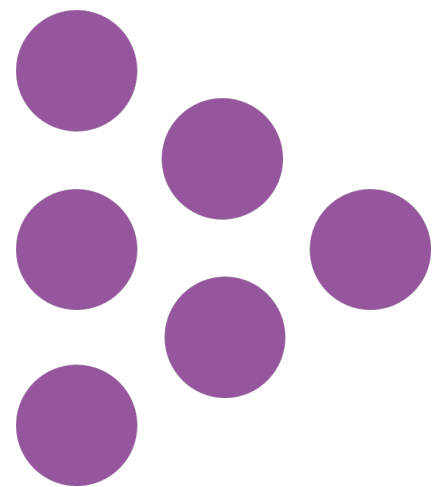


**Report**

**Ethnic diversity in the teaching  
workforce: evidence review**

**National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER)**

**Embargoed until 00:01 on Wednesday 31 January 2024**



# **Ethnic diversity in the teaching workforce: evidence review**

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## **The National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER)**

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We would also like to thank our team for their support, advice and feedback on the review: Juliet Kotonya, Neelam Basi, Jack Worth, Natasha Armstrong, Amanda Taylor and the NFER library team.

## Foreword from Mission 44

**To build a more inclusive education system, the teaching workforce must be representative of the communities they seek to serve– and yet people of colour are considerably under-represented in the teaching workforce, especially among school leaders.**

While this issue is widely recognised, with the Department for Education issuing a statement of intent to increase the diversity of the teaching workforce in 2018, progress to address this underrepresentation has, to date, been limited (DfE, 2018b). Apart from monitoring the situation, there appears to have been little positive action from government to improve the representation of people of colour in teaching. Indeed, the single national initiative to encourage diversity in school leadership was brought to a close in 2020.

It is this inaction which has led Mission 44, a charitable foundation working to build a fairer future in which every young person has the power to succeed, to make ethnic diversity in teaching one of our key objectives. Over the last two years, we have worked in partnership with Teach First to pilot a range of new approaches to attract and support Black STEM teachers, with the aim to share good practice with the educational community.

Building on this work, Mission 44 is now looking to expand our efforts in collaboration with others to increase the ethnic diversity of the overall teaching workforce and senior leadership. In aid of this, we have commissioned the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) to undertake an evidence review of existing research on the barriers and enablers to a more ethnically diverse teaching workforce.

This report sets out the evidence to demonstrate what is known about ethnic diversity in the teaching workforce and key areas for action and improvement.

We know that there is good work already happening in the sector, with many organisations within the educational community already having signed a joint annual statement of action and commitments on equality, diversity, and inclusion in education (All-in Education *et al.*, 2023). In showing the scale of the issue and providing evidence-based recommendations to address it, our hope is to inspire further dialogue and drive forward collective action to make teaching a more ethnically diverse profession.

Jason Arthur

CEO, Mission 44

## Foreword from NFER

**For too long, teachers of colour have been under-represented in the teacher workforce in England. We need evidence-informed action to improve the recruitment, retention and progression of teachers of colour.**

NFER's landmark 2022 study of racial equality in the teacher workforce, in partnership with Teach First and Ambition Institute, identified the areas of the workforce where ethnic disparities in progression are largest. While under-representation of teachers from ethnic minority backgrounds is most pronounced in senior leadership, our study found that this is driven by disparities throughout different stages of progression, particularly in early career stages and initial teacher training (ITT). Action is therefore needed to make progress towards achieving racial equality in teaching.

To support the sector in taking action, we have collaborated with Mission 44 on this evidence review to identify promising approaches to improve ethnic diversity at all career stages. It draws on a rich evidence base, including the lived experience of many people of colour in their education careers.

This review shows there are promising approaches to improving ethnic diversity in the teacher workforce. Some schools, ITT providers and other organisations have created positive and equitable working environments for teachers and leaders from diverse ethnic backgrounds that it is important to learn from.

It is crucial that alongside actions to address ethnic disparities in career progression in teaching, the sector continues to learn from emerging good practice and generates the evidence base for further action. NFER aims to develop that evidence base, so that decision makers have the information they need to take effective action to address ethnic disparities.

Carole Willis

Chief Executive, National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER)

## Key points summary

### The issue

Despite being over-represented among applicants for initial teacher training (ITT), people of colour<sup>1</sup> are considerably under-represented in teaching. Some 60% of schools in England had an all-White teaching staff in 2021/22 and this is even more pronounced at senior level (with 86% of schools in England having an all-White senior leadership team).

### Why is there a lack of ethnic diversity in teaching and school leadership?

A key factor in the lack of ethnic diversity in teaching is the low acceptance rates of ethnic minority applicants onto ITT programmes compared with their White peers. While the reasons behind this disparity are not clear, there are two main areas of speculation in the literature: one suggestion is that White candidates have higher qualifications or more relevant experience; another suggestion is that there are some underlying sources of bias in favour of White applicants. For example, this could emanate from ethnic bias in ITT entry assessments. Negative experiences during ITT could also help to explain why fewer trainee teachers of colour achieve qualified teacher status (QTS).

That said, retention is also significantly lower for teachers of colour than for their White peers. Beyond high workload, often cited reasons for leaving include (1) overt and covert racial discrimination from staff, pupils and parents; (2) disillusionment with their ability to make a difference for pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds; and (3) a lack of opportunities for progression.

### Which interventions are effective or promising?

While few interventions to date have been rigorously evaluated to assess effectiveness, there are some promising approaches in the field. The review highlighted the following strategies as potentially helpful.

### Recruitment to initial teacher training (ITT)

- Strategies (such as advertising, job experience, events and tasters) to make a career in teaching more attractive to high achieving graduates of colour
- Alternative pathways to enter ITT for people of colour who do not have the currently required qualifications to apply.
- Strategies (such as name-blind applications, contextualised recruitment and conditional offers) to increase ITT acceptance rates for applicants of colour
- Structured support for applicants of colour/from disadvantaged backgrounds to provide help with their applications
- ITT organisational strategies (including course content on racial justice in education, EDI policies, careful selection of school experience venues and teacher educators of colour) to improve qualification rates of trainees of colour.

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<sup>1</sup> We have used the phrase 'people of colour' to refer to people who identify themselves in this way. Please see the note on writing about ethnicity and glossary for further definitions.



## **Retention in teaching**

- Whole-school initiatives (such as EDI policies; and training for staff and leadership teams; an understanding of culturally responsive teaching and charter marks)
- Support and challenge for schools to diversify their teaching and leadership teams
- Career advice, development and support for teachers of colour.

## **Leadership progression and retention**

- Training programmes tailored to the needs of aspiring leaders of colour
- Bursaries to enable teachers of colour to undertake leadership development
- Mentoring support from same-race teachers and leaders and access to professional support networks of same-race aspiring/practising leaders
- In-school coaching for newly-appointed headteachers of colour
- Autonomy for headteachers of colour to pursue their moral purpose with support from governing bodies and academy boards.

## **Conclusions and recommendations**

The barriers to achieving ethnic diversity in the teaching workforce coalesce around the unequal treatment of teachers of colour in a system that was not designed with diversity in mind. To capitalise on the fact that people of colour are increasingly encouraged to enter teaching there must be complementary actions to support teachers of colour already in the profession to progress in their careers. Driving long-term, sustainable change will need people at all levels and from all ethnic backgrounds to take positive action on equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI). This requires us to identify and address all sources of inequality and monitor progress towards tangible goals. To achieve a more diverse teaching workforce in future, we will need to continue to make the case, redouble our efforts, support one another and celebrate our successes along the way.

Based on this review, we make the following recommendations for consideration.

- We recommend that attention is focused on making sure schools are providing a positive working environment for teachers and leaders from diverse ethnic backgrounds. This includes training for staff, senior leaders and governors and use of whole-school initiatives such as comprehensive EDI policies and improvement plans. Those responsible for school governance should challenge schools to diversify their teaching and leadership teams.
- Although there are challenges to diversity at all stages of a teaching career, interventions in ITT must be a priority because of the gap in acceptance rates between applicants of colour and their White counterparts. A key priority is to investigate the causes of low acceptance rates for applicants of colour and use relevant strategies to address them. We also recommend that ITT providers implement organisational strategies to improve ITT completion rates among trainees of colour, including implementing EDI policies themselves and ensuring that all sites selected for school experience demonstrate their commitment to EDI.

- We recommend that all ITT programmes should include content on anti-racism as part of their curriculum to raise awareness of the issues among all trainees and to support trainee teachers of colour at the beginning of their careers.
- Interventions are needed to increase ethnic diversity in school leadership. Given the low current numbers of leaders of colour and the barriers they face, we recognise the need to offer training, support networks and mentoring tailored to the needs of aspiring leaders of colour. There is also a case for bursaries and in-school coaching for new leaders of colour.
- Government action is important to help drive change across the system. There should be an actionable plan to increase ethnic diversity in the teaching workforce that is reflected in all policies across all parts of the system, accompanied by improvements in data collection and monitoring.

The report also offers a series of recommendations for research to investigate the gaps in our knowledge. These include investigating the reasons for the low ITT acceptance rates for applicants of colour; studying the impact of culturally responsive teaching and identifying what would attract teachers and leaders of colour to teach in schools in predominantly White areas.

## A note on writing about ethnicity

Language shapes our thinking and how we see the world. Language about identity is particularly complex because it concerns how other people see us and how we see ourselves. When referring to ethnic groups, this report follows current government guidance, with the exception of using leading capitals for 'Black' rather than 'black', and 'White' rather than 'white' in acknowledgement of the equal status of all ethnic groups.

In this report, we have primarily used 'people/teachers of colour' as an umbrella term referring to people who do not identify as White. People of colour belong to minority ethnic groups in the context of England, while being part of majority groups in a global context.

We recognise there are limitations to these terms. For example, using the term 'Teachers of colour' aggregates data across minority ethnic groups (not including White minorities), which enables analysis and synthesis of patterns at a broad level. However, we acknowledge that this term could also serve to ignore different experiences of particular ethnic groups which can cause inaccurate interpretations. To mitigate this, we have reported on more specific ethnic groups and included information on intersectionality (for example, considering gender and ethnicity) where relevant evidence is available.

It is also worth noting that the research and policy literature contributing to the report uses a range of different terms which reflect the terminology at the time of writing and the ways in which ethnicity is categorised in official statistics. Where the evidence provides important insights, and there is no direct equivalent to the category used, we have retained the original language. For example, the terms Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) typically include White minorities and so we have retained these where it is important to do so.

## Glossary

A glossary of key terms relating to ethnicity is provided below.

**Asian ethnic group.** Individuals identified as belonging to one of the following ethnic groups: Indian; Pakistani; Bangladeshi; Chinese; any other Asian background.

**Black ethnic group.** Individuals identified as from a Caribbean, African or any other Black background.

**Mixed ethnic background.** Individuals identified as: White and Black Caribbean; White and Black African; White and Asian; any other mixed or multiple ethnic background.

