Perspectives on the Educational Experiences of African/Caribbean Boys.

by

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Abstract

This thesis critically explores*: "Perspectives on the educational experiences of African Caribbean boys".* It draws upon the earlier literature in the field of secondary schools (Mac an Ghaill, 1988 and 1994, Gillborn, 1995, Sewell, 1997, Blair, 2001, LDA 2003). But this study adopts a comparative approach, specifically focusing on Black boys current experiences of both state secondary schooling and other areas of education, namely, a supplementary school and a youth organisation.

Recent statistics have indicated a continuing high level of underachievement among African-Caribbean boys studying in British schools. The DFES 2006 reports that only 39% of Black pupils achieve 5+ A*-C GCSE grades which denotes that Black boys are among the lowest achievers at secondary school level as compared with pupils of other ethnic minority communities. The DFES further reports that Black pupils are more likely to be excluded from schools than pupils from any other group (Education and Skills, 2006). This study will go beyond the statistics by examining the reasons as to why Black boys have negative experiences in their secondary school education which is linked to their historically-based underachievement in secondary schools.

The literature review of the study explores the academic literature/reports concerning African-Caribbean pupils' underachievement (Mac an Ghaill, 1988, Wright, 1992, Benskin 1994, Gillborn, 1995, Sewell 1997, Ofsted, 1999, Blair 2001, LDA 2003, Education and Skills, 2006). The discussion reflects a number of inter-related issues that are shaped by the intersection of race, class and gender. These issues include: racialisation and accompanying negative stereotypes of the Black community and more specifically portraying Black masculinity as a problem, lack of respect for Black boys and their culture, peer group influence, and differences in treatment by teachers towards Black boys, as some of the significant factors affecting Black boys' negative experiences at secondary schools and their resulting underachievement. In addition to examining the impact of these factors, as indicated above, this thesis critically examines two other areas of education, a supplementary school and a youth organization. Earlier studies have identified such sites as a powerful source of positive experiences for secondary school Black boys.

This comparative, multidisciplinary approach enables original data to be gathered, in probing into the reasons as to why these institutions are successful in making Black boys educational experiences more meaningful. Over a course of six months, 36 participants were involved in this research study. The boys, their parents and their teachers were interviewed at the secondary and supplementary school. At the youth organisation, the Black boys and their youth workers were interviewed. The research used a wide range of methods, such as semi-structured interviews, participant-observation and non-participant-observation. This process provided the researcher with the bigger picture, giving insight into why Black boys have negative and positive experiences of education. The study makes a number of recommendations based on the findings, which include: actively recruiting more Black teachers to provide Black pupils with positive role models who understand their culture; employing Black culture/history in schools for the benefit of Black boys and teachers in state secondary schools learning from the other educational sites in terms of curriculum, pedagogy and relations between educators and Black male pupils. Such recommendations have been proposed in potentially being a step towards removing institutional racism

within schools and promoting the career paths of these boys into successful professions.

<u>Dedication</u>

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my deity Amba, Sai baba, my parents, sister, my supervisor and to all those participants who participated in my research study.

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Introduction

Establishing research area of interest

The researcher while being born in England moved at an early age to India and then returned to England in 1988 and entered into the London school system as a primary school student. He had previously only experienced school life in India and soon came to realize the differences that existed. Some of the teachers were very friendly and helpful and others were at times unpleasant. Even at the age of eight the researcher could differentiate the indifference felt towards him. For example, in a classroom setting one of the teachers generally ignored him but gave her attention to other students; however she became effusive in her interest in him when other visitors came into the school. This particular experience has remained embedded in the researcher's mind. Over the years the researcher has been taught by teachers of many ethnic backgrounds but has never perceived any of them as being racist.

The researcher's interest in Black cultural issues began during his A' Levels, when he realized that many of his Black classmates from year 11 were no longer present at his sixth form college. The teachers explained to him that many Black students did not attend A' Level courses because either they had found jobs or college courses. It struck him at the time that there was something slightly odd about this explanation.

When the researcher was at university he discovered the subject of Educational Studies. This discipline allowed close investigation of the way ethnicity could influence societal

organisation. This meant he could study Black ethnicity in a sociological and educational context. The researcher also became aware of media representations of young Black males as a 'problematic demographic'. For example, *The Times Educational Supplement* reported Ofsted's (1999) concern over a number of years with the negative progress of Black males in school. The researcher's own experience of his Black male peers at school and such reports helped to create a research interest in the issue. Hallam and Rhamie (2003) in 'The Influence of Home, School and Community on African-Caribbean Academic Success in the United Kingdom' point to the persistent issue of African/Caribbean underachievement:

> Since the 1960s Afro-Caribbean children have been labelled and identified as underachievers (see Taylor; 1981, Tomlinson; 1983). Research in the 1980s and 1990s reflected earlier findings with pupils' continuing to make less progress on average than other pupils' (Maughan et al; 1985, Mortimore et al; 1988, Drew and Gray; 1991, Plewis and Veltman; 1994, Gillborn and Gipps; 1996, Ofsted; 1999, Strand; 1999) (Hallam and Rhamie, 2003, p101).

It was interesting for the researcher to note that more recent publications such as the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) *Ethnicity and Education. The Evidence on Minority Ethnic Pupils' aged 5-16* (2006) continued to identify the trend reported by Hallam and Rhamie that African/Caribbean boys were amongst the lowest GCSE achievers. Similarly, the London Development Agency Report (LDA), *The educational experiences and achievements of Black boys in London schools, 2000-2003* commissioned by the then London Mayor, Ken Livingstone, reaffirmed that the underachievement of Black boys was a continuing issue. The persistent nature of this problem has inspired the researcher to conduct a research study on the issues involved,

but remembering his own experiences of schooling, he wanted to ensure that the Black boys themselves were able to tell their own story.

