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Fostering Effective Parent-Practitioner Partnerships in the Teaching of Secondary Education

Presented at: Parental Involvement in Children's Secondary Education and Character Education Event

23rd May 2019

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A Systematic Review of Parental Involvement Interventions for Increasing Academic and Educational-Related Outcomes in Secondary School Students

Paul, S-A.S., Gundarina, O., & Clarke, P.J. (To be submitted to Educational Research Review).



Author(s)	Type of Article	Focusses on specific populations?	Focusses on a sole type of parental involvement intervention?	Includes studies published at least 5 years ago?
<u>Patall et al. (2008)</u>	Meta-Analysis	No	Yes - homework	Yes. 1987 - 2004
Hill & Tyson (2009)	Meta-Analysis	No	No	Yes. 1985 - 2006
<u>Jeynes (2012)</u>	Meta-Analysis	Yes – urban children and their parents	No	Yes. 1964 - 2006
<u>Semke & Sheridan (2012)</u>	Systematic Review	Yes – rural children and their parents	No	Yes. 1995 - 2010
See & <u>Gorard (2013)</u>	Systematic Review	No	No	Yes. 1990 - 2012
Higgins & <u>Katsipataki (2015)</u>	Meta-Analysis	No	No	Yes. 1995 - 2013

Background

- Our Systematic Review differs because it:
 - Includes studies published up until December 2018
 - Is not restricted to specific types of parental involvement interventions
 - Is not restricted to studies with specific types of populations (e.g. urban or rural students)

- Our full study inclusion criteria is presented shortly...

Research Questions

1. What are the types of parental involvement interventions used to increase academic and educational-related outcomes in secondary school students?
2. How effective are parental involvement interventions in improving academic and educational-related outcomes in secondary school students?

PROSPERO and PRISMA

- We published a protocol for the systematic review on the PROSPERO website:
https://www.crd.york.ac.uk/prospero/display_record.php?RecordID=121911
- We adhered to the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines (Moher, Liberati, Tetzlaff, & Altman, 2009) in the reporting of this systematic review.

Method

1. Search Strategy

- Interested in studies published between 2008 and 2018.
- Databases searched: British Education Index, ERIC, SCOPUS, Web of Science, and Science Direct.
- Search terms: Parent-practitioner partnership OR Home-school collaboration OR Home-school interaction OR Parental engagement and school OR Parent-teacher partnerships OR Parent-teacher collaboration OR Parent-teacher involvement OR Family-school involvement OR Parent-practitioner links OR Family-teacher links OR Home-school links.
- Searches were refined by ‘language’, ‘date of publication’, and ‘type of publication’.

2. Inclusion Criteria

- a) The study participants were secondary school students, their parents & teachers.
- b) All types of secondary school could be involved in the study.
- c) The studies could be conducted in any country but reported in English.
- d) The studies should be reported in peer-reviewed journals.
- e) The interventions were implemented either in school or at home.
- f) The interventions focussed on parents & teachers co-delivering secondary education, or promoting student's academic engagement, or promoting parental engagement with school.
- g) The interventions were aimed at increasing student academic outcomes and/or educational-related outcomes in secondary school students.
- h) The studies used a RCT or experimental design which collects quantitative data.
- i) The studies employed a pre-post-test design or included baseline tests of equivalency.

