

#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-Level** 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](#):



Martyn @martynyeouk · 18h

Good evening! Welcome to the [#mathscpdchat](#)

Just remember to use [#mathscpdchat](#) in everything you write.

Let's share or thoughts!

Q1 How do you establish close connections with parents?



including these from [Jenny Hill-Parker](#) and [Martyn Yeo](#):



Jenny Hill-Parker @JennyHillParker · 18h

Replying to [@martynyeouk](#) [@ParentMaths](#)

It depends what we mean by close connections; is the goal to improve the parents' mathematical undertaking so that they can help their son/daughter, or is the goal to build closer bonds between the school and the parents?



Martyn @martynyeouk · 18h

Which do you think is more important? Or should come first? #mathscpdchat

this from [Jenny Hill-Parker](#):



Jenny Hill-Parker @JennyHillParker · 18h

I think the first goal is to build closer bonds, and this can be done by praising the students, and sharing that praise with the parents

these from [Simon Ball](#) and [Martyn Yeo](#):



Simon Ball @ballyzero · 18h

Replying to @martynyeouk @ParentMaths

I find this really difficult at A-Level! Apart from parents evenings, I only tend to get in touch when our students aren't working as well as they should. Need to work on calling when things are going well, too! #mathscpdchat



Martyn @martynyeouk · 18h

How do you think you might do that? I've heard of postcards being used? #mathscpdchat

these from [Simon Ball](#) and [Martyn Yeo](#):



Simon Ball @ballyzero · 18h

Yes, that's certainly an option! Also, if I can call because Jimmy-Joe isn't doing so well for whatever reason, then I can surely call because Joey-James has been doing brilliantly for a couple of weeks? #mathscpdchat



Martyn @martynyeouk · 18h

What is your barrier to doing that? #mathscpdchat

these from [Simon Ball](#) and [Martyn Yeo](#):



Simon Ball @ballyzero · 18h

The classic teacher fallback of not having time, I suspect. I also... don't know when is best to ring home? I worry that I might interrupt dinner/whatever soap opera is on at the time, or catch them at a bad time... I am a serial worrier, though! #mathscpdchat



Martyn @martynyeouk · 19h

Have you considered social media @ballyzero? We use twitter @WhitestoneInfs to keep parents informed about maths teaching and hopefully give them some ideas to use and praise great work! #mathscpdchat

and these from [Kathryn](#), [Martyn Yeo](#) and [Simon Ball](#):



Kathryn @Arithmaticks · 18h

Replying to @martynyeouk @ballyzero @WhitestoneInfs

The success of this is highly dependent on your schools GDPR policies I think! 🏠 #mathscpdchat



Martyn @martynyeouk · 18h

Yeah - lots of backs of heads and telling the children they are on twitter works!
But also taking photos of their work...



Simon Ball @ballyzero · 18h

Replying to @martynyeouk @WhitestoneInfs

Now that is an idea worth considering! Not thought about setting up a work
Twitter account for parents before... that is getting added to the 'To Do' list!

(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](#)