## Parents Forum - The March C of E School - FEB 2017

Date - 8.02.17

# Topic – Homework

### **Attendees**

Chair – Mr Jackson (Deputy Head)

Head Teacher attendee - Mrs Metcalfe

Governor Attendee - Stella Aldred

Parent Governor Attendees – Ashley Hatton

Further attendees – parent attendees

Minutes - Gael Emmett

Mr Jackson led the forum with a presentation 'What Should Homework look like at The March' – including results of research carried out into the affects of homework on learning and performance - please also see document attached

Additional points noted during presentation of document

- The research was about the visible benefits of homework on learning.
- The benefits were assessed across a spectrum of family support environments
- The affects of the stress homework can create in the family situation were also considered
- It was concluded that homework should be about 'key skill' learning ie; linked to 'core skills'
- At Secondary School level, it was also concluded that homework did not prove much more beneficial. The focus on any home guided learning should be on 'preparation' for a class.

A survey was carried out in July by The March, through Survey Monkey, regarding Education City as a Homework tool. It received a mixed response. Year 5 trialed a new system for homework, focusing on Maths.

#### **NEW HOMEWORK POLICY**

PLEASE NOTE – as a result of the research and surveys carried out, a new homework policy is to be adopted by The March – this is clearly outlined in a **document attached**, which will also be provided to parents for their information/record.

The new homework policy document presentation led to the following additional comments

- The new policy allows everyone to be successful, both the parents and children. It will help to reinforce confidence around homework.
- Spellings these will be provided to children in a booklet and will continue to be available on E-schools. There will continue to be the 3 levels of ability in the spellings
- Maths will be provided in a Maths pack and on Education City (to be reviewed).
- A comment was made that perhaps the homework could include 'skill set' enhancing. It was
  noted in reply that these types of activities are carried out in the daily curriculum, with
  written records kept of the activities. At Secondary School these activities are recorded in
  an online learning platform.
- A comment was made that Secondary School homework requires more 'planning'.
   Preparation is key to an activity, before the student can start to produce their homework, either handwritten or on a computer.

The following questions arose

Q: Does homework help a student to achieve their EOY goals?
A: Education City has different levels of activity to suit different abilities.

Q: With tiered levels of homework, for a child of lower ability, does this hinder their learning A: No, this does not hinder a child's learning. It is important to master a skill to their level before progressing.

Q: Are there other ways of encouraging children with basic learning, such as times tables A: It was suggested that parents can use 'competitive' concepts for children who respond to this. Also, creating fun around learning, such as chanting and singing.

Q: the online homework can often be confusing to parents, the way it is worded or what is expected.

A: The new homework strategy will be focusing on core skills only, so less opportunity for confusion. Where required, example pages will be sent home to illustrate how the homework is to be completed.

Q: It was commented that there is often a lack of acknowledgement of homework carried out, which does not encourage the student.

A: Education City, which is currently one of the main homework portals, acknowledges the homework with certificates, scores and a record of achievement.

Q: It was suggested that we could introduce a Homework 'club' to support students (and parents) with homework.

A: with the new Homework policies, this would not be a requirement.

Q: Preparing children in Year 6 for managing the planning of homework schedules at Secondary School. It was suggested that a student from a Secondary School could visit The March and talk to Year 6 students about this.

A: Children in Year 6 are starting to use planners and use learning records. Work is done in Year 6 and with Secondary Schools to help students to transition successfully.

#### **EDUCATION CITY**

A discussion arose around Education City and its value as a Homework tool. Whether its cost was justified in its benefit as a key Homework tool.

- It was suggested that guidance could be given to parents regarding free online websites that could be used as an alternative to Education City.
- Guidelines are given to parents by the teachers outlining clearly a student's goals for learning for the EOY.
- It was suggested that the school could reintroduce the Maths Evenings as an opportunity to educate parents on the skills their children are learning.

#### OTHER MATTERS

**Meeting times** - The time of the meeting was discussed. The conclusion was reached that the current time would be ongoing. Full reports, including minutes and relevant documents are available on the website for parents who are unable to attend. Prior to meeting, the topic is advised and parents who are unable to attend are encouraged to provide relevant questions or comments to an attendee, or to place in the 'suggestions' box in Reception.

Increasing parental attendance - Encouraging increased attendance was discussed. It was suggested that attendees encourage other parents to attend, via class email groups and discussion. It was suggested that if each parent was encouraged to attend I meeting per year as a representative of their year group it would be very positive.

**Minutes** - Responsibility for the Minutes will now take place on a rotational basis. The parent volunteered for the next meetings minutes is Sara Watkins.

**Topics** – The topics for the Parents Forum are agreed as one topic set by the school, one topic set by the parents (in agreement with the school). Where possible, two topics will be covered in one meeting, meeting times being set at one hour duration. Where topics require more focus and time, the topics will alternate, one school led, one parent led per meeting.

**NEXT MEETING - Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> March** 

**TOPIC – Healthy Living and Wellbeing** FUTURE TOPIC - Maths