Aim of the study

The aim of this study then is to investigate the experiences affecting the success and failure of Black males in English state secondary schools. It is concerned primarily with Black boys since they have been identified as one of the social groups having highly negative experiences within mainstream secondary educational institutions (Sewell, 1997; Blair, 2001). For example, there is research, which suggested that the authority structure in secondary schools contributed to Black boys developing an anti-school stance, which impacted in a negative way on their educational achievement (Mac an Ghaill, 1988, 1994, Sewell, 1997, Blair, 2001). Similarly, Department of Employment statistics pointed to Black Caribbean boys (and others of Black origin) having had the highest rates of exclusion from state maintained schools (See www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SBU/b000209/980-s3.htm and www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SBU/b000209/980-anx.htm).

The study is situated within the context of two fields of educational research. The first has focussed upon secondary schooling and Black male pupils (Mac an Ghaill, 1988 and 1994, Gillborn, 1995, Sewell, 1997, Blair, 2001, LDA 2003). The second field of inquiry has explored Black educational organizations (Reay and Mirza, 1997). Alongside the research in a secondary school, this study will also use comparative research findings

from two 'non-school' institutions, a supplementary school and a youth organization in order to gain additional data about Black boys' experiences of secondary school. Alongside the often negative experiences of secondary school reported by the first field of inquiry, the second field offers the possibility of examining more positive engagement with and response to Black educators/youth workers in the 'non-school' sites. The study is particularly concerned with probing the reasons as to why these institutions were successful in making Black boys' educational experiences more meaningful and the implications of this for secondary schooling. It is further hoped that this comparative approach will highlight the specific impact of mainstream secondary schooling on Black boys and their responses, in relation to research findings on other social groups, for example, white working class boys, Black girls and other ethnic minority groups, who it is reported have negative experiences of schooling and low achievement. The specificity of contemporary Black boys' experiences of school life should be further enabled by the researcher's framing of the study in drawing upon key social and educational concepts-culture, identity and identity formations; masculinities; Black culture and racial stereotyping. These concepts are derived from the literature which has addressed the issue of Black underachievement in schools. Some of these concepts are contested and this will be explored in the literature review.

Methods

The study adopts a multidisciplinary approach to gather original data. In order to investigate Black boys' schooling and their own accounts of their experiences both fairly

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and accurately, the data presented in this study are drawn from a large number of interviews: with Black boys, Black, Asian and White teachers, youth workers and Black parents. Over a course of six months, 36 participants were involved in this research study. The study used a wide range of methods, including semi-structured interviews, participant-observation and non-participant-observation (Bouma, 2000; Brewer, 2000). This personal interaction was carried out in the best social scientific way possible (Silverman, 2001; Mc Namee, 2002; Ritchie et al, 2003). Alternative data gathering approaches, such as questionnaires or other statistical information were considered, but it was felt by the researcher that they were not appropriate to generate material that is primarily concerned with research participants' meanings of their social lives. As Thomas (1996, p.770) points out, qualitative methods enable the researcher to investigate, meaning, human value, social processes and the perceptions and traditions of social groups. Reading through the data presented in this study, the researcher feels that it is representative of these boys' descriptions and explanations of their educational lives. Further, because the researcher wanted to engage with and understand the educational experiences of Black boys through their 'eyes'/'voices' he decided that it would be useful to look beyond the school gate at other sites of education and learning. He decided therefore, to talk with and observe Black boys not only in a secondary school setting, but also in the setting of a supplementary school and a youth club. The latter was a site of informal learning. By opening out the scope for research fieldwork, the researcher hoped to capture different dimensions of the boys' experiences and to see if their perceptions on education were consistent or different according to location.

<u>Terminology</u>

For the purposes of this study the ethnic group referred to as African/Caribbean were people who had a Black African or Caribbean ancestry only. In terms of the British census and various educational statistics this was a demographic group, an ethnic group and not a race. The term racism in this thesis refers to systematic discrimination both within the structures of the institution of schooling and interaction between individuals based on negative perception of assumed racial characteristics.

<u>Outline of the thesis</u>

The study is divided into seven chapters. Chapter One offers a review of the research literature, focusing upon the experiences and achievement of African/Caribbean boys in English state maintained schools. The second chapter provides a discussion of the rationale behind the chosen research methodology, emphasising the developmental aspects of refining the topics of research conversation. Chapter three is short, but important as it points to difficulties encountered in translating the proposed data gathering methods into practice. The next three chapters report and analyse the data gathered in the three sites of learning - the secondary school, the supplementary school and the youth organisation. The final chapter outlines conclusions, makes recommendations for further research and offers suggestions for ways forward in the area of Black male education.

Chapter 1

Literature Review: Research on the educational experiences of African/Caribbean boys

Introduction

The research focus for this thesis is *"Perspectives on the educational experiences of African/Caribbean boys."* African/Caribbean boys' achievement and their experience in education is the main subject of this review. A 2006 Department for Education and Skills (DFES) report on ethnicity and education showed that Black Caribbean boys had the lowest attainment at GCSE of all ethnic groups who were regular school attendees. The problem of attainment at secondary school for African/Caribbean boys has been recorded consistently since the 1970s. Recent statistical evidence from the Education and Skills 2006 report will be included to provide current information on the continuing trend of school attainment amongst Black pupils.

A common theme in the research literature, including earlier work such as Bernard Coard's (1971) study of how the British education system failed Black boys or the government sponsored Rampton Report (1981), which recognised the existence of racism in the British education system, and the more recent work of Maud Blair (2001), is that a high proportion of Black boys find their educational experience to be negative. In this thesis the researcher refers to African/Caribbean boys as the 'problematic demographic'. This is because the literature emphasizes the problems they encounter and the lack of interventions and other educational strategies to help them achieve success. In response

to the schooling of Black boys over the last few decades there have been in the literature diverse explanations and emphases of what is to be done. For example, in a study commissioned by the London Development Agency, *The educational experiences and achievements of Black boys in London schools 2000-2003,* the authors of the report called for an increase in the proportion of Black Minority Ethnic teachers within the educational system, particularly Black teachers, because there was evidence that suggested the latter had better relations with Black boys than White teachers did (see pages 11 and 15 of the recommendation section, recommendation number 32, see also Virk, 1998). Youdell (2004) provides a different focus, exploring the racialisation of London-based Black male pupils, in which she critically discusses the tension between learner identities and sub-cultural identities. Importantly, government reports especially from Ofsted have stated that Black boys in primary school achieved close to the average on entry to secondary school but by the end of year eleven they became amongst the lowest achievers (Ofsted, 1999). This was a primary reason that this review and the work presented in the thesis concentrates on older African/Caribbean students at secondary schools.

