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Exclusions Review 2018
Evidence on the Exclusion of
Black Caribbean and Mixed: White/Black Caribbean students

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Exclusion from school indicates a breakdown in relations between school and student; permanent exclusion is strongly associated with very serious problems, including low educational achievement and involvement with the criminal justice system.

- Our review focuses on the greater than average rates of exclusion, both temporary (fixed term) and permanent, for students categorized as Black Caribbean and Mixed: White/Black Caribbean.

The Scale of the Problem
- Twenty years of official statistics on permanent exclusions shows that Black Caribbean and Mixed: White/Black Caribbean students are consistently and significantly more likely to be permanently excluded than their White British peers.

- The over-representation of Black Caribbean students fell dramatically between 1998 and 2001 when there was a government drive to reduce the number of exclusions. The improvement ceased when the pressure to reduce exclusions was lifted.

- The rate of Black Caribbean over-representation is consistently high: compared with their White British peers, the odds of permanent exclusion for Black Caribbeans has rarely been less than *three-times more likely* and has sometimes been in excess of *four-times more likely*.

- The problem of the over-exclusion of Black students is present from the earliest stages of education, from the Early Years Foundation Stage (when children are aged 4 or 5) through to Key Stage 4 (students aged 15 to 16). This is true for both Black Caribbean and Mixed: White/Black Caribbean students.

- There is a particularly serious problem as students near the end of their secondary education, when they are preparing for and sitting their final GCSE examinations. In the last three years of secondary school (Year 9 to Year 11 inclusive) more than *one in three* Black Caribbean students experienced at least one temporary exclusion.

Why Does This Keep Happening?
- Detailed qualitative research has revealed a persistent problem of stereotyping and unconscious bias in the treatment of Black students. Sometimes despite their best efforts, research consistently demonstrates that White teachers tend to have much lower academic expectations for Black students and to be wary of them as a potential source of disciplinary problems.

- These patterns of stereotyping often saturate the fabric of education and can be rightly described as institutional racism.

- Black students tend to experience these negative teacher expectations regardless of their gender and social class, but the patterns are most pronounced for Black boys and young men.

- Teachers' greater sensitivity to the behaviour of Black students can lead to them being singled out for harsher treatment. Research suggests that this is particularly problematic where Black boys and young men are subject to a cumulative process of mounting disciplinary sanctions for relatively low-level disruption that might go unpunished for other ethnic groups.

- Community-members and advocates have raised concerns that the problems may be especially acute in Academy schools. Greater clarity from official data is urgently required on this matter.

What Can be Done?
- Targeted action to reduce rates of exclusion has been shown to be effective. Rates of Black exclusion showed the greatest reduction where schools were strongly encouraged to find alternative responses in less serious cases.

- Ofsted has a crucial role to play. Race equality is no longer a mandated part of school inspections and stakeholders believe that this has had a profoundly damaging impact.

- Good teacher education is vital. Initial teacher education is especially important and should be required to address the decades of evidence-based understanding and good practice that has built up in this field.

- Meaningful Impact Assessments: properly conducted impact assessments could help to address these, and other, injustices as an important part of the policy formation process.

- Official data can be exceptionally important in helping to expose current injustices and shed light on the processes involved. It is crucial that data of sufficient quality and transparency is collected and made widely available. It is important that the material is considered in light of previous research and that appropriate ethnic categories are used in order to illuminate, not obscure, key issues.

INTRODUCTION

For the sake of clarity, we have restricted this evidence statement to relatively brief summaries of the main research findings in the field. In particular we have drawn upon empirical studies in which we have played major roles. We are, of course, happy to supply further details where this is useful.

THE SCALE OF THE PROBLEM: digging deeper into the numbers

The *Call for Evidence*[1] makes clear the very serious problems that are associated with exclusion from school (both permanent and temporary exclusions). Permanent exclusion is known to have an enormously detrimental impact on young people. Students excluded from school are much less likely to achieve good GCSE results; more than four times as many young people excluded from school fail to gain any qualifications at age16 compared with those not excluded. In addition, being out of school is a major risk factor for juvenile offending. Research has found an almost direct correlation between youth crime rates in an area and the 'out of school' population. Young people excluded from school are more than twice as likely to report having committed a crime as young people in mainstream school.[2]

