

24 September 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

Y7 Sparx Maths Pilot

We are really excited to inform you that all students in year 7 will be involved in a pilot programme which will support them in their maths learning this year. We have partnered with Sparx Maths, www.sparx.co.uk to help them develop a 21st century homework platform that delivers bespoke homeworks to our students.

The pilot will involve every student getting homework generated that is individualised (every child will get a different homework), perfectly tailored to their needs and should offer them just the right level of challenge, based on the topics that their teacher has set.

The homework uses an algorithm to ensure that the content delivered is at the correct level. We ask for patience in the early weeks of this pilot as the system learns about the precise level for each student. If a student receives too much assistance with their homework, Sparx may think they're able to tackle more difficult questions and their work could get harder. To prevent this, always encourage them to attempt the question first and to watch the support video before getting help.

Homework contains 3 elements: Compulsory, Optional and Target. All questions in the Compulsory section must be answered correctly for the homework to be marked as complete.

Please note that each week, provided you have given the school your email address, Sparx will send you an update on any upcoming homework and on the progress of your child.

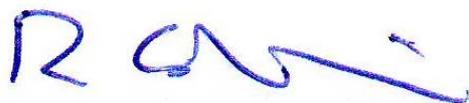
To view some top tips on what you can do to support your child with their Sparx learning please see the attached document. The article contains lots of helpful information including:

- Encouraging good habits
- Getting logged in to Sparx
- What exactly is Sparx Maths Homework?
- What are 'bookwork checks'?
- How can I support my child when they're stuck?

Sparx Maths will be launched in class and each student will receive instructions about how to log on which they will note down in their Sparx Homework Book.

This letter, together with the top tips document and the launch video watched by your child will be posted on the academy website. Please do not hesitate to get in contact with me should you have any questions.

Yours faithfully



Mr R Collins
Teach of Maths & Sparx Leader

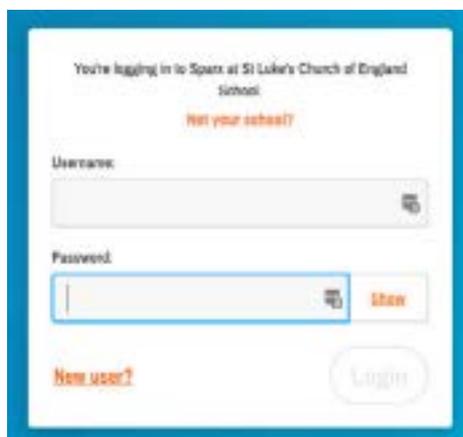
Sparx top tips for parents

Encouraging good habits

- Try and set up a quiet work area for your child if possible. If you don't have the space, consider setting aside routine 'quiet times' during the day, when children can concentrate, even if only for short periods of time.
- It is important that students still keep a record of their work when learning at home, so providing them with a book or folder if they don't have their school book is recommended. They may still need their teacher's support, and they in turn may want to see student workings.
- Keep in contact with your child's teacher, or encourage your child to keep in contact with them themselves. Most schools have a platform that students can use to reach out to teachers if they need help.

Getting logged in to Sparx

- Go to <https://sparx.co.uk>, click login in the top right corner.
- Choose Sparx Maths, Student Login and then search for the correct school
- If this is the first time your child has logged in, they will need to choose New User in the bottom left corner of the login window then enter their name and their date of birth to get a password - they will need to remember their password!
- Passwords are of the form word###word, where ### corresponds to two digits. Both words are lower case.
- If your child has forgotten their password, they should contact their teacher who will be able to reset it for them.



The screenshot shows a login page for Sparx at St Luke's Church of England School. At the top, it says "You're logging in to Sparx at St Luke's Church of England School" and "Not your school?". Below this are two input fields: "Username:" and "Password:". The "Password:" field has a "Show" button next to it. At the bottom left, there is a link for "New user?". At the bottom right, there is a "Login" button.



First Name:

Last Name:

Date of birth:

What exactly is Sparx Maths Homework?

