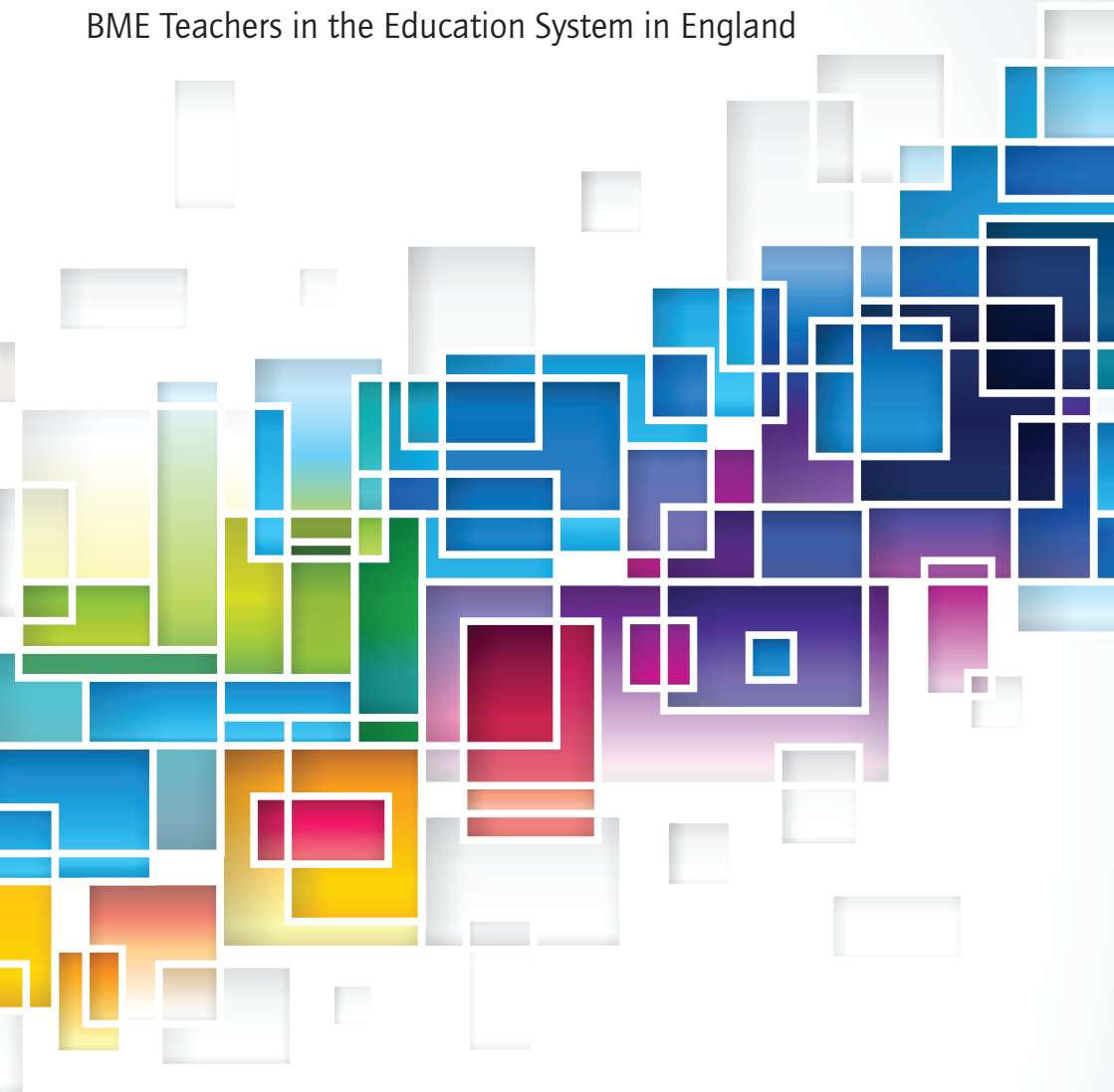


# Visible Minorities, Invisible Teachers

BME Teachers in the Education System in England



**RUNNYMEDE**

**NASUWT**  
The Teachers' Union

Act for  
**RACIAL  
JUSTICE**

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## INTRODUCTION

The NASUWT has become increasingly concerned about the experiences of teachers from black and minority ethnic (BME) backgrounds and believes that addressing the issues that prevent BME teachers from both entering the teaching profession and progressing and staying in the profession is essential for a truly equitable education system.