Exclusion from school is one of the most controversial areas of educational inequality. The over-exclusion of Black students frequently emerges as one of the top priorities in the eyes of Black teachers, parents and students.[3] As Peter Wanless (author of an official review in 2006) has noted:

> 'Exclusion rates, for black people, was a really iconic issue ... if you listened to what the particular parts of the black community were saying about the education system, unless and until an appropriate focus was placed on disproportionate exclusion rates … they weren't necessarily going to seriously believe that the Department [for Education] was engaged and interested.'[4]

The *Ethnicity Facts and Figures Website*[5] has made a great deal of important information more easily accessible than ever before. However, the situation is extremely complex and some crucial trends and areas of injustice remain hidden in other (less accessible) databases and reports. Here we aim to identify the most important issues in relation to students categorized as of Black Caribbean and Mixed: White/Black Caribbean ethnic heritage.[6]

The importance of students in the Mixed: White/Black Caribbean group
Young people of 'mixed' ethnic background are an important but complex group. The majority of children and young people in this category have one birth parent of White ethnic origin but the group is extremely heterogeneous. Children of Mixed: White/Asian background tend to achieve more highly (and be excluded less often) than the national average. In contrast, children of Mixed: White/Black Caribbean ethnic heritage tend to perform more in line with their Black Caribbean peers; they achieve *less* highly and are *more* likely to be excluded than the national average.[7]

The relatively similar levels of (under)achievement and (over)exclusion, between Black Caribbean and Mixed: White/Black Caribbean students is an important issue that is too often overlooked because the students are usually separated in official statistics between the crude composite categories of 'Black' and 'Mixed.'

Figure 1: Permanent Exclusions in Black & White (England, 1997-2016)

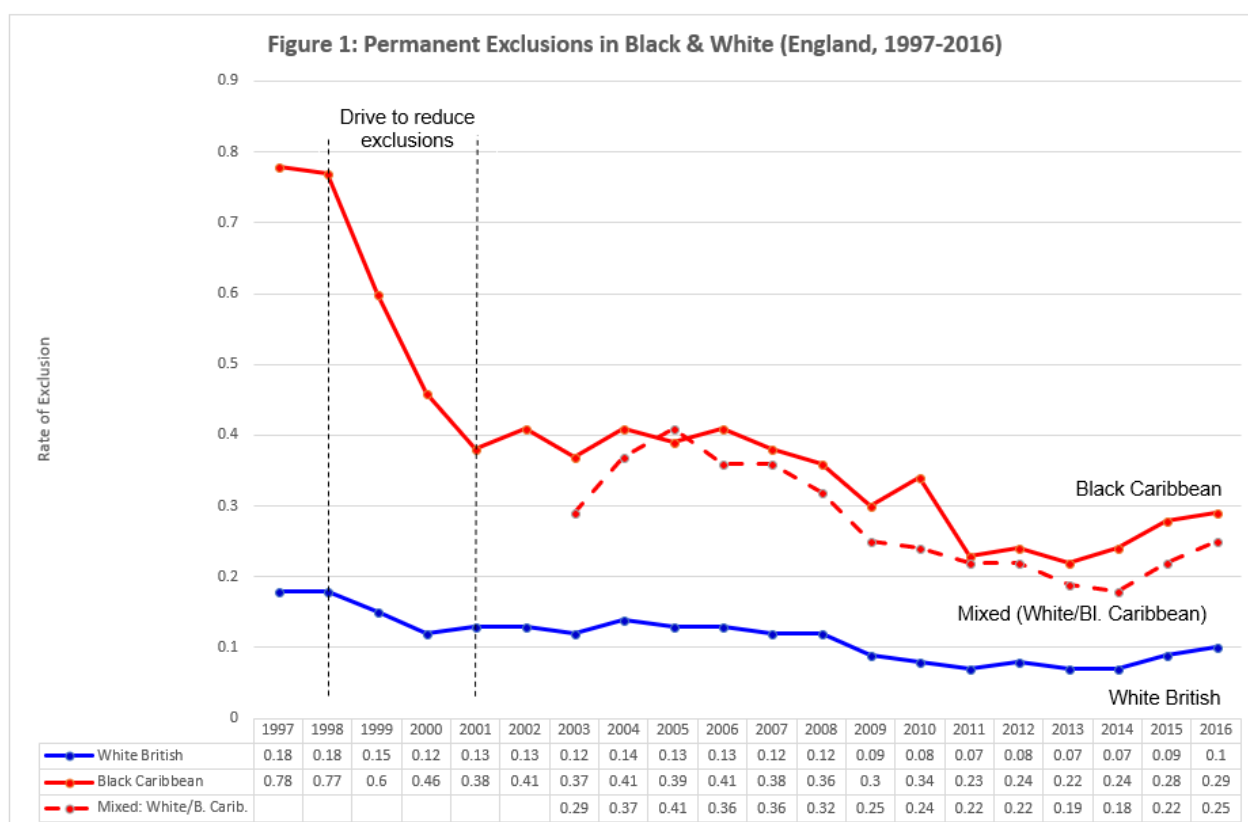|	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
White British	0.18	0.18	0.15	0.12	0.13	0.13	0.12	0.14	0.13	0.13	0.12	0.12	0.09	0.08	0.07	0.08	0.07	0.07	0.09	0.1
Black Caribbean	0.78	0.77	0.6	0.46	0.38	0.41	0.37	0.41	0.39	0.41	0.38	0.36	0.3	0.34	0.23	0.24	0.22	0.24	0.28	0.29
Mixed: White/B. Carib.							0.29	0.37	0.41	0.36	0.36	0.32	0.25	0.24	0.22	0.22	0.19	0.18	0.22	0.25

