Ethnic diversity and the teaching workforce

Research Insights, 2023

Teach First

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Introduction

RUSSELL HOBBY
CEO OF TEACH FIRST

An ethnically diverse teaching workforce benefits everyone, whatever their background. It is good for students; it is good for staff; it is good for the communities that schools serve; it will help our country achieve greater justice, prosperity and harmony. To achieve this, among other tasks, we should address disparities in the selection process for new teachers and remove systemic barriers to progression into leadership roles for ethnic minority teachers. These two goals support each other: schools with diverse leadership teams attract more diverse applicants and are more able to create the sorts of cultures in which they thrive.

Our work with Mission 44 builds on the findings and efforts of many individuals and organisations working to these goals: there is a growing, if incomplete, desire to get this right across the whole education sector. We have learnt much from our colleagues. This research offers some clues as to where to target our efforts, including what might motivate underrepresented groups and how to improve perceptions of teaching. It confirms techniques to reduce disparities in selection such as blind screening, contextual recruitment and post-offer support. Like other organisations, we have been trialling these at Teach First – and they do work. We are keen to share our experience so far and to learn from other initial teacher training (ITT) providers in this domain.

School leaders need racial literacy at the heart of their approach to their workforce (and many other parts of their job). Ultimately, as with so many things, it is the choices of individual schools and trusts that make the greatest difference. This is a significant duty and school leaders deserve the maximum support, guidance, encouragement and resources in pursuit of this task. Ultimately, fair and well-designed policies, honest and open cultures, supportive networks and high-quality mentoring will enable more Black teachers to realise their full potential to become senior leaders, head teachers, CEOs and beyond – and, in turn, support the next generation of teachers in what is undoubtedly the most important and influential role in the country.

Context

A visibly ethnically diverse teaching workforce helps foster social cohesion, helps pave the way for greater inclusion and belonging in schools, and supports pupils to grow and develop – particularly pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds.

More inclusive schools – where uniqueness is not only accepted but celebrated – can experience increased teacher performance and reduced turnover (Gilbert et al., 1999; O'Reilly et al., 1997), provided that HR initiatives are conducive to managing diversity (Avery & Mckay, 2010; Kulik & Roberson, 2008). An environment of visible, diverse role models also supports pupils to grow and develop (Department for Education, 2018:2). Teachers from ethnic minority backgrounds bring different social capital into their schools, helping to promote cultural understanding and inclusion; this benefits all pupils, but it is especially beneficial for pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds.

Research from the United States has shown that being taught by same-race teachers has a positive impact on the educational outcomes of pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds, especially pupils from Black ethnic backgrounds (Gershenson et al., 2018). Ethnic minority pupils taught by ethnic minority teachers are less likely to be excluded (Lindsay & Hart, 2017) or absent from school (Gottfried et al., 2022) compared to those taught by non-minority teachers, and there is fairly strong evidence that Black students score higher on achievement tests when assigned to a Black teacher (Redding, 2019). Some estimate that assignment to a Black teacher is associated with a 20% to 25% reduction in the Black–White achievement gap (Yarnell & Bohrnstedt, 2018).

Children's school years are a formative period in their lives. Their school environments influence how they categorise people based on social information such as gender and ethnicity. If children are taught by ethnic minority teachers, they are likely to learn that anyone, regardless of their ethnicity, can rise to positions of authority, increasing their motivation to do well (Oyserman, 2014). On the contrary, when young people don't see same-race role models in high-status respected positions such as teaching, they are more likely to infer that these positions aren't available to people like them. It is of great concern, therefore, that ethnic minority teachers are severely underrepresented in today's teacher workforce in England.

More than one in three pupils in schools in England come from an ethnic minority background, but almost half of these schools (46%) have no ethnically diverse teachers (Hamilton Commission Report[1]). In other words, more than 4 million pupils don't experience being taught by a teacher from an ethnic minority background. Moreover, the proportion of teachers from ethnic minority backgrounds increased by only 3% between 2011 and 2021 (from 6.7% to 9.7%) (UK Government, 2021).

Reassuringly, the racial diversity of new postgraduate entrants to the profession is increasing; 21% of postgraduate trainees who declared their ethnic group reported belonging to a minority ethnic group in 2021/22, up from 14% in 2015/16 (UK Government, 2022). This is now similar to the diversity of the working age population (21.5% of which identified as belonging to an ethnic minority group in the 2011 Census[2]), but still a long way short of the proportion of pupils in our schools that are from a minority ethnic background (34.5%) (UK Government, 2021).

Collectively, we need to accelerate the rate at which the racial diversity of the profession is increasing, as well as cultivate inclusive school environments that foster social cohesion and cultural understanding, and support teachers from ethnic minority backgrounds to thrive and progress along the teacher career pathway.

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[1] Research undertaken by the University College London on the school workforce data. (Tereshchenko, A., Mills, M., and Bradbury, A. (2020). Making progress? Employment and retention of BAME teachers in England. London: UCL Institute of Education.)

[2] **https://www.ons.gov.uk/census/2011census/2011censusdata** (Accessed 04/11/2022)

MISSION 44

We have partnered with Mission 44, a charitable foundation set up by Sir Lewis Hamilton to support bold organisations, leaders and ideas to reimagine the future and transform the lives of young people from underserved communities.

