National Centre for Excellence in the Teaching of Mathematics

#mathscpdchat 26 February 2019

Links with parents: how do you establish and maintain them?

Hosted by Martyn Yeo

This is a brief summary of the discussion – to see all the tweets, follow the hashtag ***#mathscpdchat*** *in Twitter*

Some of the areas where discussion focussed were:

- how to **interpret 'establishing close connections with parents'** … is the aim to improve parents' understanding of their child's mathematics, or is it to keep parents regularly updated on their child's progress, or is it both?
- the problematic nature of trying to improve **parents' understanding of the mathematics** that secondary-school pupils are doing;
- whether **'open mathematics sessions' for parents** attract mainly (only?) parents who are already quite 'switched on' to their child's mathematics learning … how to attract the others?
- during **primary school parents' evenings** allowing plenty of time to discuss mathematics learning;

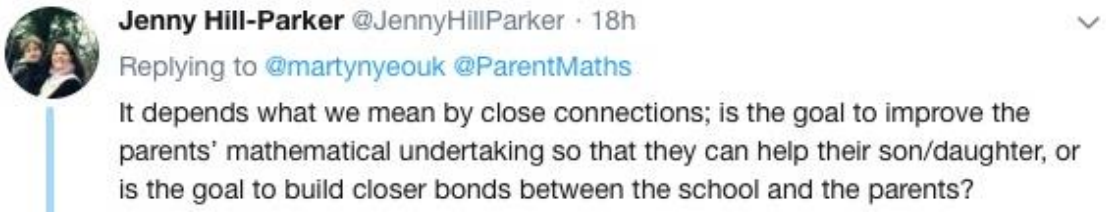
- directing parents to online sources of **support for their own understanding of their child's mathematics** … teachers can interact with parents who voluntarily take up such support;
- the rarity of 'close connections' with **parents of A-Level students** … the tendency is to make contact only when there is concern about the lack of progress of a student;
- how to facilitate **more frequent contact with the parents of A-Level students** … for example, in order to tell a parent about a particular achievement of a student;
- **when teaching A-Leve**l operating on the assumption that the majority of parents won't be able to help their children with homework tasks;
- **regularly, every week, selecting a few parents to contact** (by phone) in order to acknowledge pupils' achievements … how such contacts (phone calls) can lead to questions from parents about ways of providing effective support at home;
- **sustaining connections with parents over time** … making and keeping brief notes of the subject-matter of particular teacher-parent interactions to inform future interactions;
- the value of parent-and-child **explorations of the mathematics that arises naturally in family life and activity** … that too great an emphasis on parents continuing with classroom mathematics content at home may discourage parents from supporting their child's mathematics learning at all;
- encouraging parents to play **'fun maths games' with their children at home** … can be loosely linked to what they are learning at school … the great value of giving pupils and their families free 'maths games packs';
- arranging enjoyable **'special events' for parents** that 'shine light on' their children's mathematics learning … eg Father's Day breakfasts, bingo nights …;
- **teachers making their own short YouTube videos for parents** … eg videos showing how their child's learning of calculation procedures will evolve/develop;
- **using Twitter to help keep parents informed** about their children's mathematics learning … may include photos/videos of pupils' mathematical activity including their 'products';
- whether issuing **teachers' email addresses** to parents is a wise move … lengthy email discussions may, or may not, be productive … and they may, or may not, be a sensible use of teachers' and parents' time and energy;
- **teachers who are also parents** particularly appreciate the value to parents of teachers sharing pupils' successes with them … from the parental point of view 'silence can be deafening';

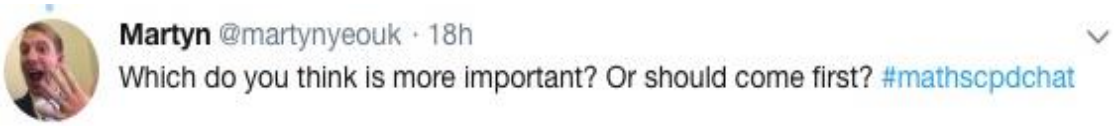
- how, when **in a secondary school you teach hundreds of pupils**, it is not possible to contact hundreds of parents individually and regularly; contact is made only for extremely positive or negative reasons … maintaining regular close contact with the parents of all your pupils is easier when you **teach just one class (year group) in a primary school** … to a parent does it appear that **contact with the school reduces when your child moves from primary to secondary school?**

In what follows, click on any screenshot-of-a-tweet to go to that actual tweet on Twitter.