**White ethnic background.** Individuals identified as from the following ethnic backgrounds: English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British; Irish; Gypsy or Irish Traveller; Roma; any other White background.

**Other ethnic background.** Individuals identified as Arab or any other ethnic group.

**Ethnic minority:** all ethnic groups in England except the White British group. Ethnic minorities include White minorities, such as Gypsy, Roma and Irish Traveller groups.

Source: [Writing about ethnicity - GOV.UK \(ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/writing-about-ethnicity)

**BAME: Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic** is used in the literature to refer to ethnic groups in England other than White British. This definition commonly includes Irish and other White minorities.

**BME: Black and Minority Ethnic** is used in the literature to refer to ethnic groups in England other than White British. This definition commonly includes Irish and other White minorities.

**People of colour** is an umbrella term referring to anyone who is not/does not identify as White.

Source: <https://www.theantiracisteducator.com/person-of-colour>

**Equality** is about ensuring that every individual has an equal opportunity to make the most of their lives and talents. It is also the belief that no one should have poorer life chances because of the way they were born, where they come from, what they believe, or whether they have a disability.

Source: <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/secondary-education-resources/useful-information/understanding-equality>

**Equity** is the condition that would be achieved if one's (racial or ethnic) identity no longer predicted, in a statistical sense, how one fares. When we use the term, we are thinking about equity as one part of racial justice, and thus we also include work to address root causes of inequities, not just their manifestation. This includes elimination of policies, practices, attitudes, and cultural messages that reinforce differential outcomes by race or that fail to eliminate them.

Source: <https://www.racialequitytools.org/glossary>

**Ethnicity** is a social construct that divides people into smaller social groups based on characteristics such as shared sense of group membership, values, behavioural patterns, language, political and economic interests, history, and ancestral geographical base.

Source: <https://www.racialequitytools.org/glossary>

**Disparity** means a lack of equality or similarity, especially in a way that is not fair.

Source: <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/disparity>

**Diversity** includes all the ways in which people differ, and it encompasses all the different characteristics that make one individual or group different from another. It is all-inclusive and recognises everyone and every group as part of the diversity that should be valued.

Source: <https://www.racialequitytools.org/glossary>

**Inclusion** is the practice of including people in a way that is fair for all, values everyone's differences, and empowers and enables each person to be themselves and achieve their full potential and thrive at work.

Source: <https://www.cipd.org/uk/knowledge/factsheets/diversity-factsheet/#Whatis>

**Progression** as used in this report means that people at one stage of the teaching profession move to the next stage within the profession (e.g. an applicant to ITT is accepted onto a course, a newly-qualified teacher enters teaching, or a senior leader is promoted to headship).

**Race:** Race is an invented social construct, and not a biological fact. As defined in the Equality Act (2010), race can mean your colour, or your nationality (including your citizenship). It can also mean your ethnic or national origins, which may not be the same as your current nationality.

Sources: <https://www.racialequitytools.org/glossary>

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/advice-and-guidance/race-discrimination>

**Representation** means the percentage of people from a given ethnic group compared with the proportion of the same ethnic group in the population of England as a whole. Groups are over-represented if their percentage in the teacher workforce is significantly greater than in the wider population and under-represented if their percentage in the teacher workforce is significantly lower.

Source: <https://www.nfer.ac.uk/publications/racial-equality>

## 1. What is the policy context around ethnic diversity in teaching and leadership in England?

Recent decades have seen a rapid increase in ethnic diversity within the UK, but the teaching workforce is not representative of ethnic diversity in the wider population.

‘From 1991 to 2011, the White population of England and Wales grew by less than 2% – including rapid growth in White migrant populations – while all other ethnic groups combined grew by 166% (...) In 2011, nearly one-fifth of the population of England and Wales identified with an ethnic group other than the White British majority.’

(Mirza and Warwick, 2022)

Research published in 2022 found that all ethnic groups except White are under-represented in relation to their percentage in the wider population at all career stages of the teaching workforce, except during the application stages of initial teacher training (ITT) (Worth, McLean and Sharp, 2022).

Concerns about the low representation of people of colour in the teaching workforce in England are not new (Swann, 1985; Alexander and Shankley, 2020; Bradbury, Tereshchenko and Mills, 2023), but the issue persists despite policy commitments to address it. David Gillborn (2020) reviewed government policy in the 20 years since the murder of Stephen Lawrence, concluding that race has been seen by politicians as a ‘toxic’ subject, which has led to successive regimes adopting ‘colour-blind’ or ‘colour-evasive’ approaches (Macpherson, 1999; Gillborn, 2020).

Recent policy decisions have been identified as largely unhelpful in creating a positive environment for teachers of colour (Maylor, 2022; Stewart-Hall *et al.*, 2023). These include a focus on a broad concept of ‘inclusion’ rather than celebrating multicultural diversity, rejecting the existence of institutional racism in schools and failing to support anti-racist initiatives. In 2014, the coalition government required schools to promote ‘fundamental British values’ and in 2015, schools were required to comply with the government’s Prevent agenda, by reporting pupils who appear to be radicalised or supportive of terrorist acts. In 2020 the equalities minister warned schools against teaching about the concept of ‘White privilege’. Commentators argue that these actions have served to constrain teachers’ ability to diversify the curriculum or discuss racism with their pupils, while creating a climate of suspicion of teachers of colour (Maylor, 2022; Alexander and Shankley, 2020, Callender, 2020).

## How has the government responded to the low representation of people of colour in teaching?

The Equality Act of 2010 aims to prevent discrimination on the grounds of protected characteristics, including race, religion or belief. It applies to all organisations, including schools, that provide a service to the public or a section of the public.

Recent policy initiatives have focused on the lack of diversity among headteachers. In 2014 the Department for Education established an equality and diversity fund to support schools to help teachers covered by at least one of the protected characteristics defined by the Equality Act 2010, to progress into leadership (GOV.UK, 2020).

In 2018, the Department for Education issued a statement of intent, setting out the case for a diverse teaching workforce (DfE, 2018b). This focused on the low representation of people from 'ethnic minority backgrounds' in headship, relative to the percentage of teachers from the same backgrounds in the teaching profession<sup>2</sup>.

'The value of a diverse workforce and school leadership is clear. Diversity within schools is valuable in fostering social cohesion and most importantly, in supporting pupils to grow and develop in an environment of visible, diverse role models.

We want to see a teaching profession that prides itself on promoting a diverse workforce, that supports the progression and retention of all teachers, and that builds an inclusive environment for teachers and pupils where they can be themselves.'

(DfE, 2018b)

The DfE made four commitments to further its statement of intent (DfE, 2018a).

1. Provide £2m of funding in new nationwide equality and diversity hubs to support aspiring leaders, including those from ethnic minority backgrounds, into headship<sup>3</sup>.
2. Ensure recruitment for new gold standard National Professional Qualifications (NPQs) for school leadership are representative through key performance indicators.
3. Consider equality and diversity as a priority through our recruitment and retention strategy to ensure people from all backgrounds are supported and that barriers to their progression are removed.
4. Commit to working with the sector including teachers, multi-academy trusts and schools, governing bodies and grassroots groups to understand what practical support we can offer.

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<sup>2</sup> Note that this comparison serves to under-estimate the extent of the issue, given the under-representation of teachers of colour in relation to either the working-age population or the pupil population.

<sup>3</sup> Equality and diversity hubs were a new model for programme delivery of the equality and diversity fund, established in 2014.

Two of these commitments have been fulfilled. The government did invest £2m in equality and diversity hubs between 2018 – 2020, before closing both the hubs and fund in 2020 (Carr, 2020). The ethnic diversity of teachers starting NPQs is broadly representative of the teacher workforce (DfE, 2023d). However, the commitment to increasing equality and diversity as a priority in the government’s recruitment and retention strategy does not appear to have been addressed, as the subsequent *Teacher Recruitment and Retention Strategy* (DfE, 2019), made no mention of ethnic diversity as a policy goal. We also have no evidence of the government working strategically with the sector on these issues. More broadly, the statement of intent had no accompanying plan of action or any specific targets designed to bring about greater ethnic diversity. Although there have been some improvements in the representation and progression of people of colour in the teaching workforce since 2018 (described below), considerable disparities remain (Demie and See, 2022; Worth, McLean and Sharp, 2022).

Recent official reports have reinforced the need to focus on differential outcomes associated with different (intersectional) combinations of background characteristics, including ethnic group, gender, social class and region (CRED, 2021; House of Commons Education Committee, 2021). In compliance with its Public Sector Equality Duty, the DfE regularly collects and publishes information on equality and diversity in the education system. This is helpful in identifying trends over time but has some important limitations. For example, researchers have called for the government to provide more disaggregated data to enable intersectional analysis (Beckles-Raymond, 2020). In addition, the practice of grouping individuals from an ‘other White’ ethnic background together with people of colour in an ‘other ethnic minority’ group, is misleading and prevents more detailed analysis. It is also difficult to assess progression between ITT and entry into teaching because definitions of ethnicity differ across datasets (Demie and See, 2022; Worth, McLean and Sharp, 2022).

### **Wales and Scotland are taking action to reduce racial disparities in the teaching workforce**

The lack of policy focus in England contrasts with actions taken by governments in Wales and Scotland, which have recently announced policies designed to increase the ethnic diversity of their teaching workforces. In 2020, the Welsh Government issued a fact sheet comparing the ethnic diversity of the pupil population to that of teachers and leaders and subsequently launched an incentives scheme to encourage people who identify as Black, Asian, or ‘Minority Ethnic’ to complete postgraduate ITT (Welsh Government, 2020, 2023b). They are currently working with ITT providers to give additional support to applicants from diverse ethnic backgrounds before and during the ITT application process and have provided all education professionals, including ITT students, with access to free diversity and anti-racist professional learning resources via a virtual platform (Welsh Government, 2023a).

The Scottish Government convened a working group on Diversity in the Teaching Profession to take forward 17 recommendations and monitor progress over time. Their actions include: making a commitment to social justice, racial equality and diversity part of teachers’ professional standards; promoting teaching as a career among under-represented groups; ensuring anti-racism and racial



equality content in ITT and professional learning for teachers and leaders; and developing a national framework for increasing diversity in ITT providers (Scottish Government, 2021).

### **How has the education sector in England responded?**

The DfE's Statement of Intent (DfE, 2018b) was co-signed by several other leading education organisations. Since then, the original co-signatories have been joined by others (totalling 14 in 2023), which collectively publish an annual 'Statement of action and commitments' to furthering equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) across schools. The annual statement sets out their progress to date and commitments for the next year (All-in Education *et al.*, 2023).

The death of George Floyd in 2020 and the advance of the 'Black Lives Matter' movement worldwide prompted a resurgence of concern about racial discrimination in society and influenced the formation of several grassroots organisations aiming to support teachers of colour in England.

### **What has been happening to disparities in pupil outcomes?**

Whereas low attainment among pupils of colour used to be a matter of concern, standards have increased considerably over time.

