Research Project: Empowering Parents

Mid-Project Report - July 2023

Research Team:

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1   Introduction

Do schools and churches want to work together to support faith development in children? Is it more effective when they do? What do they currently do to support parents and are they wanting to be doing more? Do parents want to be empowered to see home as a place to build faith? These are just a few of the questions behind this research project.

We initially recruited 5 schools, 5 churches, and 5 partnerships (schools and churches already working closely together), that were interested in the idea of empowering parents, to participate in this project. One school withdrew from the project before an interview, therefore this report details findings from the remaining 14 case studies.

For stage-one of the project we conducted semi-structured interviews over zoom with representatives from these settings to hear about their current experiences and approaches. These interviews also provide some insight into the challenges and barriers individuals face in this work and have helped us to identify some potential areas where support or resources may be a benefit.

The project then provided resources and training to the settings to encourage and equip them in empowering parents to be more involved in nurturing their child's faith. The impacts of those changes will be presented in the end of project report. This mid-project report presents the findings from our initial investigations and conversations with the settings (practitioners and parents). The views of children will also be presented in the end of project report.

Key Findings:
- The main outworkings of the Christian faith in school are currently seen through the school's vision and values, acts of worship, and opportunities for prayer.
- The schools in our study predominantly connect with parents about faith by inviting them to attend faith events at school such as services.

- There is some desire from schools to encourage more faith sharing and exploration at home but little work has been done in this area.
- Churches currently seek to empower parents through supportive relationships, all-age services and providing resources to use at home. The success of this is varied.
- Church leaders did not mention the role of school in children's faith formation and there was no expression of a desire to work together to empower parents.
- Partnerships where schools and churches are working closely together are typically characterised by shared staff or individuals spending significant amounts of time in both contexts.
- The ways that partnerships are empowering parents are a mix of the ways described by schools and churches. They do this by inviting parents to events (similar to schools), facilitating all-age services and providing resources to use at home (similar to churches).

2   School Settings

2.1   *Connections with Faith in School:*

In order to explore how the schools in our study are currently seeking to share faith with children we asked the headteachers to reflect on how the Christian faith makes a difference to everyday school life. Their responses highlighted three key themes: vision and values, worship and prayer.

Vision & Values:

School values, mission and vision statements appear to be a key way that schools reflect their Christian faith. All of the school staff we interviewed made reference to these in their interviews, with three schools highlighting their Christian values, one school mentioning their vision and ethos and all referencing their mission or vision statements. Interestingly, the vision and values did vary across the schools particularly regarding how explicitly Christian they were. On one end of the scale, two schools explicitly referenced God in their vision statements. In contrast one school makes inferences to their faith using the word 'believe' in their statement and another

spoke of their vision to be caring, nurturing and supportive which although hold Christian sentiment are not explicitly so.

All the schools highlighted the importance of weaving their Christian values throughout the school via lessons, curriculum, and policies and also discussed the importance of these being clearly explained to parents.

Worship:

All the school representatives highlighted regular worship as part of their Christian distinctiveness, suggesting this is another key way schools seek to nurture faith in children. Three of the schools spoke of encouraging children to be involved in leading acts of worship and two schools mentioned the importance of daily worship. It seems that worship is a significant way that schools interact with their local churches, with all schools mentioning that clergy or volunteers from the local church run weekly collective worship, and three schools noting attending a local church for services or events around festivals in the church calendar.

Prayer:

Prayer was mentioned by most of the schools as another important way the Christian Faith was part of their school life. The schools display creativity in the way they encourage prayer in school discussing a wide range of examples within their setting. These included school prayers written by teachers or children and said at various times throughout the day and having a specific place in the school that children could go to pray and reflect or write their prayers. One school spoke of having 'prayer warriors' – children who collect and pray for the prayer requests of their peers, and are invited to pray spontaneously or reading prayers during collective worship. Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, one school reported having a regular prayer group with parents and vicar praying together. A prayer box was available in this school for anyone to place prayer requests that were prayed for by this group.

2.2   Connections with Parents and Faith at Home:

Inviting Parents:

The main way the schools in our study are trying to involve parents in the Christian faith of the school is by inviting them along to collective worship, services and events happening in school or at their local church. The success of this seems to vary with some schools claiming good attendance while others lamenting that uptake is slow. This may not just be a feature of parents' interaction with faith events but their willingness to attend events generally. Parental attendance was more likely if their child was participating. Multiple schools mentioned inviting parents to sessions or insider lessons on aspects of the curriculum and noted that generally interaction with parents decreases as children get older. One school explained that parents wouldn't attend preventative workshops in school despite saying they were struggling with things, but do still turn to staff for help when in crisis. Despite this, one school mentioned parents being involved in developing and funding the school's spiritual, reflective garden suggesting that there was at least some interest from parents in investing in their children's spiritual lives.

