

Raising Achievement of Black Caribbean Pupils: Barriers and Good Practice in Schools



The Author

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Executive Summary

This study aimed to examine both the key barriers to learning, as well as school strategies to raise attainment of Black Caribbean pupils in Lambeth schools. A complementary methodological approach was used, comprising of three elements: a review of literature, analysis of trend attainment data, and also a survey sent to schools involved in the project to raise the achievement of Black Caribbean pupils.

- The data shows that Black Caribbean underachievement is real and persistent with consistently low levels of attainment, and the difference between their performance and that national attainment is the largest of any ethnic group. Black Caribbean pupils did not achieve in line with the wider Lambeth pupil population and there is little indication of closing over time at Key Stage 2 (KS2) and Key Stage 4 (KS4).
- The survey of the barriers to learning suggests there are many factors that contribute to underachievement of Black Caribbean pupils in schools. The factors that respondents rated as having most contribution were low literacy levels, the effect of poverty, followed by lack of positive role models and social class issues, marginalisation, lack of parent parental engagement and parental aspiration, lack of targeted support, social class issues, single parent, peer group pressure and school exclusions.
- The survey of the success factors that contributed in improving the achievement of Black Caribbean pupils also identified factors such strong leadership on equality and diversity, use of inclusive curriculum, improving attendance, effective approach to tackling racism, effective use of data, improving pupil aspiration using Aim High events, diversity in the school workforce, the involvement of parents in schools, CPD for TA and teachers with a focus on Black Caribbean pupils, reducing school exclusion and targeted support for Black Caribbean pupils.
- The survey of the impact of 'Raising the Game': Improving the Achievement of Black Caribbean Pupils initiative was overwhelmingly positive. The respondents in the survey spoke with enthusiasm about their experiences with Lambeth School Partnership initiatives (LSP) such as diversifying the curriculum, parental engagement, aiming high events and tackling exclusions. Due to Raising the Game interventions – and the work of schools across Lambeth, there are now fewer permanent exclusions, stronger connections with parents, and more emphasis on a diverse curriculum.

However, the survey respondents also reported that the Raising the Game project has limited focus in the area of closing the achievement gap of KS2 and GCSE through targeted interventions using small group tuition, use of best teachers to teach English and maths, well trained TA, booster classes, improving attendance and enrichment programmes. As a result, it was not possible to close the achievement gap of Black Caribbean pupils.

Based what we know from existing literature and this research findings, the final section of the report makes recommendations to the Department of Education (DfE) and Lambeth School Partnership to tackle the underachievement of Black Caribbean pupils in schools.

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 What does the research say about the barriers to learning for Black Caribbean pupils?

The underachievement of Black Caribbean pupils is a hot issue in education and there has been considerable concern among parents, headteachers, teachers, school governors and national policymakers in British schools for many years. A series of highly critical research reports and inquiry has been published on the underachievement of Black Caribbean pupils (see Coard 1971; Rampton 1981; Swann 1985; Gillborn and Gipps 1996; Gillborn and Mirza 2000, Demie 2005; McKenley et al 2002; Demie and Mclean 2017a,b; Demie 2019a,b,c). An inquiry committee of the Rampton Report (Rampton 1981) and the Swann Report (Swann, 1985) looked at the underachievement of pupils of Caribbean backgrounds in the 1980s and concluded that:

‘There is no doubt that Black Caribbean children, as a group, and on average, are underachieving, both by comparison with their school fellows in the White majority, as well as in terms of their potential. Notwithstanding that some are doing well.’ (Swann 1985: 81).

Other research in the 1990s and 2000s also reflected earlier findings with Black Caribbean (Demie and Mclean 2017a,b; Gillborn and Gipps 1996; Gillborn and Mirza 2000, Demie 2019a,b,c; Demie 2005; 2003; 2001; McKenley et al 2002) and concluded that Black pupils are underachieving and falling further behind the average achievement of the majority of their peers.

The previous Ofsted (2002) review of research in this area also described the differences in attainment between certain ethnic groups and highlighted that the gap was growing between the highest and lowest achieving ethnic groups, and that Black Caribbean pupils have not shared equally in the increasing rates of educational achievement. This Ofsted (2022) research highlighted the challenge of underachievement, stating that:

‘We are now seeing the third and, in some cases, the fourth generation of Black Caribbean pupils in schools in England. Their grandparents came from the Caribbean from the late 1940s, recruited to work in Britain after the Second World War. Like other Black settlers before them, they hoped for a prosperous future for themselves and enhanced educational opportunities for their children. It would be natural to expect those hopes to have been realised by now and to assume that the majority of Black Caribbean children in schools in England are sharing the higher educational standards attained by the most successful pupils in our schools. This is not the case.’ (Ofsted 2002:1; Demie and Mclean 2017a)

Recent national data also suggests that they were consistently the lowest performing groups in the country and the difference between their educational performance and others was larger than for any other ethnic groups at GCSE in both 9–4 English and Maths and 5+A*-C including in English and Maths performance indicators (see Figure 1 and 2)

Figure 1 GCSE attainment 2016-2022 (English and maths 9–4) in England by main ethnic group

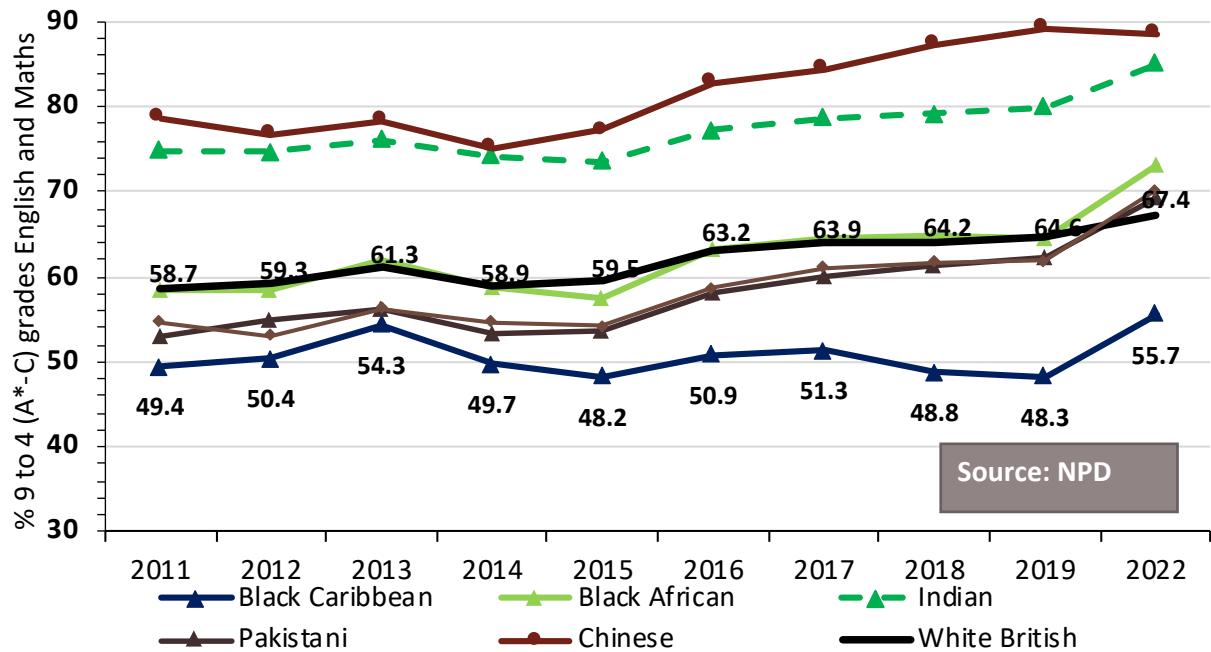
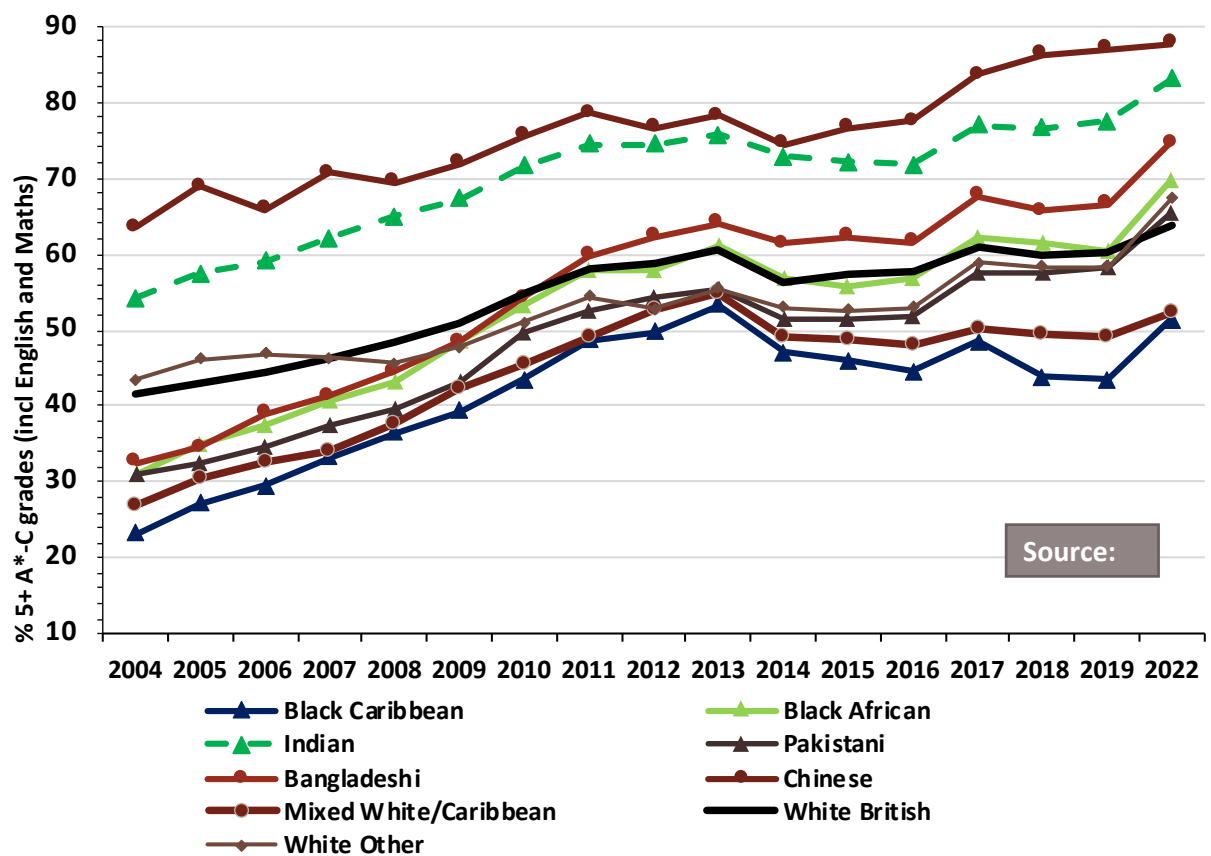


