

Computer software will monitor child's progress

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Boost for parents concerned about homework

THE days of parents arguing with their children over whether they have done their homework are numbered.

Parents are being given the chance to settle such disputes about homework or school reports, or the next parent teacher meeting, at the touch of a button.

Thanks to two new computer programmes, created by a Cardiff-based company, parents and teachers can monitor each child's progress, address concerns and share information online.

Lewis School in Pengam is just one of the schools in Wales to have adopted the computer packages, Pathways and Voyager from IT company Lisol. And it is reaping rewards already.

The electronic management of pupils' work and the monitoring of progress was considered an outstanding feature in the school's inspection report.

Under the package called Pathways, the school opens up ac-

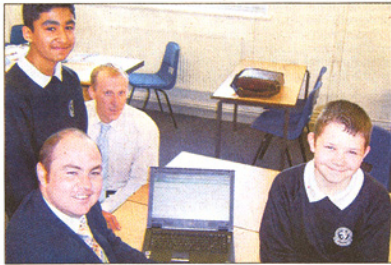
cess to a pupil's records to teachers, pupils and parents. Pupils and parents can access the system from home to see homework, reports and other school documents.

The other system called Voyager ensures information on each pupil has been passed from the feeder primary schools so that teachers do not cover old ground and needs of individual students are identified even before they start secondary school, so no time is wasted.

Caerphilly County Borough Council has installed this system in almost 100 schools so that primaries can easily store and transfer academic and pastoral information on all pupils.

Mark Baker, deputy headteacher at Lewis School, who was involved in creating the computer system, said: "Voyager has very much been developed with teachers in mind because we had input along the way.

"Nobody else has come up with an idea which deals with



DISCUSSION IT expert Leyton Jones, of Lisol, front, Mark Baker, deputy headteacher of Lewis School, Pengam, and 12-year-olds Amar Ali and Sam Griffiths discuss Lisol Voyager.

transition in this way. Nobody else has solved this problem and this technology allows for so much to be done so very, very quickly."

The problems faced at Lewis School are familiar across the

country. It needed to get better information from primary schools about every pupil arriving in Year 7.

In addition, the end of Key Stage 2 tests meant it needed to be sure the same levels of as-

essment were being used across its feeder schools.

"With Voyager we can look at a class of Year 7 pupils and know what it is they can do," said Mr Baker. "We can look at a maths class, for instance, and know if they have done long multiplication. We can move them along quicker in Year 7 without repeating things from primary school."

Debbie Hartevel, headteacher of Tir-Y-Berth Primary, Caerphilly, added: "Because this system is electronic we know that the secondary schools are getting up-to-date and valid information from us about the pupils and that the information is going to the person it needs to get to.

"Voyager's facility to work on the consistency of teacher assessments is very important to all schools in Wales at the moment because we no longer have Sats testing at Key Stage 2 to validate teacher assessment."

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