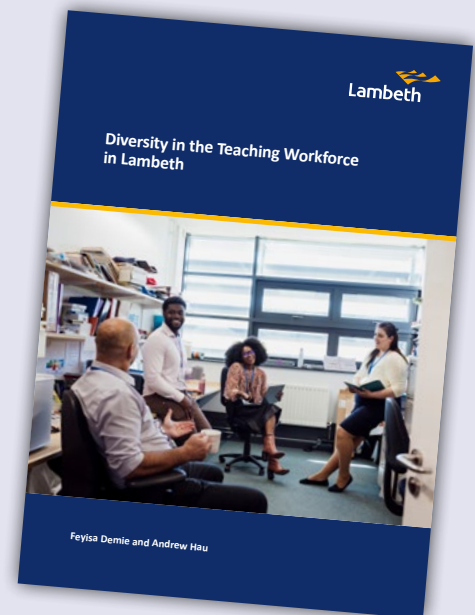


Diversity in the Teaching Workforce in Lambeth

RESEARCH BRIEF SUMMARY

1. Introduction

In the 21st century, ethnic language and cultural diversity need to be increasingly recognised and included into the core of educational values, educational practices, curriculum, and educational policy in schools. Yet evidence from research shows that this is not the case and there is still a long way to go to close the equality gap in England. Research in England shows that there is a mismatch between the teacher workforce and student populations, with the majority of 93% of school leaders and 87% of teachers having a White British ethnic background in England. This is despite 31% of students being recorded as from an ethnic minority group (DfE 2022). Previous research (e.g. Gorard et al 2023; Demie and See 2022; Miller 2021,2020; NFER 2022; DfE, 2022; Demie and Hau, 2022; Callender, 2020; Tereshchenko et al., 2020; Ingersoll et al 2020; Hague 2017; Haque and Elliot 2016; Villegas and Irvine 2010; Cunningham and Hargreaves, 2007; Basit and Roberts, 2006; Macpherson 1999) also highlighted racial disproportionality as a problem in the school teaching workforce in the United Kingdom and the United States. It also shows the significant barriers for black and ethnic minority (BAME) teachers in schools in relation to recruitment, retention, and career progression.



This research considers Lambeth local authority as a case study. The paper explores the diversity in the teaching workforce in schools and addresses four research questions:

- What does the trend data tell us about numbers of ethnic minority students and teachers?
- What does the trend data tell us about disproportionality in the teaching workforce?
- What are the contextual factors that influence the teaching workforce in school?
- What are the implications for policy and practice?

2. The teaching workforce and student population in Lambeth: Findings

The key messages from the data analysis suggest that:

Lambeth is a multi-ethnic local authority. The 2023 DfE School Census shows 82% of the pupil population in the local authority are from an ethnic minority background. These are comprised of Black African (22%), White Other (15%), Black Caribbean (12%), Mixed Other (8%), Any other group (6%), Mixed White and Black Caribbean (5%), Black other (4%), Mixed White and Black African (2%), Asian Other (2%), Pakistani (2%), Mixed White and Asian (2%), Bangladeshi (1%), Indian (1%) and Chinese (<1%). 15% of pupils are recorded as White British.

- The proportion of ethnic minority pupils between 2011 and 2023 has grown from 81% to 82%, an increase of one percentage point.

