

‘Tackling’ race inequality in school leadership: Positive actions in BAME teacher progression – evidence from three English schools

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Abstract

The career progression of teachers of BAME heritage is a matter of much debate and research. Over the past decade, a body of research has confirmed that race discrimination/ race inequality is a factor in the progression of teachers of BAME heritage in England. Put differently, although it has been argued that “Britain is not a racist nation”, it nonetheless has a “... deep sensitivity to ... ethnic and cultural difference” (Phillips 2016, p.1), a sensitivity which remains at the heart of a “deep rooted and continuing struggle among BME teachers and academics for equality and mutual recognition” (Miller 2016, p. 1). Drawing on Miller’s (2016) typology of educational institutions: engaged, experimenting, initiated and uninitiated (p.13), this paper presents evidence from three English headteachers of Multi-Academy Trusts (MATs) who promote and embed positive actions in the recruitment, development, retention and progression of staff of BAME heritage. The findings in this paper therefore marks a departure from majority of the existing research on BAME teacher progression in England, by identifying and highlighting ‘what works,’ and how. Furthermore, by treating each school/ leader as a unique “case”, this paper shows their motivation (personal and professional), experiences of “race”, school contexts and the type/s of leadership required and used in these institutional contexts to change attitudes, cultures and behaviours.

Key words: positive actions, race discrimination, BAME, England, teachers, progression

Introduction

Racism and school leadership

Although Phillips (2006) provides that “Britain is not a racist nation”, there is significant evidence that many of its educational institutions are racist (Bhopal and Jackson, 2013; Miller, 2016; ECU, 2011). Nevertheless, this paper seeks not to resolve, but rather to surface this apparent contradiction, since it is important in the context of what is being discussed herein. Racism is a reality (Bell, 2004), and racism in England’s education system is a reality – a reality played out in different ways, affecting students and staff in multiple ways and influencing their experience of, and interaction with/in the education system. For example, although Phillips argues that Britain is not a racist nation, he also provides that Britain has a “... deep sensitivity to... ethnic and cultural difference” (p.1) – sensitivities which are at the heart of a “deep rooted and continuing struggle among BAME teachers and academics for equality and mutual recognition (Miller, 2016, p. 1), and a struggle “that is a significant feature of contemporary educational institutions...” (Miller, 2018, p.3).

Although some may disagree, about the extent or degree of racism in British society, there is no denying the growing disparities at societal levels in indicators of health, education, incarceration, or inequity of opportunity and outcomes. Put differently, despite its espoused belief in equality and equity, the UK has created and reinforced a system of “in group” and “out group” along racial lines, producing, in effect, many nations within one nation, or enclaves with their own experiences and their own internal and external racialised problems or privileges. Although much emphasis has been placed on the role of educational leaders in tackling racism in their institutions, it is also important to remember that educational institutions and educational leaders are bi-products of this overarching context - a context

where inequity and inequality are endemic. Institutional racism occurs at the micro- and macro levels of educational institutions, and as pointed out by Scheurich and Young (1997),

Institutional racism exists when institutions or organizations, including educational ones, have standard operating procedures (intended or unintended) that hurt members of one or more races in relation to members of the dominant race. . . institutional racism also exists when institutional or organizational cultures, rules, habits, or symbols have the same biasing effect.
(p. 5)

Institutional racism can reinforce racist attitudes and behaviours that blight the experience of students and staff from minority ethnic backgrounds within an institution and thus the system as a whole. Nevertheless, and despite the fact they and their institutions are bi-products of racialised national, social and community contexts, educational leaders are powerful individuals who are uniquely placed to influence staff, students and other stakeholders in ways that help raise their awareness of and attention to issues of racism/ race discrimination, and to helping and enabling them to tackle race and other forms of discrimination, and to promoting, building and sustaining educational institutions in ways that positively influence all who study and work therein. In other words, leaders/ leadership can be a powerful antidote to race inequality and discrimination in organisations. This paper presents examples of positive actions taken by three English schools/ school leaders who have used the power associated with their positions, coupled with moral purpose, to challenge race inequality in staffing in their schools; leading them to invent, devise, implement and embed strategies and approaches to improve the recruitment, development, retention and progression of staff from BAME heritage in their schools. Whereas existing studies on the progression of BAME teachers have examined the plethora of barriers to progression, and more recently, enablers to progression at the level of individuals (Miller 2014, 2015, 2016), this study is the first to examine institutional/ leadership practices in supporting and enabling progression.