Teachers from BME backgrounds are as committed to teaching as their white colleagues, but struggle with the endemic racism that pervades the British educational system. This publication reveals both the overt and covert ways that BME teachers experience racism and discrimination in their everyday teaching lives and highlights that racial inequality not only exists at different levels within the British education system, but is also stubbornly persistent, affecting BME teachers' morale and long-term career aspirations. For the education system to be able to deliver for all of society, discrimination has to be challenged and rooted out wherever it is found.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Chris Keates". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Chris Keates (Ms)**  
General Secretary

## SECTION 1

### The narrative on race in Britain today

Recently, we have seen a renewed public-policy focus on BME employment prospects within the British labour market. Government-commissioned reviews have highlighted the inequality gaps that have persisted between BME and non-BME groups in both career progression and pay.<sup>1</sup> These have showed that, whilst the levels of educational attainment and degrees have improved significantly for people from BME backgrounds, these successes have not translated into improved labour-market outcomes. The NASUWT believes that this problem is particularly pertinent to the teaching profession.

The NASUWT continues to find evidence of everyday racism in schools and colleges, discrimination, harassment, ostracism, lack of pay progression, and BME teachers being held back from promotion. As these concerns have been examined in more depth, it is increasingly clear that they remain deep-rooted, endemic and institutionalised.

That the issue of racism in our schools remains of considerable concern 30 years after the seminal report on racial inequality in schools, *Education for All*, was published by Lord Swann is deeply worrying.<sup>2</sup> This report, published jointly with the Runnymede Trust, sets out the current challenges faced by teachers from BME backgrounds.



<sup>1</sup> Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, 'Terms of Reference: Baroness McGregor-Smith's Review of Issues Faced by Businesses in Developing Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) Talent', 1 April 2016.  
ISER Essex (2016) *Labour market disadvantage of Ethnic Minority graduates: university choice, parental background or neighbourhood?* Wouter Zysen and Simonetta Longhi.  
House of Lords Library Note (April 2016) 'BME people in the workplace in Britain LLN 2016/021'.

<sup>2</sup> Lord Swann, *Education for All: The Report of the Committee of Inquiry Into the Education of Children from Ethnic Minority Groups*, 1985.

## SECTION 2

### **BME teachers' have poor experiences across the school system**

Every year, the NASUWT carries out a Big Question survey to gather the views and feelings of teachers on important aspects of their teaching lives. Over 12,000 teachers regularly respond. These responses are analysed by ethnic origin as well as other protected characteristics to ensure that any major disparities in experiences and outcomes are not overlooked. The results for 2016, when comparing BME teachers to their white counterparts, were stark and worrying.

### **BME teachers have the passion and commitment for teaching**

The survey revealed that, in terms of commitment and passion for teaching, BME teachers are driven in the same ways as their white colleagues: over 80% of BME and white teachers agreed that their main motivation for teaching was interacting with pupils, seeing young children progress, teaching others and making a positive difference.<sup>3</sup>

### **But there is widespread inequality of treatment**

In terms of experience and opportunities in schools, teachers' perceptions vary widely. The 2016 survey showed that twice the proportion of BME teachers reported they had experienced discrimination in the workplace in the last 12 months (31%) compared to their white counterparts; a higher percentage of BME teachers (79% compared to 64%) believed that they were not paid at a level 'commensurate with their skills and experiences', and nearly two thirds of BME teachers (64%) had experienced 'verbal abuse by pupils' compared to just over half (51%) of their white peers.

To make matters worse, BME teachers have less confidence in being supported by the management in their schools. Over half (52%) of BME teachers reported that they felt that they were not viewed as professionals by school management, compared to 38% of their white peers. Additionally, almost two thirds (64%) of BME respondents felt that their opinions were not valued by school management in comparison with 53% of their white peers.

### **The inequality of treatment is impacting on teachers' wellbeing outside of school**

The negative treatment of BME teachers does not end at the school gates; it affects the whole of a teacher's life. The 2016 survey showed that almost twice the proportion of BME teachers (39%) had to cancel their holiday plans in the last year, compared to white teachers (20%).