Through grantmaking, research and advocacy, Mission 44 aims to:

- Build a more inclusive education system
- Support access and progression into careers in STEM and the creative industries
- Empower young people to be positive changemakers and future leaders

Building on recommendations from the Hamilton Commission, together we aim to recruit 150 Black STEM teachers and leaders to create a more inclusive education system in which all young people can thrive. Representation matters and we know that for more Black pupils to choose STEM subjects, more Black STEM educators are needed in the classroom.

Sir Lewis Hamilton visits Kingsford Community School in East London

NATIONAL FOUNDATION FOR EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH

We have also partnered with the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) to better understand where ethnic disparities occur within the teacher career pathway. The purpose of this paper is to share the findings from our research with Mission 44 and NFER. This research would not have been possible without funding from Mission 44.

We need a clear understanding of where ethnic disparities occur within the teacher career pathway and which groups are most affected in order to focus on the areas that would have the most impact. Consequently, we partnered with NFER earlier this year to establish the extent of ethnic disparities and where they occur in the teacher career pathway. NFER used teacher census data to explore the representation and career progression opportunities in the teaching profession among people from different ethnic minority backgrounds, from application to initial teacher training through to headship. They concluded that the underrepresentation of people from ethnic minority backgrounds is most pronounced at senior leadership and headship levels, but this is largely driven by disparities in the early career stages, particularly initial teacher training (ITT).

The key findings were:

1. The most significant ethnic disparities in progression occur in ITT, where people from Asian, Black, Mixed and other ethnic minority backgrounds are less likely to be accepted to an ITT course than their White counterparts. People from Asian, Black and other ethnic backgrounds are overrepresented among applicants to postgraduate ITT, but these groups are underrepresented among trainees entering teaching.
2. Teachers from ethnic minority backgrounds are also less likely to stay in the profession or progress to leadership than their White counterparts.
3. Disparities in progression between ethnic groups differ between regions and training routes and depend on the ethnic diversity of the senior leadership team (SLT). Ethnic disparities in ITT acceptance rates are significantly smaller in London than nationally, but larger for promotion to senior leadership. Disparities are smaller in schools with diverse SLTs compared to schools with all-White SLTs.

This does not mean that ethnic disparities in the profession are solely attributable to disparities in ITT application and assessment outcomes, but ITT selection is likely to be the area that has the biggest impact. However, even if selection disparities were overcome, this would not address the fact that ethnic disparities become more pronounced at senior leadership and headship levels.

Furthermore, whilst people from Asian, Black, and other ethnic backgrounds are overrepresented among applicants to postgraduate ITT courses, a recent large-scale survey of undergraduate students highlighted differences between ethnic groups in terms of interest in teaching and likelihood of turning that interest into an application or intent, with White students expressing the most interest in teaching and students from Black and Mixed ethnicity backgrounds expressing the least (Gorard et al., 2021).

Research questions

Working together with Mission 44 we prioritised the following three main research questions:

1. How do we attract more STEM graduates from Black and mixed Black ethnicity backgrounds into the teaching profession?
2. Do we see disparities in Teach First application and assessment outcomes between ethnic (and other social) groups and, if so, how can we address these?
3. What are the barriers to Black and mixed Black teachers progressing into leadership positions, and how have Black and mixed Black leaders overcome these barriers?

ATTRACTING GRADUATES AND CAREER CHANGERS

To attract more graduates and career changers from Black and mixed Black ethnicity backgrounds into teaching, we first need to understand their motivators and how these differ (if at all) from other ethnic groups, as well as what deters them from applying to ITT courses. Whilst everyone that considers teaching has a unique motivational profile, research we did with Dr John Thornby at the University of Warwick in 2020 highlighted that incoming trainees' motivational profiles differ between social groups (Teach First, 2020, unpublished). For example, incoming trainees with STEM degrees are more likely – on average – to be motivated by 'personal utility factors' (things like salary, job security and transferability) as opposed to 'social utility factors' (things like enhancing equity and making a social contribution). We wanted to supplement that research by better understanding whether motivations differ between racial groups, and quantifying which potential changes we could make to our Training Programme 'offer' that might have the largest impact on the number of Black STEM graduates applying to the programme.

We identified four elements of the Teach First Training Programme 'offer' that we felt had the potential to increase the volume of applications from Black STEM graduates. Using a methodology called discrete choice experiment, we were able to test these elements against one another to identify the specific changes that would have the biggest impact. This methodology allowed us to assess the propensity of hypothetical offerings in competition with one another. Respondents were asked to evaluate two or more different offerings at the same time, some of which would feature novel elements, and to indicate which of the offerings they prefer. [3]

These elements were:

- **salary offer:** Given our prior research on graduate motivations had indicated that STEM graduates are likely to have higher salary expectations, we hypothesised that a salary supplement of either £2k, £3k, or £4k offered to underrepresented groups to increase diversity would attract more Training Programme applications from Black STEM graduates.
- **location:** UCAS data shows that students from Black backgrounds are overrepresented in London (making up almost 20% of all university-placed applicants in 2020 compared to 1% in the South West [4]) compared to other regions. We hypothesised that offering Black STEM applicants a guaranteed placement in a school in London or within 60 minutes of their home address would motivate more to apply to the Teach First Training Programme.
- **development opportunities**: From our prior research on graduate motivations, we knew that STEM graduates place greater weight on career development compared to non-STEM graduates. We hypothesised that offering a guaranteed industry placement or coaching from a Black leader either in the education sector or STEM industry might motivate more Black STEM students and graduates to apply to the Teach First Training Programme.