Figure 2 GCSE attainment 2004-2022 (5*+A-C including English and maths) in England by main ethnic group



A growing body of research suggests there are many factors that contribute to underachievement of Black Caribbean pupils in schools (see Demie, 2022a,b,c,d; Gillborn and Youdell, 2000; Crozier, 2005; Maylor et al., 2006; Rhamie, 2007; DCSF, 2008b; Gillborn, 1990; DfE 2015; Cabinet Office, 2007; EHRC, 2016; MacPherson, 1999; Parekh, 2000; DfES, 2006b; Curtis 2008; Strand 2008; Demie 2005, 2003; Demie and Mclean 2017). Within education literature recently underachievement has been found to be influenced by the following school, home, and pupil related factors:

School factors

- Teachers' low expectations
- Marginalisation
- Institutional racism
- Lack of diversity in the school workforce

Home factors

- Lack of parental engagement in schooling
- Lack of parental aspiration
- Single parent

Pupil factors

- Low literacy levels
- The effects of poverty
- Lack of positive role models
- Social class issues
- Curriculum barriers
- Lower tier entry in school ability group
- School exclusions

One of the school factors cited in many pieces of literature is low teachers' expectations. This is considered as a key factor in underachievement amongst Black children (e.g., Crozier, 2005; Gillborn and Youdell, 2000; Maylor et al., 2009; Demie 2022c). Researchers have highlighted that many white teachers are not aware of the negative impact of unconscious prejudice and stereotypes. Teachers sometimes have 'conscious or unconscious stereotypes and assumptions about minority groups and this had impacted negatively on students' achievements' (Demie, 2019a,b,c; Demie and Mclean, 2017a,b; Maylor et al., 2009; Milliard et al., 2018). Recent research also shows a number of evidence in school that suggest negative experiences of Black Caribbean pupils. These were highlighted by the parents and governors we interviewed (see Demie 2022:82)

'My British White teachers had a low expectation of me as mixed-race child when I was in school. C or D grade estimate was a norm with all White British teachers, but I got A in all subjects when I took my A level. The same was true through my primary and secondary GCSE educations. Always assessed in teacher assessment about 2-4 levels below what I get when I take tests. What is more interesting is that despite my teachers low expectations in primary and secondary, I went to the best university and completed both my undergraduate and postgraduate Degrees with distinctions' (Parent, Demie 2022:82).*

'Teachers' tends to underestimate the academic abilities of students of colour. As a result, Black students anticipate that their teachers think less of them. They work harder in class to prove them wrong.' (Parent Governor, Demie 2022:82).

'Low expectations and poor communication failed my child. I believe low expectations are institutional.' (Parent, Demie 2022:82)

Crozier's (2005) research also looked at how low teacher expectations and negative stereotyping of young Black people have contributed to Black underachievement. Other recent research has also suggested that White teachers may have higher expectations of white and Asian students, but lower expectations of Black students' academic achievement (Gershenson et al., 2017). White teachers and schools discipline Black students more frequently, more harshly, and for less serious misbehaviour, and they are less likely to be praised than other students. They are also disproportionately placed in the bottom sets because of teachers' lower expectations (Demie, 2019; Strand, 2012).

Overall, a review of previous research confirms White teachers hold low expectations about Black Caribbean children compared to White British and Asian students (see Demie 2022; Demie and Mclean, 2017; Gillborn and Youdell, 2000; Demie 2019 Donlevy et al, 2016; Villegas & Irvine, 2010; McKown and Winston 2008).

There is other research evidence of teachers labelling Black Caribbean pupils based on ethnic stereotypes. Wright's (1992) research findings noted that teachers considered Asian pupils were highly disciplined and well-motivated compared to Black Caribbean pupils who were seen as aggressive and disruptive. This research also concluded that White teachers stereotyped Black pupils and view them negatively. Such stereotypes and negative views resulted in the exclusion of Black Children from learning and class room activities. The evidence from the IPPR (2017), also noted unconscious racist stereotyping in teachers' perceptions, especially of Black pupils' behaviour and personalities, alongside inconsistencies in their treatment of challenging behaviour.

Many researchers also argued that the diversity factor is responsible for underachievement in schools and there is a lack of diversity in the school workforce. In England, schools have not yet recruited teaching and non-teaching staff that reflect the language, culture, and ethnic background of the pupils in the schools. The evidence from school workforce data shows that in England, '86% of teachers, 91% of the leadership, 87% of Teaching assistants, and all other school staff are White British. Only 0.8% of school leaders and 1% of teachers are Black Caribbean.' (Demie and See 2022:14). This data raises a question about the worrying picture of diversity in England schools. In general, the literature review confirms that 'the ethnic background of the teaching staff does not mirror the profile of the pupils and the evidence clearly shows that there is a growing mismatch between the ethnic diversity of the pupil population and that of the teachers in their schools. This is detrimental to the growth and learning of students.' (Demie and See 2022:1)

Another factor that was raised in literature about the reasons for the underachievement of Black Caribbean pupils is institutional racism. These are discriminatory treatments, unfair policies, or biased practices based on race that result in inequitable outcomes for Whites over people of Colour and extend beyond prejudice (MacPherson, 1999). Much research highlighted how racism has played a key role in the underachievement of Black and ethnic minority students. Racism extends to all groups but affects more Black Caribbean pupils compared to their Black African, Pakistani, White, and Bangladeshi classmates (Demie, 2019; Demie and Mclean, 2017a.b; Gershenson et al., 2017; Maylor et al., 2009; Strand, 2012).

Black Caribbean pupils are being subjected to institutional racism in British schools which dramatically undermines their chances for academic success (MacPherson 1999; DFES 2006; Demie and Mclean 2007; Strand 2008). Demie and Mclean's (2017) study also confirms how institutional racism is a factor in the underachievement of Black Caribbean pupils. In their research, they asked, 'Do you believe institutional racism is a factor in the underachievement of Black Caribbean pupils'? The response of the headteachers to the questions shows institutional racism is an important factor:

'Absolutely! How many Black police officers have we got, or how many Black teachers have we got?' (Headteacher)

'Institutional racism is still an issue in society. A lot of scaremongering in the Press, vilifying young Black men; they read the headlines and though there has been a fall in knife crime, they will take one aspect and go on about that.' (Headteacher)

'It is harder for Black men to get work. Even if they have exactly the same qualifications as a white counterpart, they are overlooked.' (Headteacher)

'Racism is a key factor for Black Caribbean exclusion' (Headteacher)

'The statistics for ethnic minorities are bleak: Black men are 26 times more likely than their White counterparts to be stopped and searched by police, while Black men and women in their early twenties are twice as likely to be not in employment, education or training as White people.' (Demie and McLean 2017:89)

The overall consensus among researchers in the field suggests that racism and the 'colour blind' approach is one of the factors that have put the Raising of the achievement of Black Caribbean pupils at a disadvantage in the English school system (Demie 2022c; Strand 2008; Gillborn 2008; Demie and Mclean 2007; DfES 2006; MacPherson 1999). This was further supported by Tickly et al (2006) in their evaluation of the government's Aiming High initiatives suggesting that Colour blind ethos within schools had acted as a barrier to raising the achievement of Black Caribbean pupils. Gillborn (2008) also argued that the colour-blind approach in education policy has led to institutional racism. This view of institutional racism and colour blind was supported by the government (DfEE, 2000) and pointed out:

'A Colour blind approach can mean that factors important to the education of minority group pupils are overlooked.' (DfEE 200: 24)

One would have hoped that institutional racism was outdated, but our findings show that this is not the case. Indeed, the extent of institutional racism was highlighted by former Prime Minister David Cameron who rattled Oxford University when he described its low intake of Black students as 'disgraceful':

'We have got to do better than that.' In January 2016, writing in the Sunday Times, about race bias in universities, he said: *"Discrimination should shame our country and jolt us to action. I do not care whether it is overt, unconscious, or institutional; we have got to stamp it out.'* (The Sunday times, 2016)

Of the home factors, two key reasons were identified to explain underachievement including single-parent families and absent fathers (Demie and Mclean 2017a, Runnymede Trust 2014). The literature suggests single parenting and absent father are important social issues that can have significant effects on a child's academic achievement. Children who are raised in single-family homes are sometimes at risk of not reaching their full potential. They have to rely on one parent to meet most of their needs including limited finances, time, and parent availability to provide adequate support for their child to perform to the best of their ability. Research by The Runnymede Trust (2014) suggests that 59% of Black Caribbean children are growing up in single-parent families. We would argue that this rate is three times as high as the overall average of about 22% in the UK. They were more likely to also have an absentee father or live in a single-parent household than many other ethnic groups.

The research literature also gives a number of pupil factors as barriers to learning including the school curriculum barriers and relevance. Researchers argued that the school curriculum has contributed to the underachievement of Black Caribbean pupils, and it does not meet the needs of the community schools serve. The English curriculum which is taught in schools is biased towards the majority ethnic group and marginalise minority ethnic groups. The curriculum is focused on White British culture. British history is taught from the European point of view, even putting a positive spin on colonialism and there is the failure of the national curriculum to reflect adequately the need for a diverse and multi-ethnic society (MacPherson, 1999, Gillborn 2002; Demie and Mclean 2017). There is a convincing argument in literature that Black children are underachieving in schools because they feel that the curriculum does not relate to them.

Another key factor responsible for the underachievement of Black Caribbean children is school exclusions. This affects the learning opportunities of the children. Black Caribbean children are most likely to be excluded from school and represent the most excluded group of pupils in British schools (Demie 2022; Gillborn and Youdell 2000; Cabinet Office 2007 and EHRC 2015; DfE 2016, the Runnymede Trust 2012). DfE statistics on exclusion show that Black Caribbean pupils are overrepresented in both permanent and fixed term exclusions. Nationally in 2017/18, the figures for Black Caribbean pupils were 0.28% permanent and 10.46% fixed term exclusions This is significantly very high when compared to the national average of 0.10% permanent and 5.08% fixed exclusions for all pupils (see Demie 2022a). The previous research by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES, 2006:63) also suggests a number of other reasons why black pupils are disproportionately excluded. The report argued that:

'Black pupils encounter both conscious and unconscious prejudice from teachers – for example, research has found that throughout their education black pupils are disciplined more (both in terms of frequency and severity) and often for milder offenses than those leading to their white peers being punished.'