An interesting 'conversation' of tweets, about building initial bonds with parents and ways of getting in touch with them, followed from this tweet by Martyn Yeo:

including these from Jenny Hill-Parker and Martyn Yeo:





this from Jenny Hill-Parker:

these from Simon Ball and Martyn Yeo:

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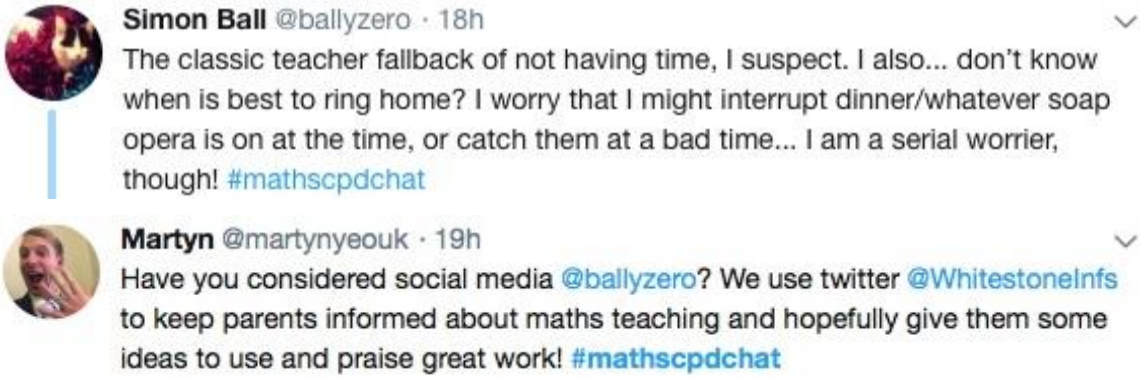

and these from Kathryn, Martyn Yeo and Simon Ball:

(to read the discussion-sequence generated by any tweet look at the 'replies' to that tweet)

Among the links shared were:

Maths with Parents, which is a website that helps 'parents and children to love learning maths together at home. It was shared by Martyn Yeo

Whitestone Infant School, Parents Guide to Maths which provides information about mathematics teaching and learning at Whitestone Infants School. It includes short clear videos in which Martyn Yeo shows how teachers and children use concrete apparatus to support pupils' learning. It was shared by Martyn Yeo

Empowering parents to support their children's maths understanding which is a report from the Nuffield Foundation of a project which aimed to develop methods of empowering parents to reflect on and share their uses of mathematics in everyday life, so they can support their children's mathematics learning. It was shared by Mary Pardoe

Archived Secondary Mathematics Parents' pilot pack which contains examples and guidance to help teachers plan and run parent-child mathematics workshops in secondary schools. It was shared by Mary Pardoe

Family Maths Toolkit: helping children improve their everyday maths: top tips for parents which contains advice for families, activities for children and information for schools. It was shared by Mary Pardoe

Mathematics for Parents which is a free-for-anyone-to-download article from Mathematics Teaching 242 (ATM, Association of Teachers of Mathematics) in which Tony Cotton explains how he worked with a particular group of parents (in which English might not be their first language) to support the learning of their children. It was shared by Mary Pardoe

Family Learning: Parental Engagement which is an article on the NCETM website in which teachers in one school describe how parents' attitudes towards mathematics were changed radically and positively when they ran maths classes for parents of Year 7 children. It was shared by Mary Pardoe