Outline of literature review

To engage with the extensive literature on the educational experiences of Black pupils' at secondary schools, this literature review has been divided into the following sections. The first section outlines key concepts that the researcher is using to frame his understanding of Black boys' schooling experiences. The researcher begins with more general concepts from sociological and cultural studies literatures and then draws upon concepts from the

educational literature. These concepts are: culture, identity and identity formations; masculinities; Black culture and racial stereotyping. The next section sets out and reflects on the question of academic achievement and British born, African Caribbean boys in schools. The researcher begins by discussing statistics from *Ethnicity and Education: The Evidence of Minority Ethnic Pupils' aged 5-16*, 2006. This leads onto an examination of current debates that simplistically compare 'Black male failure' and 'Black female success' (hooks, 2004). Looking at earlier work in the literature, including that from Black feminists, reveals a more complex picture. It is suggested that more recently a discourse of 'failing masculinity' has been important in influencing how educational statistics on academic achievement are explained by the media, the government and within schools. Also, it is suggested that alongside comparisons between Black males and females, it is important to look at the question of academic achievement among white pupils and other ethnic minority groups. This, then leads on to a broader discussion of the literature on Black boys and the schooling process including an examination of Black boys' responses in terms of peer group support to racism and the implementation of multi-cultural and anti-racist strategies. In turn, the researcher explores parental and community responses to the schooling of Black boys, within the important context of Black youth organizations and Black supplementary schools. The final section identifies key areas and issues which the literature to date generally fails to address and where this study will seek in part to address.

<u>Theoretical perspectives: Key concepts</u>

Culture, Identity and Identity Formations

The term culture is one of the most difficult and contested concepts in the social sciences

and humanities, which is often defined against the concept of nature (Williams, 1963).

While anthropologists have stressed shared values of a society, more elite definitions

associate culture with traditional literature and arts of 'high culture' sociologists have

developed understandings of culture as the lived 'experience of everyday life', speaking

of mass culture or popular culture (Hall, 1997). Early social science work examined

culture in relation to socialization, which was concerned with the learning of a society's

norms and values. Giddens (1993, p60) describes socialization as: 'the process whereby

the helpless infant gradually becomes a self-aware, knowledgeable person, skilled in the

ways of the culture into which she or he is born'. The family, work, community and peer-

groups have all been researched to understand processes of socialization but perhaps one

of the most important formal agents of socializing young people into society's culture is

education (Bowles and Gintis, 1976). The term culture became widely used during the

1970s, suggesting different meanings depending on context, including class culture,

popular culture, youth culture, gender culture and multi-culture (Du Gay, 1997). During

the 1970s and 1980s many researchers, for example in education, examined different

cultures, including class, race and gender, to help explain institutional inequalities

(Willis, 1977; Amos and Parmar, 1981; Fuller, 1984; Hammersley and Woods, 1984).

More recently in the social sciences, what has been called the 'cultural turn' seems to

have moved away from questions of institutional inequalities to examine cultural

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differences (Gilroy, 1992; Mercer, 1994). For some theorists, such as Bradley (1996), this has meant a move away from social class to explore more seriously questions of gender, race and sexuality. She welcomes the higher profile for the latter but argues for the need to bring these perspectives together. Hall, (1996, p439) provides a definition of culture with this new emphasis on language, culture, representation and difference. He writes that: 'By culture….I mean the actual grounded terrain of practices, representations and customs of any specific society. I also mean the contradictory forms of common sense which have taken root in and helped shape popular culture'. This more recent understanding of culture has placed an emphasis on identity and meaning. One of the key questions of recent research is to examine how cultural identities are produced for individuals and communities. For example, Kath Woodward (2000) entitles her edited collection: *Questioning Identity: Gender, Class, Nation*. She places her text within current rapid global and local social, political and technological change, suggesting three important questions: how are identities formed? To what extent can we shape our own identities? and, are there particular uncertainties about identity at this moment in the UK?

Jenkins (2004), who draws on the work of Barth (1969), Tajfel (1981) and Cohen, (1994) claims that identity was one of the central themes to emerge during the 1990s, with changing and new identities high on the academic and political agenda. He notes:

> Everybody has something to say: anthropologists, geographers, historians, philosophers, political scientists, psychologists, sociologists. From debates about the modernity of self identity to the postmodern and postcolonial fascination with difference, from feminist deconstructions of social conventions to urgent attempts to understand the apparent resurgence of nationalism and ethnic politics, the field is crowded (p.8).

Jenkins also argues that the term identity may be misleading in that it suggests something static. Hence, he emphasises the term identification, suggesting an active process between individuals and collectivities.

Hall, the former director of the CCCS, in the University of Birmingham, is one of the most outstanding scholars in the field providing new theoretical perspectives on how social groups form contemporary identity formations (1991, 1997). He challenges conventional sociological and psychological accounts with their emphasis on a shared historical culture and the search for an authentic true self. For Hall, in current societies, cultural identities as well as having aspects in common also have differences, including around issues of class, gender as well as ethnicity. Hence, when we look at how people produce their identity, we need to examine a range of complex processes.

As pointed out earlier, there has presently in the social sciences, been a shift away from looking at class divisions to a focus on cultural differences, around identities of gender, race and sexuality (Barrett and Phillips, 1992). This has also included a move to include social groups that have tended to be less visible in research terms, often because they – whites, men, heterosexuals - were groups with power, who presented themselves as the 'norm' (Bonnett, 2000). In relation to these social groups, Mercer (1990, p43) argues that: 'identity only becomes an issue when it is in crisis, when something assumed to be fixed, coherent and stable is displaced by the experiences of doubt and uncertainty'. This doubt and uncertainty has partly developed in response to anti-racist, feminist and gay liberation politics (Rutherford, 1990).