Teachers of BAME heritage in England

BAME teachers make up an important part of the overall population of staff in schools in England. They are an important group of individuals from non-White descent, and although not a homogenous group, their experience of the education system in England in terms race/ ethnicity based discrimination is broadly consistent. On the one hand, this makes understanding the race/ ethnic based discrimination in education somewhat easier; and on the other hand, it raises significant questions about the practice of educational institutions and educational leaders in promoting or ensuring race equality. There are approximately 451,000 teachers in the state sector in England, including 24,281 principals. Of the total number of principals, approximately 277 are of BAME heritage. Of the total number of teachers, 86.5% (or 395,564) are White-British, 3.8% (or 17,377) are from 'Other White' backgrounds, 1.7% (or 7,774) are White-Irish, 1.8% (or 8,231) are Indian, 1.0% (or 4513) are Pakistani, and 1.0% (or 4,513) Black Caribbean, and less than 1% Black African (DfE, 2017). Of the approximately 20,000 qualified teachers from Black and Minority Ethnic heritage, approximately 1200 are in a formal leadership position (including the 277 principals noted above).

Teachers of BAME heritage matter

There is extensive evidence that there are academic -related and other benefits to students and their institutions when students and teachers share the same race/ethnicity because teachers are able to serve as role models, mentors, advocates, or cultural translators for students (Gershenson et al, 2017, Wei, 2007). As noted by SecEd (2015), '[h]aving a leadership team from a range of ethnic

backgrounds also helps to forge good relationships between students and staff'. Students of BAME heritage benefit from seeing staff of BAME heritage in their classrooms and in leadership roles since they provide role models for them. Wei (2007) describes this as 'co-identification' (p.10), and it is widely believed that co-identification can play a role in encouraging students of BAME heritage to enter the teaching profession (McNamara et al., 2009). It has also been reported that leaders of BAME heritage can draw on their own experiences to engage with students of BAME heritage by challenging racial stereotypes and by lobbying for and/or making changes throughout their institutions in order to address issues of discrimination and create a more inclusive environment (McNamara et al., 2009).

The progression of teachers of BAME heritage

Barriers to progression

From an inductive review of extant literature conducted in 2018, Miller (2018) reported five broad set of factors related to the progression of teachers of BAME heritage in England. These are: (a) unfair policy treatment, (b) racism/ race discrimination, (c) institutional practices, (d) group membership or affiliation, and (e) Religion (in particular, Islam). What follows is a brief summary of these factors.

Policy: Miller (2014) found that unfair policy treatment contributes to the flatlining of the career progression of teachers of BAME heritage (and migrant origin), which has resulted in many not progressing beyond Head of Department (Miller 2018). **Race/ racism:** Earley et al. (2002) found that racial/ ethnic stereotyping was a factor in the progression of BAME teachers to senior roles. A decade later, Early et al (2012) reconfirmed this was still the case. Racial /ethnic discrimination (Bush et al, 2006) were also been found to be a barrier in the progression of teachers of BAME heritage. Furthermore, Lumby and Coleman (2007) found race/ ethnicity was a barrier to the progression of teachers of BAME heritage, a situation they reconfirmed a decade later in 2017 (See, Lumby and Coleman, 2017), and supported by Miller and Callender (2018).

Institutional practices: Marginalisation and indirect racism (Powney, et al, 2003) and workplace discrimination (McNamara et al, 2009) have been found to be a significant barrier also in the progression of teachers of BAME heritage. **Affiliation/ group membership:** Harris et al (2003) found that informal networks that excludes some groups is a factor influencing teacher progression generally, and BAME teacher progression, specifically. Furthermore, Miller (2014) contends that social connections led to the advantaging of some persons and the disadvantaging of others in recruitment rounds. **Religion:** Shah and Shaikh (2010) provide that religious background, in particular being a Muslim, is as problematic to progression as being of BAME heritage. Furthermore, Iqbal (2019) argued that being Muslim and male presented exceptional challenges to gaining an appointment as a head-teacher.

Enablers to progression

There is not a lot of research available on enablers to progression among teachers of BAME heritage. Nevertheless, led by Miller (2014, 2015, 2016) there is an emerging body of literature which seeks to fill this gap in literature and in our understanding. These are discussed below:

Affiliation/ Group membership: Miller (2014) found several "marks of affiliation" or membership of professional and /or informal networks can contribute to the progression of teachers of BAME heritage.

For example, successful completion of programmes such as TeachFirst, Future Leaders or participation in school-led government funded training through the Leadership, Equality & Diversity Fund (LEDF) is believed to have the same effect as regularly spending time with similarly minded persons at the pub on Friday evenings after school – that is, an increase in the chances of progression. **Appeasement or Adaptation:** Miller (2015) also found that when teachers of BAME heritage “proved themselves”, (and had thus become a part of an “in-group” or “network” or “club”), although not guaranteed, their chances of promotion, progression were improved. That is, teachers of BAME heritage appear to stand a better chance of promotion, progression where they, at first, look like, second, share cultural habits and patterns of behaviours similar to White teachers, and/or third, where they are prepared to ‘adopt’, ‘adapt’ and ‘adjust’. **White sanction:** Miller (2016) found that progression/promotion of teachers of BAME heritage is, in many cases, linked to or is reliant upon the support and endorsement of a white colleague – or ‘White sanction’. Miller defines ‘White sanction’ as a deliberate act “where the skills and capabilities of a BME individual are, first, acknowledged and, second, endorsed/ promoted by a white individual, who is positioned as a broker and/or mediator acting on behalf of or in the interests of the BME individual” (p. 11). Although acknowledging that ‘White sanction’ positions white colleagues as gatekeepers, and is therefore problematic, Miller nevertheless reasons that ‘White sanction’ can lead to positive outcomes for the teacher of BAME heritage who has been endorsed by a white colleague, since ‘White sanction’ provides ‘legitimacy’ and ‘enabling’ (p.11).