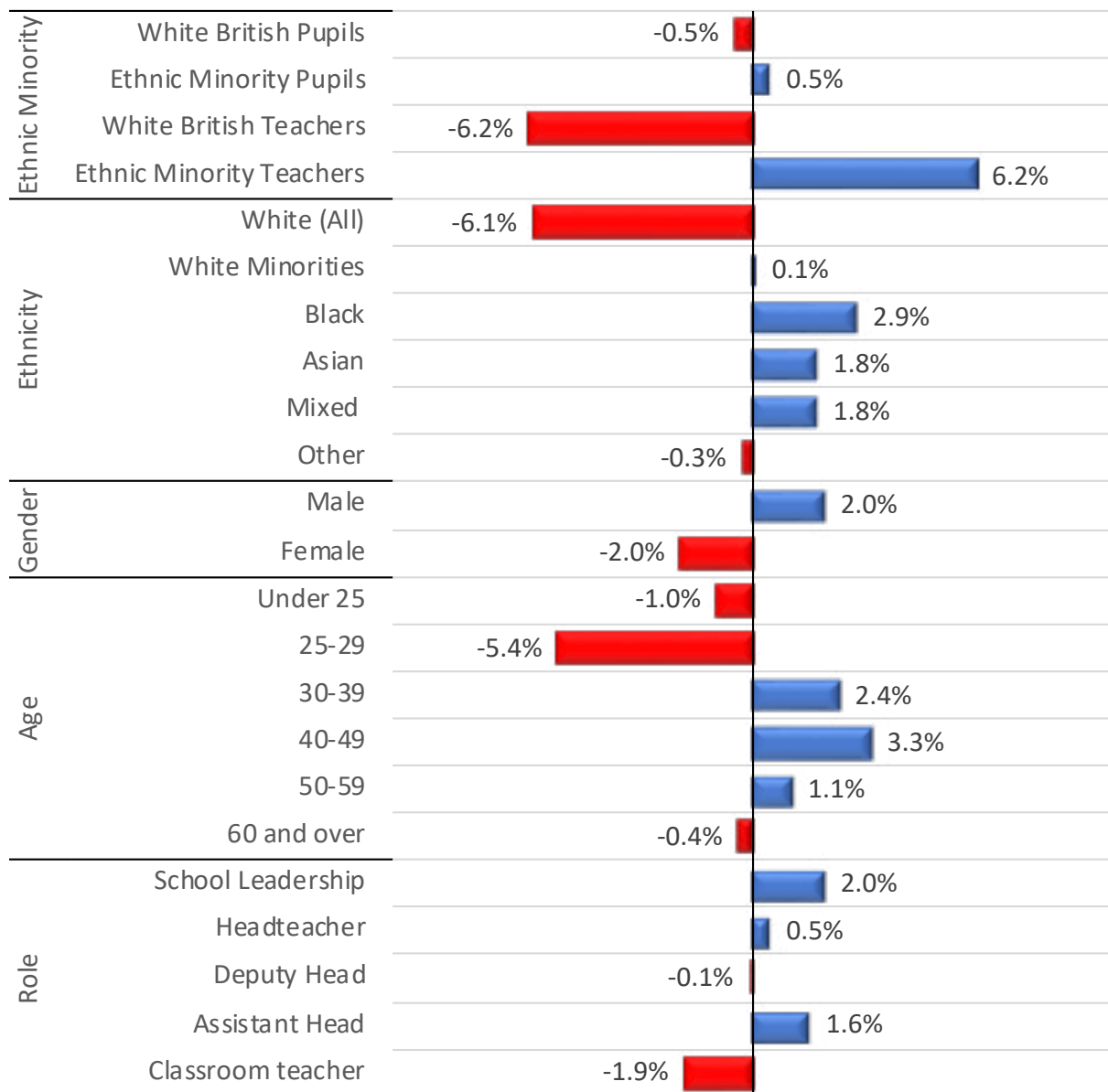
- The teaching workforce in Lambeth has grown marginally from 2,304 in 2011 to 2,335 in 2023. During this period, the Lambeth teaching workforce has become more diversified, with the proportion who are from an ethnic minority background growing from 41% to 47%, an increase of six percentage points.
- The majority of the teaching workforce are recorded as White British (53%). The next largest groups are those from a black background (19%), followed by white minorities (15%). When compared to all inner and outer London local authorities, Lambeth and Lewisham have the highest proportion of black or black British teachers in their workforce.
- Since 2011, the proportion of white teachers in Lambeth's workforce has fallen, whilst the proportion of teachers recorded as black or black British, Asian or Asian British and those of mixed ethnicity have grown the most over the same period.
- The composition of the teaching workforce is characterised by a distinct gender imbalance. The teaching workforce in Lambeth is predominantly female (72%), aligning with the broader picture nationally (76%). However, secondary schools have a higher proportion of male teachers than nursery/primary schools. In Lambeth, 17% of nursery/primary teachers are male, compared to secondary teachers where 38% are male, over double the proportion size.
- The age distribution of the teaching workforce reveals a diverse representation across different age brackets. The significant majority are in the mid-career range with 37% of Lambeth teachers aged 30–39 and a further 24% aged 40–49. Those who are earlier in their careers (aged under 30) make up 21% of the Lambeth teaching workforce and those later in their careers (aged 50 and over) make up 18%.
- Inner London local authorities, including Lambeth, have on average a younger teacher workforce than England as a whole. Comparing age ranges of Inner London to England, Inner London has a higher proportion of teachers aged under 30 and also in the 30–39 age range. In comparison, England has higher levels of teachers in the 40–49 and 50 and over age groups than Inner London.
- Since 2011, the Lambeth teaching workforce has increased in age. Teachers in the mid-career range (aged 30–49) have shown the most proportional growth, whilst teachers aged under 30 has fallen by six percentage points during this period.
- The school workforce data shows there are 2335 teaching staff in all schools in Lambeth (including academies). This comprises 1,971 classroom teachers, 175 assistant headteachers, 90 deputy headteachers and 99 headteachers. 51% of classroom teachers in all Lambeth schools are White British. This is higher for school leadership teachers, for whom 64% are White British.