Figure 1 (above) shows twenty years of official exclusions data in England; separate data for students of 'Mixed' ethnic heritage was not published until 2003.[8] Two important issues are immediately clear; first, *throughout the period Black Caribbean and Mixed: White/Black Caribbean students were consistently and significantly more likely to be permanently excluded than their White British peers*. Second, the over-representation of Black Caribbean students fell dramatically between 1998 and 2001 when there was a government drive to reduce the number of exclusions, in response to the first report of the Social Exclusion Unit.[9] Unfortunately, the improvement ceased when the pressure to reduce exclusions was lifted.

The persistence of Black over-exclusion
It is possible to calculate the relative chances of permanent exclusion for one group of students in relation to another; this is known as an *odds ratio*. Figure 2 (below) shows the odds of permanent exclusion for Black Caribbean students relative to their White British counterparts. If Black Caribbean and White British students were equally likely to be excluded the odds ratio would be 1. A figure greater than 1 indicates the

greater likelihood of exclusion for Black Caribbean students. As is clear from Figure 2, *in the twenty years of data that are currently available, Black Caribbean students have rarely been less than three-times more likely to be excluded than their White British peers; there have been years when the odds have been greater than four-times more likely.*

Figure 2: The Odds of Permanent Exclusion
(Black Caribbean students relative to White British peers). England 1997-2016
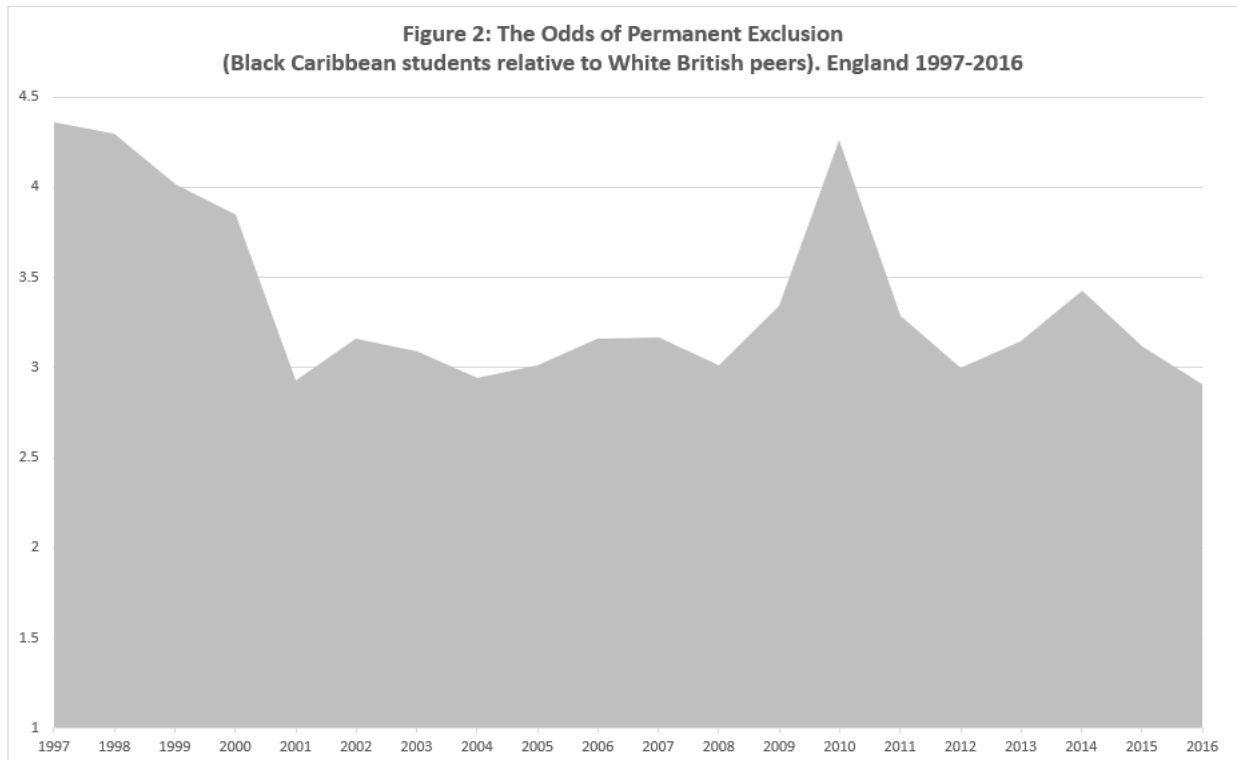
The problem starts immediately and persists throughout the education system
There is a common belief that addressing exclusions requires a particular focus on secondary schools (because this is where most permanent exclusions occur). Unfortunately, *the problem of the over-exclusion of Black students is present from the earliest stages of education.*
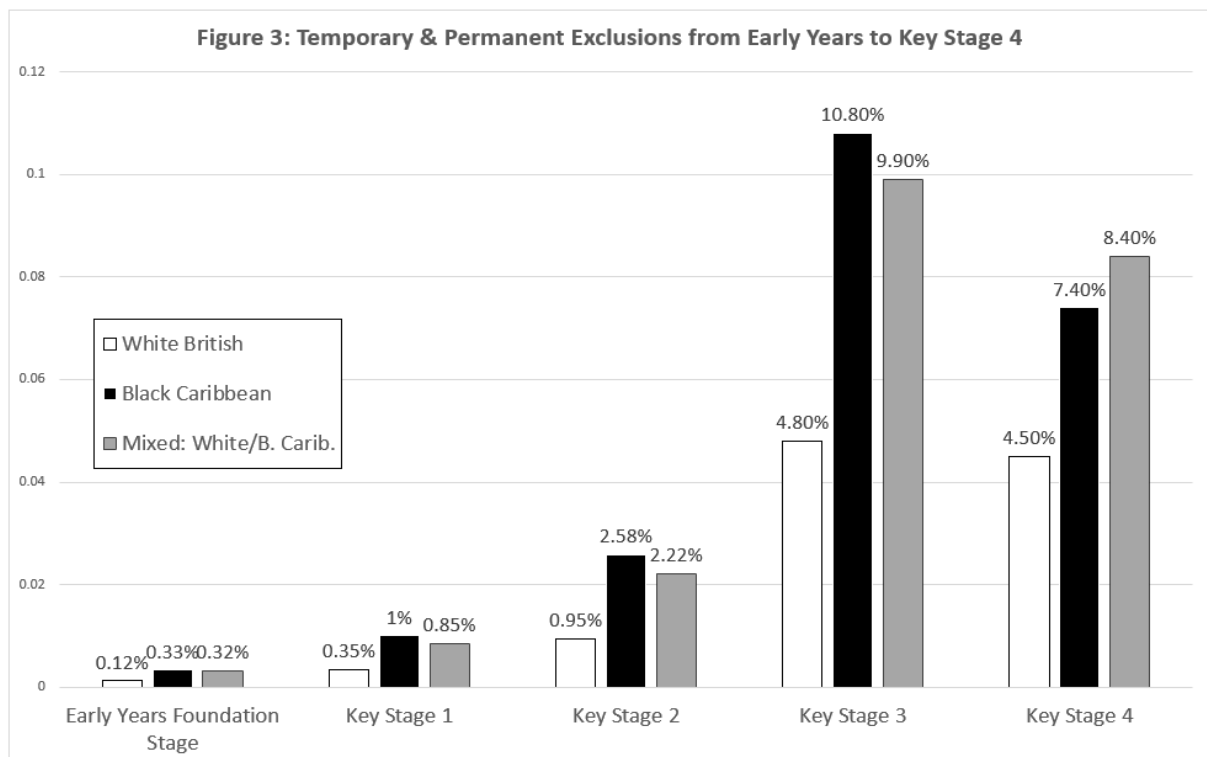