'Rapid improvements in educational outcomes for many students from minority ethnic groups are one of the most striking educational trends in recent years. In England, GCSE attainment improved particularly rapidly for Bangladeshi, Pakistani and Black African students in the past two decades, with Bangladeshi students going from a nine percentage point attainment gap compared with White British students in 2004 to a six percentage point advantage in 2019.'

(Mirza and Warwick, 2022)

However, the improvement in attainment outcomes of pupils of colour appears to have prompted a change in policy focus towards the needs of White working class boys (Gillborn, 2014, 2020; CRED, 2021). This is despite evidence that pupils from Black Caribbean backgrounds are still not reaching their full potential.

In 2021/22 the average Attainment 8 score for secondary pupils in England was 48.8 out of 90.0. Attainment scores differ widely between pupils of colour from different minority ethnic groups.

- Pupils from Chinese backgrounds had the highest average Attainment 8 score (66.1) followed by pupils from Asian backgrounds (54.6)
- Pupils from White British backgrounds had an average Attainment 8 score of 47.7
- Pupils from a mixed ethnic background had an average Attainment 8 score of 49.4 overall, but pupils from mixed White and Black Caribbean backgrounds had a below-average score of 42.1.

- Pupils from Black backgrounds had an average Attainment 8 score of 48.6 overall, but pupils from Black Caribbean backgrounds had a below-average score of 44.0.
- Pupils from Irish traveller (29.2) and Gypsy or Roma backgrounds (21.0) had the lowest average scores of all ethnic groups (DfE, 2023b).

### **There is evidence of ethnic disparities in school attendance and exclusions**

School attendance has become an issue of growing concern, especially following the Covid-19 pandemic. The 2021/22 figures for school attendance show a mixed pattern for pupils of colour (DfE, 2023b).

- Pupils identified as travellers of Irish heritage had the highest absence rate (22.1%), followed by pupils from Gypsy or Roma backgrounds (17.8%).
- Several ethnic groups had an absence rate above the average of 7.6%, including White and Black Caribbean (9.4%), Irish (8.8%), Pakistani (7.9%) and White British (7.9%)
- Pupils from Chinese backgrounds had the lowest average absence rate (3.6%).

Concerns have been raised over many years about the disproportionate rate of school suspensions and exclusions (whereby pupils are temporarily or permanently prevented from attending their current school) among pupils from specific ethnic groups: Black Caribbean, Gypsy Roma, and travellers of Irish heritage (Gillborn, 2020; Commission on Young Lives, 2022).

In 2021/22, the highest rates of suspensions were for pupils identified as Gypsy Roma (25% of pupils from this group), travellers of Irish heritage (19%), White and Black Caribbean (14%), and Black Caribbean (12%). The average exclusion rate across all pupils was 7%. These four ethnic groups were at least twice as likely to be permanently excluded compared with other pupils (DfE, 2023c).

### **There are some ethnic disparities in the identification of pupils with special educational needs and disabilities.**

The injustice of children from Black ethnic backgrounds being disproportionately labelled as 'educationally subnormal' in the 1960s and 1970s was the subject of a documentary by Steve McQueen called '[Subnormal: a British Scandal](#)'. Although culturally biased IQ tests are no longer in widespread use, there is evidence of some remaining disparities in the system.

A study by Steve Strand and Ariel Lindorff (Strand and Lindorff, 2018) reported the following findings.

- Pupils from Asian backgrounds (Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi and other Asian) were half as likely to be identified with Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASD) as pupils from White British backgrounds
- Pupils from Black Caribbean and Mixed White and Black Caribbean backgrounds were twice as likely to be identified with Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs as pupils from White British backgrounds.

The authors conclude that some pupils from Asian backgrounds may not be receiving the access to specialist resources and support they need with autistic spectrum disorders, while some children from Black Caribbean backgrounds may be unwarrantedly identified as having SEMH needs, which may result in an inappropriate or narrowed curriculum particularly in secondary school (Strand and Lindorff, 2018).

## 2. What are the benefits of a diverse teaching workforce?

The literature identifies four main benefits of an ethnically diverse teaching workforce. In presenting these, it is important to be aware of some of the pitfalls involved in adopting these narratives. These include implying that teachers of the same ethnic group share a common cultural capital, wish to be seen as role models, or are particularly suited to working with pupils of the same ethnicity (Maylor, 2009). There is a risk that using these arguments in favour of promoting ethnic diversity in teaching could serve to perpetuate stereotypes, mask systemic injustices and undermine personal agency (Beckles-Raymond, 2020). Nevertheless, they are presented here to demonstrate the importance of addressing the underrepresentation of people of colour within the teaching workforce.

### 1. Equality and diversity enrich our society

Teachers from diverse ethnic backgrounds possess different types of social and cultural capital, including multicultural, ethnic, transnational and linguistic capital. These are highly valued assets which, if properly recognised and utilised, have the potential to enrich pupils, schools and society as a whole (Wallace, 2018; Maylor, 2022; Teach First, 2023). A diverse teaching workforce can familiarise pupils from all ethnic backgrounds with people from different backgrounds and prepare them for life in an increasingly diverse world. Hearing others' experiences and perspectives can help reduce racial prejudice and improve social cohesion (DfE, 2018b, 2023a, Joseph-Salisbury, 2020, Le and Nguyen, 2019).

### 2. Encountering people from similar backgrounds provides important recognition for members of minority groups and helps to counter negative racial stereotypes

Teachers represent figures of authority and academic success. Having role models from diverse cultural backgrounds can be reassuring and inspiring for all pupils and for pupils of colour in particular, showing they belong and encouraging them to work hard and achieve their ambitions (Zirkel, 2002; Haque and Elliott, 2017; Demie and See, 2022).

'...ethnic minority children need role models from their own group. If the children see SMT (senior management team) as being all White and the cleaning staff from ethnic minorities, that is all they aspire to be. Especially if they do not see people around them or members of their families in senior positions.'

Focus group participant (Haque and Elliott, 2017)

However, the ‘role-model’ argument for diversifying the teaching workforce is particularly contentious because it assumes that teachers of colour are comfortable with taking on this responsibility and that pupils of colour relate to teachers from the same ethnicity as role models, neither of which is necessarily true (Maylor, 2009; Wallace, 2020; Rothen and McDaid, 2022). It may also entail an additional workload for teachers of colour.

### **3. Improving recruitment and retention among teachers of colour could help reduce teacher shortages**

Recent years have provided considerable challenges in recruiting and retaining the teachers that schools need. The government’s strategy for teacher recruitment and retention recognises the importance of supplying schools with sufficient high-quality teachers (DfE, 2019).

Teachers of colour tend to be highly committed to making a difference in the lives of disadvantaged students in inner city schools (Demie and See, 2022, Tereshchenko *et al.*, 2022). In addition, teachers and tutors who work in supplementary schools could represent an untapped source of teachers for the state education system (Beckles-Raymond, 2020). However, any attempt to recruit and retain teachers of colour would need to be part of a longer-term strategy to improve conditions for teachers of colour, rather than using people of colour as a ‘quick fix’ for a pressing problem in the education system.

### **4. Pupils of colour taught by a same-race teacher have more positive outcomes**

‘Teachers of colour are more likely than their White colleagues to view student intelligence as malleable versus fixed, build interpersonal relationships with students and their families, spend more time planning for instruction and differentiating pedagogical approaches to individual students’ needs, and lead well-organized classrooms’

(Blazar, 2021).

Evidence from the USA suggests that having a same-race teacher is associated<sup>4</sup> with improved outcomes for pupils of colour. Positive associations have been found for social-emotional, attitudinal and behavioural outcomes, including higher attendance and fewer exclusions (Hart, 2020; Blazar, 2021; Gershenson, Hansen and Lindsay, 2021; Gershenson *et al.*, 2022; Gottfried, Little and Ansari, 2023; Liu, Penner and Gao, 2023).

One US study found that Black elementary students who were randomly assigned to a Black class teacher had a lower probability of chronic absence (defined as missing ten per cent or more of total school days) by 3.1 percentage points (Tran and Gershenson, 2021). Similarly, another study found that being randomly assigned to a teacher of colour in elementary school reduced the

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<sup>4</sup> Note that these associations are not necessarily causal, although stronger claims can be made in the case of studies which randomly allocated teachers to classes.

probability of being chronically absent among high school students of colour by eight percentage points (Blazar, 2021).

Positive effects have been found for racial matching between teachers and pupils of colour on referral for inappropriate behaviour and suspension from school (Hughes *et al.*, 2020; Liu, Penner and Gao, 2023). One US study (Liu, Penner and Gao, 2023) attempted to understand the reasons for these findings by examining records of disciplinary referrals in schools. It found that students from Black and Hispanic backgrounds were much more likely to be referred than their White counterparts and that these gaps were partially responsible for the greater proportion of students of colour than White students suspended from school. Further analysis revealed that high rates of referrals by a small number of teachers were responsible for doubling the racial gaps in disciplinary referrals. Teachers of colour were much less likely to be 'top referrers' or to refer any of their students for disciplinary offences than their White colleagues. The authors suggest that teachers' sense-making of student behaviour determines whether or not students are formally disciplined, and teachers' characteristics, such as race, can influence their perceptions of students' behaviour.

It has been suggested that such positive outcomes for pupils of colour may be due to teachers of colour being fairer in their judgement of them. For example, White teachers may allow negative stereotypes to lower their expectations of pupils of colour, which perpetuates poor relationships and lower performance in teacher assessments (Demie and See, 2022; Gorard, 2023). Consistent with this, evidence suggests teachers of colour can form more positive relationships with their pupils (Le and Nguyen, 2019; Blazar, 2021) which leads to higher pupil engagement in class (Blazar, 2021). It is also argued that positive relationships and outcomes could be due to teachers of colour acting as role models for students of colour (Le and Nguyen, 2019), and/or being more likely than other teachers to adopt 'culturally responsive teaching' (Blazar, 2021; Demie and See, 2022). Culturally responsive teaching is an approach which aims to cultivate both the academic success and cultural identity of ethnically diverse pupils, by ensuring that teaching and learning reflects pupils' cultures and lived experiences. Examples of culturally responsive teaching include decolonising the curriculum, affirming diverse communication cultures, and drawing on pupils' strengths and experiences in teaching (Gay, 2000).

**The evidence for positive effects of same-race matching on pupil attainment is less clear-cut.**

There is a body of research (predominantly from the USA) investigating associations between same-race matching and pupil attainment, although the evidence-base for positive effects has been described as inconsistent and weak (Driessen, 2015; Gorard, 2023).

‘...There is as yet little unambiguous empirical evidence that a stronger degree of ethnic match be it in the form of a one-to-one coupling of teachers to students with the same ethnic background, or a larger share of minority teachers at an ethnically mixed school, leads to predominantly positive results. Insofar [as] favorable effects were found, they apply to a greater extent to subjective teacher evaluations than to objective achievement outcome measures.’