Educational institutions and race quality

Practices in educational institutions have sometimes lagged behind equality regulations, and in some cases, there have also been a clear mismatch between them. The Equalities Challenge Unit (2011) found, some initiatives fail due to:

the absence of resources and authority for the initiative, and sometimes fatigue and apathy towards new initiatives where previous staff experiences tend to be of unsuccessful initiatives that achieved neither substance nor sustainability. (ECU 2011, pp. 46-47).

Ahmed (2007) however notes that some institutions have shown a “lack of commitment to change” (p.236), and Miller (2016) notes some institutions are only involved in ‘light touch’ interventions (p. 218). Accordingly, based on their interaction with the progression of staff/ teachers of BAME heritage, Miller provides there are four types of institutions, namely: engaged, experimenting, initiated and uninitiated.

1. In an **‘engaged’** institution, there are BAME staff at all levels of its hierarchy, including in (senior) leadership roles.
2. In an **‘experimenting’** institution, there are a small number of BAME staff in posts and a smaller number of BME staff in leadership roles.
3. In an **‘initiated’** institution, there exists a framework for meeting its legal duty, BAME staff recruitment is restricted with only few BAME staff in posts, but no BAME staff in leadership roles.
4. In an **‘uninitiated’** institution, no framework or plan is in place to meet its legal duty and no BAME staff are in posts (Miller, 2016, p. 13).

This institutional typology will be essential in our understanding and interpretation of the evidence provided by headteachers in the current study. Nevertheless, as noted by Kalra, et al. (2009), for

diversity initiatives to be productive, there has to be changes to institutional cultures. Furthermore for diversity initiatives to be successful, there is need for leadership that is committed in speech and in action (Ahmed, 2007); which cuts through the paralysis of action associated with diversity issues (Mirza, 2008), and which is courageous (Miller, 2019).

Positive actions

Positive action is a range of measures allowed under the Equality Act 2010 (part 5) which can be taken lawfully to encourage and train people from under-represented groups to help them overcome disadvantages in competing with other applicants. For example, if an education institution has a low rate of applications from individuals from BAME heritage for academic and academic-related roles, and if it wanted to improve this, targeted action could be taken to improve this situation through changes to existing and/or the implementation of new strategies and procedures.

Positive action is not positive discrimination and the two concepts must not be confused. Positive discrimination (e.g.: setting quotas or any form of preferential treatment) is unlawful, although setting [improvement] targets is not. Where positive action has been taken to encourage applicants from disadvantaged groups to apply, every applicant must be considered on merit and interview, appointment and/or promotion/ progression must be based strictly on the agreed selection criteria. The Equality Act 2010 does however permit reasonable adjustments, which may give preferential treatment to an individual with a disability.

Theoretical framework

Courageous leadership

Many organisations continue along a routine path, day in day out, due to the failure of leaders to take charge and lead change. But leading change in organisations requires courage. According to Freeman (2008), courageous leadership involves

“... courageous listening, courageous decision-making, courageous action, the courage to set and enforce standards of behavior, and the courage to do what it takes to change destructive existing habits. Courageous leadership requires people to see what others don't want to see, and do what others don't want to do” (p.1).

Freeman also notes that courageous leaders possess the strength, conviction and stamina to move from wanting to change, to finding ways to implement and lead change. Thus, they show moral purpose that is greater and more consequential than themselves, and they are willing to put themselves on the line [in trying] to create inclusive and socially just work environments. This view is underlined by Miller who suggests,

Courageous leadership therefore requires and includes clarifying group perceptions, rebalancing power, leading by example, setting the tone, enforcing standards, taking risks and doing things differently.... (p.1)

Accordingly, the attitude of educational leaders towards race in/equality, and their courage in taking steps to making their institutions more equal, for all who study and work therein, is not merely a matter of principle but also one of justice.

Social justice leadership

Social justice, according to Vogel (2011) is the “full and equal participation of all groups in a society that is mutually shaped to meet their needs, including an equitable distribution of resources where all members are physically and psychologically safe and secure, self-determining, interdependent” (p. 71). In education, social justice is a complex concept that has come to mean different things in different contexts due to a variety of social, political, cultural and economic factors (Berkovich, 2013). Nevertheless, it is widely accepted that social justice is a principle (and a practice) based on values or beliefs centred around morality, justice, respect, equity and equal opportunities for all, irrespective of race, ethnicity, creed, (dis)ability, gender, class, economic status and/or other marginalising characteristic (Berkovich, 2013).

