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# EXPLORING ETHNICITY

## SCHOOL BUSINESS LEADERSHIP IN ENGLAND

December 2020 | Research Report

Dr Fiona Creaby



## ISBL Foreword

It is cause for great concern and disappointment that, over the years, society has failed to adequately address issues related to equity and diversity, and the education sector is not immune. The recent spotlight on racial inequality, brought into sharp focus following the tragic death of George Floyd earlier this year, further emphasised the need for urgent change.

Last year, the Institute of School Business Leadership conducted a workforce survey that revealed significant imbalance in the make-up of the School Business Leadership community, with only 3% from a BAME background. Although we have been committed to addressing this imbalance, we are increasing our work with key stakeholders representing groups with protected characteristics in order to facilitate more rapid changes by hosting focus groups and round-table discussions and via targeted research. We believe that by creating the space to encourage an honest conversation about the complex issues related to equality and diversity, we can better effect change.

As part of our ongoing commitment to understanding more about the challenges faced by the sector as we confront existing inequities, we commissioned Dr Fiona Creaby (Manchester Metropolitan University) to undertake this small-scale research study designed to further explore some of the key diversity findings that emerged from the ISBL workforce survey undertaken in 2019.



**Stephen Morales**  
CEO ISBL

# Executive Summary

Currently, data exploring the ethnicity of school business professionals in the English education system is limited. This report provides an initial exploration of ethnic diversity via a small-scale research contribution. The purpose of this is to serve as a catalyst for important conversations about diversity and an inclusive call to action across the sector.

A secondary data analysis of the existing ISBL 2020 workforce survey (WFS) data was undertaken with a focus on the ethnicity of the respondents. This was combined with primary data collection and analysis to capture practitioner voice on matters of ethnicity within the sector.

Key findings suggest a lack of diverse ethnic representation across the sector and illuminate experiences of institutional barriers faced by the participants. The findings present that there is much work to do to explore and address matters of ethnic representation and inclusion for school business professionals across the education sector, including recruitment, career development, voice and strategic participation in matters of school leadership.

The key areas of recommendation include further work and collaboration with a range of key sector stakeholders to explore diversity and to act as a driver for inclusion both externally across the sector and internally within ISBL. This includes sector-wide equality and diversity activities, consultation, research and knowledge exchange, in addition to internal engagement with the membership on several key areas that seek to foster and embed a culture of inclusion and equity.

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Acknowledgement and thanks are given to Cheryl Campbell, founder of the Association of BAME Business Leaders in Education (ABBLed) , and to the team at the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Educators Network (BAMEed) for their input and support with the research. The author would also like to express her personal gratitude to Audrey Hall for her support.

The research presented within this report was undertaken by Dr Fiona Creaby in 2020 (the author) and was commissioned by the Institute of School Business Leadership (ISBL). The research undertaken and the findings generated were done on an independent basis by Dr Creaby via consultation with ISBL on key areas of questioning for the survey analysis, the formulation of recommendations and the reporting structure.

## About the author

Dr Fiona Creaby (EdD, MSc, FHEA) is an academic at Manchester Metropolitan University, an education sector advisor on management and leadership development, and an executive trustee for the British Educational Leadership, Management & Administration Society (BELMAS). As a former school business manager in the English state school system, she engages in research and advisory and consultancy services across the sector to contribute to the growth and development of school business leadership.



1. ABBLed – Association of BAME Business Leaders in Education: <https://abbled.org/>

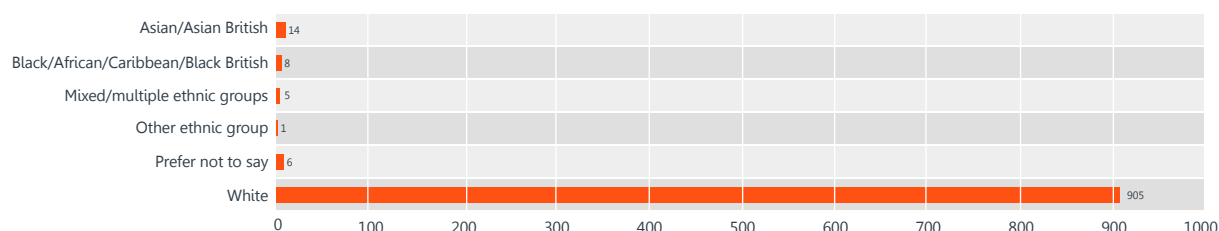
2. BAMEd – Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Educators Network: <https://www.bameednetwork.com/>

## Section 1: Introduction

This report provides an initial exploration of ethnicity within the school business profession in England and offers key areas of recommendation for the Institute of School Business Leadership (ISBL). It is informed by two key methods of research: a secondary data analysis (Appendix A) and primary data collection and analysis (Appendix B). The secondary data analysis draws on the existing ISBL 2020 workforce survey (WFS) data with a focus on exploring ethnicity. The primary data analysis collates practitioner voice via interviews with case study practitioners and analyses them thematically. This introduction outlines the rationale and the methodology of the research. The key findings and recommendations then follow in the subsequent sections of this report.

### 1.1. Rationale

The ISBL workforce survey (the WFS) was a voluntary survey undertaken in late 2019 with school business professionals (SBPs) in England (ISBL, 2020). The WFS yielded n=939 responses, which was deemed a healthy level of participation when benchmarked against other available survey data (e.g. DfE, 2019a; 2019b; Creaby, 2018). As figure 1 presents, 96.4% (n=905) of WFS respondents identified as from a White background and 3% (n=28) identified as from either an Asian background (n=14), a Black background (n=8), a Mixed/multiple ethnic group background (n=5), or Other ethnic group background (n=1). A total of 0.6% (n=6) respondents preferred not to indicate their ethnicity.



▲ Figure 1.1: Total WFS ethnicity

Considering the WFS findings shows that they reflect a lack of diverse ethnic representation in comparison to other available data sets that collate ethnicity statistics on the working age population and the school workforce in England. For example, ethnicity statistics from the 2011 census and 2017 government national statistics data present that 14.4% of the working age population identify as from an Asian (8.1%), Black (3.4%), Mixed/multiple ethnic group (1.1%) or Other ethnic group (1.1%) background (Crown 2020a; 2020b; 2017; ONS 2019a; 2019b), with 85.6% of the working age population identifying as from a White background. The same statistics also report regional ethnic diversity as varied, with London as the most ethnically diverse area of England (40.2% identifying as from an Asian, Black, Mixed/multiple ethnic group or Other ethnic group background) and other regions much lower, such as the North East (4.3%).

Furthermore, DfE 2020 school workforce data (DfE, 2020a) and 2020 school teacher workforce data (DfE, 2020b) presents that 14% of all teachers identified as being from a minority ethnic background. This included 4.4% identifying as from an Asian background, 2.2% from a Black background, 1.3% from a Mixed/multiple ethnic group background and 0.8% from an Other ethnic group background. 91.3% of teachers identified as from a White British background, with the remaining 5.3% of minority ethnic teachers identifying as from a White Other background. This results in a total of 8.7% of teachers identifying as from any other ethnic background than White British/White Other. In addition, 92.9% of head teachers report as being from a White British background. Therefore, a 3% finding of ISBL WFS respondents identifying as from a Black, Asian, Mixed/multiple ethnic group or Other ethnic group background is low in contrast to the teaching workforce at 8.7%.

In addition, the national statistics on 'schools, pupils and their characteristics' from the January 2020 school census data (DfE, 2020c) presents that from across 24,360 schools with a headcount of 8.8 million pupils, the proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is rising steadily, with approximately a quarter (26%) of pupils identifying as from an ethnic minority background. This includes 12% from an Asian background, 6% from a Black background, 6% from a Mixed ethnic group background, and 2% from an Other ethnic group background. This further suggests that the WFS 3% finding is not reflective of the ethnic representation present across school communities; however, regional variances are noted as above.

Overall, as ethnic representation can be argued as potentially lower than expected across the WFS population, further exploration of the available WFS data is argued as necessary to illuminate any potential themes that could be helpful to explore further. To inform this process, ISBL engaged with both ABBLed and BAMEed. In consultation with both groups, four key questions were generated that were felt helpful to explore when engaging with, and discussing the career development of, SBPs from ethnically diverse backgrounds. In addition, it was felt helpful to seek voice from within the sector to learn more about the experiences of practitioners from diverse ethnic backgrounds who have the potential to be an under-represented and underexplored cohort of the education workforce.

## 1.2. Methodology

The research is situated within an interpretivist framework whereby the focus is on gathering perceptions and insights to explore a phenomenon rather than trying to establish a unifying truth to it (Cohen et al, 2011). It is therefore a qualitative inquiry which utilises a small-scale, mixed-methods research design to inform this report via two key methods: a secondary data analysis of the existing ISBL workforce survey (WFS); and primary data collection and analysis via semi-structured interviews with case study practitioners. The two research methods were undertaken in mid-2020 and are explained in turn below:

### WFS analysis (secondary data analysis)

Following on from the initial WFS analysis, a secondary data analysis was undertaken to explore data from the 3% of respondents who identified as from either a Black, Asian, Mixed/multiple ethnic group or an Other ethnic group background. As outlined in the rationale (section 1.1), in consultation with ABBLed and BAMEed, ISBL posited four key questions about the wider SBP population that are felt to be potentially magnified amongst SBPs from minority ethnic backgrounds:

1. The WFS illuminated a nuanced gender pay gap; is there any evidence of pay disparity in relation to ethnicity?
2. The WFS highlighted a theme of SBPs struggling to gain recognition as credible leaders and coequals amongst other senior pedagogical staff; does ethnicity have any influence on this theme?
3. As half of all WFS respondents are not involved in coaching and mentoring activity, is this the same for respondents identifying as from a Black, Asian, Mixed/multiple ethnicity or Other minority ethnic background?
4. The WFS survey analysis suggested a link between qualification levels and career mobility within the sector; is this also the case for those identifying as from a Black, Asian, Mixed or Minority Ethnic background?

These questions shaped the focus of the secondary data analysis, with the analysis also including descriptive statistics on age, gender, role, school type, salary, qualifications, strategic participation, career mobility and coaching/mentoring activity. Analysis commenced to firstly establish descriptive statistics, with the four ISBL questions (above) then utilised to explore the data for patterns as requested and inform key findings (Cohen et al, 2011). The full WFS ethnicity analysis is found in Appendix A.

It is important to note that there is no whole-population data in relation to school business professionals (SBPs) in England. With diverse school settings and a range of roles in schools, it is difficult to ascertain the exact number of SBPs working in schools or specific detail into population demographics. However, during the WFS research, ISBL submitted a freedom of information query to the DfE in relation to school numbers and types in England to enable the collation of survey responses from across a proportional representation of school types (ISBL, 2020) to gain a sample that is representative of the whole population of English schools. Further information on the original WFS data collection can be found in Appendix A of this report.

Furthermore, given the limited data on the ethnicity of SBPs beyond the WFS, it is difficult to ascertain whether the WFS findings on ethnic representation are reflective of the whole population of SBPs in England. Therefore, the level of ethnic diversity presented by the WFS cannot be generalised to all SBPs. Nonetheless, the WFS findings compared with DfE data on the teaching workforce and the Government's working age population data (as noted above in 1.1.) presents a concerning finding warranting exploration. Therefore, as one of the few data sets that has collated ethnicity data from SBPs, the WFS data is argued to be a helpful starting point in exploring ethnicity further. However, it is important to note that due to the small sample size of ethnic minority WFS respondents, comparisons between different ethnic groups are problematic.

### SBP voice (interview analysis)

To gain deeper insights into ethnic diversity in school business leadership settings in England, it was felt important to work with ethnic minority volunteers to discuss ethnicity from their experiences and perspective (presented in Appendix B).



Although the sample of participants was small (n=4), the data collected is rich with the purpose of generating key themes of insight to inform areas of further exploration beyond this research. The participants were selected via a purposeful sampling strategy to aid the exploration of ethnicity (Denscombe, 2010). The criteria for inclusion was self-identification from a Black or Asian or Mixed/multiple ethnic group or any Other ethnic group background in addition to being currently (or recently within the last three years) working in a school business professional role and/or leadership role in a school in England. Participants took part in an individual semi-structured interview of approximately one hour, which aided in the construction of a 'case profile' to present a narrative overview of their professional journey and exploration of their lived experiences (questions are listed in Appendix B).

Full informed consent was undertaken, with participants following ethical guidelines from the British Educational Research Association (BERA, 2018) and given the option of anonymity and the use of a pseudonym, with case profiles and all excerpts from interview transcriptions checked with each participant before inclusion in this report.

The interview data was explored via a thematic analysis framework beginning with 'open coding' (Denscombe, 2010), with data interrogated to establish links and associations between codes to form 'axial codes' (Charmaz, 2000) in order to construct the thematic structure. The findings were considered in conjunction with the secondary WFS analysis finding (as above) and used to inform the overall key findings and recommendations in this report.

## Section 2: Key findings

Section 2 offers the key findings from the overarching analysis of the two research methods: secondary data analysis of the WFS and primary data collection and analysis of practitioner voice. The full detailed findings from each method are available at Appendix A (WFS ethnicity analysis) and Appendix B (SBP voice).

### 2.1. Summary of WFS ethnicity analysis

#### **Q1: The WFS illuminated a nuanced gender pay gap; is there any evidence of pay disparity in relation to ethnicity?**

Exploring the data shows that there does not appear to be a significant ethnicity gap in relation to pay based on the available data, with average salary comparisons between ethnic groups being problematic as noted. From the available data, it is therefore difficult to explore or ascertain an 'ethnicity pay gap'; however, nuances relating to a gender pay gap are apparent for Asian ethnic minority respondents, similarly to the trend in the WFS.

#### **Q2: The WFS highlighted a theme of SBPs struggling to gain recognition as credible leaders and coequals amongst other senior pedagogical staff; does ethnicity have any influence on this theme?**

From the available data, it suggests that ethnicity may be a potential factor given that participation for minority ethnic groups is around half of that reported in the overall WFS population, with most minority ethnic participants reporting as holding senior generalist roles in individual schools or senior executive roles in multi-school settings.

#### **Q3: As half of all WFS respondents are not involved in coaching and mentoring activity, is this the same for respondents identifying as from Black, Asian, Mixed or Minority Ethnic backgrounds?**

From the analysis of coaching and mentoring activity data available, it suggests a similar finding to the overall WFS, in that half of all ethnic minority respondents were engaged in a form of coaching and/or mentoring activity. However, ethnic minority respondents were also almost as likely to be providing coaching/mentoring activity as they were to be receiving it (28% providing – n=8), which was not the case across the overall WFS findings.

#### **Q4: The WFS survey analysis suggested a link between qualification levels and career mobility within the sector; is this also the case for those identifying as from a Black, Asian, Mixed or Minority Ethnic background?**

In exploring the data, it is difficult to ascertain whether qualifications had an influence on general career mobility for ethnic minority groups. However, from the available data, the findings suggest that Black and Asian respondents have slightly increased career mobility and are more likely to hold level 7 professional qualifications and be qualified accountants than those from other ethnic groups. This could suggest a link between qualifications and career mobility.

Further findings of note from the WFS ethnicity analysis.

As noted, the WFS respondent population presented a low level of ethnic diversity (3% of the sample, n=28 out of n=939). Similarities to the entire WFS population in key matters were evident when explored in the survey, including age, gender diversity, role focus, salary levels, and working hours/contracts. However, the analysis presented some further nuanced findings beyond the questions/assertions posed above:

- As with the overall WFS findings, there was a female dominance in respondents' reported gender, with only three (n=3) ethnic minority respondents identifying as male (all Asian/Asian British). This means the survey population of n=939 contained no male respondents identifying as from a Black (inc. Black British, Caribbean, African) or Mixed/Multiple ethnic group background or Other ethnic group background.
- WFS respondents from minority ethnic backgrounds appear slightly more likely to work in maintained schools and primary schools than as reported across the whole WFS population.
- Qualification levels appeared similar across ethnic minority groups in the WFS and followed the general trend of the WFS findings (especially in relation to bespoke SBP qualifications). However, minority ethnic respondents appeared more likely to hold a bachelor's degree and postgraduate-level professional qualifications. Asian/Asian British respondents presented a higher occurrence as certified/qualified accountants than other ethnic minority groups.
- A similar trend regarding salary levels presented for ethnic minority respondents in a similar way to the overall WFS findings, with a nuanced finding of male ethnic minority respondents earning on average more than female ethnic respondents despite a predominantly similar range of contract variables (working pattern, school type, role focus, service length, age), with Black women presenting as slightly higher earners than women in other ethnic minority groups.

For the full WFS ethnicity analysis, see [Appendix A: WFS ethnicity analysis](#).

## 2.2. Summary of SBP voice (interview findings)

From the interviews undertaken with the four participants, as outlined in the methodology section of this report (section 1.2), a summary of the key findings is presented below. Overall, eight key themes emerged as participants shared their experiences as professionals working in the education sector including suggestions for change/action. The full 'SBP voice' analysis is available at Appendix B of this report along with the case profiles of the participants.

### **Ethnic representation of the school business profession:**

- the low ethnic representation reported via the WFS (3%) was felt to perhaps not be reflective of the profession as a whole
- diversity was felt likely to fluctuate across various counties/boroughs, which may in turn influence career opportunities and recruitment
- observations shared of national networking events/conferences attended predominantly by SBPs from White ethnic backgrounds
- an observed lack of diverse role models and inclusive networking opportunities in regional areas

### **Cultural awareness and understanding:**

- concerns raised around a general lack of cultural awareness, empathy, and understanding of difference in schools
- negative experiences were shared in relation to attitudes towards (and lack of awareness of) cultural expression, celebration and tradition along with experiences of stereotyping and facing unconscious bias and conscious bias in schools
- it was felt there is a need for constructive conversation, training, and coaching in schools, and that there is a key role for allies, especially senior leadership teams and head teachers, to actively promote inclusion
- the 'BAME' label appeared problematic to participants and was felt to perhaps influence a lack of appreciation of difference in schools when efforts were not made to understand race and ethnicity more deeply

### **Voice and cultural expression:**

- experiences shared of being the 'lone voice' on certain issues due to a lack of diverse representation
- reports of feeling very different to others, being treated differently, and at times being ignored or not heard
- it was felt there is a need to have a strong voice to challenge assumptions and bias, but that came with the risk of being labelled as 'rude', 'defiant' or 'difficult' due to stereotyping which at times suppressed their voice/behaviour/actions
- a shared sense of having to work harder to 'prove' themselves to others and having to do more to develop their careers
- ambition and confidence were cited as very important for career progression, especially for ethnic minority women

### **Lack of senior leadership team (SLT) diversity:**

- observations of a lack of diversity across school leadership teams; reports of working with SLTs from a predominantly White ethnic background, who were more likely to be male; 'middle class' and 'White British' were often used to describe SLTs
- concerns with SLTs not reflecting the holistic school communities they serve in terms of ethnicity and gender, especially in settings where student (and staff) populations were heavily multicultural
- experiences of unconscious bias by school leaders and the impact of this on career development opportunities
- it was felt there is a need for diverse voices at leadership level and role models for staff and students

### **Voice and strategic participation:**

- the intersection of race, ethnicity, gender and class often surfaced in discussions about strategic participation and inclusion in school leadership, with unconscious bias felt to influence how their voice is heard by others, with experiences shared of lengthy journeys to gain more recognition by their SLT but with issues often persisting
- shared tensions around salary, conditions, and how SBPs are recognised generally, with added concerns about the additional barriers faced by ethnic minority SBPs due to inequity

### **Recruitment and selection:**

- an observed lack of diverse representation in school leadership was felt to be an influence on making job applications along with some instances of the ethnic demographic of schools influencing decisions to apply for roles
- reports of difficulties gaining an SBP role without school experience (and in some instances, local authority experience or specific school-type experience) were highlighted and felt to be compounded when faced with a lack of diversity on recruitment panels
- experiences of unconscious bias and discomfort in selection and promotion processes were a shared tension

### **Professional development and training:**

- coaching and mentoring are felt to be valuable to SBPs generally, but especially for ethnic minority professionals where there is a lack of ethnic diversity within their school setting

- networking groups, events and conferences were cited as a necessary and valuable aspect of school business roles, and in relation to school leadership generally, but reflections of a predominantly White British sector (especially outside of London) were shared by those who attended such events, which were felt to be potentially intimidating or off-putting for ethnic minority SBPs
- a lack of ethnically diverse role models across the sector led to feelings of not quite belonging or feeling included; it was felt this had the potential to influence pathways into education careers as well as retention and career progression

### Supportive strategies to encourage diversity and inclusion

In relation to supportive strategies that have helped, and/or could help, to increase cultural awareness and understanding and encourage greater diversity and inclusion across the sector and within school leadership, several sub-themes emerged from the interviews:

- Increasing cultural awareness and appreciation: visibility of difference, for example through celebrations, curriculum, catering, and lettings, along with the importance of avoiding stereotyping and tokenism and going beyond narrow 'accepted' understandings of difference by creating supportive cultures where staff can listen, share their voice, and ask questions about cultural difference and ethnicity
- Showcasing diverse role models: reaching out to people from different backgrounds and facilitating engagement and storytelling to encourage and inspire current SBPs and those outside of education considering a career as an SBP
- Coaching and Mentoring: the value of mentors, coaching, and supportive platforms and groups is important, with the need for a more formal scheme to support greater diversity, inclusion and opportunity
- Improving recruitment and selection processes: challenging selection bias, being mindful of the advertising process, promoting diversity on interview panels along with appropriate training for recruitment and selection
- Training and support: targeted development to support promotion processes as well as induction training that includes diversity and inclusion awareness
- Career pathways: the creation of additional entry pathways (e.g. a graduate scheme and more targeted apprenticeships) and leadership development opportunities were felt could be helpful mechanisms to encourage a diverse range of applicants/new entrants into the profession and increase promotion opportunities for existing SBPs. It was strongly felt that such pathways would require appropriate support, resourcing and promotion by the DfE, local authorities and schools. In addition, activities are needed to challenge the 'school experience required' assumption/narrative by supporting head teachers and governors in attracting career-changers, graduates and those changing their school setting (e.g. primary to secondary, joining a MAT/LA, etc.) to address barriers to recruitment and career development
- Further research on SBP ethnicity and SLT diversity: more research and exploration of ethnicity across the sector is felt to be greatly needed to better understand ethnic diversity and to explore SLT diversity in relation to matters of recruitment and promotion
- SBP voice: continue the push for greater recognition for the school business profession; promote the voice of the profession and address matters of pay and conditions, which could potentially create greater barriers for ethnic minority professionals; activities at sector level to challenge assumptions at school leadership level

For the full detailed interview analysis and the participant case profiles, see [Appendix B: SBP voice](#).