Figure 3: Temporary & Permanent Exclusions from Early Years to Key Stage 4

Figure 3 (above) shows the rates of exclusion (combining both temporary and permanent) for students at each key stage of the education system.[10] The pattern of Black over-exclusion is present throughout the system; from the Early Years Foundation Stage (when children are aged 4 or 5) through to Key Stage 4 (students aged 15 to 16).

The problem of exclusions in Years 9 to 11
The *Call for Evidence* noted the higher than average proportion of Black students who receive one or more fixed term exclusion overall. However, there is a particularly important, and largely unrecognized, problem of students being excluded during their final years of compulsory education (Years 9 to 11). Exclusion during this period, even a temporary exclusion, can have disastrous consequences for the students' preparation for their final GCSE examinations. In view of this, the data in Figure 4 are a major cause for concern.
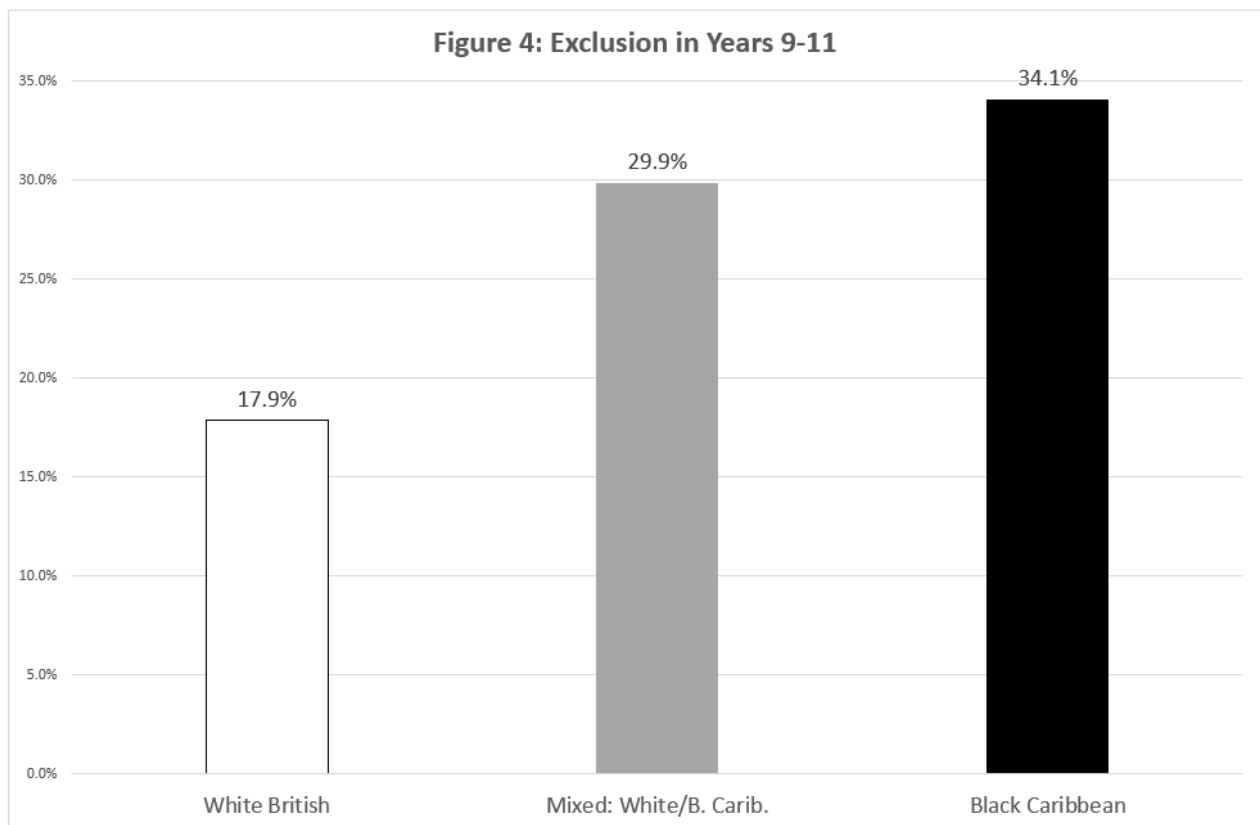