(Driessen, 2015)

Findings from research published after Driessen’s 2015 review show similar mixed results. Several studies report positive effects of same-race matching on student attainment (Egalite, Kisida and Winters, 2015; Yarnell and Bohrnstedt, 2017; Blazar, 2021; Gershenson, Hansen and Lindsay, 2021; Gottfried, Little and Ansari, 2023). However, others report mixed or negative effects (Morgan and Hu, 2023; Penney, 2023).

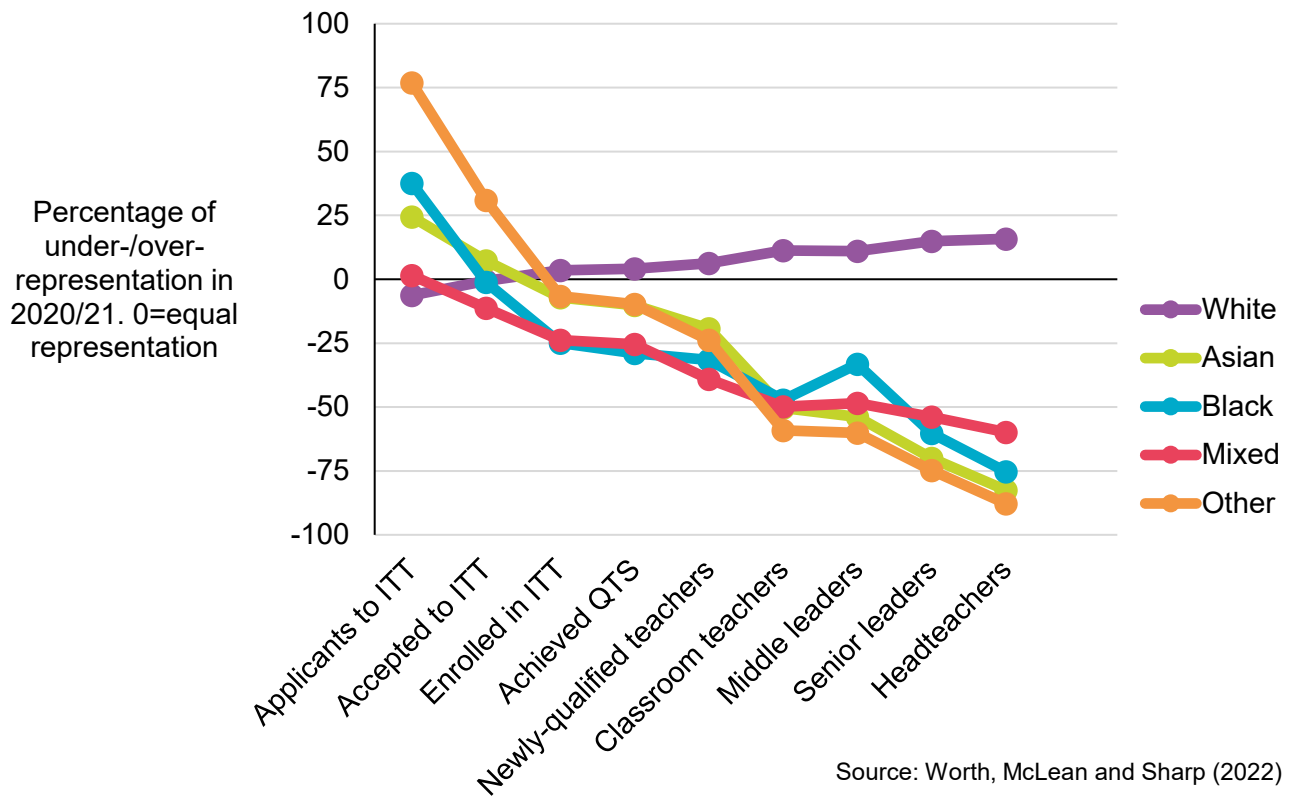
A recent study conducted in England (Gorard, 2023) investigated the relationship at school level between pupil attainment and the proportion of teachers from ethnic minority backgrounds. It found no evidence that the proportion of teachers from ethnic minority backgrounds in a school was linked to the performance of pupils in the school once the influences of prior attainment and poverty were taken into account. There was also no evidence of a link between attainment and the proportion of ethnic minority teachers relative to ethnic minority pupils at each school. However, the study used publicly-available data which is aggregated at school level. This means it could not identify which pupils had been taught by a teacher of colour or whether they were from the same ethnic backgrounds, so the author intends to apply for access to disaggregated and matched data to enable a more detailed investigation of these relationships in England (Gorard, 2023). Similarly, a recent study exploring the effect of headteacher ethnicity on pupil attainment found no evidence of higher attainment for pupils when their headteacher was from the same ethnic group. However, this analysis was limited by small sample sizes and focused on headteachers, rather than teachers, who have a more direct impact on pupils (Zuccollo et al., 2023). Further work is needed to explore the effects of teacher-pupil matching on pupil outcomes in England.

### 3. What is the extent of ethnic diversity in the teaching workforce?

**Despite being over-represented among applicants for initial teacher training, people of colour are considerably under-represented in teaching.**

There are clear ethnic disparities in the teaching workforce in England at all levels from initial teacher training (ITT) to headship.

**Figure 1 Representation in teaching compared with people of the same age in the wider population**



Compared with their share of the working-age population, people of colour are over-represented in ITT applications, which suggests there is no shortage of interest among people of colour in entering teaching. However, they are under-represented from ITT enrolment onwards, suggesting that they have lower acceptance rates than their White counterparts (Worth, McLean and Sharp, 2022). This under-representation becomes most pronounced at headteacher level, where headteachers of colour are underrepresented by 60% for headteachers of mixed ethnic background, 75% for Black headteachers, 83% for Asian headteachers, and 88% for headteachers from other ethnic groups, compared to their proportions in the wider population.

There were known to be 719 headteachers of colour working in state-funded schools in England in 2020/21. This represents 3.6%<sup>5</sup> of 20,192 headteachers. For comparison, a total of 3,379 headteachers of colour would be needed to be representative of the age-adjusted proportion of people of colour in the national population (16.7%).

<sup>5</sup> Data from the School Workforce Census 2020/21 (headcount). Figures and percentages are based on headteachers who reported their ethnicity, comprising at least 90% of the relevant population.

The severe under-representation of headteachers of colour is influenced by the loss of teachers of colour in the early career stages which means that fewer teachers of colour are available for promotion. But unequal rates of leadership progression also contribute. After adjusting for differences in their characteristics such as region and age:

- **teachers** from Asian, Black and other ethnic groups are significantly less likely (by 4-8 percentage points) to be promoted to middle leadership<sup>6</sup> than their counterparts from White backgrounds
- **middle leaders** from Asian and Black ethnic backgrounds are significantly less likely (by 3-5 percentage points) to be promoted to senior leadership than their White counterparts
- **senior leaders** from Asian backgrounds<sup>7</sup> are significantly less likely (by 5 percentage points) to be promoted to headship than their White counterparts (Worth, McLean and Sharp, 2022).

Teachers of colour are even more under-represented when compared with the pupil population in England, due to the greater ethnic diversity in younger age-groups. In 2021, 13% of teachers were from Black and minority ethnic (BAME)<sup>8</sup> backgrounds, compared with 35% of the pupil population (Demie and See, 2022).

**There has been an increase in people of colour applying for ITT in the past decade, but retention and promotion gaps widened.**

The past few years have seen a mixed picture of improvements and setbacks in increasing ethnic diversity within the teaching workforce. There was a considerable increase in applications to enter teaching and in QTS achievement rates among people of colour from 2014/15 to 2020/21. However, teacher retention rate gaps widened between teachers from Asian and Black backgrounds and teachers from White backgrounds in the same period. Gaps in the rate of promotion to middle leadership also widened for teachers from Asian backgrounds compared with White. Finally, promotion rate gaps for teachers of colour to senior leadership and headship did not change in the period 2010/11 to 2020/21 (Worth, McLean and Sharp, 2022).

The majority of schools in England have an all-White teaching staff. This is particularly the case in primary schools, 69% of which have an all-White teaching staff. Diversity is greater in secondary schools, only 18% of which have an all-White teaching staff, mainly due to the larger size of secondary schools. Pupils are more likely to encounter teachers from Asian ethnic backgrounds than teachers from Black, mixed or other ethnic backgrounds (Worth, McLean and Sharp, 2022).

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<sup>6</sup> These calculations were based on people in the workforce in 2015/16 and 2020/21.

<sup>7</sup> Numbers of senior leaders from mixed and other ethnic backgrounds were too small to analyse their rates of promotion to headship.

<sup>8</sup> The definition of BAME used in this study included White minorities, so the proportions of teachers and pupils of colour in the wider population would be smaller than the percentages quoted here.



In 2020/21, 60% of schools in England had an all-White teaching staff and 86% had an all-White senior leadership team.

(Worth, McLean and Sharp, 2022)

**There are some ethnic differences related to teachers' age and subject areas.**

ITT applicants from White ethnic backgrounds tend to be younger than applicants of colour, which is important because acceptance rates are higher for younger applicants. Teachers from Black ethnic backgrounds tend to be older than teachers from White ethnic backgrounds, but there are no other significant age-related differences between other ethnic groups among teachers or school leaders (Worth, McLean and Sharp, 2022).

In terms of their areas of specialism, teachers of colour are under-represented in primary teaching and most subjects, although teachers from Asian and Black backgrounds are over-represented in maths and sciences (Worth, McLean and Sharp, 2022). It is possible that these relationships are influenced by racial stereotyping (for example by the assumption that people from Asian backgrounds are particularly gifted in maths and science).

**Figure 2 Ethnic representation of teachers by subject**

Subject	Representation (%)				
	White	Asian	Black	Mixed	Other ethnic group
Primary	13	-58	-64	-55	-72
Sciences	< 1	10	1	-39	-20
Mathematics	-5	33	40	-43	5
English	9	-41	-36	-37	-56
Modern foreign languages	11	-75	-47	-22	90
History	15	-72	-67	-44	-65
Geography	16	-72	-71	-59	-77
Art & design, music, drama	16	-83	-55	-40	-73
Design and technology	5	-29	25	-54	-54
Physical education	16	-88	-57	-40	-82
Other subjects	2	-6	11	-40	-35

Notes: Positive numbers highlighted in blue indicate over-representation. Negative numbers highlighted in pink indicate under-representation.

Source: NFER analysis of School Workforce Census data for 2019/20 (Worth, McLean and Sharp, 2022).

**Teachers of colour are clustered in London.**

**Figure 3 Regional distribution of teachers of colour in 2022/23**

Region	Proportion in each region (%)	
	Teachers of colour	All teachers
London	46	16
South East	10	16
North West	6	14
West Midlands	15	11
East of England	8	11
Yorkshire and The Humber	6	10
South West	2	9
East Midlands	5	8
North East	1	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding. Source: (GOV.UK, 2023b)

Figure 3 shows the proportion of all teachers of colour working in each region, along with the overall proportion of the teaching workforce in this region. Teachers of colour are clustered in London, which has 46% of all the teachers of colour in England. This means that pupils living elsewhere in the country have a high probability of never being taught by a teacher of colour.