## Section 3: Recommendations

In this section, this report considers the findings of the workforce survey (WFS) data in relation to the analysis of ethnicity in addition to the current statistics available in relation to the broader education workforce and has taken the first step in collating practitioner voice via the interviews shared with SBPs.

Although the data is limited, which in itself highlights an issue related to representation, the analysis suggests evidence of continued disquiet as expressed by affected practitioners interviewed during this research exercise.

There is still much work to do, and this report is the start of an important conversation related to equality and diversity within the school business profession. ISBL aims to undertake further work in collaboration with a range of key education stakeholders, and this report suggests that ISBL considers the following recommendations:

### Sector-wide engagement

- As an institute, seek to engage with other relevant professional bodies, associations, sector bodies and diversity platforms to embed a commitment to exploring issues related to equity and diversity within the education sector, e.g. forming a sector-wide equality and diversity focus group with appropriate representation and membership of stakeholders across the education sector, supporting the work of existing groups such as BAMEd and ABBLed.
- Undertake further research and knowledge exchange:
  - Collaborate with DfE and other professional bodies in relation to sharing equality and diversity data, or undertake further research to generate further data to explore ethnicity and intersectional categories such as gender, socio-economic background, disability and sexuality.
  - Continue to explore the lived realities of practitioners via research to deepen the knowledge base around barriers and enablers for ethnically diverse SBPs, as well as the intersectionality of gender, socio-economic background, disability and sexuality.
  - Collaborate with sector experts, for example diversity scholars and researchers from the education field who explore matters of race, ethnicity, and gender within the school system in England and beyond, to gain further insights into diversity and develop actions to foster change.

### Internal engagement

- Consider creating an internal working party to lead on an institutional review of diversity across ISBL with representatives from the board of trustees, advisory panel, salaried staff and members, potentially with a link member involved in sector-level focus groups and the invitation of relevant sector experts to contribute insights, to make recommendations to ISBL on diversity and inclusion; this is important to embed as a reflexive activity that seeks to explore and ask constructive critical questions about ISBL and its engagement with practitioners.
- Undertake a review of the ISBL Professional Standards from a diversity perspective to ensure that equality, diversity and inclusion are firmly embedded within the professional standards, including values and behaviours (potentially part of the remit of a new internal working party).
- Embed 'equality and diversity' as a standing item across all ISBL work strands to demonstrate ISBL's commitment to making continuous improvement to sector representation and practice and ensuring the focus remains ever-present.
- Undertake a review of the ISBL professional development and training offering in relation to equality and diversity to establish potential gaps, including the need for bite-size training around equality and diversity to help facilitate leadership conversations and sector change, e.g. unconscious bias, recruitment practice.
- Showcase diverse role models across institutional activities, events and communications, and actively encourage mentoring to facilitate the sharing of opinions and experiences from ethnically diverse SBPs from across all regions through the engagement of affiliated local groups.
- Consult with the DfE on sector recruitment to explore entry pathways for graduates and school/college leavers to promote the school business profession more broadly as a rewarding career opportunity, such as a graduate employment scheme, scholarship programmes for diverse and disadvantaged young people, and targeted apprenticeship programmes.
- Work with the DfE, sector groups and other relevant stakeholder agencies to create a culture where colleagues of all backgrounds are comfortable to call out poor practice on equity and diversity without recourse.

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## Appendix A: WFS ethnicity analysis

# Appendix A: WFS ethnicity analysis

This appendix presents the detailed analysis of ethnicity data from the ISBL workforce survey (WFS) and informs the main report Exploring Ethnicity: School Business Leadership in England. It consists of three sections that inform the key findings and recommendations of the main report and precedes Appendix B: SBP voice (interview analysis and case profiles).

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## A1: Discussion of the WFS findings

This subsection of Appendix A reflects on four key assertions/questions posited by ISBL (outlined in section 1.1. rationale of the main report) about the wider SBP population that have the potential to be magnified amongst SBPs from Black, Asian, Mixed/multiple ethnic group or other minority ethnic backgrounds. The findings stem from the detailed analysis of the WFS data (section A2 of this appendix). It is important to note that due to the small sample size for ethnic minority participants, comparisons between ethnic groups are problematic as discussed in the main report (1.2. Methodology).

### 1. The WFS illuminated a nuanced gender pay gap; is there any evidence of pay disparity in relation to ethnicity?

Overall, there does not appear to be a significant ethnicity gap in relation to pay based on the available data for ethnic minority participants; however, average salary comparisons between ethnic minority respondents and White respondents are problematic as noted.

However, there is a nuanced gender pay gap appearing across ethnic minority groups, which is similar to the findings of the entire WFS population, with male respondents more likely to earn a higher salary than female respondents within their respective ethnic groups (as shown in Table 1). Only n=3 of respondents from either a Black, Asian, Mixed/multiple ethnic group or Other ethnic group background identified as male (all selected Asian as ethnicity); however, there was a higher salary reported for these respondents despite occupying similar roles in similar school settings as Asian female respondents, despite having less time spent in the profession.

There was also a slight increase in the likelihood of higher-level salaries for Black and Asian female respondents than Mixed/multiple ethnic group or Other ethnic group (Appendix 1, section A2, point 7). This was interesting as across the gender options selected, respondents from Black, Asian, Mixed/multiple ethnic group or Other ethnic group backgrounds present working conditions that mostly reflect the overall trend of the WFS sample: 79% of ethnic minority respondents working full-time hours and 61% working a full 52-week contract (WFS presented 77% working full time hours and 54% working full-year contracts).

Furthermore, role focus, school setting/type, and average length of service were also similar. Thus, the overall variables that could impact salary levels were relatively similar across all ethnic groups. Mixed/multiple ethnic group and Other ethnic group respondents contained only female respondents and present with an earning ceiling of £40k despite n=4 (of n=6) occupying senior generalist roles and working full-time and full-year.

**Table 1: Salary averages by ethnicity and gender**

| Ethnic group                             | Most common salary average |
|--|----------------------------|
| Male – Asian/Asian British               | £45k – £55k                |
| Male – White                             | £45k – £52k                |
| Female – Black British/Caribbean/African | £43k – £52k                |
| Female – White                           | £30k – £40k                |
| Female – Asian/Asian British             | £30k – £40k                |
| Female – Other ethnic group              | £30k – £40k                |
| Female – Mixed/multiple ethnic group     | £22k – £30k                |

Note: no male respondents recorded in the WFS for Black, Mixed/multiple ethnic group or Other ethnic group



Overall, with the data available, it is difficult to explore or ascertain an 'ethnicity pay gap'; however, nuances relating to a gender pay gap are apparent for Asian ethnic minority respondents similarly to the trend in the WFS for White male and White female respondents.

## **2. The WFS highlighted a theme of SBPs struggling to gain recognition as credible leaders and coequals amongst other senior pedagogical staff; does ethnicity have any influence on this theme?**

In total, 55% of all WFS respondents reported attending all SLT meetings, with 29% reporting that they were occasionally invited to attend specific meetings. However, strategic participation (Appendix 1, section A2, point 8) appears in a slightly different manner for minority ethnic group respondents.

Overall, 28.5% of all minority ethnic respondents had full SLT membership and participation. This was found to be 55% for White respondents, and despite the small sample size for ethnic minority respondents, this could suggest that ethnicity may be a potential factor given that most minority ethnic participants reported being in senior generalist roles (n=20) in individual schools with n=4 in senior executive roles in multi-school settings. In general, attendance at all SLT meetings was similar to the WFS findings for White respondents but began to drop when analysed for other ethnic groups, with fewer than 40% of Asian or Black respondents reporting the same level of attendance.

With invited occasional attendance, the picture was mixed, with Mixed/multiple ethnic group respondents (80% = 4 out of 5) more likely to not attend or be in invited occasionally, with 3 reporting being senior generalists in individual schools. It appears that only n=2 of the minority ethnic respondents were in non-senior roles (2 x administrators – Mixed/multiple ethnic group), which could reflect not only the lower participation rate for this ethnic group but also the slightly lower average salary as reported in question 1 above.

## **3. As half of all WFS respondents are not involved in coaching and mentoring activity, is this the same for respondents identifying as from Black, Asian, Mixed/multiple ethnic group or Other minority ethnic group backgrounds?**

As the analysis of coaching and mentoring activity presents (Appendix 1, section A2, point 10) half of all ethnic minority respondents were engaged in a form of coaching and/or mentoring activity.

Across ethnic minority groups, half of Asian respondents, half of Black respondents, and just over half of Mixed/multiple ethnic group respondents reported as engaged in some form of coaching and/or mentoring activity. The only respondent to identify as from an Other ethnic group was not involved in any form of coaching and/or mentoring activity. Therefore, the trend that appeared in the whole WFS sample presents similarly across all ethnic groups.

However, 32% (n=9) of ethnic minority respondents were likely to be receiving a form of mentoring and/or coaching. This was found to be 6% (n=53) for White respondents. Ethnic minority respondents were also almost as likely to be providing coaching/mentoring activity as they were to be receiving it (28% providing – n=8), which for White respondents presented as 41% providing (n=374).

Overall, from such a small sample of ethnic minority respondents, it is difficult to ascertain further nuances into coaching and mentoring activity.

## **4. The WFS survey analysis suggested a link between qualification levels and career mobility within the sector; is this also the case for those identifying as from a Black, Asian, Mixed/multiple ethnic group or Minority Ethnic background?**

There appeared to be no significant difference between each of the minority ethnic groups in relation to qualifications, except that Asian respondents were slightly more likely to be qualified/certified accountants than other ethnic minority groups. Respondents identifying from a Black, Asian, Mixed/multiple ethnic group or Other ethnic group background appeared to be slightly more likely to hold a bachelor's degree and have professional qualifications (e.g. accountancy, finance, CIPD/HR) than White respondents.

82% of respondents from across Black, Asian, Mixed/multiple ethnic group or Other ethnic group backgrounds reported 8+ years in service as an SPB (reported as 76% for White respondents); Asian respondents (especially Asian females) appeared to have slightly longer service on average than all other respondents (n=12 – 86% with 8+ years). Half of Asian respondents reported as being in their first role, with Black respondents having held more roles and thus having slightly more career mobility. Mixed/multiple ethnic group and Other ethnic group respondents were slightly more likely to be in their first role than other ethnic groups.

In relation to having moved to a new school or trust (as presented in Appendix 1, section A2, point 9), a similar trend appeared for respondents from across Black, Asian, Mixed/multiple ethnic group or Other ethnic group backgrounds to that of the overall WFS findings, with over half of all respondents in each ethnic group having worked in one school/trust only (i.e. having not moved schools). 50% of White respondents (n=293) and 50% Asian respondents (n=7) had not moved schools, with a slight increase in movement for Black respondents (62.5% – n=5). Mixed/multiple ethnic group or Other ethnic group respondents had not moved

to a new school or trust. For respondents with over 13 years of service in the profession, those from a Black or an Asian background had slightly increased role mobility in relation to number of schools they had worked at when compared to Mixed/multiple ethnic group or Other ethnic group respondents. Black and Asian respondents also appeared slightly more likely to hold professional qualifications at level 7 and be qualified accountants than all other ethnic groups.

Overall, from such a small sample of ethnic minority respondents, it is difficult to ascertain whether qualifications had an influence on general career mobility for these groups; however, from the available data, the findings suggest that Black and Asian respondents have slightly increased career mobility and are more likely to hold level 7 professional qualifications and be qualified accountants than other ethnic groups.

## A2: Detailed analysis of the ISBL WFS (2020) ethnicity data

This section (A2) presents a detailed analysis of the ISBL (2020) workforce survey (WFS) data using descriptive statistics to explore various aspects reported by respondents who selected their ethnicity option as Black (including Black African/Caribbean/Black British), Asian (including Asian British), Mixed/multiple ethnic group or Other ethnic group.

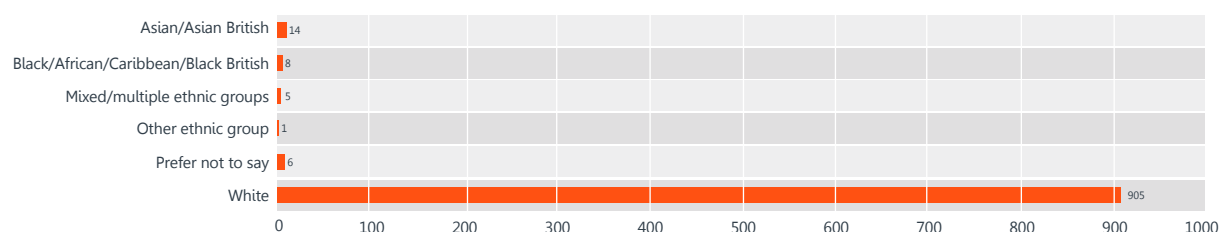
It aids in informing the discussion

in section A1 and the key findings and recommendations in the main report. The analysis includes the exploration of the following aspects:

1. Ethnicity
2. Age
3. Gender
4. Role
5. School setting
6. Qualifications
7. Salary and contracts
8. Career mobility
9. Strategic participation and SLT inclusion
10. Coaching and mentoring activity

### 1. Ethnicity

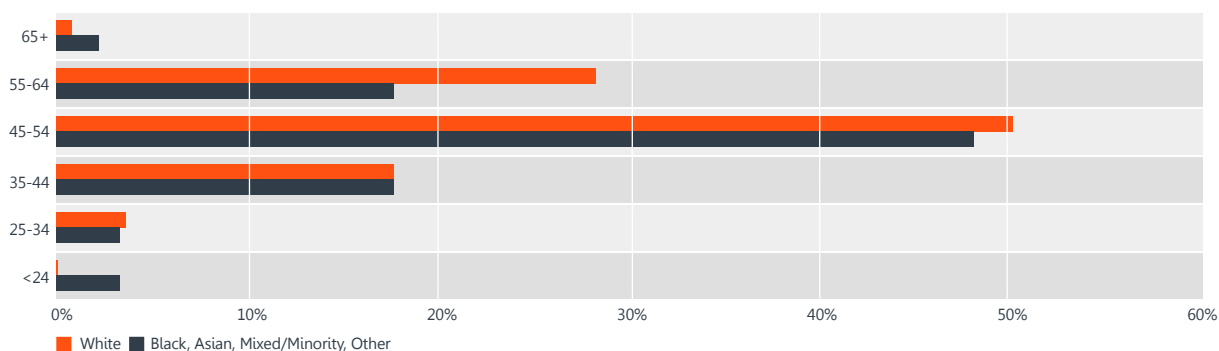
- Figure 1.1 presents respondents per ethnic group for all WFS ethnicity options. Of a total of n=939 respondents, 3% (n=28) of respondents identified as from a either a Black, Asian, Mixed/multiple ethnic group or Other ethnic group background. This included 1.5% (n=14) respondents identifying as from an Asian background, 0.8% (n=8) identifying as from a Black background, 0.5% (n=5) identifying as from a Mixed/multiple ethnic group background, and 0.1% (n=1) identifying as from an Other ethnic group background. A total of 96.3% (n=905) identified as from a 'White' background. 0.6% (n=6) respondents selected 'prefer not to say'.
- Asian respondents account for half of all Black, Asian, Mixed/multiple ethnic group or Other ethnic group respondents, with Black respondents making up approximately a fifth. Less than a fifth identified as from Mixed/multiple ethnic group or Other ethnic group background.



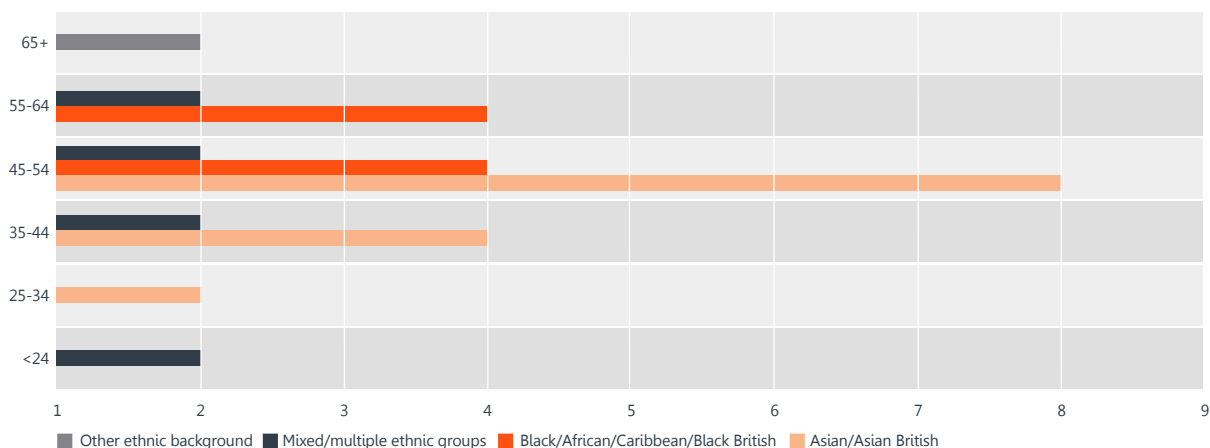
▲ Figure 1.1: Total WFS ethnicity

### 2. Age

- The WFS presented a trend of the most dominant age group as 45–54 (almost 50% of respondents). When analysed by ethnicity, there is no overall significant deviation from this trend across all ethnic groups, as Figure 2.1 presents.
- However, nuanced differences presented across age bandings, as Figure 2.2 presents, with respondents from a Black background all reporting their age as between 45–64, with an absence of any Black respondents under 45. Respondents from an Asian background were more likely to be aged between 45–54 (with an overall spread across ages 25–54), and there was an absence of Asian respondents over the age of 54.
- Similarly, Mixed/multiple ethnic group respondents were also more likely to be aged between 45–54, with an overall wider spread across age bands (figure 2.2.), with this ethnic group being the only one to contain a respondent under the age of 24, apart from those from a White background (which reported n=2).
- The only respondent (n=1) to identify with any Other ethnic group was aged 65+; the only other respondents from the entire WFS population to select 65+ identified as White (n=10).



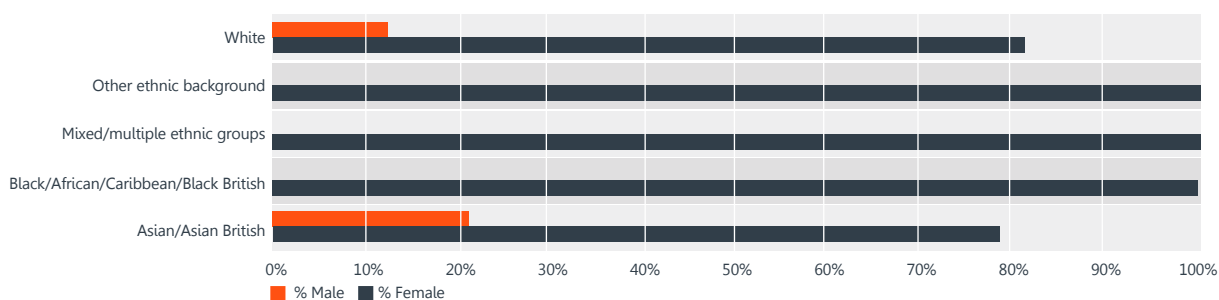
▲ Figure 2.1: Age comparison



▲ Figure 2.2: Age by ethnic minority group

### 3. Gender analysis

- 86.6% (n=813) of all WFS respondents identified as female, with 13.2% (n=124) of respondents identifying as male and 0.2% (n=2) identifying as 'other'.
- As Figure 3.1 and 3.2 both present, male respondents (n=124) were only present in the White ethnic group (n=121 out of 905) and Asian ethnic group (n=3 out of 28 respondents). There were no Black male respondents or male respondents from Mixed/multiple ethnic group or Other ethnic group backgrounds in the WFS population. Thus, Asian male respondents represent 0.32% of the entire WFS population when compared to 13.26% of all male respondents in the WFS.
- As shown in Figure 3.2, Asian male respondents represent 21.43% of those selecting the Asian ethnic group. The only other male respondents all selected the White ethnic group, representing a total of 13.4% of the White ethnic group.



