BLACK AND MINORITY ETHNIC LEADERS

Final Report to the National College for School Leadership

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Introduction

The broad aim of the research is to establish how black and ethnic minority leaders are identified, developed and supported. The specific objectives are:

a. To establish the scale of involvement of black and minority ethnic leaders at all levels of the school system in England.
b. To identify barriers to the recruitment, development and appointment of black and minority ethnic leaders.
c. To show how black and minority ethnic leaders have been able to succeed despite these barriers.
d. To examine whether black and minority ethnic leaders would benefit from customised leadership development opportunities.
e. To assess the extent to which distributed leadership provides opportunities for minority groups.

The main focus of the research is on the barriers experienced by black and minority ethnic leaders and on how they have been able to overcome the barriers and progress to senior or middle leadership positions.

Background

Hartle and Thomas (2003) highlight the potential shortage of school leaders during the next decade. The report points to the potential gender imbalances but does not address the under-representation of black and minority ethnic leaders (BMEL). This dimension contributes to the general problem as well as providing few role models for the next generation of school leaders.

There is limited data about the number of minority school leaders, partly because it is not always easy to identify who is a 'leader'. However, there is some incidental evidence of the under-representation of BMEL in middle and senior leadership roles. Coleman's (2002) comprehensive research on female heads in secondary schools, for example, showed that there were very few minority ethnic leaders.

Methodology

This is an empirical research project, framed by a review of pertinent literature. The research team adopted a multi-methods approach to examine this complex and under-researched phenomenon:

A systematic literature review to examine what is known nationally and internationally about minority leaders in education, about the nature of barriers to their involvement as leaders, and strategies to overcome such barriers. The literature includes both academic sources and official literature documenting policy initiatives by public bodies. A full report of the literature review appeared in the second interim report (Bush, Glover, Sood and Tangie 2005). The discussion below focuses on the main points in order to provide a basis for interpretation of the research findings.

a) *A survey of black and minority ethnic leaders* in state schools. Given the lack of a national database of such leaders, this was undertaken by 'snowball' sampling (Cohen and Manion 1994: 88) where the initial participants were used as informants to identify other such leaders. The initial strategies for identifying such leaders were:

   - A message on the NCSL website.

- An article in the Times Educational Supplement.
- Letters to LEA directors of education.

Subsequently, participants have been identified by interviewees, through the involvement of the London Leadership network, and through 'word of mouth'. The survey has been undertaken mainly through an e-instrument supplemented by postal questionnaires in certain cases. The survey instrument was attached to the first interim report (Bush, Cardno, Glover and Sood 2004).

b) *Case studies of schools and individual leaders* to examine their professional experience, establish the extent and nature of barriers to their career development and show how they have been able to succeed despite the barriers. These leaders, most of whom were identified from the survey responses, were interviewed in their own schools or workplaces by members of the research team. Many of the interviews eventually took the form of *life history* research (Cohen and Manion 1994: 58) as participants related their leadership practice to their wider experience as black or minority ethnic people living and working in England.

Research team

The researchers involved in this project were:

- Professor Tony Bush (project director and interviews: phases one and two)
- Professor Carol Cardno (NCSL international research associate and interviews: phase one)
- Dr. Derek Glover (literature review and survey)
- Associate Professor Kholeka Moloi (NCSL International Research Associate and interviews: phase three)
- Geraldine Potgeiter (NCSL International Research Associate and interviews: phase three)
- Dr. Krishan Sood (interviews: phases one, two and three).
- Dr. Kenneth Tangie (interviews: phases two and three)

Members of the research team take collective responsibility for this final report.

Kholeka Moloi is also working with the project director on a parallel study of 'cross-boundary' leadership in the Gauteng province of South Africa.

Literature review

Background

This literature review focuses upon evidence of the role and development of leaders of black and minority ethnic (BME) background within educational organisations in the United Kingdom. Its prime purpose is to ascertain the extent of existing evidence and its implications for further research. To this end, we have also made use of the research literature from other areas of the world.

This part of the report summarises the literature review presented in the second interim report, focusing on the main themes directly relevant to the research in order

to inform the analysis and interpretation of the empirical data. The four main issues are:

1. Context and culture
2. Identity, aspirations and development.
3. Career development.
4. Leadership and leadership development.

The final section highlights key research questions arising from the review.

Context and culture

Papadopoulos (1999) identifies the ways in which BME families form their own communities and then come to rely on tight local social contacts that may inhibit community and cultural integration until the second or third generations. Her conclusion is that this leads to a BME view that is fatalistic with limited aspirations but, as integration becomes a reality, idealism allows for 'escape' and the assimilation of the host culture.

Cultural integration

Mullard (1985) argues that the post World War Two phase represented an assimilationist model, with incorporation as its main aim, on the basis that undesirable segregation was the only alternative. Subsequently, communities favoured the continuation of the cultural heritage of incomers. Cultural pluralism then evolved to preserve the existing:

> 'unchanging, and cherished stock of central values, beliefs and institutions. To be told that your culture and history count for nothing is to invoke responses ranging from low self-esteem and lack of confidence to political opposition and resistance' (p.50)

Slater et al (2002) discuss the tension between the values that are expressed by the leaders and those of the host community. They argue that change requires a more open debate from both sides of any divide.

The Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) requires maintained schools to fulfil their statutory general duty to work to eliminate unlawful racial discrimination, and to promote equal opportunities and good race relations. Osler and Morrison (2000) comment that the inspection process undertaken by Ofted is generally imprecise and urge that 'the silence of racism' (p.10) should be countered by consideration of inclusion policies, ethnic monitoring and the development of a common language for dealing with racial equality issues.

Employment

Modood (1998) notes that Chinese and African Asians, of whom a greater proportion had experienced university education, were more rapidly integrated while there was limited progress for Afro-Caribbean and Bangladeshi groups. He identifies covert discrimination, professional marginalisation, religious intolerance, cultural stereotyping and group immobility as possible causes of differential enhancement. Significantly, he concludes that many BME candidates are unable to secure professional posts because:

> 'Upward expectations are met by downward social movement' (p.63).

Singh (2002) presents a full analysis of contemporary BME employment in England and Wales, pointing out that only 6% of BME men and 4.6% of BME women hold leadership positions. The barriers to progress arise from educational choices, gender issues, the lack of role models, and low self-esteem against societal expectations. Early disadvantage with English as a second language, female tokenism, differing gender values and home expectations impact adversely on career progress. There is also biased negative stereotyping by performance assessors, and misjudgement of potential and 'fit' by white leaders.

Bhattacharya et al (2003) argue that, whilst Black and Asian people are most likely to stay on into post-compulsory education, their further and higher education attainment is inhibited by low social grouping, the use of English as a second language at home, and a higher proportion of those of Black origin needing special education.

Taylor (2002) and Essed (1993, 2000) both conclude that the gender problem has an ethnic undertone with particular implications for women seeking enhancement. Noon (1993), and Kim and Gelfand (2003) conclude that individuals with a stronger sense of ethnic identity made more positive socio-emotional inferences if the recruitment literature stressed the diversity of the organisation.

Identity

Implicit in the discussion of cultural integration is the concept of identity. This has two aspects, the historical in terms of the 'roots' of the individual, and the geographical, in terms of the concentration of people of similar BME groups within an area. Malik (1996) distinguishes between the 'right to be equal' and the 'right to be different' within contemporary society.

Mac an Ghaill (1999) extends this argument by urging exploration of 'the theoretical shift beyond the black-white model of racism – the colour paradigm – towards one in which cultural and religious identities are foregrounded' (p.61). These issues may be fundamental to potential teachers and leaders as they attempt to establish themselves in a multi-cultural society.

The extent to which such changes are being implemented is evident from research into the identity of BME communities within differing host cultures. Rassool (1999) examined student perceptions of their own ethnicity and considers that those who have recently arrived from the former colonies have been affected by 'discontinuity, differences and social displacement'. The problem that results is one of 'in-betweenness' with the potential for conflict, contradiction and ambiguity that have to be resolved before undertaking careers. Identity is then affected by the sense and perception of community, racism, culture and belonging, which are strengthened where geographical concentration occurs.

The needs of a supportive community enabling ethnic identity to function within a multi-cultural framework have been investigated by Bishop (2003) and Bravette-Gordon (2001). They stress the importance of prompting BME community members to make sense of their roots and context through the cultural aspects of self-determination, reconciled aspirations, reciprocal learning, and mediation of socio-economic context, within the extended family, and its collective vision.

The practicalities of developing a personal identity within a differing corporate identity have been researched by Bell (2003) who works from evidence of 'colour blindness' and 'white washing' to suggest that there is a need for the recognition of self and

group identity in a way that will 'overcome prejudice both ways' (p.21), through helping both sides to make sense of racial identity.

Career development

Teaching as a career

Blair (2000) argues that the interpretation of leadership for the multi-ethnic school should be transformational with a concentration on vision and the communication of culture and values so that the requirements of the BME context can be honoured through collaborative working, leadership dispersal and institutionalised vision in which encouragement of multi-cultural leadership is paramount. Within such a context, BME participants can feel welcomed and supported, but there is little evidence underpinning this view.

Both in securing initial training places, and in their subsequent careers, participants have noted problems that can be related to ethnicity. Menter et al (2003) investigated the experience of teachers in England and Wales applying for threshold assessment and report that this leads to implicit discrimination with 'inconsistent and prejudicial judgement' (p.319).

Dee (2004), Mikatavage et al (2002) and Parvis (2003) reach a similar conclusion in assessing the shortage of BME teachers and health workers in the USA, and conclude that there is a need for inclusive language, cultural mediation and the development of mentoring role models.

Leadership in education

Amey et al (2002) found that only two out of 850 community college principals in the USA considered themselves to belong to the BME group but he cautions that this may be because second, third and subsequent generations may feel that they are no longer in an ethnic minority.

Powney et al (2003), drawing on a survey of 2158 teachers, show that teachers from BME backgrounds enter the profession later, and have lower satisfaction levels. This seems to result in lower levels of participation in leadership roles (52% BME remain as classroom teachers compared with 29% of white women and 35% of white males). They add that this may be partly because BME teachers are concentrated in Inner London and are not geographically mobile for family reasons. There is evidence of hidden discrimination for teachers securing promotion. The authors illustrate a double bind in that, whilst BME teachers are at a disadvantage in seeking promotion in a largely white school, they may also suffer from being 'crowded out' in a multi-ethnic context.

Inhibiting factors

Powney et al (2003) cite six responding heads who reported little evidence of discrimination but who identified barriers including marginalisation, indirect racist attitudes and post ghettoisation – all compounded by a female glass ceiling which is particularly serious for BME women. Harris et al (2003), in a literature review of the career progress of deputy heads, note reliance on informal networks from which ethnic minorities are excluded. They also note that BME teachers are less likely to be encouraged to apply for promotion.

In an earlier investigation, Bhatt et al (1988) consider that the educational background of BME groups adversely affects their career progress. They note that:

> 'Black people have held posts at several different levels in the educational structure…yet their potential power and influence has often been neutralised. Thus although blacks have been included on many government-initiated advisory bodies and working parties, they have usually been accepted on the basis that they will easily be outnumbered or marginalized at the Committee stage' (p.149)

The appointment of token minority ethnic teachers has often led to overload, and inhibited progress, in that they:

> 'can act as a liaison point with parents, teach the mother tongue, take responsibility for the welfare of black pupils and staff development – and all this for free' (p.149)

But 'at all levels it is the white construction and interpretation of black reality that prevails' (p.150) and this results in an alienating ethos where rules are not related to culture and where the use of diagnostic tools favours the English cultural heritage. These factors contribute to an atmosphere that makes for problems in securing initial employment and career progression at all levels.

Manuel and Slate (2003: 25) list a range of inhibitors for women in minority ethnic groups in the USA. These include lack of recruitment of women of all ethnic groups by school boards and failure at the hurdle of the mid management career 'glass ceiling'. Their analysis links race and gender to suggest a 'double bind' for BME women leaders.

Parker-Jenkins et al (1997), in a longitudinal examination of Muslim women and their career development, conclude that their progress is affected by the nature of family and professional support and the expectations of the teachers themselves. Those who did succeed reported that they had had to work twice as hard as others in the face of discrimination, and cultural problems within their communities. Jones and Maguire (1997) point to tokenism in appointments, and prejudice against BME teachers, in predominantly white schools. Peeler (2002), in considering BME teachers in Australia, responds to these points by urging that:

> 'In order to function appropriately in local contexts they must develop suitable socio-cultural knowledge, adopt a new persona, adapt to academic discourse and understand the local perspective (p.10).

This suggests that assimilation rather than integration is required.

McKenley and Gordon (2002) paint a somewhat more positive picture because BME teachers add their rich cultural heritage to the commonwealth of all schools and, with a sense of vocation to their community, have a strong, pioneering feeling. However, they also point to stress from pioneering pressure, the effect of a continuum of role models from positive through ambivalence to denial, and point out that many BME leaders had been acting in difficult circumstances before substantive appointment.

In her review of leadership in a range of professions, Davidson (1997) examines the double negative effects of race and gender for 30 female managers. Her analysis of

inhibiting factors illustrates the complexity and applicability of the race/gender debate:

- The stereotype of Afro-Caribbeans as 'athletic superwomen' prompts views of negative intellectual ability.
- Parental expectations that marriage is essential may conflict with career development and cause problems where this crosses racial groups. This leads to role conflict between home and career - not geographically mobile, not enough time for career, guilt feelings about career and motherhood, lack of emotional/domestic support from husband, and need to take work home.
- In a bicultural world there is a moral duty to support the community but with limited time this may be at the expense of career development.
- Appointment as the token woman may lead to performance stereotyping, racial stereotyping, isolation, and undervalued skills. All these are intensified where there is a lack of role models and supervisory understanding.

Relationships at work may degenerate where a feeling of being threatened may prevent the manager 'being oneself' and result in implicit taboos that inhibit discussion, and create feelings of isolation, problems of adaptation, and lack of acceptance by colleagues. Women may be the objects of sexual harassment, being seen as an 'easy target' for both white and BME males. Attempts to achieve improvement may be inhibited by misread body language and failure to understand cultural norms.

Leadership and leadership development

Securing appointment and promotion

Bariso (2001) distinguishes between external and internal exclusion. The former may affect employment and promotion prospects while the latter may impact on the experience and internal promotion of BME teachers and leaders after appointment. Progress is inhibited because of unfavourable BME community attitudes to teaching. External exclusion follows because of the lack of black role models, evident racism, negative personal experiences, poor prospects and a lack of career advice. As a result, underachievement, stereotyping, poor employment prospects, low pay, and negative parental influence become embedded in institutional racism. Exclusion from teaching and promotion also operates through unrepresentative governing body selection panels, tokenistic approaches, and the complexity of the process of recognising overseas qualifications.

The impact of this may be illustrated by Menter et al's (2003) investigation of BME achievement of threshold assessment in English schools. Evidence points to some head teachers' reluctance to recommend BME teachers for threshold assessment. Their work points to the need for monitoring to overcome uncertainty and for increased training of assessors to eliminate unlawful discrimination, promote equal opportunities and develop good relationships between people of different racial groups in order to meet the requirements of the Race Relations Act, 2000.

There is a growing body of American literature reporting on the problems of securing promotion once on the career ladder. Tallerico (2000), Ortiz (2000) and Manuel and Slate (2003) reach similar conclusions that there are largely invisible criteria for selection:

> ‘because they do not appear . . . in advertisements of desired qualifications . . . Instead they manifest themselves behind the scenes…unwritten rules involve head hunters and school board members a. defining quality in terms of hierarchies of particular job titles, b. stereotyping by gender, c. showing complacency about acting affirmatively, and d. hypervaluing feelings of comfort and personal chemistry with the successful candidate (Tallerico 2000:37)

Ortiz (2000: 565) notes that ‘the great majority of cases, however, show that succession is controlled by school board members and former superintendents holding search committee membership. Most of these individuals are white males, with increasing numbers of women and minorities’.

Manuel and Slate (2003) also conclude that school board attitudes can inhibit progress but they also note the ‘double track’ problems whereby Hispanic women make progress within educational leadership but are only successful where their home life is maintained in order to meet the cultural expectations of their male partners. Mason (1995) argues that being rejected on the grounds of so-called communication problems, and skill or experience deficiencies, may be a cover for deeper prejudice and employers’ failure to understand cultural norms.

Leadership development

Allen (1998) considers the ways in which being both black and female imposes limitations on leadership potential:

> ‘I have felt slighted to the point of being discouraged from sharing my ideas, which can be detrimental not only to my morale but also to the growth of my academic unit’ (p.583).

Lam’s (2002) discussion of cross-cultural leadership suggests that, although there may be culture specific elements of leadership, the incorporation of diversity, in gender, ethnicity or background, has a positive effect on the nature of performance:

According to Robertson and Webber (2000), the ability to reflect on one’s location within cross-cultural contexts is directed towards four elements that reflect the cultural context – emotional intelligence of learning, culture of critical enquiry, moving beyond self, and developing agency.