Figure 4: Exclusion in Years 9-11

Figure 4 shows the proportion of students who received at least one exclusion (temporary or permanent) in the final three years of secondary school.[11] *More than one third of Black Caribbean students were excluded at least once*; compared with almost 30% of Mixed: White/Black Caribbean students and around 18% of their White British peers.

WHY DOES THIS KEEP HAPPENING?
Statistical methods are very useful for identifying the broad contours of social problems but much less insightful in relation to the complex and shifting social processes that lie behind the numbers. Qualitative research is much better suited to exploring social processes, e.g. through the use of school observation and drawing on interviews with teachers, parents and students.

Stereotyping, unconscious bias and institutional racism
Qualitative research, over several decades and on both sides of the Atlantic, has revealed a consistent pattern whereby Black students experience systematically more negative teacher expectations than their White peers of the same gender and social class background.[12]

Put simply, despite the best of intentions and sometimes without their conscious awareness of any discriminatory effect, *White teachers tend to view Black students as more likely to cause trouble than to excel academically.* Many terms have been used to describe this situation: currently 'unconscious bias' is a popular term, partly as a means of emphasizing that the processes are not necessarily crude cases of overt race discrimination. When this kind of stereotyping becomes part of the fabric of school it is a textbook example of *institutional racism* – a term once prominent in policy (following *the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry* of 1999)[13] but now apparently out of favour.

Gender and Social Class
This problem is especially pronounced for *Black boys and young men*. Contrary to widespread assumptions, this pattern is *not* merely a reflection of social class. For example, in the largest-ever research of its kind, Nicola Rollock and her colleagues interviewed 62 Black *middle class* parents who self-identified their family origins as Black Caribbean.[14] The parents described situations where Black boys were frequently viewed as a challenge and blamed for disciplinary issues, even when *they* had been on the receiving end of violent assaults by White peers. In the following quotation, for example, Felicia (a pseudonym) – a senior solicitor - describes what happened after she alerted her son's secondary school to the fact that he was being racially bullied. Although the school seemed initially supportive they took no action to address the situation. When Felicia queried the lack of action she was shocked by the headteacher's response:

> 'I had a stinker of a letter back from him essentially suggesting that my son was some sort of latent gangster (…) that he talked to some of his peers, who said they found him *an intimidating presence*, all sorts of things! If you'd looked at his school reports for those four years, there's never been any suggestion of bad behaviour, in fact most of the teachers say he's a nice boy. That his peers found him an intimidating presence, that something about the *rap culture*, he talked about specifically about *bling* (…) basically telling me off about this monster I've produced.'[15]

Even more common was a situation where Black boys and young men were worn down by the *cumulative* impact of incessant disciplinary punishments for minor infractions, often where White students involved in the same activity went unpunished. The same processes have been identified in different parts of the country in projects separated by decades.[16]

The use of exclusion in response to a cumulative pattern of behaviour is extremely important. The public perception of exclusion is generally as a response to extreme, usually violent, episodes of misbehaviour. But statistics consistently reveal that the principal single reason for permanent exclusion is much less extreme but cumulative problems of *persistent disruption*. Once again, no ethnic breakdown is publicly available in relation to the reasons for exclusion but US research clearly indicates that African American students are subject to more severe disciplinary reactions for relatively lesser infractions; it is likely that such patterns are true in England also.[17]

Academies and exclusions
Publicly available statistics are not conducive to a detailed examination of the rates of exclusion by ethnic origin in different types of school. However, it should be noted that many advocacy groups who work with, and on behalf of, Black parents report a strong suspicion that Academy schools do not take a fair share of Black Caribbean and Mixed: White/Black Caribbean students but that they do exclude them at a frequency which is even greater than the national averages. This was certainly an issue in the early days of academization:

> 'Academies permanently exclude pupils at roughly twice the rate of LA-maintained secondary schools (…) In academies the relatively high rate of exclusion among several groups is striking. Black pupils are generally the most likely to be excluded from academies (…) The black Caribbean rate is 3.6 times that for whites in an LA-maintained secondary school.'[18]

More scrutiny of the racialized patterns of achievement and exclusion in academy schools is urgently required; if such patterns do exist they should be addressed as a matter of priority; if such patterns do not exist, the data could help to ally the fears that many community members express.