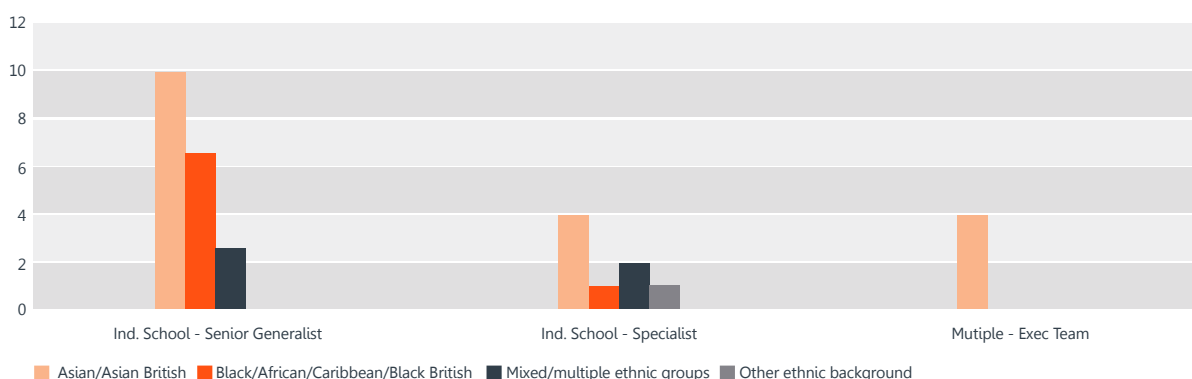
▲ Figure 3.1: Ethnicity and gender

|                                       | Other    | Female | Male | % Female | % Male |
|---------------------------------------|----------|--------|------|----------|--------|
| Asian/Asian British                   | 0        | 11     | 3    | 78.57%   | 21.43% |
| Black/African/Caribbean/Black British | 0        | 8      | 0    | 100%     | 0%     |
| Mixed/multiple ethnic group           | 0        | 5      | 0    | 100%     | 0%     |
| Other ethnic group                    | 0        | 1      | 0    | 100%     | 0%     |
| White                                 | 2 (0.2%) | 782    | 121  | 86.4%    | 13.4%  |

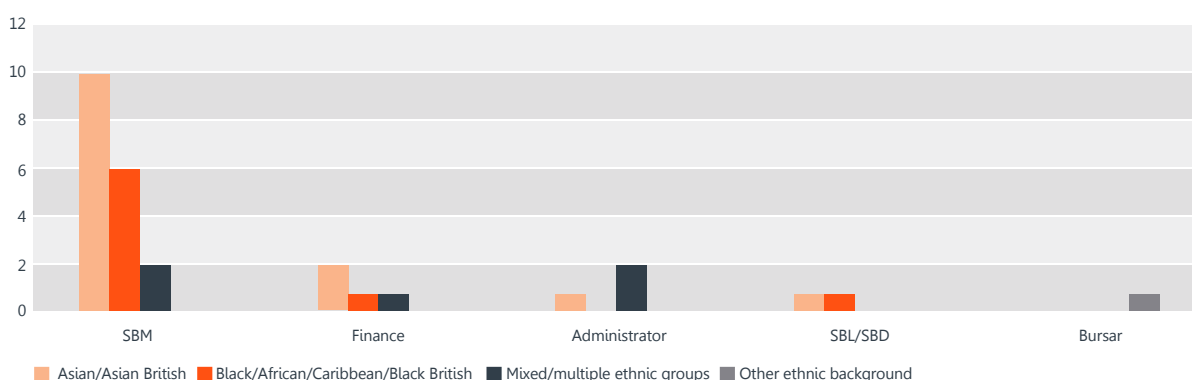
▲ Figure 3.2: Gender by ethnic group

#### 4. Role

- Following the trend of the WFS findings, of which 59% respondents selected 'School Business Manager (SBM)' as their role title, the predominant title amongst across all ethnic minority groups was also 'SBM' following the general WFS trend.
- From the n=28 respondents identifying as from a Black, Asian, Mixed/multiple ethnic group or Other ethnic group background, 86% (n=24) reported their role was focused in an individual school, with (71%) n=20 indicating they are a senior generalist in their setting (as shown in figure 4.2).
- All Asian respondents (n=14) worked in an individual school setting, with 71% (n=10) working in senior generalist roles and 29% (n=4) working in specialist roles, of which these respondents also reported working across multiple schools as part of a trust executive group.
- 17% of minority ethnic respondents reported as working across multiple school settings. This included n=4 respondents from an Asian background, n=1 from a Black background (with the same respondent, who was female, selecting 'self-employed providing SBP services to multiple schools'). There were no respondents from Mixed/multiple ethnic group or Other ethnic group backgrounds reporting working across multiple schools. A total of 14% of respondents from a White background reported working across multiple schools.
- Of those from either a Black, Asian, Mixed/multiple ethnic group or Other ethnic group background and who held generalist roles, n=18 identified as female and n=2 identified as male. Of those in specialist roles, n=3 identified as female and n=1 identified as male. This generally followed the trend of the WFS findings around role types.
- Following the trend of the WFS findings, of which 59% of all respondents selected 'School Business Manager (SBM)' as their role title, the predominant title amongst across all minority ethnic groups was also 'SBM'. As figure 4.2 presents, 64% (n=18) of respondents from either a Black, Asian, Mixed/multiple ethnic group or Other ethnic group selected 'SBM' as their job title. 54% (n=488) of White respondents selected 'SBM'.
- The remaining n=10 respondents from either a Black, Asian, Mixed/multiple ethnic group or Other ethnic group background selected a spread of role titles similar to the overall general WFS findings with finance manager/director (n=4), school administrator (n=3), school business director/leader (n=2) and bursar (n=1) appearing, as shown in figure 4.1.
- Length of time in the profession across minority ethnic respondents also followed a very similar pattern to the whole WFS population, with most respondents having over 8 years served. Career mobility (including length of service in the profession is analysed further in point 9 of this section).



▲ Figure 4.1: Role type by ethnic minority group

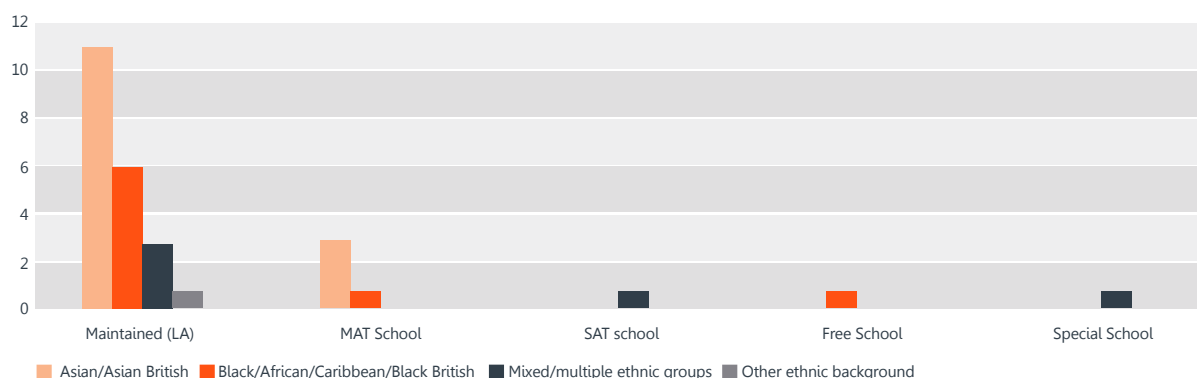


▲ Figure 4.2: Role title by ethnic minority group

#### 5. School setting (type of school and phase of education)

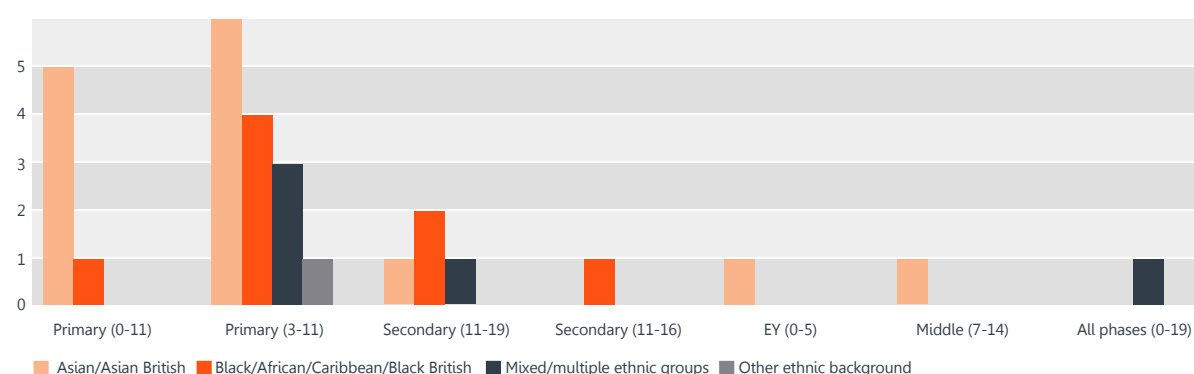
- Overall, the WFS reported that 46% of all respondents were based in maintained (LA) schools.
- 75% (n=21 of n=28) of respondents identifying as from either a Black, Asian, Mixed/multiple ethnic group or Other ethnic group background indicated working in a maintained setting (as shown in Figure 5.1). 45.2% of White respondents reported working in maintained settings, and 54.8% reported working in other settings, predominantly academy trust settings (45%).

- Of the 17% of the WFS population working in a single-academy trust (SAT), n=1 respondent (Mixed/multiple ethnic group) reported working in a SAT. For White respondents, this was 16.6% (n=150). There were no Black, Asian or Other ethnic group respondents working in SATs.
- 14% (n=4) of respondents from either a Black, Asian, Mixed/multiple ethnic group or Other ethnic group background reported working in a MAT school setting. This included 14.2% (n=3) of Asian respondents and 12.5% (n=1) of Black respondents (female), who all also indicated supporting the MAT central team. 28.3% of White respondents reported working in a MAT school setting.
- 3.5% (n=1) of respondents from either a Black, Asian, Mixed/multiple ethnic group or Other ethnic group background reported working in a special school setting. This was reported as 5.41% for White respondents.
- Findings for free schools, pupil referral units, independent schools or other settings (such as SBP service provider) were relatively comparable between ethnic groups, accounting for an overall 3.69% of the WFS population.



▲ Figure 5.1: School type

- Figure 5.2 shows the breakdown of phase settings for respondents from Black, Asian, Mixed/multiple ethnic group or Other ethnic group backgrounds.
- 71% of respondents from Black, Asian, Mixed/multiple ethnic group or Other ethnic group backgrounds reported being based in primary settings (including primary with Early Years provision). This was 58% for White respondents. 50% (n=14) of respondents from Black, Asian, Mixed/multiple ethnic group or Other ethnic group backgrounds indicated their base is in primary education from age 3–4 plus (without Early Years provision), which was 39% for White respondents. 25% of White respondents were based in secondary settings compared with 18% of respondents from Black, Asian, Mixed/multiple ethnic group or Other ethnic group backgrounds.
- Of Black, Asian, Mixed/multiple ethnic group or Other ethnic group respondents, 1% (n=1) was based in Early Years (EY) where this phase is their organisation's only provision (who reported as Asian). 21% were based in primary education which includes an EY provision. 14% of respondents selected secondary education including 14–19 provision (with a further 7% selecting secondary education without 14–19 provision).

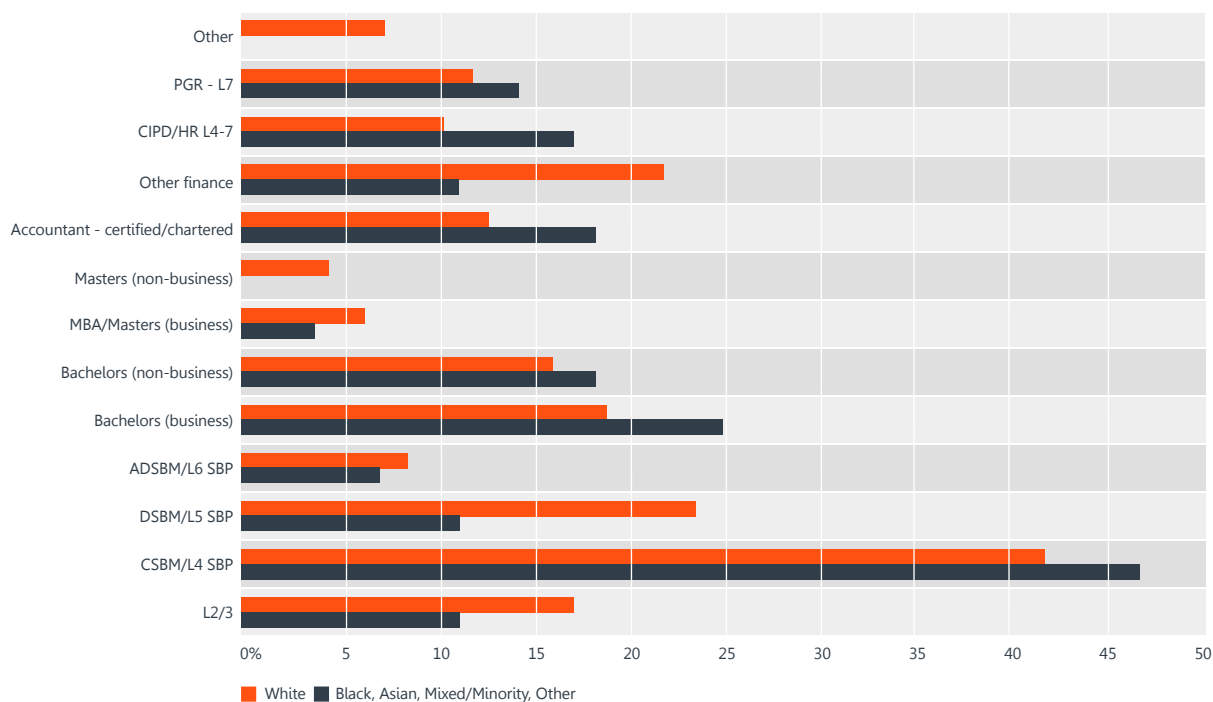


▲ Figure 5.2: School phase

## 6. Qualifications

- Respondents from Black, Asian, Mixed/multiple ethnic group or Other ethnic group backgrounds appeared to be slightly more likely to hold a bachelor's degree and have professional qualifications (e.g. accountancy, finance, CIPD/HR) than respondents from a White background, as shown in Figure 6.1 as a % comparison from the WFS. However, due to the small sample size available, comparisons between ethnic minority respondents and White respondents are problematic as discussed in the report methodology of the main report (section 1.2).

- 18% (n=5) of respondents from Black, Asian, Mixed/multiple ethnic group or Other ethnic group backgrounds identified as a certified or chartered accountant. This included 14% (n=4) who identified as Asian and 3.5% (n=1) who identified as Black. For respondents identifying as White, this figure was 13% (n=118).
- Figure 6.2 presents a further breakdown of qualifications across respondents from either a Black, Asian, Mixed/multiple ethnic group or Other ethnic group background.



▲ Figure 6.1: WFS qualification comparison (%)

|                                  | British<br>(n=14) | /Caribbean<br>/Black British<br>(n=8) | ethnic group<br>(n=5) | (n=1) | (n=28) |
|----------------------------------|-------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------------|-------|--------|
| L2/3                             | 1                 | 2                                     | 0                     | 0     | 3      |
| CSBM/L4 SBP                      | 6                 | 4                                     | 2                     | 1     | 12     |
| DSBM/L5 SBP                      | 0                 | 1                                     | 2                     | 0     | 3      |
| ADSBM/L6 SBP                     | 1                 | 1                                     | 0                     | 0     | 2      |
| Bachelor's (business)            | 5                 | 1                                     | 1                     | 0     | 7      |
| Bachelor's (non-business)        | 2                 | 1                                     | 1                     | 1     | 5      |
| MBA/Master's (business)          | 0                 | 0                                     | 1                     | 0     | 1      |
| Master's (non-business)          | 0                 | 0                                     | 0                     | 0     | 0      |
| Accountant (certified/chartered) | 4                 | 1                                     | 0                     | 0     | 5      |
| Other finance                    | 2                 | 1                                     | 0                     | 0     | 3      |
| CIPD/HR L4-7                     | 3                 | 1                                     | 1                     | 0     | 5      |
| PGR – L7                         | 1                 | 1                                     | 2                     | 0     | 4      |
| Other                            | 0                 | 0                                     | 0                     | 0     | 0      |

▲ Figure 6.2: Qualifications by ethnic minority group

## 7. Salary and contracts (working pattern)

- The overall salary data for the entire WFS population presented that almost half of the respondents (47%) reported earning between £20k and £40k, with 32% earning between £40k–£60k, 11% earning £60k+, and 9% reporting less than £20k. 88% of all WFS population reported working more than 35 hours per week (average full-time hours). As noted in the introduction section of this report, the 2019 median average salary for full-time employees was reported in April 2019 as £30,420 (ONS, 2019). The WFS survey also reported an average salary of £30k from all respondents across all ethnic groups.
- Salary ranges and working hours for respondents from Black, Asian, Mixed/multiple ethnic group or Other ethnic group backgrounds present a similar trend to the overall WFS findings.
- For respondents from a Black, Asian, Mixed/multiple ethnic group or Other ethnic group background, the spread of salary range is similar to that of the overall WFS population (figure 7.1), with 71% of these respondents earning above £30k. The average salary range of all respondents from a Black, Asian, Mixed/multiple ethnic group or Other ethnic group background falls into a £35k–£45k range, predominantly due to the earnings of Asian male respondents and Black female respondents (figure 7.2). The average salary range for respondents from a White background was £30k–£39k. However, due to the small sample size available, average salary comparisons between ethnic minority respondents and White respondents are problematic as discussed in the report methodology of the main report (section 1.2).
- Respondents reporting that they earn over £60k made up 10.7% (n=2 Black and n=1 Asian) of the ethnic minority respondents. This was 11.2% (n=101) of all respondents from a White background.
- Overall, contract conditions (working pattern) shared similarities across Asian, Black and White respondents, with those from Mixed/multiple ethnic groups or Other ethnic group background more likely to work part-time and term-time (plus), of which n=2 out of n=5 from the Mixed/multiple ethnic group reported holding administration positions rather than a senior generalist 'SBM' role.
  - When analysing working patterns for any impact to salary, 78.6% (n=22) of respondents from Black, Asian, Mixed/multiple ethnic group or Other ethnic group backgrounds reported being contracted to work for over 35 hours per week (hpw), with 61% (n=17) also working 52 weeks a year. A further 10.7% (n=3) of respondents reported working between 30–35 hpw and 10.7% (n=3) of respondents reported being contracted for under 30 hpw. 25% (n=7) reported being contracted term-time only, with 14% (n=4) contracted term-time plus several weeks (average of 44 weeks). 78.4% of White respondents also reported a similar 35+ hpw contract, with 56% (n=507) reporting working 52-week contracts. Therefore, contracted working patterns shared similarities across all ethnic groups, especially for White, Black and Asian respondents.
  - When analysing between ethnic minority groups, almost all Asian respondents (n=13 out of n=14), reported working full-time, with n=9 working full-year, n=3 working term-time only and n=2 working term-time plus an average of 42 weeks. For Black respondents, n=5 (of n=8) reported working full-time and full-year, n=3 reported working between 30–35 hpw and a combination of year lengths (including n=1 respondent reporting they are self-employed, e.g. SBP service provider). All respondents identifying as from a Mixed/multiple ethnic group reported working full-time (n=5) with n=3 on a full-year contract and n=2 on a term-time only contract. The n=1 respondent selecting 'Other ethnic group' reported being contracted for 20–25 hpw term-time only.
- In addition, the general trend of working over contracted hours present in the WFS population presented for each ethnic group in a similar way, with all respondents working full-time also reporting working over 45 hpw.
- Of the n=9 respondents from the overall WFS population who reported being self-employed providing SBP services, n=1 identified as Black, n=7 identified as White (n=1 preferred not to identify) and reported a range of hours and contract types, with n=8 reporting earning more than £40k. The only n=2 self-employed SBPs reporting earning £60k+ identified as n=1 Black and n=1 White.