The impact of ability grouping or setting pupils according to ability on pupils' attainment has also shown that Black Caribbean students are disproportionately put in bottom sets (see Demie, 2019; Gillborn, 2008. Steve Strand (2012). Research found that Black Caribbean students were less likely to be put into higher sets than their white peers. The evidence from this research also shows that they are less likely to be entered for higher-tier exams. The decision to be in a high band or stream group is made by teachers and so ultimately teacher labelling is to blame here for any underachievement of Black Caribbean pupils. Other UK research shows teachers low expectations and allocation bias:

'Black pupils were more than 2.5 times more likely than White pupils to be allocated to a lower group than predicted. Conversely, White pupils were more likely than Black or Asian pupils to be allocated to higher sets than predicted and boys were more likely than girls to be allocated to higher sets. This evidence suggests that there is an effect of stereotypes in the allocation of pupils to sets.' (Taylor 2019:1)

Poverty is also identified as one of the factors responsible for underachievement in the literature reviewed (See Demie 2022a; Demie and Mclean 2017; EHRC 2015). The persistent socio-economic disadvantage has a negative impact on the life outcomes of many Black Caribbean children. In Britain, poverty rates were higher for children living in a household headed by someone from an ethnic minority (41.9%), Pakistani and Bangladeshi (43.8%), Black Caribbean (39.4%), Mixed race (26.5%), Indian (24.9%) compared with someone from White group (24.5%) (EHRC 2015). Poverty is seen to play a major role in underachievement for Black an ethnic minority. Black Caribbean people lack sufficient income to be able to participate fully in society. and they are 'socially excluded. The attainment gap for disadvantaged Black Caribbean pupils is present at every stage of the UK Education system (Demie and Mclean 2017 and Demie 2019). A primary school headteacher spoke about the decades of disadvantage that some Black Caribbean families have experienced:

'Black Caribbean are underachieving because of poverty.' (Headteacher, Demie 2022:86)

'Our Black Caribbean parents work but they are not high earners. If you look back over four or five decades and you treat someone badly at the beginning, it creates a culture. People who came over from the Caribbean were treated in such a way they have had to become tough...' (Headteacher, Demie 2022:86)

'When the first people arrived here from the Caribbean they had to live in squalid conditions and were abused by racist comments. The following generations have seen that and become hard. The poverty started back and got handed down.' (Headteacher)

There is a general agreement among researchers and practitioners that Black Caribbean children lack positive role models, and do not have enough male role models (Demie 2003,2005,2016; Blair et al 1998). For example, the author of 'The Problem of Black Men' Lee Pinkerton wrote:

'The first role model for a boy should be his father; but what if you are growing up without a father, as too many Black boys are? Then you have to find someone else to fulfil that role. It is this vacuum that leads so many of our young to turn to gangs – looking for a father figure – a phenomenon called 'father hunger. There is an argument that Black children are underachieving in schools because they do not have enough role models there either. Not enough Black teachers and not enough Black people on the curriculum. Black educational underachievement, they argue, is partly because Black children feel that the curriculum does not relate to them.' (Pinkerton 2013:1)

A parent interviewed by Demie and Mclean (2017) also supported this view:

'The trouble is for boys there are no men as good role models. Role models are particularly important, especially for boys. Having role models to show them are important. We try and have Dads days. A lot of dads are not engaged with education. If they are engaged, then the whole family are.' (Parent Governor)

'I have worked in London schools, and they do not see Black male role models reflected in the teaching staff nor in society. They cannot see the purpose of what they are trying to achieve at the end of all that.' (Parent Governor)

'Let children know that things are possible. If you can instil a dream in a child, it is difficult to remove it. Role models should be Black, White, Asian – someone at the top of their profession so that each child will not only feel identified but part of a bigger picture. It is important to them all.' (Parent Governor)

All the above factors are barriers for learning for Black Caribbean pupils in English schools and this has perpetuated low attainment.

1.2 The aims of the research and research methodology

This research aims to explore the barriers in raising the achievement of Black Caribbean pupils' in Lambeth schools, and also identify good practice. The three central research questions are as follows:

- What does the survey data tell us about the barriers of learning that contributed to the under achievement of Black Caribbean pupils?
- What does the survey data tell us about the success factors that contributed to the achievement of Black Caribbean pupils
- What is the implication for policy and practice?

A complementary methodological approach has been used in the research including reviewing research literatures, analysing trend attainment data to explore changes and survey of schools and headteachers involved in raising the achievement of Black Caribbean pupils project.

Details of the methodological framework are summarised below:

Data Analysis: The study will draw on the analysis of a range of data that was collected by the LA, schools and the DfE as part of statutory returns, including KS2 and GCSE attainment data, to examine the achievement of Black Caribbean pupils in the schools, and to note change over time.

Questionnaire survey: A school survey was undertaken to collate the views of headteachers, teachers, governors, about barriers to learning and the factors that contributed to their school's performance. The survey was carried out in the schools that participated the last five years in the Lambeth School Partnership project that focused on Improving the achievement of Black Caribbean pupils. The survey asks the respondents to rate the level of impact on a seven point scale covering a range of barriers and interventions. Thirty-four schools were involved in the first year of the LSP, and in the second year 60 schools were listed in the project. Fifty percent of the headteachers of the schools involved responded to the survey questionnaire. In addition, there were free text questions in the survey, inviting respondents to 'describe the most important factors' that they feel have contributed to improved results and to give examples of good practice in the following initiatives:

- Improving outcomes in each of the key stages
- Diversifying the curriculum
- Improving parental engagement
- Aiming High events to raise pupil aspirations
- Reducing exclusions

1.3 The structure of the report

The structure of the report is broken into several sections. Section 1 above looked at literature review with focus to barrier to learning and the research aims and methodology. Section 2 provides the evidence of the attainment of Black Caribbean pupils. Section 3 provides the result of a survey of the factors that contributed to underachievement of Black Caribbean pupils in schools, followed by section 4 that look the results of the survey of factors that contributed to improving Black Caribbean pupils' attainment in school. Section 5 explore the results of the survey of impact of raising the game. Section 6 discusses the key findings of the survey. The final section considers recommendations and implication of the research for policy, practice, and research.

Chapter 2: Black Caribbean attainment: Context

This research consider evidence from Lambeth. The context of the Local Authority shows that in 2003 more than one in five pupils in a Lambeth school was Black Caribbean, but twenty years later this had fallen to about one in eight. Black Caribbean pupils currently comprise the third largest group in Lambeth schools, behind Black African and White British pupils. While the Black African population has remained constant (22.6% in 2003, and 22.2% in 2022), Black Caribbean pupils have reduced, from 21.6% of the school population to 12.8% over the same period. The proportion of White British pupils also showed a net reduction, from 20.2% to 15.4%. In 2003, Black Caribbean pupils comprised the second largest group in Lambeth, but 20 years, later they had fallen to third place.

As part of this research, we carried out extensive data analysis the performance of Black Caribbean pupils at the end of KS2 and GCSE (see Demie and Butler 2022). It should be noted that the format of tests and exams have changed over the last 10 years so it would not be appropriate to calculate a net improvement, rather we should look at relative gaps within years. Furthermore, there were no national test results published in 2020 or 2021 due to Covid.

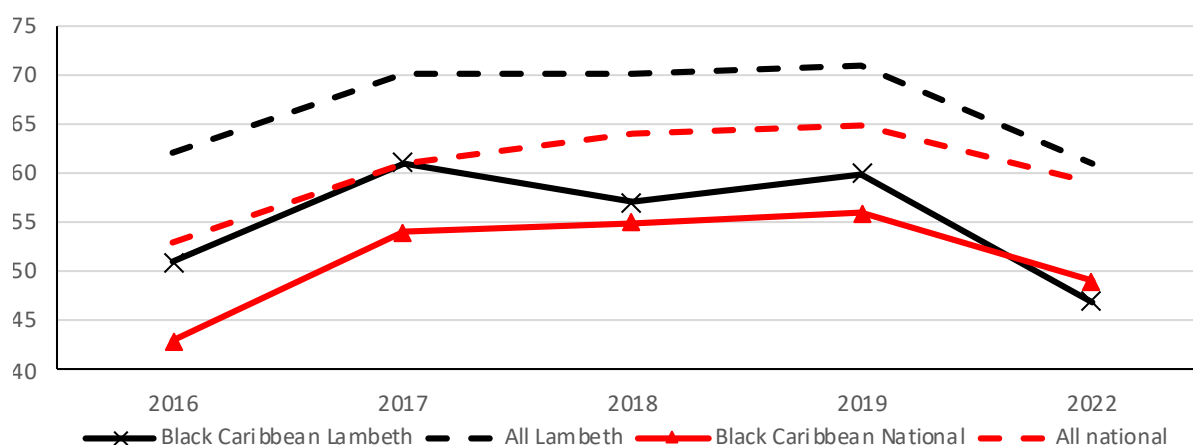
At KS2, Black Caribbean pupils always had attainment levels below that found in the borough overall, and between 2016 and 2022 under the new framework the net gap widened, from eleven percentage points to fourteen points in 2022. This is wider than the corresponding gap nationally of ten percentage points.

Table 1 KS2 attainment 2013-2022 (RWM combined)

KS2	Lambeth Black Caribbean	Lambeth all Pupils	Gap	National Black Caribbean	National all Pupils	Gap
2016	51	62	-11	43	53	-10
2017	61	70	-9	54	61	-7
2018	57	70	-13	55	64	-9
2019	60	71	-11	56	65	-9
2022	47	61	-14	49	59	-10

Table 1 and Figure 3 illustrates that with the exception of 2022, Black Caribbean pupils in Lambeth had higher rates of attainment than Black Caribbean pupils nationally.

Figure 3 KS2 attainment 2013-2022 (RWM combined)



The national GCSE data also show interesting patterns. The largest ethnic groups in the LA are Indian, Pakistani, Black African, White British, White Other, Black Other and Somali outperformed their peers nationally (Demie 2022).