Masculinities

During the 1990s in Britain there was an increased visibility about men and masculinity as being gendered categories. However, as major male theorists pointed out, the key starting point of understanding masculinity has been developed by feminist scholars who strived to ensure the concept of gender was seen as of key importance in understanding the social world (Hearn and Morgan, 1990; Connell, 1995; Kimmel, 1997). Bradley (1996, p25) defines gender in the following terms: 'Gender refers to the varied and complex arrangements between men and women, encompassing the organisation of reproduction, the sexual divisions of labour and the cultural definitions of femininity and masculinity'. She describes how earlier feminists coined the term patriarchy to illustrate that power relations were at the centre of social arrangements between men in institutions, such as the state, law, education, workplace, marriage and family life, etc (Oakley, 1972; Cockburn, 1983; Mama, 1984). A key political argument being made is that if women's lives are to change, then men must also change. Bradley also points out that a range of different styles of feminism, including Black, lesbian and post-structuralist feminists, contested the meaning of terms like gender and patriarchy (Carby, 1982; hooks, 1984; Wittig, 1981; Butler, 1990). So, by the 1990s when there were major debates about men and masculinity, academics had a rich vocabulary to draw upon. However, as Hearn and Kimmel (2006, p53) point out: 'Studies of men and masculinities stand in a complex relation to women's studies and feminism', because male theorists often fail to acknowledge the latter work.

Haywood and Mac an Ghaill (2003) in their book, *Men and Masculinities* provide a useful framework to make sense of the explosion of academic work in this area. They maintain that current comments in the media and the academy are often underpinned by sex role theory. For them, sociological theories are able to show the limits of this historical approach which makes the assumption that individuals are made up of a list of fixed gender attributes that can be identified. So, Haywood and Mac an Ghaill argue that:

> Hence a wide range of individual men and male groups, such as effeminate boys and gays, are seen as *not having enough masculinity*, which is explained in terms of deficient levels of testosterone, inadequate role models, or overpowering mothers. In contrast Black boys and working-class boys are seen as having *too much masculinity* (pp7-8).

A main point suggested here is that masculinity cannot be simply generalized against femininity (Whitehead and Barrett, 2001). In order to make sense of men and masculinity, the concepts have to be placed in a historical and cultural context. For example, Skelton (2001, pp40-41) sets out a historical typology of changing masculinities. These include: Conservative; Men's Rights; Spiritual; Pro-feminist; Socialist and Group Specific. A key move away from sex role theory has been to acknowledge that masculinity and femininity need to be understood in the plural, in other words multiplicities of femininities and masculinities. One of the most important contributions to this field of inquiry has been the pro-feminist writer, Connell (1987, 1995, 2000). In his work he claims that we should think of masculinities not simply as different to femininities, but to look at the former in terms of power relations between men and women but also among men. He coined the term masculine hegemony, meaning that in different societies particular styles of masculinity were dominant. Other theorists

have addressed the complex inter-connections between gender, race and class, stressing the multiple dimensions of masculinity (hooks, 1995; Marriott, 2000; Mutua, 2006). More recently, post-structuralist and post-modern theorists have spoken of deconstructing the individual categories and arguing that they should be thought of as existing simultaneously (Martino and Meyenn, 2001; Whitehead, 2002). So, for example, if you are thinking of a Black boy, at the same time he will have an ethnic, gender, class and sexual identity. Others, such as Mac Innes (1998, p40) argue that we need to shift away from the language of the myth of masculinity, maintaining that: 'just as there is no such thing as masculinity, neither are there any such things as masculinities'.

Black culture

As Grosvenor (1997, p10) argues: '….the term Black is, in itself, a construction, that its use as a descriptor or classificatory concept is contested. The term "white" is similarly constructed. It is also recognised that these categories implicitly imprison individuals within the closed dialectic of "race"'. At a descriptive level the term 'Black' is used to refer to people of African and Caribbean ancestry and parentage. Historically, (Black) African/Caribbeans in the United Kingdom were predominantly the descendants of West Africans captured or obtained in trade from procurers in Africa. They were then shipped by European slave traders to the West Indies to English, French, Dutch, Spanish and Portuguese colonies founded from the 16th century and on their arrival they were severely exploited, being placed in the lowest strata of these societies (Sallah and Howson, 2007, p39). Attempts to understand more contemporary understandings of the meaning of the

concept of Black need to acknowledge the influence of these early experiences on the way in which African/Caribbean's have been racially exploited, marginalised and pathologised. At the same time, US racial politics and more specifically, Black movements were of major importance in developing contemporary understandings of the centrality of the development of Black resistance to inherited forms of racial exploitation. Edgar (1981, p218) writes of this, arguing that: 'Without Black brotherhood, there would have been no sisterhood; without Black Power and Black pride there would have been no Gay Power and Gay Pride'. For hooks (1995), feminist women of colour tend to be excluded from this pivotal period in which the meaning of Black was re-imagined. Within a British context, studies were carried out, based on a political understanding of the term Black, as inclusive of people of African, Caribbean and South Asian origin (Carby, 1982; Brah and Minhas, 1985). These studies identify the systematic racism and collective resistance that Black people experienced within white dominated institutions, including workplaces, schools and public debates about immigration and welfare rights within Multi-racist Britain (Cohen and Bains, 1988; Gill et al, 1992). Over the last few decades, key cultural theorists, such as Gilroy (1987; 2000) and Hall (1992) have led debates on the changing representations of the concept of Black and Black culture. This debate is seen as the first moment in Black cultural politics, marked by the development of a common Black identity in response to the pervasiveness of being constructed as unspoken 'others'. The second phase is marked by diversity and differentiation of the experiences of Black subjects. Hall emphases, that: 'What is at issue here is the recognition of the extraordinary diversity of subjective positions, social experiences and cultural identities which compose the category "Black", that is, the recognition that

"Black" is an essentially politically and culturally constructed category, which cannot be grounded in a set of fixed trans-cultural or transcendental racial categories and which therefore has no guarantee in nature' (p. 254). At the same time, for Hall the new Black subject needs to be understood not simply through the category of ethnicity but the inter-connections between the latter and other categories, including gender, class and sexuality.