▲ Figure 7.1: WFS salary comparison (%)



▲ Figure 7.2: Salary by ethnic minority

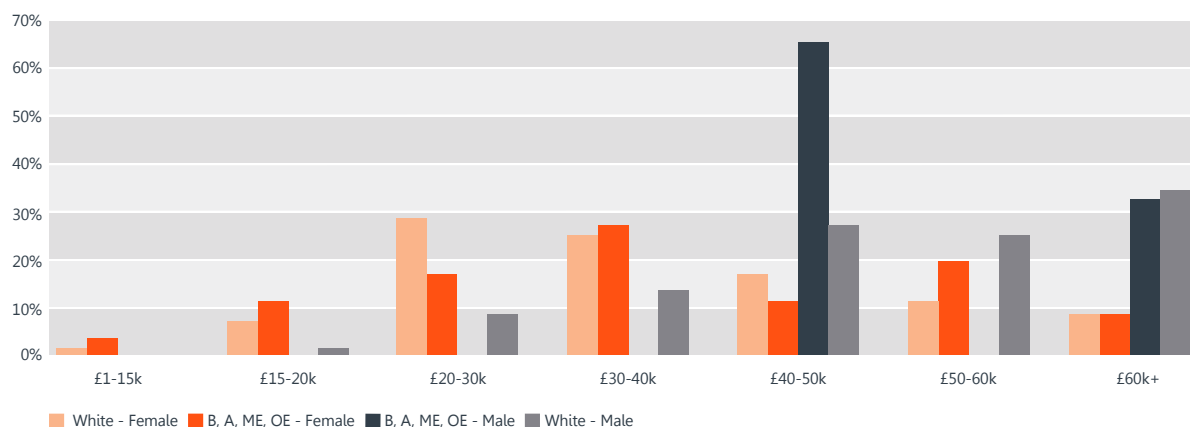
| Ethnic group                             | Most common salary average |
|--|----------------------------|
| Male – Asian/Asian British               | £45k – £55k                |
| Male – White                             | £45k – £52k                |
| Female – Black British/Caribbean/African | £43k – £52k                |
| Female – White                           | £30k – £40k                |
| Female – Asian/Asian British             | £30k – £40k                |
| Female – Other ethnic group              | £30k – £40k                |
| Female – Mixed/multiple ethnic group     | £22k – £30k                |

Note: no male respondents recorded in the WFS for Black, Mixed/multiple ethnic group or Other ethnic groups

▲ Figure 7.3: Salary averages by ethnicity and gender

- As shown in Figures 7.3., 7.4 and 7.5, there is, however, as with WFS findings, a nuanced finding in relation to gender and salary.
- Asian male respondents, as noted earlier in section A2, point 3 (gender analysis) of this appendix, were the only male respondents from minority ethnic backgrounds (10.7% – n=3 of n=28). Each of these respondents reported earning over £40k (with a salary range across the n=3 of £45k–£55k), working full-time 52 weeks of the year, and being based in primary school settings. In addition, n=2 identified as certified/chartered accountants (ACCA) and both worked in maintained primary settings at a senior level, with n=1 earning £40k–£50k and n=1 earning £60k+, with the latter reporting being employed by one school but also supporting other schools. The other Asian male respondent reported being employed by a MAT and earning £40k–£50k.
- Asian female respondents' earnings were spread across most salary bands, with an average of £30k–£40k, with n=4 earning £40k+ with similar contracted hours to the male respondents and working in similar settings. All Asian respondents reported working over their contracted hours.
- Black respondents were all female (n=8) and reported working at a senior level as senior generalists (with SBM/SBD job titles), with n=7 working in maintained schools and n=1 working in a MAT setting as a specialist (finance director). The salary for Black female respondents had a wider spread than the Asian respondents, ranging from £15k–£60k+, with the average salary banding at £40k–£50k. N=5 reported a full-time working pattern, with n=3 contracted for 30–35 hpw, n=5 working a 52-week contract, n=2 working an average of 45 weeks and n=1 working term-time only. N=6 of n=8 reported working over their contracted hours.
- Mixed/multiple ethnic group and Other ethnic group respondents were all female and had an earning ceiling of £40k, with the average salary banding being £22k–£30k, with 4 out of 5 working 35+ hpw, 3 on full-year contracts and 3 on term-time only contracts. However, Mixed/multiple ethnic group respondents contained the largest spread of responsibility levels out of all minority ethnic groups, with n=3 identifying as senior generalists (n=2 SBMs and n=1 as finance director) and n=2 as school administration officers, which could be the influence on the lower salary average for this group.
- Of the entire n=25 female respondents from Black, Asian, Mixed/multiple ethnic group or Other ethnic group backgrounds, n=5 had no line-management responsibilities, with most managing up to 10 staff members. Of the n=3 Asian male respondents, n=2 reported significant line-management duties – managing 10+ staff – and n=1 reported managing only one direct report.
- One minor point on age in relation to gender and ethnicity is that the age range was spread across all salary bands in each ethnic group; however, the n=2 male respondents' age was declared as generally younger (aged 25–44) than female respondents from a Black, Asian, Mixed/multiple ethnic group or Other ethnic group background, who are more likely to be over 45 years of age (n=20). Of female respondents, n=19 reported working in maintained settings, with n=4 working in a school within a MAT or SAT school, thus setting did not appear as a particularly influential factor.





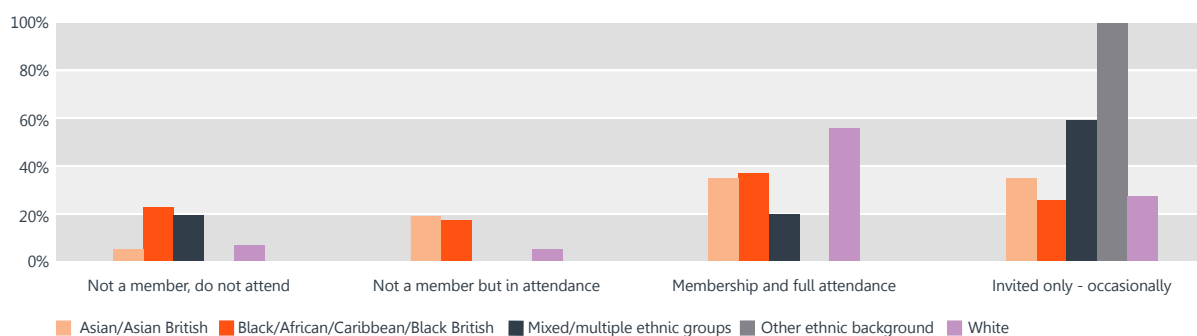
▲ Figure 7.4: Salary comparison (%) by ethnicity and gender



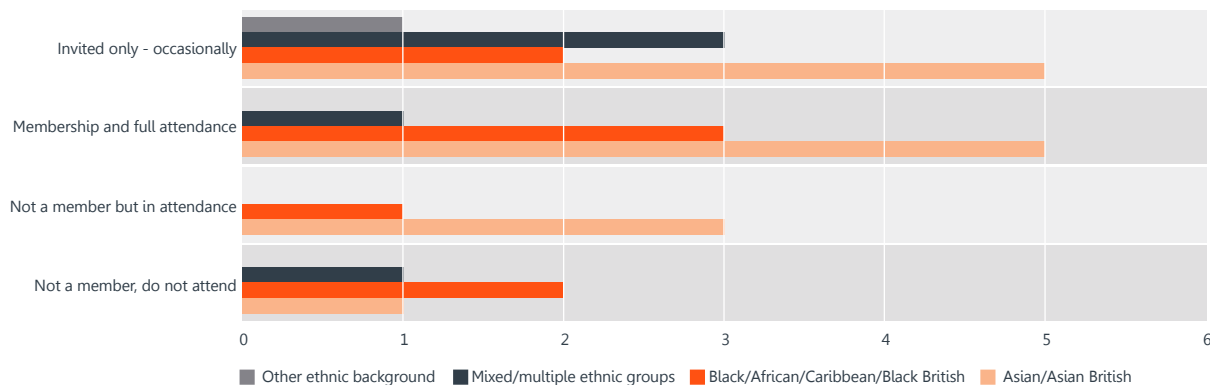
▲ Figure 7.5: Salary (by gender and ethnic minority)

## 8. Strategic participation and SLT inclusion

- The WFS presented that 55% of all respondents attended all SLT meetings, and 29% were occasionally invited to attend specific meetings.
- As Figure 8.1 presents, this was similar for White respondents. For other ethnic groups, participation appears lower, with fewer than 40% of Asian or Black respondents reporting the same level of participation as White respondents. With 'invited occasional attendance', the picture was mixed, with 80% (n= 4 out of n=5) of Mixed/multiple ethnic group respondents more likely to 'not attend' or be 'invited occasionally', with n=3 reporting being senior generalists in individual schools. This is despite the similarities across all ethnic groups in relation to reported role types and levels, i.e. senior generalist roles in individual schools (as section 4 presents) and n=4 in senior executive roles in multi-school settings present and with only a total of n=2 of this cohort in non-senior roles (n=2 x administrators – Mixed/multiple ethnic group).
- As figure 8.2 presents, 28.5% (n=8) of all respondents from either a Black, Asian, Mixed/multiple ethnic group or Other ethnic group background had full SLT membership and participation. This was 55% (n=501) for respondents from a White background.
- However, due to the small sample size available, comparisons between ethnic group respondents are problematic as discussed in the report methodology of the main report (section 1.2).



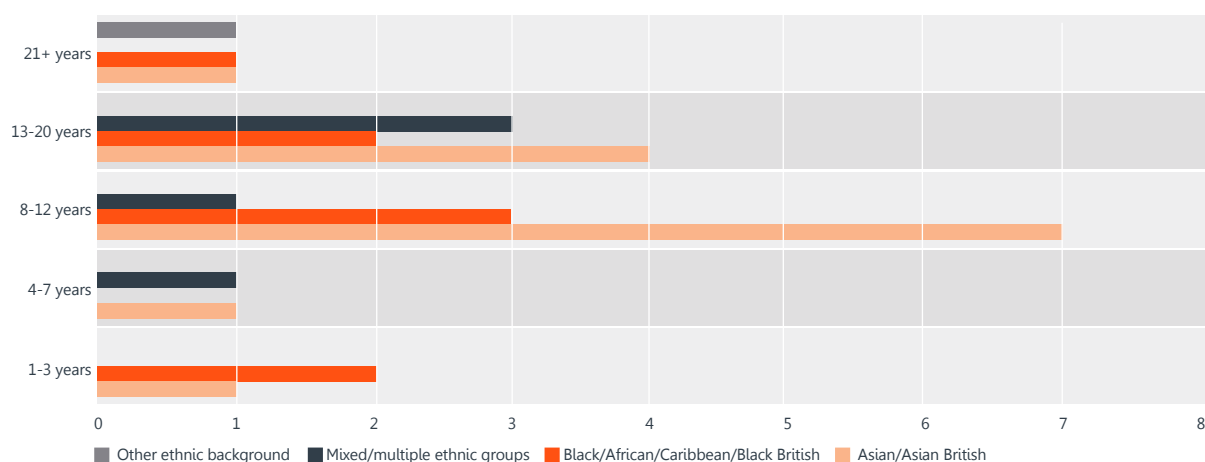
▲ Figure 8.1: WFS comparison (%) SLT membership and strategic participation



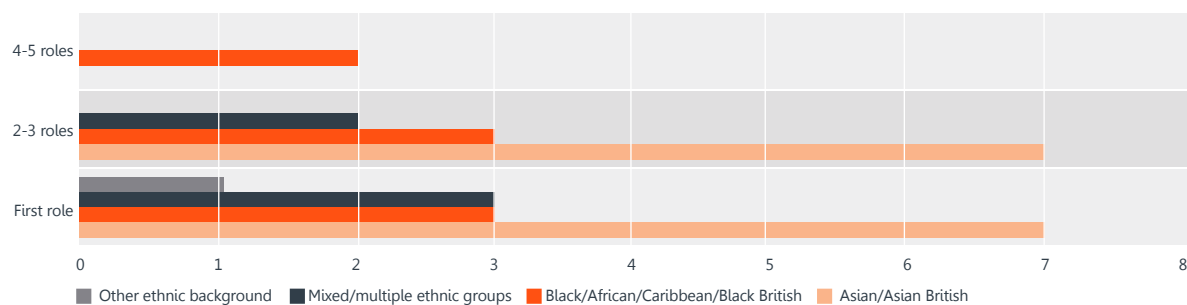
▲ Figure 8.2: Minority ethnic SLT membership and strategic participation

## 9. Career mobility

- As noted under role analysis (section A2, point 4 of this appendix), ethnicity followed the general WFS trend in relation to length of service, with 82% of respondents from either a Black, Asian, Mixed/multiple ethnic group or Other ethnic group reporting 8+ years as an SPB. This was reported as 76% for respondents from a White background.
- Asian respondents presented with a slightly longer service length (n=12 – 86% with 8+ years), with no other significant differences presenting between ethnic minority groups, as shown in Figure 9.1.
- As figure 9.2 presents, in relation to the number of roles held, the trend across respondents from either a Black, Asian, Mixed/multiple ethnic group or Other ethnic group background is similar to that of the overall WFS findings, with Asian respondents more likely to remain in their first role or have held 2–3 roles compared with other minority ethnic groups.
- As figure 9.3 presents, respondents from all ethnic groups had experienced role movements, except the respondent identifying as Other ethnic group, who had only held one role for 21+ years. Mixed/multiple ethnic group respondents were also slightly more likely to be in their first role.

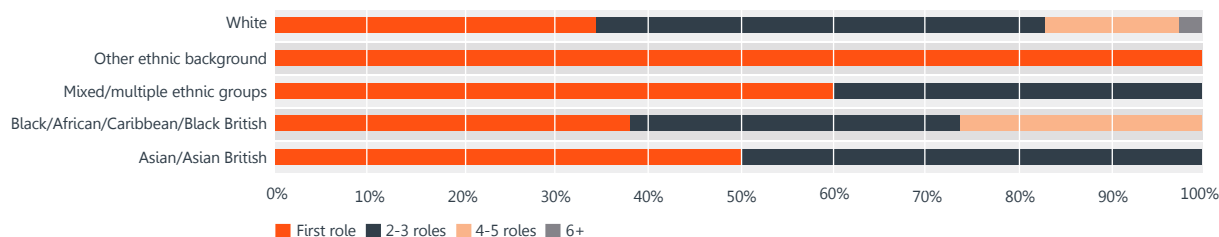


▲ Figure 9.1: Length of time as SBP

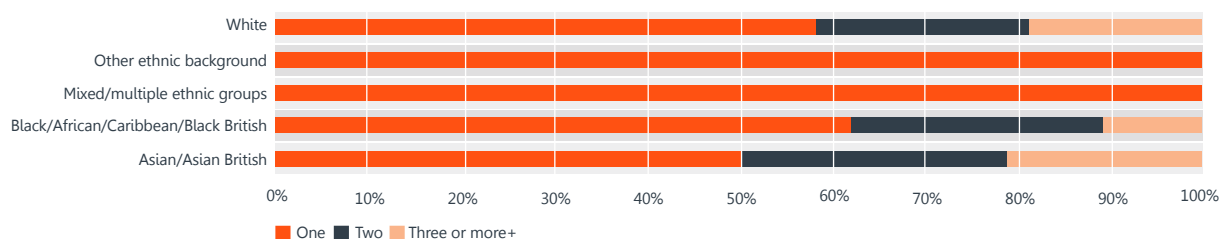


▲ Figure 9.2: Career mobility - no. of roles

- In relation to having moved to a new school or trust (figures 9.4 and 9.5), a similar trend appeared for minority ethnic respondents to that of the overall WFS findings, with over half of all respondents in each ethnic group having worked in one school/trust only (i.e. having not moved schools).
- 50% of Asian respondents (n=7) had not moved schools, with a slight increase in movement for Black respondents (62.5% = n=5). Mixed/multiple ethnic group or Other ethnic group respondents did not report moving to a new school or trust. 50% of White respondents (n=293) reported having not moved schools.



▲ Figure 9.3: WFS comparison (%) no. of roles held

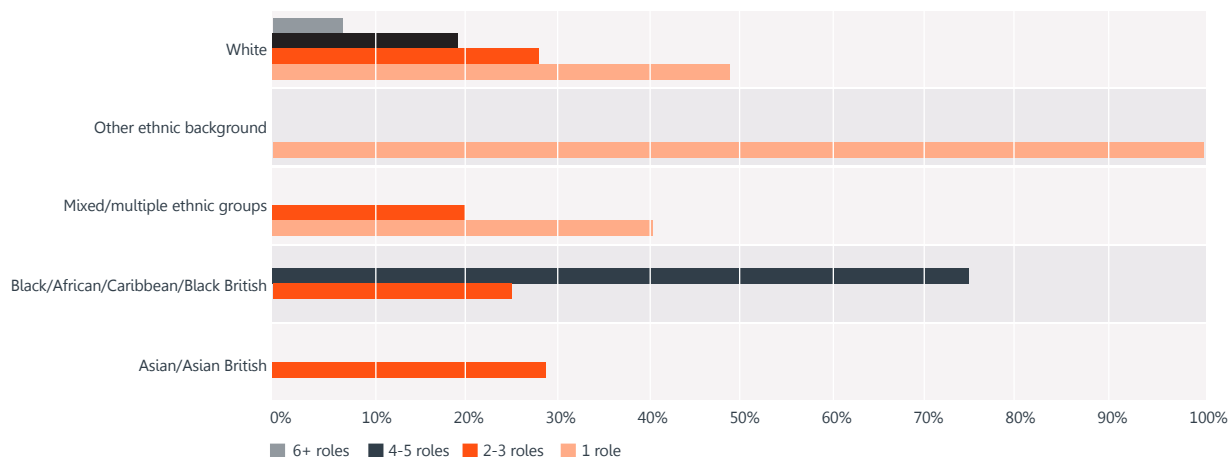


▲ Figure 9.4: No. of schools/trusts roles (%) held per ethnic group

|                                       | One | Two | Three or more |
|---------------------------------------|-----|-----|---------------|
| Asian/Asian British                   | 7   | 4   | 3             |
| Black/African/Caribbean/Black British | 5   | 2   | 1             |
| Mixed/multiple ethnic group           | 5   | 0   | 0             |
| Other ethnic group                    | 1   | 0   | 0             |
| White                                 | 293 | 219 | 174           |

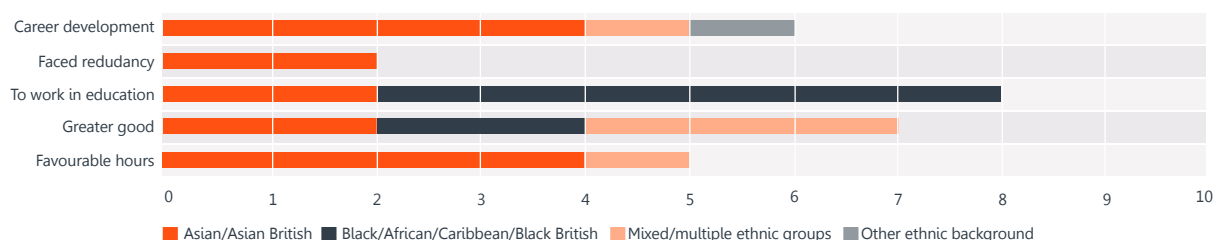
▲ Figure 9.5: Career mobility – no. of schools

- In the WFS, it was reported that almost half (49%) of all respondents across all ethnic groups who said they had not changed role in the last 10 years also said they had worked in the sector for 13+ years.
- 43% (n=12 of n=28) of respondents from Black, Asian, Mixed/multiple ethnic group or Other ethnic group backgrounds had over 13 years of service as noted earlier in figure 9.2. This was reported as 55% (n=496 of n=905) for respondents from a White background (figure 9.6).
- For Black and Asian respondents, a total of 79% (n=22 of n=28) of all minority ethnic respondents reported having had more than 2 roles. 49% of respondents from a White background reported having had more than 2 roles. This suggests that WFS respondents from Black and Asian backgrounds may have increased role mobility and therefore could suggest less inertia for these groups in relation to longer service in the profession. However, due to the small sample size available, comparisons between respondent groups are problematic as discussed in the report methodology of the main report (section 1.2).

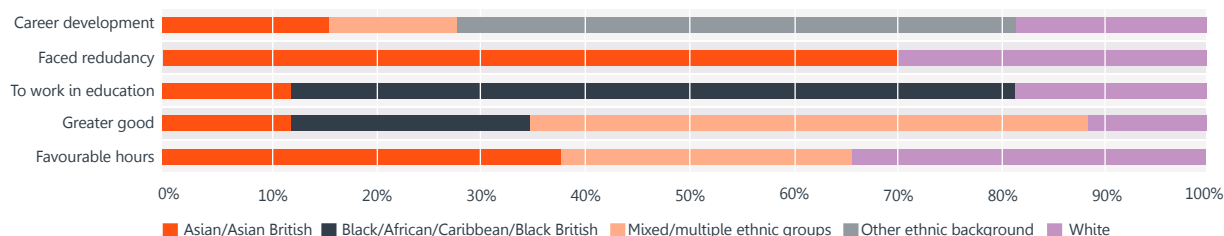


▲ Figure 9.6: 13+ SBP years and no. of roles

- When analysing the reasons selected for why respondents joined the profession, as shown in Figures 9.7 and 9.8, respondents from Black ethnic groups were more likely than other minority ethnic respondents to have joined the school business profession because they wanted to work in education or had been motivated to join 'to do something for the greater good'. Asian respondents were more likely than other ethnic groups to have faced redundancy from another sector.
- Across all ethnic groups, respondents were more likely to have come from sectors including non-school administration, banking/finance, management – private sector, and local authorities, with a slight increase in ethnic minority respondents having worked in other SBP-related roles in schools (32%) prior to their current role. This was 4% for White respondents.