Page (2003), referring to social work, differentiates between race and culture as a factor in securing leadership appointments and concludes that time in a country is a significant factor reflecting acculturation and understanding of context and culture. Women from ethnic groups other than white suffer from their double minority setting:

> ‘On the one hand as women in hierarchies dominated in the main by white men and, on the other hand, as women in a marginal position due to the numerical dominance of white women’ (p.434).

There is some evidence of an emergent valuing of diversity of all types in team development. Watson et al (2002) point to the enhancement of inter-personal leadership and collaboration in ethnically diverse teams and the greater task orientation and self-interest of non-diverse leadership groups.

The way forward

Much of the literature refers to possible strategies and tactics for the enhancement of BME leaders. These occur at three levels – the generic gains from diversity, the gains to the community, and the enhancement of the individual. Basiro (2001: 180) points to the barriers of prejudice, underachievement, exclusion, stereotypes, low expectations and overt racism but contends that these cannot be overcome whilst:

> 'The voices of the black communities and educators are rarely heard in educational debates and have had little influence on policies and practice'.

Essed (2000: 902) meets this by suggesting that women of colour:

> 'can be an example to others…..that is to say they should take up a specific role which is precisely that of scrutinising practices of exclusion and defining the conceptual frameworks for alternatives, which will do more justice to the diverse worlds and complexities of students'.

Osler (1997) stresses the need to assimilate identity in inclusive and yet diverse organisations. Alston (2000) suggests the identification of potential leaders and then the fostering of abilities through intentional and supportive encouragement and the development of formal mentoring. Allen (1998) and Page (2003) point to the need for positive role models and mentors who recognise the cultural and contextual issues involved for the mentee. Basit and McNamara (2004) describe effective affirmative action within three education authorities at the induction stage for teachers and chart perceived benefits from this.

Davidson (1997) urges individuals to confront racial behaviour through a strategy that requires a need to control oneself and modify the behaviour of others through using organisational norms and values, implicit and explicit communications networks, and the power of organisational position. She offers a number of strategies for change including the removal of organisational barriers through equal opportunities awareness, dual interviewing, precise job specifications, monitoring and targets.

Prejudice requires top-level commitment to change and equal opportunities training for all. McKenley and Gordon (2002) propose the exploration of ethnic issues during training for all teachers, increased awareness of multi-ethnic opportunities, enhanced leadership training, and enhanced monitoring for all from BME backgrounds. Dhruev (1992) adds that:

> 'People of BME heritage can alternately transform their perspectives by seeing themselves as pioneering agents of change' (p.45)

Overview of the literature

The literature reviewed is limited and goes beyond English educational experience to embrace perspectives from other countries and employment contexts. The main issues emerging from this body of literature are:

1. The statistics show that BME teachers are much less likely to be promoted to leadership positions than white teachers (Powney et al 2003).

2. Family and community attitudes to teaching influence whether BME people embark on a teaching career and/or seek promotion.

3. The sense of 'identity' of BME teachers strongly influences their attitudes to teaching and leadership. This concept includes notions of race, 'roots', culture and community.

4. There is widespread evidence of covert or indirect discrimination, coupled with a racial 'glass ceiling' and negative stereotyping.

5. Recruitment and selection strategies, and the composition of the 'selectors', may constitute a barrier to employment and/or promotion.

6. Professional and social isolation or 'exclusion' of BME teachers may occur after appointment.

7. British BME people may have a different experience from those who are educated and 'socialised' abroad.

8. BME professionals who succeed in their careers despite the barriers may be perceived as 'pioneers'.

These summary points will be explored through the empirical evidence and used to structure part of the conclusion to this report.

Survey findings

Introduction

This e-survey was developed from consideration of the issues affecting leadership progression including educational background, career experience, people and context offering support, and factors inhibiting professional development. An initial pilot survey was used with five contacts from Black and Minority Ethnic background, and slight changes were made to the survey instrument. The questions were both closed, seeking details of background and career, and open but structured to secure details of experience and attitudes in leadership progression. The survey was available between July 2004 and June 2005 and distributed by snowball contact through the NCSL website, LEAs, the educational press, and personal approaches by members of the research team.

Response rate

Contact was made with 102 BME leaders who had signalled their interest in the research. They were directed to an internet site and asked to complete the on-line questionnaire. There was also a postal option for those uncomfortable with the e-survey. Sixty four people replied (56 by e-mail and eight by post), giving an overall 63% response rate. However, two answers had so little detail that they have not been included in the qualitative analysis that follows. Telephone conversations with eight non-respondents indicated that unwillingness was related to the length of the questionnaire for three people, the nature of the questions for two and pressure of other school business at the time for two. One simply declined to participate.

Demographic background

Table one gives details of the background of respondents to the survey. Forty two (68%) are women. The ethnic summary statements of Asian, Caribbean and African include the seven who said that they were of mixed background but who detailed their background as white with African, Caribbean or Asian parents. Three respondents did not reveal their ethnicity.

	Male n=22	Female n=42	African n=14	Caribbean n=20	Asian n=25
Age group	**%**	**%**	**%**	**%**	**%**
Under 30	0	15	6	5	16
31-40	22	48	6	35	60
41-50	50	25	44	50	12
Over 50	28	12	44	10	12

Table 1: Age, gender and ethnic backgrounds

The investigation was essentially about people in leadership positions and table one suggests that these respondents may be older than a sample of white BME leaders might have been. One participant noted the relationship between age and career development:

> *'It has taken me a long while to get to where I was when I left South Africa – don't they think that we have heads over there.' (male, African , 11 years in UK)*

Education	**Male n=22**	**Female n=42**	**African n=14**	**Caribbean N=20**	**Asian n=25**
	%	**%**	**%**	**%**	**%**
Conventional UK university course	50	79	43	70	84
Access route after other employment	20	7	7	10	8
Overseas education	30	14	50	10	8

Table 2: Educational Background of Respondents

Table 2 suggests that a greater percentage of men have become school leaders after coming to the UK at the end of secondary education or higher education in their home countries, and that female leaders are more likely to have followed a conventional education in the UK. This may be linked to this comment:

> *'As a Muslim woman it is expected that we will remain within our communities and so we have had to make progress as opportunities become available' (female, Asian, in UK all her life)*

Although the sub-sample is small, it appears that those coming from Africa have followed unconventional routes into teaching. This is shown in the employment profile of three African males, one of whom had a seven year spell of labouring whilst he sought acceptance for his qualifications in the UK, another had eleven posts, four of them acting or temporary, before achieving headship and the third stated that:

> *'There have been so many difficulties that I do not want to share with you' (male, African, 7 years in UK)*

The two females of African ethnicity both report considerable problems in securing permanent leadership posts:

'I have been faced with racism at every step compounded by a lack of support from management.' (female, African mixed, 11 years in UK)

Male respondents of Caribbean origin, including two of Asian parentage, came to the country at the end of their secondary education, and appear to have moved from labouring or clerical employment to teaching as an objective in their late twenties. The female Caribbean African respondents appear to have started their progression towards teaching as a response to parental expectations within the UK. This high level of parental and family support, together with a hint of the challenges being faced, is reflected in the comment that:

'I came from the grammar school at home to the UK at the age of 12 but was then placed in a secondary modern school. My family have been a constant support - a person I met as a young mother told me she could see my guardian angel over my shoulder and this gave me hope in my most challenging moments' (female, Caribbean, 40 yrs in UK)

The respondents were asked to outline their career history in some detail as this provides evidence of the level of employment and the stages through which they have passed in securing leadership positions. Table 3 shows the post held by the leaders at the time of their response.

Career	**Male n=22**	**Female n=42**	**African n=14**	**Caribbean n=20**	**Asian n=25**
	%	%	%	%	%
Current leadership level:					
Headteacher	34	31	14	40	28
Senior management	14	19	7	30	4
Middle Management	50	29	50	30	48
Other	2	31	29	0	20

Table 3: Current leadership position

Table 3 suggests that a higher percentage of the female respondents have remained in junior leadership positions and that those of Caribbean ethnicity have generally been more successful in climbing the leadership ladder. However, the sub-samples are small and do not provide a basis for confident generalisations.

The group were asked to outline both the number of posts held in moving to their current position and an indication of the extent to which they undertook employment prior to teaching. They were also asked to outline the number of acting posts held. In moving to headship, the 11 women listing their full career history had a mean of 6.5 posts and six of the group had two acting posts. The four male heads giving full details had a mean of 7.5 teaching posts and two of them had two acting posts en route. At the middle management level, males have moved to their present post after a mean of 3.2 posts, whilst the mean for females is 4.6 posts with a considerable number of parallel moves within the primary sector:

'There have been several moves within the school so that I can be better qualified when it comes to promotion.' (female, Asian, 10 yrs. teaching)

A man at the same career stage suggests that:

'It is so much more difficult for you to make progress if you are black ; every hurdle is higher and the number of hoops is also greater' (male, African, 12 years teaching)

Consideration of the experience of ethnic groups suggests that the only difference relates to women of Asian ethnicity who appear to take longer to move from their first post. In part this may be related to their tendency to stay within their community but one suggests that:

'Where we are working within a white community the chances of success are minimised because we are just not accepted' (female, Asian, primary teacher)

Respondents were asked to outline their participation in leadership development activities. Table 4 summarises the preparation activities of the respondents:

Activity	**Female % (n=42)**			**Male % (n=22)**		
	Not undertake	Little value	Great value	Not undertake	Little value	Great value
HE management course	65	15	20	55.6	22.2	22.2
LEA leadership course	55	27.5	17.5	44.5	27.8	27.8
NPQH	60	17.5	12.5	72.2	0	27.8
Headlamp funding	90	5	5	88.9	0	11.1
New Visions	95	0	5	94.4	0	5.6
Leading from the Middle	85	7.5	7.5	88.9	11.1	0
Other NCSL courses	80	5	15	77.3	0	22.7

Table 4: Leadership Preparation

Table 4 shows that university and LEA programmes, plus NPQH, are the activities taken by most of those who had embarked on formal leadership preparation. University courses, and 'other NCSL courses', including 'Equal Access to Promotion', have a majority response indicating that they were of great value. Men appear to be more likely to take part in leadership development programmes.
The problems for those from diverse backgrounds are highlighted by one headteacher:

'I am Head of a 720 + 26 fulltime childcare school with 85% BME pupils. 30% Turkish, 30% Black African and African / Caribbean, 15% White and the other 25% made up from other groups. We have approximately 38 languages spoken by families. Approximately 50% of all staff are from BME backgrounds. One of my deputies is Caribbean, the other White with an Indian husband. The staff on the whole represents the children's backgrounds, apart from the Somali community (there are no Somali teachers at the moment). A number of the teachers are overseas trained from Jamaica who have all had to complete QTS, GTP or TP due to the lack of communication at the point of recruitment (in Jamaica) that their qualifications do not match the English ones. This has been very traumatic at times for teachers with 10 or more years experience of teaching in the Caribbean.' (male, Caribbean, headteacher)

School context

Responses indicate that most teachers from ethnic minority groups are inclined to work in those schools where there are also concentrations of pupils of similar

backgrounds (see table 5). Not all respondents gave details of pupil or staff numbers although some used expressions such as 'diverse but with no other ethnic minority staff'. Analysis is based only on objective responses.

% BMEL pupils	% Male (n=15)	% Female (n=31)	African (n=9)	Caribbean (n=17)	Asian (n=19)
Over 75	66	35	66	47	42
50-74	13	26	11	18	21
25-49	7	10	0	6	11
5-24	0	3	11	6	14
Under 5	14	26	11	23	11
% BMEL staff	**(n=13)**	**(n=25)**	**(n=8)**	**(n=14)**	**(n=18)**
Over 75	0	0	0	0	0
50-74	0	10	25	7	5
25-49	23	3	0	7	10
5-24	55	41	38	71	61
Under 5	22	26	37	14	23

Table 5: Ethnicity of pupils and staff in respondent's schools

Table 5 suggests that a high proportion (79%) of men work at schools with more than 50% of BME pupils but only 61% of women do so. It also appears that more leaders from Caribbean backgrounds are working in multi-racial schools.

The proportion of BME staff is much lower and table 5 suggests that even those schools with large numbers of BME pupils are likely to have predominantly white staff.

One return illustrates the low representation of BMEL staff:

> *'Currently the ethnicities of the pupils at [school X] are 80% Pakistani and Bangladeshi and the other 20% are African, Caribbean and White. Approximately 25% of our 127 staff (teaching and non teaching) are from an ethnic background. The Senior Management Team consists of a Bangladeshi Headteacher, an African Caribbean Assistant Headteacher (myself) and 5 other white Assistant Headteachers. 1 out of 12 of our Middle Managers (Heads of Departments / Heads of Years) is of an ethnic origin' (male, Caribbean, senior teacher)*

One respondent cautions that the figures may not be a true reflection of ethnicity:

> *'Currently, my school is described as 0% EAL although there are several pupils who are either dual heritage or Asian. This is because parents do not record ethnicity correctly on admission forms. All other pupils are white British. I am the only member of staff from a minority background. Others are all white British.' (female, Asian , headteacher)*

Another comments on the greater diversity when non-teaching staff are included:

'The school in which I work is very mixed ethnically, with approximately 25% African/Afro Carribean, 50% white of many descriptions and 25% indo Chinese, Turkish and mixed raced. In my school there are 65 members of staff. 4 teachers are from a black ethnic group, the rest are all of white backgrounds. The support staff have approximately 30% black staff and the rest are all of white backgrounds. In the past I have been asked whether I am the cleaner or a teaching assistant – people don't expect to see coloured senior staff' (female, African, head of year)

A secondary advisor, after commenting on the need for diversity of staffing to reflect that of the pupil intake, says that:

> *'The cultural make-up of the staff within services for schools is probably representative of the population as a whole. The nature of my work involves the targeting of particular social and cultural groups so I have the opportunity to work with pupils from a range of backgrounds. For example, I have just completed a two year project with dual heritage pupils from two schools in the City.' (female, Caribbean, secondary)*

One respondent notes the injustice of unbalanced staffing:

> *'79% of my students are from an ethnic minority. Most of my colleagues are from the white background. No person from ethnic minority on the Senior Leadership Team. This has been the case in almost all the 4 schools I have been at. This is totally unacceptable. The system must redress this!!!' (Male, African, head of department)*

Although the sample group is not nationally representative, table 6 reflects the tendency for women to be working in primary schools and men in the secondary sector:

	Male (n=22)	**Female (n=35)**	**African (n=12)**	**Caribbean (n=20)**	**Asian (n=25)**
Sector	**%**	**%**	**%**	**%**	**%**
Primary	13	71	24	45	64
Male			8	10	0
Female			16	35	64
Secondary	87	29	76	55	36
Male			58	30	24
Female			18	25	12

Table 6: Sector involvement of respondents

The significance of these figures emerged in responses showing that a high proportion of female primary teachers of Asian ethnicity are in situations where they have limited opportunities for promotion compared with the males of Caribbean ethnicity for whom promotion routes are more diverse.

Career development

Respondents were asked to identify both people and contexts that have helped their career development. Table 7 classifies the responses and provides examples of comments made, but it should be read with caution because multiple responses were allowed.

Significant people in career development	**Male**	**Female**	**Example of comment**
Headteacher	3	2	My first Headteacher. During my interview, although my English at the time was very limited (coming from France), he trusted me and became a very important mentor. He realised that I wasn't good at answering questions (not used to the English system) but that there was some potential in me. My new Headteacher is the second one who has full confidence in what I do. (male, African,

			secondary)
Middle manager	10	18	Head of department who coached me and encouraged me to develop by devolving responsibility to me and other 'junior' colleagues (male, African, secondary)
Inspector or advisor	7	12	LEA advisors - took an interest in my work and invited me to join networks with similarly minded colleagues (female, Caribbean, primary)
Home	2	11	My Mother making me believe I was as good as anyone else. (female, Caribbean, secondary)
Friends	1	5	Friends who may work in universities who see the potential beyond your face and who have also known you for years giving you constant support / encouragement, trying to involve you in new incentives / research etc. (female, Asian, primary)
Community	0	1	The view that I could do more for my community by being involved in the schools that their children attended (female, Asian , primary)
Mentor	3	2	Throughout my life I have had older men that have mentored me and have been there to discuss various issues and possible problems that I have encountered in my life of work. They have been frank with me as well as seeing potential in me that I initially did not see. Also most of my managers have been people that have supported me by giving constructive advice in my progress as a teacher and a manager and leader. (male, Caribbean, secondary)
Union representatives	1	1	A keynote speaker at the NUT Black Teachers Conference whose address motivated me, the facilitator of the NSCL/NUT Course and the EMAS Office Administrator . (male, African, secondary)

Table 7: Factors helping career development (actual numbers)

Table 7 shows that those who have made progress as leaders have been supported by a range of people. This is shown by one head of faculty who writes that:

> *'For one year I had a fantastic head of department, she became my mentor. Even after she left she continued to develop me and is to a very large extent responsible for my career progression. She encouraged me to apply for posts I would never consider and support me practically in the application process. She has high expectations of me. She is highly respected in her field and so her opinion is valued and trusted. She gives up her time to develop others.*
>
> *She was also fantastic in understanding religious needs, she would come up to me and remind me of my prayer times. She ensured at social gatherings there was a table that was alcohol free. She didn't make a fuss about it nor did we ask it of her, she knew and acted on our reticence in being in places*

where there was alcohol. This was true inclusion and meant we could take part in the social activities. Another LEA where I worked made sure, instead of going to the pub for social outings, we went to places which did high tea so everyone could be involved.