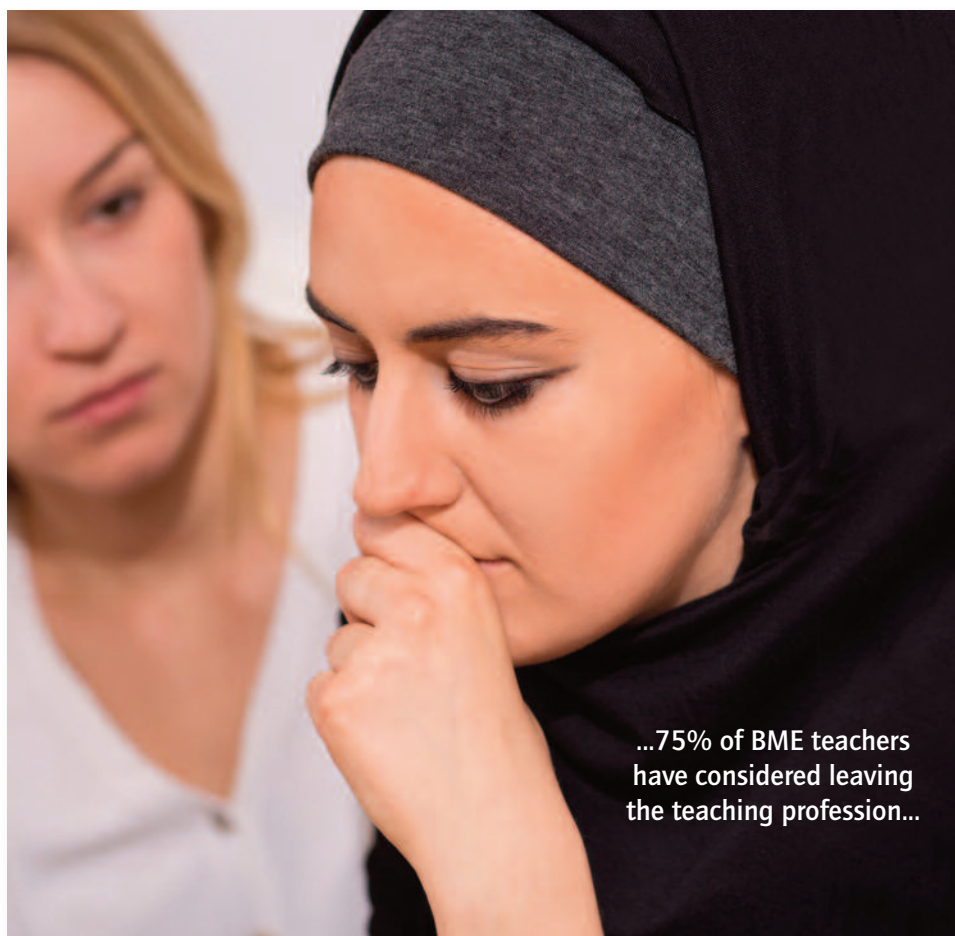
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<sup>3</sup> A total of 676 BME teachers responded to this survey.

Thirty-eight per cent of BME teachers reported poor health as a result of their work in the last 12 months, compared to a quarter of their white peers, and over one in ten BME teachers (13%) experienced a relationship breakdown in the last 12 months because of work.

### **And the discrimination is wearing teachers down**

The different manifestations of inequality of treatment, such as witting and unwitting discrimination in career promotions, and overall workload pressure are taking their toll on BME teachers. A majority of BME teachers (64%) are unsatisfied with their job (compared to 58% of their white peers), and a higher proportion of BME teachers have considered leaving the teaching profession (75% compared to 64% respectively).<sup>4</sup>



<sup>4</sup> NASUWT Big Question Annual Survey, 2016.

## SECTION 3

### The evidence supports BME teachers' experiences

Similar findings to those of the NASUWT Big Question survey are widespread across the research landscape. Disproportionality exists at almost every level of teaching and the evidence of inequality between BME teachers and non-BME teachers in pay, progression and leadership roles is striking.

#### **There is a chronic shortage of BME teachers in relation to the BME pupil population**

One of the most obvious demonstrations of this is the underrepresentation of BME teachers in comparison to the pupils they teach. In 2015, 7.6% of the total teaching workforce in England was from a non-white background.<sup>5</sup> 6.1% of primary school teachers and 9.3% of secondary school teachers were from BME backgrounds.

The number of people from BME backgrounds in the teaching workforce has increased slightly since 2010,<sup>6</sup> yet this is in sharp contrast to the diversity of the pupil population that they teach. In 2016, almost one third (31.4%) of pupils in state-maintained primary schools, and just over a quarter (27.9%) of pupils in state-maintained secondary schools, were from BME backgrounds.<sup>7</sup>

#### **Areas with diverse pupil populations are missing out on BME teachers**

As well as uneven representation of BME teachers within schools, there is also an issue of unequal representation of BME teachers across different local authorities. Some regions, including outer London and the West Midlands, have small gaps between BME teachers and BME pupil ratios, while in other regions, such as the North West and South West, the gap is much larger. In regions such as the North East, the proportion of BME pupils is up to eight times more than the BME teachers in the area – this is particularly noticeable in Newcastle-upon-Tyne and South Tyneside (see Table 1).<sup>8</sup>