The data also confirms that:

- > 70% of headteachers in Lambeth maintained schools (excluding academies) were from a white ethnic background, predominantly White British (65%). This was followed by 17% from a black ethnicity, predominantly of a Black Caribbean background.
- > 75% of assistant and deputy headteachers in Lambeth maintained schools (excluding academies) were recorded as white, predominantly White British (61%) and a further 5% identifying as White Irish. This was followed by 16% recorded as black, mostly of a Black Caribbean background (10%). White Other (white minorities) made up the next largest group (9%).

- > 69% of classroom teachers in Lambeth maintained schools (excluding academies) were recorded as white, with 52% being White British. Representation of ethnic minorities is higher for classroom teachers than school leadership with the largest groups being White Other (14%), Black Caribbean (9%) and Black African (8%).
- > The disproportionality in ethnic minority teachers/student numbers is most marked at the school leadership level. The data shows that 65% of headteachers and 61% of deputy and assistant headteachers in Lambeth maintained schools are White British, compared to 52% of classroom teachers, but serving a pupil population who are 82% ethnic minority. This does put Lambeth in a positive position however, when compared to the England average which shows 93% of headteachers, 90% of deputy and assistant headteachers and 85% of classroom teachers are White British.
- There have been changes in the demographic of Lambeth's teaching workforce when comparing 2011 to 2023. Figure 1 shows that:
 - > The balance of gender in the Lambeth teaching workforce overall has marginally changed. Since 2011, the proportion of female teachers has dropped with male teacher representation growing by 2% in 2023.
 - > The age demographic of Lambeth teaching workforce has changed with a 2.4 percentage point rise in the 30–39 age bracket and 3.3 percentage point rise in the 40–49 range. The age bracket showing the largest fall is the 25–29 age range with a 5.4 percentage point fall.
 - > Since 2011, both the Lambeth pupil population and the teaching workforce have increased in size. The ethnic minority representation of both pupils and teachers have also increased during this period. In Lambeth, although the ethnic minority teacher population is more diverse now than in 2011, the gap with ethnic minority pupils is still significantly wide.
 - > There have been notable changes in the ethnic composition of the teaching workforce in Lambeth since 2011. White teachers remain the largest ethnic cohort of teachers working in schools, but the proportion has fallen since 2011. Ethnic minority representation has grown by 6.2 percentage points while the white British teaching workforce has gone down by 6.2 percentage points. The growth in ethnic minority teachers is mainly driven by a notable rise in black teachers by 2.9 percentage points, mixed ethnic group (1.8%) and Asian (1.8%) since 2011.
 - > The constitution of the teaching workforce has changed. Lambeth schools have seen a two percentage point proportional increase of teachers in leadership positions, with the percentage of headteachers in the teaching workforce growing by 0.5 percentage points and assistant headteachers increasing by 1.6 percentage points. The representation by classroom teachers has fallen by 1.9%.