[3] We analysed data from 125 UK respondents recruited via crowdsourcing websites and via organisations devoted to STEM and/or ethnic diversity. 33% from London, 14% from the South East and 12% from the West Midlands. 50% female, 48% male and 2% non-binary/other.

[4] https://www.ucas.com/data-and-analysis/undergraduate-statistics-and-reports/ucas-undergraduate-end-cycle-data-resources-2020/2020-entry-ucas-undergraduate-reports-sex-area-background-and-ethnic-group [accessed 21/22/2022]

- **lifestyle benefits**: Many graduate programmes offer attractive employment benefits featuring employee discounts. We hypothesised that providing lifestyle benefits such as hotel, restaurant, travel, and gym discounts might motivate more Black STEM students and graduates to apply to the Teach First Training Programme.

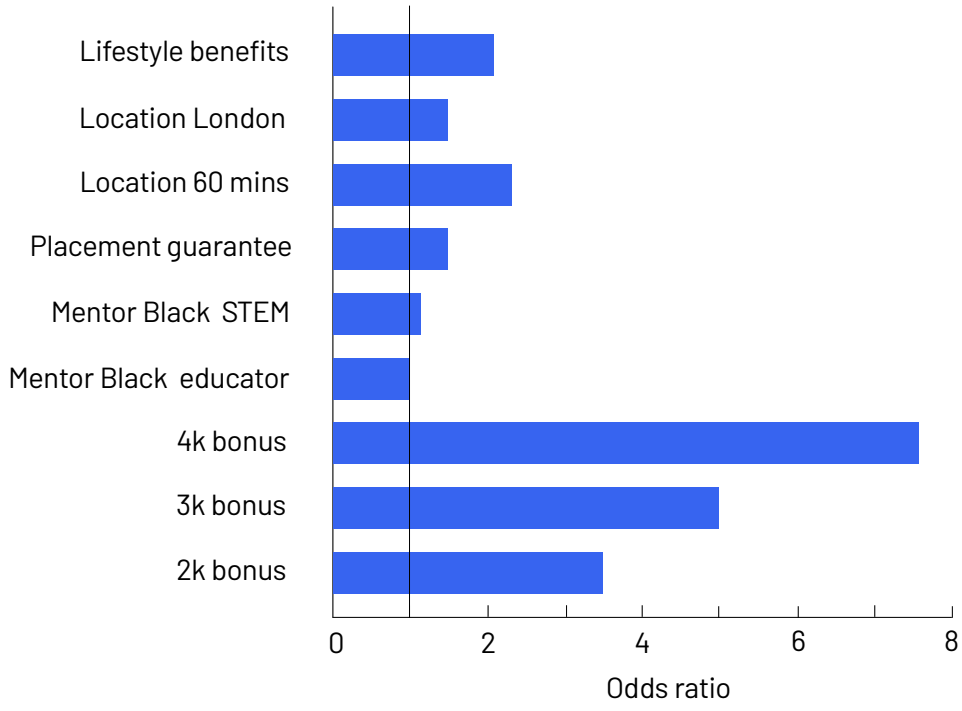
Respondents were asked to make consecutive decisions for several scenarios where two or more programme offerings were presented, enabling us to estimate a more accurate preference across choices. Because they were asked to decide on the overall programme and not the specific element of the programme, we could evaluate the implicit preferences that led to their choices. 125 Black STEM students and graduates that had considered teaching completed the discrete choice experiment.

Figure 1 summarises these findings in terms of odds ratios – that is, the relative preference for a new offering (i.e. the odds of the offering being chosen) compared to the current Training Programme offer.

Their responses suggested that salary incentives would have the largest effect on application volumes, followed by a guaranteed school match within 60 minutes of their current home address, and then lifestyle benefits. Respondents were 7.7 times more likely to choose a programme offering featuring a £4k salary supplement aimed at increasing diversity compared to the base salary currently on offer.

We explored the findings from the discrete choice experiment further through a series of four focus groups with six Black STEM students or graduates in each.[5] Participants elaborated on the financial and societal pressures to have a good lifestyle, as well as the importance of salary and career progression, particularly where starting salaries are perceived to be relatively low. They also elaborated on family and community expectations and pressures to choose a "good" career, and the relatively poor perceived prestige of teaching compared to careers such as medicine, law, or engineering.

Figure 1: Black STEM students and graduates were more likely to choose financial incentives over and above all other



[5] Participants were aged between 19 and 38 with an equal gender split. 71% were from Black African backgrounds, 21% from Black Caribbean and 8% from mixed Black backgrounds. 75% had STEM degrees and 25% were STEM-eligible due to A-Levels. They came from diverse school experiences.

