Warbreck Drive
Tilehurst
RG31 6FE

Telephone: 0118 942 1362

Headteacher: Mrs K. Ayres

E-mail: office@downsway.w-berks.sch.uk

10th January 2019

Dear Parents and Carers,

Big Write is part of our work to promote high standards in writing throughout the school and we are kicking off our Big Write for 2019 with the theme of *'the best day'*.

Children in Years 1-6 will be set Big Talk homework this weekend ready for writing next week. Once again, the themes have been chosen by the children, with all classes being asked to suggest ideas. The most popular ones have been chosen as the themes for the remainder of this academic year.

As with last term, children will be able to play a 'joker' once every term and choose their own topic if they are not enthused by the one set. Children do speak very positively about the Big Talk aspect of Big Write and say that discussing the task at home helps them with their ideas for writing. Children should not write plans as part of the homework, but instead have the chance to discuss what they will write.

The themes for the rest of the year are listed below.

| Theme | Big Talk Homework Set |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| Spring Term 2019 | |
| The best day | wc 7.1.19 |
| Vehicles | wc 21.1.19 |
| Magical Lands | wc 4.2.19 |
| Family | wc 25.2.19 |
| Easter/Spring | wc 11.3.19 |
| Summer Term 2019 | |
| Ambitions | wc 29.4.19 |
| Time travel | wc 13.5.19 |
| The sea | wc 3.6.19 |
| Sport | wc 17.6.19 |
| School | wc 1.7.19 |

Research shows that children need to develop confidence in using language verbally before they can use it in their writing. In order for children to produce their best writing they need to discuss the topic in advance.

Below you will find some hints to help with Talk Homework. If you have any questions at all regarding Big Write or Talk Homework, please contact your child's class teacher or myself.

Talk homework is a chance to:

- Help your child to think through and discuss initial ideas in order to develop the thought process.
- Engage your child in purposeful talk.
- Ask your child for their opinions.
- Develop your child's vocabulary through the use of WOW words (really good "ambitious" vocabulary which is more sophisticated than normal spoken language).
- Stimulate your child's creativity.
- Encourage the use of Standard English with no slang or incorrect grammar. Children need to understand that the way we talk is different to the way we write.

Some hints for talk homework conversations:

- Encourage as many family members as possible to be involved in the Talk Homework.
- Make it an enjoyable activity.
- Switch off the television to try to ensure that this is dedicated talking and listening time.
- Begin a conversation by modelling... "I think that... because ..."
- Encourage thinking about exciting words to use to make their writing more interesting.
- Discuss and model different ways to start sentences for the topic which has been set. For example, The best day I had was...because....; Surprisingly, the best day I had was.... As.....; The day I...,was the best day of my life!

Thank you for your continued support with Big Talk homework. The quality of writing in the children's Big Write books and their confidence shows how effective it is in supporting your children's writing.

Finally, "if they can't say it, they can't write it!"

Yours sincerely,

Mr Grover
Deputy Headteacher