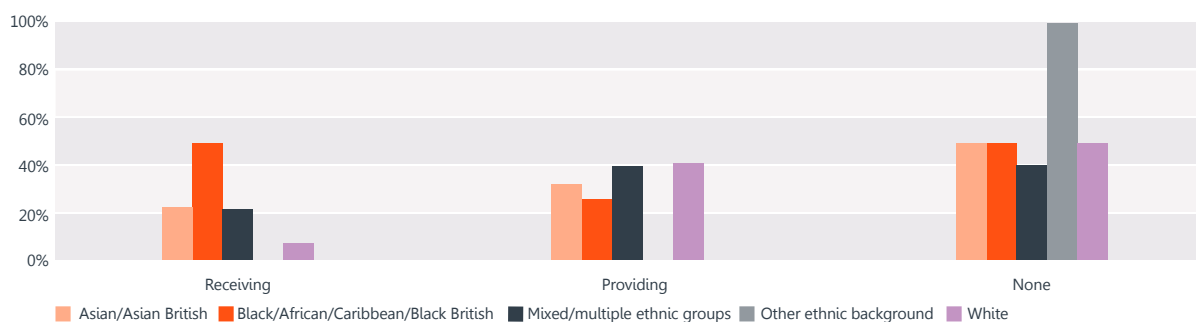
▲ Figure 9.7: Reasons for joining the SBP profession (ethnic minority groups only)



▲ Figure 9.8: Reasons for joining the SBP profession WFS (%) comparison

## 10. Coaching and mentoring activity

- The WFS presented that over half of all respondents (60%) were not engaged in any coaching and mentoring activity, which presents at similar levels across most ethnic groups.
- As shown in Figure 10.1, Black, Asian, and Mixed/multiple ethnic group background respondents were likely to be receiving and providing coaching and mentoring, whereas White respondents were more likely to provide coaching and mentoring than to receive it. However, due to the small sample size available, comparisons between ethnic groups are problematic as discussed in the report methodology of the main report (section 1.2).



▲ Figure 10.1: Coaching and mentoring activity (WFS % comparison)

### A3: Sampling parameters calculated and provided by ISBL to Qa Research

#### 1 Number of schools in the sector

There are, according to the DfE publication 'Schools, pupils and their characteristics: January 2019' (published on 27 June 2019), 21,261 state-funded schools in the school system.

According to this:

- 16,769 are state-funded primaries (32% of these are academies and free schools)
- 3,448 are state-funded secondaries (65% of these are academies and free schools)
- 1,044 are special schools

This means there are:

- 5,366 academy/free school primaries
- 2,586 academy/free school secondaries

Once these figures are taken away from those above, we have:

- 11,403 LA maintained primaries
- 862 LA maintained secondaries

This means, based on a total sample of 750, we would in theory require quotas as follows:

- 405 primary LA maintained respondents ( $11,403/21,261 = 54\%$  of whole school estate)
- 187 primary academy respondents ( $5,366/21,261 = 25\%$ )
- 120 secondary academy respondents ( $2,586/21,261 = 16\%$ )
- 30 secondary maintained respondents ( $862/21,261 = 4\%$ )
- 8 special school respondents ( $1044/21261 = \text{less than } 1\%$ )

#### 2 The figures above are great, but who works in schools and who works in central teams?

As we have a current absence of recent SBP data, I am using a 2016 freedom of information (FOI) request to the DfE for the latest available breakdown of bursars and business managers to then overlay the figures above to get the proportions of SBPs working in schools and those in central teams (see Table 1 below).

**Table 1: SBP Bursar and Business Manager figures, FOI to DfE**

| School type and phase                                   | Number (sector proportion) | Total quota required | Qa call requirement |
|---|----------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| LA maintained nursery and primary schools               | 5,960 (51%)                | 383                  | 215                 |
| Primary academies                                       | 1,800 (15%)                | 113                  | -                   |
| LA maintained secondary schools                         | 1,070 (9%)                 | 67                   | 15                  |
| Secondary academies                                     | 1,910 (16%)                | 120                  | -                   |
| LA maintained special schools and alternative provision | 660 (6%)                   | 45                   | 10                  |
| Special academies/alternative provision                 | 180 (2%)                   | 14                   | 10                  |
| Centrally employed                                      | 40 (less than 1%)          | 8                    | -                   |
| Grand total   | 11,620                     | 750                  | 250                 |

For a list of all questions asked with the WFS (ISBL, 2020), visit the ISBL website to download the full report, with the questionnaire found in appendix 1 of that report.

## Appendix B: SBP voice

## Appendix B: SBP voice

This appendix presents the detailed analysis of the engagement with the four interview participants – three school business professionals and one middle leader – from minority ethnic backgrounds and explores their experiences as education professionals in schools. It supports section 2.2 of the main report [Exploring Ethnicity: School Business Leadership in England](#).

Consisting of three sections that inform the key findings and recommendations of the main report, this appendix follows [Appendix A: WFS Ethnicity Analysis](#). It begins by introducing the participants (B1) via a case profile for each participant, then discusses the key interview findings (B2), with the detailed interview analysis (B3) following, which includes excerpts of the interviews as direct quotes from the participants on their experiences. The interviews were semi-structured, with a list of questions (B4) used to guide the interviews.

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| B3: Detailed interview analysis          | 34 |
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### B1: Case profiles

Primary data collection followed BERA (2018) ethic guidelines as outlined in the methodology of the main report (section 1.2). Participants were given the option of anonymity and asked to provide a preferred first name. They were also asked to self-identify their ethnicity and gender and asked what kind of school setting they currently or most recently have worked in and their role type, which is summarised in table B1 below.

**Table B1: Overview of participants**

| Name   | Ethnicity                      | Gender | School setting     | Role   |
|--------|--------------------------------|--------|--------------------|--|
| Selena | Black – other (mixed heritage) | Female | Maintained primary | SBP, 7+ years' experience                    |
| Nilesh | British Asian                  | Male   | Maintained primary | SBP, 8+ years' SBP experience                |
| Seeta  | British Asian (South Asian)    | Female | MAT central team   | SBP, 20 years' SBP experience                |
| Lee    | Black British (Caribbean)      | Female | MAT secondary      | Teacher/middle leader, 10+ years' experience |

In their own words, participants defined their ethnicity as follows:

"I am of Mixed heritage – my mum is from the Caribbean and my dad is from Goa, so on a form, I would normally class myself as 'Black – other.'" [Selena](#)

"I would define myself as British Asian." [Nilesh](#)

"British Indian' of 'South Asian Heritage.'" [Seeta](#)

"On paper, I'm Black British, but I am from the Caribbean, so I always refer to myself as Caribbean." [Lee](#)

#### Selena – School Business Professional

Selena is an experienced business professional with 17 years of experience in public sector roles, with over seven years spent in a school business professional role. Selena describes herself as being in her late 30s, from a Mixed ethnic background (Black Caribbean – West Indies, and South Asian – Indian) heritage and was born in the UK. She is the mother of two daughters.

Selena has been working in a two-form entry 3–11 community primary school in London for the last seven years beginning as the school business manager, which was not originally part of the SLT. The school historically has a low level of ethnic diversity, particularly amongst the staff, which has begun to change in the last few years. After Selena gained her Level 4 Certificate in school business management (CSBM) in 2014, her role became part of the SLT. She leads on 'everything that is not teaching and learning', undertaking a broad range of business functions including finance, procurement, governance, human resources, premises management, IT, marketing and attendance monitoring. As part of a recent school restructure, and to recognise the increasing accountability and breadth of her role, Selena became the Business and Operations Leader at the level of a deputy head in an SLT consisting of her role, the head teacher and 3 assistant heads. She line-manages 20 staff and acts as coach

and mentor to the other SLT members. Her role was also formally recognised as deputising for the head teacher in all aspects of school leadership and management, whereby Selena is the most senior member of staff and decision maker on all matters when the head teacher is not in school, supported by the assistant heads and middle leadership team. Selena reports to the head teacher and participates fully in all SLT meetings as well as full governors' meetings. The leadership of governor committee meetings is divided between her and the head as relevant to their skill set, and they co-lead the personnel and wellbeing committee together.

Prior to starting her working life, Selena attended university in the South East of England, studying accounting and management after leaving school and college, achieving a BA (Hons) upon graduation. After a brief stint of working in the insurance industry as an administrator, she started working in the public sector in 2004 in admin and finance assistant roles, firstly as a temp for a London borough council and the Prison Service. Selena then became a permanent finance officer in youth services, working in a large London borough council. As Selena's career progressed, in 2006, she moved to a larger London borough council to take a role as a management accountant for adult and community services, which she held for several years. Although progressing well within finance roles, Selena found them too narrow and became motivated by the breadth of school business management and the opportunity the profession presented to get involved in human resources. Selena then moved into the school sector in 2013 to her current role in a community primary school, firstly as the school business manager and more recently as the Business and Operations Leader after a restructure. Selena has completed both the Certificate (L4) and Diploma (L5) in School Business Management (CSBM and DSBM), as well as a level 5 human resources qualification from the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) and a health and safety qualification (IOSH), and is currently studying for a master's degree in educational business management. Selena is also currently mentoring professionals who aspire to work in state schools as SBPs as they undertake qualifications to facilitate their entry into the school business profession. She is also a member of ISBL and an associate member of the CIPD.

Overall, Selena is passionate about her role and enjoys working across the school in a broad role that has a positive impact on the school community and can't imagine not working in a school as an SBP. She is passionate about diversity and inclusion across the school and actively works to raise cultural awareness and encourage equality in staff development and recruitment.

#### **Nilesh – School Business Professional**

Nilesh is an experienced business professional and accountant with over 15 years of combined experience, having served seven years in the voluntary (charity) sector and eight years in local authority primary schools. Nilesh describes himself as being in his late 30s, from a British Asian ethnic background, and a British citizen from birth who was schooled extensively in London. He is the father of two children who are now aged 12 and 9, both of whom were in primary school when he began working as an SBP.

Nilesh has spent the last seven years working in two different 3–11 local authority (LA) community primary schools. Although ethnic minorities make up a large proportion of the wider borough community, his current school of three years is situated within a predominantly White working-class area, which is reflected in the whole school community including the staff. The previous school he worked in between 2012 and 2016 was more ethnically diverse and reflective of the borough. His current and previous role have both been senior generalist roles, with his current role as a school business manager of over three years aligned with Tier 3 of the ISBL Professional Standards. He leads a broad range of business functions, including finance, human resources, premises, admissions, and SEN administration. Nilesh is a member of the corporate leadership team (the SLT), attending around 90% of meetings as well as full governors' meetings and all governors' Finance, Premises and Personnel committee meetings. He reports directly to the head teacher and line-manages six staff members and is responsible in total for ten as well as overseeing external contractual relationships.

Prior to starting his working life, Nilesh attended university in London, studying biological sciences after leaving grammar school with 3 A levels, achieving a BSc (Hons) upon graduation. Having worked part-time throughout his studies since the age of 16, after graduation he continued working in several temporary administrative positions in the health sector and voluntary sector, on both a paid and voluntary basis, gaining administrative and finance experience. In 2015, Nilesh joined an Audit Graduate Trainee Programme in the voluntary (charity) sector and began training as an accountant. He graduated in 2009 as a Certified Chartered Accountant (ACCA) and was promoted to internal auditor for the charity sector, becoming a senior auditor by 2010 during a restructure. As Nilesh became familiar with the school business profession and felt it would be a good fit for his skill set and aspirations, and since, as a father to young children, his interest in education and schools was also growing, when he was offered a more senior role in the voluntary sector with a significant pay rise, he turned it down as he felt the travel was too much of a sacrifice to his young family. Despite joining the school business profession resulting in a pay cut, Nilesh began applying for SBP roles and moved into the sector in 2012.

Nilesh has completed a level 5 diploma in leadership and management from the Institute of Leadership and Management (ISM) and is a member of ACCA, ISBL and the National SBL council for NAHT. He is an active member of SBP networks across his borough and various working parties and LA groups, and he applied to be a DfE School Resource Management Adviser



(SRMA) but has not had the opportunity to further his application. Despite significant continuing professional development, Nilesh has increasingly struggled with limited opportunities for career progression and innovation in the sector, as well as feeling a sense of nepotism across the school sector. Having been recently offered a position in the voluntary sector, with more opportunities to progress and a much a fairer salary, he is disappointed to leave the sector, but he has made the decision to leave to gain fairer professional recognition for the work he does.

Overall, although Nilesh has enjoyed his time in the profession and working in schools in a broader role that has had a positive impact, he has become frustrated with the lack of recognition and respect for the role in schools. He feels there is a lot of work to do across the sector for SBP roles to be appropriately recognised, respected, and remunerated.

**Nilesh says:** "...if we don't see the profession as a whole valued, then it is going to be really difficult for diversity to be found within... It's going to be harder as it's not making the role attractive in a way that promotes diversity across the board."

### **Seeta – School Business Professional**

Seeta is an experienced business professional with almost 20 years served in the education sector in local authority (LA) roles (over 15 years) and school business professional roles (almost 11 years). She is also the current Chair of Trustees at a small two-school MAT, with over seven years of experience as a school governor and trustee. Seeta describes herself as being in her 40s and from a British Indian, South Asian ethnic background.

Seeta is currently working within the regional team of a large national multi-academy trust (MAT) in England, which has 28 schools catering to a range of age phases. As a large MAT, ethnic diversity varies considerably depending on the borough or location of each academy. Seeta has been in her current role for over two years, which she aligns to Tier 4 of the ISBL Professional Standards. She supports operations delivery across the region (including the delivery of finance, HR, administration, catering, premises and IT services) through her role as Regional Service Delivery Manager. Reporting to the region's operations director, her role is broad and varied, and she is accountable for the strategic leadership, improvement and delivery of the services provided by the regional operations team. This involves coordinating and supporting the work of the regional teams with the work of the central trust. Seeta works closely with school SLTs and the MAT's executive leadership team, as well as regional and national teams, and attends regional operations team meetings.

Prior to entering the education sector, Seeta attended university after leaving school, which included taking a year out and then changing her degree, before training as a Montessori teacher after graduation. She started working in one of the first Montessori schools in England where she spent some time supporting a Montessori teacher. After a short time, Seeta became involved in school policy and development work and found that she was increasingly enjoying school business work over her teaching duties and subsequently moved into an office management role in the school and later moved to a local authority school to become a head teacher's PA. After then moving into local authority work, Seeta undertook various education business roles for almost 15 years, including leading extended services, providing clerking to a governing board, leading projects and directing community partnerships. In 2011, her role was made redundant, and in reassessing her knowledge and skills, Seeta found school business management aligned increasingly well with her skills base and aspirations. Gaining support from the Executive Head Teacher as her ex-employer, she applied to the school business management development programme and began the Diploma in School Business Management (DSBM), now known as the Level 5 Diploma. In 2012, Seeta gained a new role as a school business manager in an 11–16 boys' school, and following this, she undertook the Advanced Diploma in School Business Management (ADSBM), now known as the Level 6 Diploma. After gaining further school experience in a university technical college as a finance and business manager, Seeta became the temporary operations manager of an 11–18 academy school (part of a national MAT), then undertook a business manager role at a local authority 3–11 primary maintained school, before later rejoining part of the national MAT's central team leading on regional operations delivery in 2018 (her current role). Seeta is currently pursuing a master's degree, is an end-point assessor for the School Business Professional Apprenticeship (SBPA qualification) and is a member of two education professional bodies (ASCL and ISBL).

### **Seeta states:**

"I am passionate about improving the life of children and want to be part of that change. I also want the support staff and professional services staff to have a voice and be recognised for the work they do in the schools and academies all over the UK that is not formally recognised nor celebrated."

### **Lee – Teacher and middle leader for staff development, South East, UK**

Lee is an experienced teacher and middle leader and has worked in state schools, including academy schools and maintained schools, for over ten years. She describes herself as being in her early 30s and as Black British 'on paper' but refers to herself as 'Caribbean', also sharing that her parents migrated to England.

Lee is currently working in a large multi-academy trust (MAT) secondary school catering for boys aged 11–18, located in London in an area with high levels of deprivation. The school is 'very diverse' in relation to ethnicity, having over 70% of staff from minority ethnic backgrounds, which is reflective of the student body and the community the school serves. Lee joined the school a year ago and has been in her current role as a middle leader since then, which is part of the teaching and learning

team, where she leads on whole-school curriculum and staff development. In this role, she plans and delivers whole-school training and CPD for staff, undertakes coaching and works closely with teaching departments across the school to share pedagogical research and good practice. One of the key aspects of her role is to facilitate progression opportunities for teachers that encourage increased ethnic and gender diversity, especially at senior leadership level.

Lee came into teaching straight from university via a government graduate scheme. She was also encouraged by one of her ex-teachers, who had become a head teacher, to consider the teaching profession seriously as she pondered a potential career in media and public relations while she faced entering the rather turbulent employment market as a graduate in the late 2000s. Feeling that teaching experience could help her future prospects, and based on her positive experience on a student associate scheme run by the Government where students undertook a paid term in schools to gain experience, Lee enrolled on a graduate teacher training programme. She began working in a school as a class teacher and 'learning on the job' over a two-year period.

Upon graduating from the programme with QTS, Lee soon gained several promotions within her first few years as teacher. By the age of 26, she had gained a promotion to head of department and worked in this role for 18 months. However, although she felt this was a significant achievement as a young, early-career, Black, female teacher, she was deeply unhappy in the role due to increasing pressures placed on teachers through changes to the political landscape and the impact on education policy. Despite colleagues suggesting she could easily become a head teacher, Lee felt she wasn't ready and wanted to take a step back, so she decided to quit her role and left the school. For around two years, she undertook supply teaching across a variety of schools and worked with examination bodies, which she felt offered a helpful foundation for her later return into teaching in 2016. Lee purposely did not pursue a school leadership role on her return, instead opting to become a class teacher with middle leader responsibility for curriculum development and staff development. As she considers her next steps, Lee is currently undertaking a master's degree in education and is looking to undertake the NPQ-SL qualification.

Overall, Lee enjoys working with staff across her school to promote opportunities for development and leadership, including championing a 'women in leadership' group, where all women across the school are invited to participate no matter their role. She is passionate about promoting and championing equality and inclusion across the school and works closely with young teachers and students to generate wider awareness for the possibilities for future development.

## B2: Discussion of the interview findings

Throughout the interviews with the four participants, eight key themes emerged as participants shared their experiences as professionals working in the education sector in schools including suggestions for change/action. These themes are explored in turn below:

**Ethnic representation of the school business profession:** In relation to the WFS findings reporting 3% of respondents came from an ethnic minority background, it was felt that this was not perhaps reflective of the sector as a whole. Participants felt that diversity of the profession and school leadership fluctuates greatly across England and is likely to be different across various counties/boroughs. This was felt to influence career opportunities and recruitment in addition to perhaps creating a lack of diverse role models and inclusive networking opportunities in areas where representation is low. It was felt that more data and research was needed to better explore ethnicity via methods that can attract a wider pool of respondents at different levels of the profession. However, reflections on the school business profession being a heavily 'White British' profession were shared, particularly in relation to attendance at national networking events or conferences.

**Cultural awareness and understanding:** A general lack of cultural awareness, empathy, and understanding in schools was a considerable theme of concern shared across all participants. This was felt to be underpinned by lack of recognition and appreciation of difference, with participants sharing negative experiences of attitudes towards (and a lack of awareness of) cultural expression, celebration and tradition along with uncomfortable and upsetting experiences of stereotyping and facing unconscious bias and conscious bias in schools. Stories of speaking out against assumptions and bias were common in relation to challenging attitudes, along with stories of allies and the importance of the role of head teachers and SLTs in championing awareness and promoting inclusion. Tensions with the 'BAME' label were also evident, with this appearing as problematic for participants and being felt to perhaps influence a lack of appreciation of difference when understanding many different people in a deeper way.

**Voice and cultural expression:** Participants spoke often of feeling they were the 'lone voice' on certain issues due to a lack of diverse representation, with many reflections of feeling very different to others and at times being ignored or not heard. A strong voice was felt to be needed to challenge assumptions, but this came with the risk of being labelled as 'rude', 'defiant' or 'difficult' as experiences of navigating stereotyping, bias and assumptions were shared. This was felt to have often resulted in barriers and limitations to the amount of voice and input participants could have on certain issues and, at times, led to a suppression of behaviours and actions. There was a strong theme of participants feeling that they have each had to work harder to 'prove' themselves to others around them in order to achieve the same outcomes that others have, and because of this, they felt they have had to do more to develop their careers. Having ambition and confidence and encouraging this in others was cited as very important for career progression, especially for ethnic minority women.

**Lack of SLT diversity:** Three of four participants had worked in several different schools during their careers, with one having worked in a single school that had seen considerable SLT turnover. They each reflected on a lack of observed diversity in relation to ethnicity across leadership teams and, in some cases, also with school staff and governing bodies. Participants shared their experience of working with SLTs from a predominantly White background, whose members were usually all male. The terms 'middle-class' and 'White British/English' were often used by participants to describe their experiences of SLT membership. It was felt that this lack of diversity was a concern in relation to career development opportunities due to the potential for unconscious bias and was linked closely with issues around a lack of diverse cultural awareness and understanding. There were also concerns that school leadership is often less ethnically diverse than the school communities they serve where student bodies (and staff) are in settings that are heavily multicultural. A need for diverse voices and role models at leadership level was shared across participants.