My current line manager is also fantastic at recognising barriers to progression for ME people, she is great at developing people and provides the right balance of support and challenge. She also recognises what it means to other people, adults and children, to see a person from my background in the position I am. She will notice the response a pupil will make when seeing me in a school, this is significant because it means she is aware of the barriers to ME leaders progression and the importance of overcoming it.

This made us feel valued, that these people and organisations respected difference and catered for it. In return it makes you give back even more.' (female, secondary, Asian)

Another commented on the way in which different headteachers helped in different ways:

'Three headteachers whom I worked for who encouraged and supported me in developing professionally in all aspects of school life. Encouraged me to take risks in the early stages of my career and not give up when the going got tough. The second quietly offered me opportunities to develop professionally and saw that the potential was there. It ensured that I had developed the skills to take on the challenges of senior management. The third kept pushing even when there was a reluctance not to advance further. Partly by me having to take responsibility for the school when he was not present and allowing me to start and finish issues that arose without interfering. Also allowed me to represent the school on a number of courses that he felt I could lead and get my name known. This also assisted in me gaining greater skills, knowledge and understanding that I wanted to put to good use as headteacher (female, Asian, primary)

The importance of the right help at the right time is reflected in the systematic analysis of career development by one respondent:

'Those encouraging me to speak in public – starting with Sickle Cell – encouraging me to overcome my shyness and speak up for what I believed in. Those encouraging me to start teacher training – ELBWO members. I was impressed by the powerfulness of the message about Black achievers. Teachers who encouraged me during my third year in teaching to try for a senior management job in the school – she pointed out my strengths and encouraged me to seek promotion. Inspector who told me to apply for next middle management job advertised in LEA, following my interview for the above – helped me realise that my community management skills could be transferred to education. Advisor who invited me to be trained as an Assertive

Trainer. Advisor who invited me to facilitate on the Women as Managers course in [LEA] in 1990 – again showed me how my skills were transferable. Friends who constantly encouraged me by telling how good I was at what I did (resulted however in my reducing some of my community work as I progressed in the teaching profession as I was overworking big time). LEA inspectors who encouraged me to apply for deputy and then headship – becoming a head after 8 years in teaching. (female, Caribbean, secondary)

There were four responses that referred to the importance of both formal and informal role models:

'Dynamic black leaders generally with positive attitudes and personal self-belief. Dynamic black headteachers who I worked for and their personal self-belief that anything is possible. Their excellent grasp of issues both educational and other matters. Their willingness to share their beliefs and approach and to act as mentors (unofficially).' (female, Caribbean, primary).

Of the eleven females who referred to the importance of home support, seven were of Asian ethnicity and it appears that expectations of self-improvement were a major force in development:

'My father, who helped me to believe in myself and what I could do for our community' (female, Asian, primary)

At the same time cultural constraints appear as inhibitors and it is only because of support from colleagues that progress has been made. It appears to be important that those seeking promotion are helped to work though the pressures of home and community. For one:

'My ex- headteacher explained that I could undertake higher education, despite having a full time job and two young children' (female, Asian, primary)

Another comments that:

'I have faced difficulties because my family doesn't value what I do and see it as an imposition on their lives which would not occur if I had a 9 to 5 job' (female, Asian, primary)

Both of these comments can be seen to have gender-related overtones but none of the 42 female respondents explicitly referred to gender in their comments.

Respondents were asked to identify critical incidents in their development. For many, there was nothing specific but rather a culture or context within which development was possible. Significant factors are listed in Table 8:

Significant aspects of career development	**Male**	**Female**	**Example of comment**
Determination	3	4	Being taken for granted and my contributions undervalued but observing contributions highlighted from other people helped to ensure I wanted to be in a position where I will be able to help others and not repeat mistakes made. A sense of helplessness to affect change meant I wanted to be in a position where I could affect change. A sense of being pigeonholed, not just as an individual but as a Muslim female, meant I wanted to be in a position where I could say people like us do things like this too and we do it well. (female, Asian, primary)
Promotion support	9	2	Being approached by the headteacher to take the post of the Library Manager. The support and encouragement from the headteacher helped a great deal. (female, Asian, primary)
Making applications	2	7	When I moved to my DH post in the second school, the HT saw similar qualities in my work. In addition, this was the time when they were

Significant aspects of career development	Male	Female	Example of comment
			introducing the new Literacy strategy which had not been introduced in the new school. She gave me the responsibility not only to plan and implement it, but also the responsibility of monitoring all aspect of the teaching and learning in the school. She commended me to work at Borough level as well. She unfortunately went on a long sick leave and I was approached by the Governing body to run the school in her absence. I then applied for and got the substantive post. (female, African, primary)
Mentor support	4	4	Personal encouragement and support from Head and senior staff in school and LEA at different points in my career. Opportunity to 'try out' leadership role as Acting Deputy while the substantive deputy did a secondment - could have left it if I hadn't liked it! (female, African, primary)
Self-awareness	4	5	Recognising that I had vision and the ability to make things happen: Empowerment with responsibility; support-formal mentoring, informal from family and friends and a passion and desire to affect and influence lives (male, mixed Caribbean, secondary)
Meeting challenge	1	6	A series of incidents where staff were either physically or verbally attacked by parents. I set up a clear policy for dealing with this type of incident. We are very strict about these matters but it has worked to a greater degree, the staff are happier and feel safer and the number of incidents has greatly reduced. (female, Caribbean, primary)

Table 8: Significant aspects of career development (actual numbers)

The complexity of challenge is illustrated by one response:

> *'A speaker I invited to raise the morale and engagement of my multi-ethnic, C/D borderline year 11 group, finished off his up-to-that-point excellent speech by saying "Even if you are a Muslim girl you should study". This highlighted to me the perception that was held of Muslim girls, I want to be in a position to challenge that incorrect perception but also to be a living example of it not being true. Also teaching and learning is a noble occupation as part of my faith, this drives what I do, it's not just a job and therefore you give more of yourself to it, perhaps that is reflected in my progression.' (female, Asian, primary)*

Eleven of the respondents make some comment about their faith as a spur to development including

> *'For me my commitment to Christ at the age of 17 and growing up in a positive Christian environment, has given me focus to life and a clear vision and direction to lead and empower others.'*

There is some evidence that interviewing panels and some governors could show prejudice. The reaction of one respondent shows a positive response to that challenge:

> *'X is a high powered upper school, which teaches GCSE and advanced level courses, staff who became ill, or progressed to promotion, allowed for me to take on a management role. It was the RE dept itself who put me forward, I am not particularly ambitious, but the challenge has been a beneficial one for all concerned, i.e., staff, students and the subject profile in the school. Being a practising Muslim in a Church of England school and being the HOD of RE did require me reassuring the governors and parents that despite 9/11 I was going to teach the subject and their personal prejudices should not be a source of suspicion' (female, Caribbean, secondary)*

Overall there were fewer responses to this section than to other questions in the survey. In part this may be related to lack of clarity in the question, in part to the fact that 14 said that there were no critical incidents in their development, and in part to the emergence of 'positive' and 'negative' experiences. A greater proportion of the group reported on adverse relationships and incidents (see tables 9 and 10).

One respondent, facing a complex set of problems, attributes these to the attitudes of both senior management and colleagues.

> *'The line manager for Maths since Jan 2003 who has determined that I will not be successful despite the support I have had from parents and pupils and some colleagues in the school. The head teacher for not intervening sooner. Some members of the faculty who are always complimenting the work I am doing for the faculty and then went behind my back to complain to the headteacher and the line manager. The line manager who publicly shouted at me and said that my team do not respect me; he also failed to put support in place for me when I asked for it for the first time. (female, African, secondary)*

Role of people inhibiting career development	**Male**	**Female**	**Example of comment**
Headteacher	3	6	The present Head of my school doesn't really know how to help me develop and sometimes actually hinders my development through considering only the demands of the school and not the personal needs of staff. (female, Caribbean, primary)
Senior Management team	7	12	A BME leader who used me to prop up behaviour management across the school and to teach the most challenging classes, but did not feel she could go out on limb to have me in a senior position. She went in the end with what

			the majority wanted. They felt that a long serving member of staff deserved this opportunity because she was 'next in line'.(male, Caribbean, primary)
Middle Management	1	4	My predecessor in Sociology, he was not keen for staff to gain promotion, training and manipulated timetables to suit his own needs rather than that of the whole dept and their needs. This led to a lack of self esteem in my initial years of teaching (female, Asian, secondary)
Colleagues	2	6	Members of staff who believed that I have only been given the position I am in as a token gesture and previous managers who expressed the belief that as a black woman and mother I should feel guilty to be ambitious. (female, Asian, primary)
LEA staff	1	2	The Line Managers and Officers who were responsible for recruitment and retention. Also what we Ethnic minority workers call catch 22 That is, you don't get the job because you don't have the experience and you don't have the experience because you don't have the job. (female, African, primary)
Governors	0	1	Governors who discriminated against ethnic minority people because they believed that parents would not take kindly to black staff. (male, Caribbean, primary)

Table 9: People inhibiting career development (actual numbers)

Five respondents refer to the way in which, whilst there has been no overt racism from members of management teams, there has been:

> *'Failure to secure promotion because of inbuilt prejudice masked as lack of age, experience or balance within the department' (male, African, secondary)*
>
> *'Injustice in the assessment of my THRESHOLD application. I worked extremely hard and raised the exam results by 13% and I failed to pass my threshold on 'pupil progress'. I found this treatment so unfair that I resigned from my post.' (male, African, secondary)*

Five female teachers of Asian ethnicity refer to aspects of:

> *'Failure by headteachers or senior staff to follow what is recognised as good practice in multi-cultural situations' (female, Asian, primary)*

One female of African background commented that:

> *'There are times when I have seen other colleagues from ethnic minorities take on challenges that were too big for them at the time and without appropriate support and failing – possibly because this was what they were set up to do' (female, African, secondary)*

However, 11 respondents felt that nobody had inhibited their development:

'I am not very sure there is any incident that inhibited my personal progression. I, may be wrongly, believe that my progression is fair, realistic and at the right time.' (Asian, female, secondary)

'I can recall very few people who have openly or deliberately tried to inhibit my personal progress. Where it has happened the circumstances have been in situations where I have made a mistake that has warranted some form of discipline and they have sought to make the situation more difficult and even detrimental to my future career. My own honesty and integrity has saved me in each of those situations.' (male, Caribbean, secondary)

One comment suggests that it is possible for people to over-compensate for diversity:

'Ours is a county school, with small time values and prejudice and suspicion was there and still is for some as there were, and still are, few minorities in the school. Excluded from ethnic difference, the population is prone to believe stereotypes, but I think my profile in the school has reduced this. Being pleasant and friendly, and approachable, has eliminated people's fears and, although racism will exist, this has become more significant as result of recent events. The Head was initially anxious about my promotion and sent out a circular to the community to reduce their concerns, if they had any, a gesture which I thought unnecessary' (female, African , secondary)

When asked to identify those incidents that inhibited career development, respondents were again reluctant to give details but identified situations in which prejudice, at times giving way to racism, and lack of support for progress, had been experienced. This is analysed in table 10. The relatively small number of responses suggests that the prevalence of such incidents and attitudes is not high but the comments suggest that personal costs have been significant. There appears to be more difficulty for women of all ethnic groups in the secondary sector and for Asian females in mainly white primary schools. The male Caribbean and African teachers appear to have experienced initial prejudice but then reacted as if this was a challenge to be overcome.

Factors inhibiting career development	**Male**	**Female**	**Example of comment**
Racism shown by senior management	1	3	Attitude of headteacher towards non whites (keep creating hoops for me to jump through that are not known until a request for salary increment or progression up the Threshold is made by me). (male, African, secondary)
Racism shown by middle management	1	3	The line manager had told me previously when I went to him for support (this was when my second in faculty was off for approximately 8 months due to stress and the temporary KS3 coordinator was experiencing difficulty in coping with both his teaching and the KS3 responsibilities) that I should be able to cope with the demands of the job even when I have staffing problems, at the same time he informed me that when he was head of faculty with three staff on long term absent, he coped without a problem. I believe that there is more than my competence at stake here. (female, African, secondary)

Factors inhibiting career development	Male	Female	Example of comment
Racism shown by colleagues	2	2	I experienced difficulties in my first teaching post that in retrospect I realise should have been dealt with in a more professional way by senior managers in school. This was the first and last time that I felt my racial background was influencing the way that colleagues worked with me. (female, Caribbean, primary)
Management attitudes	2	6	There is always a pretended misunderstanding between managers and black teachers, whereby one need to work twice as hard for recognition. I always say where a white person scores B a black person need to score AA for the same recognition. Very few black people have managed to achieve in all aspects of jobs without working two / three times as hard as their counterparts. (female, African, secondary)
Overlooked or over interviewed	2	4	I interviewed for a leadership position a few days after completing the EAP course and I was commended by the interviewers as an excellent candidate. I believe that being an ethnic minority in a school that was almost 100% white in its pupil population and 100% white in its teacher population played a factor in my not being chosen. (female, Asian, primary)
Parental attitudes	1	1	Being verbally, racially abused by a parent following a minor incident where their child was reported to me for misbehaving. The parent has been banned from the school grounds and the police were involved. I now try to have as little contact as possible with this parent and I am very wary when having to speak to any parent about the behaviour of their child (female, Caribbean, primary)
Community attitudes	0	2	When working for the underground, I was made to feel like as a black member of staff the routes to progression were severely limited. I have also had many incidences when I am asked where I work and when I reply in a school I am asked whether I am a cook or a teaching assistant. It is almost as though Black people are not expected to hold any leadership posts in schools. (female, Caribbean, secondary)
Personal lack of confidence	1	5	Sometimes I have been reluctant to 'sell' myself and push myself forward, not wanting to be seen as pushy and arrogant. However, I have realised that such false humility can be interpreted as me being perceived as having no ambition or not being committed to the job or task at hand. (male, Caribbean, secondary)

Table 10: Factors inhibiting career development (actual numbers)

Three of the comments reveal a level of concern about the local context and its effect on leadership opportunities. One comment was that

> *'I was inhibited by problems at X - parochial, white, and insular - and felt that I was always an outsider. Difficulties with Asian woman head who was allowed to fail by the LEA - she resigned and I was offered acting post with OFSTED in six weeks - all felt difficult. Carried school through special measures but did not want to stay there.' (male, Caribbean, primary)*

Another argues that there could be adverse effects from positive discrimination and that this was not acceptable to her:

> *'My own personal reluctance to put myself forward for promotion because at times the local political/educational climate made me feel that I would only have got jobs because I was black and not because I was good enough to do the job. It is important for me to feel that I have not benefited solely from 'positive discrimination' for my own self esteem.' (female, Caribbean, primary)*

There is a running theme of adverse expectations that have clearly inhibited development. Four female senior teachers and heads comment on the need to live with local prejudice and two men refer to the need to maintain self-esteem in the face of such opposition. One summed up the situation as follows:

> *'There are no critical incidents as such but a series of minor incidents that as a BME person you learn to live with otherwise you would be in a constant mode of challenging peoples' behaviour. You learn to let go of smaller things and try not to let it influence your outlook. The generalisations people make about you, the expectations people have of you, the way some people may treat you. You actually make this work for you, so anything you do you make sure you do to the best of your ability and cover every base so it cannot be criticised, you endeavour to meet every deadline. Progression is not necessarily inhibited by things that happened to you but rather things that did not happen for you. The right encouragement, the way you are welcomed and valued, the right recognition or word of support is what develops people, if that is not done for you, you will not progress.' (female, Asian, secondary)*

Discrimination

Respondents were asked to assess the extent to which they had suffered from, or indeed, gained from discrimination. Discrimination was overwhelmingly negative with 36 providing evidence of this whilst only 12 detailed positive actions. Fourteen reported 'no discrimination'. This was expressed in the following,

> *'I have never at any time or place felt that my ethnicity has helped me progress or held me back in my career progression. I firmly believe that it is my skills and experience (professional qualities) that have helped me progress regardless of my ethnicity' (female, Asian, primary)*

Another example of 'no discrimination', however, is qualified:

> *'I don't believe there has been any positive or negative discrimination - that may sound naive but I live my professional life as teacher first and Black person, second. This means that any discrimination is dealt with at a professional, intellectual level. I strongly believe that this is the way forward for Black professionals. Having said that, there have been a number of incidents where others – i.e. parents, staff, governors have responded to my*

ethnicity before responding to my professional role.' (female, Asian, secondary)

Tables 11 and 12 summarise the negative and positive experiences of respondents.

Seven respondents made it quite clear that they had never experienced any discrimination, but all were working in schools in multi-ethnic contexts with over 70% of pupils from similar backgrounds. Significantly, five of the seven who had come to the UK at a late stage in their career felt that they had been subject to discrimination both within LEAs and in schools.

'Failing my threshold assessment. I found this was a clear example of discrimination. I went to an industrial tribunal for this. The case was resolved by a compromise agreement which included a big compensation' (male, African, secondary).