WHAT CAN BE DONE?

The persistent nature of the over-exclusion of Black and Mixed: White/Black Caribbean students suggests that the underlying issues are complex and cannot easily be solved through simple entreaties to change behaviour for the better. Building on the insights of past research, we suggest the following actions as key first-steps at a system-wide level.

Targeted Action: as we have noted above (see Figure 1) the biggest fall in Black rates of permanent exclusion were associated with a deliberate and high-profile government drive to reduce the number of exclusions. This clearly demonstrates that the rate of permanent exclusion *can* be influenced where there is the political will and, perhaps, confirms that a higher proportion of Black student exclusions are for less serious offences, where alternative sanctions can more easily be found (when there is encouragement to do so).

Ofsted: scrutiny by the official schools inspectorate is one of the biggest single drivers of change in the education system. A major two-year research project recently examined the changes that had happened in the 20 years following the murder of Stephen Lawrence.[19] As part of the project the researchers interviewed a range of educational stakeholders, including community advocates, headteachers, educational consultants and civil servants; their overwhelming view was that race equality had ceased to be an important issue for most schools as soon as it was downgraded in standing and no longer required as a mandatory aspect of Ofsted inspections:

> 'over the last five years the focus has completely gone … race … or any type of equality just isn't a factor".[20]

Initial Teacher Education: there is currently no formal requirement for trainee teachers to undertake serious work in relation to unconscious bias and patterns of discrimination related to race and ethnic origin. This cannot be defensible in view of the decades of research that confirms persistent patterns of race inequity in school experience and achievement.

Meaningful Equality Impact Analyses: The requirement for policy proposals to be subject to Equality Impact Assessments arose directly from the *Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report*. Potentially this was a very important development, meant to anticipate possible negative unintended consequences *before* policies are rolled out nationally. In practice these assessments have often been done hurriedly and with an eye to justifying, rather than scrutinizing, a policy. The Education Select Committee recently suggested making more rigorous impact assessments part of the remit for a *Social Justice Commission*, to replace the Social Mobility Commission.[21] We strongly endorse this suggestion.

Better Data: Data alone solves nothing; but the government's commitment to greater transparency around issues of social injustice – seen most clearly in the publication of the *Ethnicity Facts and Figures Website* - displays a welcome commitment to the power of knowledge and understanding as a driver to positive action. We welcome this development and suggest that the statistics would be easier to understand, and more effective, if official reports adopted a different approach to analyses in relation to ethnic origin.

Understandings of ethnic origin, and ideas about 'race', are constantly shifting and frequently controversial; there is no simple or straightforward way of categorizing people in relation to such terms. Nevertheless, some current practices could be refined quite easily, for example:

- **'Asian' is not a useful category**: official reports frequently use the term 'Asian' to refer to composite statistics for people categorized as Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi. These groups have very different social, political, economic and demographic characteristics, to simply subsume them under a single category is not merely simplistic and patronizing, it also obscures important differences. For example, Indian students achieve, on average, better than their White peers but this is not the case for Pakistani students. Such differences are erased by the use of a crude catch-all 'Asian' category.

- **Treating 'Chinese' students as a major category is misleading**: the same reports that present data on a composite 'Asian' group tend to also present findings on Chinese students as a separate

'major' ethnic grouping. Nowhere is a rationale offered for this. There are many problems with this approach, perhaps the most serious is that the categories 'Chinese', 'Asian' and 'Black' are frequently cited together without reference to their very differently sized populations: Chinese students account for 0.4% of state secondary school students compared with 5.5% Black and 10.3% Asian.[22] Listing Chinese students as a 'major' ethnic group gives a false sense of their equivalence to the 'Asian' category which is, in fact, 25 times larger.