Encouraging Faith at Home:

When asked to reflect on what they have currently tried to empower parents to discuss or explore the Christian faith with their children at home, schools generally commented they had done very little. Only one school mentioned focused work in this area, sharing how they put resources on their website to help parents pray with their children at home alongside book recommendations and Bible stories and activities they could use at home. The success of these was either not known or mentioned in the interview. Another school alluded to some work trying to encourage faith at home by signposting parents to other organisations who may support this. Despite limited examples of actions in this area, the interviewees suggested a desire to do more to encourage faith at home which suggests there is an opportunity for more work to be done supporting schools in this task.

When asked what school is doing to empower parents for faith, parents mainly responded by mentioning invitations to school and church events such as school worship or services held in church. However, one parent referred to the church newsletter being sent home through school. Some parents, when asked, however, indicated that they would like resources from school which would help them to talk about faith or share prayer at home. Equally parents responded that they would simply appreciate knowing what was being taught in RE or through school worship whether this was directly from the school or through time with the vicar. One parent stated, 'School helps teach and model the Christian faith,' linking to the values and ethos.

3   Church Contexts

Our interviews with church leaders (some children and family workers and others clergy or lay ministers) explored what they were doing to support faith development in children and empowering parents for sharing faith at home. The range of responses highlighted a few key themes including, resources to use at home, all-age services and the importance of relationships. Interestingly, their comments (and sometimes lack of) appeared to suggest little consideration of the role of school in children's faith formation, and relationships with schools were not mentioned as current or potential avenues for empowering parents.

3.1   Resources to Use at Home:
In contrast to schools, the churches interviewed suggested significant effort in empowering families to explore faith at home with many highlighting the importance of the COVID-19 pandemic for initiating or accelerating this work.

All of the churches in our study referenced sending home discussion questions or formal resources for families to use at home. It seems that seasonal festivals such as Christmas, Lent and Easter are times that churches offer increased resources to do at home with multiple churches mentioning this. One of the churches shared how they intentionally follow the same teaching passages in children's groups as they do in their weekly sermons which enables them to send

home discussion questions to spark conversations within families. Despite considerable effort in this area, the effectiveness of this was unknown, not discussed or questioned by those interviewed, two Churches specifically mentioned that resources were often not used by families even when sent. The disappointment and frustration at this is highlighted in the following participant quote:

> *"I looked it up on churchsuite and it said 50% of your families have read your emails and it's like oh, that's really disappointing."*

While it is clear that churches have a strong desire to see parents sharing faith at home and are trying to resource this by sending things home, it is apparent that some more work needs to be done to identify whether this is actually helpful for parents and if not, what might be better.

When asked what parents would find helpful in empowering faith the most common answers were not too dissimilar to the parents in the school settings wanting resources to enable faith inclusion in the home. Help to pray at home was also listed by several parents.

3.2   *All-Age Services:*
When asked about their patterns of services and approaches to discipling children, all the churches mentioned 'All-Age' or 'Intergenerational' services. These varied in frequency with two churches holding these monthly, one having them on fifth Sundays and one using an irregular all-age pattern as they found people didn't come when they knew the dates. One church explained that the majority of their services with children and families present were all-age in nature. This church were also the only ones to explicitly reference explaining to parents the importance of role modeling faith to their children and joining in throughout the service, pointing out to their children where they are in the service. Despite this they recognised that response to this varied significantly with some parents being very good at this and others not so. What is interesting is that this church did not have a children and families worker and had a very large number of non-christian families attending, in comparison to the other churches with paid staff

members working specifically with children and families and having a smaller but christian group of families.

All-age services were often discussed as having distinct features to other services, e.g different preaching styles, posing lots of questions, being shorter and more interactive which suggests that aspects of 'typical' services are often not inherently accessible for children or designed to empower parents, but that with consideration tweaks and changes can be made to encourage spiritual growth in families. The fact that some churches found lower attendance when their congregation knew it would be an intergenerational service suggests that there is more work that could be done to ascertain how to make these services enjoyable and appropriate for all.