'I cannot list any for certain but I am very concerned that people in leadership positions in X and other LEAs do not accurately reflect the racial mix of society. This is not a good model for the young people or for aspiring leaders and more should be done to rectify this. I will not apply for positions in mainly white middle class schools, instead preferring schools that are racially mixed. - I just don't feel comfortable' (female, Caribbean, primary).

Negative discrimination	**Number of mentions**	**Examples**
Racist attitudes	10	Some negative comments in meetings from particular individuals-not sure if discriminatory-usually aimed at others too. But effect is stark on individual as the only black team member. (female, African,secondary)
Management	12	I have experienced freezing out of conversations, body blocking, being talked over, unmasked surprise, being mistaken for the PO, false accusations, I could go on and on. (male, Caribbean, primary)
LEA	6	I have had experience of overt and institutional racism on at least 3 occasions in my career. These involved discrimination in recruitment and selection (male, Caribbean, primary)
Colleagues	4	As a Muslim teacher, I was often expected to give up my lunch breaks during the month of Ramadhan to organise Muslim pupils' prayer times. This is unacceptable and points to lack of understanding of what inclusion means and how all pupils are the responsibility of all the staff. At a school I worked in I was literally screamed at by teachers assuming I was a pupil. I wore a scarf as did many pupils and despite working in the school for nearly a year a senior teacher stopped me going into the staff room saying very rudely. 'This is for Staff'. Another teacher screamed at me in a dining hall full of pupils for being on the staff side of the queue. (female, Asian, secondary)
Community	1	As an ethnic teacher I feel acceptance from the parents is critical. This can really affect your

Negative discrimination	Number of mentions	Examples
		confidence and desire to continue in education. With a few parents I always got the feeling I had to prove myself as capable. (female, Asian, primary)
Other	6	When you are taken for granted and not consulted adequately because you are not well valued for what you do. I believe I could have been in a higher leadership position if I were not black and African. (male, African, secondary)

Table 11: Negative discrimination.

Positive discrimination	Number of mentions	Examples
Positive discrimination	1	I gained from the decision by the school to offer New Blood appointments after a period of internal promotions. They also wanted to encourage diversity and I think that I offered both subject and cultural opportunities. (female, Asian, secondary)
Racist attitudes	4	It is hard for me to identify any negative discrimination that has affected my progress to leadership, because I tend to take a positive view to life and strongly believe that my destiny and progress are in the hands of God not some individual. This is not to deny that it does not exist, but to say for me it has not played a major part in my life to date. On the other hand, I can point to individual examples of positive discrimination that have directly affected my progress to leadership. For example it was a result of an equal access course that I was able to complete A Levels in order to commence a degree course to pursue a career in teaching. Also as a result of the Prince's Trust targeting inner city black youths, I was selected to go on an 'Operation Drake' (1978 – 1980) expedition, around the world. I spent 3 months in Indonesia from January 1980 to April 1980, which definitely contributed to my own self confidence and future leadership skills. (male, Caribbean, secondary)
Management	3	X have been great about my beliefs, allowing for a prayer room, time off during Friday to pray, no meetings after school in Ramadan, time off when I went on Hajj. This has been a learning curve for a school who have little knowledge of other faiths. I am sure that other faiths could also ask such allowances. I have always been assertive about such things. In terms of leadership all the people in management have said that I am the best person for the job, and have been keen for me not to leave, especially since I am now on maternity leave, they are insistent that I do not leave for good, I suppose that this is reassuring, as if they were unhappy, they

		would be keen to find another replacement (female, Caribbean, secondary)
LEA	1	LEA policy to actively employ ethnic minorities. (female, Asian, secondary)
Colleagues	1	Colleagues recognizing my potential and giving me an opportunity to have a go. (female, African, secondary)
Community	1	There has been no concern within the area because they value me as a scientist first and as a black person way down the list (female, Asian, secondary)
Other	2	One headteacher at a school where I had applied for a deputy headship asked if 'someone like me should be applying for this post.' Not sure what he was getting at - but the Chair of Governors who overheard sought me out to say everyone would be treated equally! (female, Asian, primary)

Table 12: Positive discrimination

The overall view emerging from this section of the survey is that there is both positive and negative discrimination at work. Negative discrimination is at its worst where the predominant ethnic group is white Caucasian, and to be most unfortunate in its effects on those who have not followed traditional UK educational paths. Positive discrimination appears to be a product of support from a range of sources. Three mention support from black headteachers who have shown that achievement is possible. Nine mention the support of county advisory staff and two detail help from counsellors outside the school.

> *'Most support came from my General Inspector who was very clear about issues of race - felt able to discuss issues with him that I would otherwise have kept to myself. This was very empowering and also allowed me to de-personalise issues and deal with them in a seemingly professional way - despite hurting inside!' (female, Asian, primary)*

Securing change

a. Positive policies

Table 13 gives examples of positive policies supporting respondents' development.

Element	Number of mentions	Examples
Equal opportunities policies	19	We actively plan and prepare pupils for life in an ethnically diverse society. We participate in a school linking project to enable children to meet children in a variety of cultural and social contexts. Staff are trained to recognise and challenge discrimination. We actively seek to recruit suitable staff who reflect the ethnicity of our school population. We promote a human rights approach to cultural issues. We work closely with parents and the community. (male, Caribbean, primary)
Diversity practice	4	Our school states – and means – we will promote, by all means within our power, attitudes and actions which will actively assist in the creation of harmony in the lives of all involved in the school and which will

		add to each individual's dignity and worth. Equally the school will resist anything which will in any way detract from such dignity and worth on the grounds of gender, race, culture or disability." (male, Caribbean, secondary)
'Best for the job'	3	The policy is very simple, the best person for the job is employed (female, Asian, primary)
Performance review	3	We have annual performance review (documented) linked to whole school staff evaluation – self-assessment and departmental observation. Everybody is judged solely on merit (female, Caribbean, secondary)

Table 13: Positive policies for securing change (actual numbers)

There is also one mention of a successful LEA course aimed at securing greater self-confidence amongst those from ethnic minorities, and two mentions of the 'Aiming Higher' training programme. Eleven of the 34 respondents to this question detail successful implementation of policies but there are five adverse comments from those who speak of the existence of schemes rather than the implementation of policy.

However, seven comment that they believe that positive discrimination is not the answer to such problems. One commented that:

> *'I would feel VERY AGGRIEVED if a fellow black teacher was promoted to my current level of responsibility owing to positive discrimination with a view to reflecting black role models. I have worked hard to get to where I currently am. After qualifying to teach in 1987, I have not allowed my own professional development to stand still. After two years, I did an Open University Advanced Diploma in Education. In 1994, I successfully completed my M.Ed and in 2003, I completed my NPQH. I would hope that ANY teacher who intends to make a success of their teaching career from being an NQT and promoted to Senior Management level would have a similar experience- reflecting relevant 'on-the-job' leadership/management training, together with a Higher level qualification. It should be 'the best person for the job'.....if that person happens to be black, then all the better in order to act as a role model to others. I hope that I continue to be a positive role model to others- NOT just due to my colour, but due to my ability to do my job well.' (female, Caribbean, primary)*

b. Community relationships

There is some evidence that teachers from ethnic minorities face expectations, both within and outside schools, that they will fulfil additional community responsibilities. These are summarised in table 14.

Element	**Number of mentions**	**Examples**
Role model	14	This is best described by the pupils' reaction: Whenever I am visiting a school or a classroom, pupils simply cannot believe that I am there in my professional capacity. Pupils from my background get very excited, a buzz goes around the class, they start interviewing me as to where I come from, what languages I speak. I end up having to constantly remind them to do what they are supposed to be doing. Some pupils just look at me and beam. Their sense of

Element	Number of mentions	Examples
		pride at having someone from their background being in a leadership role is obvious, it highlights the scarcity of ME leaders and the importance of it for the pupils. It is also humbling, your role takes on an added dimension - you are not just there as an individual but a representative of the potential these pupils have to achieve and an aspiration for the pupils to achieve. You are not an individual but a representative, this carries its own burden and responsibility, you have to live up to it. It's a message you are giving others: You can do this too and you can do it even better than me. (female, Asian, secondary)
Cultural ambassador	9	I was the first black person to be appointed to a middle-management position. I was the first one to introduce black history month in my school. Since taking over in my new post, I have organised a multicultural day which has proved very popular amongst staff, parents and students. I have also introduced the Saturday school, and an Easter school, residential at the local university, which has proven to be very popular with the students. (male, African, secondary)
School link	8	In school I am seen as a pioneer in the number of initiatives I try to promote - giving certain opportunities to minority ethnic children like introducing them to universities of Oxford and Cambridge. (male, African, secondary)
As a head teacher in LEA	6	Whether I am seen as a pioneer is not something I can comment on as this is sometimes a retrospective judgement. However, projects I have implemented and co-ordinated have been recognised by line managers as important in providing examples for schools of ways they may want to address race equality programmes within their school development plans. (female, Asian, primary)
Community link	3	Certainly in my community I am seen as a pioneer. Muslim women are not seen as assertive and successful, it helps others to aspire to be successful, and not see just gender stereotypes as the only goal in their lives. The problem is more marked for boys than girls as boys' underachievement tends to undermine their life chances. In school I try to demonstrate that hard work and commitment are more important than gender, class or race and this . . . should spur people on. I do not think being an Asian female affected my chances of success, but I have been offered my opportunities in my community because of being Asian, such as sitting on the appeals board for students in the city, to writing for the local paper, or doing inter faith dialogue, or presenting faith in assemblies in the city/county. (female, Asian, secondary)

Element	Number of mentions	Examples
Offering training	1	Other Black teachers who are experiencing difficulties are regularly referred to me for help and guidance. I very regularly give Black teachers going for promotion pre-interviews and have supported many teachers in their development into teaching (and other professions), and into middle, and senior management. (female, Caribbean, primary)

Table 14: Community relationships (actual numbers)

All 44 who responded to this question offered a positive view of their contribution to the community as well as to the school. Two comments suggest that the respondents were a convenient link between school and community for those from ethnic minority groups:

> *'I am seen as a good link to the Pakistani group within our school community but, as this is a minority group, I sometimes feel that it is a matter of convenience rather than a hoped for development' (female, Asian , primary in a predominantly white area)*

Three Asian female teachers comment on the way in which they are seen as the local link with the school, and one head of Caribbean ethnicity comments that:

> *'I am known in the area and they think that I have street cred. as somebody who can understand them' (female, Caribbean, primary)*

The importance of being a 'bridge' is seen as part of their community responsibility by nine of the respondents (seven Asian, two Caribbean)

> *'Many ex-pupils continue to keep in contact and have said they see me as a role model. Many pupils and colleagues feel certain positions 'are not for them'. When they see a ME person in a role like I am in, it makes it more real for them and achievable. They can 'go for it too'. Friends and family have a real sense of pride, they will always ring to wish me well for a conference, my dad gives out my card to anyone! and reads my things I write in detail. There is a sense that my achievements to date are not my own but belong to the community, this is a wonderful feeling because its true, we are not islands we are shaped by the people around us'. (female, Asian, secondary)*

The extent to which respondents were seen as pioneers was limited except in that they were recognised for their personal achievements but there is evidence that they are seen as community leaders beyond the school.

> *'Have worked to set up and develop Saturday school for up to 100 youngsters in the African Caribbean community. Work with women to establish Womens' Centre and take on Executive roles. Helped to develop Black Teachers Group to encourage constructive approach to support and dealing with negative aspects affecting teachers in their role. (female, African, secondary)*

Whilst the emerging picture is of teachers from ethnic minorities developing within, and accommodating to, the community context there is also some evidence that the community can exert pressures. This is mentioned by six Asian respondents and two other females. Two comments illustrate the point:

'Have had little support from within the local Afro-Caribbean community, some of whom have been hostile because I was not perceived as 'black enough' - because I did not share their views that all white people were inherently racist and any difference of opinion or dispute was regarded as a racist incident' (female, Caribbean-mixed, secondary)

'Something that is not discussed openly is the issue of resistance from some members of my cultural community who feel that any ambition to be promoted within what they might perceive as a racist system is a betrayal. My view is that it is always easier to influence and change a system if you can operate within it at a senior level. (female, Caribbean, primary)

Positive action to overcome cultural expectations is shown in one comment:

'We need to recognize that we have to change parental attitudes so that they can see that girls can succeed despite the perceived view that they should not go beyond their home environment' (female, Asian, primary)

One of the Asian headteachers commented that cultural norms can be misinterpreted and inhibit leadership practice:

'I was brought up to respect people older than me, this respect didn't have to be earned, it was a given. This had a profound influence on how I dealt with my line managers. Early on in my career I worked under a HoD who was unprofessional and unsupportive in her conduct. I struggled in how to tackle this because she was an older lady and I would have to challenge her behaviour. After a year of putting up with it, I finally sat down in a meeting with her and raised my concerns. Another incident was when I was HoD and two people in my department, who were both in senior positions and much older than myself, had issues I had to sort out. I felt extremely awkward in brokering their discussion. She was confusing the respect I was giving her, due to her because of her age and experience, as timidity and so she felt she could bully me. It was difficult, but important, to make her see me as a colleague who demanded respect and professional behaviour. I feel this is an important cultural aspect that needs to be addressed when training staff'. (female, Asian, secondary)

Overall, though, there are few comments about adverse community relationships even where teachers from ethnic minority groups are working within predominantly white communities. One comment relates to the classification of potentially racist behaviour:

'It is always hard to guess who or which incidents are down to your ethnicity unless they are overt in their nature. I have been brought up not to stress over the people I cannot change. In light of this I put few incidents down to my cultural background although I will never be convinced it has not been an issue with governing bodies at interviews' (female, Asian, primary)

Three of the male leaders who came to the UK as children mention the fact that they have become fully integrated within their communities and that they are accepted for what they are irrespective of their background. There are also eleven comments indicating that pupils have shown interest in their ethnicity and that this has at some stage been positively used in teaching. In terms of securing change there is hope that such interest might help in developing understanding:

'Many children find it interesting to know that one can be a black HT, and hope some of them will become HTs one day.' (female, Asian, primary)

Beyond this there are two comments from Caribbean males that relate to institutional racism and indicate the need for further training and policy development for both the white and minority ethnic communities:

'The main obstacle has been institutional racism which involves an unconscious belief that black people will be less effective in leadership roles or that the parent community might find them less acceptable and consequently negatively affect parents' choice of school.' (male, Caribbean, primary)

c. Training and development

Twenty seven of the respondents suggest that there will be fewer problems if there is a greater emphasis on diversity within existing development programmes but only seven refer to the need for race-specific training for leadership. Most respondents believe that leadership transcends ethnicity issues and that all aspiring leaders have to contend with contextual problems of one sort or another. The majority feeling is that over-compensation is counter-productive in changing attitudes. For those who seek some form of development work, it should be as workers in their communities to broaden horizons:

'The key is to engage young people at school level. If they have a positive experience of relationships with teachers and of learning (as I did) they might feel more inclined to view teaching as an acceptable career. While I am not naive enough to think that racism does not exist at all levels of the education system, I am not convinced that is the sole reason for a lack of black and ethnic minority leaders. (male, Caribbean, secondary).

'Changes are occurring but still too slowly. Many young blacks still believe the barriers are there and are not as adaptable as they could be. They see adaptability as compromising their core values re being 'Black'. Black women have greater opportunities but they are seen as less of a threat so are given less opportunities to try or make mistakes'. (female, African, secondary)

Seven refer to the importance of developing the local BME community:

'Raising the sights and ambitions of the local community so that they encourage their children and young people to do well. Making senior managers aware of the possible low self-esteem in BME workers and ways to overcome this. Making sure that ME workers have realistic expectations about their job promotion and are able to develop and promote their own personal qualities in the same way as others – it is not enough just to be black or to speak another community language' (female, Caribbean secondary)

Five also refer with some bitterness to an adverse staff room atmosphere and the consequent misery for those seeking to succeed. As with the majority of comments, respondents offer solutions as well as their view of problems.

