

Teachers as Research Creators

A Conference Celebrating the Education Research Schools Partnership.

ERSP Newsletter Autumn 2024



Our Inaugural Conference

Although perhaps something of a distant memory now the summer marked the first Education Research Schools Partnership (ERSP) conference. The conference took place on the 21st of June and attracted 76 attendees from a wide range of educational sectors, including schools, colleges, local authorities and Canterbury Christ Church University. The full-day conference highlighted the essential role teachers play in educational research, providing a valuable forum for presentations and dynamic roundtable discussions led by teacher researchers from Borden Grammar School, Kent College, Veritas Multi Academy Trust, St Claudine's Catholic School for Girls, Blean Primary School, and The John Wallis Academy.

A New Model for Collaboration

The ERSP is a collaborative initiative between Kent schools and Canterbury Christ Church University.

The partnership is driven by the commitment to foster research-rich environments within schools. The central ethos of the ERSP initiative is the belief that true partnerships between schools and universities can pave the way for a new era of collaboration between the two sectors. The partnership encourages teachers to be research literate and engaged, providing them with the tools and opportunities to engage in scholarly inquiry and professional learning.

Exploring Opportunities and Challenges

The conference's agenda focused heavily on sharing the experiences of schools actively engaged in research, exploring both the possibilities and barriers to conducting research and adopting research-informed approaches in schools. Attendees were particularly interested in how schools could develop research environments that place teachers at the heart of educational innovation.

Building Stronger School-University Relationships

Keynote speakers included Graham Chisnell 'Irresistible learning – Embedding a culture of research in schools' and Dr Louise McGowan who spoke about the challenges and successes in creating a research school.

Exploring the potential for schools and universities to strengthen research-driven partnerships, speakers and contributors during the roundtable discussions examined how fostering these collaborations could contribute to creating an education system that promotes continuous learning and richer professional development for teachers.

The roundtable discussions also provided valuable opportunities for teachers engaged in research to present their approaches and initial findings to other teachers and the wider academic community. Some conversations focused on identifying the necessary tools and infrastructure to support teachers in effectively conducting, applying, and disseminating their research.



Dr Louise McGowan, Headteacher – St Claudine's Catholic School for Girls.



Round table discussion led by Dr John-Paul Riordan (CCCU) and Dr Kerry Jordan-Daus (Veritas Multi Academy Trust)

ERSP Research Accreditation

During the conference, Professor Lynn Revell presented the future vision for the Education Research Schools Partnership. She outlined the formalisation of the collaboration between CCCU and schools with the introduction of an official accreditation for schools engaged in educational research and part of the ERSP project. The first round of accreditations is expected to be awarded by late 2025.

ERSP PhD Scholarship

Professor Revell also introduced an exciting opportunity for educators wishing to expand their research expertise: a fully funded scholarship for full-time doctoral studies. Many enthusiastic applicants, eager to advance their educational research skills and secure funding for their doctoral journey, submitted their research proposals over the summer. After interviews with shortlisted candidates in September, we are delighted to announce that Lydia Ahern has been awarded the scholarship. Lydia's research proposal is focused on exploring teachers' perceptions of educational research, with a particular focus on teachers being critical consumers of research-informed practice.

Finally, a heartfelt thank you to everyone who played a part in organising and contributing to the ERSP conference. Special thanks go to Lorna Hughes and Finley Lawson (CCCU), Jennifer Webber (St Lawrence College), and Clare Appleton (Kent College) for their key roles in organising the event and ensuring it was a fantastic day for all involved. As Lorna has now left CCCU, we would also like to take this opportunity to wish her all the best in her future endeavours. Her contributions to the ERSP project and many other initiatives at CCCU will be greatly missed.



Jennifer Webber, Lorna Hughes and Clare Appleton.