From all the parent responses only one parent hinted at all-age services as being important and a small number referenced services in general. Age specific groups were however listed more frequently as being important.

3.3   Role of Relationships:
Almost all of the churches mentioned the role of relationships in empowering parents suggesting that cultivating and encouraging these relationships is an important tool when seeking to empower parents. These church leaders all mentioned the benefit of church staff members regularly connecting with parents either via phone calls, meetups, or conversations after church services. This kind of support can be hard to quantify due to its informal nature, something which was acknowledged by two churches, and thus it was also not easy to ascertain how successful this is. Peer support also seems to be a common approach to empowering parents with two churches mentioning the importance of families supporting one another and another emphasizing the role of child-child relationships in church in growing their faith.

While relationships are clearly key in supporting family faith, it can be difficult to help parents feel empowered to nurture their child's faith themselves rather than relying on their church connections. This was exemplified in a story told by one church leader when a family who lived nearby knocked on the vicars door when their pet died and they wanted prayer and support. The

vicar expressed delight that they had turned to the church for support, but also shared a desire for the parent to feel more confident coaching their child through this and praying together without needing the vicar's presence.

Our findings suggest that strong relationships within a church community are important for nurturing family faith but suggest there is still work that could be done to assess how these relationships can be used to particularly empower parents to feel confident doing this in their everyday lives. The importance of relationships between leaders and parents and within the church family were included by many parents, one suggesting a slightly more formal 'mentor scheme,' or opportunity to chat to parents of older children to share good practice.

A range of courses and formal resources were mentioned by church leaders as useful for helping them support parents, particularly highlighting the Parenting for Faith courses, Parenting for Faith certificate for church leaders, Care for the Family resources and baptism preparation materials. Parents also stated they would like to take part in these types of courses or things like Alpha to strengthen their faith giving them confidence to answer their children's questions.

Similarly to the school settings parents also stated they would like more communication over what the children are learning in their groups.

4   Relationships between Church and School

One of the key aims in this study was to consider the relationship between churches and schools and how this impacts those seeking to empower parents. Interestingly, when we asked the church representatives in our study who they felt were the key people in children's spiritual lives and discipleship, none of them mentioned school. A range of people were noted including parents, church staff and kids/youth group leaders, but teachers or schools support staff were not included in this list. However, when parents were asked who was important in the spiritual life of their children many stated either school or specifically teachers were amongst the key influencers. In school or partnership settings, teachers or the school were viewed to be of similar importance to

parents, or in some cases of greater importance, whereas parents who responded from church settings, rated the importance of clergy or church church alongside parents or the home.

When asked about what they felt might be helpful in better empowering parents, no church interview specifically referenced or inferred a desire to work closer with schools. This is interesting given the emphasis that is put on the role of school in the growing faith model. The interviews did not explicitly ask church leaders about their involvement with schools so it may well be that there are existing connections that were not mentioned but the lack of mention suggests this may not be a high priority for clergy, children and family workers in churches. In fact, the only mentions of school in church interviews were around the impact of admission protocols and as barriers to empowering parents. Conversations with two churches supported the view that school admission policies requiring church attendance can significantly impact a churches engagement with local children and families with one deeming it the reason they have such high attendance and one noting an attendance drop after a change in school requirements. Two interviews mentioned school as a barrier for parents sharing faith with their children, saying they felt that education and extracurricular always takes priority in families. This is considered in more depth later in this report.

Two of the interviews with school staff mentioned the relationship between church and school with one in particular describing how church staff and congregation supported a variety of events in school. The other interview shared that they were working on building a better relationship with their local church which had been negatively affected in the past by a poor ofsted result. The school representative expressed very strongly the impact that the poor Ofsetd had had on the relationships and trust with parents.

Overall, our data indicates that relationships between school and church can vary significantly and that for some churches this may not be a huge priority.

5   Partnerships

The inclusion of the partnership category in our study shows that there are some churches and schools that are working very closely together supported by the fact that without requesting it, all of the partnership interviews included both church and school staff members or individuals who were employed by both. Monitoring these partnerships provides a great opportunity to explore how church and school relationships might be used to empower parents.