Figure 1: Lambeth teaching workforce 2011 & 2023 (%)



3. Conclusions

The overall conclusions of the study suggest that diversity really matters and is at the heart of the work of schools. In general, the review of literature suggests that increasing the diversity of the teaching force can help to tackle educational inequality, raising aspiration, reduce school exclusions and promoting learning for student and high achievement. It also helps in promoting cultural diversity and to tackle the shortage of teachers in disadvantaged areas. The analysis of trend data also confirms that the education system in Lambeth and England is marked by disproportionality in the school teaching workforce. In particular, there continues to be a persistent racial-ethnic parity gap

between the percentage of ethnic minority students and the percentage of ethnic minority teachers in schools. Since 2011, the proportion of Lambeth ethnic minority teachers has increased from 41% to 47%, whilst the ethnic minority student population has increased from 81% to 82%. However, despite this growth, the size of the ethnic minority teacher population still lags far behind that of the student population with a gap of 35 percentage points.

4. Policy implications and recommendations

The composition of the teaching workforce shows a variety of trends and characterisations distinct to the teaching profession across England.

The high proportion of females across the teaching workforce in Lambeth, reflects the gender balance in England's teaching profession, both currently and historically. Male teachers are under-represented, particularly in primary schools and may have implications on the impact of role models on pupils, with some Lambeth schools having no male teacher influence present.

The age distribution of the teaching workforce in Lambeth and England has been more fluid over the past decade. Where Inner London local authorities, including Lambeth, show a comparatively younger teacher population than the average for England, the proportion of younger teachers (aged under 30) has declined, raising considerations over recruitment and retention and the benefits of fresh perspectives both in terms of diversity in role models and pedagogy.

Lambeth teachers should be representative of the Lambeth school population. The disproportionately low number of BAME teachers and school leaders in education highlights a wider diversity issue within teaching on both a local and national scale. The current teaching workforce has not diversified as much as the changing pupil population and has remained a largely white teaching workforce. The teaching profession is also far from engaging sufficiently with the pertinent issues around the lack of BAME role models for ethnic minority pupils and the experience of racism and discrimination for both BAME pupils and teachers within schools and the lack of diversity in the teaching profession.

We would argue that diversity is critical for a more inclusive and diverse school community that reflects the wider society. Diversity also brings different perspectives and life experiences, exposing our children to cultural diversity, which reflects the languages, cultures, and ethnic backgrounds of the local community and society at large. The research evidence shows there is a mismatch between the ethnic makeup of teachers and the local authority students. It also raises concerns about the recruitment and retention experiences of teachers from black and minority ethnic backgrounds and argue that addressing the issues that prevent ethnic minority teachers entering the teaching profession and staying in the profession is essential for a truly equitable education system.

The recommendations from this study are that policymakers should consider policies to increase the diversity of the teacher workforce to close racial and ethnic achievement gaps in schools. We also need to recognise first the importance of cultural and ethnic diversity if we are serious about racial inequality and disproportionality in the teaching workforce. This should be backed by a national conversation about racism in the education system through an ongoing dialogue in the form of events, media and resources for teachers, academics, and policy makers to reflect on the challenges facing ethnic minority teachers and the ongoing problem of racism in the education system.

Notes for editors:

1. The research was carried out by Feyisa Demie and Andrew Hau.
2. Details of the findings are published in a research report entitled '**Diversity in the Teaching Workforce in Lambeth.**'
3. For further information or for the copy of the report please contact: Feyisa Demie, Schools' Research and Statistics , Education and Learning, Lambeth LA. E-mail: fdemie@lambeth.gov.uk

September 2023