Although there is no single definition of social justice leadership, a common theme among definitions is that social justice has to do with leaders using their power to create equity. Bogotch (2000) argues, “Social justice, just like education, is a deliberate intervention that requires the moral use of power (p. 2). Furthermore, Theoharis (2007) propose social justice leaders:

.... advocate, lead, and keep at the center of their practice and vision issues of race, class, gender, disability, sexual orientation, and other historically and currently marginalizing conditions.... Addressing and eliminating marginalization in schools... (p. 223).

Thus, social justice leaders actively try to right wrongs inflicted on marginalised groups, as well as use positional power to create safe spaces, opportunities and equity between individuals and groups. Accordingly, “... social justice leadership is activist both in its intent and its approach, and social justice leaders understand the material, economic and social differences between different groups. It is with this understanding that they focus on creating equity-based opportunities for all” Miller et al, 2019, p.3). Social justice leaders move beyond equality debates to equity debates, by setting out to change systems, processes and structures to better respond to the needs of all (Dantley and Tillman, 2006), and “... a social justice leader interprets their role as not one which is limited to being a teacher or leader, but also one of activism, working towards... empowerment and equity for all” (Miller et al, 2019, p.3).

Methodology

Data collection for this qualitative exploratory study was conducted between October 2018 and May 2019. There were three participants (headteachers): one female and two males. Participants are all from schools defined as Multi-Academy Trusts (MATs). A ‘multi-academy trust’ is a group of schools in partnership with each other, often but not always because they are geographically close to one another. The person in charge of a MAT is usually referred to as a Chief Executive Officer. The female participant is in charge of a primary MAT with two schools, both of which also have two schools each. Sampling was completing random. A blast was sent out via social media to schools/ headteachers with a request to participate in a study on ‘Positive actions in BAME staffing’. This was followed up by several attempts on social media to recruit. Of the 24, 281 school leaders in England, only three responded, and the three which responded were “discovered” via social media. In-depth interviews were held with each headteacher lasting over 45 minutes at a time, and each headteacher was interviewed twice. A series of email exchanges occurred between the researcher and each participant, following the interviews, aimed at achieving “respondent validation”. This was not only important as an ethical issue in research, but was crucial to the field since currently there no available research

evidence on what/ how school leaders challenge and change school structures to promote race equality in staffing.

Participants

Except for the shared coincidence of being leaders of MATs, and their broad age group, participants had very little in common.

Table 1: Personal characteristics of participants

	Gender	Age	Ethnicity	Headship Experience	School type
P1	Female	Early 50s	Black African (migrated to the UK from South Africa)	20 years as HT	Primary, MAT
P2	Male	Early 50s	White British (Welsh)	9 years as HT	Secondary, MAT
P3	Male	Early 50s	White British	15 years as HT	Secondary, MAT

Analytical approach

This study combined thematic analysis and elements of auto-ethnography. Additionally, Brooks and Watson's (2018), model of "Ecologies of racism" which combines different lived states: *Pretext–context–posttext* with different levels of racism: individual, dyadic, sub-cultural, institutional and societal, is used as a key analytical frame. In choosing this analytical framework, my aim was to provide a detailed picture of a particular situation or context (in this case the individual schools), by drawing on accounts of actions taken and examples of impacts provided by headteachers within their individual schools. Combining these approaches was believed to be more useful to the overall analysis since the emphasis was on identifying and cross-matching actions and outcomes led by different actors in different work contexts, and since a main objective of the study was "... interpretive explanation and not prediction" (Doyle 2003, p.326).

Findings

Headteachers in this study are in charge of two schools each. However, this study on focused on positive actions in one school per headteacher - the one they proposed had the greater need for the positive actions intervention. Several important findings have emerged from this study, which provides qualitative insights into the motivation, attitudes and behaviours of headteachers, and of actions taken and led in their individual schools in the recruitment, development, retention and progression of staff from BAME heritage. The findings are discussed below.

School characteristics

All three schools are located in different parts of the country, although two are located in London. All three schools are part of a Multi-Academy Trust (MAT), one primary and two secondary. One of the secondary school Comprehensive and the other is a Grammar school. Socio-economic profile of families varies among schools, as is the ethnic and racial profile of students and staff. The primary school however, currently, has the highest level of race diversity in staffing.

Table 2: School characteristics

	School Location	Economic profile	Dominant ethnicity of students	Dominant ethnicity of staff	School type
P1	East London	Middle class families	White	None*. Very diverse	Primary, 500
P2	South East London	Working class	White	White British	Grammar, 1500
P3	Northern England	Mixed; working class	Mixed	White British	Comprehensive, 1450

* No dominant group. Good balance of UK white, black & Asian as well as Caribbean, European, Asian and African.

The meaning of race equality in staffing to you (the person)

Headteachers came to this question from very different personal stances, reflecting direct/ indirect experiences of race inequality/ discrimination, underpinned by their personal commitment to transforming schools for individuals and school communities.

P1 connected her stance to the need to provide students with “hope” through role models that looks like them:

For children to feel successful they need to have hope. They need to have role model around them that look like them; that inspires them to believe they can achieve. It’s about role models. It’s more than that though. A diverse staff helps us to see pupils as who they are and not just targets. It helps us to be better able to talk to parents from all backgrounds (P1, female).

