Raising Achievement of Black Caribbean pupils: Good practice for developing leadership capacity and workforce diversity in schools
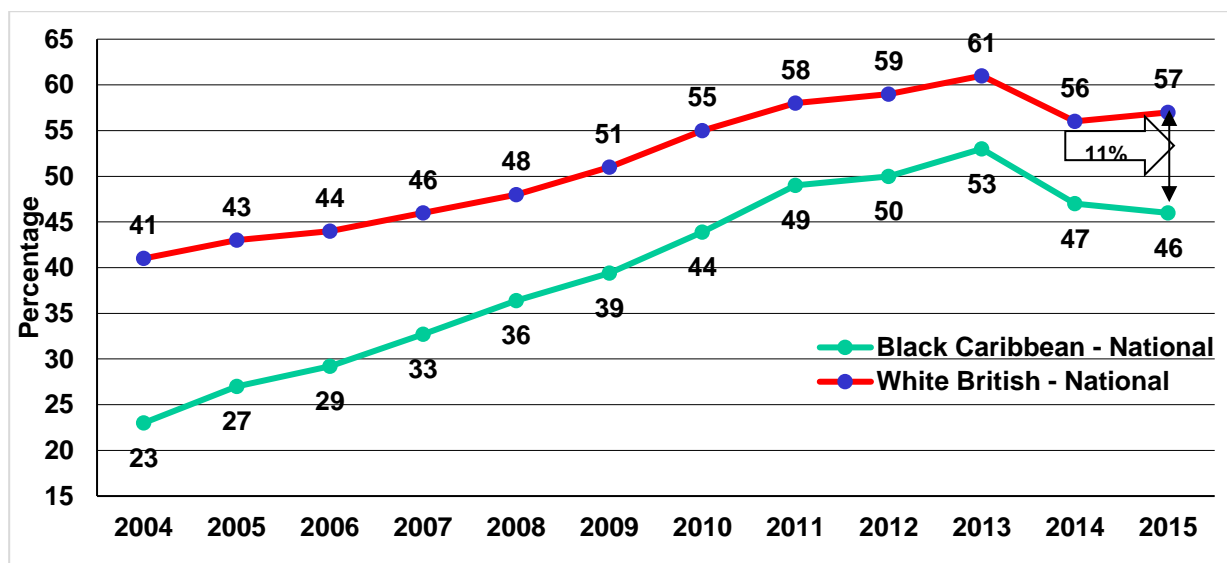
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Abstract

This research aims to examine the success factors behind raising the achievement of Black Caribbean pupils with focus on leadership and work force diversity factors. Drawing on case studies and focus group methodological approaches of research the study findings identified a number of success factors including the strong leadership of the Headteacher, effective use of a diverse multi-ethnic workforce, valuing and celebrating cultural diversity, providing an inclusive curriculum that adds to gives pride in being Black Caribbean. What is particularly special about the case study schools is that the leadership of the schools are strong on equality and diversity issues and there are also plenty of opportunities for teachers and school staff to celebrate cultural diversity and reflect on the achievement of Black Caribbean pupils. Overall the study suggests that Black Caribbean pupils do well in multicultural schools with a strong school leadership on diversity and equality issues. Policy implications for developing leadership capacity and workforce diversity are discussed in the final section.

Key words: Diversity, Leadership, Black Caribbean, Multicultural schools, Raising Achievement

1:   Introduction

This research aims to examine the success factors behind raising achievement of Black Caribbean heritage pupils in schools. For some considerable time there has been a policy concern about the educational achievement of Black Caribbean pupils in schools (Hague and Ellitt 2017, Cabinet Office 2017, Tomlinson 2008, Strand 2012, Demie and Mclean 2017, EHRC 2015). As a result there has been much research into the underachievement of Black pupils in British schools the last sixty years and yet little research has been carried out into what work in raising achievement of Black Caribbean pupils in schools. The previous research suggests that they are underachieving and this became a hot issue with the education system (see Demie and Christabel 2017, Cabinet Office 2017, EHRC 2015, Rhamie2014, Strand 2012, Gillborn and Mirza, 2000). Each of these studies show considerable underachievement of Black Caribbean pupils relative to the White British pupils who form the largest ethnic group in schools across England.

Figure 1. Black Caribbean Pupils GCSE performance (% 5+ A*C GCSE inc. English and Maths) 2014-2015

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Similarly, the most recent national data shows that Black Caribbean pupils were the least successful group at GCSE, with only 47% achieving 5 or more GCSEs at A* to C including English and maths. This compares unfavourably with results for other ethnic groups, with 75% of Chinese, 73% of Indian, 61% of Bangladeshi, 57% of Black African, 56% of White British and 51% of Pakistani pupils achieving this standard (DfE 2015). Recent Race Audit report by Cabinet office also confirms that *"although pupils in the Black ethnic group made more progress overall than the national average, Black Caribbean pupils fell behind"* (Cabinet Office 2017:9).   Substantial gaps in attainment remain between ethnic minority and White pupils across England and Black Caribbean pupils have the lowest attainment (EHRC 2016). It is of a huge concern that Black Caribbean pupils are persistently low achieving in comparison to the other ethnic groups and this underachievement is an issue that needs to be tackled by policy makers and schools. (Figure 1)

There are many reasons for underachievement, but previous studies attribute the roots of Black Caribbean underachievement to a number of factors including:

> *'Headteachers' poor leadership on equality issues, stereotyping, teachers' low expectations, curriculum relevance and barriers, lack of diversity in the work force, lack of targeted support, exclusions issues and racial equality, lack of parental aspiration and low expectations; absent fathers and single parent families, socio-economic disadvantage and effect of poverty, poor housing, institutional racism as the main factors.' (Demie 2017:103)*

This recent research reinforces some of the previous studies findings which identified similar reasons for underachievement of Black Caribbean pupils in schools (see Strand 2012; Tilley et al 2006, Tomlinson 2008, Demie and Christabel 2017). All of these factors contributed to low attainment by Black Caribbean pupils.