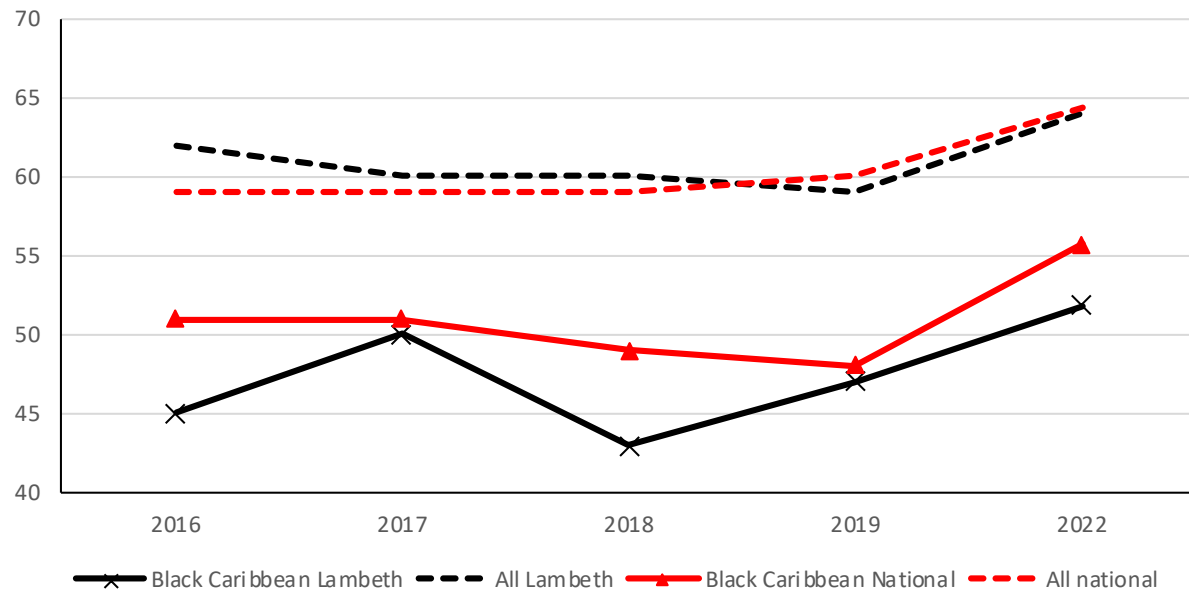
Table 2 and Figure 4 shows that Black Caribbean had the lowest levels of attainment at GCSE over the years. There are also huge variations in performance between the main ethnic groups at the national level. The data clearly shows that Black Caribbean attainment has consistently been lower than overall attainment for pupils in the borough and nationally.

Table 2 GCSE attainment 2016-2022 (English and maths 9–4 %)

GCSE	Lambeth Black Caribbean	Lambeth All pupils	Gap	National Black Caribbean	National all pupils	Gap
	E+M 9–4*	E+M 9–4	E+M 9–4	E+M 9–4	E+M 9–4	E+M 9–4
2016	45	62	-17	51	59	-8
2017	50	60	-10	51	59	-8
2018	43	60	-17	49	59	-10
2019	47	59	-12	48	60	-12
2022	51.8	64	-12.2	55.7	64.3	-8.6

Source: Demie and Butler 2022

Figure 4 GCSE attainment 2016-2022 (English and maths 9–4)



The data in figure 3 also reveals that there is considerable difference in attainment between different ethnic groups. Black Caribbean pupils are markedly less likely to attain English and maths GCSE passes than White, Chinese, Black African, Pakistani, and White other pupils.

The overall conclusions for KS2 and GCSE data suggest the underachievement of Black Caribbean heritage pupils has been a persistent problem for many years with low levels of attainment in the LA and nationally.

Chapter 3: A survey of the factors that contributed to underachievement of Black Caribbean pupils

The findings of the literature review above suggest that the reasons for the underachievement of Black Caribbean pupils are wide-ranging and complex, and underachievement is influenced by factors such as:

- Marginalisation
- Institutional racism
- Teachers' low expectations
- Lack of diversity in the school workforce
- Lack of parental engagement schooling
- Single parent
- The effects of poverty
- Lack of positive role models
- Social class issues
- Curriculum barriers
- Lower tier entry in school ability group
- School exclusions

This finding of the literature review related to barriers to learning have led us to develop a number of explanatory factors that we believe have contributed to the underachievement of Black Caribbean pupils in schools. This has also helped us also identify a number of factors that needed to be included in any further survey questionnaire.

Building on the findings of the literature review which identifies the barriers to learning, this section provides evidence from the survey of the factors that contributed to underachievement of Black Caribbean pupils in schools.

To investigate barriers to learning we asked headteachers, teachers and governors in the "Raising the Game" schools to complete a survey. We wanted to establish whether issues covered in our literature reviews were also raised as key factors by the staff in the schools. The survey asked the respondents how much they felt each of the factors contributed to Black Caribbean pupils' underachievement, using a 7-point scale which was then grouped into "not at all, slightly, moderately, high". We also asked additional open-ended questions to describe the key factors that they felt have contributed most to Black Caribbean underachievement.

The main findings of the survey results are given in table 3 and figure 5, showing the factors that contributed to underachievement of Black Caribbean pupils. The factors that respondents rated as having most contribution to underachievement were low literacy levels (88%), the effect of poverty (82%), followed by lack of positive role models and social class issues (74%), marginalisation (65%), lack of parent parental engagement and parental aspiration, lack of targeted support, social class issues (63%), single parent (56%), peer group pressure and school exclusions (52%). It was agreed that these were the main barriers of achievement reported by the respondents, with factors such

as institutional racism, teachers low expectations, lack of diversity in the work and perceived loss of culture contributing less than 50%.

Table 3. A survey of the factors that contributed to underachievement of Black Caribbean pupils.

School factors	Not at all	Slight	Moderate	High
Marginalisation	8%	27%	50%	15%
Recruitment and training issues of teachers/staff	15%	26%	37%	22%
Institutional racism	8%	46%	27%	19%
Teachers' low expectations	7%	48%	26%	19%
Lack of diversity in the school workforce	11%	44%	30%	15%
Rigid school behaviour policy	22%	41%	30%	7%
Home factors				
Lack of parental engagement schooling	0%	37%	41%	22%
Lack of parental aspiration	0%	37%	52%	11%
Single parent	7%	37%	44%	11%
Pupil factors				
Low literacy levels	0%	12%	73%	15%
The effects of poverty	0%	19%	26%	56%
Lack of positive role models	4%	22%	44%	30%
Lack of targeted support	7%	30%	33%	30%
Social class issues	4%	33%	41%	22%
Curriculum barriers	7%	37%	30%	26%
Peer group pressure	4%	42%	35%	19%
Lower tier entry in school ability group	11%	37%	33%	19%
School exclusions	30%	19%	37%	15%
Perceived loss of culture	11%	44%	41%	4%

The survey also asked respondents to "list any other factors not listed above that you think are barriers to Black Caribbean pupils' academic achievement." There were a number of barriers that the survey respondents added and commented on:

'This is a complex issue involving many factors. Black Caribbean children and their families, as an ethnic group, are disproportionately impacted on by low income, mental health, poor housing, mobility. The children at our school who do not attain as well as their peers are usually mobile and have at least one other injustice impacting on their lives.' (Headteacher)

Another headteacher commented:

'Teachers' perceived behaviours of BCRB students as "disruptive" rather than SEN or other learning need not being met (remembering that Lambeth has a high number of BCRB students with SEN).'

'Adultification of Black Caribbean students & association of negative behaviours as "intentional", thus more punitive measures used in classrooms.' (Headteacher)

Diversity is a key problem not only in the study LA but also nationally. The national statistics confirm teachers and school leaders diversity is a concern and indicates that in England, 86% of teachers, 91% of the leadership and 87% of teaching assistants and other school staff are white British. A governor of one school pointed out further:

‘There are many where I do not know the answer e.g., the relationship between socio economic status and ethnicity. My answers are not reliable in this area, but I would argue that low income, poverty, and diversity is the key factor.’ (Governor)

A teacher raised concern about the diversity of ethnic minority leadership in their school and argued ‘not enough Black and ethnic minority in Senior leadership (Targeted interventions/ Inclusion lead)

‘Lack of diversity and cultural understanding within SLT.’ (Teacher).

Another school headteacher pointed the barriers related to media and societal pressure. The media do not stand in isolation from the society the way they report and is a huge problem. An inherent problem is the way the media positioned and represented people who are different such as those from a Black Caribbean background. Any difference from White British constructed as negative and they were positioned as a threat and sometimes even as criminals. Media coverage pertaining to people of colour tends to cluster around particular themes such as crime or deviance

‘A lot of images we see Black Caribbean in the media are stereotypical and negative’ (Headteacher)

‘Teacher societal pressures and norms - impact of social media- easy money without the need to work hard.’ (Headteacher)

A Deputy head in another school also commented that.

‘Possible feelings of distance and alienation from school leadership, mistrust of school, impact of parents/ families’ own negative experience of schooling.’ (Deputy Head)

One headteacher argued that that there is a limited or no ‘enrichment opportunities which raise aspiration.’

‘Schools do offer a range of enrichment opportunities, trips and visits that raise the aspiration of Black Caribbean pupils. It is important to tackle barriers of learning the school and also provides cultural, artistic, and sporting experiences that pupils are unlikely to encounter at home or in the community, widening horizons and heightens their aspirations and expectations an giving them access to opportunities that they may take up later in life. This provides opportunities to develop greater self-confidence for Black Caribbean.’ (Headteacher).

Chapter 4: A survey of factors that contributed to improving Black Caribbean pupils' attainment

The above section covered the attainment of Black Caribbean pupils in the context of barriers to learning in school, including the reasons for underachievement. Another way of finding what might be happening for Black Caribbean pupils is to study those who 'buck the trend' - that is, are successful in their education. In a way the majority of such pupils are not. This section looks into the success factors in schools which have started tackling the issues of underachievement.

A review of available British and international research suggests that efforts to improve school performance and student outcomes have traditionally focused on initiatives and strategies at the individual school level (Ofsted 2009, Demie and Lewis 2010, Barr and Paret 2007). As a result, there is a growing body of evidence that shows conclusively how schools that serve disadvantaged communities can and do perform as well as other schools in more affluent areas. Recent research into good practice in schools by Ofsted (2009), Demie and Lewis (2010), and Demie and McLean (2013) show that schools serving deprived areas can succeed against the odds in raising achievement. The research identified the reasons behind a school's success, which included the quality of teaching and learning, effective leadership at all levels, supportive professional development, inclusive pastoral care, high expectations, and the use of data, ethos of respect with a clear stand on racism and parental involvement (see for details Demie 2005, DfES 2003b, McKenley et al 2003, Ofsted 2002, Blair and Bourne 1998).

Demie (2005) and DfES (2003) argued there is no 'pick and mix' option. An effective school will seek to develop all these characteristics underpinned by the practical use of data to monitor the achievement of particular groups of pupils to pinpoint and tackle underperformance. Much of the previous British research in this area again is on Black Caribbean pupils' underachievement, and there is a lack of research into the factors which contribute to educational success and high attainment of Black Caribbean heritage pupils.

Building on the past research that suggested significant difference in the performance between Black Caribbean and their peers, this study also explored further the achievement of Black Caribbean pupils in the Raising the Game schools. Similar to the question on barriers, we asked respondents "To what extent do you think the following factors contribute to improving Black Caribbean pupils' attainment in your school? Responses are shown in Table 4 and Figure 6.