**Voice and strategic participation:** The intersection of race, ethnicity, gender and class often surfaced in discussions about strategic participation and school leadership and was felt to influence how the participants' voice is heard, with examples of experiences offered. However, participants acknowledged the ongoing tension relating to strategic input and SLT inclusion/participation for SBPs generally and felt that their experiences were heavily related to how the profession has been positioned generally. However, it was felt that in a profession that generally struggles with recognition and voice, to be from an ethnically diverse background can present further barriers, with added difficulties for female ethnic minority professionals.

**Recruitment and selection:** Participants observed that a lack of diverse representation in school leadership was felt to be an influence when making job applications, along with some instances of the ethnic demographic of schools influencing decisions on whether to apply for roles or not. Difficulties joining the profession without school experience (or local authority experience) were reported, along with difficulties of moving context without specific experience (e.g. moving from primary to secondary or from LA to MAT). An observed lack of diversity on recruitment panels was shared as experiences of unconscious bias and discomfort in selection and promotion processes were shared. Although the 'narrative' appearing around school-specific experience was felt to be a sector-related issue rather than an ethnically influenced issue, this was felt to be potentially compounded when faced with a lack of diversity on recruitment panels.

**Professional development and training:** Participants all reported the value of coaching and mentoring and reflected on how more of this was needed, particularly for SBPs generally as they often have no other professional/colleague in school who can directly relate to their role, and this was felt to be compounded where ethnic diversity was lacking amongst school colleagues. Networking groups, events and conferences were cited as a necessary and valuable aspect of the SBP role, but reflections of a predominantly White British profession, especially outside of London, were shared by the three SBP participants who attended such events. Overall, all participants felt there was a lack of ethnically diverse SBP role models and a similar lack of role models across school leadership in general, which left them all with a sense of not quite belonging or feeling included. It was felt this had the potential to affect role retention and influence pathways into education careers, for SBPs and for teachers, and that it was important to encourage greater diversity across education, school leadership and the school business profession.

**Supportive strategies to encourage diversity and inclusion:** In relation to supportive strategies that have helped, and/or could help, to increase cultural awareness and understanding, and encourage greater diversity and inclusion across the sector and within school leadership, several sub-themes emerged from the interviews:

- **Increasing cultural awareness and appreciation:** visibility of difference, for example through celebrations, curriculum, catering, and lettings, along with the importance of avoiding stereotyping and tokenism and going beyond narrow 'accepted' understandings of difference by creating supportive cultures where staff can listen, share their voice, and ask questions about cultural difference and ethnicity
- **Showcasing diverse role models:** reaching out to people from different backgrounds and facilitating engagement and storytelling to encourage and inspire current SBPs and those outside of education considering a career as an SBP
- **Coaching and Mentoring:** the value of mentors, coaching, and supportive platforms and groups is important, with the need for a more formal scheme to support greater diversity, inclusion and opportunity
- **Improving recruitment and selection processes:** challenging selection bias, being mindful of the advertising process, promoting diversity on interview panels, along with appropriate training for recruitment and selection
- **Training and support:** targeted development to support promotion processes, as well as induction training that includes diversity and inclusion awareness
- **Career pathways:** the creation of additional entry pathways (e.g. a graduate scheme and more targeted apprenticeships) and leadership development opportunities were felt could be helpful mechanisms to encourage a diverse range of applicants/new entrants into the profession and increase promotion opportunities for existing SBPs. It was strongly felt that such pathways would require appropriate support, resourcing and promotion by the DfE, local authorities and schools. In addition, activities are needed to challenge the 'school experience required' assumption/narrative by supporting head teachers and governors in attracting career-changers, graduates and those changing their school setting (e.g. primary to secondary, joining a MAT/LA, etc.) to address barriers to recruitment and career development

- **Further research on SBP ethnicity and SLT diversity:** more research and exploration of ethnicity across the sector is felt to be greatly needed to better understand ethnic diversity and to explore SLT diversity in relation to matters of recruitment and promotion
- **SBP voice:** continue the push for greater recognition for the school business profession; promote the voice of the profession and address matters of pay and conditions, which could potentially create greater barriers for ethnic minority professionals; activities at sector level to challenge assumptions at school leadership level

### B3: Detailed interview analysis

Excerpts from the interview data are presented in this section as verbatim, using exact quotes from the participants, and sorted by areas of questions (see B4 for detailed list of semi-structured interview questions).

- Observations of diversity in the school/setting/school business profession in relation to race and ethnicity
- Experiences of critical career moments in relation to race and ethnicity
- Strategic participation and voice
- Reflecting on the idea of diversity and inclusion
- Career development as an ethnic minority professional in the sector
- Reflections on sector ethnicity statistics
- Encouraging greater diversity across the sector

#### Participants:

| Name   | Ethnicity                      | Gender | School setting     | Role   |
|--------|--------------------------------|--------|--------------------|--|
| Selena | Black – other (mixed heritage) | Female | Maintained primary | SBP, 7+ years' experience                    |
| Nilesh | British Asian                  | Male   | Maintained primary | SBP, 8+ years' SBP experience                |
| Seeta  | British Asian (South Asian)    | Female | MAT central team   | SBP, 20 years' SBP experience                |
| Lee    | Black British (Caribbean)      | Female | MAT secondary      | Teacher/middle leader, 10+ years' experience |

In their own words, participants defined their ethnicity as follows:

"I am of mixed heritage – my mum is from the Caribbean and my dad is from Goa, so on a form, I would normally class myself as 'Black – other'. **Selena**

"I would define myself as British Asian." **Nilesh**

"British Indian' of 'South Asian Heritage". **Seeta**

"On paper, I'm Black British, but I am from the Caribbean, so I always refer to myself as Caribbean." **Lee**

#### Observations of diversity in the school/setting/school business profession in relation to race and ethnicity

When talking about what they each observed in relation to the ethnic diversity of their school or setting, participants shared a mixed picture. Local demographics were reflected on with suggestions that particular types of staff did not necessarily reflect the student body or local demographics. Location or characteristics of the school also appeared influential to this. Three of the participants had experience of other school settings and felt there were commonalities in what they had observed:

..."the borough I work in is quite a multicultural borough generally... ethnic minorities make up a large proportion of the population in the borough. Whereas the school I am working at... we are on the border with [a South East borough] which is predominantly a White middle-class area, so we do attract a lot of staff from there... as a whole borough, [the school] is probably not quite as representative, but more locally, it is. ...However, having said [that], it does feel like the same sort of people that are here. ...we have quite a high proportion of children with SEND... some people we attract to work here have to have certain [SEND] specialisms that are not easy to find in a local workforce, so our staff come from all over." **Nilesh**

..."the setting I am in is diverse in terms of teaching and teaching assistant staff; when you go on to middle leadership, it is fairly diverse, but as you go higher up, the diversity is more diluted." **Seeta**

"It's been a really long journey, and I would like to think I have been part of that journey... In my school currently, all of our cleaners, bar one, are of an ethnicity other than English. In terms of the teaching establishment, we have one teaching assistant who is Black Caribbean and one who is Asian, then apart from that, almost everyone else is White English."

**Selena**

"I am working in a boys' school... we have a very diverse staff. But I have seen this, it is not just my school, I have seen this in a few schools, and I have worked in a few, you will have the behaviour team – so the people who manage pupil behaviour – and they are predominantly Black. Then you will have the middle leadership team which tends to be varied, but if you look at pastoral roles, so the care, the wellbeing, heads of year, then again, its predominantly Black people. Whereas if you look at heads of department, then it is the other way. ...It's 2020, and the teaching profession itself is overwhelmingly White... but I think that is starting to change." **Lee**

When talking about diversity in relation to school leadership, such as the SLT or governors, there was a pattern across the participant discussions that suggested a lack of ethnic diversity when it came to the make-up of SLT membership. There were concerns that SLTs often did not reflect the diversity of whole-school staff, the student body or local community. It was felt by the three participants who had worked in different schools in their career that this was a trend across different schools, with the other participant observing similarities when visiting different contexts and in the turnover of her own SLT. The three female participants often also reflected on how SLTs from their experiences had been predominantly male, which the male participant also noted was very common from his own experiences:

..."I know, for example, when I leave, there will not be any senior staff at the school who come from an Asian background, so I think that is something the school will need to reflect on." **Nilesh**

..."the further and higher up the hierarchy you go, the less diversity there is, and this is the same for all the settings I have worked in." **Seeta**

..."our governing body at the moment is the most diverse it has ever been... but the parent governors we have are all exactly the same; they are all White middle-class, and they don't treat me equally..." **Selena**

..."there are more Black people in our school than White people... we have a very diverse staff, but actually [the] senior leadership team is very White, in fact all White, and it is all men. That is changing [soon], but in the past, that is how it has been, so there has been a lot of angst and scepticism because the environment we teach in is very multiracial, and the staff generally reflect that, but why is it that all our senior leaders are all White men? Not to discredit them as I am sure they have earned their place, but it does raise a lot of questions, because what message are we sending to the children if the cleaners and the dinner ladies are Black women and the senior leadership are White men? ...it is not just Black staff, for example, there is one lady I work with who is part of the union, and I just think why wouldn't you have somebody like her, who is a very, very able and intelligent White female on school leadership... but it just doesn't seem [to] transpire." **Lee**

Participants reflected on how their observations of ethnic diversity in education had made them feel, with many tensions raised in relation to issues around feelings of belonging, inclusion and appreciation. There was also a shared concern across participants as to the impact of a lack of diversity, especially at SLT level, on staff aspiration and career development, and the message this was sending to the student body:

..."I didn't appreciate the workforce diversity and [that] families that attend [my current] school were so different to what I was accustomed to in an outer London school. So, in that sense, I didn't feel as well included, and that is sometimes a challenge when speaking to certain families as it felt like they didn't feel like I could identify with them and vice versa. ...it has played on my mind at times. I have found that more of a challenge here than at the school I worked at [before], which I think was much more diverse, both in terms of the local community but also the staff, so that was definitely a factor I felt I had to overcome. So that made it harder... but because of the role I do, I am quite distant from people, and I am the only one that does my job, so I don't have colleagues that I can bounce ideas off in the same way... I am not one of fifteen class teachers or how[ever] many we have, I am one of one, so makes it really hard to feel included anyway, and when you don't necessarily have that identity with the people you work with, that makes it even harder. ...it is a lonely job, and that probably exacerbates that more." **Nilesh**

"It doesn't make me feel appreciated because I know of colleagues who are capable of being in promoted posts, and I think that the organisation should reflect the community it serves, and I think that it is so important for pupils and for other staff and for other colleagues to see that reflection and to see that input from diversity and be able to celebrate that diversity in their roles as well." **Seeta**

..."it is quite concerning that particularly in London or inner-city schools, you have student bodies that are very multiracial, but head teachers are mostly White British... you can't be what you can't see. ...it makes me feel a bit like a hypocrite because we say to [the children] that all they have to do is work hard and you're going to be given these same opportunities, and then they look around them and they see that's actually not the case as there is clearly a concrete ceiling for them as Black boys. So that visibility isn't there, that role-modelling isn't there... but you could have Black head teachers who aren't role models and who are very far removed from the boys that I teach, so it is not necessarily because they are all White men, but I think it speaks a lot that there is nobody there that represents the students that we teach." **Lee**

...“it has been quite a journey, and I am really proud I kickstarted that journey and still push that journey. ...we just recruited a Black teacher, and as soon as the kids found out, this little girl was walking into school, and she said to me, “I have got a new teacher and she looks just like me”. I almost wanted to cry because she can look up to somebody who is like her, who looks like her, who she feels a connection with... There are lots of teachers in my school that I know had never met a Black person or any other ethnicity before they came to [the South East]... the natural flow of conversation is really difficult because there is a bit of hesitation and they don't quite know what to say or how to act because it is just not something they are familiar with. But we can't let it be an elephant in the room for evermore, we need to talk about it... in a professional workplace with people of different nationalities, cultures and ethnicities, then you can't joke about [ethnicity] as it is just not funny, and it has taken a while... I don't think people mean to be racist or are consciously trying to say that the White race is better than any other race, but a lot of it is down to ignorance, and their life experiences having never been around a different culture, nationality, or a different class, and so they have no empathy or understanding about anything that is different. ...It is about having the understanding that people are different.” **Selena**

Overall, in relation to participant observations of diversity in the school/setting in relation to race and ethnicity, participants shared a mixed picture. Location or characteristics of the school also appeared influential to how reflective the staff body was to the local community or student body. However, in relation to school leadership, such as the SLT or governors, a pattern emerged that suggested a lack of ethnic diversity when it came to SLT membership, with concerns that SLTs often did not reflect the diversity of whole school staff, the student body or local community. Gender also emerged as a theme, with participants sharing their experiences of predominantly male SLTs. This led to participants sharing similar feelings around a lack of belonging, inclusion and appreciation, along with a shared concern of the impact of a lack of SLT diversity on career development and the message this was sending to the student body.

### Experiences of critical career moments in relation to race and ethnicity

Moving from discussions of what they each observe about diversity in their own settings, each participant was asked to share one or two critical moments from their career that were felt to be challenging or deeply formative for them as a professional in the education sector, which could be either positive or negative. All participants shared stories where they had felt uncomfortable in relation to matters of race and ethnicity, both personally in relation to how they had been directly treated and in terms of how they had witnessed others being treated, which was often felt to be down to a lack of cultural awareness of difference. When describing how this felt for them, commonalities between participants including feeling upset, with some incidents remaining with them many years later, feelings of disappointment or feeling left out, and even a sense of shock in some cases. However, there was also an overall shared feeling of how things needed to change and how they wanted to challenge issues.

For example, Selena shared several stories of when she initially joined her current school years before when there were several incidents that took place that she found deeply challenging. These were the stories she chose to share when asked about specific moments that stuck out as critical or deeply formative or challenging to her as a Black school business professional:

...“we had quite a challenging parent, and she was Black... during a heated discussion, the head teacher never came over. No one came over. People were walking past, and no one came over to support me. ...I was just standing there taking it ...it felt that because I am Black and they were Black, it felt almost like ‘she can deal with it, we will let her get on with it’. I was really, really upset. ...some support would have meant everything, but everyone just walked past and did nothing. I think that is how you can feel a lot the time, when you are a Black person trying to do something, is that you are just walked past, you are just ignored because either you are not good enough, or you deserve it.” **Selena**

Selena explained that she still felt upset about that incident, and coupled with some incidents towards children of different faiths when she first started, it had driven her to want to make a change:

“I've started to make a bit of headway with people being a bit more embracing of another faith. I feel I am doing something good and positive to help widen appreciation of differences and not be afraid of them or negative about them... when I first joined the school, I saw [an incident of discrimination in school] and I was shocked... you wonder why children grow up having issues, growing up with a complex, and it is situations like that which start that and make them feel different. ...one of the dominant teachers, who had been there for a long time, was very well respected, made [a comment] I felt was unfair... I wanted her to know how it came across and how it made me feel when she spoke... I spoke with [the teacher] and explained it, and she was so apologetic, she hadn't realised how it came across... but I was told by the head teacher he had a complaint from the assistant head teacher who had said I was shouting in the room at this teacher... it didn't happen... they didn't hear anything as there weren't any raised voices... The only reason I can think that the assistant head teacher would say I was shouting was because of the colour of my skin because that is what she would have expected for someone in her mind of my race to have approached a conversation. I really knew at that point... it was going to be a journey.” **Selena**

Seeta also spoke of a negative incident that had stayed with her for years and still caused her upset now; however, she also spoke of a very positive incident in contrast that had really helped her:



"One negative experience is that I have worked somewhere where I was the only female member on the senior leadership team and also the only ethnic member on the senior team, and I had an issue, and I did raise a grievance, and I did not feel like my voice was heard. Mostly because I was being challenged by a White group of people that were hearing my grievance, there was no ethnic diversity hearing my grievance, and I felt like I had to leave that employment, which I did in the end as my voice was not being heard. I felt like I was being dismissed because of my ethnicity, and I still feel strongly about that now, that it was more to do with my ethnicity. Had I been White, I would have been treated differently and spoken to differently, but because of my ethnicity, I was treated differently. One positive experience is that years ago [with a different employer]... I was supported to do the school business professional qualification for the first time even though I was being made redundant from my role, and that particular employer was very strong and supportive and [the executive headteacher] did employ a very diverse membership within his SLT and within the rest of the trust as well. So that is one thing that stays with me, the positive more than the negative experience, because I would like to think that there are more people like them out there rather than like the other place I worked where I was mistreated." **Seeta**

Similarly, Nilesh spoke of difficult situations where he had been acutely aware of his ethnicity because of the absence of anyone else like him in certain circumstances, describing this as uncomfortable and requiring a strong voice at times:

"...I have found in a lot of the roles I have had, pre-schools and in schools, I have very much felt like the only representative of my ethnicity... I have been aware of that... I will, at times, have to be the lone voice on certain issues. I have been to meetings where it is very, very obvious your ethnicity or your difference makes it so much more difficult... I went to a procurement event before I was in schools, and I felt like I was there to make up the numbers, and I didn't feel like my opinion was valued, and I found that quite difficult, and I don't know if that is down to ethnicity, but I know I was very, very different to every other person who was around that table, and I found that really challenging... I think that within schools, I have particularly noticed at network meetings and the sorts of the things where colleagues get together, it is conspicuous because of its absence, the lack of diversity, I have to say, and it does feel like that if you are not a 40–50 year-old White male or female, then you are very much in the minority in this profession. ...in the last two jobs, I have been to quite a few construction meetings... there is a massive under-representation there, and the barriers are a lot more obvious there, and I found going to some of those meetings that some of them again, with people – even something as simple as pronouncing your name causes mass panic, and because they are not used to dealing with people from minority ethnic backgrounds... and when you do our role and you are already a jack of all trades and you sometimes go to meetings where you feel a little out of your depth, when you have that challenge to deal with as well, that unconscious bias and such, that just makes it so much harder... and it is there, it's real, and it is something that some others won't have to worry about." **Nilesh**

Although Lee is not a school business professional, she reflected on her experiences as a teaching professional working in school contexts, including as a part of SLT, and described incidents where she had struggled with a sense of belonging:

"...I had been teaching in London schools, which were very fast-paced and multicultural, and I then went to this school in [an affluent suburb outside of Birmingham]... I remember thinking that I just did not fit in there at all. There were 3 ethnic minority staff in the whole school and probably about 12 ethnic minority children. They never made me feel out of place, but you could sense it. For instance, there was a parents' evening, and one family refused to come and speak to me even though I was their child's teacher, but they didn't expect that to be (a) a Black teacher and (b) for me to be a young, female, Black teacher either. So, my head of department was telling them that I was the teacher, and I was the one to talk to. I had been teaching them about 6 or 7 years by then, and I really struggled with that, and I had a great team of people behind me during that time, but can you imagine a 21-year old teacher who doesn't have that, being faced with that, then no wonder they leave." **Lee**

### **Strategic participation and voice**

As the interviews moved on to explore the participants' main interactions in their settings and their strategic participation in decision-making and school leadership, each participant described the usual sorts of people they interacted with. This was predominantly SLT staff, head teachers, governors and administration or facilities staff, and suppliers for most participants, and students or parents.

Selena described her role as part of SLT and a very senior role in her individual primary school setting. She explained there was no longer a deputy head teacher after a restructure, with her role filling this level and that she 'deputised for the head teacher in all matters, including teaching and learning, when she was not in school and was supported by the assistant heads in doing so'. She described working very closely with the head teacher as a sort of partnership with them dividing up leadership of various school functions and governance based on their expertise and skills. She also attends all governors' meetings and leads on several functions.

Nilesh's role was also part of the SLT and a senior role within his individual primary school setting. He described himself as focused on the business functions and 'everything not teaching and learning', attending about 90% of SLT meetings to ensure he could manage his workload and be part of relevant decision-making, which was his choice. He also described attending all governors' meetings and reflected that he was 'the only one barring the deputy head that does that within the leadership team.'