P2 reasoned that social mobility is also about racial mobility, and social mobility is for all:

Social mobility is crucial, and should be open to all, including racial mobility. Its important people from all backgrounds have an equal chance of succeeding. My Welsh background is important to my stance. I experienced prejudice as a child, and I remember expressions such as no blacks, no Irish, no dogs... (P2, male).

P3 connected his stance to his observations of how staff of BAME heritage lack opportunities despite their hard-work and talent:

Equality is a key point for me. I have an equation that I used to use quite often: Talent + hard-work = Success. However, seeing the treatment of BAME staff in our schools, I have since added “Opportunity”. That is Talent + hard-work + opportunity = success. Opportunity is missing for several persons, and I have spent a lot of my time as a leader helping people to spot those opportunities, and using my influence to level the playing field. Not positive discrimination, but to challenge and remedy issues through structures and systems. (P3, male).

The meaning of race equality in staffing to your school (the professional)

Although it was not entirely possible for headteachers to separate their personal motivation from their professional motivation, their reasons provided significant insights into why race equality was an important issue for their schools and for their leadership. These insights were practical, perspectival and philosophical.

For P1, it was about providing students with role models that look like them and understand their cultures:

Parents don't want their children to be average. Co-identification with parents allows teachers to challenge parental lack of engagement more effectively and as a result, rally support through their co-identification. This kind of buy-in therefore becomes more powerful for the school. Staffing that reflects the community will result in a better school for the community ultimately. This is a model that is needed in every school, and not just a black school. Children in every school need to realise that teachers and leaders are capable of coming from every/ any ethnic background, and it is ok. They need to know there can be successful black teachers/ leaders (P1, female).

For P2, it was this was seen as a moral duty:

It's important because it's important in education. It's important for student population so it is important in staffing. It is a moral dimension that should be reflected in staffing. In principle, school leaders should act to promote diversity, including race. Race equality as an issue is important to our students. They have been fighting for and campaigning for race equality. They have been a driving force. We are nurturing adults to challenge the status quo, which means challenging ourselves, and recognising the power institutions have to maintain or challenge the status quo and to blight or provide opportunities for others.

For P3, it was after being exposed to race diversity as a teacher in schools in Bradford and London, having grown up in "an exclusively white village in Yorkshire":

I grew up in a typical working class family in an exclusively white village in Yorkshire. I left school with one O' level. Through injury and illness, I missed a lot of schooling, but I am not sure I was all that focused either. At weekends I often attended the Working men's clubs with my parents. There, a lot of ugly things were said about people who were not white. This was pretty common. However, I have worked in racially diverse communities in Bradford and Brixton, South London, and I have worked with the police and interfaith leaders... As a young teacher, I also assisted schools in tackling racism through different sporting initiatives, which, as you can imagine have been a total immersion for me.... these have opened my eyes to several equality issues around race discrimination and exclusion (P3, male).

Positive Action in the recruitment, development, retention and progression of BAME staff

The main focus of the study was about the positive actions taken by headteachers to improve recruitment, development, retention and progression among staff of BAME heritage. Table 3 summarises the different approaches used by headteachers/schools, as well as different strategies and tactics used to support the approaches. Recruiting from ethnic communities (local and international) where large numbers of students came from was a common strategy used by headteachers. In the case of the secondary schools, both headteachers had also enlisted the support of recruitment agencies and Human Resources experts to support them. A common support and direct recruitment strategy was also advertising in/ through outlets specifically targeting minoritised groups.

'Qualifying up' was a key approach used by all headteachers, where teaching assistants with degree qualifications were supported by the school to train as teachers. Furthermore, shadowing, appropriate CPD on Leadership and secondment opportunities were also provided, through what P3 described as a clear Talent Management Process. The use of development posts/ trail leadership positions was

also used by headteachers to provide what they described as ‘job insights’. These approaches were supported by an ‘opt-in’ school culture where all staff have to get involved in equalities discussion and initiatives involving teaching and learning and changing structures and staffroom interactions and conversations. Furthermore, P3 highlighted that his school receives feedback from staff through questionnaires completed four points during the term; the findings from which are translated into follow-up actions for all staff as appropriate.

Retention approaches were somewhat linked to development approaches and included distributing leadership (thus giving more persons more opportunities), and through providing enhanced roles and responsibilities (thus providing opportunities to deepen and widen leadership). These approaches, the headteachers argued, were supported by whole-school discussions on under-representation which allowed all staff to own the issue of race inequality/ discrimination, and staff of BAME heritage to see that any imbalance was not ignored or hidden. P2 also highlighted that in opening up his school to the local community for hosting their festivals, the community had begun to see the school as “our school”, and by ensuring events at school reflected the diversity of issues that matter to staff (especially minoritised groups), this was in turn creating a stronger sense of belonging. Progression was linked to recruitment, development and retention approaches and in the main, headteachers preferred to promote internal candidates they had “grown”, although there was room for suitably qualified and experienced candidates from outside.