Respondents were asked to comment on successful strategies that they had experienced or that would be of value in training and development (see table 15):

Strategy	Number of mentions	Examples
Mentoring	15	Mentoring of BEM leaders not by other BEM leaders but by influential leaders in schools. Give ownership to BEM leaders and support in leading initiatives (female, Asian, primary)
Role model development	5	There is a need not to focus on the negative stereotypes and accept the overwhelming need to promote leadership among black and ethnic minority workers for job satisfaction and career progression – this is shown in good role models (male, African, secondary)
Monitoring	4	There is a need to monitor the situation to ensure that all staff have opportunities according to their ability (female, African, secondary)
Self-awareness training	11	Do not hold back, do not be afraid to voice your opinions. Do not work extra hard to prove yourself. Work to the best of your ability, do not exert yourself, everyone is replaceable. (female, Asian, primary)
Leadership training for diversity	11	All leaders have to be educated. It is born out of positive, sound, consistent teaching that encompasses and embraces 'different people'. That requires a fully differentiated curriculum. (female, Caribbean, secondary)
Application and interview training	4	Black and ethnic minority teachers need a proper interview preparation, not only the final part of the interview, i.e. Q and A, but the whole process of the interview, from the application through research to the day of the interview. (male, African, secondary)
Affirmative action	6	Without going for positive discrimination I feel that we could do more to encourage leadership potential through directed training (male, Caribbean, primary)
Diversity training for all staff	9	Training should be directed towards other colleagues as I feel racist jokes or bigoted behaviour do little to increase confidence...if done in the staff room, leadership should be about talent, skill, experience and that positive or negative discrimination has no place in the work place. (female, Asian, secondary)
BME specific help	8	Effective CPD targeted at minority ethnic staff. Active recruitment of ethnic minority candidates (male, Asian, primary)
Changing whole school attitudes	6	There needs to be training for ME staff on how to ensure their achievements and contributions are recognised and valued. Many ME staff I have worked with do a fantastic amount of work, for the benefit of the pupils, which the school benefits from but fail to recognise, value and reward. Attitudes need to change to foster understanding (female, Caribbean,

		secondary)
Networking	4	I have gained much from keeping formal and informal links with those from BMEL backgrounds who have faced the problems I have faced in coming to this country (male, African, secondary)
BME expectations	3	Making sure that ME workers have realistic expectations about their job promotion and are able to develop and promote their own personal qualities in the same way as others. It is not enough to just be black, or speak a particular community language. (female, Caribbean, primary)

Table 15: Strategies for training and development

Twenty seven of the 60 responding to questions about their development refer to two particular courses. Fifteen mention NCSL's 'Equal Access to Promotion' programme as being of value because:

> *'It has an inbuilt view of diversity but is not concerned with ethnicity as an issue . . . just with the skills and qualities that we can offer to schools' (female, Asian, primary).*

Twelve others refer to courses offered by the National Union of Teachers (NUT). These are targeted at ethnic minority groups and:

> *'provided the opportunity to meet with others who were experiencing all the difficulties I had met, and was the start of informal networking that has been a great help. (male, African, secondary)*

The question of appropriateness in staffing for mentoring was raised by four female teachers, one of whom pointed to the need for the best person available to be a mentor, irrespective of ethnicity:

> *'Coaching and mentoring by high level professionals who are respected in their field; this may well be from outside the organisation they are currently in. This has to be a high level respected professional because their advice will be trusted. The mentors should not have to be from ME backgrounds themselves but have an understanding of the issues faced by ME leaders. My mentor is one of the leading authorities in the country, she is white but has an even deeper insight into barriers faced by me than even I do'. (female, Asian, secondary*)

There were five comments that suggest that it would be wrong to concentrate on training solely for those from BMEL backgrounds because their leadership needs may be related to other factors:

> *'Don't always assume that management and persona and personal conflicts are simply because of ethnicity and colour, look first at your own personality and management style.' (male, Caribbean, secondary)*

> *'While I am not naive enough to think that racism does not exist at all levels of the education system, I am not convinced that is the sole reason for a lack of black and ethnic minority leaders. The notion of positive discrimination concerns me because it is open to misinterpretation by employers and*

employees. I have seen evidence of minority ethnic colleagues being recruited to a post they were not qualified for. This just serves to breed resentment amongst other colleagues and actually goes against the notion of race equality' (female, Asian, secondary)

One respondent commented at length on the need to adapt leadership training to meet current needs:

'The broadening of perceptions of leadership and leadership qualities would vastly empower many people and in doing so release the leadership potential of ethnic minorities as well as ethnic majorities. For example, the Hay McBer model can be equally applied to all members of a school community - pupils, non-teaching staff and teachers, as well as members of school management. The concepts of leadership based on the 'larger than life character', or the 'person with the big stick', or 'the charismatic personality', or the 'single-minded visionary' are still far too prevalent. The recognition of 'leadership qualities' and how they can be developed would open the way for many people to discover their leadership potential, if only in small but nonetheless fulfilling aspects of their daily lives. This may be especially true for females in ethnic minorities whose leadership qualities, for many reasons, are often overlooked or discounted in society as a whole.' (male, African, secondary)

There is, however, one troubling comment that suggests that appropriate training has not always been available:

'I feel that I cannot comment on my training opportunities. All I know is that I feel so betrayed and that people within the educational system had failed me from progressing in the career that I love and that I have devoted over 15 years of my life to. I found it very hard to trust people within the leadership. Personally there are always those who strive in their career by making the working lives of other people miserable and purposely setting others up to fail. (female, African, secondary – and a late arrival in the UK)

Reflections on race and ethnicity

Respondents were offered the opportunity to comment on ethnicity issues as they affected their leadership development and progress. The views ranged widely from those experiencing a similar bitterness to that offered in the previous comment, to those who felt that such issues may well be a cover for other factors that could affect progress.

At the most negative extreme a view is given of overt racism within a predominantly white school:

' My LEA needs to do more to promote equal opportunity for all; the chair of governors should not be allowed to get away with offensive remarks to black and ethnic people and the council should have more INSET training whereby members of this group are used positively to kick out racism. The county council needs to work together with black people in all professions (e.g. education, medical, law) to positively help educate people'. (female, Caribbean, secondary)

Three comment on the nature of the local context as a factor in this:

'I think that there is a different focus on ethnicity and leadership depending on where one is located in the UK. I think that there is more support for ethnic minority leaders in large cities as opposed to more rural communities. This could be based on the 'assumption' that many black and ethnic minority leaders are based in/around large cities. (male, Caribbean secondary)

Sixteen recognise that there are racism issues but that they can be overcome through personal determination:

'It is difficult without positive support to aspire. I used to believe that my race did not stop me from gaining promotion but I am not sure now. Over the past few years my confidence has been eroded. However, I have a positive outlook and my son is now training to be a secondary teacher. I think education needs to address cultural issues in the curriculum, education needs to move away from white middle class values and views'. (female, Caribbean, primary)

That this requires whole community action is recognised by four respondents:

'We have to recognise that our community as much as any individual has to do much to change attitudes and to tell our young people they can succeed' (male, African, secondary)

Seven mention the existence of a glass ceiling affecting promotion opportunities. One states that:

'I feel at the present time black people are faced with a glass ceiling as to how much they can achieve within specific areas, education being one of them. I think we need to actively promote the good that can be served by members of ethnic minorities taking up positions of leadership and show that they are not there for token gestures but because of their achievement and skill.' (female, Asian, secondary)

But one offers advice:

'Be good teachers, show commitment, talk up your role, liaise with senior teachers in a positive way and sell yourself – offer to take on initiatives and follow them through' (female, Caribbean, primary).

Four refer to the need to achieve a fair representation of those from ethnic minorities within all levels of leadership, and one comments that:

'ME leaders should be mainstreamed, they should not be just encouraged to apply for positions in fields such as inclusion. There is a dire need for more representation at the highest level both in schools and within the education field. Often when I go to subject specific meetings at national level, I find myself the only ME person in a room of 300 or 400 people. This is not because the potential is not there, but rather the potential is not developed, encouraged and promoted. I don't believe we should have positive discrimination; we should just eliminate negative discrimination. (female, Asian, secondary)

Towards the more positive end of the spectrum one respondent argues that:

> *'I think we need to have a different starting point and see BME leaders as a 'given' and not a novelty or special achievement of a few. I think policy makers / developers have to be brave and target resources specifically at this group, particularly as we often end up leading schools in the most deprived parts of the country. Often this is a criticism levelled at BME leaders by other members of the professional BME community. However, most BME families are heavily concentrated in poorer areas and many BME teachers came into the profession to make a difference to students from our communities. Preparation for such major challenges is vital to ensure that good leaders don't flag up as failing due to the circumstances in which they work. The view that we are judged by our colour first and foremost is still very true'. ((female, Caribbean, secondary)*

Three respondents comment that the solution must begin at school and pupil level:

> *'This I am sure has its root cause in low aspirations and self-belief of a significant number of BME children when they are at school. In order to increase the number of leaders from ethnic backgrounds we must firstly get more people from ethnic backgrounds wanting to move into professional occupations.' (male, African, secondary)*

One reflection from a respondent who has been positive in all his responses poses a question of fundamental importance:

> *'The issue of ethnicity and leadership is one that is bound up with the whole history of race, colonisation and power, and the unconscious conflict that white people have in being led by black leaders especially in a majority white institution, whether it be a school, business or church. Also most black leaders would feel uncomfortable having to lead and exercise authority over a predominantly white institution. That may explain why to some extent we find leaders of ethnicity leading institutions that have a high proportion of ethnic minority pupils or people and this is considered acceptable. Whereas, rarely will one find ethnic leaders over predominantly mono-cultural white institutions, and such an example would be considered exceptional rather than the norm. Our key question then, is are we seeking to prepare ethnic leaders in order to lead predominantly ethnic groups, or to seek to develop leaders generally that will be able to lead any institution because of their leadership skills and talents.' (male, Caribbean, secondary)*

As part of the overall analysis of the data, the responses of each participant have been classified as tending towards negative or positive experiences. These are summarised in table 16:

	BMEL background	**Tending to positive experience and attitude**	**Tending to negative experience and attitude**
Male			
	African	2	5
	Caribbean	3	2
	Asian	3	2

		47% of respondents	53% of respondents
Female			
	African	0	6
	Caribbean	10	4
	Asian	19	1
		67% 0f respondents	33% of respondents

Table 16: Summary of respondent attitudes (based on complete responses)

However, it should be noted that 75% of those from Access or overseas backgrounds have had negative experiences and show negative attitudes.

Overview of survey findings

These findings are of self-selected respondents and cannot be used as a basis for statistical generalisation. However, the data provide clear evidence of a range of problems facing BME leaders. In particular, the survey shows that teachers from ethnic minority groups do face problems in securing promotion and leadership development. The main issues emerging from this body of evidence are:

1. Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) teachers seem to assume leadership positions at an older age than white teachers.
2. BME teachers appear to experience greater difficulties if they have been educated and/or employed outside Britain.
3. The geographical immobility of some BME teachers, notably Muslim women, limits their promotion potential.
4. The great majority of BME leaders work in multi-ethnic schools. However, the ethnic balance of the staff does not match that of the pupils.
5. Most BME leaders are able to point to a key person who encouraged them into leadership positions. These 'sponsors' include headteachers, middle leaders and LEA staff.
6. However, most BME leaders also report examples of racism from senior managers, middle leaders, colleagues, LEAs, parents and governors. These are sufficiently widespread to raise concerns about possible institutional racism.
7. Racism is more likely in predominantly white schools than in those that are multi-ethnic.
8. Many BME leaders recommend that equal opportunity polices and practice, and diversity training, should be included in leadership development programmes. This should be for *all* staff, not just those from BME backgrounds.
9. The evidence suggests that a range of support strategies, including mentoring, self-awareness training and role model development, should be made available for BME teachers and leaders.
10. Most BME leaders do not favour positive discrimination but they do wish to see negative discrimination eliminated:

'Despite all the efforts, and all that is said, racial prejudice is alive and well for staff in many of our schools' (female, African, secondary)

Findings from the interviews

Introduction

The purpose of key participant interviews was to collect rich data through in-depth questioning focusing on the issues that had been identified as significant in the analysis of the questionnaire completed by almost all participants. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 47 participants in three phases between September 2004 and July 2005. Researchers took notes of each interview and sent them to participants for verification. Minor adjustments were made to final transcripts by a number of the participants. Sampling was based largely on the survey responses. Participants were asked if they were willing to be interviewed and the sample was drawn from those who responded positively to this question. The intention was to interview all survey respondents who said 'yes' to the interview question but, in practice, a few were omitted for logistical reasons. This report provides an overview of the interview data from all three phases of the research. Full reports from the three phases were included in interim reports.

Demographic information

Twenty six of the participants work in primary schools and fifteen in the secondary sector. Six participants were involved in support services in education and not attached to specific schools. Half of the schools are drawn from the London area, the rest from the South East, East, West and North West Midlands and the North of England. Almost all of the 33 schools are located in urban or suburban areas.

Ten of the sample are heads (nine primary, one secondary), six are deputy heads (five primary and one secondary), eight hold middle leaders posts in primary schools while twelve of the secondary respondents hold middle or senior level responsibility for subject or year groups or were appointed to secure minority ethnic achievement. Five main scale teachers offer evidence of the problems inherent in starting on the leadership ladder. There are 30 women and 17 men in the sample.

Participants were asked to define their own ethnicity. Their responses were:

British Asian (5)
British Jamaican (3)
Asian (11)
Indian (6)
Black British (4)
Black African (5)
Black African-Caribbean (11)
Black Caribbean (1)
Afro-Caribbean (1)

Twenty eight of the sample were born in Britain, eight in Africa, eight in the Caribbean, and three in India. All except five of the sample undertook secondary and higher education in the UK

Motivation to participate

Investigating participants' motivation to take part in the research was intended to provide insight into the nature of their concern with ethnicity issues. Five main issues were identified.

a. A concern to influence policy or public opinion

Four respondents hope that participation in the project that might affect policy:

'The study has potential to engineer positive change of some kind'.

Two said that the research has the potential to draw public attention to the problems BME leaders are facing at work. Three also hoped to change the public's perception of the leadership potential of BME teachers:

'As MBE teachers, we are perceived as unqualified for senior posts'.

b. A concern for ethnic representation

Seven participants are concerned about the limited opportunities for the promotion of BME leaders:

'It's like tokenism; there are no opportunities for people like us'.

'Me and my Asian colleagues are not having access to higher positions in the educational system despite our qualifications and experience'.

One participant felt that it is important that people see that ethnic minorities can be successful and achieve.

'*If you believe in yourself you can correct stereotypes such as that one cannot be successful if he is black.'*

Two expressed concern about an unfair educational system that does not respect equal opportunities:

'I have been, and still am, frustrated in the system…because it's unfair and does not respect equal opportunities'.

Two specified the need for investigation aimed at identifying the factors inhibiting black and minor ethnic leadership.

'It can add to the hard evidence…of why participation is not representative'

One had a more specific objective; to encourage the creation within LEAs of an ethnically diverse panel to look into issues facing BME leaders:

'If a head or senior member of staff had a crisis, there should be a panel they can refer to for advice… Such a panel should be created within the LEA and should have fair representation of membership in terms of ethnicity'.

c. Concern for the well being of BME people

Fourteen participants referred to this issue, expressing the need to contribute to the welfare and career development of BME teachers:

'I am committed to promoting the well being and work of BME people and their communities'.

One participant expressed this more bluntly:

'*We have been kept down and still they keep us down'*

Another said that it was important to look at ways to improve the situation and that teachers are important in terms of securing change:

'*If you get this right then you will get the system right'.*

d. The research is interesting or important

Five participants referred to the inherent importance of the project:

'I thought that it's interesting as it's about time somebody did something about this'.

Three refer to the way in which participation could be of help, to their own higher education research projects.

e. Responding to an invitation

Ten participants simply said that they took part because they were asked to do so. Six of these were from one London primary school. Three commended the inherent worth of the project as an opportunity for reflection on their own progress. Seven referred to previous NCSL programmes, including Equal Access to Promotion, and felt sympathy with the work of the College.

Career development

Four separate aspects of career development emerged from the interviews:

a. Educational profile

All except three participants' educational backgrounds were fairly typical of other English teachers, most having obtained their teaching qualifications at English universities. Two had followed conventional training routes in their home country. Thirteen had also taken postgraduate or post-experience management courses.

b. Professional background

In additional to being full-time teachers, nine had had experience as supply teachers and seven had worked outside education, for example in accountancy. All except 11 of the respondents had previously held one or more leadership roles before their present post

Participants' previous experience in their present leadership position ranged from one year (four people) to 21 years in one case. Most had been in post for five years or less. Their total professional experience ranged from four to 31 years.

c. Factors that facilitated leadership progression

This aspect of development included several overlapping themes.

1. Encouragement -three participants were invited to apply for their first teaching post; five prepared for leadership by attending a professional development course.

   'I obtained a Certificate in Religious Studies in 1989 with a view to applying for a job in a catholic school and to increasing my chances of success at interview'.

   One participant acknowledged that the LEA was developing links between computers and maths and that, because she had a degree in mathematics, she was appointed without formal interview.

Fifteen acknowledge the encouragement of headteachers or other senior staff.

'The head was 'very good at supporting my career'. He 'believed in me'.

'The head said that I had dynamism …The head had identified something early on in me'.

Four acknowledged support from colleagues at their own level.

2. Preparation – nine participants specifically referred to encouragement to undertake preparation for leadership. This took the form of acquiring management qualifications (13 participants), retraining to move to another sector (2) and making an effort to be known in the local community (2)
3. Self-motivation – seven planned to become leaders from an early stage, because this was their personal 'vision' or because of good or poor role models:

'I have seen a head with poor management style and thought I could do better and I took it upon myself to self develop. That's my personality. I don't plod on. I'll look for headship.'

Four participants mentioned perceived challenges,

'It is about getting a range of people on board as a BMEL, to deliver the vision. You might have to work twice or three times as hard. Some won't buy in.'

'*I made a conscious decision to only work in certain types of schools: multi cultural/diverse schools. I want to develop my own people.'*

d) <u>Factors that inhibited leadership progression</u>

Twelve of the participants mentioned factors that had inhibited their career progress. These include 'being treated with suspicion', experiencing outright discrimination and working with 'difficult' superiors:

'I kept trying and finally got appointed as deputy head in a language school. The headteacher of this school challenged my appointment, saying it was based on favouritism. He repeatedly requested that I should be re-interviewed and I felt unjustly treated…. my disgruntled headteacher made my working life unbearable by asking other staff not to cooperate with me'.