3. Search, Screening, and Review Process

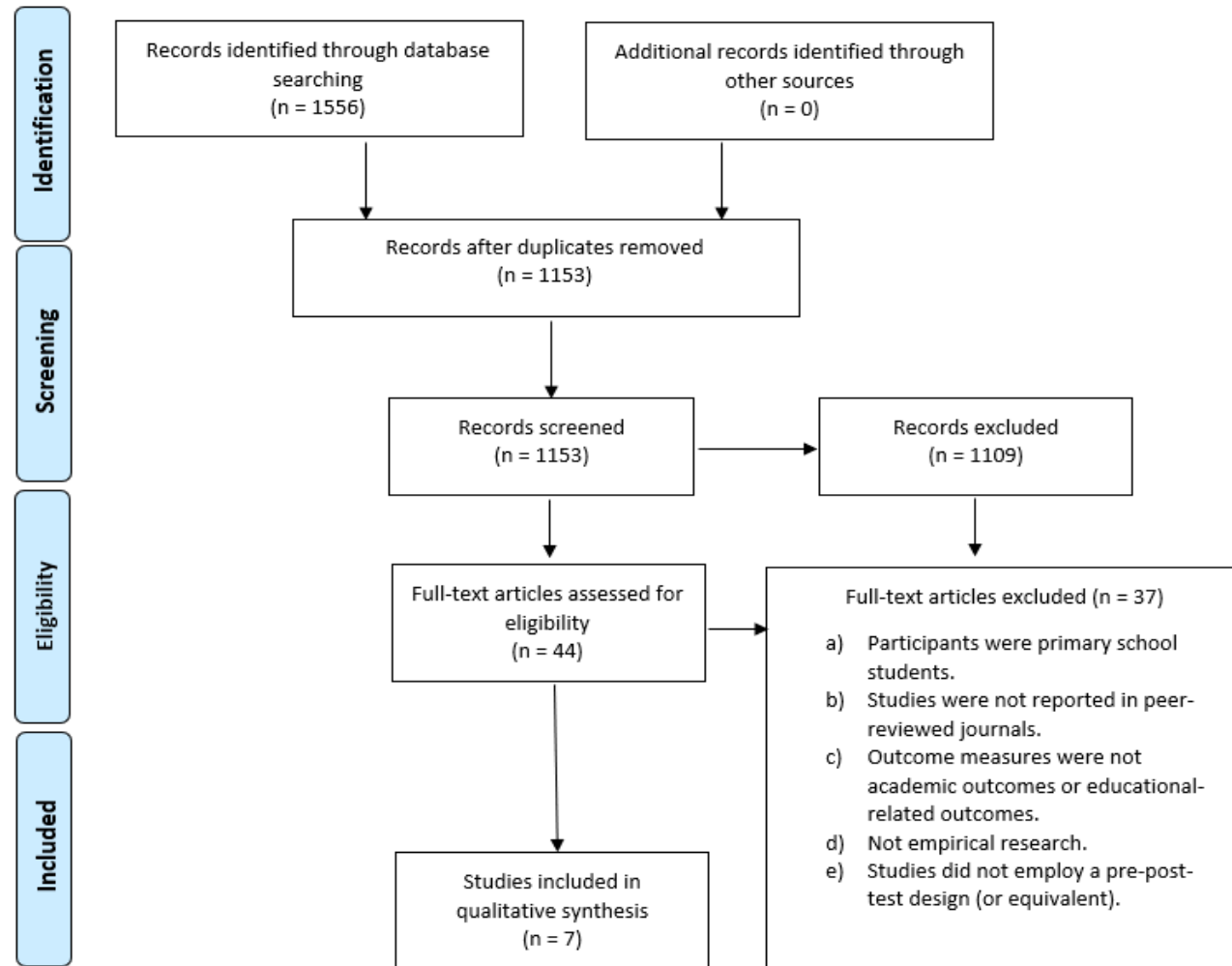


Figure 1. Overview of the search protocol based on the PRISMA Statement.

4. Data Extraction

Table 1. Excerpt from Results Table (illustrating key study characteristics).

Author(s)	Sample	Type of Intervention	Specific outcomes targeted	Method of Delivery	Design	Dosage	Measures	Results	Risk of bias
Castleman & Page (2017).	4754 college-intending senior high school students (age and school grade not given). 1,734 students in student only outreach group; 1,362 students in student and parent outreach; 1,658 students in control group.	Text-messaging campaign (in partnership with uAspire) aimed at students vs. text-messaging campaign aimed at students and parents vs. control group.	College enrolment outcomes: 1. Overall enrolment in any college; 2. Whether students enrolled in 2-year or 4-year institution.	Delivered by uAspire advisors via an automated system, Signal Vine to students and parents.	RCT: 2 treatment groups + control	14 messages over 3 months in 5-day intervals.	Enrolment data from National Student Clearinghouse.	1. Overall enrolment was significantly higher post-intervention for pooled treatment groups, but not significantly higher for individual treatment groups, compared to control. 2. No significant differences in enrolment rates in 2-year or 4-year institutions at post-test between any of the groups. <i>No Effect Sizes reported.</i>	<i>Low:</i> Bias due to deviations from intended interventions; Bias due to missing outcome data (Outcomes 1 and 2); Bias in measurement of the outcome (Outcomes 1 and 2); <i>Some concerns:</i> Bias in selection of the reported result (Outcomes 1 and 2). <i>High:</i> Bias arising from the randomisation process.

5. Risk of Bias (Quality) Assessment.

Risk of Bias tool	Criteria for Judging Risk of Bias	Risk of Bias Judgement Classifications
<p>RoB 2 – the Revised Cochrane Risk-of-Bias Tool for Randomized Trials (Higgins et al. 2016).</p>	<p>1. Risk of bias arising from the randomization process</p>	<p>Low risk/Some concerns/High risk</p>
	<p>2. Risk of bias due to deviations from the intended interventions (effect of assignment to interventions)</p>	<p>Low risk/Some concerns/High risk</p>
	<p>3. Missing outcome data</p>	<p>Low risk/Some concerns/High risk</p>
	<p>4. Risk of bias in measurement of the outcome</p>	<p>Low risk/Some concerns/High risk</p>
	<p>5. Risk of bias in selection of the reported result</p>	<p>Low risk/Some concerns/High risk</p>
	<p>6. Overall risk of bias</p>	<p>Low risk/Some concerns/High risk</p>

Research Question 1

What are the types of parental involvement interventions used to increase academic and educational-related outcomes in secondary school students?

Author(s)	Type of Parental Involvement Intervention	Delivery Method and Dosage	Description of Intervention
Castleman & Page (2017).	Text-messaging campaign (in partnership with uAspire).	Texts delivered to students and parents by uAspire advisors. 14 messages over 3 months.	Students and parents received personalised messages to remind them of the tasks required to matriculate in college.
Kraft & Rogers (2015).	Teacher-to-parent communication intervention	Phone calls or texts delivered weekly to parents by teachers or researchers for 5 weeks.	Positive messages group: Messages stated what the student had done well and should continue doing. Improvement messages group: Messages stated what students needed to improve upon.
Kraft & Dougherty (2013).	Teacher-Family communication intervention.	Phone calls and texts delivered daily to parents by school teachers over 5 days.	Phone calls home discussed student's academic progress; classroom behaviour; upcoming homework; areas for improvement. Text messages stated what the student had done well at; what they could do better at; provided encouragement and affirmation.
Chiu (2014).	Cloud-Based Student, Teacher, and Parent Platform (CSTPP).	A cloud-based platform accessed by students (at home or school) and parents. Implemented over 3 months.	Students used CSTPP to choose a test subject and complete a set of multiple-choice questions. The system identified student's subject-specific weakness and provided targeted remedial education. Parents accessed parent-teacher communication logs which enabled them to review academic performance and subject-specific weaknesses.
Heddy & Sinatra (2017).	UCV (Use, Change, Value) discussion intervention with parental involvement.	Science teachers facilitated UCV discussions with students every 2 weeks over 16 weeks. School staff delivered parental training.	Students recorded their Transformative Experiences of using science concepts outside school (Use), how using the concepts changed their perception (Change), and why the concepts were useful to them (Value). Teachers facilitated UCV discussions which focussed on scaffolding TE in students. Parents received training and monthly newsletters on TE. Students discussed their experiences with science concepts with parents.
Gonzales et al. (2012).	Bridges to High School. A multi-componential family-focussed preventative intervention.	Delivered by school staff to students and parents during 9 weekly evening group sessions in school.	1. Parenting sessions (e.g. effective parenting practices; promotion of school engagement); 2. Adolescent coping sessions (e.g. coping efficacy; academic engagement); 3. Family sessions (e.g. focussed on family cohesion).
Smolkowski et al. (2017).	Positive Family Support (PFS). A three-tiered family-management intervention.	Delivered by school staff to parents and students in school. 2 or 3 years of exposure.	Primary Tier (e.g. parent screening for student's needs; positive family outreach); Secondary Tier (e.g. parental engagement protocol; e-mails & texts home); Tertiary tier (e.g. parent support sessions; parent management training).