Table 3: Strategies for recruitment, development, retention and progression of BAME staff

Recruitment approaches	Development approaches	Retention approaches	Progression/ Promotion approaches
International (e.g.: from countries where majority of students are from) [P1]	Qualifying up (e.g.: Teaching Assistants with degrees encouraged and supported financially to train as teachers) [P1, P3]	Distributed leadership opportunities through: “job insights”, “trial leadership positions” and “development posts” [P1, P2, P3]	Internal and external candidates as appropriate [P1, P2, P3]
Local (ethnic) community [P2]			
General advertising + in partnership with organisations targeting women persons of BAME heritage (e.g.: BAMEed and WomenEd) [P3]	Shadowing [P1, P3]	Enhanced roles and responsibilities [P2, P3]	
	Development posts/ trial leadership positions [P2, P3]		
	Bespoke leadership CPD [P2]		
	Secondment [P2]		
	Coaching [P3]		

Recruitment support	Development support	Retention support	Progression support
<p>Advertise in outlets targeting persons of BAME heritage [P2, P3]</p> <p>Contract recruitment firm/ teacher recruitment agency to assist with recruitment [P2, P3]</p> <p>Seek advice from other school leaders and existing members of staff of BAME heritage [P2, P3]</p> <p>Employ Equality Opportunity Adviser to assist with HR policies and practices [P1, P2]</p> <p>Open school to local community for their events/ festivals so that community members can build a relationship with the school [P2]</p>	<p>Encourage responsible risk-taking [P1]</p> <p>School-led Teaching & Learning conferences that address topics such as LGBT, race, etc. [P2]</p> <p>Staff perception survey (completed day 1, day 51, day 100, and last day of term) [P3]</p>	<p>Create a culture of equality with no 'opt-out' for anyone [P3]</p> <p>School-led discussion and initiatives on staff well-being and female and BAME (under)representation [P3]</p> <p>Show awareness of, and sensitivity to the things that matter to staff (e.g.: religious festivals, Black History Month, LGBT) [P2]</p>	<p>Internally "grown" candidates preferred but not exclusively [P1, P2]</p>

Impact/ effectiveness of the approaches/ strategies

The ultimate aim of the range of positive actions taken by headteachers was towards change for staff for BAME heritage in particular, and for their schools in general. Headteachers recognised they and their schools were on a journey to change that would take time and effort. Nevertheless, each reported some element of success.

P1 noted:

BAME teachers are speaking out; they are becoming more confident. We have a diverse leadership team with a black female principal, and two other members of the leadership team who are from BAME background. A diverse teams provides confidence and opens the eyes and ears of BAME people to speak out and be counted. (P1, female).

Although claiming some success, P2 lamented the absence of a clear national strategy to support institutional-led strategies:

The strategies have been very effective but more BAME people need to apply/ put themselves forward. It's frustrating there isn't broader [national] strategy that the school's effort could dovetail into. We need a strategy to help us grow leaders from all areas. (P2, male).

Continuing, he also provided:

It's important to grow the middle leaders' base of BAME staff in schools, so there will be enough qualified and experienced BAME staff to enable succession planning. (P2, male)

P3 challenged leaders to be "hero-makers", asserting that his school's predominantly white staff were "becoming white allies in actions and words...":

Although early days, a new culture is being created. I am looking for solutions. Upfront are the actions; underneath are the values and beliefs. We have to move away from being the hero to being the hero-maker. Majority of the white leaders in my school are becoming white allies in actions and words, and this is starting to impact staff. (P3, male).

Continuing, he also mentioned:

We [have to] move beyond the statutory things like equal opportunity statements. I am modelling the way it's meant to be. I want to make myself a white ally. Not a poster boy, but someone who wants to be more comfortable feeling uncomfortable in the current climate of discrimination. I have given my school 2-3 years to change completely, not 5 years, that's too long... (P3, male).

Motivation to introduce these specific strategies

Headteachers had different motivations for introducing the specific actions/ strategies, ranging from push-back in the face of community racism, to a moral obligation that schools (students, teachers, teachers, other staff) are reflective of their local and wider communities.

P1 noted:

School leaders need to invest in [race] diversity. There is simply no excuse. (P1, female).

P2 provided:

First, the belief that Grammar schools can be a lot more than they have been. Second, there is an element of racism in the community. I received at least one letter each year from an unknown person, complaining about how dark the school is, and that 'it wasn't like that when I was there'. Third, it's about social conscience. A school's leadership should reflect its community. Diversity matters in schools for students and staff. We want students from all backgrounds to feel they can... Getting our students to have a positive role model is important. Baroness Valerie Amos is one of our past students. It's our moral obligation and education leadership comes with responsibility. (P2, male).