The high proportion of teachers of colour working in London is driven by several factors. The ethnicity gap in ITT acceptance rates is smaller in London than across England (Worth, McLean and Sharp, 2022). Teachers of colour may choose to teach in areas with ethnically diverse populations, because of the chance to make a difference for pupils of colour, and additionally may fear potential racial, verbal and physical abuse from teachers, parents and local communities if they were to teach in areas with no or low proportions of pupils of colour (Cunningham and Hargreaves, 2007).

**London has the greatest ethnic mismatch between teachers and pupils.**

Despite the relatively high ethnic diversity of teachers in London, the diversity gap between the teacher and pupil population is larger in London than elsewhere. Regions with the fewest pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds, such as the South West and North East, have the most proportionate workforce because both teachers and pupils are predominantly White (Gorard *et al.*, 2023).

## 4. What are the barriers and enablers to advancing diversity in teaching and school leadership?

**Research identifies many barriers and few enablers to advancing diversity in the teaching workforce. Experiences differ for people with different ethnic and other intersectional identities, including gender and religion.**

There is little hard evidence on the reasons for the lower ITT acceptance rates experienced by applicants of colour compared with applicants from White backgrounds (Worth, McLean and Sharp, 2022). There are two main areas of speculation: one suggestion is that White candidates have higher qualifications or more relevant experience<sup>9</sup>, another is that there is some underlying bias in favour of White applicants. There is one further possibility, namely that applicants of colour could be more likely than their White counterparts to turn down an offer of a place when offered it. It will be important to investigate these possibilities further to identify which are driving the disparities and identify solutions.

Most (80%) ITT entrants are graduates (GOV.UK, 2023). Young people of colour are more likely to enter university than their White counterparts (GOV.UK, 2022b), but they are less likely to graduate with a 'good' (first or 2.1) degree, especially if they are Black<sup>10</sup> (GOV.UK, 2022a). This may be because fewer students of colour attend Russell Group<sup>11</sup> universities, where degree classifications are higher (Boliver, 2011; Alexander and Shankley, 2020). It is also possible that fewer high-achieving graduates apply for teaching because their families do not consider teaching to be a good career choice compared with other graduate professions (Duggan, 2021; Gorard *et al.*, 2021, 2023). On the positive side, family support for teaching has been identified as an enabler for young people of colour choosing teaching as a career (Thompson and Tomlin, 2013).

If ITT selection processes use assessments which have not been checked for ethnic bias, this could reduce success rates for applicants of colour (Bardach, Rushby and Klassen, 2021)<sup>12</sup>. It is also possible that applications from people of colour are judged less favourably by ITT staff, who are overwhelmingly White (Maylor, 2022).

There are differences in ethnic acceptance rate gaps for students applying for different ITT routes. Gaps in 2019/20 acceptance rates for applicants from Black, mixed and other applicants of

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<sup>9</sup> Note that the difference in acceptance rates is not driven by international applicants, because they represent less than one per cent of applications to graduate ITT courses (Worth *et al.*, 2022).

<sup>10</sup> In 2020/1, 39% of graduates from White ethnic backgrounds obtained a good degree, compared with 33% of Asian, 36% of mixed and 20% of graduates from Black backgrounds.

<sup>11</sup> This is a group of 24 'world-class, research-intensive universities', see <https://russellgroup.ac.uk>

<sup>12</sup> This study found evidence of ethnic and gender bias (in favour of people from White backgrounds and women) in situational judgement tests used to select applicants for a teacher education programme in the United Kingdom.

colour<sup>13</sup> compared with White were relatively smaller for Teach First, but larger for the School Direct fee-paying route (Worth, McLean and Sharp, 2022). Teach First has reduced their acceptance rate ethnicity gap over time, following changes to their application process which are known to improve diversity in recruitment, including ‘blind’ applications; post-offer assessment tools; conditional offers; and contextual recruitment (Teach First, 2023).

### **Negative experiences during ITT help to explain why fewer trainee teachers of colour achieve qualified teacher status (QTS)**

In the period 2017/18 to 2019/20, QTS achievement rates were significantly lower for trainees of colour than for their White counterparts (Worth, McLean and Sharp, 2022). There appear to be three main reasons for this.

1. Trainees of colour can find the experience of ITT isolating, especially if there are few people of colour on their courses (Hobson *et al.*, 2008; Wilkins and Lall, 2011; Maylor, 2018).
2. Trainees may experience ignorance and racism from other students, tutors, teachers, parents and/or pupils, particularly during their school experience (Wilkins and Lall, 2011; Wilkins, 2014; Lander and Sheikh Zaheerali, 2016; Callender, 2020; Warner, 2022).
3. Trainees of colour report poor preparation and support from ITT tutors and school mentors on the challenges of diversity and racism they may face in teaching (Bhopal and Rhamie, 2014; Maylor, 2018; Callender, 2020).

Such negative experiences are compounded by a lack of teacher educators of colour in ITT, and the absence of institutional policies that challenge racial inequalities (Wilkins, 2014; Maylor, 2018, 2022; Warner, 2022). Black and male trainees of colour may be particularly impacted because they are entering a predominantly White, female profession (Wilkins and Lall, 2011; Maylor, 2018; Callender, 2020).

### **Teaching in London and high workloads are associated with leaving the profession regardless of ethnicity, but teachers of colour have additional concerns**

Retention in teaching is significantly lower for teachers of colour (by 1-4 percentage points, compared with their White counterparts). This is mainly because teachers of colour are concentrated in London, where retention rates are lower for all teachers. Nevertheless, teachers from Asian backgrounds have significantly lower retention rates than their White counterparts (by 1 percentage point) even after accounting for differences in region, age and experience (Worth, McLean and Sharp, 2022).

One of the main reasons teachers from all ethnic backgrounds leave the profession is high workload. But teachers of colour have three other key concerns, namely: overt and covert racial discrimination from staff, pupils and parents; disillusionment with their ability to make a difference

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<sup>13</sup> This analysis used a classification of ‘other ethnic minorities’ which includes Arab and other ethnic minorities but does not include White minorities.

for pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds; and a lack of opportunities for progression (Tereshchenko, Mills and Bradbury, 2020).

‘Both overt and covert racism takes a toll on BAME teachers’ wellbeing, progression and job satisfaction. BAME teachers had the same high levels of workload as all teachers, plus an additional ‘hidden workload’ of coping with racism.’

(Tereshchenko, Mills and Bradbury, 2020)

Research among teachers of colour commonly finds that they experience racism from colleagues, pupils and parents. Compared with their White counterparts, significantly higher proportions of teachers of colour report experiencing discrimination at work and abuse from pupils (Haque, 2017; Adams *et al.*, 2023). Women, people of colour, and school staff with a disability are less confident than their peers that their leaders would take action to prevent discrimination (Ozolins *et al.*, 2021).

The first wave of the Working Lives of Teachers survey was administered in spring 2022. This nationally representative survey of teachers and school leaders in England found several significant differences related to ethnicity.

- Teachers from Black or other ethnic minority backgrounds were more likely than White teachers or leaders to report bullying and discrimination.
- Those from Asian or Black backgrounds were much more likely than those from White backgrounds to be dissatisfied with the salary they received.
- White teachers and leaders more likely to say they felt valued by their school than those from other ethnic backgrounds.

When asked about EDI, 72% those from White ethnic backgrounds agreed that their school ‘values an equal, diverse and inclusive workforce’. Significantly fewer respondents from Asian and Black ethnic backgrounds agreed with this statement (55% and 39% respectively).

(Adams *et al.*, 2023)

Racism and discrimination can be overt, but it can also take more subtle forms that are difficult for people of colour to challenge for fear of being labelled ‘aggressive’. These include racial stereotypes (such as ‘angry Black person’), tokenism, microaggressions, ‘othering’ and social exclusion (Haque and Elliott, 2017; Pearson, 2020; Tereshchenko, Mills and Bradbury, 2020; Ozolins *et al.*, 2021; Bradbury, Tereshchenko and Mills, 2023; Education Support, 2023). One

example of thoughtlessness on behalf of a predominantly White teaching staff is that teachers of colour may feel left out of work-related social events that centre on drinking alcohol (Tereshchenko *et al.*, 2022; Education Support, 2023).

Teachers of colour can also be demotivated by colleagues' rejection of their culturally responsive approaches to teaching (Hargreaves, 2011; Tereshchenko, Mills and Bradbury, 2020; Miller and Lashley, 2022) and feel their personal background is not reflected in what they teach (Pearson, 2020).

Experienced teachers of colour can become frustrated by a lack of opportunities for progression, due to an absence of support, unfair treatment and experiencing an 'invisible glass ceiling' (Haque and Elliott, 2017; Elton-Chalcraft, Kendrick and Chapman, 2018a; Miller and Callender, 2018; Small *et al.*, 2018; Tereshchenko, Mills and Bradbury, 2020; Education Support, 2023). Teachers of colour report being denied opportunities for training or being passed over for consideration in terms of career progression (Haque and Elliott, 2017; Tereshchenko, Mills and Bradbury, 2020).

'I look at the people at my school that have been promoted above me or given opportunities to learn, and they're all White British which I find interesting.'

(Mark, a primary teacher from a Black African background, quoted in Tereshchenko, Mills and Bradbury, 2020)

Teachers of colour respond to such experiences in different ways. Miller (2019) identified three typical responses as assimilation, appeasement and group membership (Miller, 2019). This includes adopting similar dress and speech patterns (also known as 'code switching') and adjusting one's behaviour, views and interests to mirror those of the dominant White group. It can also mean downplaying parts of one's culture and experience that are different from the majority and keeping quiet for fear of expressing views that might not be well received (Haque and Elliott, 2017; Callender, 2018; Education Support, 2023). These responses can be personally damaging to individuals' self-esteem and ability to navigate their experiences at work (Haque and Elliott, 2017; Tereshchenko, Mills and Bradbury, 2020). Teachers of colour may suffer from symptoms of stress and poor mental health as a result (Education Support, 2023).

### **A supportive family and diverse leadership team are associated with teacher retention**

'I blame myself. It makes you wonder whether it's a personal problem rather than racial when you're overlooked in terms of career progression. How much of that is that I just don't fit?'

(Male secondary teacher from an African Caribbean background, with over 16 years of teaching experience, quoted in Haque and Elliott, 2017)

Teachers of colour who remain in the profession tend to be those who have access to additional personal and professional resources. First, having support from family and wider networks is important. This includes an upbringing that emphasises personal agency and being supported by their family and wider community (Duggan, 2023). Second, schools with diverse senior leadership teams have higher retention rates for teachers of colour (Worth, McLean and Sharp, 2022). This may be because diverse leadership teams both signify and contribute to a more equitable school culture (Tereshchenko, Mills and Bradbury, 2020). On the other hand, these findings suggest that teachers of colour who do not have access to these sources of support to navigate the barriers and setbacks they face are more likely to leave the profession (Duggan, 2021).