5.1   The Presence of Church Staff in School:

All the interviews with partnerships were characterised by significant presence of church staff in school, with three mentioning the role of staff specifically employed to work across both school and church. One partnership had a staff member employed to work 50% of their time in church and 50% of their time in school, another church worker spends one day a week working for the school, and another spoke of the huge success of a previous school chaplain, lamenting the lack of funding for this to continue. The other two partnerships shared how they do a lot of events together including weekly worship led by clergy and church staff, activities in school run by staff and lay leaders, and occasional events in school such as 'questions with the vicar.' Two partnerships specifically mentioned significant overlap in governance explaining that many of the school governors, including the chair, are clergy or congregation members. It seems that partnerships between school and churches seem to work best when staff and congregation are able to give a significant amount of time to being in and around the school. A small number of parent responses referenced a link between church and school as being important, with some mentioning visits from clergy or visits to the church.

5.2 Communication and Celebration:

 We asked the partnerships to describe how their relationship worked and the impact it had, and the results suggested that communication and celebration are key features of strong partnerships. Three of the partnerships mentioned that they shared and celebrated things that were going on in school and church in their regular communications. For example, one partnership advertises church activities on their school website and another celebrates things going on in church in their

school newsletter. This seems to work both ways, with one partnership explaining how their monthly church magazine always included an article about the school and what the classes have been doing. One partnership discussed links between the church and school website and how the church can distribute information such as their notices and resources including growing faith materials to parents through the school. It is interesting to note however that good communication does not always result in families attending church, as one two of these partnerships highlighted that the church doesn't see many school families attending the events promoted by school.

It was noted in one interview that collaborative working was key to their partnership. A beautiful example of this was described in one interview where church staff and congregation worked together with school staff, children and parents to create and maintain a spirituality garden based on Psalm 23 in their school. However another partnership explained that this kind of working was not always easy and that despite their best attempts to work together nothing is fully led jointly. They mentioned how the organiser for each event had to be distinct due to staffing and policy guidelines. This shows that collaborative working between schools and churches around faith matters can be really successful, but is often very difficult and time-consuming to do.

5.3   Partnerships Working to Empower Parents:
As could be expected, the ways the partnerships appear to be seeking to empower parents are a mix of the ways described by schools and churches in our study. Their responses highlighted three key themes: inviting parents to events (similar to schools), running all-age services and sending resources home (similar to churches).

Three partnerships mentioned inviting parents to events and services either held in school or church. One partnership mentioned the success of RE afternoons run for parents designed to spark and support faith conversations at home. A popular resource raised was the Bible Society's 'Open the Book' with three partnerships saying they do this already and one hoping to start it. Interestingly one of these partnerships explained that they invite parents to watch or get involved

with Open the Book and another suggested that inviting parents to be a part of Open the Book is something they wanted to try.

One partnership spoke in detail about a monthly all-age service run for families in the school hall, something they had been awarded the church-school partnership for. This is a long-term project run by the church team closely supported by the school and sees many families engage with faith through it during their children's time at primary school. Interestingly the vicar noted that this did not lead to increased families in church activities and that as a result they had recently begun another service aimed at reaching children and families. There seemed to be some uncertainty as to whether this was its own congregation or designed to be a bridge into a 'main' church congregation, something that may need to be considered by any partnerships exploring running something similar.

All except one of the partnerships mentioned school sending things home to try and empower parents to share faith at home. These ideas are shared with families in various ways including via apps, newsletters and on school websites. Similar to the reflections of churches also sending home resources, there were some questions raised as to the effectiveness of the approach. One partnership in particular mentioned this as something they had tried but found to be ineffective saying that parents rarely opened the emails sent let alone used them. The findings from both churches and schools suggest that while sending home resources appears to be a popular approach to empowering parents, it may not be as effective as we might hope.

6   Issues and Challenges

When asked about the issues and challenges around empowering parents three clear themes were observed across the contexts. These were time, parents faith, and staff faith/knowledge.

6.1   Time

As mentioned already, two schools withdrew early on in the project due to the significant pressures on their time indicating something which would later become a recurring theme across

almost all interviews. The interviews suggested that busyness of children, parents, school staff, church workers and clergy all impact the effectiveness of anyone empowering parents.