#### **The disproportionality for BME teachers is most marked at leadership level**

The evidence points to racial inequality as being an almost endemic problem at the leadership levels of teaching. In November 2014, the School Workforce Census showed that just 3% (435 out of 14,500) of the headteachers from local authority maintained primary schools and 3.6% (47 out of 1,300 headteachers) from local authority maintained secondary schools were from BME backgrounds.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> DfE (2016) *School Workforce in England: November 2015*, [www.gov.uk/government/statistics/school-workforce-in-england-november-2015](http://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/school-workforce-in-england-november-2015). The School Workforce Census currently only collects comprehensive teaching workforce data for England. Non-white includes all BME groups, including mixed-heritage BME groups.

<sup>6</sup> Department for Education (2011) *School Workforce in England Nov 2010 (provisional)*, April 2011

<sup>7</sup> DfE *Schools, Pupils and their Characteristics: January 2016*, National tables.

<sup>8</sup> FOI request to DfE by The Bureau of Investigative Journalism, 2016.

Steel, S. (2015) *Race to the Top 2: Diversity in Education*. Elevation Networks.

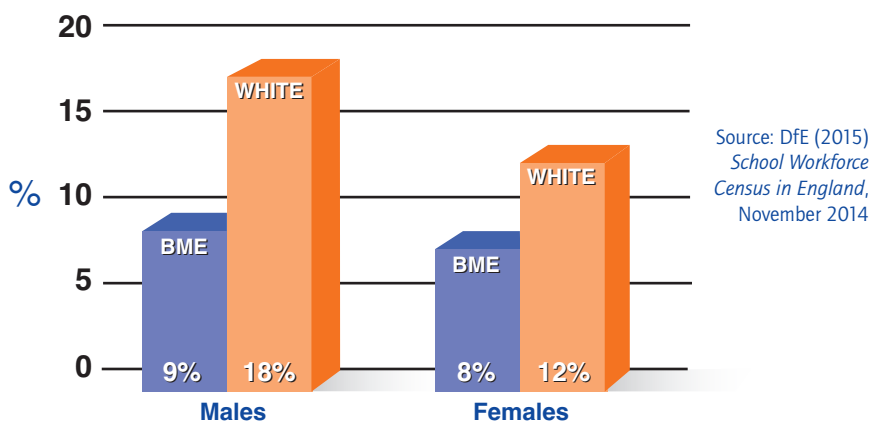
<sup>9</sup> DfE (2015) *School Workforce Census in England*, November 2014.

Out of the 20,036 qualified BME teachers, only 1,872 were in senior leadership roles, such as deputies and assistant headteachers.<sup>10</sup>

The racial disparity in leadership roles is exacerbated when gender is taken into account, as there are greater disparities between male BME and male white teachers, compared to their female counterparts. Twice the proportion of white males (18.3%) are in senior roles compared to BME males (8.7%);<sup>11</sup> whereas 12.3% of white female teachers are in senior roles compared to 8.1% of BME female teachers (see Figure 1).<sup>12</sup> It is important to note that there are more men in senior leadership positions than women within a predominantly female workforce, suggesting a double-bind hurdle for BME women. Importantly, this lack of representation at senior levels cannot be explained away by low numbers of BME teachers applying for promotion or higher levels of responsibility. Research has shown that, overall, men are more likely to apply for leadership positions than women, with BME men most likely to apply for promotion overall.<sup>13</sup>

In November 2014, the School Workforce Census showed that the highest concentration of the BME teaching force was among classroom-level staff, particularly in secondary schools, where 10.2% of classroom teachers were from BME groups (see Table 2). More recent figures from the School Workforce Census (November 2015) show that people from BME (non-white) backgrounds comprise 7.6% of the teaching workforce, yet make up 3.1% of headteachers. Only 2.5% of all male headteachers are of BME origin.

Figure 1: Proportion of teachers, all in leadership roles, by ethnicity and gender



<sup>10</sup> Ibid.  
<sup>11</sup> Headteachers, deputies or assistant headteachers.  
<sup>12</sup> DfE (2015) *School Workforce Census in England*, November 2014.  
<sup>13</sup> Davidson, J, Powney, J, Wilson, V, Hall, S and Mirza, H S, 2005, 'Race and sex: teachers' views on who gets ahead in schools', *European Journal of Teacher Education*, 28 (3), 311–26.