'Since joining this school there's been no progression, only stagnation'.

'In one (interview), I felt I didn't fit in as it was a nice posh school and the person who got it was a nice posh lady'.

The responses suggest hidden discrimination and continuing unfairness.

'I felt I was stabbed in the back because the job was advertised without my knowledge.'

'Leadership changed, the new head felt he was restructuring and that my post was no longer needed in the school.'

' Although qualified in SA, came here as a non qualified teacher'

'I've been teaching for 30 years and I am not getting a promotion.'

e) Experience of appointment

Participants were asked to reflect upon the process of appointment to their present post to ascertain the extent to which this might be affected by hidden or overt racism.

(i) The appointment process

Seven of the participants were appointed by the head without an interview while three were appointed following an interview but without external competition. Nineteen succeeded after a competitive interview. Three noted that it was an advantage being black because the post relates to minority ethnic achievement or because of the need to improve black representation in management. One referred to the scarcity value of:

'being a black female scientist'

(ii) Positive experiences

Nineteen participants commented that the appointment process was 'smooth', 'fair' or 'very positive'. Seven saw it as a 'rigorous' process:

'I believe my appointment was fair in terms of having a round peg in a round hole'.

Four mention that the process was challenging or taxing but acknowledge that:

'I felt as fairly treated as anyone else'

'I had the confidence to feel that I could compete at this level'

'I recognized that I was up against other people in the country'

(iii) Negative experiences

Fourteen spoke of negative experiences at this stage. Eleven participants referred to the 'challenging' nature of the appointment process in a negative way, with 'unfriendly' candidates, poorly organised interviews and 'hypothetical' questions. In one extreme case, a candidate received a death threat:

'I got an anonymous and threatening phone call on the evening of that same day in which I was told: 'Your head will roll next'.

Others refer to issues of gender or overt racial bias:

'*Where an internal female applies, conditions often favour her'.*

'When I told the head that I was from [country] …..he was negative. Being a foreigner is an issue and that is sad. It is not openly said and blocks are created'.

In another case, the participant's success led to discomfort in the staff room:

'I felt paranoid because staff were involved, people stopped talking when I walked in to a room. This lasted for a few weeks'.

The ethnic context of leadership

Table 15 shows the ethnic composition of the participating schools in terms of pupils, staff, governors, LEA staff, and parents. The 47 participants were drawn from 33 schools. Ethnic diversity is expressed as a percentage of the total number within the 27 schools where this information was provided. Sometimes, precise quantitative estimates were provided, at times, qualitative statements were used to describe diversity and, in six cases, no opinion was provided on diversity.

Number of schools : pupils	BMEL percentages	Number of schools: staff
6	Less than 2%	11
4	3-25%	9
3	26-50%	6
5	51-75%	1
9	75-100%	0

Table 15: Diversity of pupils and staff

Where possible, we have classified schools where a significant number of BMEL pupils and BMEL staff come from the same ethnic background. This is true for only 18% of the respondents. The full detail of this classification is given in the interim reports.

Table 15 demonstrates that teacher diversity is much less evident than pupil diversity in almost all the schools. This suggests that BME teachers and leaders are under-represented in these schools. This is also likely to have an impact on teacher recruitment as pupils have few role models.

The position with governors is similar with only seven of the 47 respondents showing that governing body membership matches the ethnicity of pupils. This suggests difficulties in attracting BME parents, and members of the community, to seek governing body membership. Unsurprisingly, the ethnicity of parents mirrored the pupil populations (see table 15 above).

Participants were mostly unable to provide information about the ethnicity of the LEA staff responsible for the 47 schools. Four said that few LEA staff were from BME backgrounds. One participant knew no senior black inspectors whilst two said that they knew of one black LEA adviser. One participant said that there are two

consultants, who are both female and Pakistani. One participant said that the LEA has appointed senior BMEL teachers to its committee for diversity and inclusion.

Participants commented widely on several different aspects of the ethnic context of their schools:

a. Diversity and ethnic representation

One participant noted that there are 17 cultures and 17 languages represented in one school while another said that BME teachers are not represented within the SMT:

> *'It baffles me that the head and all senior teachers are white. It is not representative'.*

Others felt that there is little diversity:

> *'I am the only black member in senior management.'*

This was echoed by four participants who felt that the staff does not represent the student population while another added that there was evidence of BME 'tokenism'.

Five commented on positive aspects of diversity including recognition of the value of some BME representation, and the gains made from the application of EAP policies. One commented on the importance of the large number of committed teachers in senior positions who, despite this, are not familiar with diversity issues

b. Discrimination, alienation and racism

Participants provided wide-ranging examples of discrimination and racism that serve to reveal the complexity of social relations in many of the schools. These include:

- White pupils excluded from EMAS (Ethnic Minority Achievement Support) feel alienated and discriminated against.
- Kids of mixed heritage get enrolled as 'whites' because their parents do not want them to be identified as 'mixed'.
- White staff in a predominantly white school initially questioned every decision taken by a black head 'with an accent'.
- Black colleagues got jealous and resentful when a fellow black was appointed head of year; they accused him of 'selling out to management'.
- Feelings of racism dissuaded BME people from working in a white dominated school.
- Evidence of racist name-calling in one school

> *'One parent . . . is being really racist to me. Called me a 'monkey' to my face'.*

There were however, other positive points made by participants:

- There have been no racial issues in my experience (3)
- Social class is a greater divider than ethnicity
- Kids get on – it's the parents who are difficult with other parents

In dealing with the reaction of pupils to staff from ethnic minority groups, there is evidence that 24 of the 47 interviewed had positive experiences. This was because they were respected for their professionalism rather than for any other characteristic.

'*The pupils regard me as fair and strict and colour fades away'*

Three report openly racist incidents in pupil relationships with staff.

c. Relationships with parents

Participants had mixed experiences of working with parents. One had a good relationship while another described the relationship as 'nice but wary. They didn't know what to do'

Parents differ in their working relationships with black staff. It is important to be cautious about generalising. Black African parents are sometimes described as 'positive', Asian parents as 'easy' and African-Caribbean parents as 'suspicious' of any black leader seen to be representing white authority:

> *'They expect you to speak a certain language to show that you are not part of authority'*

There were comments indicative of cross-cultural rather than simply racial issues.

- I have some very stroppy Black parents (Black leader)
- Asian parents did not like me (Asian leader)
- Indians welcomed me as an Indian Head (Asian leader)
- Some would say I am not really representative of Blacks.

d. Internal and external support

One participant says that the head is unwilling to encourage her progression and was unhappy when she was contacted to apply for a headship position:

> *'Someone contacted me a year ago to see if I was interested in a headship position within the authority. My head was very upset when someone asked as she told me that she wouldn't offer me a reference. I don't think my head is a good mentor. I won't trust her. She wants me to stay here for 4-5 years till she retires because it'll be easier for her'.*

Another says that s/he has a good but superficial relationship with governors. There is mixed experience of LEAs with some seen as supportive while others are perceived as negative:

> *'The LEA is not supportive to black teachers and leaders in its recruitment policy: it recruits white staff from Australia and Canada and never from Africa and the Caribbean'.*

Three participants say that the school has a good working relationship with local churches and mosques, and with local councillors.

The nature of BME leadership

Participants were asked to reflect on the special features of their experience as a black or minority leader.

(a) Perceived advantages

Twenty eight participants pointed to perceived advantages as a BME leader. These include:

- Being able to understand the religious and cultural background of pupils (11)
- Adopting a 'black to black perspective', doing things differently and being more honest to black people. (3)

  '*I remember what it was like to be a black child in a white school. I realised that the only way to get out of the situation was to talk'.*

- Being able to provide pastoral care with knowledge of the cultural background. (5)

  '*I have lived in the community where the children come from for 22 years and I know the children and their families. I care about them and I am involved in community work'*

- Overcoming barriers so that the community and parents recognize the voice of ethnic minority groups (2)

  'In a school like ours I feel readily accepted by the community. The parents find it easier to talk to me. They feel confident to approach me…having come from X has taught me to deal with black children at college and school'

  'Black boys who are not achieving can approach me. Angry parents want me to be their voice. Our voices are not heard'

- Being able to inspire others to aspire to leadership positions by offering a role model. (4)
- Being able to deal effectively with the community (3)
- Responding to high public expectations of BME leaders:

  'Public expectations of you are higher when you are a BME leader and this makes you want to prove a point in your work, to show that you too are capable of attaining high standards'.

(b) No perceived advantages

Ten participants say that there are no real advantages, although four do accept that they may be role models for BME children. One acknowledges that s/he is an ethnic minority but adds that 'I don't feel special'. One respondent sums up a prevalent view:

> *'I don't see myself as a BME leader… I'm a leader, not a Black leader; that's how I see myself'*

Four refer to other issues such as gender and culture.

> *'Black girls can be perceived as being loud'*
>
> *'Need for understanding the problems of underachieving African Caribbean youngsters, appreciating the problems and doing something about it'.*

(c) Perceived disadvantages

Seven participants say that it is more difficult as a BME leader, having '*to work harder and prove oneself*'.

> *'Another school next door…had more serious problems than we did but was overlooked by the LEA. For 13 years I had good OfSTED reports, good quality assessment, high pupil and staff attendance rates and many more positive outcomes, yet they focused only on me. They were only focusing on me and that is what unnerved me'.*

Six say that they are less likely to receive support from colleagues, feel out of place at meetings or are less likely to be promoted, because they are black:

> *'Unlike Whites, I don't stand as many chances of being appointed to a senior management position'.*
>
> *'I feel out of place when I go to meetings. When is it all going to change? We need an ethnic mix right through the education system and know that you can get to the top'*

(d) Other comments

There were wide-ranging comments on this issue, including:

- Negative attitudes against black children in some schools (2)
- Failure of existing white heads to recognize the special needs of Afro-Caribbean boys in developing their skills and the need for leadership from amongst those who understand the culture
- Not accepting racism as an excuse for black teachers not to develop themselves
- Accepting challenges in a positive way and not giving in to racism (3)
- Commitment to pupils' educational development (4)
- Equal treatment of others (3)
- Recognition of the need to develop a deeper need of how to work with the system
- A full commitment to succeed and show that I can do better than the whites (3)

  'You always have that feeling you have to work ten or even a hundred times as hard before you succeed'.

- Having a vision of success for all pupils irrespective of their backgrounds (4)

  'Every one of them should achieve their potential no matter who they are and how they are perceived. Every student should be able to learn'.

Enabling leadership progression

Participants were asked to identify those factors that had helped their career and leadership progression.

a. Ethnic /Racial factors

There is some evidence of 'reverse racism', or 'positive discrimination', operating with black leaders being more welcomed in certain communities, notably in London:

> *'I was accepted because I am a Black Caribbean person'.*
>
> *'I got the job because of my ethnicity. The head wanted to change the ethnic composition of the staff'.*
>
> *'I am privileged in that my ethnicity gives me access to certain kinds of understandings e.g. the way of life of our parent community, which I would otherwise not have'*
>
> *'Being black was an advantage in getting the head of year and assistant head posts; the latter being linked to ethnic minority achievement'.*

This latter point also has a negative dimension in that BME teachers may be considered suitable only for leadership posts linked to ethnic issues rather than for wider leadership positions.

Participants mention several elements in their own success, including:

- The expectation of the need for harder work and determination than shown by white colleagues (4)

  'For me hard work pays.'

- The development of greater self-confidence and the will to succeed (3)
- The support given by their parents or schools so that they should succeed (7)

  'My family did not have this. I had to be a champion for the ethnic minorities.'

- The challenge of being judged on one's own merits rather than being given some preferential treatment (3)

(b) <u>Cultural factors</u>

For several participants, working and living in a multicultural environment is regarded as enabling. Much depends on community attitudes to education and the teaching profession.

> *'Teachers are respected in Sikh culture, so being a Sikh I get much respect'.*
>
> *'Being Black African enables me to relate to Black African students and to understand their way of life'.*
>
> *'There is a shortage of people wanting leadership in the Catholic sector and there are more chances of getting a job if you are a well qualified Catholic'.*

Mention is made of:

- Cultural stereotyping:

  'There is a perception that black people are more laid back'.

- The gains from understanding the people with whom one is working (4)
- The positive development of cultural strengths:

> *'My history in terms of my parents, their struggles, how they were treated, their aspirations. I have tried to fulfil their aspirations. The "Go get attitude" that Jamaicans have.'*

(c). Gender

Responses here tended to be stereotypical:

> *'10 out of 14 PE co-ordinators in local schools are male'.*
>
> *'Being male may be helpful when a leadership role involves much evening and week-end work'.*
>
> *'Physical presence is also an advantage'.*
>
> *'Well, there's the traditional theory of females being more prone to getting employment in the primary sector'.*

There are comments that reflect a strong feminist core with reference to the failure of women to move beyond middle management.

> *'I think there is a bias against males in management but it is even harder to make progress as a woman'.*

One of the respondents says that it is an advantage to work in an organisation that is 85% female because you get things done. Other comments related to the Asian community and culture:

> *'People in the Asian community speak with more respect to men than to women.'*
>
> *'It is deeply embedded in the Asian culture and also, men have more preferences and privileges than women'.*

However, seven respondents regard the factor as neutral:

> *'If I applied for a job alongside women and got it, that would be down to my [personal] qualities and not because I am a man'.*
>
> *'Gender hasn't been a factor. I face the same struggles as women and ethnic minorities'.*

(d) System policy and practice

Several participants refer to support from the LEA and/or their headteachers.

> *'I always talk to him (his first head who is still his mentor) about my career. He gave me a computer on my first day because I had never used one before'.*

Seven of the participants refer to the value of the LEA's equal opportunities policy but point to problems in its application

> *'There is an official policy of equal opportunity here. People like me use it. The reality is, it is more complicated than policy. There are people who know that a person can do a good job, others are stereotyping. For example, I was asked: Why do you apply for a job here? Have you applied for a job in London or Birmingham because there are more black people there?'*

> *'Policy can be used as leverage, to bring about change. Policy has been set down by the British society to bring about change, but policy is only on paper, practice is challenging'*

However, other respondents mention the lack of career development for black leaders:

> *'No particular policies exist in the LEA to promote the career development of BME teachers'.*

> *'Promotion is quite hard in this Authority and is based on who you know'.*

Three note the need to be of highest quality to be noted by the LEA:

> *' I grew up feeling that to make it in the system I had to be twice as good to make the most of the system'*

A third group note the lack of effective diversity policies and unrepresentative selection panels:

> *'There is a big gap in the practice of diversity and this is reflected at the highest level of the diocese'.*

> *'Interview panels should consist of people with no conflict of interest, should be representative of all ethnic groups and the LEA should monitor interview processes to weed out traces of nepotism and canvassing'.*

(e) <u>Personal circumstances</u>

For many participants, the attitudes of family and friends were critical. Six mention the role of mothers as motivators and supporters. Several referred to broader family support while others mentioned the encouragement of friends.

> *'It was my choice but they were very encouraging.'*

> *'She[my wife] is my critical friend and, as a teacher, can see the other side of the headteacher-teacher relationship. She advises me on certain lines of action from a recipient's point of view'.*

> '*They [friends] have been very encouraging and tell me not to settle for second best and have given me permission to paddle my own canoe. My partner gives me time and listens, guides, offers day to day support, feeds the gin and tells me you've had enough now'.*

Some participants also mention the significance of their own personal attributes in determining their career path. They refer to 'personal conviction and choice', 'high expectations' and 'perseverance'.

> *'I refused to accept the status quo'.*
>
> *'At one point a teacher colleague discouraged me from applying for leadership positions but I never listened to him'.*
>
> *'I have always had to work hard to break stereotypes – assertiveness helped I think my personality is part of my success. I also think I work twice as hard anyway. I had to have NPQH and I have a Masters degree as well. Had to keep a step ahead'*

One comment, however, was indicative of cultural inhibitors in that:

> *'Coming from an Indian community, you are expected to become a doctor, accountant or engineer: if you don't, you are a failure with lack of support from the community.'*

Another three noted that personal circumstances could be of help in an apparently adverse way.

> *'Me, myself, I had a lot of experiences, bad experiences: family, health, stress problems. Life has not been easy for me. These children do not come from easy lives and I understand*.'

(f). Other factors

Participants mentioned several different factors in responding to this question. Two referred to the benefits of their international experience, some mentioned 'luck' or 'opportunity', while others note 'fantastic support' from school and system leaders.

> *'People have been supportive and the LEA Science Adviser has encouraged me'.*
>
> *'I was in the right place at the right time'.*
>
> *'I was the only BME teacher in my school at the time and felt I had a duty to prove I am capable of doing my job'.*
>
> *'I was fortunate enough to have had people who supported me. Other head teachers had seen my ambition and helped me, their moral support has been fantastic.'*

Comments relating to the religious context are indicative of a changing and more difficult issue that could affect leadership progression:

> *'As a Muslim who goes to pubs and clubs I can get comments from Muslim colleagues and friends. Not in terms of my career progression, but certainly makes you feel…a lot of work needs to be done in communities to respect*

individuals as individuals. There is a role about educating communities to be professional.'