Author(s)	Type of Parental Involvement Intervention	Design	Sample Size
Castleman & Page (2017).	Text-messaging campaign (in partnership with uAspire).	RCT. 2 Treatment groups + Control group: Student group vs. Student and parent group vs. Control group.	4754 college-intending senior high school students. 1,734 students in student only group. 1,362 students in student and parent group. 1,658 students in control group.
Kraft & Rogers (2015).	Teacher-to-parent communication intervention	RCT. 2 treatment groups + 1 control group: Positive Messages (PM) group vs. Improvement Messages (IM) group vs. Control group.	435 9 th – 12 th grade students (age 14 – 18) and their parents. 146 in positive information group. 136 in improvement information group. 153 in control group.
Kraft & Dougherty (2013).	Teacher-Family communication intervention.	Clustered (at class-level) RCT. 1 Treatment group + 1 Control group.	140 6 th grade (age 11 – 12) and 9 th grade (age 14 – 15) students and parents. 69 in treatment group + 71 in control group.
Chiu (2014).	Cloud-Based Student, Teacher, and Parent Platform (CSTPP).	Quasi-experimental non-equivalent pre-post-test-design. 2 Treatment groups + 1 Control group: Student and parent group vs. Student group vs. Control group.	72 junior high school students. 24 in CSTPP with parental participation group. 24 in CSTPP without parental participation group. 24 in control group. <i>Age and grade of students not given.</i>
Heddy & Sinatra (2017).	UCV (Use, Change, Value) discussion intervention with parental involvement.	Experimental pre-post-test-design. 1 Treatment group + 1 Comparison group: UCV with parental involvement vs. UCV with no parents.	89 7 th grade (age 12 – 13) and 10 th grade (age 15 – 16) science students and parents. <i>Number of students in each grade and condition not specified.</i>
Gonzales et al. (2012).	Bridges to High School. A multi-componential family-focussed preventative intervention.	RCT. 1 Treatment group + 1 Control group.	516 7 th grade (age 12 – 13 years) students and parents. 338 students in intervention group. 178 in control group.
Smolkowski et al. (2017).	Positive Family Support (PFS). A three-tiered family-management intervention.	RCT. 1 Treatment group + 1 Delayed control group.	12912 students and their parents. Cohort 1: 6921 6 th grade students (age 11 – 12). Cohort 2: 5991 7 th grade students (age 12 – 13). Cohorts combined: 6457 students in PFS intervention. 6455 students in delayed control.

Research Question 2

How effective are parental involvement interventions in improving academic and educational-related outcomes in secondary school students?

Author(s)	Type of Parental Involvement Intervention	Academic/Educational Outcomes Targeted	Results
Castleman & Page (2017).	Text-messaging campaign: aimed at students vs. aimed at students and parents vs. control.	1. Overall college enrolment. 2. Whether students enrolled in 2-year or 4-year institution.	1. Overall enrolment was significantly higher post-intervention for pooled treatment groups, but not significantly higher for individual treatment groups, compared to control. 2. No significant differences in enrolment rates in 2-year or 4-year institutions at post-test between any of the groups. No Effect Sizes reported.
Kraft & Rogers (2015).	Teacher-to-parent phone communication (call/text intervention): Positive Messages (PM) vs. Improvement Messages (IM) vs. control.	1. Course credit. 2. Student attendance. 3. Teacher assessment of student effort. 4. Student self-assessment of effort.	1. & 2. Course credits and student attendance significantly higher at post-test for IM group. 3. Teacher's assessment of student effort was significantly lower at post-test for IM group. 4. Student's self-assessment of effort was significantly lower for both treatment groups at post-test compared to control. No Effect Sizes reported.
Kraft & Dougherty (2013).	Teacher-Family communication (phone call and text) intervention vs. control.	1. Homework completion. 2. Student attention in class. 3. Student class participation	1. & 2. No significant differences between groups at post-test on Homework completion or Student attention in class. 3. Student participation in class was significantly higher for treatment group at post-test. No Effect Sizes reported.
Chiu (2014).	Cloud-Based Student, Teacher, and Parent Platform aimed at students vs. students and parents vs. control.	Attitudes to learning English.	No significant gains in Attitudes to Learning English for any group. No Effect Sizes reported.
Heddy & Sinatra (2017).	UCV discussion intervention with parental involvement vs. UCV with no parents.	1. Transformative Experiences. 2a) Situational and 2b) Individual interest in STEM.	1. TE scores were significantly higher for the treatment group at post-test; $\eta^2 = .05$. 2a) Situational interest scores were significantly higher for the treatment group at post-test; $\eta^2 = .11$. 2b) Individual interest scores were significantly higher for the treatment group at post-test; $\eta^2 = .12$.
Gonzales et al. (2012).	Bridges to High School. A multi-componential family-focussed preventative intervention vs. control.	Grade point average.	Intervention group students with low baseline GPA's had near-significantly higher GPA's at post-test than the control group; $d = 2.97$.
Smolkowski et al. (2017).	Positive Family Support (PFS). A three-tiered family-management intervention vs. control.	1. Student self-assessment of School participation. 2. Parent assessment of School success. 3. a) Maths scores; b) Reading scores; c) School absenteeism.	No significant differences between groups at post-test for any outcome. 1. Student self-assessment of School participation; $g = -.01$ 2. Parent assessment of School success; $g = .00$ 3. a) Maths scores; $g = -.02$ 3. b) Reading scores; $g = .03$ 3. c) School absenteeism; $g = .02$