However, the majority of research until recently has mainly focused on the reasons for underachievement and this '*has led black pupils being stereotyped as academic failure'* (Rhamie 2007:47). Little research has been undertaken into the factors which contribute to the educational success of Black Caribbean pupils in schools. Such research are useful for policy makers and school improvement practitioners to challenge underachievement issues in schools. A number of researchers have now begun to address this issue, by examining schools that are successful in raising the achievement of all groups of pupils to see what works in narrowing the achievement gap (see Demie 2005, OFSTED 2002, 2009). The findings of these studies suggest that that strong leadership, effective teaching and learning, use of data, an inclusive curriculum, celebration of cultural diversity and targeted interventions are key driving factors in successful schools. This findings are also further supported by international evidence which suggests similar factors drive school improvement for all groups of pupils in schools (see Ofsted 2009; Muijis et al 2004). Headteachers and high quality teachers have been credited, in both the international and national studies, for the significant contribution to the achievement of all groups of pupils in schools. Past research has also shown that a diverse workforce, reflecting the school population, is an important success factor for raising achievement of ethnic minority children in multicultural schools (Demie 2005; Ofsted 2002). It is evident that in schools lacking a diverse workforce and without a multicultural curriculum, children may be more likely to experience racism, stereotyping and low expectations which is likely to have an effect on Black Caribbean pupils' achievement (Demie and Mclean 2017; EHRC 2015; Hague and Ellitt 2017; Cabinet Office 2017). More importantly it was argued in these studies the way schools adopted

the above success factors can have a significant impact on Black Caribbean pupils attainment and progress.

Yet despite the national and international evidence showing the need for headteachers with strong leadership who promote equality issues, it will be argued here that few schools in England have a diversified workforce that reflects the community they serve. Furthermore, the absence of good research evidence at a national level to identify factors that influence success and failure places serious constraints on addressing the issues of underachievement and effectively targeting policy.

2.   Research aims and methods

This research is a qualitative and quantitative study of schools in an inner London Local Authority (LA) and aims to explore how providing strong leadership and multi-ethnic work force helps in raising achievement of Black Caribbean pupils in multicultural schools. A number of previous research looked into the success factors in raising achievement (Mongon and Chapman 2008; Ofsted 2002, 2009; Demie 2005). However, we would argue that the leadership and workforce factors that reflects the school population is still an issue in the English school system today and needs further investigation using recent empirical evidence.

Three overarching research questions guided this research:

- What does the data tell us about raising achievement?
- What are the success factors in raising achievement?
- What are the implications for policy and practice?

It provides evidence based answers to these questions, drawing on the practice, experience and ambitions of schools in challenging circumstances. The case study schools in this research defy the association of poverty and low outcomes and they enable children from such families to succeed against the odds. They refuse to use a child's background as an excuse for underachievement. Overall the case study schools' data shows that from their generally low starting points, pupils reach exceptionally high standards (see table 2).

The case study Local Authority LA is the second largest inner London Borough with an official population of 318,000 (ONS 2014 Mid-Year population estimate). The latest index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) in 2015 places the LA as the 8th most deprived borough in London and 22nd most deprived district in England. As of January 2017, the LA comprised 93 schools with a total of 38,027 pupils. This is broken down into 5 nursery, 61 primary, 20 secondary, 5 special and 2 pupil referral units.

The LA is also one of the most ethnically and linguistically diverse boroughs in Britain. African pupils form the largest ethnic group with 24%, followed by Black Caribbean 17%, White British 15%, White Other 8%, Mixed Race 13% and Portuguese 6%. Overall, 85% of pupils in the Local Authority schools belong to Black and other ethnic minority communities. Across the Authority over 150 languages are spoken, reflecting the different cultures, experiences and identities of the members of the community. The latest disadvantage data also shows that 34% of the pupils are eligible for free school meals.

The methodological approach of the research comprised data analysis, case studies of selected schools, class room observations and focus group interviews. Details of the methodological framework are summarised below:

Data analysis: The study drew analysis of a range of data, which was collected centrally as part of statutory returns, including KS2 and GCSE attainment data to examine the achievement of Black Caribbean pupils in the case study schools including changes over time. Table 2 below shows that the selected case study schools serve some of the most deprived wards in the Local Authority (LA) and the proportion of pupils taking up free school meals is about 26%, ranging from 7% to 50%. There is a high proportion of mobile pupils. Over half the pupils are from homes where English is not the first language. Table 2 also shows that the attainment of all pupils has been exceptionally high. Of the pupils in the case study schools 88% achieved level 4 or above at KS2 in 2015. From 2008 the case study schools have had consistently high results. The improvement rate of pupils in the case study schools is much higher than the national and LA average. Between 2008 and 2015, pupils in the case study schools improved from 64% to 88%. This is an improvement rate of 24 percentage points compared to 12 points nationally.

Table 1. KS2 Attainment in the Case Study Schools (Level 4 or above*)

	2008	2015	Improvement
Case Study Schools-Black Caribbean	64%	88%	+24
Black Caribbean -LA	62%	77%	+15
Black Caribbean- National	63%	75%	+12
All pupils- National	73%	80%	+7
White British	74%	81%	+7

*2008 data is % of pupils getting level 4 + in both English and maths and 2015 is % of pupils getting level 4+ in reading, writing and maths (RWM)

At GCSE, 61% of the Black Caribbean pupils in the case study school achieved 5+ A*-C including English and maths, compared to 47% of Black Caribbean pupils nationally. Results in the case study schools have shown a strong upward trend since 2010. Currently, Black Caribbean pupils in the case study schools outperformed their peers nationally by 14 percentage points, while the gap between them and all pupils in the case study schools was only four percentage points. (See Table 2 and Figure 1)