Table 1: Diversity gaps between BME teachers and BME pupils across the regions

Region	Percentage of BME pupils 2015	Percentage of BME teachers 2015
North East	9.4%	1.2%
North West	19.9%	3.3%
Yorkshire and the Humber	23.3%	5%
East Midlands	20.8%	5.1%
West Midlands	32.2%	9.7%
East of England	21.8%	5.1%
Inner London	81.1%	26%
Outer London	64.7%	21.5%
South East	21.1%	4.3%
South West	11.9%	1.6%

Source: School Workforce Census, 2015; DfE National Tables (Jan 2015) Table 9a: Number of pupils by ethnic group.

**Table 2: BME teacher representation in local authority maintained primary and secondary schools (England)<sup>14</sup>**

	Total (all ethnic groups)	BME Representation	%
<b>Primary maintained schools</b>			
Headteachers	14,500	435*	3
Deputy heads and assistants	19,400	935*	4.9
Classroom and other	167,200	9,298*	6.2
All teachers	208,000	12,100*	6.0
Total of all BME students			30.4
<b>Secondary maintained schools</b>			
Headteachers	1,300	46*	3.6
Deputy heads and assistants	7,200	439*	6.1
Classroom and other	73,700	7,517*	10.2
All teachers	86,400	8,553*	9.9
Total of all BME students			26.6

Source: Steel, S. (2015) *Race to the Top 2: Diversity in Education*;

\*These figures are not absolute numbers, but figures which have been extrapolated from percentages of BME teachers.

<sup>14</sup> Figures from DfE *School Workforce Census in England*, Nov 2014, Table 5  
[www.gov.uk/government/statistics/school-workforce-in-england-november-2014](http://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/school-workforce-in-england-november-2014).

## Discrimination and unequal treatment starts early in teachers' careers

Worryingly, the evidence suggests that the disproportionate representation of BME teachers is unlikely to change soon. Discrimination and disadvantage starts early on in a BME teacher's career. In 2015/16 only 14% of new recruits to initial teacher training (ITT) were of BME origin, and whilst there has been a slight increase from 2008/09 (up by 2%),<sup>15</sup> it has remained stubbornly around the same level, between 12-14%, for some time.<sup>16</sup> Noticeably, the percentage of new BME trainee teachers falls significantly short of the BME pupil population in England – around a quarter of all pupils.<sup>17</sup>

Research has highlighted anxieties about encountering racism, both within the school and in the wider environment (thus affecting applicants' perceptions of safety), and poor image perceptions of the teaching profession as inhibiting factors in the recruitment and retention of BME teachers.<sup>18</sup>



<sup>15</sup> DfE and National College for Teaching and Leadership (2014/15) [www.gov.uk/government/statistics/initial-teacher-training-trainee-number-census-2014-to-2015](http://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/initial-teacher-training-trainee-number-census-2014-to-2015).

<sup>16</sup> Source: NCTL Initial Teacher Training Census.

<sup>17</sup> School Teachers Review Body (2016), 26th Report, CM9302.

<sup>18</sup> Basit, T N, Roberts, L, McNamara, O, Carrington, B, Maguire, M and Woodrow, D, 2006, 'Did they jump or were they pushed: reasons why minority ethnic trainees withdraw from initial teacher training courses', *British Educational Research Journal*, 32 (3), 387–410.

## Retention of BME teacher recruits is an unexplored issue

There is also evidence to suggest that barriers for BME teachers persist even after they have entered teacher training, with BME trainee teachers reporting financial and domestic hurdles, such as childcare and other caring responsibilities, to completing their teacher training courses.<sup>19</sup> Moreover, some of these barriers – low pay, financial hardship and family responsibilities – are factors that have a detrimental impact on the retention rates of older recruits and women on ITT courses.<sup>20</sup>

Whilst there are a number of initiatives that provide teacher training and leadership programmes for BME graduates, such as Teach First, Future Leaders and the Leadership Equality and Diversity Fund, they are often piecemeal, ineffective and insufficiently monitored by ethnic breakdown.<sup>21</sup> This is particularly the case with retention rates in ITT and teacher wastage across different ethnic groups.

## The culture of racism is pervasive for BME teachers

An NASUWT poll of 450 BME teachers in 2015 found that over half (54%) reported that they had been subject to discrimination or harassment at work because of their race/ethnicity.<sup>22</sup> The poll revealed that 62% of teachers did not believe that schools treated BME pupils fairly, and 60% believe that schools do not respect BME teachers. Almost 9 out of 10 BME teachers agreed with the view that schools pay lip service to equality for BME staff and pupils.