Author(s)	Type of Parental Involvement Intervention	Risk of Bias (Quality) Assessment			
		<i>Low</i>	<i>Some Concerns</i>	<i>High</i>	Overall Risk of Bias
Castleman & Page (2017).	Text-messaging campaign: aimed at students vs. aimed at students and parents vs. control.	Bias due to deviations from intended interventions. Bias due to missing outcome data (Outcomes 1 and 2). Bias in measurement of the outcome (Outcomes 1 and 2).	Bias in selection of the reported result (Outcomes 1 and 2).	Bias arising from the randomisation process.	<i>High</i>
Kraft & Rogers (2015).	Teacher-to-parent phone communication (call/text intervention): Positive Messages (PM) vs. Improvement Messages (IM) vs. control.	Bias due to deviations from intended interventions. Bias due to missing outcome data (Outcomes 1, 2, 3, and 4). Bias in measurement of outcome (Outcomes 1, 2, and 3).	Bias arising from randomisation process. Bias in measurement of outcome (Outcome 4). Bias in selection of the reported result (Outcomes 1, 2, 3 and 4).		<i>Some concerns</i>
Kraft & Dougherty (2013).	Teacher-Family communication (phone call and text) intervention vs. control.	Bias due to deviations from intended interventions. Bias due to missing outcome data (Outcome 1). Bias in the measurement of the outcome (Outcomes 1, 2 and 3).	Bias arising from the randomisation process. Bias due to missing outcome data (Outcomes 2 and 3). Bias in selection of the reported result (Outcomes 1, 2 and 3).		<i>Some concerns</i>
Gonzales et al. (2012).	Bridges to High School. A multi-componential family-focussed preventative intervention vs. control.	Bias due to deviations from intended interventions. Bias due to missing outcome data. Bias in measurement of the outcome.	Bias arising from randomisation process. Bias in selection of the reported result.		<i>Some concerns</i>
Smolkowski et al. (2017).	Positive Family Support (PFS). A three-tiered family-management intervention vs. control.	Bias due to deviations from intended interventions. Bias due to missing outcome data. Bias in measurement of the outcome (Outcomes 3a, 3b and 3c).	Bias arising from the randomisation process. Bias in measurement of the outcome (Outcomes 1 and 2). Bias in selection of the reported result.		<i>Some concerns</i>

Conclusions

1. Texts/calls home can significantly increase the number of course credits obtained, student attendance, and student participation in class.

An EEF-funded trial (Parent Engagement Project) has shown that texts to parents can significantly improve Maths outcomes in secondary school students (Unpublished).

2. UCV discussion-based interventions involving parents can significantly increase student's Transformative Experiences, and Situational and Individual interest in science subjects.

This intervention could be more rigorously evaluated via a full-scale trial.

3. The (albeit limited) evidence regarding the impact of multi-componential family-focussed interventions on academic outcomes was mixed.

The development of additional interventions in which the primary outcomes are academic outcomes, are required.

Worth noting that in multi-componential interventions, it is difficult to isolate the impact of the parental involvement component.

Implications of findings

1. The development of additional interventions targeting secondary school students and their parents are required. Where possible, the study designs should be as robust as possible (e.g. RCT's).
2. All Educational articles should report Effect Sizes in order to enable an adequate assessment of intervention impact.
3. The outcome of the RoB2 assessments suggest that there needs to be more transparency in the reporting of Educational studies which evaluate parental involvement interventions.

N.B. This may be a wide-spread issue in Education. However, in the UK there is a shift towards developing and publishing project protocols (e.g. EEF).

Applications to Character Education

1. Any of the parental involvement interventions presented could potentially be adapted to character education.
2. With the rise in technology and the fact that many teenagers (and adults?!) are constantly on their mobile phones, an intervention that incorporates texts to students and parents may be feasible.

For example, texts to students and parents with virtues definitions could *potentially improve student's virtues literacy*.

Texts reminding students and parents to complete character education home activities could increase completion rates in students, parental involvement, and ultimately character outcomes in students.