P3 also provided:

Age and experience have strengthened my moral purpose. I am louder and prouder about the things that I feel are important. I want to be a "White ally". As I become older, I am becoming more comfortable in being uncomfortable". It's harder to talk about race exclusion than women exclusion in this country. I use my position, my reach and my influence, within and outside my

networks to try and tackle this issue. This has given me a degree of confidence, and some people are uncomfortable.... (P3, male).

Institutional analysis and BAME staffing pre - implementation of actions/ strategies

Asked to rank their school's engagement with BAME staffing on Miller's (2016) Institutional typology prior to their actions/ interventions, Headteachers described their schools as:

- *P1, female. **Uninitiated***. No framework or plan is in place to meet its legal duty and no BAME staff are in posts
- *P2, male. **Initiated***. There exists a framework for meeting its legal duty, BAME staff recruitment is restricted with only few BAME staff in posts, but no BAME staff in leadership roles.
- *P3, male. **Initiated***. There exists a framework for meeting its legal duty, BAME staff recruitment is restricted with only few BAME staff in posts, but no BAME staff in leadership roles.

To support her assessment, P1 provided:

No framework existed for the school to support BAME staff progression. It never even crossed people's mind that the way the school was operating was having an effect on people's mindset and emotional well-being (P1, female).

Institutional analysis and BAME staffing post - implementation of actions/ strategies

Asked to rank their school's engagement with BAME staffing on Miller's (2016) Institutional typology following their actions/ interventions, headteachers described their schools as:

- *P1, female. **Engaged***. There are BAME staff at all levels of its hierarchy, including in (senior) leadership roles.
- *P2, male. **Experimenting***. There are a small number of BAME staff in posts and a smaller number of BME staff in leadership roles.
- *P3, male. **Initiated but moving towards Experimenting***. In an 'initiated' institution, there exists a framework for meeting its legal duty, BAME staff recruitment is restricted with only few BAME staff in posts, but no BAME staff in leadership roles.

Headteachers spoke of the cumulative impacts resulting from their actions/ interventions in terms of increased recruitment, development opportunities provided and progression of staff of BAME heritage.

I have made sure the recruitment and progression of BAME staff was embedded in our structures. Our decision to recruit the Jamaican teachers, and to recruit a diverse staff team is part of this. We do it well. We took legal advice to make sure our actions were ok. And were are making a statement in our stance, and we are doing it well. We now have a strong leadership team which includes at least three black staff. (P1, female).

The Headteacher of one of the schools in the MAT I lead is from a BAME background (Asian). Before the initiatives I started there was no BAME person on the leadership team. But we have to ensure that nurturing of BAME talent is happening at other levels, and not only for a few individuals. (P2, male).

Headteachers also spoke of being “kept on their toes” by pupils, and efforts to decolonise the English [literature] curriculum and to provide training for staff in the new texts chosen.

Discussion

As mentioned earlier, this discussion is framed using Brooks and Watson’s (2018) “Ecologies of racism” model which combines different lived states: *Pretext–context–posttext* with different levels of racism: individual, dyadic, sub-cultural, institutional and societal. It is important to consider that race/ethnic discrimination occurs in multiple histories, and our (individual and institutional) response/s to such discrimination is very much framed within the context of these histories. Three aspects: pretext, context and posttext are especially important to our analysis and will be discussed below in trying to make sense of the findings.

Pretext: Each Headteacher had different personal reasons for challenging race inequality in their schools. P1, this was very much wrapped up in her minority ethnic statuses as: female, migrant and black. Her experiences of racism started in South Africa, under Apartheid, but were amplified in England due to her triple minority statuses of: race, gender and migrancy. Accordingly, P1 could be argued as having had a “racialized” upbringing. P2 recalls a period during in youth where slogans such as “no dogs, no blacks, no Irish” were common. Although Welsh and not Irish, growing up in England, he found these characterisations and the process of “othering” deeply problematic since, being Welsh, he suggested this conferred on him a minority white status, which resulted in him also being “othered” and discriminated against although not along racial lines. P3, who grew up in “an exclusively white village in Yorkshire”, had limited exposure to race diversity until secondary school, and at this point, his experience and engagement with individuals from BAME heritage was to “tease them” and call them names”. Consequently, P3 could be suggested as having been oblivious to race/ race inequality and its effects until much later.

These different early experiences confirms very different histories in relation to racism. Although none directly experienced racism, none were oblivious to it and/or to its effects. However, whilst at secondary school, P3 did directly shout racist abuse at students from Pakistani heritage, and his commitment to tackling race inequality is directly linked to what he describes as the impacts of race inequality he saw later on as a teacher. These critical incidents, and encounterings are critical “points” along a journey to change in relation to issues of race (Theoharis & Brooks, 2012).

Context: Institutionally racist organisations perpetuate racist attitudes, values, beliefs and behaviours, where racism become normalised. Thus, understanding the professional motivations of headteachers in tackling race inequality is important. All headteachers saw their role in tackling race inequality as a “moral duty” which was “good for students” and for the community. Many saw the context of education is England and the UK as being quite “White” and exclusionary, and as a result, institutions had become exclusionary by default. They however didn’t want to be complicit in excluding, but rather to invent and introduce approaches and strategies to disrupt and dismantle cultures and histories of race inequality that had become normalised in their schools. All headteachers spoke of the need to ensure the “pipeline” was not clogged or blocked, the need for “schools to reflect the diversity in society”, the value of diversity to schools and the need for and importance of “same race teachers”, as a significant benefit to students (Gershenson et al, 2017, Wei, 2007).