Table 2. Background to the selected case study schools

Case Study Schools-Primary	Background				KS2 Level 4+ RWM	
	Ethnic Minorities (BME)	% Black Caribbean Pupils	Free School Meals	English as an Additional Language	Black Caribbean	All Pupils
School A	91%	25%	28%	40%	100%	93%
School B	90%	23%	28%	49%	78%	85%
School C	89%	25%	23%	49%	89%	93%
School JE	87%	21%	26%	41%	86%	85%
School SJ	67%	17%	11%	20%	78%	80%
School SS	57%	13%	7%	25%	80%	90%
School Y	72%	11%	21%	42%	88%	93%
School V	94%	13%	50%	70%	100%	83%
Case Study	**85%**	**15%**	**26%**	**49%**	**84**%	**88%**
LA	**84%**	**14%**	**25%**	**52%**	**77**%	**86%**

					5+ A*-C including English and Maths	
National	**31%**	**1%**	**17%**	**19%**	**75%**	**80%**

Case Study Schools- Secondary	Background				5+ A*-C including English and Maths	
	Ethnic Minorities (BME)	% Black Caribbean	Free School Meals	English as an Additional Language	Black Caribbean	All Pupils
School G	81%	14%	17%	27%	50%	62%
School D	78%	23%	32%	33%	49%	51%
School E	87%	24%	24%	42%	63%	57%
School I	97%	32%	23%	45%	69%	68%
School O	96%	19%	32%	65%	55%	57%
School RE	96%	13%	13%	58%	53%	80%
Case Study	**88%**	**20%**	**22%**	**44%**	**61%**	**65%**
LA	**88%**	**18%**	**26%**	**38%**	**48%**	**56%**
National	**28%**	**1%**	**14%**	**15%**	**47%**	**53%**

Source: DfE School Census and School Performance Table 2008-2015

Case studies: A detailed case study research was carried out to study the strategies used to raise achievement and narrow the gap. A structured questionnaire was used to interview headteachers, teachers, parents and pupils to gather evidence on what worked in raising the achievement of Black Caribbean pupils. We explored during the case study the factors such quality of leadership, school curriculum, the quality of teaching and learning, and the diversity of the school workforce, how the school monitors pupils performance, school links with parents and the community, pupils' views about the school. A further focus groups were also carried out in the case study schools to ascertain the views of pupils, parents and governors on strategies that worked to raise achievement. Eight primary and six secondary schools were selected for case studies. This represents about 17% of the LA primary and secondary schools. The key criteria for the selection of schools were those with a very high proportion of pupils with Black Caribbean heritage, good KS2 and GCSE results, and outstanding grade in Ofsted inspection reports on leadership. The schools were visited at least twice between October 2015 and December 2016 for purpose of this research. A total of 60 people participated in the interviews and the focus groups. This include 15 Headteachers, 10 Deputy Headteachers, 15 teachers, 20 other school staff parents, pupils and governors. The majority of staff interviewed were from White backgrounds.

In all the case study schools we visited, we have carried out classroom observations with the main aim of developing understanding of how schools and teachers recognise and value diverse cultures/heritages and how children respond in lessons where this occurs. The classroom observations focused on teacher's interactions with Black Caribbean and minority ethnic children, and interactions between diverse groups of children. The findings which emerged from the data analysis, focus groups and case studies are given in the section that follow.

3.   Results and discussions

The above data suggests that in most instances Black Caribbean pupils in the case study schools do well when compared to the attainment of Black Caribbean pupils nationally. There are a number of reasons for the high achievement of Black Caribbean pupils in the case study schools. The research identified the following key success factors in raising achievement and narrowing the gap including: providing excellent leadership on race equality and diversity; effective teaching and learning; diversity

in the school workforce; valuing and celebrating cultural diversity, a commitment to multicultural education. These good practices are explored and discussed below:-

Excellent leadership on promoting race equality and diversity

The single factor that links all the case study schools' success in raising the achievement of Black Caribbean pupils is the excellence of their leadership. All the case study schools have outstanding leadership on Ofsted inspections criteria and our observation and interviews confirms also Headteachers have a very strong vision of the kind of school they want to lead and they have the leadership skills to create them. Universally, they focus on high standards and high achievement. They devote time and resources to staff appointments and to continuing professional development. They build strong, cohesive teams and have the confidence to delegate responsibility to others. They lead by example. A few are themselves of Black Caribbean heritage and some are church-goers, as are the families they serve. All have the gift of creating the ethos and relationships with pupils, parents and staff that have developed a real sense of community. The case study schools serve some of the most disadvantaged communities in the country, but they have worked with those communities to raise their hopes and aspirations along with the achievements of their young people (see Table 2). The leaders of these schools refuse to accept a challenging context as a barrier to success; indeed, it gives them additional motivation and purpose.

One of the strategies for successful leadership is building a vision of success and setting clear direction. For example the executive Headteacher of **School C** maintained that the school's ethos of valuing every child is one of the main reasons that Black Caribbean pupils succeed:

> *'Every child is a unique child and we meet an individual need which explains why all the children do well and Black Caribbean pupils do well. But of course, we pay attention to all groups in the school, Black Caribbean, Black African and mixed heritage.'…. We ensure that there is effective leadership and management, quality of teaching and learning, personal development and well-being. All adults have one goal in mind and that is to raise the achievement of the children together with the high aspirations for all… and the possibility of giving children the opportunity to experience things beyond the school gates, visits to places of interest and visitors to the school'… 'Our priorities are to raise the aspiration of families in our school, school improvement, Continuing Professional Development (CPD) learning from each other as well as giving children opportunities of developing their learning.'*
> ***(Executive Headteacher, School C)***

Another remarkable feature of the effective leadership of the case study schools is that the Headteacher and the deputy Headteacher of a number of case study schools have many decades experience teaching at the school or in other local schools. They consider that a detailed knowledge of and commitment to the local community is a crucial factor for a successful teaching career in London schools, as one head of school made clear:

> *'I have always lived in this area. I have been used to being in this area and having Black people around me all the time and as I have got older the number of Black people in this area has increased'… A lot of people, who teach in the school, live in the LA and have been here all their lives. I think you get a real commitment to the people who live here, I think you understand the people and the children and the parents and the ways of life, the houses and facilities. It is just something else that makes you close.' (**Head of School, School C**)*

Coming from a white working class family the head of school, describes her father's family as being 'disadvantaged'. She says that the reason why the school's Black Caribbean pupils achieve success is because the school 'expects everything of everybody', she continued:

> 'Education can offer you the world. I have grown up in this community and am part of this community. I have given 27 years to this school. I was teaching the children of the children I first taught when I came here. You don't have to fight for credibility. I now see myself as a grandparent of the children. I am moving into the matriarchal role. I feel that I am 120% invested in it. Trends come and go, but what remains the same is a heart for the community and the children.' (**Head of School, School C**)

A knowledge and understanding of the Black Caribbean community which has been strengthened through his wife's family who come from Monserrat has enabled the white Headteacher of **School D** to establish an effective rapport with pupils and parents. He explains how because he grew up in a council house, his own social and cultural mobility have been essential elements required in leading the school, which he describes as having *'a clear middle class cohort and a working class cohort'*:

> 'I am from a Council house background but I can talk about what was on Radio 4 yesterday. There are massive amounts of people who cannot have those conversations. For example my Black Caribbean wife had never heard of Abba's "Dancing Queen" until she went to University.' (**Headteacher, School D**)

The case study school leaders' views that an in-depth knowledge of the local community and the urban context is a pre-requisite for successful teaching. Lack of exposure to urban environments makes teachers very susceptible to behaviour patterns which are rooted in well-internalised but incorrect cultural notions and assumptions. For this reason, in our case study schools, the leadership's recruitment practices are thorough (although all were concerned about the lack of Black teachers entering the profession) and they are careful to induct new teachers into their schools. There is a thorough understanding of the challenges that parents and children face in the communities they serve, so they are able to find ways of engaging even the most elusive parents. The Headteacher of **School A** described some of the issues parents face:

> 'There are huge problems socially in this area, poverty, mental health, unemployment or low paid employment, poor housing.' (**School A**)

She went on to describe what the leadership are doing to support the achievement of Black Caribbean pupils who are the predominant group in the school:

> 'I have a Family Support Worker and a Parent Partnership Worker on my senior leadership team. They can talk with the parents more effectively than I can because I represent authority as a Headteacher. They do very well at building relationships with parents. Usually problems do not reach me unless it gets to the stage that the situation needs a bit more weight. For example, a Year 1 child who was quite needy and had a young mum who gets very angry because the child's jumper was lost and our Parent Partnership Worker has done wonders with this parent, she got her involved in the Christmas Fair doing hotdogs. This is because we took the time to build a relationship. If you cannot get your child to school on time we say 'what can we do to help?' So many good things in place.'

The Headteacher of this school expressed concern at the lack of Black teachers applying for posts in the LA schools, she commented:

> *'I am a white Headteacher and most of the teachers are white. We only have one black teacher but we have a mixed staff. Although I interview teachers for LA schools, I have not interviewed any black teachers and there are fewer black headteachers now in LA than there used to be.'* **(Headteacher, School A)**

The professional development of staff in this school has been one of the keys to its success as potential is recognised early leading to an opportunity to further develop knowledge and skills and contribute to the strength of the staff team:

> *'Professional development of staff brings lots of knowledge, highly trained teaching assistants, who don't just turn up at 9am and they are involved in the discussions about individual pupils. They might come to pupil progress meetings. We are up for trying anything new.'* **(Headteacher, School A)**

The success of the school's CPD is expressed in the following quote from the Family Support Worker, who is a man of Black Caribbean heritage:

> *'This school hasn't judged me on my colour, as I have been given a place on the leadership team and I am studying for a postgraduate course, despite not having a first degree. I am now a role model to our pupils. I grew up on an estate and did not have any positive role models. Children wouldn't take it seriously if they are not in a school with black role models. There is no point in saying you should be a teacher, doctor or whatever, if they do not see themselves reflected in those professions.'* **(School A)**

The case study school leaders understand the importance of inclusion, and are attuned to the local community with its ethnic diversity. They are adept at listening without judgment to those whose life experiences might have been very different to their own. They are aware that each family has its own story to tell, and they want to be heard, and they attend to all of those stories, including the ones that seem quite unfamiliar to them. This takes practice and effort which is what these leaders do effectively and wisely. There is a recognition that those who would lead need to do so with wisdom unless they inadvertently become oppressive to others. There are seeds of oppression within everyone—not because there is an intention to be exclusionary or mean-spirited but because models of oppression have been internalised by society. It is visible sometimes in the language used, in the assumptions made about others, in the way we treat those we define as different from ourselves. As new models of leadership for the 21st century emerge it is important for all school leaders to work to develop the habits of mind that will help to uproot those seeds of internalised oppression and to identify and challenge them when they see them in their staff.

A commitment to multicultural education and clear approach in tackling racism

There are many reasons why schools should challenge racism and promote race equality in schools. We know from the national statistics that the school teaching workforce is predominantly White British (see Table 3). Tackling racial issues is a challenge for many teachers due to their background and lack of understanding discrimination, racism and diversity issues. Much research has shown that black pupils are disciplined more frequently, more harshly and for less serious misbehaviour. Recent research found that there was systematic racial discrimination in the application of disciplinary and exclusion policies' (Demie and Christabel 2017). There is also evidence that 'teachers can wittingly or unwittingly affect the performance of pupils by being openly prejudiced, by being patronising or by

having unjustified low expectations of the child's abilities based on racial background. What is a major concern is that Black Caribbean pupils face low expectations in the classroom and they are disproportionately put in bottom sets and entered into less challenging exams that can have the effect of preventing these pupils from gaining the highest grades (Gillborn 2008, Demie and Christabel 2017).