3. We would be grateful for your thoughts!

Author(s)	Type of Parental Involvement Intervention	Academic/Educational Outcomes Targeted	Measures
Castleman & Page (2017).	Text-messaging campaign: aimed at students vs. aimed at students and parents vs. control.	1. Overall college enrolment. 2. Whether students enrolled in 2-year or 4-year institution.	Enrolment data from National Student Clearinghouse.
Kraft & Rogers (2015).	Teacher-to-parent phone communication (call/text intervention): Positive Messages (PM) vs. Improvement Messages (IM) vs. control.	1. Course credit. 2. Student attendance. 3. Teacher assessment of student effort. 4. Student self-assessment of effort.	1. Binary indicator for whether students received course credit. 2. Binary indicator for whether students attended class. 3. Teacher survey. 4. Student survey.
Kraft & Dougherty (2013).	Teacher-Family communication (phone call and text) intervention vs. control.	1. Homework completion. 2. Student attention in class. 3. Student class participation	1. Class-specific homework completion records. Classroom observational protocol capturing: 2. The number of instances a teacher redirected a student's attention/behaviour and 3. The number of instances a student participated in class.
Chiu (2014).	Cloud-Based Student, Teacher, and Parent Platform aimed at students vs. students and parents vs. control.	Attitudes to learning English.	Revised version of FLAGS (Foreign Language Attitudes and Goals Survey).
Heddy & Sinatra (2017).	UCV discussion intervention with parental involvement vs. UCV with no parents.	1. Transformative Experiences. 2a) Situational and 2b) Individual interest in STEM.	1. Transformative Experiences Scale (TES) 2a) Situational Interest Survey (SIS); 2b) Individual Interest Scale (IIS).
Gonzales et al. (2012).	Bridges to High School. A multi-componential family-focussed preventative intervention vs. control.	Grade point average.	Average grade over four compulsory subjects.
Smolkowski et al. (2017).	Positive Family Support (PFS). A three-tiered family-management intervention vs. control.	1. Student self-assessment of School participation. 2. Parent assessment of School success. 3. a) Maths scores; b) Reading scores; c) School absenteeism.	1. Bespoke items measuring student's self-assessment of School participation. 2. Secondary School Readiness Inventory. 3. State data on a) Maths scores; b) Reading scores; c) absenteeism rates.



Case study schools

- Very few recent qualitative studies have explored parent-practitioner partnerships at secondary level in an English context (e.g. Bilton et al., 2018; Fretwell et al., 2018; Goodall, 2018b; Wallace, 2017; Passey, 2011; Selwyn et al., 2011; Skaliotis, 2010).
- Absent from the research are the studies which would link parental engagement and Character education in secondary level in England (except for: Berkowitz and Bier, 2005).
- Parental involvement in secondary education is challenging and fragile (Costa and Faria, 2017; Antonopoulou et al., 2011) and decreases throughout schooling (Goodall, 2013; Spera, 2005; Hornby, 2011; Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005; Hill et al., 2004).

Potential reasons:

- negotiating adolescence (Goodall, 2013; Hornby, 2011; Hill and Tyson, 2009; Harris and Goodall, 2008; 2007),
- the age of children (Hornby, 2011, p.16),
- Low parental confidence with the learning material (Chen, 2008),
- a lack of initiative from schools (Hornby, 2011).

Research question

The aim: to consider effective strategies for fostering parent-practitioner partnerships in the teaching of secondary education and their application to character education.

1. What are the effective strategies for fostering parent-practitioner partnerships in the delivery of secondary education?
2. To what extent could these strategies be applied to the teaching of Character Education?

Research approach

Qualitative multiple case study with three embedded cases (Yin, 2014).

Case selection and recruitment

Purposive sampling (Stake, 2005): criterion and convenience sampling

Selection criteria were identified in the project board meeting comprising:

1. Schools which have developed excellent parent-teacher partnerships. Preferably where there is evidence of sustained engagement;
2. Secondary level;
3. Any type of school is acceptable;
4. Geographical limitation (within 2-hour train).

Methods for identifying schools:

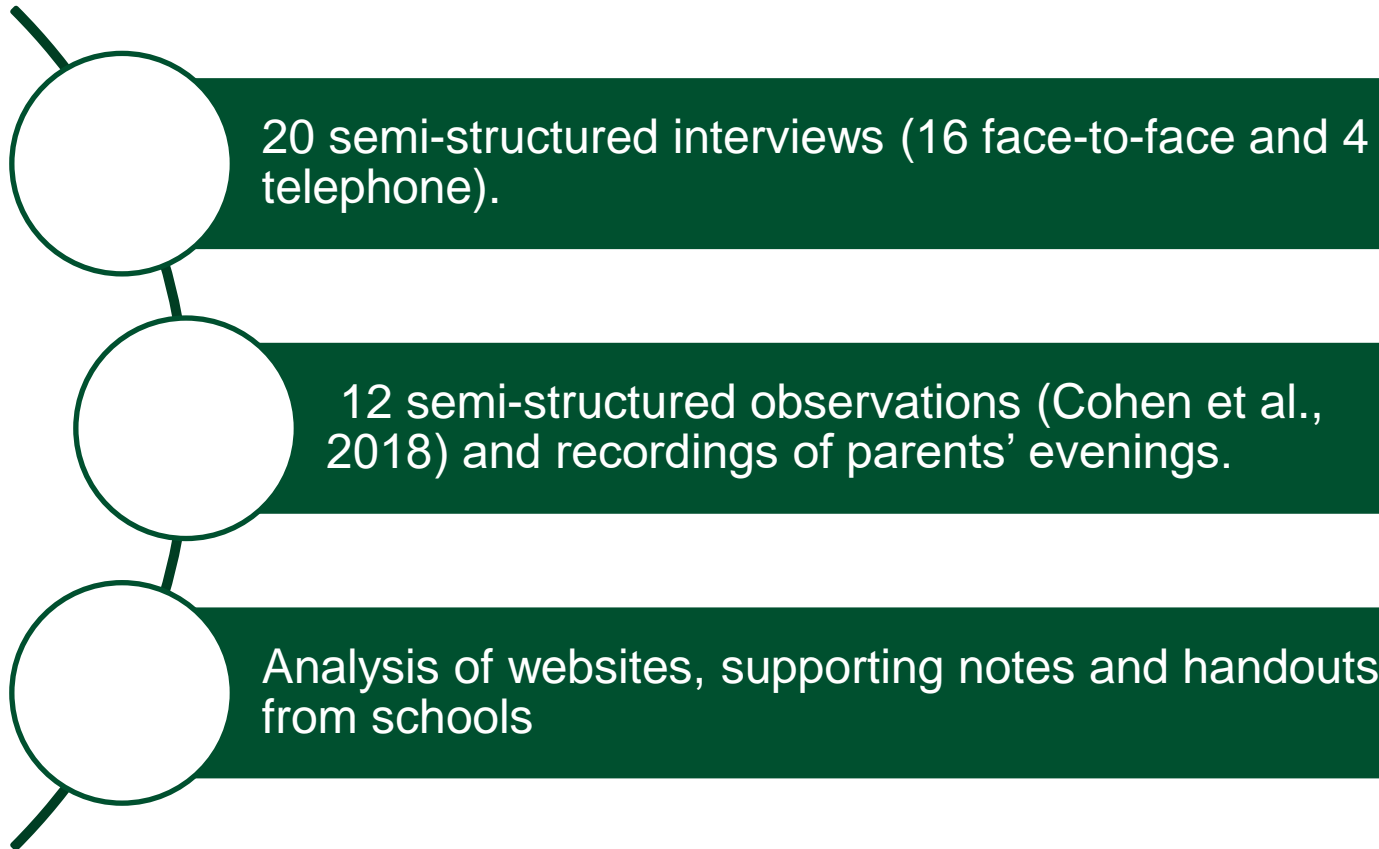
1. Website search;
2. Examination of Parent Survey section of OFSTED reports;
3. Snowballing strategy (Seidman, 2013; Dörnyei, 2007).