'[Gender] is not so much an enabling factor, especially now. In the first five years of teaching it wouldn't, but more recently it has become a disabling factor, especially since the 9/11. I am regarded as an extremist Muslim'.

Inhibiting leadership progression

Participants were asked for their views on the factors inhibiting leadership development and progression. Each of the factors seen as positive enablers may also become inhibitors in certain circumstances.

(a) Ethnic /Racial factors

As many as 17 participants refer to disadvantages arising from their ethnicity:

'My ethnicity hasn't enabled my career progression in any way. It's harder to network with White colleagues because as an Asian you are perceived as an outsider'.

'There is too much networking, nepotism, canvassing within the LEA and it is difficult for us to penetrate the networks our White colleagues have created in there'.

'Maybe people in my school and community are subconsciously racist and would not want BME leaders for fear of what they will bring to the school'.

'Racism continues to be a barrier; it's an equation of power and prejudice. It is ingrained and institutionalised in our society. You are always marginalised; it is hard to progress if you do not fit into a slot.'

Several leaders note the 'mixed' attitudes of parents with both white and BME parents expressing reservations or hostility towards black leaders (8)

'There has been 'a bit of trouble' with a small minority of parents showing dislike from day 1'.

'Some Jamaican parents expect me to be more 'understanding' to black children, by accepting lower standards of behaviour and giving preferential treatment'.

'Some parents have made derogatory remarks towards me. "Do you speak English properly?" "Are you qualified?" "I don't want my children to learn Asian dances"'.

'Most white parents have a negative first impression about me and question my ability to head the school'.

Some of the leaders also refer to negative attitudes amongst governors:

'I always felt that due to my colour a number of governors didn't think I was qualified to be a head'.

'Some school governors made derogatory remarks that I could classify as racist'.

'I suffered "witch hunting" from some governors who were jealous of the car I bought'.

Eight others referred specifically to negative experiences during the recruitment process:

'People were in shock when they saw my colour at interviews'.

'There is hidden institutionalised racism in the promotion system that makes one feel helpless, powerless and under-represented'.

'I applied for my first job and didn't get it because the school was racist'.

'Language and communication could be a barrier to leadership progression; being a non-native speaker with an accent I stand little chance compared to native-speakers of English'.

Participants also refer to practical problems arising once in post:

'I have restricted access to student records compared to white colleagues'.

'Some staff have no confidence in my judgement and decision-making; they check with someone else when I gives instructions'.

'I am not given opportunities to take part in decision-making in the LEA and strongly feel this is due to racial discrimination'.

'White people visiting the school administration prefer speaking to my deputy (who is white) and often show disapproval when she refers them to me'.

'Being same ethnicity doesn't always help. Some of the most stroppy parents can be Black'

'Bilingualism: there is this perception of bilingual people as lacking something. The system looks for people who are proficient in English.'

However, some respondents have not experienced any racism.

'I am not aware of any negative responses towards me'.

(b) Cultural factors

Many participants mention religious and/or cultural factors as barriers to their career progression.

'I was accused by other black staff of thinking like a white person, hence, referred to as a "black coconut".

'My physical appearance (wearing a turban, in particular) does not suit a good number of people'.

'Ignorance of a culture breeds fear of it. I think that some of my White bosses don't understand my culture'.

Others say that their 'foreign' accent may count against them:

'My non-British accent at times affects peoples' perception of me'.

For another, though, the problem is not necessarily racial in that:

'My South London accent may put people off'.

Cultural differences appear to be of greater significance in working within the school as a community.

' I don't know if the culture is so supportive. The way I speak, you are expected to talk in a certain way. You have to kind of fake it. It is not in my culture to sit in a pub and drink. If you don't do it, you are seen not to be a team player. In terms of progression, I think that if you don't do the social thing you held back.'

' As a Muslim I was told that I was going to oppress children. I believe that what is oppressive is liberation for another and what is liberation is oppressive to the other.'

'To me my arranged marriage was a barrier. I had turmoil in my personal life and it affected my work.'

Another participant responded in a way that reflected adaptation:

'I have an adaptable character. I am not culturally situated in one place. I pick up other people's cultures and shift them. My culture is fluid. I am not located in a particular pigeon hole'

(c) Gender

Many of the women participants, and some of the men, say that men progress faster in primary education because there are in short supply. Some also refer to stereotypical assumptions that men make better leaders.

'Being a male is an advantage and not a barrier.'

'Men in primary schools have better chances of promotion as there is a general shortage of men at this level'.

'The man is supposed to be the manager' and some people look for a 'father figure'.

'There is the old-fashioned perception of men as better leaders. It'd have been better for me to be an Asian man'.

'The governing body feels men can handle discipline better'.

However, three respondents specifically state that gender is not a barrier.

Five of the participants do, however, mention the problems of coping with gender related family circumstances. They mention Asian family female pressures at home with different priorities and treatment for girls and boys

(d) System policy and practice

This question led to a range of interpretations with participants referring to government policy, LEA practice, governor attitudes, Ofsted inspections and school managers:

> *'Government policy on inclusion is actually excluding BME people, not being matched by concrete action to provide opportunities for them'.*
>
> *'The LEA does little in terms of tracking BME people and promoting them. They operate under a broad umbrella of equal opportunity but the reality is different…There are hardly any Asian or Black heads. In terms of population statistics, diversity at the very top is non-existent. This is quite bad'.*
>
> *'I am even thinking of leaving this Authority and working in London where I think there is much more scope, opportunity, and tolerance for BME teachers. In terms of professional development this is not the Authority to be'.*
>
> *'Some of the governors lined up teachers against me and at some point, I had a psychological breakdown and employed the services of a private counsellor'.*
>
> *'Blacks and Asians are held down by White management in primary schools [LEA] -wide. I can't think of any BME head in a primary school'.*
>
> *'I was observed the most by the OfSTED team in my last school. I saw the head about this who asked the team to back off'.*

One brought this together in the following way:

> *'The school has not been challenged enough in my view. I don't think they are prepared for these challenges'*

Once again there are references to the rift between policy and its interpretation:

> *'Official and system level policy is not a barrier but it is how people operate the system and that can be a barrier. Attitudes, stereotypes, racist people may operate covertly to block you and for whatever reason.'*

(e) Personal circumstances

There were few comments on this issue but some female participants referred to balancing school work with family responsibilities while three people mentioned their family's negative attitudes towards teaching as a career. Three mention that they had to pay for their university courses without any family support.

One pointed to the complexity of decision making in matters of promotion:

> *'I cannot answer that because I've been successful. Geographical mobility is difficult because I have children. I have to stay here for my two children and partners are involved. I have to do things right for them.'*

(f). Other factors

Several participants simply repeated earlier points. One says that schools should monitor diversity while another says that the absence of black role models is a problem.

> *'Inclusion should not only be in terms of children. Staff should have a feel of it as well'.*
>
> *'I don't see black faces; this is a barrier. You feel that you need to be quiet or feel that you've got to work harder to prove yourself more'.*

Another mentioned the fact that teacher attitudes whilst a pupil at school can inhibit self-confidence and that this is reinforced when some parents from ethnic minority backgrounds don't encourage their sons/daughters to go away to study.

Some respondents were emphatic that they had really not encountered barriers of any kind in their career progression for leadership positions. However, table 16 shows that inhibitors outweigh enabling factors by a ratio of approximately 3:2.

FACTOR	INCIDENCE	
	YES - enablers	NO - inhibitors
Ethnic/racial	18	15
Culture	7	11
Gender	4	11
System	4	18
Personal	9	11
TOTAL	42	66

Table 16: Identification of barriers by factor (n = 37 with multiple responses)

Overcoming the barriers

Seventeen participants say that there are no significant barriers to overcome. Others mention a range of strategies, including self-confidence, resilience, perseverance, and drawing on the support of family and friends.

> *'Through perseverance and by avoiding being seen as a trouble-maker'. (3)*
>
> *'Support from and the sharing of ideas, grievances and coping strategies with ethnic minority colleagues'. (4)*
>
> *'Informal networking between friends and other BME colleagues is crucial because we feel more secure discussing these issues with someone close who can guarantee confidentiality. There is little support from the public domain'.*
>
> *'My colour shouldn't matter. I can do the job same as white counterparts'*
>
> *'Previous experience of hardship in life has made me strong' (3)*

'I draw inspiration from the headteacher under whom I served in [previous city]. He was very supportive and encouraging'.

'I don't allow people to have power over me. They can encourage, advise but can't control me'. (3)

One said that facing up to issues meant that he was 'fronting up to BNP pamphlets'. Another said that talking with others in similar situations was a palliative.

'I don't know. A colleague who helps, we talk things over. I cry and become angry, but life goes on.'

One of the participants says:

'Every time, when there is a knock back, I go back and overcome it. In community type issues I keep as big a distance as possible. In corporate issues, I take it as far as I could, it seems to make a difference.'

Another comments about pressure linked to religion:

'It would be easy to compromise on a lot of things. I feel upset when I am in a situation that is contrary to my religious beliefs. Why should people have an issue in the way I choose to dress?" This pressure means that you need to be very, very good at what you do.'

Seven refer to their determination to succeed:

' I am determined to do credible work. I do the best. Through determination, I removed a barrier from my previous school.'

Career aspirations

Twenty nine of the 47 participants have clear career aspirations but their aims are mostly modest, relating to the next career stage.

Those who were already Heads or Deputies said:

- Would like to go for a second headship and then a role in the LEA (2)
- Perhaps one day – a bigger school (3)
- Adviser maybe next – don't know (3)

'We have to do everything in our power to see ethnic minority on the same level as others, working together irrespective of race, colour and culture.'

Those in middle management roles said:

- Maybe a Deputy Head role as a long-term aspiration (4)

  ' I've had set backs and been told: You're too fast, slow down. Though I want to be a head teacher, in the next two years I'd like to be a deputy head. I'd like the headship for my 40th birthday – do that for seven years and then be like you (referring to researcher)'

- I may look at Deputy Head or Head of Year posts.

Nine respondents indicated that their aspirations did not relate to leadership. They aspired to:

- Maintain present position to be involved with pupils (3)

  'I want to look at what teams do to mould learners to become achievers, to feel good about themselves and to see how to contribute to society.'

  'I could not see myself doing anything else.'

  'I am not really interested in being a head as that means less contact with pupils. I'm more of a hands-on person'.

- Personal travel/work abroad, possibly as consultants to international organisations.
- Moving to higher education (3)
- Working more closely with children (2)

One further comment was by way of advice:

> *' Have confidence in your own ability. Never give up. People readily put you down – don't listen.'*

Customised leadership development

Participants were asked to consider whether customised leadership development would help those from BMEL backgrounds. Participants differed markedly in their response to this question; some support special provision for BME leaders while others do not and a few are ambivalent in their views. Comments made by respondents fell into two broad categories: (1) the need for minority ethnic leaders to be given customised leadership development and (2) the need for ALL leaders to be given customised leadership development for working in minority ethnic contexts.

(a) <u>Those favouring customised support</u>

Nine participants perceive a variety of gains from customised support:

- Could help to raise cultural issues in training to understand pressures (3)
- Helps to address barriers arising from family and cultural issues (2)
- Extra support to cover issues arising from their backgrounds (2)

  'BMEs are overlooked and their contributions are overlooked. They make huge sacrifices, they give up a lot of time to inspire people but they are not recognised.'

A few respondents offered more cautious comments:

> *'In part, maybe. I found the NPQH very useful. We need the breadth that the general leadership courses provide but it is important for both teachers and managers to be aware of special needs issues'*

> *'It depends on the context. In terms of leadership and management there are generic things that need to be there.'*

'We cannot say everybody is the same. Open the gate first. There needs to be more. Some of the NCSL programmes have modules dealing with strategies of empowerment. These need to address how to deal with diversity. Learn about black empowerment. There needs to be customising of the standard programme of leadership'.

b. Those opposed to special provision

Twenty two participants oppose such provision because it is either patronising, inappropriate, or would be likely to cause further resentment within the profession.

'No, leadership is not about ethnicity, race, etc; it is about leadership qualities'(2)

'BMEL teachers should have the same course and 'the same treatment' as other teachers'. (4)

'Why would I need customised leadership? …No positive discrimination is called for'. (4)

'Leadership qualities and skills required to be a leader have nothing to do with ethnicity'

Some interesting comments were made related to a second way in which customisation could occur – to prepare leaders of any ethnicity for a particular minority ethnic context. These include:

- Part of leadership development should be continuing awareness of differences in cultures
- Different contexts need different skills

But there was a reservation that

'If you are customizing for someone to be a BME leader for a particular context and take them out of that context they would probably be found wanting.'

(c) Ambivalent views

There were several examples of ambivalence in about this issue. They could see the value of some customised provision but were concerned about 'alienation' if other groups are excluded:

'Complementary sessions should be organised bringing together white and BME leaders'.

'I would hate to think that I was getting special help simply because I was black – what about the views of other colleagues'.

(d) Mentoring

There were some comments about the value of mentoring, for BMEL leaders and other groups.

'I would be happy to mentor groups from different cultures and to take bits from different groups.'

'You need a personal mentor to ensure that the school takes it seriously. I experienced this with the activities I had to do with for the NCSL courses'

'To develop you must manage change, be aware of institutionalised racism and take the challenge of being BMEL. You must be armed with the right vocabulary on how to challenge the system and the justification to make the changes.'

(e) Stage of development

Participants were invited to suggest the stage of career development when customized training could be of value.

At senior management level:

'The national qualification is supportive at this level. They need training that focuses on how to cope with prejudices and learning how to deal with them.'

There were four comments that, at the middle management stage, it is not so much a matter of course availability but of the resources to allow participation.

There is more support for customised support at the early stages of career development**.** These include:

'At a very early stage, . . . targeting issues of representation at higher levels and targeting developing issues.'

'As soon as they enter the profession they need to know how they can move up. There is also a need for a specialist course customised to help people move out of middle management to top management. Having mentors will help.'

One commented that the issue is bound up with that of professionalism

'The new teacher would need to realise [their] own potential because as a new teacher you are left alone without any support. The training should address how to progress and to present themselves in a professional manner, for example, I've seen teachers wearing T-shirts. What is professional is meeting deadlines, the way you model policies, getting involved in committees, the Association and the national strategies to develop[your] own philosophies and strategies.'

The commonality of BME leadership experience

This line of investigation was designed partly to generate other participants for the research through 'snowball sampling' and partly to establish if respondents regarded their situation as 'typical' or unusual.

Several noted similarities with the experience of friends and colleagues, notably in respect of racism (4):

> *'We do face similar problems related to racism; my BME colleagues have reported similar incidents though they differ in intensity and dimension'*
>
> *'All of us are in a similar situation; the tokenism is the same'*

Others point to differences arising mainly from different school, community or LEA contexts. One person who has not experienced racism says that her friend has encountered it. Another says that two black teachers 'lack the confidence to become heads'.

Much seems to depend on the nature of the community served by the school. Being a BME leader is seen to be easier in predominantly BME areas

> *'Being a man and a Moslem may have worked in his favour somehow. He's probably been fast-tracked in the system'.*

Some provide anecdotes of the success or failure of other BME teachers in their attempts to gain promotion:

> *'I know of a few with varying fortunes: some successful and others unsuccessful in achieving outcomes and targets'.*
>
> *'There's more networking when you are White and, as a BME person, you can't really penetrate these networks'.*

One of the participants commented:

> *'I have met several other BME leaders having taken part in the Equal Access to Promotion course run by the National Union of Teachers and the National College for School Leadership. Until then, I was unaware that there were so many other people in a similar situation to mine. They too were not presently being encouraged, being given the correct tools to progress and not seen as part of the school's social culture. Very often staff will try to enquire into whether you are part of a mixed relationship (i.e. Are you with a non-white partner or white partner?). I think it is irrelevant and implies that it is an expectation that they have.'*

BME leaders as role models

Several respondents do see themselves as role models for BME teachers and leaders:

> *'Yes, I do, absolutely, without doubt'(3)*
>
> *'Yes, I do'. There are a lot of BME teachers out there who are low in self-esteem and not ready to take the challenge and seek leadership positions (3)*
>
> *'The fact that we are different in colour makes no difference. We are just as good as our White counterparts and can achieve the same standards'.*
>
> *'As a model I'll sell the cliché that "if I can do it, you can do it"'(4)*

Another group see themselves as role models for young people, staff and others in the community:

> *'Most people who know about my career admire me' (4)*
>
> *'I have inspired 2 local black musicians to train as teachers'*
>
> *'I may be a role model for some black people, encouraging a better route for participating in society'*
>
> *'A role model for young people thinking about teaching' (3)*

Two participants do not regard themselves as role models, mainly because they are middle rather than senior leaders, and one comments that it is leadership rather than ethnicity that determines the way in which others regard their leaders. One comments:

> *' I need to have a life away from work, what's in it for me? I hate the role model stuff. It leaves no time for me. I want to think about me for once, be selfish.'*

Open comments

All participants were given an opportunity to make additional comments. This produced a wide range of responses.