**Racism** – both overt and covert – is still a significant issue; research focusing on the experiences and careers of ethnic minority teachers found that teachers faced considerable racist and stereotypical attitudes from their colleagues, which not only hindered their career progression, but also prevented them from supporting BME pupils.<sup>23</sup> Other research conducted for the NASUWT on the leadership aspirations and careers of BME teachers has reinforced these findings, with over half of BME teachers reporting that they have experienced discrimination based on ethnicity in their careers, and believe that schools were not inclusive.<sup>24</sup>

This was also borne out in the NASUWT poll,<sup>25</sup> with 70% of BME teachers answering that they did not feel they were treated fairly when applying for jobs or promotion.

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid, 387–410.

<sup>20</sup> Bush, T, Glover, D and Sood, K, 2006, 'Black and minority ethnic leaders in England: a portrait', *School Leadership & Management*, 26 (3), 289–305.

<sup>21</sup> Wilkins, C. (2013) 'Inspecting the Inspectors: Race Equality and Quality in Initial Teacher Education', *Race Ethnicity and Education*, Vol. 17, no.3, pp. 445–470.

<sup>22</sup> Conference Declaration (2015) Black and Minority Ethnic Teachers Consultation Conference, NASUWT.

<sup>23</sup> Cunningham, L and Hargreaves, M (2007) 'Minority Ethnic Teachers' Professional Experiences: Evidence from the Teachers' Status Project', Research Report 853, London DfES.

<sup>24</sup> NASUWT (2009) *The leadership aspirations and careers of black and minority ethnic teachers: A report for NASUWT and the National College for Leadership of Schools and Children's Services*. McNamara, O., Howson, J., Gunter, H and Fryers, A.

<sup>25</sup> Conference Declaration (2015) Black and Minority Ethnic Teachers Consultation Conference, NASUWT.



...60% of BME teachers believe that schools do not respect them...

For BME teachers, racism can appear in many different guises – through verbal or physical abuse, through visible and invisible obstacles in progression, by being refused help and support from fellow colleagues and senior management, or simply being overlooked in situations where intervention would be invaluable or critical.<sup>26</sup>

### Barriers vary but discrimination is widespread

A 2006 study of BME leaders in British schools set out four key barriers to promotion for BME teachers in their careers:

- being educated and/or employed outside of Britain;
- having a lack of geographical mobility (this particularly applies to Muslim women);
- being based in a predominantly white school; and
- applying for promotion at an older age than their white counterparts.<sup>27</sup>

Although this study was undertaken ten years ago, anecdotal evidence from the NASUWT's work with BME teachers suggests that these barriers in career progression still persist today.

<sup>26</sup> Basit, T N, McNamara, O, Roberts, L, Carrington, B, Maguire, M, and Woodrow, D, 2007, 'The bar is slightly higher': the perception of racism in teacher education', *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 37 (2), 279–98.

<sup>27</sup> Bush, T, Glover, D and Sood, K, 2006, 'Black and minority ethnic leaders in England: a portrait', *School Leadership & Management*, 26 (3), 289–305.

The experience of discrimination and racism varies for BME teachers in different areas, and from different backgrounds. Studies have revealed that some BME teachers, such as those who had trained and qualified in England and worked in urban and inner city areas, had few barriers in trying to enter the profession, whilst others, particularly those who had trained and qualified overseas, found it harder to gain employment.<sup>28</sup>

Workforce data has also shown that some BME teachers, noticeably those from Black African and Black Caribbean groups, are more likely to be older than their white trainee counterparts when they begin teacher training, particularly those entering ITT placements.<sup>29</sup>

Research also suggests that entering the teaching profession at an older age as well as being from BME backgrounds, has financial and domestic ramifications that affect both recruitment and retention rates.<sup>30</sup>

It is worth noting that British BME teachers report more positive experiences in their career progression in contrast to their peers who were educated or had gained experience abroad.<sup>31</sup>



<sup>28</sup> Cunningham, M and Hargreaves, L (2007) *Minority Ethnic Teachers' Professional Experiences: Evidence from the Teachers' Status Project*, Research Report RR 853, London DfES.

<sup>29</sup> Basit, T N, Roberts, L, McNamara, O, Carrington, B, Maguire, M and Woodrow, D, 2006, 'Did they jump or were they pushed: reasons why minority ethnic trainees withdraw from initial teacher training courses', *British Educational Research Journal*, 32 (3), 387–410.