We might have heard similar things from non-Black STEM graduates, but our focus group participants also shared concerns about the levels of diversity and inclusion in schools, with some describing a wariness to teach in a school with an exclusively White teaching workforce, given the examples of discrimination against the wider Black community that they'd witnessed in different contexts. Some even cited having researched the ethnic composition of universities before making their choice of university at which to study for their undergraduate degree.

Whilst the opportunity to be a positive role model for both White and ethnic minority students was appealing, concerns about diversity and inclusion in schools, as well as teacher workload, posed a perceived risk to their wellbeing. These findings reaffirm the importance of ensuring teaching is perceived as a prestigious, well-remunerated , valued profession committed to increasing the diversity of the teaching workforce, and to cultivating inclusive school environments.

Together with Mission 44, our STEM from Black recruitment campaign will bring together Black STEM leaders and educators to showcase the powerful role teachers can play in inspiring the next generation of Black scientists, engineers, mathematicians and inventors.

APPLICATION AND ASSESSMENT OUTCOMES

Whilst people from ethnic minority backgrounds are overrepresented among applicants to postgraduate ITT, these groups are underrepresented among trainees entering teaching, highlighting differences in application and assessment outcomes between ethnic groups. However, as NFER concluded, 'there are some areas of the education system where disparities in progression between ethnic groups are smaller. These are potential areas of good practice that could help to inform action to improve racial equality across the sector. They include Teach First, where the gaps between the acceptance rates of applicants from Black, Mixed and other ethnic minority backgrounds and their White counterparts are significantly smaller than they are in other ITT routes (Worth et al., 2022:viii).

Over the past 20 years, we have screened approximately 120,000 applications and assessed over 50,000 people at our Assessment/Development Centre. We've learnt a lot about how to root out bias in our stage 1 application screening and stage 2 assessment processes over this time.

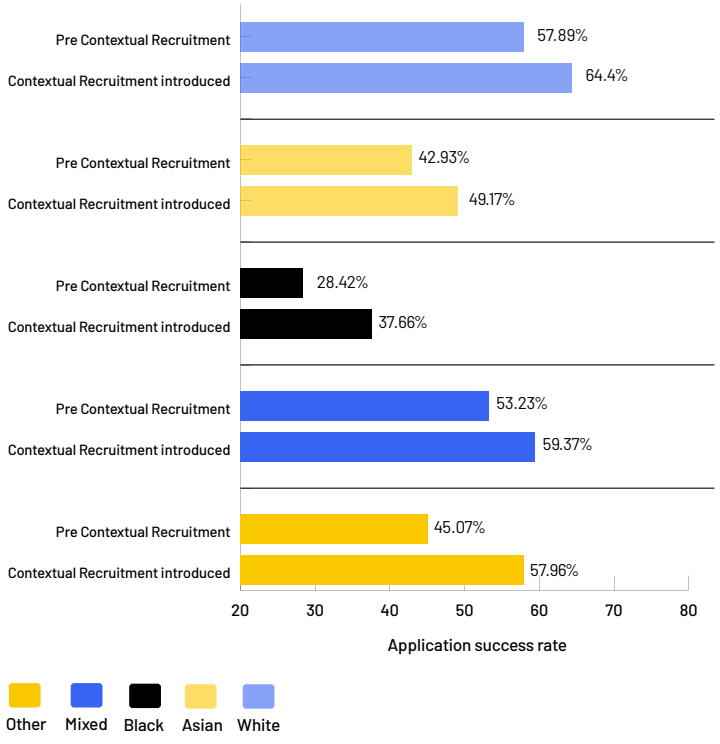
Since 2008, every application submitted to us has been assessed blindly – that is, we assess responses to competency questions in isolation to the rest of the application form to prevent any other information influencing our assessments. This is now considered a gold standard in hiring practices more widely. In 2017/18, we introduced contextual recruitment to counteract the relationship that exists between socioeconomic disadvantage and young people's academic outcomes at school, and their choices made at age 16 (Allen et al., 2016).

In our decision-making, we began considering the impact of socioeconomic disadvantage on academic performance and how this might affect candidate performance in our selection process.

We considered a range of factors, including the type of school they went to and whether they received free school meals, their family's socioeconomic background, and whether they experienced significant disruptions in their life such as becoming a refugee or being a young carer. Whilst our primary focus was on the effects of socioeconomic background, we knew this would also diminish the relationship between ethnicity and application outcomes because of the relationship between ethnicity and socioeconomic background.

After we introduced contextual recruitment, we saw a significant reduction in the gap in our application success rates between applicants from different ethnic groups (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: Application success rates before the introduction of contextual recruitment (2016/17) and two years after the introduction of contextual recruitment (2018/19)



Stage 1 is a competency-based written application form; those successful at stage 1 are invited to stage 2, the development centre (previously called assessment centre), where prospective trainees complete interviews and scenario-based tasks that test their potential through simulated exercises similar to those they may face as a teacher.

Next, we introduced post-offer assessment tools. This required a change in our thinking about assessment from a summative verdict of someone's ability to a mechanism through which we could provide applicants with helpful feedback and an opportunity to show how they could use that feedback to learn and improve. Consequently we reimagined our 'Assessment Centres' as diagnostic 'Development Centres' that enabled assessors to focus on behavioural indicators more so than experience, to identify candidates' areas for development, and to observe their response to feedback in real time.