> 'For example, prior to 2006 the mathematics GCSE had a three tier system; pupils entered for the higher exam were able to achieve grades A*-D. Pupils entered for the foundation tier exam could only achieve grades D-G. White students are twice as likely as black to be placed in the top maths sets. In London in two-thirds of black students were entered into the lowest tier, where the highest grade they could achieve was a D. In effect, they were marked out for failure before they even sat the paper.' (Gillborn, 2008:96)

We would argue that schools are the heart of promoting racial equality and they need to continue to actively support and engage in raising the expectations of all children and young people irrespective of their ethnic and cultural background. Despite the challenges however, there is evidence of positive work being undertaken in the case study schools and teachers and staff are committed to multiculturalism and have been effective in tackling racial equality. In particular, action to respect and celebrate diversity is informed by sophisticated analysis of data to check the participation and the achievement of individuals and groups. The schools effectively use ethnicity data to track individual performance, for teachers to review student performance, to have a reflection and good conversation on the current achievement of Black Caribbean and other minority ethnic upils. Social and ethnic profiles are well used to design interventions to ensure they address the needs of the local community they serve. Ethnicity data is used extensively for monitoring and lesson planning to inform accurate targets for individual pupils and track progress of pupils, to identify weaknesses in topics or aspects in the class as whole; to set high expectations with pupils and to challenge the expectations of pupils and parents.

A number of teachers and pupils commented:

> 'Ethnicity data is critical in understanding how Black Caribbean and different groups in my class progress and achieve. We use it effectively.' **(Teacher, School A)**

> 'I see ethnic monitoring as an effective method of raising achievement, to identify underachieving groups and prioritise our support systems.' **(Teacher, School B)**

> 'I work closely with Black Caribbean parents to ensure they know how their children are progressing in school.' **(Teacher, School C)**

> 'We believe in the incorporation of the principle of equality of opportunity in every face of our work.' **(Headteacher, School A)**

> 'Assemblies reflect different cultures… and a lot of teachers are from different cultures too.' **(Pupil)**

In the case study schools the leadership of the schools are strong on equality issues and tackling racism. In addition these schools have a well-developed multicultural curriculum and are good in using an inclusive curriculum that reflects the pupils diversity in terms culture, ethnic background and historical experiences**.** For example, one case study primary school offer a very rich curriculum, drawing on inspiring black role models whenever possible, to encourage pupils to aim high. One of the great strengths of **School C** is its excellent, enriched curriculum which very positively supports the aims and ethos of the school. The executive Headteacher described the school's approach:

*'When the new National Curriculum came out in 2014, we looked at our curriculum and assessment and said they need to be based on our children. Our four key drivers are spirituality, possibilities, excellence and diversity, that the staff parents and governing body thought we wanted to preserve and develop. So when the National Curriculum came along we still use these four drivers, so we make sure that those four elements are covered. Alongside all of that, when we got together with another school (*which is a partner school in the Federation)*, we formulated our seven values. Although diversity isn't one of them, it is threaded in. We decided to look at what our core values would look like. Everything we have done has stemmed from these strong core values, articulated not only by staff and children but also by parents. It is clear in our environment communication and that has really helped us in our journey to support our children to feel unique, to feel comfortable with whom they are and to feel comfortable with what they want to achieve.'*….she stresses that: *'It's valuing each child as an individual and to be able to offer each child possibilities to broaden their experiences and motivations.'* **(Executive Headteacher, School C)**

Teachers in Years 4 and 6 also talked with enthusiasm about how they ensure that the curriculum takes account of the diverse range of pupils and represents them:

'Our key drivers of spirituality, possibilities, excellence and diversity are threaded through our curriculum. Year 5 has just been doing a project on space and last year when we were doing it, we taught about Mae C Jemison, the first black woman in space. We are very much aware of who our children are and we also understand what motivates them and it makes our job easier if they are motivated, so we try to weave it in. Severus, the black Roman Emperor was a moor. We try every way we can to link it to the pupils and to London. We visited the Windmill Project at the Black Cultural Archives and are involved in a drama project with another school on Hiroshima. We went along the Thames when we were visiting the Globe Theatre. So many children don't go into Central London and experience the amount of history here. I find it incredible that so many children never go. We walked past Southwark Cathedral, the Golden Hind and walked down by the Thames. We make an effort to do this because they just don't go there. We take children out as much as we can, even though it can be a challenge.' **(Teacher, School C)**

Likewise in other schools, teachers draw on the local history of the area to develop Black Caribbean pupils' understanding of their own cultural heritage as teachers described:

'We have to do a lot to the curriculum to diversify it.' **(Year 6 teacher,** School A**)**

'I try to make things interesting and relevant to them. My enthusiasms I bring into the classroom. For example, I showed the children photos of my holiday in Rome and they commented "you have a black friend!' **(Year 3 teacher,** School A**)**

*'I took my class last year to the Black Cultural Archives. I was amazed that the Black Caribbean children had no knowledge of their history. The imagery of black cultural history in Britain, Windrush and the signs which said "no dogs, no Irish, no blacks", I tried to stand in front of the sign as it could upset young children'. **(Year 3 teacher,** School A**)**

*'The school history curriculum is inclusive and includes key black role models including Nelson Mandela, Martin Luther King and Mary Seacole.' **(Headteacher, school RE)**

'We had to re-think about the curriculum in our school. The new national curriculum is narrowing, especially in English and history; you have got to be more creative now to make it relevant to our pupils. We have lead practitioners in a range of subjects. Our specialism in Performing and Visual Arts complements and enriches the curriculum which has been described by Ofsted as "innovative and engaging". The curriculum offers extensive opportunities for students including established links with world class organisations e.g. the Young Vic, Ballet Rambert and Laban and educational trips, visits and workshops with artists in residence. This has helped in improving our English and history curriculum.' (Deputy **Headteacher leading- Curriculum, School E)**

There are also plenty of opportunities for teachers and school staff to reflect on the achievement of the Black Caribbean pupils using data and their own experience and knowledge about individual pupils and their progress. There is good dialogue at all levels about the achievement, diversity and race issues in the school which has made a significant difference for Black Caribbean children. What was more evident during our research and classroom observations in the case study schools is that they have high expectations of Black Caribbean children and an excellent commitment to equal opportunities policy and practice. Furthermore the case study schools provide an inclusive curriculum and a high level of support to Black Caribbean pupils to help them to achieve.

