

**Toddington St George Church of England School**

**Parent Forum 2016-17**

**Monday 7<sup>th</sup> November 215pm**

**Focus: Parent forum focus on supporting parents – literacy and mathematics.**

**Apologies:**

**Present:**

**Question: What do you do to support your child with their learning?**

Parents reported doing the following activities to support their child's learning.

Reading -especially at bedtime activities that involve going to the library.

Other things related to learning that involve making learning link to real life contexts for example visits and trips that relate to themes or topics covered in class.

Other activities include picking things out when they are out about to focus on numbers/ letters/ words when out shopping etc.

Reading signs and boards to reinforce identification of numbers and words.

Other activities at home include dividing out food etc and focusing on reading the time on clocks to emphasise numeracy.

Some parents also have charts and other visual cues at home again to reinforce times tables etc.

Some parents use the skill checks and grammar hammer at home but some parents would like to know what day their child completes these checks in school.

**Areas for improvement /consideration:**

Would the school would consider laminating things like keywords so that parents could use these at home.

Some parents already do this themselves but wondered about what happens to those children whose parents don't have access to their own laminator.

Other parents use things like magnets and it was proposed or suggested whether the school was able to offer a discount service on stationary /posters and charts to assist or help parents reinforce learning at home.

Other suggestions were whether there was some kind of way of having a parent forum where parents could propose tips and provide practical advice about how they have tackled homework reading and writing activities at home to share ideas about what has been successful for them.

**Question: Do you feel supported in how to help your child with speaking and listening? Do you feel supported in how to help your child with reading? Do you feel supported in how to help your child with writing, including spelling? Do you feel supported in how to help your child with maths?**

Parents expressed how important and extremely helpful all curriculum sheets were to help support what topics the children were covering and also the focus for each curriculum area across the term.

Parents appreciated being offered the opportunity to attend workshops sessions to experience first-hand how their child is being taught different aspects of the curriculum, however some parents felt a little unclear what happens if they miss these key opportunities. They would appreciate clarity about how they could catch up on any important information that they were missing.

The forum proposed several potential ideas to address this. Firstly whether there was a possibility to be clearer about the location on the school website of the presentations slides.

In addition whether there could be a voice recording attached to the presentation for those parents that missed or to re-emphasise key points.

Parents discussed that informal Facebook groups exist for each year group and these have been beneficial in providing some form of communication, however this was discussed whether it was possible for this to be more formalised to meet an obvious need that parents have at present.

Parents also proposed whether there could be opportunities both either daytime or evening for slots for parent workshops.

There was agreement from all forum members that ultimately all staff teaching staff at the school are very approachable therefore if there was a particular concern they're very happy about how supportive staff are and how quickly any issues are resolved.

**Question: Do you prefer workshop type events? Do you prefer written communications?**

There was some general discussion about whether parents with new children to the school were perhaps less aware of the school systems and how they operate therefore the guidance they are provided with via written communication is essential to help clarify or reinforce any concerns they may have.

As a result some parents felt it was not always clear at where how to navigate the website to find copies of any communication could be found therefore they valued receiving copies via their Child's book bag.

Parents valued the workshop sessions and appreciate the opportunity to actually experience how their child is taught first hand as it helps them to appreciate how they can support their children with their learning.

#### **Areas for improvement**

Include perhaps longer notice about when the sessions will be held and the possibility of including alternative dates or times for workshop sessions. Parents felt they need to be able to be given a plenty of prior notice so parents can reschedule activities so they are able to attend.

#### **Question: Is the homework your child receives appropriate brackets reading/spellings/skills test/weekly task)?**

Parents expressed their enjoyment about the opportunity to complete take-home tasks with their children. All parents valued this opportunity and especially like the fact that it develops their child imagination and felt it provides them with an opportunity to develop their creativity through the opportunity to either make or do an activity as a family to help reinforce their child is learning.

#### **Areas for improvement/consideration.**

Some parents expressed the need to have simpler tasks that they could undertake with the children at home to support their learning of grammar. Rather than just having the skill in the grammar hammer sheets.

Parents expressed their pain of having to undertake spelling sentences and were concerned that the children don't always enjoy the process or are unclear of what the focus is. For example they were unclear whether the focus is practising handwriting, grammar, spelling and what needs to be the priority for their particular child at that point in their learning. Some solutions were proposed about whether the spelling sentences could be more specific to their particular topic area. Or smaller in number or have a particular key focus for that week or term. In addition they would appreciate some tips to ensure that it is a more enjoyable and focused activity for them to complete as a family at home.

#### **Question: Are you aware of the schools success? (OFSTED data dashboard)**

There was general agreement in the forum that parents were unsure of present OFSTED data or SATs results and were really unclear whether this was something that they wanted or needed and if appropriate where it could be found for example on the school website.

Some parents had investigated prior to the meeting information on the dashboard and their research had found out it was going to be a new format and they were unsure what this new format would be the impact of this on their child's learning.

**Question: Do the extra opportunities such as world book day/library reading challenge assembly/book fair inspire your child?**

Parents like the opportunity to take part in activities such as world book day but do not like to have to spend lots of hours or money making costumes and sometimes feel there is potentially too much emphasis on costumes. It was proposed whether there was another way to engage children or other options that could be considered. For example making posters or making hats. In addition, some parents expressed they feel pressured to produce costumes even though it is recommended by the school that parents do not need to go to that expense. Parents also expressed they appreciate longer notice given for them to be able to accommodate their child so that they are not isolated by being the only child not engaged in the particular activity or theme.

**Question: Do we appropriately recognise your child successes in literacy? Do we appropriately recognise your child successes in mathematics? What ideas do you have which could inspire your child?**

All parents expressed their appreciation at the current recognition they feel their child receives from their teachers for example things such as stars, stickers, star bands, head teachers award and wow I can certificates. All parents were in agreement that this is very positive and that both children and parents appreciate these activities.

There was some discussion about the relevance or significance of such awards such as 100% attendance awards as some parents felt that this might be have a negative impact on their child and questioned what the purpose.

Some parents felt although this was obviously the standard that each parent wishes to achieve for their child that it may encourage children or parents to send their children to school when they are not well.

All parents agreed that they feel their child is currently inspired and that the school provides a range of options and experiences that engage their children.