- Sparx homework is tailored to your child, and should offer them just the right level of challenge, based on the topics that their teacher has set.
- Homework contains 3 elements: Compulsory, Optional and Target.
- All questions in the Compulsory section must be answered correctly for the homework to be marked as complete.
- Each task bar will show as green when fully complete. For the homework to be classed as complete, all task bars for that homework need to be fully green. The percentage of homework complete will show on the menu page:



The screenshot shows the Sparx Homework dashboard. On the left, there are three categories: Compulsory (3 new, 1 started), Optional (4 new), and Target (None available). The main area displays a homework set due Monday 25th May, which is 37% complete. A progress bar shows that Homework Task 1 is completed, while Homework Tasks 2, 3, 4, and 5 are not started.

- Optional questions are at a similar level to Compulsory, and offer extra practice.
- Target questions have been designed to challenge your child. You will receive a link to a video in your parent email each week, to help you offer them support and encouragement with their Target homework

If a student receives too much assistance with their homework, Sparx may think they're able to tackle more difficult questions and their work could get harder. To prevent this, always encourage them to attempt the question first and to watch the support video before getting help.

Why are there bookwork checks, and how do they work?

We believe that a good standard of bookwork is very important in helping students to embed good practice, and to help them and their teachers to keep track of any misconceptions.

- In Sparx, every question is accompanied by a 'bookwork code'.
- Your child should write this down, and then write their workings and answer next to the code.
- When they are asked for the answer they gave for a particular bookwork code, they need to give the exact answer they wrote down, even if it was wrong.
- Here's an example of good bookwork; as you can see all workings and wrong answers have been recorded:

	<u>Task 1</u>		E41	$P(\text{yellow}) = \frac{3}{6}$	X
D40	$12 + 13 = \underline{25}$	✓	F51	$P(\text{black}) = \frac{4}{8}$	
E50	$4 \times 3 + 2 \times 5 =$ $12 + 10 = \underline{22}$	✓		$= \frac{1}{2}$	✓
F60	$\begin{matrix} 12 : 18 \\ \div 6 \\ \hline 2 : 3 \end{matrix}$	✓			
H70	$\frac{1}{14} + \frac{1}{7} = \frac{1}{21}$	X			
J90	$\frac{1}{8} + \frac{1}{4} = \frac{1}{8} + \frac{2}{8}$				
				<u>Task 2</u>	
			G61	All the marbles are green	
				The probability of	
				choosing a purple marble	
				is <u>impossible</u>	✓

- If a student fails a bookwork check in Sparx, they will need to re-do the question, even if they originally gave the correct answer. This is to encourage them to record their workings.
- The more bookwork checks your child gets correct, the fewer they'll see.

How can I support my child when they're stuck?

- Even if your child thinks they will answer incorrectly, they should make the first attempt on a question without assistance. This will enable the teacher to see what they are working on, and also helps Sparx and School correctly determine their level.
- Each question is accompanied by a help video. Watching the video with your child is a great way to support and encourage them with the question.
- If your child gets a question wrong three times, Sparx will suggest they seek help.
- The teacher will also be notified that they need help with this particular question.
- You can also contact the child's teacher for help using the school's normal communication channels.
- To help the teacher, we recommend supporting your child in writing down their workings clearly in their book. You can share this with the teacher to help them identify the problem.
- Parents whose children have been set Compulsory homework will receive a weekly email from Sparx, which includes an update on how much homework their child has completed as well as any they have outstanding from the previous few weeks. Most importantly, the email contains a link to a short video that parents can watch and use to help support their child in answering one of their Target questions.

What happens if my child can't complete their work?

- If for some reason they cannot complete the work that has been set, you, or your child should contact their teacher and seek further advice.

How can I check on my child's progress?

- Sparx provides teachers with data to help them make informed decisions on student progress. We believe that the teacher is the expert on your child's progress in Maths, and therefore encourage you to get in touch with them if you would like an update.

What is XP?

- Sparx XP or 'Experience Points' is an effort based points system that schools can use to support and inform their own reward schemes.
- Students earn XP when they complete a task or win a reward game.
- Tasks from different homework types earn different numbers of points, for example students can earn more XP if they complete Optional and Target homework tasks compared with Compulsory ones.
- In lessons, all tasks are rewarded the same level of XP.
- Students go up a Sparx level for every 10,000 XP they collect. They can be encouraged to increase their number of XP by completing all of their Optional and Target homework.

Questions with extended written answers

- Some questions in Sparx cannot be entered online, but should instead be written down for the teacher to check.
- Sparx will prompt the student to answer 'I have done this' for these questions, and teachers may follow up with them later.

© Sparx Maths 2020 www.sparx.co.uk