### **There appear to be specific barriers preventing teachers of colour becoming senior leaders**

The main barriers to leadership and headship reported by teachers of colour are a lack of encouragement, racism and preconceptions linked to their culture and/or faith (Bush, Glover and Sood, 2007; Hargreaves, 2011; Haque and Elliott, 2017; Elton-Chalcraft, Kendrick and Chapman, 2018; Miller and Callender, 2018; Elonga Mboyo, 2019; Tereshchenko, Mills and Bradbury, 2020; Miller and Lashley, 2022; Education Support, 2023).

‘Teachers spoke about an invisible glass-ceiling and widespread perception among senior leadership teams (SLTs) that BME teachers “have a certain level and don’t go beyond it”.’

(Haque and Elliott, 2017)

Worth, McLean and Sharp (2022) also found that schools with diverse senior leadership teams were associated with *lower* rates of promotion to middle leadership for teachers of colour. This is a puzzling relationship which requires further investigation to understand.

One of the main barriers to senior leadership highlighted in the literature is that teachers of colour are encouraged or self-select into middle leadership roles that have limited opportunities for further progression, such as pastoral or behavioural responsibilities (Lander and Sheikh Zaheerali, 2016; Haque and Elliott, 2017; Tereshchenko, Mills and Bradbury, 2020; Wallace, 2020). This could be the result of racial stereotyping leading decision-makers to view teachers of colour as suited to particular roles. For example, Derron Wallace interviewed 25 Black male secondary teachers who reported pressure from senior colleagues to serve in racialised roles as community liaisons, role models, and schoolwide disciplinarians, particularly for students of colour. However, accepting such roles hindered these teachers’ prospects of securing a senior leadership position.

Wallace describes a typical professional trajectory experienced by the Black male teachers in his study. First, they were ‘backed’ by senior White teachers and veteran teachers of colour to apply for mid-level appointments such as head of year, head of department or instructional coach. Next, they were ‘blocked’, capping their advancement to senior management roles. Last they were ‘burned’, when they encountered discrepancies between what senior management suggested about their value and the reality they experienced whereby the promotions they wanted were denied (Wallace, 2020).

‘It is all too easy to be pulled in the direction of those cultural stereotypes, such as being able to deal with more challenging parents or more challenging behaviour or cultural relevance in the curriculum because you are a Black leader. All of this is fine if that is your skillset and you have the ability to articulate a whole-school vision related to these elements, but one person cannot carry the weight of such changes in an organisation if that is not their particular strength. Furthermore, we certainly shouldn’t be expected to be the lone advocates of equality just because of the colour of our skin.’

(Caroline King in Wilson (Ed.), 2023)

## 5. Applying for senior leadership

### Edmond’s experience

Edmond is of Black African origin and had been living in England since the age of 24. About three years after starting his career in the North of England, Edmond began to apply for promotion. He was invited for interviews in three different schools for a head of department post. In one school, he was one of three candidates to take part in an interview process which included being observed teaching a class. At the end of the process, the headteacher called Edmond back to explain that he (the headteacher) wanted to appoint Edmond as he was clearly the best candidate, but the other two panellists (a head of year and a member of the department) were vehemently opposed. When the headteacher questioned why, the other two panellists were unable to substantiate their opinions. They then became angry at the headteacher for accusing them of racism and ‘stormed out’ of the interview room. The headteacher explained to Edmond that he had decided not to appoint him because to do so would ‘set Edmond up to fail’ as he would have to work with colleagues who did not like him.

(Elonga Mboyo, 2019)

Elonga Mboyo goes on to suggest that some school leaders may fail to appoint deserving candidates of colour to senior leadership positions because they feel unable to deviate from the existing prototype of their organisations which enshrines established group values, including institutional racism (Elonga Mboyo, 2019).

### Women of colour may face greater barriers to senior leadership

Women of colour may face greater barriers in achieving leadership roles, because senior leadership roles in schools are dominated by White men (Miller and Lashley, 2022). Women of colour may also be deterred from seeking promotion to leadership roles because they have a greater burden of responsibility in the home (Elton-Chalcraft, Kendrick and Chapman, 2018).



## 5.1. Leadership retention

Miller and Lashley identified six factors that were responsible for and/or contributed to 16 school leaders of Black and mixed heritage exiting the profession or accepting a junior role (Miller and Lashley, 2022).

1. Quality of life. The impact of school leadership on leaders' quality of life is an important barrier to retention among leaders in general but has also been identified as a particular issue for leaders of colour.
2. Conflict with other senior leaders (usually, but not exclusively White) and senior staff (usually White) was the second most crucial factor in decisions to exit the profession or to accept a more junior role. Lack of support (absence of or inadequate guidance and assistance) from other senior leaders created a disabling environment for school leaders of colour
3. Racism was a factor in accepting a junior role and in decisions by school leaders to exit the profession, although not believed to be the most influential
4. Clash of values, including an observation that education was becoming too 'corporate', the curriculum was too rigid and perceived systemic/institutional blockages to their moral purpose
5. Disillusionment with their supervisors and/or other aspects of the education system
6. Bullying (from peers and supervisors) and toxic school cultures also contributed to these leaders' decisions to step down or leave teaching.

'I've had enough experience as a Black person. You know, you look at so many things that need to change for Black kids, your kids, and you, you can't do it. You're prevented from doing it.'

(School leader quoted in Miller and Lashley, 2022)

A key barrier thought to reduce retention among headteachers of colour is that they are disproportionately appointed to lead challenging schools in socially disadvantaged areas, with the additional pressures that brings (Miller and Callender, 2018; Johnson, 2021; Miller and Lashley, 2022).

Finally, several commentators have discussed the influence of academisation on leaders and teachers of colour. This is particularly relevant in the secondary sector, which has the greatest representation of teachers and leaders of colour. First, concerns have been expressed that accountability for race equality (under Public Sector Equality Duties) may be less strongly enforced in academies (Haque and Elliott, 2017). Second, it has been suggested that academisation has led to schools becoming more 'corporate' and less focused on social justice, thereby creating a conflict of values for some leaders of colour (Miller and Lashley, 2022). Third, it has been suggested that being part of a multi-academy trust could lead to reduced headteacher autonomy and opportunities for leadership development among leaders of colour (Johnson, 2021).

## **The main enabler of leadership progression and retention is an anti-racist culture**

Unsurprisingly given the barriers identified above, a positive institutional culture for racial equality is identified as the key enabler to encourage progression to leadership for teachers of colour (Miller, 2020; Warner, 2022; Stewart-Hall *et al.*, 2023).

Some commentators argue that leadership training programmes specifically designed for aspiring leaders of colour are necessary to increase the numbers of senior leaders and headteachers of colour (Johnson and Campbell-Stephens, 2010, 2013; New Leaders, 2022). Reasons for this include that they offer a supportive community which enables participants to make sense of their roots and identity (Ogunbawo, 2012) as well as providing an opportunity to learn how to 'lead differently' (Johnson and Campbell-Stephens, 2010).

However, such courses have been controversial, on the grounds that they serve to endorse ethnic segregation and do not address the need for all leadership development training to focus on issues of diversity (Ogunbawo, 2012). In her study of two such targeted programmes in England (*Investing in Diversity* and *Equal Access to Promotion*), Ogunbawo found these were highly appreciated by participants. She concluded that there were two options for future development: the first is to offer customised development programmes and allow aspiring leaders of colour to choose either a tailored course or a mainstream programme provided for their White counterparts. The second is for all development programmes to offer core learning units on diversity literacy and understanding equity and social justice to equip teachers and school leaders with the necessary skills and competences required for working in a multicultural environment.

While some tailored programmes exist, there is currently no specific government-funded support and few opportunities for aspiring leaders of colour to benefit from mentoring or leadership training tailored to their needs (Bush, Glover and Sood, 2007; Johnson and Campbell-Stephens, 2010, 2013; Carr, 2020; Miller, 2020; Johnson, 2021; Miller and Lashley, 2022).

Other so-called 'enablers' of progression identified in the literature can be considered as responses to structural barriers for aspiring leaders of colour. For example Paul Miller identified 'White sanction' (endorsement from a senior White leader) as possibly the most important enabler of leadership progression for Black teachers and academics (Miller, 2016). Such an endorsement was found to be instrumental in getting aspiring leaders of colour noticed and providing them with legitimacy which is not readily available from other sources (such as peer networks). However, the need for such endorsement is problematic, because it 'reveals the reality of the educational leadership landscape in England as primarily a White endeavour' (Miller and Callender, 2018).

Due to the systemic barriers they face, senior leaders of colour have been described as 'exceptional', demonstrating extraordinary agency, determination, resilience and hard work to achieve and maintain their positions (Bush, Glover and Sood, 2007; Miller, 2020). However, this narrative has been critiqued for putting the onus on the individual to be 'resilient', rather than on the organisation to address racism. It is damaging to suggest that aspiring leaders of colour need only apply if they are able to withstand the additional burden of racist attitudes or that unsuccessful candidates would have succeeded if only they had been more persistent (Elonga Mboyo, 2019).

The ability to pursue their moral purpose is important for all school leaders. For leaders of colour, this purpose may include leadership for EDI (Campbell-Stephens, 2009; Johnson, 2020, 2021). However, given the lack of official recognition of the need to combat racism in education, this can be particularly challenging to pursue without sufficient support from staff, governors and parents. Leaders of colour may also seek out and benefit from community support and networking with other leaders of colour for support in pursuing their chosen moral purpose (Johnson, 2021; Smith, 2021).

## 6. Which interventions are effective or promising?

### **There is very little hard evidence on the effectiveness of interventions to improve ethnic diversity in teaching**

‘What are the programs, support systems, and incentives that can increase the share of individuals of color entering the teaching profession? These questions were first posed over 40 years ago. It is time that we find the answers.’

(Blazar, 2021)

There is a long history of interventions designed to increase diversity within the teaching workforce in the USA, but few have been evaluated. However, evidence from practice reviews suggests that there is no single solution to increasing diversity in teaching and leadership because initiatives must be tailored to address specific needs within a local context (Goe and Roth, 2019; Jones, Holton and Joseph, 2019).

Researchers recommend that initiatives should be based on a clear needs analysis and involve people of colour in their design (Jones, Holton and Joseph, 2019; Carter, 2021a).

Although EDI training is widely recommended, evidence suggests that it is likely to be ineffective unless it is part of a wider strategy, endorsed by senior leaders (Kulik and Roberson, 2008; Atewologun, Cornich, and Tresh, 2018; Dobbin and Kalev, 2018). Making a deep commitment to anti-racism can be challenging for leaders as, according to Stewart-Hall and colleagues, it entails moving away from a stance of race neutrality by understanding their own race identity and analysing situations from a ‘race’ lens without guilt and with conviction for the benefit of those they serve. This involves considerable courage and tenacity (Stewart-Hall *et al.*, 2023). School leaders who took part in a programme of six workshops over a school year referred to the need for ‘bravery’ and endorsed the importance of being part of a supportive group of fellow headteachers. The researchers identified a deep understanding of the issues and support from a reflective community of practice as pre-requisites for effective anti-racist practice and sustained school transformation (Walker *et al.*, 2023).