We began making offers to applicants that were conditional on them completing targeted interventions tailored to their needs and demonstrating progress in response to feedback. Afterwards, we saw the gap in our stage 2 assessment outcomes between ethnic groups reduce (see Figure 2) as a result of these changes to the way we assessed.

The introduction of contextual recruitment and post-offer assessment tools helped us improve the ethnic diversity of people starting our Training Programme. However, figures 2 and 3 show that success rates still differ between ethnic groups. To isolate the relationship between applicants' ethnicity and their selection outcomes from the relationships between other factors [6] and their selection outcomes, we built regression models predicting application and assessment outcomes from applicants' ethnicity, whilst holding other factors constant. This involved analysing the outcomes of almost 16,000 applications received during the 2018/19 and 2019/20 recruitment cycles, and the outcomes of almost 10,000 candidates that attended our Development Centre during the same time period. Our analysis of stage 2 assessment results showed that after controlling for a range of factors [7] there were no statistically significant differences in outcomes between applicants from White backgrounds and applicants from Asian, Black, Mixed or Other backgrounds.

In other words, the difference in stage 2 assessment outcomes between ethnic groups is driven by factors other than their ethnicity (e.g. disparities in degree outcomes between ethnic groups).

Similarly, there was not a statistically significant difference in stage 1 application outcomes between applicants from White backgrounds and applicants from Black or Mixed backgrounds after controlling for other factors. However, we found Asian applicants were 42% less likely [8] to pass the stage 1 application, and applicants from 'other' ethnic backgrounds were 62% less likely to pass.

Delving further into these findings, we saw a difference in scores for grammar and/or spelling between White and Asian applicants, leading to more Asian applicants being rejected. We also found that those applying to teach English performed better at stage 1 application compared to candidates applying to teach other subjects, and that those who completed their degree in a language other than English were less likely to do well in their application compared to those who completed their degree in English.

Together, these findings provoked us to explore new ways in which we can better support candidates to prepare for the application process, especially applicants that are Asian and/or whose first language is not English and/or who did not do a writing subject at undergraduate level. For example, to further support candidates who may not have benefitted from targeted interview and/or assessment support as part of their school or graduate experience, we are launching opt-in Mock Development Centres designed to help prepare candidates more fully for their assessment. As well as building their experience within assessed activities, assessors will be on hand to provide targeted feedback on behaviours that they have demonstrated during the day to help them reflect on areas for development and ultimately support them to unlock their potential.

We are relentlessly committed to eliminating ethnic disparities in selection outcomes for applicants to the Teach First Training Programme, but we know we'll have a bigger impact if we share our lessons learnt with the wider ITT sector.

[6] The characteristics included in the model as controls were: whether the candidate was a Russell Group graduate, their degree classification, whether they had minimum 300 UCAS points, whether they were students, finalists, graduates or career changers, their location and subject preferences, whether they received EMA - receipt of educational maintenance allowance (i.e. their prior socio-economic background), their gender, gender identity, and sexual orientation, whether they completed their degree in English or a foreign language, whether their qualifications were from the UK or not, year, and the month and year of application.

[7] The characteristics controlled for in this model were: sexual orientation, gender identity, EMA, UCAS points, whether English is their first/second language, Teach First defined 'peer group' (career changers, students, recent graduates, etc.), Teach First defined context score (based on their background), NARIC (i.e. country in which they gained their qualifications), location preference, subject preference, first degree institution Russell Group/not, first degree classification.

[8] Note these values are based on the statistical model predictions and reflect an average estimation (assuming that the actual value can be lower or higher); these are not the absolute values comparing White candidates to other candidates directly.

BARRIERS TO PROGRESSION

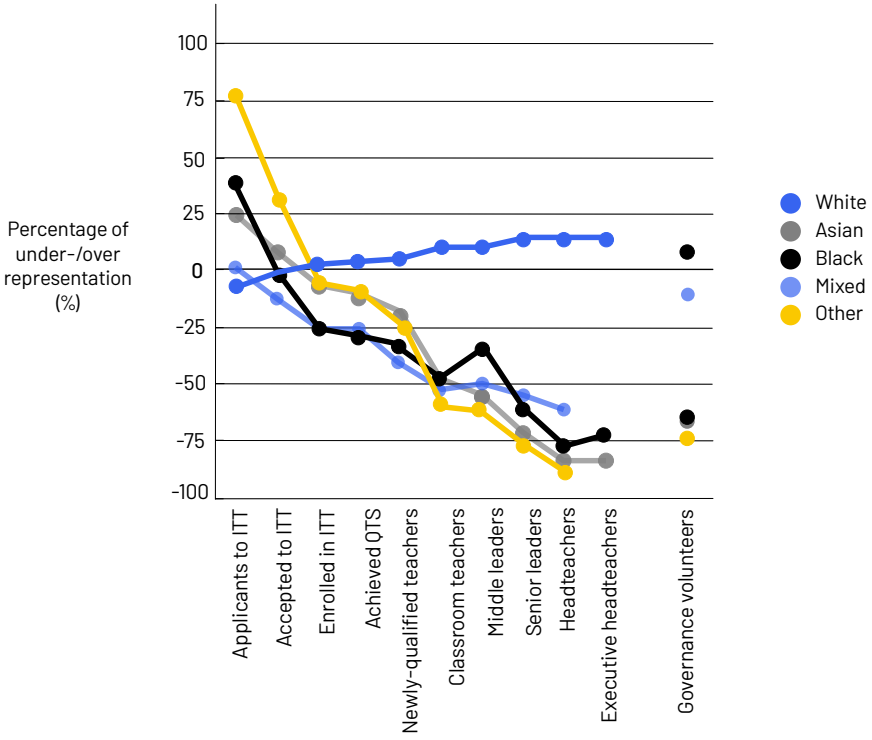
Whilst the biggest ethnic disparities exist between application and selection in ITT, progression disparities occur and widen along the teacher career pathway and are most pronounced at senior leadership and headship levels (see Figure 4 below). Consequently, 86% of publicly funded schools in England have all-White senior leadership teams and 96% of headteachers are from White ethnic backgrounds (Worth et al., 2022).