Table 4 The factors that contributed to improving Black Caribbean attainment.

	Not at all	Slight	Moderate	High
Use of inclusive curriculum	4%	0%	15%	81%
Strong leadership on equality and diversity	0%	4%	22%	74%
Improving attendance	0%	7%	19%	74%
Effective approach to tackling racism	0%	4%	26%	70%
Effective use of data	0%	4%	35%	62%
Improving pupil aspiration using aim high events	0%	4%	40%	56%
The involvement of parents in schools	0%	7%	37%	56%
Improving diversity in the school workforce	0%	7%	37%	56%
CPD for TA and teachers with focus on Black Caribbean	4%	8%	35%	54%
Effective governing body	0%	7%	41%	52%
Improving school exclusion and behaviour	4%	8%	42%	46%
Targeted interventions to support Black Caribbean pupils	0%	30%	30%	41%

The factors which respondents rated as contributing to improving Black Caribbean attainment in the survey were strong leadership on equality and diversity, use of inclusive curriculum, effective approach to tackling racism, Improving attendance, effective use of data, Improving pupil aspiration using aim high events, Improving school exclusion and behaviour, The involvement of parents in schools, CPD for TA and teachers with focus on Black Caribbean pupils, effective governing body, targeted interventions to support Black Caribbean pupils. These findings are similar to a number of previous studies (Demie and Mclean 20017; Demie 2005, DfES 2003b, McKenley et al 2003, Ofsted 2002, Blair and Bourne 1998).

The respondents also highlighted other factors that would be useful for improving the achievement of Black Caribbean pupils including.

'Multi-agency support when required.' (Headteacher)

'Teacher CPD on Racial literacy, Strategies to 'involve' parents, Governor CPD, and increased accountability on the achievement of BCRB children at senior level.' (Headteacher)

'My school has good representation of Black staff at senior level. There are more representations of female Black staff at this level. Additional support is targeted at pupils who need it. Given the achievement profile in the school, this will mean that more pupils whose families originate from the Caribbean benefit.' (Governor)

'Outstanding, inspirational teaching and learning emphasis on relationships - going the extra mile in order to support.' (Headteacher)

Chapter 5: The impact of Raising the Game project in improving the Achievement of Black Caribbean pupils

To tackle the problem of underachievement, the Lambeth Schools Partnership (LSP) started **'Raising the Game': Improving the Achievement of Black Caribbean Pupils** initiative in September 2018. The objective is to improve outcomes in each of the key stages by 5% in first year, and 7-8 in the subsequent years of the project. In addition, it aims to improve parental engagement, improve pupil aspirations through the use of "Raising the Game" events, as well as developing an inclusive curriculum and reducing exclusions at all key stages.

To gain more evidence on the impact of the initiatives, as part of the survey we also asked respondents to describe the contribution of the Raising the Game's Interventions to raise the achievement of Black Caribbean pupils in their school and to give examples of good practice where possible in:

- Improving outcomes in each of the Key Stages
- Diversifying the curriculum
- Parental engagement
- Aim High events
- Tackling Black Caribbean exclusions

The main findings of the survey are summarised below:

5.1 Improving outcomes in each of the Key Stages

Despite a national and Lambeth-wide trend of underperformance, previous research showed examples of schools that provide an environment in which Black Caribbean pupils flourish and identified key characteristics of successful schools in raising achievement. These included strong leadership, high expectations, effective teaching and learning, an ethos of respect with a clear stand on racism and parental involvement, use of a relevant inclusive curriculum, links with the community, diversity in the school workforce, celebration of cultural diversity and effective use of pupil voice (see for details Demie 2005, DfES 2003b, McKenley et al 2003, Ofsted 2002, Blair and Bourne 1998). These findings are also supported by the survey as can be seen from the following comments by headteachers and teachers.

'Yes, in my school it has been helpful and as result, we had good key stage 2 results.'
(Teacher)

'Not easy to quantify, but the overall focus on Black Caribbean pupils, the curriculum and the unconscious bias training is showing signs of benefits to BCRB pupils' attainment.'
(Headteacher)

'Targeting interventions through data analysis and tracking.'

'We specifically identify the Black Caribbean children in each year group, identifying the support needed for children to meet and exceed expectations. We also review targets for BCRB children.' (Headteacher)

'Having a focus on Black Caribbean students as a priority group for school at Leadership level makes it a whole school priority and thus more coordinated action in improving outcomes across different fields academic, pastoral, etc.' (Headteacher)

'The school has bought into CenturyTech in order to encourage independent learning. Any student who does not have a device which would permit them to access online work is provided with one. Targeted support through Century Tech and Coach bright is available to students.' (Headteacher)

'Monitoring of individual achievement with support provided where needed.' (Governor)

'Our Black Caribbean numbers are low per cohort, so it is hard for us to see any trends in data, but we carefully monitor data at pupil and cohort level to ensure that individuals and groups are performing well. Having this at the front of our ARIPP has helped focus our attention of this group, amongst others, and challenge ourselves to do better.' (Headteacher)

'Identification of key groups within each year group, i.e., Black Caribbean to track during pupil progress meetings. Specific targeting of children who are BCRB, boys and pupil premium.' (Deputy Head)

'Quality First Teaching.' (Headteacher)

'Not much as this not an area we focussed.' (Governor)

'Raising the Game network meetings presented an opportunity to discuss the compelling underlying reasons for disaffected pupils, as well as generate ideas. A key message was that schools needed to add it to their whole School Improvement Plans in order to affect authentic change or challenge. This prompted an analysis of poor results using internal data as well as an audit of our curriculum (to review representation). The audit reflected that only 16 % of Black characters and authors were represented within the core books we used. Whilst we advocate that Inclusive practise should be prevalent in any setting, regardless of ethnicity, for the purpose of advocating change within our specific context, SLT agreed that the percentage needed to match the 75% of Black pupils attending the school which is what ensued. A year later, internal data from the same cohort of pupils had risen significantly in the area of Reading.' (Assistant Head)

'Targeted class focus.' (Headteacher)

'Broadening and diversifying the curriculum, representation across the curriculum, targeted supported and tracking of Black Caribbean boys.' (Deputy Head)

'Impact not yet seen.' (Headteacher)

'Awareness and analysis of data for Black Caribbean children.' (Teacher)

5.2 Diversifying the curriculum:

The aim of this strand was to bring together experienced primary and secondary teachers who shared a clear passion for ensuring all children have access to an inclusive curriculum reflecting the Black Caribbean experience, culture, and history. Diversifying The Curriculum is a vital component of Raising The Game (RTG) and focuses on the importance of creating a diverse curriculum to improve educational outcomes for children and young people across Lambeth. This involves incorporating stories, facts and information reflecting Black Caribbean history, experience, and culture. This inspires interest and excitement amongst all pupils in relation to Black Caribbean history and culture, and in doing so encourages Black Caribbean pupils to have a stronger sense of pride about their heritage.

Lambeth Schools Partnership (LSP) has recruited 5 Primary and 5 Secondary School Curriculum Developers to inspire content diversity within curriculums across Lambeth (see LSP 2019a,b). The teachers who were involved in the curriculum development project commented on the importance of Inclusive curriculum as follows:

'The Curriculum we develop is geared towards having the impact of the vast communities we serve in Lambeth.' (Teacher)

'There are many possibilities of diversifying the curriculum we want to broaden the horizons of all of our groups so that we're representative of all voices that we've got in Lambeth.' (Teacher)

'Raising Black Caribbean attainment is key in our curriculum development. We can do that through inclusive practice through planning and assessment. We want to make sure that the Black Caribbean materials are really fun that we have rich Caribbean literature and of course a carnival party atmosphere. We are also going to open ourselves up to a wealth of new community engagements including parents and community leaders.' (Teacher)

'Diversifying the curriculum gave us the opportunity to bring a topic to life for the children. It made them passionate about what they were learning which in turn made them enthusiastic about learning more and putting to use what they had learnt. It gave them a context for their learning and a reason for learning from the past.' (Teacher)

'I think diversifying the curriculum is a really exciting project. I think it will really increase children's confidence. I think children learning about their own history and their own culture and seeing them represented in what we are teaching them will really give them a sense of ownership over their learning and really raise their achievement. I think it will also raise expectations among both children and teachers.' (Teacher)

'I think in terms of diversifying the curriculum for the Black Caribbean children will impact children from lots of different diverse backgrounds not just Black Caribbean children. I think, it will give all children a chance to learn from a really rich and diverse culture.' (Teacher)

'By diversifying the science curriculum we really want to give children a broad range of opportunities, experiences and part of that is building on the idea of science capital because as children travel through primary school they might enjoy science and they might get a lot from it but actually they might also think well it's not for me it's not a subject for me that's for somebody else but really by diversifying the curriculum we want to alter what we want

children to think. Well actually there is a broad range of diverse scientists who are currently working. There is a broad range of diverse scientists throughout history, and we want to really tap into that, and we give children opportunities and experiences to think like a scientist so they think well actually I could pursue that as a career.’ (Teacher of Science)

‘The tools we have produced are made by teachers for teachers. We have done the hard work for you, material that can be embedded into your existing curriculum that meets that requirement and is Ofsted approved. It is going to be a true curriculum that reflects, inspires, and acknowledges true contributions from the Black community.’ (Teacher)

As part of curriculum initiatives, a number of achievements is reported in the survey including positive comments:

‘As a result, a number of schools in the LSP project are engaged in curriculum development and innovation using the richness of their local communities to bring greater relevance for students. (Headteacher)

‘We use diverse curriculum that meets the needs of Black pupils.’ (Teacher)

‘We are using the primary curriculum materials in our school that have been developed by a focus group of teachers as part of the Raising The Game to support Achievement of Black Caribbean Pupils intervention. These includes KS1 and KS2 material related to Ancient Kingdom of Benin, Ancient Rome, Ancient Roman Britain, Art textiles, History- Romans, Geography, Maths Arts, English. We found the materials developed are useful to engage school leaders to review their own school curriculum, inspiring curriculum leads to ensure it is reflective of Lambeth’s diverse communities. (Headteacher, Primary)

‘The curriculum used adds to their growing pride in being Black African/ Black Caribbean. The Black experience is used to enrich the curriculum in art, dance, music, geography, history, and technology e.g., the Kingdom of Benin artifacts, The Kush Kingdom, and the Merotic civilisation. The Kingdom of Benin was well known for its artifacts and the Great Wall, and The Kush Kingdom was an ancient civilization in Africa and is well for goldmines, iron, pyramids and also developed its own alphabet.’ (Headteacher, Secondary)

‘This has had a significant impact on our curriculum. We have reviewed the whole curriculum to ensure we reflect our community in all areas, not just in the overarching topics studied, but in the books in the library and classrooms, the class readers chose, and the artists studied.’ (Headteacher)

‘The Inclusive curriculum was written by Lambeth teachers to make sure the full contribution of the Black community, past and present, is recognised.’ (Headteacher)

‘We are proud of the work we have done to ensure we teach our students about the history and experiences of the Black and ethnic minority communities that make up our local area.’ (Headteacher)

‘Has supported pupil engagement particularly boys writing.’ (Headteacher)

'Has massively enabled parental engagement and involvement with homework projects and presentation.'