Similarly, mentoring is unlikely to be successful unless it achieves a level of intensity and duration (Caven *et al.*, 2021; Garvey Shah *et al.*, 2022). One US study found that early career teachers of colour who spent more than four hours per month meeting with their mentors were more likely than

those spending less time with their mentors to still be teaching in the same district the following year (Caven *et al.*, 2021).

Two evaluations of interventions in England designed to improve ethnic representation in teaching are summarised below.

### **Research insights from Teach First**

Teach First introduced several evidence-informed changes to their ITT application process to increase diversity. These included: blind assessment of applications; post-offer assessment tools; conditional offers; and contextual recruitment, taking account of socio-economic deprivation and other indicators known to affect academic performance. These changes were followed by a significant reduction in the gap in success rates between applicants from different ethnic groups.

(Teach First, 2023)

### **Investing in Diversity**

Investing in Diversity was a leadership development programme for Black and global majority educators with the express purpose to change the ‘face and heart of leadership’ in London. Its philosophy encouraged Black and global majority educators to embrace the ‘additionality’ they bring to their leadership. Sponsored by the London Centre for Leadership in Learning at the University of London, funding was originally provided by the Department for Children, Schools, and Families through the London Challenge, a funding programme designed to improve educational outcomes for students in urban contexts.

The programme took place over a 12-month period, beginning with a residential weekend and followed by ten after-school sessions and a whole-day seminar at the end of the year.

About a thousand London teachers completed the programme from 2004 to 2010. It consistently achieved high rates of satisfaction from participants with an average of 85-90% saying they were highly satisfied with the course and 96% describing the residential weekend as ‘excellent’. In 2007, 146 former participants responded to a questionnaire. Almost two-thirds (92 participants) said they had applied for promotion since completing the programme, and two-thirds of those (60) had been successful.

The Investing in Diversity model was also adopted in Leeds (funded by the Local Authority) and similar programmes were funded by the National College in Yorkshire and the Humber and Bristol. A sister program known as ‘Leading for Equity’ began in Toronto in 2009 sponsored by the Centre for Leadership and Diversity at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education.

(Johnson and Campbell-Stephens, 2010, 2013)

We have drawn together evidence from initiatives and research in England and the USA to identify promising practice and research-based recommendations focused on different career stages.

### Promising approaches to improving ethnic representation in teaching

Recruit	Attracting people of colour into teaching <sup>14</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Awareness campaigns to raise the status of teaching as a career among people of colour; tasters and placements.</li> <li>• Alternative pathways into teaching for people of colour who do not have the necessary qualifications.</li> </ul> <p>(Jones, Holton and Joseph, 2019; Carter, 2021a; Steiner <i>et al.</i>, 2022; Duggan, 2023; Teach First, 2023)</p>
	ITT application processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ‘Name-blind’ appraisal of applications; ensure that any assessments used are free of ethnic bias.</li> <li>• Contextualised recruitment and conditional offers, dependent on applicants of colour completing targeted interventions.</li> <li>• Monitoring application and acceptance rates of applicants of colour to inform research-led approaches for improvement.</li> </ul> <p>(Bardach, Rushby and Klassen, 2021; Carter, 2021a; Teach First, 2023)</p>
	ITT experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EDI policies and training for teacher educators and students. Selection of ITT experience placements to be supportive of students of colour.</li> <li>• Preparation and support for all trainee teachers on how to handle racism and prejudice.</li> <li>• Access for trainee teachers to teacher educators and mentors from diverse backgrounds (including same-race teacher educators and mentors for students of colour).</li> </ul> <p>(Kohli, 2019; Beckles-Raymond, 2020; Carter, 2021a; Caven <i>et al.</i>, 2021; Maylor, 2022; Gorard <i>et al.</i>, 2023)</p>

<sup>14</sup> Note that several initiatives offer bursaries to encourage ITT applications from people of colour, but analysis has found that while they boost the number of applications overall, bursaries that are open to people from all ethnic backgrounds have proportionately fewer applications from people of colour (Worth and Hollis, 2021).

<b>Teach</b>	<b>Teacher retention</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EDI training and policies in schools.</li> <li>• Racial literacy in the leadership team; openness to culturally sensitive teaching approaches and curriculum materials; actions to improve diversity of teaching staff and SLT.</li> <li>• All training for school leaders to include awareness of EDI issues.</li> <li>• Support and encouragement of career progression for teachers of colour and fair progression processes.</li> <li>• Access to mentors of colour and support networks.</li> <li>• Increased diversity of governing bodies.</li> <li>• Professional development and listening spaces for teachers of colour to address race and racism in their teaching experiences.</li> </ul> <p>(Haque and Elliott, 2017; Miller, 2020; Carter, 2021b; Jaciw <i>et al.</i>, 2021; Garvey Shah <i>et al.</i>, 2022; Tereshchenko <i>et al.</i>, 2022; Education Support, 2023)</p>
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<b>Lead</b>	<b>Leadership development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Career support for teachers of colour.</li> <li>• Commitment from senior leaders to provide career advancement opportunities for teachers of colour.</li> <li>• Training tailored to aspiring leaders of colour. Same-race mentoring for aspiring leaders of colour.</li> <li>• Fair selection processes underpinned by EDI policies and training; selection panels for senior posts to include people of colour.</li> <li>• Monitoring of the ethnicity pay gap.</li> </ul> <p>(Johnson and Campbell-Stephens, 2013; Elonga Mboyo, 2019; Miller, 2020; Ozolins <i>et al.</i>, 2021; Miller and Lashley, 2022; New Leaders, 2022; Tereshchenko <i>et al.</i>, 2022)</p>
	<b>Leadership retention</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognition and support for leaders of colour to pursue their moral purpose.</li> <li>• Support from community and diverse peer networks.</li> <li>• Access to mentoring and on-the-job coaching for new leaders.</li> <li>• Adequate compensation for additional commitments as visible leaders of colour, such as speaking and mentoring.</li> </ul> <p>(Campbell-Stephens, 2009; Johnson, 2021; Garvey Shah <i>et al.</i>, 2022; Miller and Lashley, 2022; New Leaders, 2022).</p>

## 7. Conclusion

Investigating the lack of ethnic diversity in the teaching workforce exposes some big contradictions. People of colour are under-represented in the teaching workforce, but over-represented among applicants who want to make teaching their career. Most teachers and school leaders from White backgrounds believe their school values an equal, diverse and inclusive workforce, but significantly fewer of their colleagues from Asian and Black backgrounds agree. The government wants to build an inclusive environment where teachers of colour can ‘be themselves’ but evidence suggests teachers of colour need to suppress parts of their identity in the workplace in order to fit in.

This evidence review set out to understand the barriers and enablers to increasing ethnic diversity in the teaching workforce. By reading and synthesising the work of many researchers and practitioners from diverse backgrounds, drawing together statistics, survey findings and detailed accounts from teachers of colour about their lived experiences, the reasons behind the apparent contradictions start to become clear and potential solutions emerge.

The barriers to ethnic diversity in teaching, although multiple, tend to coalesce around the unequal treatment of teachers of colour in a system that was not designed with either ethnic or intersectional diversity in mind. To capitalise on the fact that people of colour are increasingly encouraged to enter teaching there must be complementary actions to support teachers of colour already in the profession to stay in teaching and progress in their careers.

The evidence-base provides strong and consistent findings on the experiences of people of colour in teaching and the barriers they face. Some aspects are less clear, however, including the reasons behind the gap in acceptance rates of applicants of colour in ITT. We also have less robust evidence on the efficacy of different approaches to improving diversity in teaching.

If we are serious about improving ethnic diversity in teaching, we need to understand the barriers and remove them. This includes people from White backgrounds making a commitment to EDI across the education system and centring the experiences of people of colour as we all work to make equity a reality. It requires us all to address sources of inequality, monitor progress and hold organisations to account, while evaluating new initiatives and sharing best practice. That it has taken so long to make progress on this issue suggests there is a long road ahead. This is why we need to continue to make the case, redouble our efforts, support one another, and celebrate our successes along the way.

## 8. Recommendations

Based on the findings of this review, we offer the following recommendations for consideration by Mission 44 and others working to tackle ethnic under-representation within the teaching workforce.

Given the lack of monitoring and evaluation in this area, we recommend that schools and ITT providers share learning and evaluate impact. Cross-programme monitoring (for example of ethnic pay gaps), and evaluation of initiatives could be used to holistically understand the career journeys of teachers of colour and identify areas for improvement as well as identify examples of best practice.

There are currently no specific government targets, programmes or funding in England to improve the ethnic diversity in the teaching workforce. We therefore recommend that key stakeholders work together to campaign for government action, for example by referring to actions taken in Scotland and Wales (Scottish Government, 2021; Welsh Government, 2023a).

As the loss in diversity is greatest at ITT entry and achievement of QTS, we recommend this stage as a priority for action. From our evidence review, this could include encouraging ITT providers to take action to increase diversity, including agreeing to publish their ethnicity data as a first step. We recommend an initial focus on the School Direct fee-paying route, which has a large ethnicity gap in acceptances, and providers in London and other inner-city areas, where ITT applicants and trainees of colour are clustered.

We also recognise the importance of increasing the diversity of the teaching workforce in areas with a predominantly White population. Given the low starting point, this requires a different approach. We therefore recommend a process of consultation with teachers and leaders of colour regarding their willingness to train and teach in such areas. This essential first step will help to identify the conditions that are needed for success, before working with key stakeholders to develop a plan of action.

## **8.1. Interventions for schools and teachers**

Based on this evidence review, we recommend attention is focused on making sure schools play their part in improving ethnic diversity amongst teachers and leaders. This long-term process of systemic change could usefully involve teacher, school leader and governance volunteer representative organisations well as ‘middle tier’ organisations, such as MATs and LAs.

1. Training for senior leaders and governors should include content on how to promote EDI in their schools.
2. Use of whole-school initiatives such as EDI policies, training for all staff including leadership teams and an adoption of anti-racist charter marks.
3. Claims of racism should be properly investigated and reported. School leaders should be encouraged to review whether their practices are negatively impacting on teachers and other staff of colour.
4. Members of MAT boards, local authorities and governing bodies should challenge schools to diversify their teaching and leadership teams.
5. Schools should provide careers advice, development and support for teachers of colour (such as training, networks and mentoring) from an early point in their teaching careers.

## **8.2. Interventions for ITT**

Interventions in ITT must be a priority because this is the career stage with the greatest losses of people of colour from the teaching workforce. The following strategies are recommended in the literature.

1. Make a career in teaching attractive to high achieving graduates of colour through strategies such as advertising, job experience, events and tasters.