Seeta explained that her current role in a central MAT team did not have any strategic participation in relation to decision-making or school leadership and that she was no longer part of an SLT since joining the MAT central team as her role now was more operationally focused:

"There isn't any involvement for me in [strategic decision-making]. That tends to be done at a higher level within where I am. I have previously been involved when I have been part of the senior leadership team; I have been a lot more involved with the educational side as simply by being a school business professional as I was part of the senior leadership team. In the organisation I am at now [large MAT central team] with the scale of it, I am not involved in strategic aspects at all." **Seeta**

"When asked how she felt about that, or what challenges she had encountered, Seeta explained:  
It is the implementation of those strategies that are challenging; if you have not been part of the planning or you can't talk to anyone who is part of the planning, then how are you then supposed to deliver or support that? An example is a document I was asked to explain to some colleagues, and I couldn't explain it as I wasn't part of the planning of it nor the implementation of it and I didn't have any instructions on how to explain it to them. So, if you are part of the planning or you are part of the strategy or part of the delivery, you are able to support colleagues to a greater extent, but not being part of the strategy and/or rationale puts you at a loose end." **Seeta**

Lee described working as a teacher and middle leader for whole-school CPD and spoke about working with SLT and her usual interactions:

"My role is a middle leadership role working closely with SLT, but also with new teachers and those focusing on development... but with my own team in my MLT role, I am more proactive, hands-on and have a lot of voice. With the SLT, it feels more transactional." **Lee**

Beyond an observed lack of ethnic diversity, the participants shared experiences of their 'voice' (e.g. input to meetings or decision-making) in relation to their sense of individual agency and were asked how they felt they were heard/listened to, included, asked for opinions and able to express their beliefs. In doing so, the participants raised issues around often being aware that they are the only ethnic minority voice in many situations and being mindful of how they expressed themselves. This led to participants sharing experiences of being the 'lone voice' on certain issues, being cautious or having to alter their normal behaviours to 'tone it down' to be heard, or in some cases, not being heard and feeling ignored or dismissed. Experiences like this were reported as having led to feelings of upset, frustration, exclusion and a lack of belonging in some situations:

"I think that I have worked really hard to be heard. When I first started my first role as school business manager, I was told I couldn't be on the SLT, so I went back to the head teacher six months later and asked if I did my CSBM then can I join the SLT and he said yes... so I did that and joined the leadership team. ...in early SLT meetings, I wasn't asked an opinion, they were very much teaching and learning meetings back then, very operational. In governors meetings... I make it my duty, even with the governors... to ensure that they are talking to me on an even level as I do think that when you are of a different ethnicity you do have to prove yourself, and you have to show people that you know what you are talking about, but I think I have done that, and actually our governing body at the moment is the most diverse it has ever been... but the parent governors we have are all exactly the same, they are all White middle class, and they don't treat me equally... one parent governor said, when I did some finance training with them, "oh, you actually really do know what you're talking about, don't you?", but well... that is my job! What do you mean, I "actually" do know what I am talking about? I just thought it was really inappropriate. I thought "they don't say that to the head teacher or the assistant head teachers who present on data"... it didn't make sense to me... so I find the parent governors quite difficult." **Selena**

..."[in one role,] as the only female member on the senior leadership team and only ethnic member on the senior team... I did not feel like my voice was heard. ...I am a very bold and courageous leader, and I think I make myself known, even if I am not invited to speak, I tend to – with my personality – will always be willing to speak up and will speak up to be supportive of colleagues when I feel that they can't speak up. ...I myself – whether I feel uncomfortable or not – I will speak up and think that is more my personality." **Seeta**

..."I will at times have to be the lone voice on certain issues, you know sort of put a halt to things... and you need to have quite a strong personality to do that. I think as more of a generalisation I am holding that perhaps it is more of a challenge for people from minority ethnic backgrounds than it would be for someone who has worked here for years and comes from, say for example, a White British background. I do think that is a challenge... I tend to listen before I speak... if I feel like something needs to be said, I will say it. ...I have felt, not from the perspective of my ethnicity or anything like that, but from the perspective of the role, it needs to be respected more. Less so from my head teacher's point of view... but I think some of my colleagues within the leadership team perhaps wouldn't see the value as much in my role as the head teacher might... I have found that frustrating, and I have to say that is one of the factors that has caused me to now be leaving the profession; I am leaving at the end of the month. I have found that frustrating at times, but I think that is more about the role of the business manager or leader than any other factor." **Nilesh**



"For a long time, I was the only Black woman on my team. ...you have to be hyper-aware of your position in a room full of people who are not the same as you; very obviously not the same. I have to tone things down a lot. I have to listen a lot more, which isn't necessarily a bad thing, but a lot of the time, I don't agree with what they say or do, but I've got to accept it... I am asked for my opinions [at SLT meetings], but I feel that you have to be very conscious, especially as a Black woman because... if I am always saying 'but' or challenging it, I am going to come across as being abrupt, or rude, or challenging; there are a lot of negative associations with being a Black woman in those sorts of meetings. Really, all I would be trying to do is saying that we need to think about things, but it won't be listened to as that, it is going to be seen as me being defiant, so I am very conscious that I have to either word things in a particular way or just not say them, which contradicts the objective of being in those meetings, but I've got to be very aware that I am not making it harder for the next one who comes after me."

Lee

The topic of gender also often surfaced when participants were sharing stories, not only in relation to discussion about their 'voice' but also in relation to discussion about the diversity of their current or most recent settings and their strategic participation. For example, when discussing SLTs appearing as predominantly male and White to them, but also when reflecting on the school business profession more broadly and across their individual careers in education:

"You have to have a stronger voice as a female to start with, and then working out in the wider community, you have to have a stronger voice being South Asian as well. So, you have got two sorts of challenges, and I think that I have felt them both with the negative experience I have had with the SLT ignoring my grievance, and I have strongly felt that, I felt that my voice wasn't heard because I was female and because I was from an ethnic minority, and that does make me feel very, very disheartened that in this day and age that you still have to fight for that. ...I have realised that through the years that I have had to become a stronger female. ...I have been very fortunate to have strong female and male role models around me in my community that have encouraged me to use my female voice as a South Asian, and I think that has been very supportive, but it would be nice to have that wider support where I may work as well."

Seeta

"...[the head teacher and I] were in a meeting negotiating a catering contract, and there is a lady I deal with on a day-to-day basis, but her manager came, he was a director from the company. In the meeting, I would speak, and he would turn to the head teacher and tell the head teacher the answer. When I asked a question, he would turn to the head teacher and look at him to answer the question. So you do have conversations like that, and I think it is hard as a woman as well, because you think 'well, is it because I am a woman, is it because of my ethnicity?' I am not really sure which one I am dealing with as it was a man I was having the conversation with, and it actually got to the point where the head teacher said "[Selena] asked you that question", so that was a bit awkward. There have been many times... especially in male-dominated situations, but a lot of the suppliers I deal with tend to be salespeople, and they do tend to be men."

Selena

"...I am working with men, and it is very much laddish in the sense that they go to the pub together, and I don't, and they talk in a certain way, and they all came from the same institutions and similar friends and all of that. They've never made me feel bad, but if I don't agree... I have to accept it because if I challenge it then I am going to be making [it] harder not just [for] myself but also for another woman who comes in after me."

Lee

"...I think, I would imagine that the gender balance the higher up the salary level you go, I wouldn't be surprised if we were looking more at MAT level and senior board level really, that gender imbalance means more males in a senior position. That is certainly my experience when I go to network groups, and for primary business managers, which is what I am, there are very few males. But I know when I go to conferences and there is a much broader range of professionals at the events, you tend to find there are a lot more males. I tend to find that, and I don't know why, but they tend to be CFOs or the likes within a MAT or the like in an academy trust. ...I can't recall meeting any female SBPs from an ethnic minority background in a very senior position, I just can't think of many, or any, that I have met. I have met females that work at a senior level in one school, and I have met some, but not very many, males from a minority ethnic background, but not both."

Nilesh

Overall, all participants shared quite deeply uncomfortable stories in relation to how they felt they had been directly treated because of their ethnicity and how they had witnessed others being treated, which they felt was often due to lack of cultural awareness of difference and lack of diverse voices in school leadership. Gender also entered this discussion as a tension for all participants in relation to their interactions with SLT, governors and across the profession. Commonalities of the tensions this brought for participants included feelings of disappointment, exclusion, injustice and the need to take action.

### Reflecting on the idea of diversity and inclusion

After exploring observations of diversity in participants' settings and critical moments from their own careers, the interviews then moved on to a broader discussion on diversity and inclusion in relation to schools as workplaces. Statements from the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) on diversity and inclusion were shared with the participants, and their opinions and thoughts on what they experienced in their daily working lives, and how this felt for them, were sought.

**CIPD Statement 1:** Diversity: 'Diversity is about recognising difference. It's acknowledging the benefit of having a range of perspectives in decision-making and the workforce being representative of the 'entire school community.' In the context of the CIPD diversity statement, participants shared their thoughts and experiences in their school setting or from across the sector more generally.

**CIPD Statement 2:** Inclusion: 'Inclusion is where people's differences are valued and used to enable everyone to thrive at work. An inclusive working environment is one in which everyone feels that they belong without having to conform, that their contribution matters and they are able to perform to their full potential, no matter their background, identity or circumstances. An inclusive workplace has fair policies and practices in place and enables a diverse range of people to work together effectively.' In the context of the CIPD statement about inclusion, participants shared their experiences of feeling inclusion, appreciation and belonging in the school setting or from across the sector more generally.

Seeta reflected on the presence of policies but a lack of actual impact of those policies and concerns around 'tick-box' activities and tokenism, a theme that also came up for other participants:

"I think I have seen diversity more written in policies but not actually implemented across the settings I have worked in... they are there as a tick-box exercise, but they are not actually impacting the staff and everyday work... I haven't worked for an organisation yet that has managed to hit inclusivity near enough to how it should be, and that comes down to being sensitive to certain cultural aspects. It makes me feel that all voices aren't being recognised. ...if there was some work towards this, like a working group working every day towards this, rather than just "here is a statement, and the policy is due to be renewed, so the governing body and trustees review so it is seen as fit for purpose", but it is not tested to see if it is fit for purpose, and they move on. ...organisations need to address this and say to colleagues "how does this make you feel, how can we help support you?" There are too many assumptions and stereotyping. For example, when I had to attend a funeral for my mum's cousin, the employer I worked for then wasn't very sensitive... it felt more like it was seen as a burden, like I was taking too much time off, rather than recognising that it is part of my culture... I found that to be quite upsetting when I almost had to fight and argue with my employers of why I needed that time off. ...I think that makes me feel left out and marginalised. We are supposed to be a multicultural country, you would think they would be more sensitive to the issues and perhaps work with local authorities and local communities to become more clued-up on cultural aspects, so it would be nice to see more partnership working and to see what the needs of the communities are. I would like to feel more included, more thought of, and for my colleagues at work to be thought of too, regardless of what community they are from." **Seeta**

"Nilesh, similarly to Seeta, was concerned about a lack of representation meaning certain voices were not being heard in school: Generally, I think there is a recognition of the value of diversity in decision-making, but what we don't have is the actual voices there to make that opinion heard as it is just a few similar people, so they are not heard; if there aren't the right sorts of platforms or groups for their voices to be heard, then they won't be heard, so I don't think that is necessarily about a lack of recognition of diversity, more of a lack of representation." **Nilesh**

Selena shared similar views and reflected on how hard she felt she had worked to gain recognition and feel included as she presented her concern for those who perhaps were not as able to push and 'fight to be heard' like she had been able to:

"I feel included and valued, but I feel like I am included and valued because I have pushed myself and I've worked really hard to put myself in that position, whereas, if you had a White person who applied for my job and had my job, they wouldn't have had to prove themselves to be respected in the way I am respected; I think that would just come naturally. ...being different, [you are] having to work a bit harder... there is really a lack of understanding, a lack of appreciation and a lack of broadening of minds to understand and appreciate that there are people who do things differently to you. So, for example, every year... there are two days off for Diwali or a few days off for Ramadan... and there is always a comment of "why are they allowed two extra days when they have Christmas off as well?"... when some of the older children want to fast, and a lot of our first aiders are really unsympathetic about it... rather than offering them solutions, they are very quick to say we should phone home and they shouldn't be allowed to do it. ...I feel that if I fight hard enough, I'll get there eventually, and eventually I will be heard. I might have to fight a bit harder, but I can get there, but with the children, they haven't got that opportunity, they are learning all the time, they are looking and seeing what is going on around them, and we have to treat them equally from the very beginning, we can't continue down this route of showing them bad examples; I feel very passionately about that." **Selena**

Lee also had similar views, feeling that there is a lack of daily lived reality in relation to the policies and practices that are spoken about. She reflected a lot on difference and the nuances that are present in everyday life and the aspects that intersect with ethnicity that can result in prejudice and assumptions:

"That statement sounds great on paper, it sounds very ideal, very utopian, but in reality, I think it is very different... I feel like our school tries to, and other schools I have been in, they try to make everyone feel accepted and wanted, and on special occasions, like Eid, the canteen food reflects that. But actually, in the day-to-day, people are given respect based on how well they fit an ideal. ...if their face fits... cultural assimilation and respectability politics are there... and I feel, as a young female teacher who speaks with a British accent and is married to a White male, all of that, I feel like that gives me a little bit more privilege than some others... if an African man comes in who has got a very strong accent, he isn't listened to in the same way I am... the Pakistani teacher who has a very strong accent may have it differently. So, that statement [on inclusivity]... I feel in theory people would love that, but if you look at the teaching profession, then it is very samey, everybody has to be the same, and my SLT is the perfect example of that where everybody is the same. ...I feel like, on paper, it all sounds well and good, but in practice, it is definitely not like that" **Lee**

Overall, there was a sense that the ideas portrayed within the CIPD statements were positive; however, it was felt that this is not often what happened in reality, and participants shared concerns around a lack of impact of diversity policies aligning with a lack of diverse representation in creating, reviewing and embedding these policies. There were stories of working hard to be heard and recognised, not just in relation to the role of SBP but often as the 'lone voice' on matters of ethnicity, with the need to push and 'fight to be heard' highlighted. There was resonance on the importance of valuing difference and the nuances that are present in everyday life for ethnic minority groups and other aspects that intersect with ethnicity, such as gender, class, nationality, religion, health, language and accent.

### **Career development as an ethnic minority professional in the sector**

When asked to share experiences of career development and professional training and CPD from their perspective as an ethnic minority professional in education, participants reflected on how they had felt the need to work harder to prove themselves alongside other colleagues to gain similar outcomes. In this sense, they had each found professional development an important part of their journey but also problematic. For example, Selena raised how a core aspect of her role was continuous learning and development and it was a very important part of the profession yet was often not valued by school leaders in the way it needs to be:

"In my position, I have had more than four different head teachers, so in the process because I have worked really hard to prove myself and make sure I know my job and that I am always at the top of my game, I am always doing qualifications and going to conferences and doing webinars, always learning. As the new heads have come in, they have appreciated my support and... because my school is two-form entry and a primary school, we only really ever get deputy heads who are stepping into their first headship as the salary isn't high enough to attract a current existing head teacher to move into that salary bracket; it wouldn't make sense. So, where you've got a deputy head stepping into a headship, they know little about my side of the school, so they are trusting me to lead that part, and if I can show them that, then it is of more gain to them to take that on and allow me to continue to do that than it is to battle against it." **Selena**

Nilesh also shared concerns about professional development and learning being seen as an add-on by too many outside of the profession, such as school leaders, head teachers and governors. Nilesh also reflected on how important professional development had been for him. He shared his encounters in the charity sector before starting in schools, sharing that he felt CPD and development opportunities were harder to come by in education, especially in the primary school phase:

"From a training perspective... you tend to find some schools, often smaller schools, don't see the role as a profession as such, and that means training opportunities are limited for some of my colleagues. It can be a real pain to request to go on a training course for some colleagues, which is ludicrous; some won't entertain going to a training or networking event because it takes them away from their job. There is the impression given that those sorts of training, learning and development aspects, are in addition to your job and not part of it. If you have that difficulty for people from diverse backgrounds being able to have their voice heard, then they are just never going to get those opportunities as they are too worried to request those things, and because those things are valued, then they are not being offered either. More needs to be done about changing that mindset." **Nilesh**

Nilesh also recalled, on an important development programme he had taken part in outside of the education sector when he worked in a charity, feeling that more needs to be done to develop programmes for SBPs and for other school leaders who help to develop awareness around inclusion:

"...at corporate level where I worked [when in the charities sector], diversity was quite low... but around 2009, there was a big drive [to] launch a leadership programme for people from minority ethnic backgrounds, which I was fortunate enough to be enrolled on. ...just sharing experiences with BAME colleagues across the organisation and from different workforces was an eye-opener, and that taught me a lot about what diversity meant. ...I haven't seen that here [in the education sector]." **Nilesh**

As others had also raised, Seeta commented on the lack of ethnic diversity she had encountered on training programmes and events as she also pondered differences in promotion opportunities and what she had observed about SBP colleagues in relation to career development and ethnicity:

"...when I first attended the DSBM qualification, I noticed that I was one of maybe four ethnic minority people there out of, say, a group of 30 or 40. I have noticed that at the ISBL conferences I have been to. I haven't attended as many ASCL events as ISBL events, but I have noticed around the room that there are very few members of ethnic minorities... I have seen colleagues that have risen through the ranks quite quickly and more easily than myself, and it has made me question whether it is my ethnicity that has stopped me progressing or is it my strong voice that has stopped me? It is something I have felt indirectly, but nothing... that clearly makes out that it is my ethnicity. ...Why is it that certain people are having to make so many applications for the roles or promoted posts, or courses, when they are more than capable of doing the job, and some people are already doing the job but not being paid or recognised for it? Why are ethnic minorities having to work harder for roles, what is being supported for them at the point of application or at the point of interview, how diverse are interview panels? It would be good to see those sorts of questions explored... and to look at how much more they can be inclusive as well." **Seeta**

When Lee reflected on professional development from her perspective as a teacher and middle leader for whole-school CPD, she also spoke about feeling that she had to work harder than others and to do more to prove herself as capable alongside other colleagues. However, she also reflected on the need to be prepared and supported for career moves via professional development and shared her concerns about assumptions that can be made by school leaders:

"I was having my performance meeting with my line manager, and I told him I wanted to do my NPQSL... and he said to me 'oh, [Lee] you don't need to do that, I haven't done it'. ...so I said 'well... you don't need to'... you could see as the words left his mouth that he momentarily forget that as a White male who is well connected, he doesn't need to do these additional qualifications, whereas I have to do my MA and my NPQ, I have to go on all of these CPD courses, I have to do so many more things. I feel like they don't realise that, the legwork that goes into the background. I am not saying they don't have to do it or haven't done it, but I feel like, for women and for Black people, you have to do it more as you've got to be better... for so many years, I was constantly searching to climb up and prove myself – it is that immigrant hunger for success – and I just packed it all in... by the time I was about 25 or 26, I was head of department, and that was a really big achievement as a young Black teacher... But I absolutely hated it... I left teaching... I remember that as being so life-changing as it gave me time out of the profession... I feel like, for the first part of my career, I was pushed into roles by well-meaning people... but actually, looking back, I don't think I was ready for it, I wasn't prepared enough... that was very formative for me. ...I went back in as just a classroom teacher, and that was by choice. ...I remember, in one school, the leaders would walk into the meeting... and they were very autocratic, and I hope I wasn't like that as a school leader, and that is exactly how I don't want to be..." **Lee**

During conversations about career development and entry into the profession, an interesting theme shared by all three SBPs emerged around how hard it was to get into the profession for each of them and how promotions or changing context also had not been easily done. They each shared concern around assumptions in the sector by recruiters, who were often school leaders, head teachers and governors, around the need for specific school experience. There was discussion of the potential issue this could raise if the pool of applicants is continually coming from the same source, when this source is already appearing to lack ethnic diversity:

"I have had this a lot when I have applied for jobs in schools... that you could never get a job as you have to know someone in the school or know someone in the council to get a job there, and that was very much the view many years ago, like 20 years ago, but there are some people that still have that viewpoint, so there is that lack of encouragement for people to join [the profession] and be told you don't have to have a school background to work in a school. I do see recruitment adverts that do say 'no school background necessary', and there should be more of that, but there needs to be more encouragement that skills are transferable, and they could work in that environment." **Seeta**

..."when I decided to make that move into school business management, it was the first time I had to go for about seven interviews at many different schools before I could get a job. ...it was the first time I had experienced rejection, and I would always get quite close to the end, to the last two or three, and then they would say "you need some school experience", but they already knew I didn't have experience before I came, so anyway, it was quite hard to get into the role. But once I got in, I have really flourished in the role, and I really enjoy it. I cannot imagine doing anything else." **Selena**

..."before I started in schools, I couldn't get a look-in because I hadn't been working at a school, and you are linking that back to ethnicity; if you are employing the same people over and over again and only looking for people within the sector where you already have a diversity problem, then you are just perpetuating the problem. If you are only recruiting within your narrow base because you are too scared to employ from a different background, then this is just going to be an endless cycle, whether it is gender, age, ethnicity or sector background... unless more risks are taken in recruitment from a diversity perspective, then we are just going to have the same kinds of people getting the same jobs." **Nilesh**

All participants reflected on feeling that they have had to work harder to prove themselves alongside their peers who are not from minority ethnic backgrounds and how important continuous learning and development was in relation to that. However, it was felt that CPD and training were not always valued, especially in the primary phase, and the need to be developed, prepared and supported for career moves, especially as an ethnic minority professional, was needed. A lack of ethnic diversity on training programmes and events was highlighted as well as experience of inequalities in promotion opportunities. An interesting theme around entry to the profession emerged, with a bias towards school experience and difficulties moving between phases surfacing as barriers, alongside concern of how this may perpetuate diversity issues.