Two Churches referenced families' busyness being a barrier to empowering them, reporting that parents often don't read emails, come to events, or have time to do faith activities with their children at home. This view was also held by three of the partnerships who explained that parents were often too busy to attend events, meetings, or courses even when they have disclosed that they are struggling. Two churches mentioned the pull of education and extracurricular activities as a difficulty suggesting that the draw of these typically overshadows church or faith based activities. One individual explained that around them "education is everything" and that families would typically choose tutoring over church events. Two of the schools in the study also made specific reference to time as a barrier, reducing their ability to develop spirituality well and wishing they had more time to invite parents in to chat, share ideas and pray with parents. One school also mentioned desiring that the vicar could spend more time with parents. Other interviews suggested a range of experiences across clergy when it comes to empowering parents. Two churches reflected on the time pressures faced by church staff and clergy, explaining that they could not be as present as they might have liked with parents. In this area, however, there seems to be the greatest disconnects as many parents are asking for resources to use at home. Does this mean the parents have aspirations which the settings are finding difficult to meet or that the resources going home are not the ones which will meet the requirements of the parents?

One of the partnership interviews also mentioned the barrier of vicars' workloads but also noted that clergy sometimes don't see opportunities beyond assemblies. This was further supported by one church interview where the vicar reflected that they had limited ideas and lacked time and headspace to think through what they could do to better empower parents.

Addressing these issues is complex, it is surely more difficult than simply 'making more time' for empowering parents. While it seems some vision casting for parents may be required around the importance of prioritizing time exploring faith with their children, church leaders also insightfully expressed concern that they did not want to burden or guilt families into doing things and were keen to ensure they didn't unintentionally judge other people's parenting in the process.

There are also huge difficulties in reducing time pressures on clergy and school staff who are typically already overworking. There is some suggestion from our discussions that specifically employed staff members such as children and family workers or school chaplains can go someway to helping carry the load of empowering parents. One partnership highlighted the success of a previous chaplaincy role which could no longer be funded and one church worker commented that while there was a definite presence of clergy: *"I hold the ministry [to parents]."* Despite this, busyness was still considered a barrier.

6.2   Parents Faith

Parents not having a Christian faith or lacking confidence in it was identified as a barrier to empowering parents across the spheres but was particularly prominent in partnerships with 3 out of 4 partnerships referencing it. One partnership articulated that parents not being comfortable with growing their own faith can be a barrier to them supporting their child's, while two partnerships explained how a lack of parent faith at home means that home values don't reflect what's taught in schools. Parent responses reflect this as many asked for resources to help them in this area. However, when asked their views on the importance of Christian faith in children, most parents stated it was either very important or important however some indicated it was beneficial in helping them 'choose their own path' and others expressed the importance in teaching morals and values. One parent noted, 'adults can learn much from children's faith.' It was suggested that something as simple as information on what the school services or RE contained would be helpful so this can be discussed and built upon in the home would be beneficial. Some parents suggested they would like stronger links with the church, through the school, as an opportunity for conversations with the vicar to see what she is doing with the children in school would be beneficial. Another parent stated they would like signposting to Alpha courses, parenting for faith resources etc to answer questions for themselves. One parent stated:

> *'there is no clear link between church, school and the home other than invitation to special events.'*

Parents' lack of faith or confidence in their faith was expressed by one church leader who explained that despite having a large number of children and families attending the multiple weekly services the church put on aimed at them, they felt the limited or lack of faith in parents attending was a significant barrier to empowering them. This church reflected that many of the families attending did so due to school admission policies in the area requiring church attendance and lamented a drop off of these families at church activities once the children reached school age. Despite noting this as a barrier the leader specifically referred to encouraging a positive view of this as a huge opportunity, recognising that with some help and ideas the church was positioned to potentially empower a huge number of parents as a result of the admission policy.

Although this is clearly a challenge there are findings to suggest that this is not always the case. Two partnerships highlighted a mix of attitudes from parents towards the Christian faith, with one noting that in schools within the trust that are in more deprived communities engagement with parents was generally easier than in the schools in more wealthy locations. One school explained that while having lots of families with no faith can be a barrier, careful choosing of values (e.g. to avoid more explicitly Christian ideas such as Koinonia) meant that most parents were on board with the general approach.

6.3   School Staff Faith and Knowledge

The final theme which came out across multiple interviews was that the knowledge, confidence or faith of school staff can be a barrier to empowering parents. Three partnerships spoke of how staff attitudes towards this topic were mixed, with some open to the idea and others less so. In contrast one school expressed that their staff were open to this idea and that their good relationships with parents would make them good at it. Two schools mentioned that their staff would have low confidence in running any sessions on faith for parents and highlighted limited knowledge of the Christian faith particularly in younger staff who are also concerned about getting things wrong. This same headteacher reflected on how being associated with a high church confused some of the staff as it was a very different experience than they may have had working in other faith schools. A number of the partnerships explained how they were able to

successfully support teachers in delivering faith-based aspects of the curriculum and increase the confidence of staff doing this themselves.