Cases

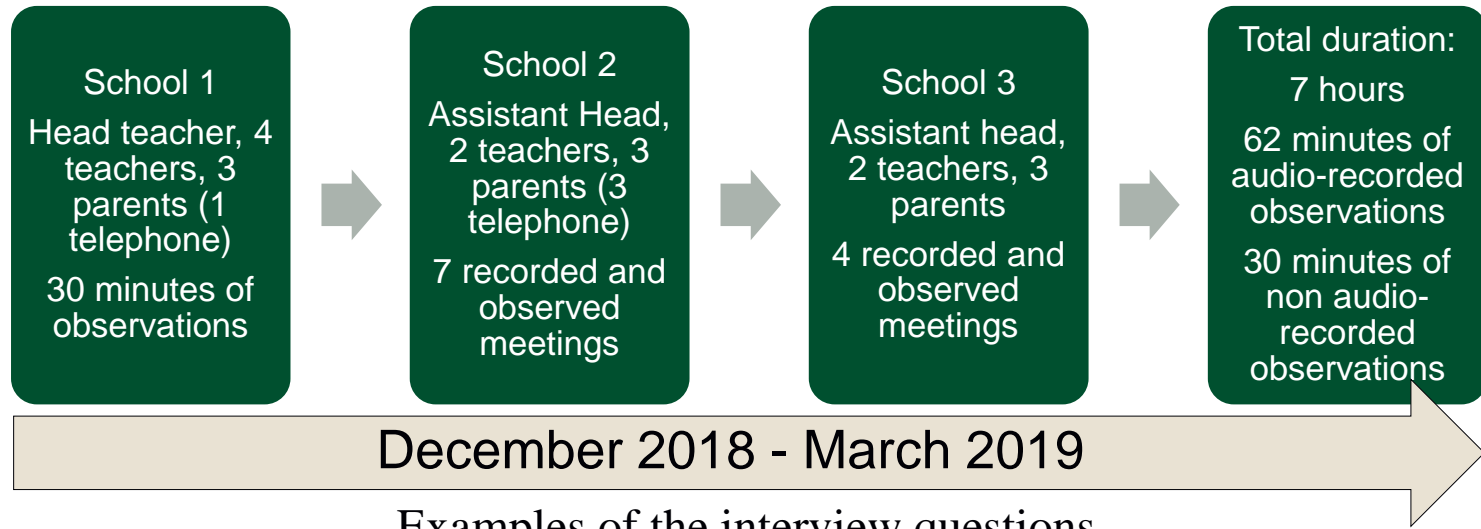
Case study	Type of school	Location	OFSTED	N of students
School 1	Secondary Academy	North London	Outstanding	1221
School 2	Secondary Community	North East England	Outstanding	1601
School 3	Secondary Academy	East Midlands	Outstanding	1205