The headteachers in this study provided examples how environmental factors have helped to shape their awareness of race inequality, and how in turn, they have used this awareness to shape the physical, social, cultural, political, and economic environment of their schools in trying to tackle race inequality in their institutions (Larson & Ovando, 2001). Although heavily influenced by and deeply

connected to emic and etic racial dynamics in community and society (Brooks, 2012), “institutional context” is changeable, but this requires leadership. Thus, educational leaders and students shape the context of their institutions in relation to race inequality by, first, educating themselves; second, by having difficult conversations about race; third, by critically reflecting on and changing their attitudes and behaviours; and by fourth, by crafting and implementing policies and procedures that promote and support race equality (Scheurich, 2002). In the words of P3, “there is no ‘opt-out’ regarding race equality at my school”.

Posttext:

All three headteachers in the study displayed courageous leadership and social justice leadership. Courageous leadership involves “...courageous decision-making, courageous action, and the courage to set and enforce standards of behavior...” (Freeman 2008, p.1). Furthermore, courageous leaders “see what others don’t want to see, and do what others don’t want to do” (Freeman 2008, p.1), and possess the strength, conviction and stamina to move from wanting to change, to findings ways to implement and lead change. Headteachers in this study provided very clear examples of courageous leadership, having moved beyond sympathising to tackling, from talking to doing, being conscious their actions were part of a journey and not a destination.

It should also be noted these headteachers demonstrated social justice leadership. Social justice leadership is not only about promoting excellence, equity and inclusion but also about delivering or taking steps to deliver these. Accordingly, headteachers committed themselves personally and their schools to mid-to-medium term equity agendas and objectives that were not merely talked about but which were owned by all staff and which had become embedded in key institutional priorities. The actions of headteachers in this study very much underline Bogotch’s (2000) observation that, “Social justice, just like education, is a deliberate intervention that requires the moral use of power” (p. 2), and Miller et al’s (2019) observation that “Social justice leaders actively try to right wrongs inflicted on marginalised groups, as well as use their position to create safe spaces and opportunities that promote equity between individuals and groups...” (p.3).

The attitudes, behaviours and actions of headteachers in this study points to a current and a futures oriented way of thinking about racial dynamics in their schools. That is, inasmuch as their work is very much focused on the future (e.g., missions, goals, strategic plans, etc.), race equality is important enough an issue to also be embedded in the current and future work of these schools (Brooks, 2012). Put differently, if race equality is not part of an educational institution’s plan for the future, it will be harder for it to design long term and sustainable anti-racism interventions, choosing instead to treat racism/ race discrimination as sporadic and/or random acts of improvement (Brooks, 2012; Scheurich and Skrla, 2003), which, based on available evidence, are therefore more likely to fail when construed in these terms (ECU, 2011).

Conclusions

Race matters in schools and school leaders are both influence and are influenced by it (Brooks and Jean-Marie, 2007). Accordingly, doing race equality is serious business, and doing race equality in schools or educational institutions is serious business that requires courage and the moral use of power that extends beyond sympathising to taking actions. Sometimes accused of putting profit over people, Multi-Academy Trusts (MATs) have not always enjoyed an entirely positive reputation by both the public and those who work in them. Although three “cases” out of 24, 281 school leaders is by no means generalisable, headteachers of MATs are arguably slightly more ahead of other headteachers

in tackling head-on, the thorny issue of race inequality in staffing in their schools. Headteachers, like other educational leaders, are caught in a vicious and continuing cycle of performativity, accountability and improvement, where more is being demanded from less, and where turnaround times are increasingly shortened. Additionally, headteachers are operating in a context where equality legislation promotes equal opportunities of access but does not provide guarantee of equal outcomes. This zero sum game produces only losers and masks any lack of enthusiasm shown by headteachers and other educational leaders, across the country, who use the Equality Act, not as a lever for positive change, but as a tool to justify inaction and reify race inequality on the basis that candidates of BAME heritage are not good enough. In other words, headteachers, and other educational leaders must come out the shadows of performativity and associated agendas, and a flawed Equality Act, and exercise moral purpose combined with courageous and social justice leadership. The accounts and examples of positive actions provided by headteachers in this study are as important as they are symbolic. They are symbolic because three of 24, 281 represent a mere 'drop in the bucket' of those needing to lead and take a stand against race inequality in staffing in their schools. But these steps are also important for the field of educational/ school leadership, providing excellent insights of courage and justice in action, which individual headteachers and their professional association can adopt. It is very much recognised that the race inequality in England is a deep rooted issue, but as P1 reasons, "there is no excuse for not tackling race inequality".

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