



Reach Society

Building Connections

www.reachsociety.com Email: info@reachsociety.com



Patrons: Lord Herman Ouseley, Prof Trevor Williams, Mr John Budu-Aggrey, Prof Sir Geoff Palmer & Mrs Marva Rollins OBE Newsletter: 016

Welcome: Dear Friends/Supporters, here's our first newsletter of 2021 and hope you are all safe and well, given the current circumstances and thank everyone for your continued help and support.



About Reach Society: Inspiring Young People since 2010: Our core purpose is *to encourage, motivate and inspire our young people* to development of their potential. The picture shows one of our Role Models 'inspiring' at

our Annual Careers Conference which took place in 2019, at Royal National Hotel. **IMPORTANT INFORMATION:** We are pleased to announce that Reach Society will be hosting a **Virtual Careers Conference 6th-9th April 2021**. Please click on this link for further details: <https://www.reachsociety.com/events/the-9th-careers-conference-4-day-virtual-event> Please regular check our website for updates/registration details.



The Society's submissions to the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities - Last year the

government set up an independent Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities in order to review inequalities in the UK. With regard to the call for evidence the Society supported by experts within the community submitted evidence in four areas: education, health, employment and the criminal justice system; which we will serialise in future newsletters. Below is a summary of our submission in the area of education which falls into three categories – primary, secondary and higher education sectors.

Primary sector

1. Key stage 2 attainment – there is a culture of low expectation of Black British pupils, especially the boys of Caribbean background. This culture presents itself as staff not encouraging these pupils nor setting them stretching targets. This culture is also defined by harsher punishment of Black pupils relative to their white peers for the same behaviour, which generates resentment in Black pupils from an early age, who learn to see teachers as routinely unfair in their decision making. The cumulative effect is that the average attainment by end key stage 2 on Black pupils, especially the boys of Caribbean background, in reading and maths is they are well behind their peers of all other ethnic groups. Typically the national average attainment for pupils of Chinese and Asian backgrounds is in the range 80 to 70 percent, while that for Black pupils is roughly 60 percent.

This situation can be mitigated by the Department for Education by improving the OFSTED framework for assessing the performance of schools. Standards and targets for Black pupil attainment must be introduced into the OFSTED framework, and schools need to be held accountable for any failure to achieve these targets.

2. Inclusive curriculum gap - It is common knowledge that the existing curriculum does not reflect the diversity in British society. Consequently, there is virtually nothing of an inspirational nature in it to inspire or build cultural esteem in Black pupils, or give them a clear sense of inclusion in the

society. In order to overcome this omission the DFE needs to reform the curriculum for primary education so that it will inspire British pupils in the modern Black community. Such a curriculum should also help white staff to reframe their attitude and expectation of these pupils.

3. Leadership score card - The score cards for the leadership teams in primary schools must also be reformed. They need to include a requirement for the hiring of staff who are skilled in the teaching and nurturing of diverse groups of pupils. Furthermore, school leadership teams must continue to monitor the performance of staff to ensure that any corrosive impact on Black pupils is quickly identified and mitigated.

Secondary sector

1. Misperception of Black students – There is a chronic problem in this sector of staff believing that Black students do not have the capability to excel in the education system at this stage. Consequently, most white staff do not go the extra mile to encourage and inspire these pupils. This negative attitude in predominantly white staff must be challenged and removed.

2. Poor quality teachers – Many inner city schools have become the hiding places for some poor quality teachers who are incapable of inspiring pupils or demonstrating the personal qualities of effective role models; and this cohort of teachers has caused significant damage to the educational development of large numbers of Black students in this stage of their education. Teacher quality and professionalism must rise and senior leadership teams must be held accountable for maintaining this standard.

3. Poor school leadership – The longstanding issue of systemic racism impacting Black students has been largely ignored by head teachers and senior leadership for some time. This climate has left Black students vulnerable and exposed to destructive and demotivating treatment by staff who are motivated by negative stereotypical views. This culture has resulted in the loss of too many Black pupils, especially boys, to pupil referral units (or PRU) due to permanent exclusions from which there is virtually no return to regular schooling. PRU students are then set up to fail when they leave education with very little qualifications and so cannot compete for employment. The mentoring of troubled pupils by senior staff and their early intervention are a well tried and proven approaches for helping these troubled pupils to remain in mainstream education. Government has the power to mandate all schools to return to such a practice for the benefit of these pupils.

4. National strategy for education – The foregoing issues need to be addressed as a matter of urgency. An approach for mitigating the foregoing areas of systemic racism is the introduction of a national strategy for education which sets out clear standards and includes targets for ending under-attainment of specific ethnic groups, and the key expectations of senior leaders.