<sup>30</sup> Powney, J., Wilson, V., Hall, S., Davidson, J., Kirk, S., Edward, S. and Mirza, H. (2003) *Teachers' Careers: the Impact Of Age, Disability, Ethnicity, Gender and Sexual Orientation*: The Scottish Council for Research in Education, Nottingham: DfES.

<sup>31</sup> Bush, T, Glover, D and Sood, K, 2006, 'Black and minority ethnic leaders in England: a portrait', *School Leadership & Management*, 26 (3), 289–305.

Similarly, research has found that overseas-trained teachers reported damage to their confidence and self-esteem when they were placed in some of the most challenging schools in the UK, with an unfamiliar curriculum, little or no induction, or limited professional support.<sup>32</sup>

### **BME teachers are, on average, paid less than their peers**

In 2014, the NASUWT commissioned a major study into the equality impact of teacher pay reforms and found that not only was performance-related pay not 'fit for purpose', i.e. there were few benefits in public sector educational settings, but it was also having a detrimental impact on BME teachers, who were on average paid less than their white peers, and were less likely to hold senior positions.<sup>33</sup>

Recent longitudinal research also revealed that less than a quarter of teachers surveyed in the research believed that the performance-related measures which had been implemented in England and Wales would lead to fairer distribution of pay and would reward good teaching.<sup>34</sup>

The NASUWT's own Big Question surveys in 2015 and 2016 showed that BME teachers do not feel that they are treated fairly in performance reviews, and almost half (47%) of BME teachers (compared to a third of white teachers) did not trust headteachers to make 'fair and objective decisions about individual pay matters' in their schools.

Only a third of BME teachers, compared to half of white teachers, agreed that they were paid for 'the full range of responsibilities they undertake'. This was borne out by a recent review commissioned by the NASUWT,<sup>35</sup> which found that performance-related pay was subjective, discretionary and open to discrimination.

It is worth noting that earlier research examining the impact of Performance Threshold Assessment on teachers' work suggested that BME teachers would be hindered under such schemes because they relied on teachers supporting each other throughout the performance process.<sup>36</sup> The research found that this was an issue for BME teachers who tended to be more isolated and lacking in support from peers in their institutions.

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<sup>32</sup> Basit, T N, Roberts, L, McNamara, O, Carrington, B, Maguire, M and Woodrow, D, 2006, 'Did they jump or were they pushed: reasons why minority ethnic trainees withdraw from initial teacher training courses, *British Educational Research Journal*, 32 (3), 387–410.

<sup>33</sup> Barnes, S., Lyonette, C., Atfield, G and Owen, D (2016) *Teachers' Pay and Equality: A Literature Review*. Warwick University. Produced for NASUWT.

<sup>34</sup> Marsden, D (2015) *Teachers and Performance Pay in 2014: First Results of a Survey*.

<sup>35</sup> Barnes, S., Lyonette, C., Atfield, G and Owen, D (2016) *Teachers' Pay and Equality: A Literature Review*. Warwick University. Produced for NASUWT

<sup>36</sup> Mahony, P. (2005). *The Impact of Performance Threshold Assessment on Teachers' Work* (ESRC Full Research Report, R000239286). Swindon: ESRC.



## SECTION 4

### Emerging areas of concern

#### Teacher retention

The NASUWT Big Question survey for 2016 found that 75% of BME teachers (and 64% of white teachers) have considered leaving the teaching profession altogether, proving that the retention of teachers is becoming a serious concern. Whilst recruitment to the teaching workforce has been increasing steadily since 2011, teacher wastage, defined as those either leaving the profession, retiring or going on maternity leave, is at its highest rate in the last decade, with one out of ten teachers leaving teaching.<sup>37</sup> In secondary schools, this figure is even higher with 11.2% of staff leaving the profession.<sup>38</sup> Neither the ethnic origin of wastage figures nor the specific ethnicities of teachers entering the profession are published in routine government statistics, making it difficult to garner anything about the rate of BME teachers leaving, but the data from NASUWT surveys suggests increasing disillusionment and dissatisfaction with teaching among BME teachers.<sup>39</sup>

#### Performance and pay

BME teachers have also drawn attention to the detrimental impact of the arrangements in school for managing teacher capability and, in particular, the discretionary way that performance is measured under the scheme. Both the research and feedback from NASUWT BME conferences have suggested that decisions about performance are not always fair and equitable, and the achievements of female and BME teachers are often underrated.<sup>40</sup> There is already considerable research to suggest that gender inequalities exist in pay arrangements for teachers (both in the US and in the UK),<sup>41</sup> and there is growing evidence that racial inequalities are also manifesting in pay arrangements for BME teachers. As well as evidence about disparities in pay between ethnic groups (for instance, Chinese, Pakistani and Bangladeshi teachers are being paid less than their counterparts),<sup>42</sup> there is also evidence of widening pay inequalities in schools between headteachers/senior leadership and classroom teachers.