Social researchers have used Hall's analysis in carrying out studies on youth cultures and schooling cultures to explore the suggested plurality of Black identity among young people, suggesting that new Black ethnicities have developed (Mac an Ghaill, 1994; Back, 1996). This work links to new theoretical perspectives on contemporary identities in post-modern societies, as outlined above. More recently, Youdell (2004) in her paper. 'Identity traps or how Black students fail: the interactions between the biographical, sub-cultural and learner identities', explores the complex construction of young men's schooling, in relation to contemporary notions of 'Black masculinity'. Similar work is being carried out within an American context, with the focus on a 'hip-hop Black masculinity' seen to be a major concern in the media (Brown, 2006). Many Black feminists, while acknowledging the contradictory location of men of colour within the white sex/gender order, address the regressive elements of the new Black youth culture and more particularly, the high profile of rap music and hip-hop. They suggest that the latter is seen as over valuing an intensification of white patriarchal values of aggression and competitive individualism that refuses to engage with the complex interconnection between race, gender and sexuality, thus limiting the possibilities for a wide range of Black male forms of identity to emerge (hooks, 2004).

Reading through the diverse writing on race, ethnicity and racism, one term that frequently appears is that of racialisation. In the early literature, Banton (1977), writing from a race-relations perspective, used the term racialization with reference to the use of the idea of race to structure people's perceptions of different populations. In the 1980s, Reeves (1983) critically explored the term within the contest of British racial discourse. From a post-structuralist position, in the 1990s, Keith (1993, p239) maintained that: 'The process of racialisation is also of particular significance because it is one of the principal means through which subordination is produced and reproduced in an unjust society'. However, one of the major contributions has been that of Miles (1989), who sets out to critically explore the signification of racism and accompanying concepts, including scientific theories of race and racialisation. Miles (1982) initially used the term to capture the post 1945 labour migration to Britain, exploring racial categorisation. He builds on this to suggest that: 'I use the concept of racialisation to refer to a dialectical process by which meaning is attributed to particular biological features of human beings, as a result of which individuals may be assigned a general category of persons which produces itself biologically' (1989, p76).

More specifically in relation to schooling, Grosvenor (1997) has explored the usefulness of the concept of racialisation within the historical analysis of racism and educational policy in post 1945 Britain. He draws upon the work of Miles (1989), to argue that: 'racialisation is a process through which exploitation and exclusion, physical and verbal abuse, and discrimination, can become manifest' (p9). Also, important has been the work

of Gillborn (1995), who has critically identified the shift during the 1990s to processes of deracialisation of educational policy, in which the term 'race' becomes coded within various cultural references. In doing so, he anticipates the New Labour position, noting that: 'Deracialised notions of culture, language, heritage and the nation construct a policy terrain in which "race" equality is effectively removed from the agenda' (p29).

One area of seeing the term racialisation translated into practice is in relation to the historical and current stereotyping of minority ethnic communities. According to Maud Blair (2001) the general stereotypes that seemed to have been operating within British society were that 'Black men are seen as violent, aggressive, hyper-sexual, muggers and drug pushers' (Blair, 2001, p81). These stereotypes existed in the public consciousness. They were also part of the way Black boys generally saw themselves and this affected their self-esteem, self-image and self-control. Sollis (1996) argued that 'African/Caribbean boys grow up in a society that portrays Black men in a negative manner and success is only associated with being White. This results in poor self-image, leads to a lack of confidence and poor motivation whilst they are growing up as boys and when they grow into adults' (p32). The question still to be asked is: where does this poor self-image in African/Caribbean boys and men develop from? Black youth are also major consumers of the media as well as their White and Asian counterparts, but feel very much let down by it. When Rasekoala (1997) did her research, the following comments were typical from her participants: 'The only time you see a Black person on TV, is when they are doing sports or music, or as criminals. You never see them as doctors or lawyers or doing anything important' (p28). This led to many people thinking that Black people are

mainly involved in working class professions and in turn this led many African/Caribbean boys to develop negative images of themselves. For example, Annobil-Dodoo and Moore (2003) reported in *New Nation* newspaper, about a TV documentary on Channel 4 called *"Thug Life-The Crisis Facing Young Black Men"* which showed a reporter visiting Britain's inner city estates to ask Black youngsters why they were killing each other. However, because the programme failed to show positive, respectable, hard-working Black youngsters who also lived in these areas, they argued it might have led both 'Black and non-Black viewers into believing that every Black male under 20 is either a robber, drug pusher, killer-or even all three' (p10). An African/Caribbean boy named Mark Duwell, aged 14, told Annobil-Dodoo and Moore, "…Thug Life showed the bad side of Black boys", but he also goes on to say that "… it's not just Black boys that behave like that. I've seen the same round … White people on buses getting up to the same sort of stuff. Black people are just being used as scapegoats…I've managed to keep myself out of trouble and…I want to be an ICP programmer and I want to go to University and get some qualifications in that area." Annobil-Dodoo and Moore reported other Black boys having held similar opinions too (Cited in *New Nation,* 2003, p10). The above illustrates that the media, can perpetuate negative stereotypes by not concentrating on positive Black images of successful young African/Caribbean youths in society who are highly motivated to achieve and therefore not involved in illegal activities or following the negative stereotypical role. Moreover, Annobil-Dodoo (2003) reported on how renowned and established positive Black adult role models, like fashion designer Wale Adeyemi and *Aimhigher* PR and Brand Ambassador Adam Rutherford, were encouraging those Black youngsters who followed

negative stereotypes to change their behaviour and 'to get themselves involved in higher education'. They also gave their support to the 'Aimhigher programme', a government initiative which aimed to encourage people from families who did not have a history of going into higher education to consider going to University' (Annobil-Dodoo, 2003 (a), p6).