When asked if the school or church ever talked to parents about their child's faith development, the responses were mixed. Churches tended to do this more than schools or partnerships with more parents noting this was a frequent occurrence in church rather than an occasional one. In the schools and partnerships communication via printed forms happens more frequently than verbally and in church it is both. This could be a result of lack of time and confidence in many school staff when tackling this issue.

6.4   Communication

In all three sectors responses regarding communications between school/church and parents were the same, with parents asking for more information on what is being taught, and feedback on how the teaching was received. Parents suggested a variety of ways. A parent from school said they would like to chat to the vicar to ask what is being covered; a parent in the partnership suggested 'cheat sheets' of the main topics that are covered and answers to possible questions the children may have. In all settings it seems that communication and feedback could be improved.

7   Opportunities

As part of these initial interviews we were keen to hear from participants about the opportunities they saw for developing the way they empower parents and what they felt might be helpful. Most of these suggestions were things that other participants in the study were already doing - suggesting a lack of new ideas outside of those already mentioned above.

The schools in the study primarily focused on the need for practical resources they could use to support parents. For example, one school mentioned the need for materials, most likely videos, that could explain the various religious festivals and their link to Christian festivals to parents - something that seeks to increase parent knowledge and confidence when sharing with their children. Another school expressed a desire to better direct parents to books and websites that

might help them as well as resources to run a Bible study group for parents. However, parents from school, church and partnerships all mentioned they would like some sort of resources to help them know how to introduce faith conversations, or answer their children's questions with one parent adding it would be helpful to have a "cheat sheet" of the main topics covered and answers to possible questions the children may have.

One school brought up the idea of a prayer bag, similar to the class teddy, which could be passed between school and home to encourage children and families to reflect on something together. This could involve candles, conversation starters, Bible activities etc. and could hopefully increase confidence in parents and spark more regular faith activity at home. With some parents noting they would like resources to help them introduce prayers in the home this could be seen as positive.

A recurring theme amongst parents is that they are unsure what their children are being taught in school or church groups around faith. One parent stated, '[I] would like feedback/info on what topics are covered in RE, worship and services' and another suggested, 'something included in the parents evening updates about this, not just academic & social development updates.' Developing communication in this way could therefore be advantageous in fostering greater empowerment of the parents.

Opportunities to start something worship based, such as Open the Book are clearly worth exploring within these sorts of settings, so that parents can be easily invited to participate.

Churches in the study seemed to focus on things that were helpful for the staff member seeking to empower parents. For example, two individuals shared that talking to others in a similar position would be helpful for them, while others spoke of the need for ideas and activities they could utilize in their context emphasizing that time and headspace were their main barrier to this work. One church who worked with a very large number of non-christian families explained that some way to prioritize the families they worked closely with might help them to better empower parents.

The partnerships in the study appear to concentrate on the relationship between church and school and the way that one could be used to support the other. For example one partnership talked about wanting to open up the church more to support parents and make it a place they know they can turn to for support e.g. through food hubs or general parenting courses. Another partnership spoke of how the church might be able to get more involved in school life, sharing that they would like people of faith to go into their school to share their views and answer questions, highlighting that this is particularly beneficial when teachers don't have a personal faith or feel they can't share it. The partnerships also discussed ensuring parents were able to attend things being put on, e.g. inviting them to Christian events in school such as lessons about communion or by making sure that church services and activities were accessible to school families.

It appears partnerships between schools and churches draw on the approaches used individually in both these settings to empower parents together. Churches seem to be more experienced than schools in attempting to encourage faith at home and this learning seems to be passed on to schools when they work together in partnerships. A key component of partnerships that appears to allow this knowledge sharing and strengthen the relationship seems to be staff members who spend significant amounts of time in school while also being deeply connected to the church. Finding ways to help church leaders, and congregation members to spend more time in school and working directly with parents appears to be something we should work towards in order to more effectively empower parents to share faith with their children.

8   Next Steps

This project will now continue to support and observe the settings in their quest to empower parents more. The final report will be submitted to the Growing Faith Foundation in December 2023.

If you have any queries, please get in touch with Principal Investigator: Dr Sarah Holmes, School of Education, Liverpool Hope University, UK. Email: youngfaith@hope.ac.uk.