Disparities widen along the teacher career pathway because teachers from ethnic minority backgrounds are less likely to stay in the profession, and less likely to progress into senior leadership and headship positions compared to their White counterparts (Worth et al., 2022). This owes a lot to the fact that teachers from ethnic minority groups experience unique problems linked to racial inequality and racism in their careers (Haque & Elliott, 2016).

Research by Tereshchenko, Mills and Bradbury suggests that racism and associated inequalities are at the forefront of Black, Asian and ethnic minority teachers minds in conversations about retention. Based on 24 teacher interviews, they concluded that overt and covert racism 'takes a toll on Black, Asian and ethnic minority teachers' wellbeing, progression and job satisfaction', and that 'Black, Asian and ethnic minority teachers had the same high levels of workload as all teachers, plus an additional 'hidden workload' of coping with racism' (Tereshchenko et al., 2021:4). They highlighted how the perceived overall whiteness of SLTs in otherwise diverse schools influences teachers' decisions to move schools, and how school leaders play the key role in creating a supportive organisational culture within ethnically diverse schools.

Importantly, senior leaders' commitment to avoiding stereotypical approaches to Black, Asian and ethnic minority teachers' staff development, together with their 'racial literacy' (i.e. their understanding of the ways in which race and racisms work in society, and their knowledge and skills to use this understanding) play an important role in nurturing or inhibiting the creation of a supportive organisational culture, and in minimising stalled opportunities for career progression that leave many experienced minority ethnic teachers in pursuit of opportunities outside of the state school sector.

Figure 3: Representation of ethnic groups in the teacher profession in 2020/21



Source: NFER analysis of data from: UCAS, Teach First, ITT-PP, SWC and NGA. Population estimates are based on 2011 National Census data for England, projected forwards to 2021.

But, whilst the existing literature highlights some of the unique problems and barriers to progression faced by teachers from ethnic minority backgrounds, there is very little research on the strategies and experiences of ethnic minority leaders who successfully overcome these barriers.

To understand this better, we conducted one-hour semi-structured online interviews with Black and mixed Black teachers and senior leaders working in schools in England who had been qualified for a minimum of 5 years, selecting 10 participants (from the 60+ expressions of interest) across a variety of demographic characteristics, levels of seniority and regions, as well as schools with varying levels of diversity. Interviewees shared their experiences of discrimination, and of the stereotyping of Black educators, reinforcing what we had read in the existing literature (Joseph-Salisbury, 2020; Tereshchenko et al., 2021).

One way we are trying to address these systemic barriers to the progression of ethnic minority teachers is by building the racial literacy of schools' senior leadership teams (SLT) through our leadership programmes. For example, we have created new content for school leadership teams on our Leading Together programme that supports them to conduct Equality Impact Assessments designed to ensure their policies, practices, and decision-making processes are fully addressing racial inequality and racism in their schools.

The Black school leaders we interviewed – each of whom had overcome barriers to progression – also highlighted the importance of finding ways to celebrate their ethnic identity in their day-to-day work, of resilience, and of their refusal to be limited by senior colleagues who discouraged them from applying for promotions. They also told us about the importance of building networks/connections and seeking support and advice from multiple mentors, both from within and beyond the Black community.

Inspired by their stories, we are cultivating networks that celebrate ethnic diversity and the impact that diverse role models can have on pupils, at the same time as providing a safe space for teachers and leaders from ethnic minority backgrounds to talk about the additional challenges they face. Seven affinity networks were set up in 2021/2022 to support trainees and ambassadors, including the Teach First BAME network to provide support from both within and beyond the ethnic minority community. There are also a number of wider networks aimed at supporting teachers from ethnic minority backgrounds, such as Black Men Teach, Black Teachers Connect, and NAHT Leaders for Race Equality.

We are also exploring the potential for a mentoring scheme for Black teachers interested in progressing into leadership, and we are committed to ensuring that Black educators can access the tools to build/protect their resilience and cope with the additional challenges and emotional demands of being a Black teacher or school leader.