However, it is still difficult to get non-Black and Black youngsters away from a thinking pattern, which involves seeing Black people in negative stereotypes. This pattern is also linked to the way that the media is also involved in constantly contributing towards portraying famous Black celebrities in negative stereotypical roles as well. For example:

> Michael Jackson the King of Pop and then the alleged child molester of boys; Michael Jordan as the king of the basketball court and then the voracious gambler; Bill Cosby as the Model TV dad and then the repentant adulterer; Colin Powell as the model straight up soldier turned coy politician; Jesse Jackson as heir to Martin Luther King Jr and then spoiler of the Democratic Party; Irvin "Magic" Johnson as the smiling next door boy turned superstar who spilt HIV-contaminated blood on to the gym floor; and many more Ron Brown, Rodney King, OJ Simpson, Mike Tyson, Al Sharpton, Johnny Cochran, Louis Farrakhan, Clarence Thomas, Marion Barry, Coleman Young, Don King, Tupac Shakur, and Black police officers accused of harassing and raping White female subordinates in the 1997 military sex scandals, and so on. These stories of famous Black men are broadcasted across the country (Ross, 1998, p605).

Such reporting makes it even harder for African/Caribbean boys, especially at school to 'challenge teachers' low expectations of them, as they knew teachers picked up on the negative images of their race from the media. Hence, according to Rasekoala, they were treating them differently at school (Rasekoala, 1997 p28) and as a result of teachers negative treatment towards them, their self-esteem went down and the Black boys then

started to copy the negative stereotypes that were portrayed against them even more which resulted in their underachievement (Sewell, 1997). As a consequence, researchers have suggested new ways should be introduced whereby pupils' self-esteem can be built up within school by teachers (Klein, 1999).

Armstrong (2003) reported in *New Nation* on some solutions to this problem by suggesting that when Black boys' self-esteem went down, they really then needed more Black teachers at schools who could inspire them to achieve in education. The former head of Ofsted, Chris Woodhead, said that when "…Black kids see men and women in positions of authority…they see they've "made it." They are role models and that is good." As a consequence Black boys would realise then, that their Black teachers have not picked up on negative stereotypes because they themselves have entered into positions of authority, overcoming many challenges and adversities to get there and as a consequence Black boys' self-esteem could then automatically be improved as well. Richard Majors made a similar point in an interview with Armstrong:

> '…Community workers in Birmingham are now…helping to set up Britain's first all Black school' in order to show more Black teachers as role models to Black pupils' who could boost their self-esteem and thereby 'drive up poor exam results among Afro-Caribbean pupils'… Schools such as Kingsdale in Southwark and St Martin-in-the field in Lambeth, both under Black leadership, shine (Armstrong, 2003, p6-7).

On the other hand, it was important to note that Armstrong also highlighted success associated with the presence of White teachers: 'Michael Wilshaw, a White head-teacher, raised attainment levels at his school where 60% of the student body were

African/Caribbean'. Wilshaw also rejected the idea that Black-run schools are the solution. However, Wilshaw did emphasise that what all schools needed were more 'Black and ethnic minority teachers to help Black children succeed in school' as they were seen as positive role models to many Black pupils' (Armstrong, 2003, p6-7). In addition, Black mentors were also seen as a solution to this problem, as they also worked effectively like Black teachers by improving performances of this group in education as well as being seen as positive role models to them (Kane, 1994; Garate-Serafini et al, 2001; Majors, Wilkinson and Gulam, 2001).

Although classroom issues can be resolved in terms of how negative stereotypes can be overcome in schools, nevertheless when considering the impact of negative stereotypes within society i.e. outside school, it led to even more damaging outcomes because of the development of racist attitudes. Ghouri (1996) reported:

> 'Police officers say some form of racist attack, be it verbal or physical, takes place every twenty-eight minutes. The real figure could be much higher as so few cases are reported with even fewer leading to prosecution. Independent monitoring organizations estimate around seventy thousand acts of racist violence and harassment occurs every year' (Ghouri, 1996, p22).

The murder of Stephen Lawrence 22nd April, 1993 (and more recently that of Anthony Walker 30th July, 2005) is perhaps the most well known example of a young African/Caribbean man being murdered by racists. This case also saw the acceptance in some areas of the establishment of the idea of Institutional racism in the UK (McPherson, 1999, p2). For recent information on racist murders, see also

(http://www.irr.org.uk/2002/november/ak000008.html) and for information on 'institutional racism' see Braham, Rattansi and Skellington (1992), D' Souza (1995), Green (2000), Mason (2000), Pilkington (2003), Solomos, (2003) and Law, Phillips and Turney (2004). A connection between the incidence of racist attacks and the continued circulation in British society of negative stereotypes relating to Black males should not be discounted. That said, Aguiar also reported in *The Voice* newspaper that:

> Fears are rising within the Black community that an entire generation of young Black men could be lost to gun violence. Vivian Michaels - whose son Sika died of gun violence caused by Black youths said: "…The Black man has turned against himself and if this doesn't stop… there will be a generation of young Black people in prison or in early graves…An argument shouldn't be solved by using a gun. Young Black men should change their thinking" (Aguiar, 2003 (a), p4).

Noting the above evidence one can claim that while such murders were not racially motivated, it is still the case that Black males appear to be fulfilling the negative stereotypes that were directed against them.