'Supports the school to be seen as inclusive, this helps with engaging parents particularly in challenging circumstances. Models that the school is Anti-Racist.' (Headteacher)

'A work in progress.' (Headteacher)

'Support in sharing good practice for this.' (Headteacher)

'A real focus on teaching History improving the History curriculum and the role Black Caribbean played throughout.' (Targeted interventions/Inclusion lead)

'Has allowed the pupils to engage more thoroughly and be able to relate to the content.' (Teacher)

'Reworking the curriculum to show more achievement of Black people. Greater emphasis on Black history and artists, as well as authors.' (Governor)

'We have an ongoing process of reviewing and improving our curriculum. We have worked as a staff team to ensure that we have further diversified the curriculum in all subject areas and that the curriculum is reflective of our school and the much wider community, for example ensuring Black History is embedded in every term in every year's learning and not just as part of a Black History month. We feel that this has had a positive impact on pupil engagement.' (Headteacher)

'Explicit inclusion of more diverse texts and figures (historical, scientific, etc) across the curriculum. CPD for teachers and TAs on diverse range of images and names within lesson examples.' (Deputy Head)

'Inclusive curriculum.' (Headteacher)

'Ensuring that a range of identities and cultures are represented in teaching materials, for the benefit of all children.' (Governor)

'Exposing children to different narratives.' (Headteacher)

'Excellent planning resources available to support both teacher subject knowledge and helping to focus lessons on key issues.' (Senior Leadership Team)

'Yes, we have developed a curriculum that meets the need of Black people in the school.' (Governor)

'Attended the improving the achievement of Black Caribbean network meetings. The outcomes from it i.e., development of draft anti racist mark curriculum review has presented a clear framework for reviewing and evaluating the contents of our curriculum approach including attitudes and behaviours.' (Assistant Head)

'School has reviewed own curriculum and been supported by BLAM Grounded sessions.' (Headteacher)

‘Scrapping a focus on Black History Month (BHM) to ensure balanced representation across all of our topics across the year.’ (Headteacher)

‘Whole school focus on diversifying the curriculum starting with English and the texts covered and continuing with wider curriculum subjects, so all children see examples of achievement from all cultures.’ (Deputy Head)

‘Benin curriculum plans used to support ideas.’ (Headteacher)

‘Ensuring that children are increasingly seeing a range of diverse figures (from a range of backgrounds and ethnicities) in subjects to inspire them and allow them to see themselves in the subjects they study. To use an increasingly wide range of diverse texts to teach with. To ensure these things are embedded across the curriculum and not just an add-on for Black History Month.’ (Teacher)

Previous studies by the author in Lambeth also support the above comments of some of the respondents in the survey and shows that teachers, school leaders and Black and ethnic Minority (BAME) professional have continued championing on the need to improving the existing curriculum by adding more BAME experience (see Demie 2022b, Demie 2019; Demie and Lewis 2010, Demie 2005, McKenley et al 2003, and Demie and McLean (2017b, 2013). These include the lives of famous BAME people in Britain, the achievement of early civilization such as Benin in West Africa, Cushitic and Merotic civilization in North East Africa, the transatlantic slave trade and its abolition, the history of the Windrush generation, pre-colonial Black presence in Britain, migration patterns ,ethnic and cultural diversity in Britain; the positive contribution people of all ethnicities have made to Britain and the role of the countries of the former British empire in both world wars, Black History month in the curriculum, Black Live Matters and the Civil Right movement in USA and elsewhere. These topics that engage and raise the aspiration of BAME pupils has been included in the national curriculum from Key Stage One in primary through to Key Stage Four when students take their GCSEs, and across subjects including history, geography, citizenship, English and PSHE (personal, social, health and economic education). There is evidence in successful, schools the school curriculum add to the growing pride in being Black pupils and ethnic minority students in multicultural Lambeth (Demie 2022b, 2019,2005; Demie and Mclean (2015a,b).

5.3 Parental engagement:

Another key factor which has had a major impact in raising achievement of Black Caribbean pupils is the work the schools are doing in constructively engaging parents. The Parental Engagement Project encourages parental and carer engagement in their child’s educational journey from the very start through fun activities, play, reading together and developing a home learning culture. In this regard the initiatives that focussed on parental engagement were a success story, and schools valued them highly. The support of parents and engagement of the local community contributed to the levels of achievement of Black Caribbean pupils in a number of successful schools in Lambeth. The schools have engaged and organised training for parents to understand more on managing behaviours, nutrition, and health. The engagement of parents enabled a mutual trust and understanding to develop between school and home and enabled the construction of a bridge between the two environments for pupils. Respondents from the survey commented positively on the Parental Engagement Network (PEN) Project.

'Parents are well engaged.' (Teacher)

'We have established a Parent Forum with a particular focus on Black and other ethnic minority parents which has been extremely successful in engaging all parents.'
(Headteacher)

'Targeting interventions through data analysis and tracking. Proving the right resources for the families who need it.' (Headteacher)

'Early stages.' (Headteacher)

'Parents of key students and those identifying as Pupil Premium are contacted by phone before each parent and information evening held at the school to encourage attendance.'
(Headteacher)

'School develops our own approach.' (Targeted interventions/Inclusion lead)

'Improving parental engagement, in turn usually improves parental aspirations for their child with assists in driving the pupils aims and achievement higher.' (Teacher)

'Greater number of school governors who are also parents than when I joined the governing body. Chair of governors has been key in this, as someone who is a parent governor herself.'
(Governor)

'Survey completed to gather parental views on racism and their perceptions of initiatives we have undertaken.' (Deputy Head)

'Inclusive environment, Parental engagement, Targeted invitations to engage.' (Headteacher)

'Encouraging conversations between teachers and parents, encouraging wide participation in school/parent activities, scheduling parental engagement activities to be as inclusive as possible.' (Governor)

'Having a Family Support Worker providing targeted support' (Headteacher)

'We work very closely with parents, and we organize and celebrate cultural diversity in the school.' (Governor)

'Although the STEM aim high roadshow was not very well attended by parents from the school, it was good to be able to share a wealth of information in the form of videos which RTG facilitated following this online event.' (Assistant Head)

'Work with PEN in phase 1 transformed approach to working with parents and drove policy change.' (Headteacher)

'Staff training, implementing a number of strategies.' (Headteacher)

'Survey completed of parent views on anti-racist practice and information used to shape future plans.' (Deputy Head)

5.4 Aim High events

A common finding from national and local research was the need to raise the aspirations of Black Caribbean pupils and to find examples of successful role models within the Black Caribbean community that could be used with all children so that they become a regular part of young people's thinking (Demie 2019, 2005; Demie and Lewis 2010, McKenley et al 2003, and Demie and McLean 2017b, 2013; Ofsted 2002). The research indicated that schools should plan a 'range of annual inspirational events to raise aspirations for young people' and the project planning group felt that the RTG project should have centrally organised events that would act as models for the future. The intention was to have at least two events per each year of the project.

The events would feature successful Black Caribbean heritage groups and individuals across a range of professions who would talk to the young people about their individual journey to success. It was hoped that the events a range of mentors would help them form a plan about how they were going to achieve their aspirations

Aim High acts as an integral strand of the LSP Working Group, Raising The Game. Aim High focuses on giving pupils of all ages the chance to meet inspirational, highly successful Black individuals from a range of professional and academic backgrounds. Well over 1,200 pupils aged between 5 and 14 have taken part in 2 events in the first year in 2018. In February 2020, they welcomed more than 650 pupils from years 2 – 6 from 23 Lambeth primary schools, as well as 70 inspirational Black professionals and academics. Similar events to raise aspiration were carried out in 2001 and 2002.

These speakers included representatives from the African Caribbean Medical Mentors Association (ACMM), educators, lawyers, economists, storytellers, a vet, a member of Mensa, a police officer, an actress, a child psychologist, a fashion designer, a journalist, political members, senior Lambeth staff and many more. Key messages from the survey are summarised below:

'We participated in a number of aiming high events and this has been useful in raising the aspiration of Black Caribbean pupils in my school.' (Teacher)

'The children have enjoyed attending these events.' (Headteacher)

'Has supported the climate and culture of our school that all children can achieve.' (Headteacher)

'The school work closely with Into University who are running workshops with each Year group and Maths Booster who will conclude their work with a celebration at a university.' (Headteacher)

'Children are routinely involved in considering future careers.' (Governor)

'We used these videos in school last year but have not taken part in the face-to-face events. The videos were good as it meant that all children could access/benefit from them, but if face-to-face events were to take place again, this is something that we would like to be part of.' (Headteacher)

'Conference, Pupil events.' (Headteacher)

'Attended aiming high events that are useful to raise pupils' aspirations.' (Governor)

'The STEM roadshow allowed me as a practitioner to consider how our curriculum (including the wider curriculum) could plan for a wider range of exposure to STEM related opportunities back at school. How far teachers are utilizing this area, continues to be a focus for development.' (Assistant Head)

'Great information and inspiration.' (Headteacher)

'Attended 2 years ago but not fully engaged.' (Headteacher)

Overall, there has been a considerable amount of positive feedback from the events from staff and the young people themselves. Most of the secondary schools now run similar events and there were several comments about the value of young people attending a central prestigious venue and meeting other school groups. There was also interest in sharing contact details of inspirational black speakers who have a proven track record of talking to young people. The young people were a credit to their schools and the staff who accompanied them gave very positive feedback about the sessions. Several schools commented that they intend to run similar events next year.

5.5 Tackling Black Caribbean exclusions

There is growing concern about the numbers of exclusions in schools in England and the LA. The disproportionately high number of exclusions of Black Caribbean pupils has previously been identified. In particular, a number of studies have drawn attention to the rise in Black Caribbean school exclusions and suspensions (see DfE, 2019; Demie, 2019; Parsons, 2009; Timpson, 2019). However, there are evidence the schools has tackled Black Caribbean school exclusions as can be seen from the comments below.