Effective use of diverse multi-ethnic workforce and celebration of cultural diversity

For many years in England, there has been a recognition and understanding by policy makers of the many benefits which can accrue from having a school workforce which is reflective of its pupil characteristics. For long time, it has been recognised that minority ethnic teachers can play an important role in ensuring that all pupils get a more balanced view of society. For example, previous research reports (Haque and Ellitt S. 2017; Demie and Christabel 2017; Tikly et al 2004) highlighted the need to ensure that the teaching ethos of each school reflected the different cultures of the communities served by society and that the lack of ethnic minority teachers in schools needed urgent attention.

The case study schools serve some of the most deprived wards in the local authority. Many pupils come from disadvantaged economic home circumstances. The school population mirrors the community in which the schools sit. Most pupils come from African, Caribbean, Portuguese and White British ethnic backgrounds. A significant proportion of pupils have a mixed heritage. Through the school curriculum, pupils explore the representation of different cultural, ethnic, linguistic and religious groups in the local authority and in the UK. Senior managers provide strong leadership in ensuring the schools provide an inclusive organisation. The ethos that is developed is based on a commitment to a vision of the school that serves its pupil community in the context of diversity. The schools are multi-ethnic and multicultural schools. Staff are aware of the many pressures young Black Caribbean pupils face in the wider society. They actively consider this in their approach to education and discuss openly ethnic diversity issue of its leadership team, teaching and non-teaching workforce to ensure that it reflects the community served by the school. They are promoting equality and diversity in the classroom.

Table 3 also shows the percentage of BME staff in the case study schools' workforce to demonstrate how they are more inclusive compared to schools nationally. The schools have recruited good quality teaching and non-teaching staff that reflect the languages, cultures, ethnic backgrounds and faiths of the pupils in the school. The staff are mainly from the local community and this has helped the school to build trust in the community they serve.

Table 3. Percentage of BME Staff in the Case Study Schools' Workforce

Case Study Schools	Leadership			Teachers			Teaching Assistants			Other Staff			ALL		
	BCRB	WBRI	BME	BCRB	WBRI	BME	BCRB	WBRI	BME	BCRB	WBRI	BME	BCRB	WBRI	BME
School Y	0%	67%	33%	5%	90%	11%	23%	31%	69%	10%	65%	35%	11%	66%	35%
School C	0%	100%	0%	0%	50%	50%	11%	33%	67%	27%	36%	64%	13%	45%	55%
School JE	50%	25%	75%	10%	36%	65%	14%	31%	69%	42%	16%	84%	21%	29%	71%
School A	0%	100%	0%	8%	77%	23%	44%	22%	78%	30%	30%	70%	22%	53%	56%
School SJ	33%	67%	33%	21%	64%	36%	33%	22%	78%	36%	36%	64%	30%	45%	55%
School SS	50%	50%	50%	0%	60%	40%	16%	37%	63%	5%	33%	67%	10%	40%	60%
School V	17%	33%	50%	7%	71%	29%	32%	23%	77%	33%	25%	75%	24%	37%	61%
School E	0%	89%	11%	9%	63%	37%	11%	44%	56%	20%	27%	73%	13%	48%	52%
School RE	0%	63%	38%	12%	34%	66%	14%	43%	57%	14%	50%	50%	12%	45%	55%
School O	50%	50%	50%	27%	16%	84%	43%	14%	86%	34%	31%	69%	33%	25%	75%
School G	0%	73%	27%	10%	61%	39%	18%	59%	41%	12%	56%	44%	11%	60%	40%
School D	0%	667%	33%	6%	42%	59%	24%	24%	77%	21%	50%	50%	15%	44%	56%
School I	0%	83%	17%	30%	41%	59%	78%	0%	100%	40%	35%	65%	36%	38%	62%
CASE STUDY	16%	61%	38%	14%	48%	52%	25%	26%	75%	25%	36%	64%	20%	40%	60%
All LA	10%	68%	32%	8%	57%	44%	20%	36%	64%	19%	39%	61%	15%	46%	54%
NATIONAL	1%	91%	9%	1%	86%	14%	2%	86%	14%	1%	87%	13%	1%	87%	13%

Source: DfE School Workforce Census 2016
Note: BCRB- Black Caribbean   WBRI- White British   BME- Black and Minority Ethnic group

The evidence from Table 3 also shows that in England, 86% of teachers, 91% of the leadership, 86% of teaching assistants and all school staff are White British. This national data shows a worrying picture and raises a question about the chances of headship for BME teachers and an issue of representation for students. It limits an understanding of diversity. However in the case study schools:

▪ 52% of teachers are BME staff compared to 44% in the LA and 14% nationally.

▪ The percentage of leadership staff recorded as BME is 38% compared to 32% in the LA and 9% nationally. In England, 91% of the school leadership are White British.

▪ The percentage of teaching assistants recorded as BME is 75% compared to 64% in the LA and 14% nationally.

▪ 60% of staff are BME compared to 54% in the LA and 13% nationally.