There have been attempts by Black celebrities to set a positive example and encourage young Black people to fight this issue. Aguiar and Holloway, reported in *The Voice* on two famous African/Caribbean men in the music industry. Asher D and Reggae legend Luciano, urged young Black men to give up their guns and see them as positive Black role models who were not involved in gun crime (Aguiar and Holloway, 2003, p8). Similarly Annobil-Dodoo (2003) reported in *New Nation* about an African/Caribbean male rapper from south London named MC Slim Dutty, who was also seen as a positive role model to many Black men. He had recently produced '*Blood Puddles* – a single

video portraying the consequences young Black men faced when they get caught up in gun crime, drugs and gang violence'. Dutty supposed if he was regarded as a positive Black role model then Black people would listen to his lyrics and follow his advice because as he said: "The lyrics are designed to provoke thought and if they manage to stop just one person taking the life of another, then I'll feel I've achieved something very positive" (Annobil-Dodoo, 2003 (b), p5).

Negative stereotypes severely affect Black people, because they suffer the consequences of this in society. However, positive Black role models are seen as a good solution to minimise the negative effects of such stereotypes. While research has shown the impact of negative stereotypes on Black boys' achievement in schools not much has been said in the literature about how Black boys could be influenced by positive stereotypes which are present outside school and which could influence their education in a positive way. Some institutions (supplementary schools and youth organisations) might have positive portraits of Black people, which this research aims to investigate, as having too many negative Black stereotypes might also motivate Black boys to seek positive stereotypes. The role of positive Black stereotypes outside school in influencing Black boys' education is an aspect which existing studies have paid less attention to, and which will be explored in this study. Furthermore, Black parents could also influence their children to counteract negative stereotypes against Black people, an issue which will also be explored in this study.

Having set out the different theoretical and political perspectives that have provided general frameworks to make sense of Black boys in British schooling, the next section specifically critically explores the literature on Black boys' experiences of the schooling process in mainstream secondary institutions.

Schooling achievement and Black boys

The school achievement of African/Caribbean boys as indicated earlier has been an issue for many decades. A range of explanations have been offered by educational theorists as to why African/Caribbean boys have had difficulty generating the necessary degree of compliance with institutional imperatives, since they continue to be amongst the lowest achievers in the English education system. The discussion below refers to statistics from *Ethnicity and Education: The Evidence on Minority Ethnic Pupils' aged 5-16,* 2006.

ETHNIC GROUP	KEY STAGE 1: % EXPECTED LEVEL			KEY STAGE 2: % EXPECTED LEVEL			KEY STAGE 3: % EXPECTED LEVEL			KEY STAGE 4: % OF 15 YEAR OLDS ACHIEVING:
	Reading	Writing	Maths	English	Maths	Science	English	Maths	Science	5+A*-C GCSEs
White	85	83	91	78	74	87	72	74	68	52
White British	86	83	91	78	75	87	72	74	68	52
Irish	85	83	91	82	78	88	76	76	70	58
Traveller of Irish Heritage	31	29	50	23	23	38	26	24	23	30
Gypsy/Roma	45	43	64	30	25	45	19	23	17	14
Any White Other background	80	78	89	75	73	83	71	72	64	55
Mixed	85	82	90	79	74	86	72	71	65	50
White and Black Caribbean	83	79	88	76	69	84	66	65	58	40
White and Black African	84	81	89	78	72	85	72	71	64	47
White and Asian	89	85	92	84	80	89	80	81	75	66
Any other mixed background	86	82	91	80	75	87	73	73	66	52
Asian	81	78	86	74	69	79	68	69	57	55
Indian	89	86	92	83	80	87	80	80	71	67
Pakistani	77	73	83	68	61	72	58	59	46	45
Bangladeshi	76	74	83	71	66	77	62	62	50	48
Any other Asian Background	83	80	90	75	77	82	69	76	65	60
Black	79	74	84	70	63	77	62	58	48	39
Black Caribbean	81	75	85	70	61	78	61	57	48	36
Black African	78	74	83	69	64	75	62	59	48	43
Any other Black background	81	76	85	71	64	80	62	61	51	36
Chinese	90	88	95	81	89	89	79	90	78	74
Any other ethnic group	75	71	85	66	70	76	61	67	55	48
Unclassified	77	73	84	71	68	81	65	67	60	47
All pupils	85	82	90	77	73	86	71	73	66	52

Figure 1

Figure 2

Figure 2

A horizontal bar chart comparing Boys 2005 (blue) and Girls 2005 (red) showing % of pupils by ethnic group.

Legend: Boys 2005 (blue), Girls 2005 (red)

Y-axis (categories, top to bottom): Unclassified, Any other ethnic group, Chinese, Any other Black background, Black African, Any other Black background, Black Caribbean, Any other Asian background, Bangladeshi, Pakistani, Indian, Any other mixed background, White and Asian, White and black African, White and Black Caribbean, White and Black background, Any other White background, Gypsy / Roma, Traveller of Irish Heritage, Irish, White British

X-axis: % of pupils (0 to 100)

Category	Boys 2005	Girls 2005
Unclassified	44.8	54.7
Any other ethnic group	49.3	59.1
Chinese	77.1	85.1
Any other Black background	33.7	50.8
Black African	42.9	53.3
Any other Black background	33.3	49.4
Black Caribbean	59.0	69.2
Any other Asian background	46.7	58.5
Bangladeshi	43.2	54.1
Pakistani	64.8	75.8
Indian	52.6	64.2
Any other mixed background	64.2	70.6
White and Asian	48.4	62.1
White and black African	37.6	50.0
White and Black Caribbean	54.2	63.7
Any other White background	7.9	20.0
Gypsy / Roma	22.9	22.2
Irish	59.4	65.8
White British	50.2	60.1