'We do not have exclusions in our schools and have not used the service.' (Teacher)

'Our exclusions for all pupils are extremely low and this will continue.' (Headteacher)

'Improved racial literacy and school context understanding in staff CPD has encouraged strategy thinking to support children. There have been no exclusions at our school.' (Headteacher)

'Maintaining the focus on this and ensuring we analyse data in relation to this, intervening where necessary.' (Headteacher)

'The school looks carefully at each exclusion and tailors support appropriately.' (Headteacher)

'A real focus on between schools manage moves rather than exclusion.' (Targeted interventions/Inclusion lead)

'A pupil can only learn when actively a member of a school; conversely a pupil can actively disrupt the learning of others which can have a negative effect on pupil attainment.' (Teacher)

'No children are excluded in the school, so this is not an issue.' (Governor)

'It is our policy to avoid exclusions and there has not been any this year so this is not a key priority area for us.' (Headteacher)

'Nurture based curriculum/culture/ethos.' (Headteacher)

'We do not have exclusions issues in our school.' (Governor)

'School has changed own school policy. Impact of Train the Trainer events with Betsy Hall was instrumental in this work.' (Headteacher)

'Meeting with Black Caribbean parents whose children are at risk of exclusion, putting behaviour support and plans in place, including 1:1 support, positive mentoring.' (Deputy Head)

'Very low.' (Headteacher)

5.6 Other Comments

We also asked for any general comments in the survey about "Raising the Game: Improving the Achievement of Black Caribbean Pupils." The following were the key messages:

'It would have been great if it led by BC headteachers, and this will make huge difference.' (Teacher)

'A brilliant initiative that needs to continue and develop as the borough-wide issue of BCRB attainment has not been resolved.' (Headteacher)

'The Governor events have been excellent and really engaged our school Governors on tackling this from a strategic level.' (Headteacher)

'Having worked within the LA for 58 days it is difficult for me to comment on historic support at ATS.' (Headteacher)

'There is a lot of good practice in Lambeth primary schools.' (Governor)

'Support for subject leads with the inclusive curriculum could be increased.' (Headteacher)

'Highlighting the issue, and helping schools to identify good strategies, can only be a good thing.' (Governor)

'It would be great to have even more planning and curriculum resources to develop the diversity of our curriculum further.' (Senior leadership team)

'The aims high events and parental engagement initiatives have worked well however, we have not focussed much on raising achievement, and BC children are underachieving in our schools.' (Governor)

'Raising the game is instrumental in sharing 'What Good practice should look like' and providing an effective platform to challenge the status quo and put it firmly on the agenda of every school. RTG has been effective in reaching out to a cross section of stakeholders i.e., parents, governors, support staff, caretaker, and pupils to take notice of underachievement and share the principle that everyone has a part to play. IF the draft Anti- racist quality mark (compiled as part of RTG work around diversifying the curriculum) is used as a working document then it will definitely have an impact on challenging assumptions, low expectations and other factors that contribute to labelling.' (Assistant Head)

Chapter 6: Summary and Conclusions

6.1 Introduction

This study aimed to examine the key barriers to learning and the school strategies to raise achievement of Black Caribbean pupils in Lambeth schools. Three overarching research questions guided this research, namely:

- What does the survey data tell us about the barriers of learning that contributed to the under achievement of Black Caribbean pupils?
- What does the survey data tell us about the success factors that contributed to the achievement of Black Caribbean pupils
- What is the implication for policy and practice?

A complementary methodological approach was used in the research including reviewing research literatures, analysing trend attainment data to explore changes and a survey of barriers of learning and success factors in schools involved in raising the achievement of Black Caribbean pupils.

There are a number of key messages from the survey. The main findings of the surveys are summarised below:

6.2 The attainment Black Caribbean pupils

The main findings from the study confirm that the English school system has produced dismal academic results for a high percentage of Black Caribbean pupils over the last 40 years (Demie and Mclean 22; Ofsted 2002). Over the past four decades, national research has shown that their achievements persistently lag behind the average achievement of their peers and the gap is growing at the end of primary and secondary education. The data also shows that Black Caribbean underachievement is real and persistent with consistently low levels of attainment, and the difference between their performance and that reported nationally is the largest of any ethnic group. In 2022, Black Caribbean pupils did not achieve in line with the wider Lambeth pupil population at KS2 or KS4. Comparing data from 2016 through to 2022, we can see that the attainment gap between Black Caribbean pupils and their peers has fluctuated but shown little indication of closing over time, both at KS2 and KS4 (see table 5 and 6). The discrepancies in achievement between Black Caribbean pupils in Lambeth and their peers are also worse than those same discrepancies at the national level.

Table 5. KS2 attainment 2016-2022 (RWM combined)

KS2	Lambeth Black Caribbean	Lambeth all Pupils	Gap	National Black Caribbean	National all Pupils	Gap
2016	51	62	-11	43	53	-10
2017	61	70	-9	54	61	-7
2018	57	70	-13	55	64	-9
2019	60	71	-11	56	65	-9
2022	47	61	-14	49	59	-10

Table 6. GCSE attainment 2016-2022 (English and maths 9–4 %)

GCSE	Lambeth Black Caribbean	Lambeth All pupils	Gap	National Black Caribbean	National all pupils	Gap
2016	45	62	-17	51	59	-8
2017	50	60	-10	51	59	-8
2018	43	60	-17	49	59	-10
2019	47	59	-12	48	60	-12
2022	51.8	64	-12.2	55.7	64.3	-8.6

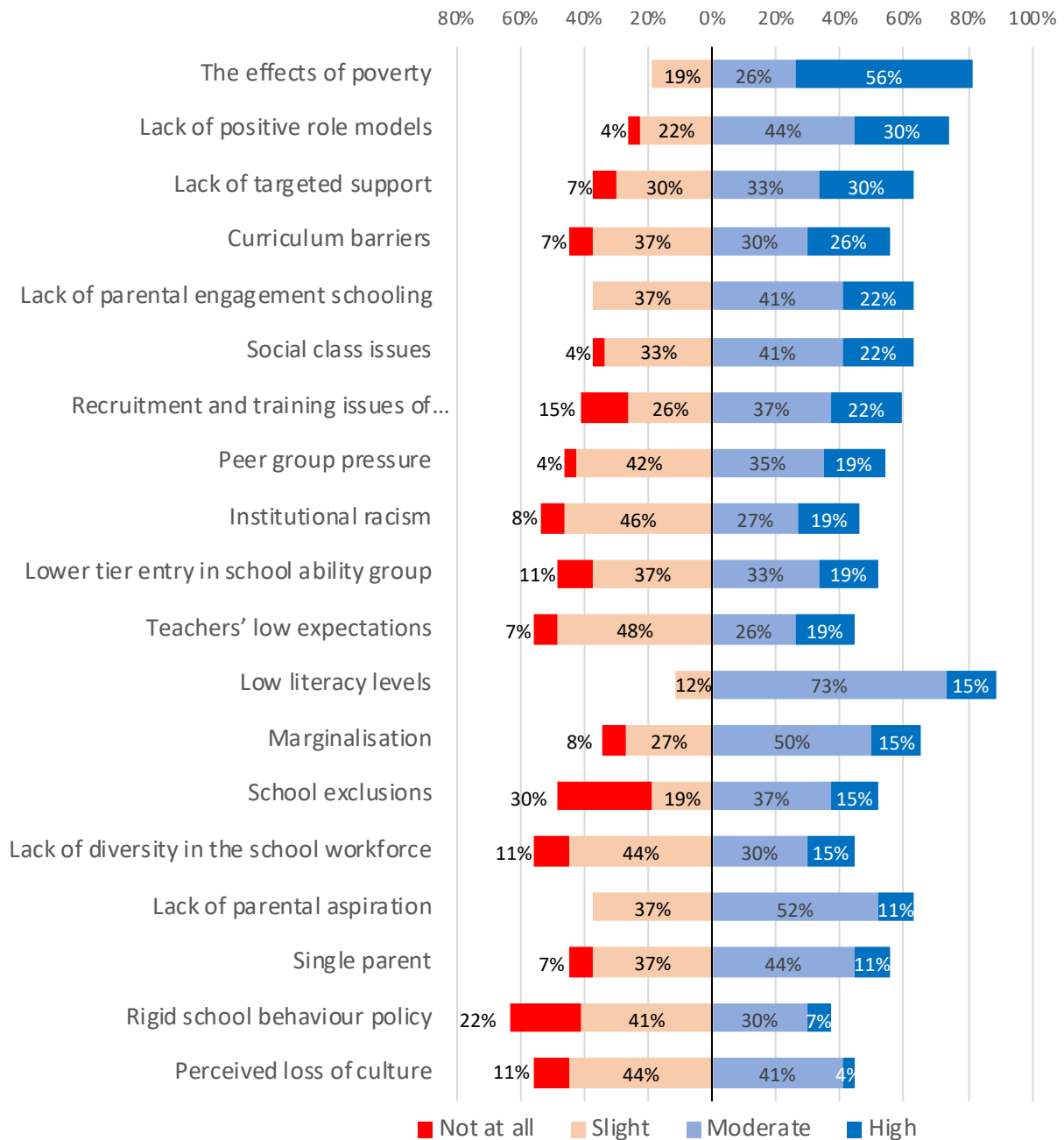
6.3 Barriers to learning for Black Caribbean Pupils

A growing body of research suggests there many factors that contribute to underachievement of Black Caribbean pupils in schools (see Demie, 2022a,b,c,d; Gillborn and Youdell, 2000; Crozier, 2005; Maylor et al., 2006; Rhamie, 2007; DCSF, 2008b; Gillborn, 1990; DfE 2015; Cabinet Office, 2007; EHRC, 2016; MacPherson, 1999; Parekh, 2000; DfES, 2006b; Curtis 2008; Strand 2008; Demie 2005, 2003; Demie and Mclean 2017). Within education literature recently underachievement has been found to be influenced by the following school, home, and pupil related factors:

- Teachers' low expectations
- Marginalisation
- Institutional racism
- Lack of diversity in the school workforce
- Lack of parental engagement in schooling
- Lack of parental aspiration
- Single parent
- Low literacy levels
- The effects of poverty
- Lack of positive role models
- Social class issues
- Curriculum barriers
- Lower tier entry in school ability group
- School exclusions

Researchers used case studies and ethnographic approach of research to come to this conclusion (see Demie and Mclean 2017a,b; Ofsted 2002,2009). However, with the survey approach used in this study, we were able to produce quantitative evidence to compare the relative contributions of each of the above factors. Of the above barriers the factors that respondents rated as having most contribution to underachievement, were low literacy levels (88%), the effect of poverty (82%), followed by lack of positive role models and social class issues (74%), marginalisation (65%), lack of parent parental engagement and parental aspiration, lack of targeted support, social class issues (63%), single parent (56%), peer group pressure and school exclusions (52%). (See Figure 5)

Figure 5. A survey of the factors that contributed to underachievement of Black Caribbean pupils