Overall there is a great diversity in the workforce in the case study schools in terms of range of roles, skills and ethnicity. In one outstanding case study secondary school 50% of the leadership team is

Black Caribbean. There are also significant numbers of White British, Black African, White Other, Mixed White and Black Caribbean, Mixed White and Black African, Other Mixed Race, White Irish, Pakistani, Indian, Bangladeshi and Other Black staff in the school. Overall, over 84% of teachers and 75% of the school workforce are of ethnic minority origin and many of the languages, cultures and faiths of the pupils are reflected in the workforce. In another case study secondary school 59% of all of the teachers are BME and 30% of teaching staff are Black Caribbean.

The diversity of the staff is also a striking feature of another outstanding primary school. The school has a diverse multi-ethnic workforce including staff of Black Caribbean, African and Portuguese heritage represented across the school and within the leadership team. However, while there are good practices in the case study schools, a number of people in our focus group commented on how challenging it is to get more BME teachers and leaders. Some of the headteachers we spoke to wanted to recruit more Black teachers but found that there were very few people of Black African and Black Caribbean origin entering the teaching profession.

> *'I am a white Headteacher and most of the teachers are white. We only have one Black teacher but we have a mixed staff. Although I interview teachers for LA Schools, I have not interviewed any Black teachers and there are fewer Black headteachers now in LA than there used to be.' (**Headteacher, School A**)*

Another school also experienced difficulty in recruiting and retaining members of staff from Black and ethnic minority groups. As one of the teachers confirmed:

> '*Having a more mixed profile in the staffing is high on the school's agenda and has been for some considerable time – it's part of the school's positive ethos and is considered as very important.'*

We asked one Black Caribbean heritage teacher at the school why there are so few black teachers now:

> *'I have always been curious to find out why many of my friends do not want to be teachers. It is a lot of stress being a teacher. There were not many Black Caribbean people going through the system on my course.' (**Teacher, School A**)*

In answer to the question as to whether there was any correlation between the lack of interest in becoming a teacher and their own negative experiences at school, she replied:

> '*That negativity could be expressed at home and it could put people off becoming a teacher.' (**Teacher, School A**)*

There were instances when those interviewed expressed amazement when as pupils they saw Black teachers in schools. What is concerning is that this surprise was not just expressed when it happened to those at school five decades ago but by others with more recent experience of schools:

> *'I went to a Roman Catholic primary school in Clapham in the 1960s/1970s where Black pupils were in the minority. At one time we had a couple of Black teachers and I was amazed that we had qualified teachers who were Black!' (**Parent C**)*

The deputy Headteacher of a large secondary school felt that it is important for parents and the community to have a Black Headteacher. He commented:

> *'I have not questioned it before. If parents of any background have a trust in the school then it shouldn't be a problem.'* **(Deputy Head, School D)**

As a White deputy head we asked whether he thought White people might find it difficult to work under Black leadership and he replied:

> *'I have seen racism towards the Black staff, particularly to those who have to deliver hard messages. If that were told to white families or it were given by me it might be difficult. I think it is important that the makeup of the leadership team reflects the area. We have Black members of the senior leadership team and in terms of gender and ethnicity there is a good mix across our faculties.'* **(Deputy Head, School E)**

Those interviewed were generally of the opinion that there was a need to have more Black teachers in schools:

> *'It's about identity. If you put a young white female teacher from outside London in a class with secondary Black Caribbean boys they know that they can wind her up and she'll easily leave within a couple of weeks. If you put a mature Black teacher in there, it will be different.'* **(Parent, School O)**

> *'Role models are important. We have a male and female Black Caribbean teachers, teaching assistants that play key role in supporting pupils. We need more in our schools to reflect the diversity of our school populations.'* **(White Headteacher, School A)**
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Another Black Headteacher commented that:

> *'Having more Black Headteachers is critical for the success of Black Caribbean and African pupils in schools. It's not about appointing black headteachers because of their colour though; you need black headteachers who are equally good but with a good understanding of the local context in which the school is operating. Some headteachers come from suburban and rural areas and they really don't understand what it is like to work in a multicultural environment.'* **(Headteacher, School SJ)**

In addition, each school uses a number of approaches to celebrate cultural diversity through effective use of assemblies, Black History Month, the curriculum and high quality displays. The schools use Black History Month as an opportunity to explore different countries and celebrate diversity. A broad range of activities take place both within and outside the school day. These include a focus on black and minority achievement through organising heritage days, a series of lessons, activities and assemblies to explore this area of the curriculum. Annually there is also an annual 'International Day' where staff, pupils and parents dress up in their traditional dress and share food from around the world. This event involves pupils, parents and neighbours celebrating cultures from across the globe at the school. Parents from all backgrounds mingle and share recipes and children are encouraged to try different foods which opens them up to other cultures. There are many opportunities for Black Caribbean and ethnic minority pupils to celebrate cultural diversity and explore Black history and enjoy a multicultural education. Overall the case study schools saw the diversity within the school community as a genuine asset to the life of the schools, to widen pupils' horizons and to enhance learning. The Black Caribbean pupils flourish in the multicultural environment in the schools which celebrate their cultural heritage.

4.   Conclusions and implications for developing leadership capacity and workforce diversity

Building on the findings of national empirical data and previous research which highlights the underachievement of Black Caribbean pupils in schools in England, this research aim is to identify good practice to raise their achievement in schools. The report draws on statistical analyses, case studies of schools and the views of headteachers, staff, governors, parents and pupils expressed in focus groups. It also recognises that there was little previous research on the critical importance of strong leadership in schools to tackle race equality and diversity issues which this paper has attempted to address with new empirical evidence.