2. Provide alternative pathways to enter ITT for people of colour who do not have the currently required qualifications to apply.
3. Investigate the causes of low acceptance rates for ITT applicants of colour and use appropriate strategies such as name-blind applications, contextualised recruitment and conditional offers to address them.
4. Provide structured support for applicants of colour (and applicants from disadvantaged backgrounds) to help with their applications.
5. Implement organisational strategies to improve the qualification rates of trainees of colour. These include EDI policies and training for ITT staff and students, a rigorous complaints procedure; ensuring that school experience takes place in schools committed to EDI; increasing diversity among teacher educators; and exit interviews with trainee teachers who withdraw to include investigation of barriers related to EDI.
6. All ITT programmes should include racial justice in education as part of the curriculum for trainee teachers.

### **8.3. Interventions for senior leaders**

Based on the available evidence, we suggest the following types of support are needed to increase the number of people of colour in senior leadership and headship.

1. NPQs should include explicit content on leading for social justice.
2. Given the current barriers faced by aspiring leaders of colour, we endorse the case for providing training programmes tailored to their needs. While some such programmes exist, these tend to be based in London which suggests that more programmes may be needed in other areas of England. Such programmes typically include content on social justice and moral purpose; personal development planning and preparing for application/interview; how to sustain a career; developing community relationships; and leading for diversity.
3. There may be a need for bursaries to enable teachers of colour, especially those from socio-economically deprived backgrounds, to undertake leadership development.
4. Mentoring support should be available from same-race teachers and leaders (mentors should be trained and paid).
5. Teachers and leaders of colour could benefit from access to professional support networks of same-race aspiring/practising leaders.
6. In-school coaching should be available to newly-appointed headteachers of colour.
7. Monitoring and evaluation strategies should be built into leadership development programmes from the start.

### **8.4. System change**

Given the persistence of under-representation of people from diverse ethnic groups in teaching and some of the deep-seated issues involved, there is clearly a need for change at system level.

1. The government should devise an action plan to improve diversity in the teaching workforce, and this commitment should be included in all relevant policy initiatives, such as the teacher recruitment and retention strategy. The new policy direction should include a move away from a 'race-blind' approach to the issue.

2. The government should ensure that training providers and schools are aware of their responsibility to prevent discrimination on the grounds of protected characteristics.
3. The government should monitor the diversity of teachers and ethnic pay gaps in schools and MATs.
4. There is a need for improved ethnicity monitoring data at national, regional and organisational levels to identify and understand gaps in progression, scrutinise progress and share good practice.

## 8.5. Priority research topics

Our rapid research review has identified several notable gaps within the evidence base. If the sector is to gain a better understanding of the barriers and enablers to increasing the ethnic diversity of the teaching workforce, we recommend the following research questions are answered.

1. What are the reasons for low ITT acceptance rates among applicants of colour?
2. What works in recruiting and retaining teachers of colour? What are the specific issues encountered by teachers and leaders with different intersectional identities (including ethnicity, gender, social class and religion)? For example, Black men who teach, and women of colour who aspire to senior leadership?
3. Does racial matching of teachers and pupils improve outcomes for pupils of colour in England and if so, how?
4. What does culturally responsive teaching mean in an English context, how can it be supported in schools, and could it improve outcomes for pupils of colour and/or improve retention among teachers of colour?
5. What can we learn from the experience of senior leaders and headteachers of colour, as they progress in their careers to help encourage and support more senior leaders of colour in future?
6. Under what circumstances could ITT providers and schools serving mainly White populations attract and retain teachers and leaders of colour?

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## Appendix: Review search strategy

At the outset of the review we agreed inclusion and exclusion criteria to focus the search strategy on the most relevant and robust evidence to answer the following research questions.

1. What are the benefits – both perceived and independently verified – to a more diverse teaching workforce and senior school leadership (for example, to the school, teaching and young people)?
2. What is the ethnic composition of the English teaching workforce and school leadership teams<sup>15</sup>, highlighting any subjects, levels, school types or geographical areas where POC are particularly underrepresented?
3. What are the key known barriers and enablers to improving ethnic diversity in the teaching workforce and at the head/senior leader level?
4. What is the evidence of interventions shown to be promising or effective in this space?
5. What are the gaps in provision to encourage ethnic diversity in the teaching profession?

Criteria	Include	Exclude	Rationale
Content of interest: England only	Evidence on the ethnic composition of the English school teacher & leadership workforce (including the student pipeline)	governance roles support staff roles	Focuses on specific context of interest
Content of interest: UK/international	Evidence on ethnic diversity in the teaching & school leadership workforce in relation to:  Barriers/enablers  Interventions  Benefits	governance roles support staff roles	As above
Phase of education	Primary, secondary	Early years, FE, HE	Focuses on issues relevant to school teacher/leader workforce

<sup>15</sup> Note that the focus will be on teachers and school leadership: we do not intend to include school governance in this analysis.

Criteria	Include	Exclude	Rationale
Date range	Published since 2017	Earlier than 2017 (unless summarised in reviews, widely cited or identified through reference harvesting)	Manageable volume of a broad range of contemporary literature with scope to include influential earlier works
Geographic scope	UK and US	Wider international literature (unless summarised in reviews or widely cited)	Focuses on the UK context whilst learning from the more extensive US evidence base
Evidence types	Primary research studies, literature reviews and good practice guides		Captures evidence relevant to the English school system alongside key messages from pre-synthesised US research and contemporary initiatives
Language	English only	Other languages	Not cost or time effective in a rapid review

Our search strategy executed in early July 2023 covered the following information sources:

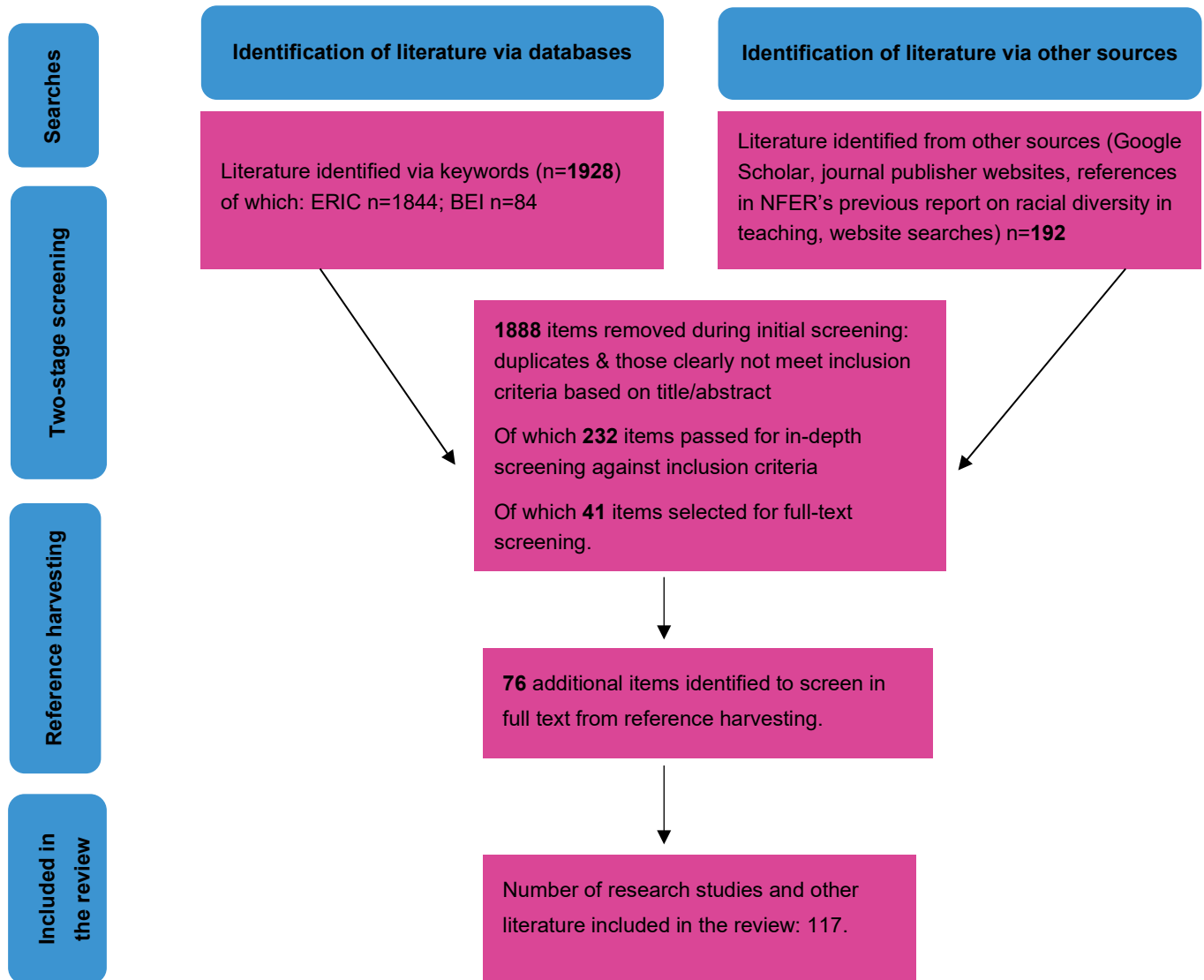
- Bibliographic databases: British Education Index (BEI) & Education Resources Information Center (ERIC) – we indicate the main keywords<sup>16</sup> below.
- Peer-review journal publisher websites & Google Scholar
- Reference harvested from previous research, in particular, NFER’s report [Racial equality in the teacher workforce](#) (Worth, McLean and Sharp, 2022).
- NFER’s research database covering grey literature published by major UK research organisations
- Websites of key organisations including Ambition Institute, DfE and Teach First.

References were harvested from shortlisted literature and we carried out a further round of reference harvesting in August 2023 following the publication of new UK research (Gorard *et al.*, 2023).

<sup>16</sup> Our search keywords combine database thesaurus terms with free-text terms e.g. those not in the controlled language but which may increase our chances of retrieving the most relevant results.

ERIC	BEI
<p>African American teachers</p> <p>Minority group teachers</p> <p>Diversity (faculty)</p> <p>Teachers of color/colour (FT)</p> <p>Black teachers (FT)</p> <p>Same race teacher(s) (FT)</p> <p>Teacher diversity (FT)</p> <p>BAME teacher(s) (FT)</p> <p>BAME educator(s) (FT)</p> <p>Minority ethnic teacher(s) (FT)</p> <p>Ethnic minority teacher(s) (FT)</p> <p>Minority group students AND (pre-service teacher education OR pre-service teachers)</p>	<p>Minority teachers</p> <p>Teachers of color/colour (FT)</p> <p>BAME teacher(s) (FT)</p> <p>BAME educator(s) (FT)</p> <p>Same race teacher(s) (FT)</p> <p>Black teachers</p> <p>Teacher diversity (FT)</p> <p>Minority students AND (teacher training or teacher education)</p> <p>Minority ethnic teacher(s) (FT)</p> <p>Ethnic minority teacher(s) (FT)</p>

## Identifying key studies for the evidence review<sup>17</sup>



<sup>17</sup> Diagram adapted to reflect our rapid review methodology from: (Page *et al.*, 2021), 'The PRISMA 2020 statement: an updated guideline for reporting systematic reviews', *BMJ*, 372, p. n71. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.n7> .



# Evidence for excellence in education

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