(a) Racial issues

Several participants perceive inherent prejudice that affects teacher progression:

> *'If I was a black teacher in an all white school I would be more careful of some things I do. I will think about the views of parents on my race.'*

Three participants mention the 'positive environment' in their schools, while six refer to aspects of ethnic representation:

> *'The governing body reflects the multicultural nature of the school'.*
>
> *'I am concerned about the shortage of black governors and the fact some are discouraged by the position'.*
>
> *'We need a reformed system for the inclusion of ethnic minority leaders in the educational system. People should be attracted to the jobs; it does not suffice to advertise openings'.*
>
> *'I'd also welcome some positive discrimination to be applied across the board. What are they doing about Black males in the primary sector? BME leaders should be appointed if we need role models'.*

(b) Discrimination

Several participants refer to discrimination and how BME people can respond to it:

> *'Black people may be seen as problematic, so I want to make them effective in all aspects of society'*

'Due to colonisation many black people believe that "made in Britain is best", so are over respectful to white people and white heads'.

'There is a need to collect and publish statistical data on the number of BME and white leaders in schools so that the issue of the under-representation of BME leaders would be taken seriously'

'Stop looking to blame someone else; look to yourself and see what you can do'

One referred specifically to NCSL:

'NCSL should lead by example, reach out to people, find out what qualities they have and help in developing them'.

Two referred to aspects of discrimination in the following terms:

'I have had experience of individuals being in a position simply because they were in the right place at the right time. This is wrong and can set us back by the image that it gives the public of BMEL people in leadership'

'Giving Black people a "stepping stone" will not solve anything – we don't want teachers because they are black. We want them because they can teach'

c) Context

Four refer to the slow progress of improvement for BMEL leaders, regretting that:

'West Indians have been here for forty years and underachievement is still an issue'

'There has been a failure to recognise that there is a need for teachers from minority ethnic groups so that they can make a real difference to the life chances of many young people'

'Commitment, empathy and dedication are the answer. The education of our children is valuable.'

' I do really think that there is a need for training the BME – there is real need. They need to open doors. There are perceptions and stereotypes of what people can do. In terms of tokenism, it's not what I am talking about. True inclusion happens only when there is true dialogue.'

Overview of interview findings

This report provides findings from all three phases of interviews with BME leaders. The research does not provide a basis for generalisation because probability sampling was not possible. However, the interview samples are more than sufficient to exemplify the issues facing black and minority teachers and leaders (BMEL) at different levels in primary and secondary schools, and also in other sectors of education. The data confirm that BMEL leaders face a range of problems. The main issues emerging from this body of evidence are:

1. There was an unusual level of interest in the research with many participants 'burning' to share their experiences with the researcher. This was motivated by a perception of the need for policy change to achieve a more balanced representation of BME teachers in leadership positions.
2. It is clear that there is a significant under-representation of BME teachers and leaders compared to the ethnic balance of pupils and school communities.
3. BME leaders have an advantage because of their ability to empathise with pupils from ethnic minorities but a disadvantage in that career progress is perceived to be more difficult for them than white leaders.
4. Many BME leaders have experienced support from headteachers, LEAs, family and friends. Some have also benefited from positive discrimination.
5. A majority of BME leaders report a range of factors inhibiting their career development, including race, culture, dress, accent and religion. The attitudes of certain LEA officers, school governors, headteachers, senior managers and Ofsted inspectors are all seen as barriers to career progress.
6. BME leaders overcome the barriers through a range of strategies, including self-confidence, thorough preparation, resilience, perseverance, and drawing on the support of family and friends.
7. Many BME leaders regard themselves as role models for BME teachers, pupils and communities.
8. A majority of respondents believe that racism and discrimination are significant features of the appointments process and the day-to-day experience of BME leaders.

Conclusion

The survey and interview findings provide substantial evidence of the recent and contemporary experience of black and minority ethnic leaders at all levels in English primary and secondary schools. The participants offer a detailed portrait of life as a BME leader and of the many hurdles to be cleared in order to progress within the English education system. Their enthusiastic involvement in the project demonstrates that the research met a perceived need for a systematic enquiry on this important topic. The first part of the conclusion links the findings to insights from the literature.

Personal experience

The responses of the BME leaders are inevitably influenced by their experience as professionals and as members of their own communities. While the participants have many similar experiences, there are also important variations arising from their ethnic backgrounds and birthplaces. Teachers and leaders are shaped by their personal experiences and by their communities (Bishop 2003, Bravette-Gordon 2001).

Almost 70% of the interviewees were born in Britain and most of these choose to describe themselves as 'black British', 'British Asian', etc. Others prefer to refer to their family origins, for example 'black African'. This connects to the concepts of 'identity', 'colour' and 'roots', discussed in the literature, but also confirms that ethnic minorities are complex and cannot be treated as a homogenous entity. This can be

illustrated by the evidence which shows that British born BME teachers are more likely to become senior leaders while those born overseas are thinly spread in those positions and are more concentrated at the lower levels of leadership. Some participants believe that their foreign accent has inhibited their career progression.

Beyond such differentiation, it remains clear that a majority of all these BME leaders have experienced racism and discrimination. Powney et al's (2003) large-scale research shows that 52% of BME teachers remain in the classroom as compared with 29% of white women and 35% of white men. These authors argue that this arises from 'hidden discrimination'. Some 60% of participants in the present research refer to race, ethnicity, culture or religion as factors inhibiting their career progression. As one participant explained, 'if you are black you have to be exceptionally good if you want to progress'.

Their professional experience also links to their backgrounds, their family's and community's reaction to their career choice and the ways in which their development was enabled or hindered by their role sets, lay and professional, in and beyond the schools they served. 'In the Indian community teachers are not respected. To be respected you have to be a lawyer or a doctor.'

Context

The importance of the context in which leadership is practiced is increasingly recognised. For BME teachers and leaders, this has a particular meaning. Their professional experience is inevitably influenced by the nature of the community served by the school. Where leaders are working in their own ethnic communities, they are often able to derive the support needed to persevere in the midst of perceived racism and discrimination. Papadopoulos (1999) refers to BME families forming their own communities and this may lead to concentrations of particular ethnic groups in certain areas and schools. In these circumstances, the community often regards the BME teachers and leaders as their 'voice' because they understand their culture, speak their language and are perceived as more approachable than white teachers. Some participants add that understanding the culture of the community, and knowing the parents because they live in the communities they serve, helps to improve discipline within the school. Mullard (1985) notes the importance of the 'cherished stock of central values, beliefs and institutions' (p.50).

The nature of the community served by the school strongly influences the ethnic composition of its pupils. The great majority of the interviewees work in urban areas with significant numbers of BME pupils from different ethnic groups. More than half are in schools with a majority of BME pupils and only 22% are in predominantly white schools. However, most of the schools are overwhelmingly white in terms of staffing (68-92%) and governing body composition (98-99%). There are challenges in all these situations but these appear to be more evident in mono ethnic (white) schools and communities where participants are more likely to experience covert or overt racism. These 'challenges' are often regarded positively by these BME leaders, as a driver to persevere and to do exceptionally well.

Facilitating factors and support

Most of the participants are able to point to encouragement from different sources. The interview data confirm the survey findings with leaders identifying support from several sources, notably colleagues, middle managers, heads, LEA staff and NCSL programmes. 'Sponsorship' from heads or LEA staff is often the critical variable in enabling BME teachers to progress into middle leadership and on to more senior

positions. Many participants also refer to personal characteristics, notably resilience, determination, courage and ambition, but some also mention support from family and friends. This confirms Davidson's (1997:29) view that 'strong extended family support systems tended to act as an important stress buffer for many'. Three leaders mention their experience of racism in their country of birth, which has enabled them to deal with difficult situations in England.

Several participants express the view that BME people need customised leadership development and support at all the various levels of their careers. They advocate 'early stage' programmes to encourage BME teachers to consider preparing for school leadership. Many respondents commend their LEA and NCSL for providing sufficient and relevant programmes at middle management. However, a few suggest a need for more to be done to facilitate access into more senior positions. One participant specifically mentions a racial 'glass ceiling', a problem also referred to by Manuel and Slate (2003: 25). Some respondents also feel that training should focus on how BME teachers can cope with prejudice and discrimination. However, most BME leaders do not favour customised support, arguing that they are 'leaders' first and 'black leaders' second.

Barriers to career progression

The literature identifies several barriers which explain why far fewer BME teachers progress to leadership positions than white women and men (Powney et al, 2003). These authors suggest that marginalisation and indirect racism create barriers, while Harris et al (2003) note the subtle influence of informal networks from which ethnic minorities are excluded. Bhatt et al (1988, p.150) add that this occurs in a context of white interpretation of black reality. Tallerico (2000) mentions invisible or 'behind the scenes' criteria for promotion while Davison (1997) notes that BME leaders may experience isolation as 'token blacks' and face lack of acceptance by professional colleagues.

The survey and interview data provide empirical support for much of this analysis. Tables 8 and 9 show that the attitudes of heads, senior and middle managers, and colleagues, inhibit BME career development for many survey respondents while some also allege direct or indirect racism from these groups and from some governors and LEA staff.

Seven of the interview participants mention head teachers' attitudes as inhibitors while the majority of survey respondents and interviewees refer to negativity from other school managers and staff. These BME leaders also point to racist attitudes from parents, including black parents, and from governors and LEA staff. These problems are exacerbated for women who face a 'double bind' of racism and sexism in some schools and communities. 'There is the old-fashioned perception of men as better leaders. 'It'd have been better for me to be an Asian man'.

Participants adopt a range of coping strategies to deal with these problems. Most persevere in the face of such difficulties and several find comfort in the support of family, friends and professional colleagues. One of the participants says that she often cries and two mention anger: 'I become angry and I sink into acceptance that the world is against me'. Those who experience racism and entrenched stereotypes often have to be assertive to deal with these attitudes – 'I want to show them that black people can do the job'.

Special provision for BME leaders

The under-representation of BME leaders, and the barriers they experience, leads to their conception as 'pioneering agents of change' (Dhruev 1992, p.45). This is particularly evident for the three Muslim women in the interview sample who have experienced both professional and community difficulties. Several interviewees refer to a pioneering role, notably in being role models for other BME teachers, while others claim that they are modelling for a wider audience, including pupils, staff and the community. One of the participants says 'I am a champion for my family' but another states that he 'hates the role model stuff.'

Given the under-representation of BME leaders, participants were asked if they favour positive discrimination. However, most survey and interview respondents were adamant that this is not appropriate, feeling that they are professionals first and black people second. "It should be the best person for the job'. Another survey respondent adds that positive discrimination for black teachers 'just serves to breed resentment amongst other colleagues'

Exceptional people

The survey and interview findings show that BME teachers and leaders are greatly under-represented in comparison with the ethnic composition of pupils. This supports Powney et al's data (2003) about the slow career progress of black teachers. This weight of evidence leads to the hypothesis that those who succeed despite the barriers are 'exceptional people' rather being representative. The British born participants in the research often attribute their 'quick career progression' to being 'unusual and not representing BME'. One of them says 'I am relatively young and I have been pushed to my present position' (head teacher).

Our sample of BME leaders displays several exceptional features:

- Determination, hard work and courage
- Drive, commitment and confidence
- Thorough preparation for leadership
- Resilience
- Understanding different cultures
- Respect for other cultures
- Building positive relationships
- Professionalism (meeting targets, dressing properly and eloquence)

Evidence from the research suggests that BME teachers and leaders do experience barriers and either direct or hidden discrimination. The under-representation has some cultural dimensions but also arises from the 'invisible' criteria used by selection panels, a form of covert racism. These leaders have progressed despite these barriers rather than as a result of positive discrimination or any other systematic support. Rather they have succeeded because their own talents and hard work justified it. Their promotion to headships and other leadership positions is often 'against the odds' (Coleman 2002).

Meeting the research objectives

The research has five specific research objectives. This section shows the extent to which they have been achieved.

a. To establish the scale of involvement of black and minority ethnic leaders at all levels of the school system in England.

As we noted earlier, Powney et al's (2003) evidence suggests that BME teachers are much less likely to progress to leadership positions than white professionals. We have not been able to address this issue satisfactorily because of the difficulty of establishing the 'population' of BME school leaders. However, we can conclude that both BME teachers and leaders are under-represented compared to the ethnic composition of pupils.

b. To identify barriers to the recruitment, development and appointment of black and minority ethnic leaders.

The survey and interview data demonstrate that BME leaders experience many problems in advancing their careers. Appointment panels rarely match the ethnic composition of the school community so they are perceived to be less likely to appoint BME teachers to leadership positions. The participants believe that they often have to be better than white candidates in order to secure promotion. Such perceptions are often accompanied by strong emotions such as anger and despair.

The barriers to progress include several factors external to the school, including the culture of certain ethnic communities, which discourages their young people from entering teaching, and the geographical immobility of Asian women, in particular, which inevitably restricts their career development options. However, it is evident that BME teachers and leaders also experience racism and discrimination.

There are certain exceptions to this general position. Some heads and LEAs are concerned to have balanced leadership teams but this leads participants to feel that they may be 'token blacks' in predominantly white senior teams. In inner city areas, BME teachers may be 'fast tracked' into leadership roles linked to ethnic minority issues but such advancement may be seen as stereotypical or even as a leadership 'ghetto'.

c. To show how black and minority ethnic leaders have been able to succeed despite these barriers.

It is evident that some BME leaders have overcome the barriers but it should be noted that Powney et al's (2003) findings suggest that only about half of BME teachers have been able to do so. The successful leaders display characteristics of determination, resilience and perseverance coupled with an above average propensity to prepare for leadership through NCSL, LEA and university programmes. Many can also point to the support of professional 'mentors' and colleagues, and of family and friends, as important factors in building confidence and self-belief.

d. To examine whether black and minority ethnic minority leaders would benefit from customised leadership development opportunities.

A minority of participants favour customised provision for BME teachers and leaders in order to address the imbalance in the ethnic composition of school leaders. There is particular praise for NCSL's 'Equal Access to Promotion' (EAP) course. However, most respondents argue that preparation should be the same for all potential leaders. Some add that issues of diversity should be a central part of leadership development programmes for both white and BME leaders. The most sensible approach is to continue with the EAP programme and to allow BME teachers to make individual

decisions about whether to seek such customised provision or to prepare alongside white leaders.

e. To assess the extent to which distributed leadership provides opportunities for minority groups.

The increased interest in distributed leadership means that there are more leadership positions available in many schools, leading to more opportunities for all teachers including those from BME backgrounds. The research included a case study of one London primary school that has seven BME leaders. However, here and elsewhere, these leaders are all at initial or middle stages of a leadership career. Progression to headships and other senior posts does not appear to have been facilitated by the greater leadership density arising from distributed leadership.

Implications for practice

The systematic review of the literature, the survey findings and the interview data serve to build a picture of the position of BME teachers and leaders in English schools. While the situation is improving, it is evident that much remains to be done if the number of BME leaders is to match the ethnic composition of pupils and communities. We make seven specific recommendations for action by LEAs, governing bodies and NCSL.

- NCSL should continue to make specific provision for BME teachers through its EAP programme.
- NCSL should review the content of its other programmes to ensure that they address issues of diversity and meet the specific needs of BME leaders.
- LEAs and school governing bodies should review their appointments procedures to ensure that criteria do not discriminate against BME applicants.
- LEAs and school governing bodies should review the composition of their appointment panels to ensure that, as far as possible, they match the ethnic backgrounds of their schools and communities.
- LEAs should monitor the ethnic composition of teachers and leaders in their areas.
- The aims and content of governor training should be reviewed to ensure that they address issues of diversity.
- NCSL and LEAs should consider the appointment of mentors to promote the development of BME teachers.

Implications for research

We believe that this research makes an important contribution to understanding the position of BME teachers and leaders in English schools. The 'voices' of the participants paint a clear picture of their lived experience of leadership. It is evident that they face a number of problems in advancing their careers, including direct and indirect racism and discrimination. However, the research has two specific limitations:

1. Because of the difficulty of establishing the total numbers of BME leaders, it is not possible to generalise from the experience of this sample to the wider population. The findings are plausible, even convincing, and they are supported by much of the existing literature, but we cannot confidently assert that they apply to all BME leaders in England.

2. The findings are based on the experience and perceptions of BME leaders alone. They do not include the perspectives of their role sets; other senior and middle leaders, classroom teachers, other staff, governors, pupils, parents, LEAs and communities. The research data have not been triangulated by evidence from these other groups.

We recommend three additional research projects to address these concerns:

- A survey of all BME headteachers in England. It should be possible to establish the 'population' through contacts with senior LEA staff and the headteacher associations. The aim of this project would be to obtain generalisable findings about the experience of the people who have overcome the barriers to reach the most senior position in schools.
- Case studies of schools and communities in ethnically diverse parts of England to establish what the various role holders feel about the relationship between the ethnic composition of pupils and communities, and the ethnic balance of teachers and leaders in their schools.
- Research with BME teachers to establish their leadership aspirations and their experience in seeking to advance their careers.

Under-representation will continue unless and until there is a pool of teachers from BME backgrounds who can progress to leadership positions within the school system in England. The presence of these leaders at all levels is needed to provide the role models that will encourage BME people and children to enter the profession, progress to leadership positions and remain as leaders to become the role models of the future.

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