Gillborn & Demack, *Centre for Research in Race & Education* (CRRE) May 2018

NOTES

[1] Department for Education (DfE)(2018) *Exclusions Review: Call for Evidence*. London: DfE. https://consult.education.gov.uk/school-absence-and-exclusions-team/exclusions-review-call-for-evidence/

[2] Equality and Human Rights Commission (2010) *How fair is Britain? Equality, Human Rights and Good Relations in 2010. The First Triennial Review*. London: EHRC; Gillborn, D. (2008) *Racism and Education: Coincidence or Conspiracy?* London: Routledge.

[3] Greater London Authority (GLA)(2003) *Towards a Vision of Excellence: London Schools and the Black Child 2002 Conference Report*. London: GLA; John, G. (2015) *Denying Children's Rights by Stealth*, http://www.gusjohn.com/2015/02/denying-childrens-rights-by-stealth; Richardson, B. (Ed.)(2005) *Tell It Like It Is: how our schools fail Black children.* London: Bookmarks.

[4] Quoted in Warmington, P., Gillborn, D., Rollock, N. & Demack, S. (2017): "They can't handle the race agenda": stakeholders' reflections on race and education policy, 1993–2013, *Educational Review*, DOI: 10.1080/00131911.2017.1353482 (p. 8).

[5] The *Ethnicity Facts and Figures Website* https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/

[6] For the sake of clarity, we use the official census categories but it should be remembered that ethnic self-identification is a complex issue and these terms are not always the preferred labels for the people involved.

[7] Gillborn, D., Rollock, N., Warmington, P. & Demack, S. (2016) *Race, Racism and Education: inequality, resilience and reform in policy & practice.* London: Society for Educational Studies. http://soc-for-ed-studies.org.uk/documents/GillbornD-et-al_Race-Racism-and-Education.pdf

[8] Data are taken directly from relevant Statistical First Release (SFR) publications.

[9] Social Exclusion Unit (1998) *Truancy and School Exclusion Report by the Social Exclusion Unit*. Cm 3957. London: SEU.

[10] Data are taken from the National Pupil Database for the 2012/13 cohort.

[11] This data is drawn from the Longitudinal Study of Young People in England (LSYPE) and relates to students who were in Year 11 in 2006.

[12] For summaries see Gillborn, D. & Gipps, C. (1996) *Recent Research on the Achievements of Ethnic Minority Pupils.* Report for the Office for Standards in Education. London: HMSO; Gillborn, D. & Mirza, HS. (2000) *Educational Inequality: Mapping Race, Class and Gender - A Synthesis of Research Evidence*. Report #HMI 232. London: Office for Standards in Education, and Gillborn, D., Rollock, N., Vincent, C. & Ball, SJ (2012) 'You got a pass, so what more do you want?': race, class and gender intersections in the educational experiences of the Black middle class, *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 15:1, 121-139, DOI:10.1080/13613324.2012.638869

[13] Macpherson, W. (1999) *The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry*. CM 4262-I. London: The Stationery Office.

[14] Rollock, N., Gillborn, D., Vincent, C. & Ball, S.J. (2015) *The Colour of Class: the educational strategies of the Black middle classes*. London: Routledge.

[15]   Quoted by Rollock et al (2015) *op. cit.*, p. 86.

[16]   Cf. Gillborn, D. (1990) *'Race', Ethnicity and Education: Teaching and Learning in Multi-Ethnic Schools.* London: Unwin Hyman/Routledge; Gillborn & Mira (2000) *op. cit.*, and Rollock et al (2015) *op. cit.*.

[17]   See Anyon, Y., Lechuga, C., Ortega, D., Downing, B., Greer, E. & Simmons, J. (2018) An exploration of the relationships between student racial background and the school sub-contexts of office discipline referrals: a critical race theory analysis, *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 21:3, 390-406 & Monroe, C.R. (2013) Discipline and diversity in the suburban US South, *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 16:2, 182-202, DOI: 10.1080/13613324.2011.645575

[18]   Gillborn, D. & Drew, D. (2010) Academy Exclusions, *Runnymede Bulletin*, Issue 362, Summer 2010, pp. 12-13 (p. 13).

[19]   Gillborn et al (2016) *op. cit.*

[20]   Quoted in Warmington et al. (2017) *op. cit*. p. 11.

[21]   Education Select Committee (2018) The future of the Social Mobility Commission. https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201719/cmselect/cmeduc/866/86602.htm

[22]   DfE (2016) *Schools, pupils and their characteristics: January 2016*. SFR 20/2016 (p. 9). London: DfE.