Methods of data collection



Data collection timeline



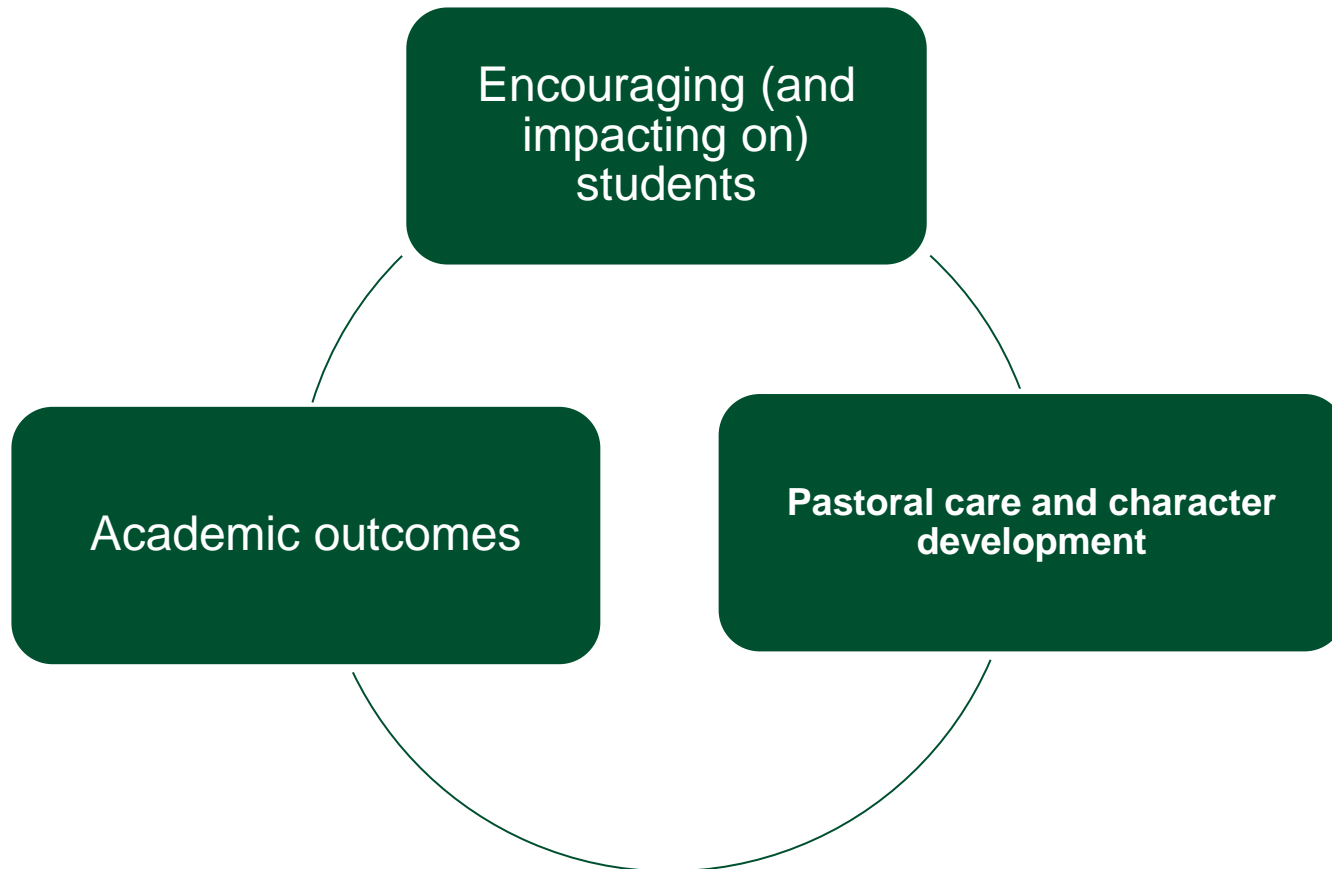
Examples of the interview questions

1. Could you describe the parent-teacher partnership?
2. What are, in your view, the best elements of the partnership?
3. What do you think are the benefits of the partnership?
4. Are there any areas of the partnership that could be improved on?
5. Is there a national or local policy that you use as a guidance in developing and sustaining the communication between parents and teachers?
 - a. If no, how did you generate your ideas and strategies for fostering such an excellent partnership?
 - b. If yes, what are the policy's characteristics?

Themes

- Aims of parent-practitioner partnerships
- What makes effective partnerships?
- Areas of improvement
- Forms of parental engagement

Theme: Aims of parent-practitioner partnerships



Theme: Aims of parent-practitioner partnerships

Encouraging (and impacting on) students

Instead of the two-way communication (Epstein, 2011)

The three-way partnerships (parent-teacher-student)

Making students ‘informed about how to achieve well’

(Interview with the head-teacher, 1H, January, 2019).

‘With them [students] being there [at the parents’ evenings] it helps to build up a better three-way communication path’

(Interview with a teacher, 2T1, December, 2018)

Parents will ‘encourage the child a bit more ... after parents’ evening’

(Interview with a parent, 2P2, January, 2019).

Theme: What makes effective partnerships?

‘It isn't just about information sharing. It's about engagement in something productive as a partnership’

‘Even if you run an event and only 10 people turn up, it's still valuable and I've spent a lot of the last four years reassuring people that their small *audiences doesn't mean it's a failure*, it's about providing something for those people that do come and if we change one life that way, then it will have an *impact.*’

(Interview with the head-teacher, 1H, January, 2019)

‘True partnership’/‘Parents as equal partners’ (Goodall, 2018a, p.611)

Theme: What makes effective partnerships?

Ease of access and contact: ‘Our doors are never closed’

‘They can come in the reception. If there is an issue they would see somebody. Somebody will be available to see them. There’s always somebody that they could approach’

(Interview with a teacher, 1T2, January, 2019)

- Availability of teachers’ emails online
- Opportunities for contact though mobile apps:

‘I don’t always think that that’s necessarily a good sign if a parent wants to get in touch with a subject teacher but they have to go through a head of year or they have to go through a head of department. So I think that should be more transparent. Even it’s not through email, even if it’s through a mobile application or a specialist website.’

(Interview with a parent, January, 2019)

Theme: What makes effective partnerships?

‘Community partnership’
‘Community is a crucial component’

‘School family’ (Epstein, 2011, p.36; Pavlakis, 2018)

‘At the end of the day, we’re serving that community and we want the best for them and those students. And then it doesn’t really matter which school they attend.’

(Interview with a teacher, 3T1, January, 2019)

‘A second home rather than just a school.’ (Interview with a teacher, January, 2019).

‘We find out more about what’s going on in their communities, in their houses, rather than just assert “this is what the school expects” and thus, schools become ‘places that they can just come to.’

(Interview with the head-teacher, 1H, January, 2019).

Theme: What makes effective partnerships?

Primary liaison: ‘Start well before secondary school’

‘We start well before secondary school, we have primary liaison, I have a key member of my team, his job is to work with primary schools’

‘Once the parents know their child will be coming here in Year 7, we have lots of contact with parents, they all come in and register and we look through their paperwork about their children and talk with them about their children, and then we have a transition evening where we have a specialist in parental and child interaction, come and talk to them about how they can support their children through the transition.’