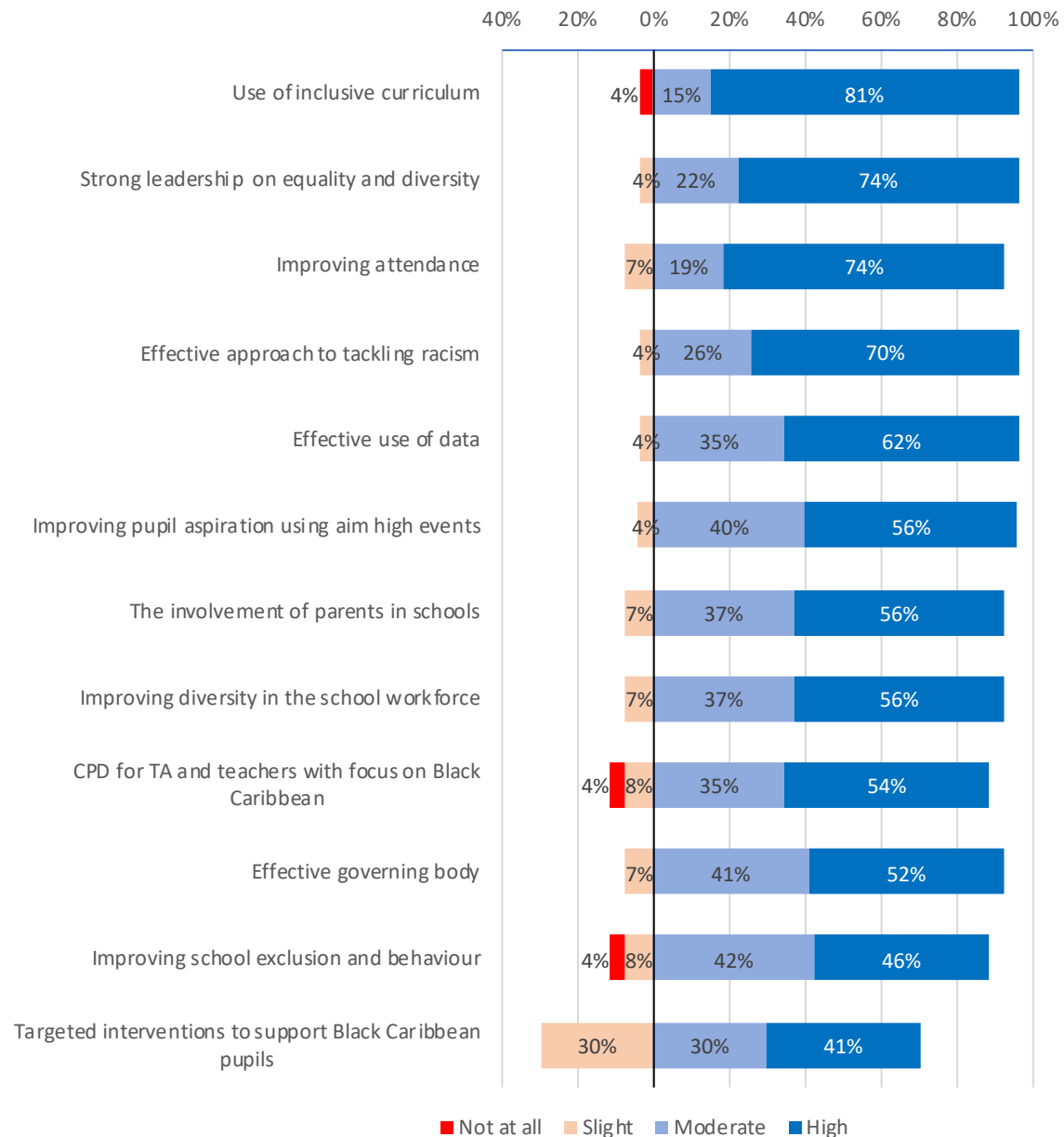
6.3 Factors that contributed to Black Caribbean achievement

The evidence from the data confirms tackling educational inequality and closing the gap is one of the biggest challenges faced by policy makers, teachers, and school leaders in England. Black Caribbean pupils are consistently the lowest performing group, and the gap widens particularly at the end of secondary school. The data suggests little improvement and there is still a long way to go to in closing the gap in achievement. All the factors listed above can perpetuate low attainment and disengagement from learning for Black Caribbean pupils. However, despite underperformance at local and national level the situation is not always doom and gloom. In a number of successful schools Black Caribbean pupils buck the national trend. There are a number of reasons why Black Caribbean

pupils are doing well in these successful schools (Demie and Mclean 2017b; Demie 2019a,b,2005; Ofsted 2002a,b; McKenley et al 2002; Tickly et al 2006). Key features and success factors Identified from literature review that is based on ethnographic and case studies includes:

- Headteachers excellent leadership on equality and diversity
- Effective teaching and learning
- High expectation for all pupils and teachers
- Diversifying the curriculum to meet the needs of Black Caribbean pupils.
- Close links with parents and increasing community support.
- Diversity in the school workforce
- Effective use of data to track individual pupils’ performance.
- Targeted support for Black Caribbean pupils
- Celebration of cultural diversity and a strong commitment to equal opportunities.

Figure 6. A survey of the factors that contributed to improving Black Caribbean attainment



Our survey in Figure 6 also support this findings from literature as the main success factors to raise achievement with respondents rating as having high contribution factors such as strong leadership on equality and diversity (81%), use of inclusive curriculum (74%), improving attendance (74%), effective approach to tackling racism (70%), effective use of data (62%), improving pupil aspiration using aim high events (56%), diversity in the school workforce (56%), the involvement of parents in schools (56%), CPD for TA and teachers with focus on Black Caribbean pupils (54%), Improving school exclusion and behaviour(46%)and targeted support for Black Caribbean pupils(41%) in the survey.

The respondents in the survey spoke with enthusiasm about their positive experience particularly with Lambeth School Partnership initiatives such as

- Diversifying the curriculum
- Parental engagement
- Aim high events.
- Tackling Black Caribbean exclusions

Due to its interventions and the work of schools across Lambeth, there are now fewer permanent exclusions, stronger connections with parents, and more emphasis on a diverse curriculum that includes the lives of famous Black and ethnic minority people in Britain, the achievement of early civilization such as Benin in West Africa, Cushitic and Merotic civilization in North East Africa, the transatlantic slave trade and its abolition, the history of the Windrush generation, pre-colonial Black presence in Britain, migration patterns, ethnic and cultural diversity in Britain; the positive contribution people of all ethnicities have made to Britain and the role of the countries of the former British empire in both world wars, Black History month in the curriculum, Black Live Matters and the Civil Right movement in USA and elsewhere. The Black experience is used to enrich the curriculum in art, dance, music, geography, history, science, and technology (LSP 2019; Demie 2019). This is a great achievement and the LSP should be proud of the work that has been done in Lambeth schools in developing and encouraging schools to use diversified curriculum that meets the needs of Black pupils. The curriculum and parental engagement contributed to the outstanding spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development that prepares students for life in modern British society. The aiming high events have also helped to inspire pupils and to engage parents in their children's education.

However, the survey respondents also reported that LSP Black Caribbean Raising the Game project has limited focus in the area of closing the achievement gap through targeted interventions using:

- Small group tuition
- Best teachers to teach English and maths for Black Caribbean targeted interventions groups.
- Well trained TA
- Booster class
- Improving attendance
- Enrichment programmes e.g., trips to cultural venues

The survey shows that Raising the Game focussed initiatives such as diversifying the curriculum, parental engagement, aiming high events and tackling Black Caribbean exclusions. As a result, it was not possible to close the achievement gap of Black Caribbean pupils.

Based what we know from existing literature and this research findings, we make the following recommendations to tackle the underachievement of Black Caribbean pupils in schools.

Chapter 7: Recommendations

The Department for Education

1. We would argue that it takes a wide-ranging strategy with a strong lead from national government to reverse the trend of underachievement particularly of Black Caribbean pupils. The recommendations from our findings are that the DfE should establish a national Black Caribbean Raising Achievement Project and provide ring fenced funding to support a range of targeted interventions including:
 - Small group additional teaching
 - One-to-one tuition
 - Use of best teachers to teach intervention groups including English and Maths
 - Use of well-trained TAs
 - Parental involvement
 - Booster classes
 - Enrichment programmes e.g., trips to cultural venues
2. Develop a national curriculum and workforce that more reflects the UK's rich cultural diversity.

Lambeth School Partnership:

- At present there is no evidence that the Lambeth School Partnership (LSP) has focused on the key priority of the project which was raising the attainment of Black Caribbean pupils to close the achievement gaps in each key stage. It is strongly recommended that the LSP focus on the main challenge improving the achievement of Black Caribbean pupils. This should be done through effective use of targeted interventions in the schools that are under achieving.
- The LSP should seek a grant from the LA, or an external grant, to improve the achievement of Black Caribbean pupils, by employing a headteacher, or suitable deputy head to support and challenge schools to close the achievement gap. This fund should also be used to support Black Caribbean intervention groups through extensive use of one-to-one support, booster classes and using the best teachers to teach English and Maths to improve outcomes. This grant would need to cover these costs for three years.
- The LSP need to design the project to be able to monitor and evaluate the impact of the LSP initiatives in improving attainment in schools, whilst also comparing it with schools with and without targeted interventions to draw lessons.
- Schools should continue auditing their workforce and pursue diversification that reflects the local community.
- Discuss race issues and ethnic diversity within lessons as a part of staff CPD.
- Celebrate cultural diversity in schools.

Research Community

There are implications for future research agenda that need to be considered by research community. We would argue that learning from the research findings can make a difference to schools and policy makers where the underachievement of Black Caribbean pupils is a challenge. This research is about of barriers of learning for Black Caribbean and some of the good practice that are contributing to achievement. This research evidence offers a regularly replicated model of research that shows barriers of learning and indisputably what works. Our findings is in line with other previous studies (Ofsted 2002,2008; Demie 2022,2005; Demie Mclean 2017a,b; EEF 2019). A number of researchers also argued that this approach is useful for obtaining detailed in-depth information about the views, opinions of respondents, and group feelings. Despite this , our study has some limitations that have implications for further research.

First the study is small scale one based on small number of respondents based on school survey or case study interviews or ethnographic approach of research.

Secondly, our research or previous research in this area have not able to undertake impact of targeted interventions in raising the achievement and tackling inequality of Black Caribbean pupils at national level. There is a need for more research to understand the success factors that contributed to improving the achievement using different research methodological approaches that includes survey, case studies, ethnographic and RCT methods. Well-designed research initiatives in this area can attract funding from national institutions that interested in the raising achievement of disadvantaged and underachieving groups in schools.

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