Central to such a strategy must be a diverse and inclusive curriculum that impacts all subjects (not just history); and a requirement that leadership teams ensure that all staff fully understand how to behave professionally in ways that are free of racism and bigotry; fully understand how to safeguard all



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students; and are fully capable of inspiring students of all ethnic and social backgrounds. The DfE has the power to introduce the required changes and new standards for transforming school culture, the quality of education for Black students, and indeed for students of all ethnic backgrounds.

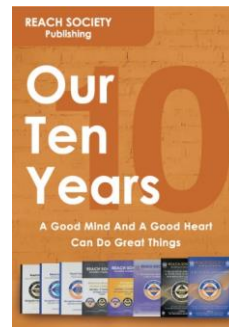
Higher education sector

1. Undergraduate awarding gap – The issue of the proportion of first and upper second degrees awarded to Black undergraduates relative to their white peers is a vexing matter. Typically 60 percent of Black undergraduates are awarded first and upper second class degrees whereas the proportion for their white peers is greater than 80 percent; a clear disparity of roughly 20 percentage points. The percentage of the high grades awarded to other ethnic groups (Asian and minority ethnic) is also below their white peers.

This disparity is deeply concerning because many Black undergraduates who enter university with top A-level grades are not awarded top degree passes. Whereas, this disconnection (between entry A-levels and class of final degree) is less apparent for white undergraduates. This issue is a reflection of the way that teaching staff are assessing these cohorts of undergraduates. Universities need to be held accountable for this awarding gap and where blatant system racism is uncovered the Office for Students must have the power to issue financial penalties.

2. Undergraduate relationship gap – The anecdotal evidence is that in general the relationship between Black undergraduates and university teaching staff is not close when compared with many of their white peers. This relationship gap can have a profound impact on the future prospects of Black undergraduates. One area where this is apparent is the number of Black graduates invited by senior academics to undertake postgraduate research. These invitations are offered disproportionately to white graduates, and are seldom offered to their Black peers. This shows itself in the severe underrepresentation of British Black graduates applying for postgraduate research grants. This disparity needs to be addressed and mitigated.

3. Black staff in higher education – The percentage of senior Black staff holding the status of professor is believed to be less than one percent despite the modern Black community making up roughly five percent of the population. The rate of progression of Black staff in higher education is typically slower than their white peers with similar accomplishments. This disparity is another indicator of systemic racism in the sector. There is a need for a diversity and inclusion framework in the sector that will increase access and opportunity for Black academics into funded research. This longstanding disparity in funded research needs to be addressed and mitigated. It is our belief that the Covid-19 BAME review 2020, which was chaired by Professor Kevin Fenton, is one area that would benefit from such a framework. Indeed, there are several other research areas in the health sector that could be similarly impacted.



The Society's latest publication

We have published five inspirational books including our latest entitled – “Our Ten Years: A Good Mind And A Good Heart Can Do Great Things.” To purchase a copy of this new publication and also any of the other books in the collection just visit our website:

<https://www.reachsociety.com/books/>

Reach Society's Network Conversations - On the last Friday of every month (with the exception of August and December) Black professionals meet to discuss issues that affect our community; with the aim of finding solutions and building amity. Since April our events have been taking place via Zoom.



Here is a flavour of some of our debates: **The impact of predicted grades on black pupils' progression and attainment.** Lead contributors Oveta McInnis, Peter Dennis, Karl Murray; others: Dr Winston Morgan, Adrian Rollins. **Black Health Matters: A discussion about health and wellbeing.** Lead by: Prof Frank Chinegwundoh MBE, Tai Ibitoye RDA, Amaeze Madukah, Dr John Ndikum, Dr Melrose Stewart MBE, Tutiette Thomas, FMHC and Lyndon Wissart. Other contributors included Rudi Page. **Young, gifted & black: voices of the next generation.** Contributors: Sarah Adama, Tamilore Awosile, Shani Glover, De-Shaine Murray, Jordan Barrett, Paul Daramola, Chantelle Lewis, Khadija Owusu, Tre Ventour and Marlon Wilson. **The BLM protests: Where do we go from here?** Lead Contributors: Dr Marilyn Comrie OBE FRSA, Solomon Elliott, Dr Nelda Frater, GP, Dr Karl George MBE, Sandra Kerr CBE, Dr Victor Olisa QPM, Prof Sir Geoff Palmer, Dr Jeffery Quayle FRSA FCCT. Others: Nana Agyeman, Stephen Akinsanya, Adrienne Johnson, Sonia Winfield, De-Shane Murray, Judy Richards, Prof Frank Chinegwundoh MBE. These conversations are open to any individual and for more info click here: [Events | Reach Society](#) ; or contact Dr Donald Palmer: db_palmer@yahoo.co.uk