(Interview with the head-teacher, January, 2019)

Theme: What makes effective partnerships?

Parental voice: ‘parents brainstorm ideas’

Epstein’s (2011) decision-making component

‘dialogic partnership’ or ‘authentic dialog’ (Goodall, 2018a, pp.614-617)

‘We have a Parent Voice, so parents come into school in the evening and they share with us ideas about the school’

(Interview with the Assistant Head, 3AH, January, 2019)

Afro-Caribbean evening:

‘The school coming together to find out ways of pushing and encouraging the children, it’s great for the black children but all kids in general, it’s just a fantastic thing that’s there, it’s a great booster, self-confidence booster and once again, showing that where you go, you’re not just going to a meat grinder, you do what you need to do and get chucked out, the people that are around you actually care and that’s one of the major reasons why we really do like this school.’

(Interview with parents, January, 2019).

Theme: What makes effective partnerships?

Positive contact – ‘It’s absolutely fantastic’

A way of supporting parents (Olmstead, 2013)

‘Parents always think like when you ring, it’s always, it’s a negative call. They don’t think that it’s a positive call.’

(Interview with a teacher, 1T2, January, 2019).

‘The best thing is being able to contact home and tell them something positive.’
Parents ‘take great pride in that.’

(Interview with a teacher, 3T1, January, 2019)

‘As much as you might get messages at home saying, “Your child has a detention,” you also get messages home saying, “Your child has received a team award.” So you get the good as well as the bad. My child knows if she gets a detention then there’s going to be a sanction at home as well, but if she gets a reward, even better, then there’s a reward’

(Interview with a parent, 3P2 January, 2019).

Theme: Areas of improvement

‘There’s pretty much everything missing [in the policy] and there is no national forum for school staff and parents to communicate with one another.’

‘It would be nice if government could identify trailblazer schools in terms of their communication with parents and kind of try and extract from that, some key messages.’

(Interview with the head-teacher, January, 2019)

‘You know more recently, Tom Bennett released papers about the DfE work that he did, about pastoral care and how essential it was to have a good relationship with parents and communicate with them but nowhere does it say that these are really good ways to communicate with them or these are things that we should be doing.’

(Interview with a teacher, January, 2019).

Theme: Areas of improvement

Parental incentive

‘I just don’t have the time’

(Interview with a parent, 2P3, March, 2019)

‘I think the policy about how parents communicate to you needs to be clearer. The other way around.’

(Interview with the Assistant Head, January, 2019)

‘It’s not solely on the school, parents have a duty to respond to the school when they are called, a duty to communicate with school, it’s no excuse if you don’t speak the language, we will provide an interpreter for you’

(Interview with a teacher, 1T1, January, 2019)

Theme: Areas of improvement

Parental incentive (Cont.)

‘Often we find that they’ve not had a good experience of school themselves which is making them very reluctant to come in and talk to teachers.’

(Interview with a teacher, January, 2019)

‘We spend two weeks, myself included, ringing three parents. Only three. We need to ring them, and ring them, and ring them. You need to go to their home. You need to send letters, whatever you need to do, but we need to get these parents in. We need to engage them. So that’s something that we’re doing that’s new. We can’t just ignore them forever and they can’t ignore us forever.’

(Interview with the Assistant Head, January, 2019)

Theme: Areas of improvement

Informal communication without criticism

‘dialogic partnership’ (Goodall, 2018a, p.614)

‘More opportunities for face to face communication with the pastoral side’

(Interview with a parent, 3P3, January, 2019)

‘A kind of social event where children and parents come together with teachers you know, socialising once a year or twice a year and make strong links between the children as well as parents as well as teachers.’

(Interview with a parent, 1P3, February, 2019)

‘Open drop-in sessions, maybe sometimes advertised, where you really speak to the school quite informally, that might be quite nice, certainly seeing the subject, say for English, you could say on a Monday between four o’clock and five o’clock, you can pop in and ask any questions about English, and then you can pop up to the school yourself and ask and then it’d be a very informal session’

(Interview with a parent, 2P2, January, 2019)

Application to Character Education

As parents appreciate a ‘joined up’ approach to academic work, shared values and vocabulary between home and school is important.

Some teachers spoke about ‘genuine’ partnership with two way conversation. In the same way schools should listen to communities to understand the values and virtues that are important to those communities.

Teachers can model the characteristics they believe are important in their relationship-building activities (those often used to engender trust).

Conclusion and Recommendations

The case study schools in the research employed a range of strategies underpinned by the whole school ethos and belief in the ‘community partnership’ as a ‘true partnership’ (Goodall, 2018a, p.611), which engages parents but also students in a ‘three-way-partnership’ through giving them voice and making the schools welcoming places.

1. There should be a national forum for school staff and parents to communicate with and share innovative practice with one another.
2. There should be some form of civic recognition for the schools that have the most innovative curriculum regarding partnerships with parents and the key messages of best practice should be extracted from them.
3. Schools would like to be given more specific advice on ‘what works’ in communication with parents.

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Theme: What makes effective partnerships?

Parent as an extension of the school's arm

“Outside- and inside-of-school” aspects which influence achievement (Milner, 2013, p.23)
‘Learning in the home’

(Goodall, 2018b; 2013, p.139; Goodall and Montgomery; 2014; Harris and Goodall, 2008)

‘You have to start from home, if your child is good, that teacher will be good.’

(Interview with a parent, 1P3, February, 2019)

What is your role in the partnership?

‘To make sure that they’re [children] all doing the right thing, they're all ticking the right boxes in order for our children to achieve the best.’

(Interview with a parent, 1P3, February, 2019).