Given that BME teachers, female teachers, disabled and part-time teachers are all more likely to be at the classroom level, these inequalities in pay are likely to affect these groups disproportionately and widen equality gaps.

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<sup>37</sup> DfE (2016) *School Workforce Census in England*, November 2015, Table 7.

<sup>38</sup> DfE (2016) *School Workforce Census in England*, November 2015, Table 7.

<sup>39</sup> NASUWT Big Question Annual Survey, January 2016.

<sup>40</sup> Barnes, S., Lyonette, C., Atfield, G and Owen, D (2016) *Teachers' Pay and Equality: A Literature Review*. Warwick University. Produced for NASUWT.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.



Additionally, providing training at school level may be problematic, as earlier research has highlighted some of the persistent racism experienced by BME teachers on placements and inadequate procedures by schools to address such discrimination.<sup>43</sup>

### A fragmented education system

The devolution of accountability from local authorities to the school level and the increasing independence of schools creates significant potential for lines of accountabilities around equality duties to become obfuscated.<sup>44</sup> In 2010, the largest concentration of BME staff were in academy schools, followed by maintained secondary schools. As over 60% of secondary schools had become academies by 2016,<sup>45</sup> it can be presumed that BME staff are currently even more concentrated in academies. However, there continues to be a dearth of evidence about the experience of BME teachers in academy and free schools. At a time when there is both increasing diversity of schools and more localised accountability, including within schools, the fact that it is difficult to determine the impact on equality is worrying. Given this, it is essential that greater efforts are taken by headteachers, governors and school leadership to ensure that they are complying with their Public Sector Equality Duty and monitoring the equality characteristics of their staff.



<sup>43</sup> Basit, T and Roberts, L (2006) *Tackling racism in school placements: final report to Multiverse* (London, Multiverse).

<sup>44</sup> NASUWT (2014) *Free schools, equality and inclusion: A report for the NASUWT by ROTA*. Stokes, E.

<sup>45</sup> BBC Website, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-13274090>, May 2016.

## SECTION 5

### Act for Racial Justice

The message from BME teachers is loud and clear. While they are passionate about teaching and are motivated to provide role models for BME young people, they are struggling against the tide of conscious and unconscious racial discrimination.

The teaching profession, and indeed the education system as a whole, does not feel inclusive, either for them or for BME students. Moreover, the incidences of reported discrimination – both overt and covert – from BME teachers in general, and black teachers particularly,<sup>46</sup> suggest that there is still an endemic culture of institutional racism.

Discrimination based on race and ethnicity, and increasingly faith, are enormous hurdles to overcome, and blight the lives and teaching careers of many BME teachers.

Discrimination, whether intended or unintended, and inequalities of treatment and opportunities in schools are not just issues that affect BME teachers; these are issues for the education system as a whole.

Whether the discrimination is based on race, gender or disability – the impact is the same on the individual.

The evidence set out above shows that there are significant barriers in the way of some teachers achieving their potential and building a fulfilling and meaningful career.

It shows that, currently, a level playing field does not exist for all teachers – something which is an affront to the teaching profession. The NASUWT and Runnymede believe there needs to be a concerted effort across the education system to Act for Racial Justice in schools.

This should consist of:

#### **1. Challenging racism in schools and across the education system**

- challenging all forms of racism and discrimination in the workplace through casework and industrial action where appropriate;
- empowering teachers with tools for challenging racial injustices in employment, backed up with meaningful support.

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<sup>46</sup> NASUWT (2009) *The leadership aspirations and careers of black and ethnic minority teachers: A report for NASUWT and the National College for Leadership of Schools and Children's Service*. McNamara, O., Howson, J., Gunter, H and Fryers, A.

## 2. Meaningful actions to close the gap between equality policies and practice

- delivering Government-led strategies for addressing racial injustices in the workplace and wider society;
- providing a strong portfolio of teaching resources for schools on educating for equality, diversity and tolerance.

## 3. A national conversation about racism in the education system

- an ongoing dialogue in the form of events, media and resources for teachers, academics, policy makers and campaigners to reflect on the challenges facing BME teachers and the ongoing problem of racism in the education system;
- bringing together a coalition that can start to identify foundational solutions to the problem and press all players in the education system, including government, to deliver real change.





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