Implications

We believe that our research findings have the following implications for schools, training providers and government:

- We need to attract an ethnically diverse pool of people into the teaching profession.
- We need to close the gap between application and assessment outcomes between ethnic groups.
- We need to support more teachers from ethnic minority backgrounds to stay in the profession and to progress into leadership positions.

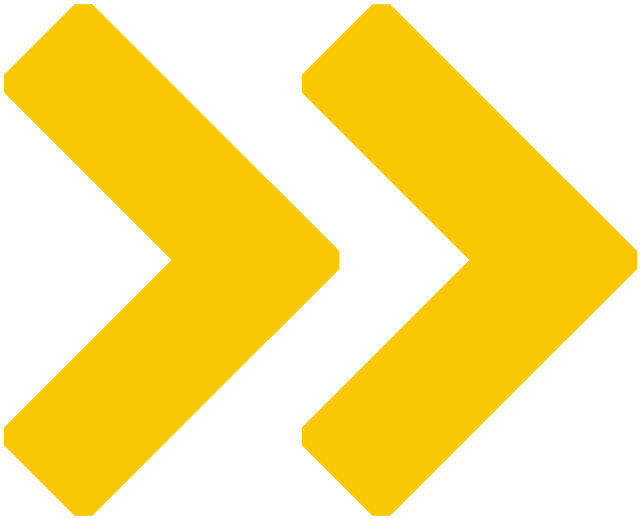
CLOSING THE GAPS IN APPLICATION AND ASSESSMENT OUTCOMES BETWEEN ETHNIC GROUPS

When graduates and career changers from ethnic minority backgrounds apply to ITT courses, they are significantly more likely to be rejected. Addressing this disparity requires a relentless, collective vigilance with rooting out and addressing bias in ITT application and assessment processes. We encourage other ITT providers to conduct regression analysis to better understand the extent to which their own application and assessment outcomes vary by ethnic and social group (after controlling for other factors), and to share their results with the sector.

We promote the adoption of blind application screening, both across ITT applications and assessment, and across school recruitment more broadly. This is something we called for in our 'Manifesto for ending educational inequality' (Teach First Manifesto, 2021).

We also believe that contextual recruitment should be adopted across the sector and encourage others to use post-offer assessment to provide applicants with more opportunities to demonstrate that they can learn and improve in response to feedback, and to counteract the relationship between young people's socioeconomic background and their academic outcomes and choices at age 16.

These recommendations supplement others made in our manifesto, for example that the Department for Education (DfE) should run a fairer recruitment pilot in which they would partner with the relevant employees of a large multi-academy trust to review, revamp and debias their HR processes (Teach First, 2021).



ATTRACTING AN ETHNICALLY DIVERSE POOL OF PEOPLE INTO THE TEACHING PROFESSION

Whilst people from Asian, Black, and other ethnic backgrounds are overrepresented among applicants to postgraduate ITT courses, large-scale survey data suggests that the level of interest and consideration in teaching varies between ethnic groups, with Black and Mixed origin students having the least interest in teaching (Gorard et al., 2021).

Our research suggests that, to attract a more diverse pool of people into teaching, we need to ensure the profession is perceived as deeply committed to improving the diversity of the teaching workforce, and to cultivating inclusive school environments. That's why we are bringing together Black STEM leaders and educators to showcase the powerful role teachers will play in inspiring the next generation of Black STEM professionals, and why we have made changes to our recruitment and school matching processes to ensure ethnic minority trainees are placed in diverse and inclusive schools.

Teachers from ethnic minority backgrounds are concentrated in London schools and in ethnically diverse schools (Tereshchenko et al., 2021), and our discrete choice experiment suggests that students are more likely to convert interest in teaching into an application or intent to apply if they are matched with a school within 60 minutes of their current home location. Hence, we have made ethnicity one of the 'exceptional circumstances' that affects how trainees are prioritised for school matches with shorter commutes.

Based on the results of our discrete choice experiment, we are also stressing the 'personal utility' benefits of teaching (things like career and salary progression) in our marketing campaigns, (alongside 'social utility' benefits like enhancing equity and making a social contribution), given these factors showed the greatest potential to build interest and consideration in teaching amongst Black and mixed Black students.

We encourage other ITT providers and recruiters to review their own marketing materials and to consider placing BAME trainees in schools with diverse staff, especially amongst the senior leadership team.

SUPPORTING MORE TEACHERS FROM ETHNIC MINORITY BACKGROUNDS TO PROGRESS INTO LEADERSHIP POSITIONS

Whilst the biggest ethnic disparities are between application and selection in ITT, disparities widen along the teacher career pathway and are most pronounced at senior leadership and headship levels. To address the ethnic disparities in retention and progression rates, we need schools, training providers and policy makers to prioritise racial inequality and racial literacy, and to support more Black teachers to overcome the unique problems and barriers they face to progressing into leadership positions.

This means:

School leaders need to place racial literacy at the heart of their workforce's role and training

We encourage school leaders to place 'racial literacy' at the centre of leaders' and teachers' roles and training, such that all take responsibility for teaching in ways that seek to tackle racism. As research by Joseph-Salisbury highlights, many teachers are currently ill-prepared to teach in ways that promote anti-racism, and this can include Black, Asian and ethnic minority teachers (Joseph-Salisbury, 2020).