The main finding of the research show that KS2 and GCSE results in the case study schools are significantly above the national average and have improved over the years. This is despite the underachievement of Black Caribbean pupils at national level. The study identified a number of key success factors for high achievement and continued improvement. These include providing a strong leadership by headteachers on race and equality issues, maintaining high expectations of Black Caribbean pupils, effective use of a diverse multi-ethnic workforce, valuing and celebrating cultural diversity, and a clear stand on racism. What is particularly special about the case study schools is that the leadership of the schools are strong on equality issues and tackling racism and there are many local people employed, both in teaching and other posts. In addition these schools have a well-developed multicultural curriculum that meets the need of the community the school serves. There are also plenty of opportunities for teachers and school staff to celebrate cultural diversity and reflect on the achievement of Black Caribbean pupils. Each of the above good practices are explored in detail in this paper to reveal exactly what the schools are doing to ensure they provide the very highest quality of education for Black Caribbean heritage students. Overall the study suggests that Black Caribbean pupils do well in multicultural schools with a strong school leadership on race and equality issues.

A key success of the case study schools is the leadership's ability to create a community ethos by employing a diverse multi-ethnic workforce including Black Caribbean heritage staff, which represents the community the school serves. The quality of staff recruited including the diversity of the staff team is seen as crucial in case study schools. Staff of BME heritage are represented across the case study schools and within the leadership team.   Many schools pointed to their ability to acquire the right calibre of teaching staff, i.e. staff that would buy into the explicit culture and core values, as crucial to their success in raising the achievement of all pupils. They recruit teachers who want to be in the school and who believe in real partnership with pupils and their parents. The teachers are seen to come with attributes to enhance and help. What is particularly special about these schools is that local communities are represented well in the school. They recruited staff that reflects ethnic background, faith and they have staff who speak many of the languages of the local community. As a result children feel that they can relate to a member of staff from their own cultural background and are highly motivated.

Another significant success factor in raising the achievement of Black Caribbean pupils the case study schools is a clear commitment to multicultural education and tackling racism. The schools are truly multicultural schools where diversity in cultural heritage, language, ethnic background, country of origin and pupil nationality are valued and celebrated. These schools have also developed the confidence to understand ethnic diversity issues through effective use of data. In these schools the data was analysed by ethnic and social background   and this continues to be a strength in all schools. In addition these case study schools do not tolerate any racist views and are committed to the ethos that all children should be given equal opportunities to fulfil their potential.

We, however, need to be cautious about this present research as it has some limitations. The data is based on a small number of case study schools from one inner London Local Authority. The socio-economic composition of the case study schools is not also representative of the country as a whole. The proportion of Black Caribbean pupils, ethnic minority pupils and pupils eligible for free school meals in the case study is very high compared the average for England. Such differences may mean that similar studies carried out in different areas would show a somewhat different pattern. Nevertheless previous studies produced similar findings by identifying good practice to raise achievement in schools (see for details Lewis and Demie 2015, Demie and Mclean 2017, Demie 2005, and OFSTED 2009). On this basis we would like to state that the broad findings of our research are in line with other studies. It is our view that the conclusions from our research regarding success factors to raise achievement of Black Caribbean pupils are transferable and have important implication for leadership and diversity in schools. There is a need for schools to have a strong Headteacher who is committed to provide a diversified workforce that reflect the community served by the school. Schools should also provide an inclusive curriculum that value their cultural identity and history. The lessons from the case study schools show the Black Caribbean pupils flourish in the multicultural environment in the schools which celebrates their cultural heritage.

There are also other weaknesses to this study that need to be noted. A research approach such as this is bound to have its critics as it will not meet academic ideals in terms of sampling and conventional research methodology. This one is no exception as it is based on a small number of case study schools in order to explore in detail what successful schools do differently, additional or more intensively to achieve the best outcomes for black Caribbean pupils. An increase in research of this type which focuses on high performing schools will provide positive messages for policy makers and schools.

We would also argue that while it is an important insight that high performing schools report pursuing policies to promote diversity, the case study methodology used here does not indicate whether or not low performing schools may also been pursuing similar policies. This is a weakness that could be addressed in further research, by considering whether low performing schools are also pursuing similar policies. However, due to limited funding it was not possible to explore this aspect for this report. An extension to this study could take a longitudinal approach to examine the difference between high performing schools in the case study, and lower performing schools in the LA. We would argue that a longitudinal study would have the potential to enhance our understanding of the performance of Black Caribbean pupils in both high performing schools, and other schools in the LA.

To conclude, we would argue that schools do not operate in a vacuum and they need to recognise they are part of the community. In all schools in England, teachers should be aware with diversity and multicultural education. However the challenge for schools is to ensure pupils from ethnically and linguistically diverse backgrounds are not further disadvantaged or left behind in the education system. This is a particular challenge for policy makers and schools as the research and data (see Table 3) suggests that, in general, teachers in England tend to come from White British with a monocultural background (Demie and Christabel 2017, Haque and Ellitt 2017,Tomlinson 2008, Gillborn and Mirza 2000). As we have shown above the case study schools have a diverse multi-ethnic workforce and they actively recruit from the local community. This has promoted community cohesion and shows loyalty to the community. The evidence from our study highlights that the case study schools promotes equality and diversity in the classroom. Our classroom observations and interviews during the research also suggests that the schools staff and teachers in the case study schools are comfortable with the profile of pupils who attend their school and they enjoy teaching in inner city multicultural schools with pupil of a diverse ethnic and linguistic background. The recommendations from our study is that to help raise the achievement of Black Caribbean children, schools should:

- Develop leadership capacity by providing strong leadership on promoting equality and diversity. As a matter of good practice school should audit the current workforce and pursue strong diversification at all levels including senior management to ensure that it

reflects the school population.   Diversity in the workforce is particularly important for those multicultural schools where there are high numbers of Black children.

- Celebrate cultural diversity through effective use of International day, Black history month and an inclusive curriculum that meets the needs of a multicultural society.

- Audit the provision to support the progress and achievement of Black Caribbean pupils and to identify areas for targeted interventions.

Acknowledgements

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