### Reflections on sector ethnicity statistics

Participants were briefly talked through the context of the ISBL WFS and how it suggested a very low rate of ethnic representation, with 3% of respondents identifying as from a Black, Asian, Mixed/multiple ethnic background, or Other ethnic minority background. As outlined in the main report (section 1.1), the national working age population statistics, DfE teacher workforce ethnicity statistics, and school census 2020 key findings were also briefly shared in summary in relation to ethnicity data (8.7% of teachers from minority ethnic backgrounds, and 92.9% of head teachers reported as White British). Participants were asked to consider their own experiences in the school business profession and school leadership sector and their interactions with other SBPs

and school leaders in the local community/borough, along with reflections of conferences or professional events, and give their views on these findings. All three SBP participants felt the 3% WFS finding was likely not reflective of the ethnic minority population overall but that this was complicated by matters of local diversity and ethnic demographics between boroughs and counties. However, they all reflected that when they are out and about at national conferences or events, ethnic diversity is not representative. All participants were not surprised by the DfE teacher and head teacher ethnicity statistics and felt this was reflective of their lived realities of school leadership teams and likely to be similarly so across England, particularly in less diverse boroughs and regions of the country:

"I think the representation within the [school business] profession and the role is probably higher out there in the real world than it is in the survey. However, what I would say is that the vast majority of the [SBP] colleagues I have worked with who would identify as BAME tend to work in more junior roles within the sector and profession than more senior ones... the sort of people who perhaps they aren't necessarily members of their SLT are less likely to be members of a professional organisation like ISBL or any other... the impression I get is that there just isn't that voice there or the influence that some of my White colleagues might have. ...I can't actually think of a[n SBP] colleague – a BAME colleague – someone who has really stuck their neck out and is a voice of our industry or even at a local level, I can't think of anyone. I think the people are there, but they are not necessarily in those really senior roles to sort of be role models. ...I have one colleague who I know quite well who would identify from a Caribbean background, and other than that, I cannot think of any others really. ...I know a fair number of Black women that work in the sector, in the profession, but only one male. ...our local network groups are quite well populated, so we get around 40 attendees to each meeting, and out of all of them, I haven't met a single one at an ISBL conference, and we have quite a diverse local business manager community, but none of them go to conferences... I don't know why." **Nilesh**

"I think it [the 3% ethnic diversity finding] is likely reflective of what you see and what you hear. ...but there are people out there who are more than qualified to do SBP jobs... the school business management community, when you walk into these rooms and you are surrounded by, you know, they are very White English, in most places you go into now, and I live in [a part of London], and you might be surrounded by White people, but they are not all White English... but in the school business management community, it is just very White English, and it really feels that way..." **Selena**

"I am quite surprised by that finding [3% ethnic diversity] because I know that there are a lot of ethnic minority people in the field, but I don't know how many of them identify themselves as school business professionals. ...so perhaps that is where people haven't been able to identify themselves as SBPs. ...I have noticed [at conferences] around the room that there are very few members of ethnic minorities... [so] I must say I haven't seen a huge number of people from different ethnic backgrounds in the profession... I am surprised there aren't a lot more in knowing the amount of people I do that are from ethnic backgrounds that have HR qualifications and accountancy qualifications and even health and safety... but with the working age population, the 3% doesn't correlate at all... in my own borough that I live in, it is very diverse, and I think that representation is probably more 40% of ethnic diversities in the school business profession, but I think when you go into the other boroughs... the representation is probably a lot lower... maybe 10% to 5% or less. ...if I look at my own local authority, it is a lot higher than it generally would be, but then there is a higher level of ethnic diversity in my local area. ...I see more women within primary schools from my own experience. I have seen a lot more males generally in the profession at secondary levels, simply because of the finance and accountancy background that seems to attract men more to secondary schools, but I have seen a few men in the primary aspects." **Seeta**

"They [the statistics for head teachers] are not surprising, it is very much the trend I have witnessed ...I had been teaching in London schools, which were very fast-paced and multicultural, and I then went to this school [in an affluent suburb] outside of Birmingham... I remember thinking that I just did not fit in there at all. ...I really struggled with that, and I had a great team of people behind me during that time... maybe living in London... we take it for granted, and it wasn't until I went to teach in places like [an affluent suburb] and others, that I realised that it isn't typical." **Lee**

Overall, it was felt that there is likely greater ethnic representation across the entire school business profession than the 3% WFS findings present, but there was a consensus from the three SBP participants that many of the conferences and wider networking or training events they had attended lacked diverse representation. However, concerns were raised at how people were perhaps defining their own roles and how connected they were to professional networks and likely to attend conferences leading to reflection on the level of diversity across the sector. Local demographics were also thought to play a part in where ethnic minority professionals may work in relation to different boroughs/counties/regions. It was felt the head teacher statistics were likely accurate by all participants, which was linked with concerns around SLT diversity and selection bias in recruitment.

### Encouraging greater diversity across the sector

As conversations about ethnicity developed and questions were asked about what could help (or does help) to encourage diversity, various themes were shared around the importance of cultural awareness and understanding. Embracing and appreciating difference was cited by all participants as extremely important as well as asking questions and listening to different kinds of people. This included reflections on the culture of the school, what is visible, the values and expectations – even the canteen food and celebrations held were considered important. Recruitment and selection processes and the way training and development is undertaken also featured heavily in discussions, with the value of supportive platforms, network groups, role models and coaching/mentoring highlighted as important:



...“if there is going to be a change generically across schools, [SBPs] are going to be the people who make those changes, and if you are not one of those people who are having these problems, if you are a White male or a White female, then how can you put policies and procedures in place for something that you don’t understand and know nothing about? ...Diversity is spoken about in schools, a little bit perhaps, but maybe at recruitment level when you are faced with a group of applicants, but I think that once those people are actually in the school, we don’t talk about diversity, we don’t talk about how we can make sure we are being fair to everyone and treating everyone equally. ...When we talk about school business management as a profession, there should be something in all the SBP qualifications about diversity.” **Selena**

...“targeting all aspects of diversity really, not just general recruitment [as mentioned before]. So, the curriculum is an interesting area to look at. ...one experience I have had when working was to set up cultural awareness months... I think catering and the food that is provided, especially because we have such modern cuisine now compared to 20–30 years ago... we have diverse restaurants out there that pupils should be able to experience at a much earlier age at school. Even in terms of lettings, diversity can be celebrated, and in having more diverse lettings and having an understanding of cultural aspects and cultural celebrations... I think there needs to be a lot more celebration of diversity, not just within the curriculum but with staff wellbeing as well. Looking at the cultural aspects, looking at celebrating moments in history... and it should not be a tokenistic survey and a tick list, it should be based on conversations, it should be based on real feelings and thoughts as to what could go on. ...inviting everyone to have a voice is so important. We should be inviting those who are going to be part of and enjoying the facilities to participate in those meetings as well, and that is across the board in terms of diversity in terms of gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, etc. You need to integrate staff into the things that go on within schools. Where I am at the moment, they have set up a BAME group, which has been welcomed by the chair of trustees and the chief exec, and they are asking the right questions.” **Seeta**

...“sometimes it is not about people’s deliberate attempts to discriminate, it is about people’s level of being comfortable addressing those sorts of issues, so if somebody comes to the office where English isn’t their first language, for example, I think people struggle with that; I don’t know if that is just here or in general, but they find it awkward and don’t know how to address that. We get that here, as we have Deaf children and Deaf staff here, and some people find that hard, and they freeze in that situation when they don’t know how to handle disability or language barriers and other things, so generally speaking, that is something we ought to address on a wider level.” **Nilesh**

“It’s really hard to make it not tokenistic. I think that having Black women on the SLT, for instance, just to tick that box, I don’t think that is right as it definitely should be merit, but I think that there needs to be opportunities open to those teachers and staff, the young Black teachers, who are really keen to move up the ladder. The opportunities for promotions, the opportunities for training, for coaching and all of those things, I think they need to be more relevant for those staff. And not only for those who are trying to get into leadership, but also trying to get university students who are graduating or people looking for a career change from ethnic minority groups into schools. ...we started a ‘women in leadership group’, and it’s women, not just necessarily in the teaching or leadership team, it is for any women on our staff, they can join it. It has been really empowering to see a lot of our dinner staff join a women-in-leadership group because the idea is that we are all leaders in some way, it isn’t just about position or being in the classroom... you are working and leading, so that has been really promising.” **Lee**

Reflections around the BAME term and its influence in schools were also shared by participants, with concerns shared about a potential lack of appreciation of difference, especially if policies and activities are taking a broad approach to subsume all ethnic minority groups under one label and in doing so are making assumptions that do not fit well culturally within different settings for different people. However, it was felt that there is a need to explore, talk about, and address issues of cultural awareness rather than focus on settling on terminology; conversation and raising awareness were seen as the crucial point:

...“I think you need the understanding of different cultures and an appreciation that everyone is different. You can’t just treat everyone the same, it is really important.” **Selena**

“I don’t agree with the label ‘BAME’ because it is almost saying a ‘them or us’, you are either BAME or you are not. I think that we need to celebrate our individual heritage and culture without being grouped into one whole group of BAME. I’d like to just be called South Asian. It doesn’t mean I don’t have to be part of the BAME heading; I think we all need to be able to celebrate our individuality.” **Seeta**

“I read things about this, and from my background when I was in the charity sector, I used to be one of the representatives on the Black workers forum – and that is what it was called, the Black Workers Forum – and I know a lot of my Asian colleagues found that difficult, and they couldn’t identify with that because, well, I don’t identify with being Black, but having learnt more about the group and why it was called that, I got on board with that quite comfortably, but I know that it is a barrier, and I think the difficulty is that I don’t think we are ever going to get a generalised term that is appropriate. So for me, I think that if we get hung up on what we call this, then we are missing the point entirely; we are arguing about the wrong things here – it does matter what we call ourselves – but that is an argument we need to settle quite quickly because that is not the issue ...there’s an issue about how we all individually identify ourselves, but the reason we are talking about this is about a wider point of diversity, so I would want to focus on that point rather than how we identify... you might get varied opinions on that, though... but as much as BAME is part of the terminology, that isn’t so important to me, but there are nuances [to] the barriers each of us face depending where we fit within those categories... but I don’t want to argue about the terminology itself; let’s instead look at the issues behind those different strands rather than what it is called.” **Nilesh**

"It just feels like putting people into groups because they are all ethnic... is problematic because my experience as a Black woman is very different to one of a Chinese woman or man. ...if you look at Bangladeshi children, they are actually low-achieving in education outcomes, they don't do as well in schools as other Asian boys, or even Caribbean boys and White boys. So, within that label, you have different nuances, and just grouping everyone together is just lazy, quite frankly. I am not expecting everybody to say, "well, what are you?" before we look at it and write about it because they would have a hundred different fragments. But whenever I speak, I always use the term Black, politically Black, to encompass all of those issues." Lee

Recruitment and selection bias were themes raised by participants in many discussions, with some ideas around challenging selection bias shared, as well as reflections on the advertising process, promotion processes and training:

"...I think that in the role of school business manager, as many people are realising the importance of the role... when you are recruiting to this really important role where your relationship with the person is critical, you are trusting them with this big part of the school, trusting them to lead on that which is something you probably don't have that much knowledge of, you are going to pick someone you feel confident with... the majority of people are just going to pick the person they feel comfortable with, and that person will generally be of the same colour as them. ...personality is so important... if [the DfE] are saying that leaders of the schools are [92.9%] White British... I think that we need crack the head teachers, they are the ones making the recruitment decisions. ...The head teacher who recruited me was very liberal. ...very working class [Northern] who had always worked in quite rough schools and in [London] in a challenging behaviour school. I don't think I would have got my foot in the door without him. I sat in front of my interview panel in front of ten middle-class White people, and that is quite intimidating, and that is quite hard, and I think he could feel that, and... he tried to put me at ease and tried to remove some of the tension from that atmosphere... he was a really great guy... [he] said to me that he had fought for me. And I know he probably did, as the rest of them likely didn't agree, but he fought for me. Before I got recruited, they had been out to advert three times... the [White] head teacher was looking for someone specific, someone who he would get along with; he was looking for someone specific who he could build a relationship with. ...I think, especially in schools, the recruitment process isn't as straight, the best person doesn't always get the job, so if your face meets the expectations of the person who is sat in front of you... so when I was sat in front of these ten middle-class White people... it was intimidating." Selena

"It's important to look at how you can include people... Recruitment is one of the general areas I would look at, and training and qualifications. Why is it that certain people are having to make so many applications for the roles or promoted posts, when they are more than capable of doing the job and some people are already doing the job but not being paid or recognised for it? Why are ethnic minorities having to work harder for roles, what is being supported for them at the point of application or at the point of interview, how diverse are interview panels? It would be good to see those sorts of questions explored and integrated into the sorts of things are employers doing on an everyday basis." Seeta

"...schools are very risk averse places. We don't like taking risks; we like doing the same things over and over again because it is what we know, and if that extends to your recruitment, which it invariably does, then that is what is going to happen, and I see it across the board. People don't like taking risks; they just want to do what was done before, so the same people get the same jobs. That approach to risk, and generally diversity in skills as well as ethnicity and gender and sexual orientation, all those things are being missed, not just those 'defined' diversity elements." Nileshe

"...[diversity platforms] for instance, they advertise jobs there, so a lot of Black teachers or ethnic minority teachers won't apply to certain institutions because they fear that rejection, so on [diversity platforms] you know that you've got these places [that] are willing to consider you; it might not mean you'll get the job, but they are specifically advertised here, so it means you won't automatically get ruled out. I think that is really powerful. ...so, making it visible, opening those doors, sharing experiences, and, where possible, collaboration." Lee

The three SBP participants also reflected at various points on how the profession is valued in schools and ongoing issues with salary levels and conditions of employment. It was felt that the voice of the profession and increased recognition was important to tackle generally across the profession, but particularly from an ethnic diversity perspective where barriers potentially exist to voice due to unconscious bias around ethnicity and issues with voice could be compounded for ethnic minority professionals. It was felt by participants that more work across the sector was felt needed, including more research and exploration of ethnicity across the school business profession and in relation to the diversity of school leadership. Creating opportunities for mentoring, coaching and safe spaces/platforms for ethnic minority professionals and promoting the value of this widely was also seen as a valuable method of support and encouragement.

"First of all, the sector needs to recognise the SBP as a valid profession; it is only the last few years through the work of ISBL that there seems to be a stronger voice – and that voice has been brought to the DfE table by ISBL – [and] that the profession is beginning to have a voice. I don't think a lot of people realise that [for] their children, or the children themselves realise, this can be a career. ...I would like to say that it is good, the work that ISBL are doing on this research, and I think that it is very good to have informed research, look at how you are going to develop as an organisation and support colleagues and develop in the organisation, and I think that is one of the highest things that any organisation can do is to listen, to start by listening

and encourage people to take part. As we have got this momentum at the moment which Black Lives Matters has accelerated, it is important to ride on that momentum and to make positive changes quite quickly.” **Seeta**

...“when you have such few numbers [of males and ethnic minorities] responding on the survey, it is hard to take that data further... we don’t know whether we are capturing a wider pool... a lot of my colleagues are not members and wouldn’t have been aware of the survey, so it’s missing that proportion. ...the work the ISBL are doing around professionalising the profession is valuable, but I don’t know if that is being heard where it matters at a governing body or board level or MAT or senior leadership level. I am not sure those messages are getting heard, so I would like to see that change, and I think it would help coming from the DfE, quite frankly. If we don’t see the profession as a whole valued, then it is going to be found wanting as it’s forever going to be seen as an ‘add-on’, and certain people never progress to senior levels... the salary issue is important to address as well... and it is something we talk about a lot [as a profession/in networking groups] across the country, and it has to be said that for colleagues to be on a leadership scale alongside their teaching peers is high unheard of, it is almost impossible, and that is generally a barrier. You are just making those opportunities even harder; if you are not making the role attractive, how are you going to get diversity across the board?” **Nilesh**

...“Someone you can talk to, a platform, a safe space where there are people who understand. I wish back then when I was going through initial situations in the school [witnessing and experiencing racism], I wish I had someone I could have talked to about those issues. ...the understanding of different cultures and an appreciation that everyone is different and you can’t just treat everyone the same is really important. ...having either unconscious bias and anti-racism induction or training that is compulsory is important.” **Selena**

“I think that places like Twitter have been great... you are able to form different groups with different people and hear different voices... social media has been second to none in raising awareness.” **Lee**

Ideas to encourage the entry of more ethnically diverse professionals into the sector included addressing long-standing issues related to pay, conditions and status, and it was felt that tackling these issues in a broader sense could encourage younger and more diverse applicants into the profession. The creation of additional entry pathways, such as a graduate scheme, a more targeted apprenticeships programme, career-changer programmes, and showcasing role models and creating mentoring schemes and platforms could be helpful mechanisms. However, support and promotion from central government and local authorities and MATs was felt as key to the success of such programmes:

“To be an SBP, you do need experience, and for some aspects, you do need qualifications; depending on what tier you are working at depends on what you need and how to obtain that. ...some people I know have done business management degrees and haven’t done much with it after graduating, so if there was perhaps a graduate scheme, like for instance the banks and financial services offer for example, that would be something that could help. I know there is the apprenticeship scheme for SBPs at level 4 and 6, but for someone who has just completed a degree, they are not going to do a level 4 or 6 apprenticeship, they will be looking at a level 7 apprenticeship in the school business profession, and an employer is not going to want to pay for that until they have seen you in employment, and employers are not going to employ you and put you on it straight away. So, I think a graduate scheme would support younger people and that this is a profession that you can enter straight from university or on a pathway from further education and either work your way up or go in at a higher level if you have the degree already.” **Seeta**

...“we have quite a diverse local business manager community, but none of them go to ISBL conferences. Why that is, I don’t know, but I am the only one that goes. ...ISBL should get out there and come and visit groups, the DfE are putting together a database of groups and are keen to talk from a procurement point of view, so we have had the DfE come to some of our meetings, but not the ISBL to date so far, so that is definitely something to look at.” **Nilesh**

“I know from my experience of working in local authorities that the predominant make-up of accountants, in [South East], were Black African. So, there are people out there who are more than qualified to do SBP jobs, but personality is so important. ...what could we do as a profession? ...there could be, and I think maybe I saw it somewhere, that there is a BAME group that has been set up. I think being mentored and having people out there of a different race and ethnicity, who you can go to for advice or support when you are having the sort of day where you don’t really know who you can go to with it, it is not something you can just talk to anyone about.” **Selena**

...“you should admire and respect everybody no matter what they do, and everyone’s voice is important, and anyone can be a leader. But if there are always the same certain type of people in SLT and they all look a certain way, students will be questioning where they fit within that hierarchy. ...that visibility isn’t there, that role-modelling isn’t there ...I think it speaks a lot that there is nobody there that represents the students that we teach... I feel for young teachers and school staff coming in, no wonder so many leave, particularly Black teachers and that five-years’ turnover... that doesn’t surprise me as it can be so intimidating.” **Lee**



Overall, in relation to supportive strategies that have helped, and/or could help, to increase cultural awareness and understanding and encourage greater diversity within the profession, several examples and themes emerged from the participants' interviews and provided some helpful suggestions around recruitment, mentoring and coaching, supportive platforms, increased SLT diversity, training and the need for further research into ethnicity across the profession. Along with the other key themes raised in this section, these strategies and suggestions were used to inform the key findings and recommendations of the main report.

#### B4: Interview questions

1. Please describe your ethnicity/race in your own words.
2. What sort of setting do you work in (or have worked in)? e.g. primary, secondary, LA school, MAT, SBP service
3. What is your current role in the sector, how long you have been in the role, and what sorts of duties do you undertake?
4. What sort of work, if any, have you done before you began working in the school sector?
5. What motivated you to work in the school sector?
6. What do you observe about the diversity of your school/setting in relation to race and ethnicity?
  - How does this make you feel?
  - What would you like to see change and why?
7. Who do you predominantly interact with in the school community and how often? e.g. SMT, teachers, parents, students
8. What sorts of meetings do you attend and what is your role there? e.g. SMT, operations, decision-making, debating
9. Tell me about your voice in these meetings. e.g. how are you heard/listened to, included, asked for opinions?
  - How does this make you feel?
  - What would you like to see change and why?
10. (Share CIPD statement: Diversity is about recognising difference. It's acknowledging the benefit of having a range of perspectives in decision-making and the workforce being representative of the 'entire school community'):  
In thinking about diversity, tell me about your experiences in your school setting or from across the sector more generally.
  - How does this make you feel?
  - What would you like to see change and why?
11. (Share CIPD statement: Inclusion is where people's differences are valued and used to enable everyone to thrive at work. An inclusive working environment is one in which everyone feels that they belong without having to conform, that their contribution matters and they are able to perform to their full potential, no matter their background, identity or circumstances. An inclusive workplace has fair policies and practices in place and enables a diverse range of people to work together effectively.)  
In thinking about workplace inclusivity, please tell me about feeling included, valued and your sense of belonging in your school setting or from across the sector more generally.
  - How does this make you feel?
  - What would you like to see change and why?
12. Can you describe two critical moments from your career, perhaps one positive and one negative (if possible), that you felt were challenging or deeply formative for you as a (Black/Asian/Mixed Race/Other Minority Ethnic) professional?
13. The ISBL WFS has suggested a very low participation rate of SBPs in the school sector from a Black, Asian, Mixed/multiple ethnicity, or Other ethnic minority backgrounds. When you consider your own interactions with other SBPs in your local community or at conferences or professional events, from your experience, what do you think about that finding?  
Share other findings as relevant... e.g. DfE teacher workforce data
14. What sort of strategies/activities do you think could encourage greater diversity across the school business profession?
15. Please share any final/general comments in relation to your professional experiences when you consider race and ethnicity.

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