Like Tereshchenko and colleagues, we believe school leaders in diverse schools should demonstrate the experience, training and skills that allow them to develop equitable learning environments that support diverse learners and BAME teachers, and we encourage school leaders to investigate and report all claims of racism (both overt and covert), as well as identifying practices that have negative effects (unintended or otherwise) on BAME teachers (Tereshchenko et al., 2021). We also encourage training providers to follow our example by including racial justice in education as part of their ITT curriculum, and by supporting SLTs to conduct Equality Impact Assessments to ensure their policies and practices are addressing racial inequality and racism, particularly in hiring decisions and decisions around internal promotions. As referenced in our manifesto, we also encourage schools to use positive action policies, such as referring high-performing staff from underrepresented backgrounds for promotion opportunities or piloting a development programme for aspiring leaders.

Policy-makers need to prioritise challenges to the progression of ethnic minority teachers

Increasing the number of BAME leaders of SLTs is likely to help overall Black, Asian and ethnic minority teacher retention, as shown by the fact that disparities in progression between ethnic groups depend on the ethnic diversity of a school's senior leadership team (Worth et al., 2022). As highlighted by our 'Missing Pages' campaign, we need greater ethnic diversity in the literature that students study in school (Teach First, 2020). We believe in the power of a broad, ambitious, and knowledge-rich curriculum to inspire our pupils. However, we also agree with the teachers and pupils who believe that what is taught in schools must be representative of the modern British experience. We strongly believe that we can create space in our teaching that better reflects modern Britain, while retaining rigour, to inspire all our pupils. School curricula should therefore be broadened to increase racial diversity and, as suggested by Joseph-Salisbury, 'any transformation of the curriculum will require wider changes in examinations and school resources' (Joseph-Salisbury, 2020:2). We welcome the Government's commitment to providing schools with guidance on how to tackle racism and their work in ensuring seemingly neutral school policies – like uniform and hair policies – do not systematically disadvantage pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds.

We need to support more Black teachers to successfully overcome barriers to progression through high-quality mentoring and supportive networks, and celebrate the stories of those that progress into leadership

Black, Asian and ethnic minority teachers should be supported through high-quality mentoring from mentors both within and beyond the school and Black communities. We repeat our call to the DfE to create and fund a development programme for aspiring Black, Asian and ethnic minority leaders, building on the successes of the Positive Action Pathway and other Civil Service Accelerated Development Schemes (Teach First, 2021). We also believe there is great value in schools and third sector organisations cultivating and supporting networks that celebrate ethnic diversity and provide safe spaces for educators from ethnic minority backgrounds to discuss the additional challenges they face.

Summary

A visibly ethnically diverse teaching workforce helps foster social cohesion, helps pave the way for greater inclusion and belonging in schools, provides pupils with diverse role models, promotes cultural understanding, and supports pupils to grow and develop, particularly pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds. Our research with NFER provides a clearer picture of the extent of ethnic disparities, which are most pronounced at senior leadership and headship levels, but which can be traced back to disparities in ITT selection outcomes. The diversification of the teaching workforce must be a holistic endeavour that focuses on all levels of teaching.

To have the biggest impact, we need to address ethnic disparities in ITT selection outcomes, whilst also removing systemic and institutional barriers to the progression of ethnic minority teachers into leadership positions. The gaps between the ITT acceptance rates of Teach First applicants from ethnic minority backgrounds and their White counterparts are significantly smaller than they are in other ITT routes. We believe that blind screening, contextual recruitment, and post-offer assessment tools have helped us increase the diversity of our trainee cohorts, and we encourage other ITT providers and schools to consider adopting these approaches.

We can also do more to build interest in teaching amongst those ethnic groups amongst which it is weakest, particularly Black and mixed Black communities. Our discrete choice experiment gave us a better sense of what we should focus on to attract more Black STEM students and graduates onto the Training Programme, but more research is needed to better understand whether/how the motivational profiles of different ethnic groups differ.

To remove the systemic barriers to progression for ethnic minority teachers interested in leadership, school leaders need to place racial literacy at the heart of their workforce's role and training, and policy makers need to prioritise challenges related to Black, Asian and ethnic minority teachers' progression. Collectively, we also need to support more Black teachers through high-quality mentoring and by cultivating supportive networks, and we need to celebrate the stories of Black educators successfully overcoming barriers to progression.

We would like to thank Mission 44, for supporting this research as part of our wider partnership to address the underrepresentation of Black STEM teachers in the UK and to build a more inclusive education system.

We would also love to hear your thoughts – what do you think would have the biggest impact on increasing the racial diversity of the teaching profession?

MISSION 44 AND TEACH FIRST PARTNERSHIP

To inspire the next generation of Black engineers, scientists, mathematicians and inventors, there needs to be more Black STEM educators in the classroom.

Teach First is working in partnership with Mission 44 to recruit and train 150 inspirational Black STEM teachers and leaders to create a more inclusive education system in which all young people can thrive.

Findings from this research report have informed and shaped partnership initiatives to achieve this, including a targeted marketing campaign, taster and mentor programmes, and network opportunities specifically for Black graduates and career changers.

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