Figure 3

The section in Figure 1 indicates that African/Caribbean's were roughly average in terms of expected level of achievement across key stages 1, 2 and about half way through key stage 3. At the end of key stage 3 there was a drop, which became severe by the end of key stage 4. This information grouped boys and girls together. Figure 2 shows a graph comparing boys and girls in various ethnic groups, achieving 5+ A*-C GCSEs. This indicated that African/Caribbean girls were close to average, but the boys were still amongst the lowest achievers. In addition Figure 3 shows a graph comparing ethnicity and reasons for fixed term exclusions. Following pupils of Gypsy/Roma and Travellers of Irish heritage, African/Caribbean pupils were the next highest group to have been excluded, most frequently for physical assault. The literature reported that teachers in mainstream schools cautioned African/Caribbean boys more than other groups for issues of physicality which caused disrespectful behaviour and achievement problems amongst Black boys in schools (Mac an Ghaill 1988 and 1994, Gillborn 1990, Sewell, 1997, Blair 2001). One 'common-sense' interpretation of this data, often held by many teachers, suggests Black boys have a self-respect problem and an anger management issue at schools, which results in their lack of achievement and exclusions in schools (Blair, 2001). The different theoretical perspectives examined below will critically engage with this view. The picture is further complicated by the information from supplementary schools, which indicates that African/Caribbean students as well as students of other ethnic minority groups do not exhibit consistent difficult behaviour as they show positive behavioural and attitudinal changes. Also they do not show lack of achievement when they attend supplementary school; they greatly improve on their numeracy and literacy skills within these institutions (www.qca.org.uk/10007_10034.html). Supplementary

schools are further discussed below. It follows therefore, that there must be a specific negative interaction between mainstream state secondary schools and some African/Caribbean boys.

Thus, it can safely be suggested that supplementary schools as well as other outside institutions such as Youth clubs might be a useful external source to regain a sense of self-respect among Black boys. The researcher will investigate how far such resources can effectively be used to develop a sense of self-respect among Black boys. The researcher believes the issue of self-respect important because it has proved to be a positive factor, which significantly affects pupils' achievements. In addition, the study will also address the question of whether gangs are formed because of teachers' attitude.

Academic achievement: male failure versus female success

One way of making sense of Black males' experiences and achievements at school is to compare them with Black females. *The Ethnicity and Education* (2006) report demonstrated, as have previous statistics, that Black boys consistently underachieved compared to Black girls. This data pattern has given rise to a particular understanding of contrasting 'Black male academic failure' with Black female academic success. From the viewpoint of this discussion questions of gender and education is not an ethnically specific issue but rather psychological and sociological literature have assumed this division as existing broadly across all social groups. Alongside this, media representation claims to reflect a general public view that seem girls are naturally more tractable, calmer and more amenable to the abstract academic learning strategies employed by most

schools. Psychological-based literature suggests that boys matured biologically differently and at different rates from girls. For example, there were differences in the development of the cerebral cortex and the corpus collosum. Essentially, the female collosum was larger than the male, which encouraged females to multi-task, due to a more equal use of their hemispheres. The male right hemisphere was usually larger then the females and this encouraged them to enjoy more physical pursuits. Since the human brain was not really very understood as the location of the mind, another thing, which was not really understood, these psychological developmental differences may appear more important than they really were. However the boys always seemed to be a little more active physically than girls and the girls seemed to be able to do more than one thing at once (**www.indiana.edu/~pietsch/callosum.html**).

A range of different theoretical perspectives have reported that Black girls tended to achieve close to the average and were excluded from school close to the average (LDA, 2004) in contrast Black boys did poorly and were excluded most (Bourne 1994, Benskin, 1994, Blair, 2001 and LDA, 2004). The psychological explanations for these differences involved complicated discussions concerning the impact of nurture on human development. The ways in which boys and girls were brought up by different cultures tended to result in differences in achievement.

As discussed so far in this section, one way of making sense of Black males' experiences and achievements at school is to compare them with Black females. At the present time, there seems to be simplistic comparisons within the media and political reports that

appear to suggest that we can compare Black boys' negative experiences of schooling with Black girls' positive experiences (see Lesko, 2000, Wright et al, 2000, Martino and Meyenn, 2001, Martino and Pallotta-Chirolli, 2003, Reddock, 2004). In contrast, earlier academic work on schooling indicates a more complex picture. For example, Williams (1987, p337), writing about the varied forms of both racism and sexism that young people report in different educational contexts, argues that:

> Racism is a complex phenomenon. Not only does the level of racist abuse or harassment vary in different schools and localities but teacher stereotyping and the labelling of Black children vary according to pupil, age, social class, and demographic distribution of ethnic minority groups. The responses of Black students to these different forms of racism have been shown to result in a range of Black male and female identities in different settings (see, for example, Fuller, 1982; Riley, 1985, Brah and Minhas, 1985).

Alongside this emphasis on the complexity of the multi-dimensional aspects that Black males and females experienced, earlier ethnographic work points to some of the specific responses of Black and Asian females to their schooling. One interesting finding is the notion of Black and Asian female students adopting a wide range of sophisticated strategies of survival, including various combinations of resistance and accommodation (Amos and Parmar, 1981; Fuller, 1982; Anyon, 1983). These texts illustrate a more complex understanding of diverse gendered responses. In contrast, the literature on Black male sub-cultural responses like that of white working class males tends to over-concentrate on images of masculine, hyper-opposition to schooling (Willis, 1977; Mac an Ghaill, 1988). In turn, Mirza (1992) in her book *Young, Female and Black*, critiques the above work for concentrating on questions of sub-cultural responses, which she claimed distracted from the racist, sexist and class based forms of subordination that impacted on

Black females within schools and the wider society. Mirza agrees with Chigwada's (1987) argument that simplistic comparisons with Black males results in a limiting choice between representing women as victims or superwomen.

The main point to be raised here is that a contemporary perspective seems to have forgotten these rich discussions that emphasised, as Mirza makes explicit above, the importance of situating the schooling young Black females and males within specific contexts in which multiple social divisions help shape how different individual pupils respond. One of the major changes that have occurred in the last decade has been the emergence of a discourse of a 'crisis of masculinity' (Kimmel, and Messner, 2001). Harris (2004) identifies this discourse as a backlash against feminism, which fails to acknowledge the continuity of institutionalized gender inequality in late modernity. One of the main institutions where this discourse of 'failing boys' has taken place is schooling (Skelton, 2001). For example, there is now an annual highlighting, with the release of A-level and GCSE examination results, of how boys are the new gender losers in the gendering of schools. It is within this overall framework, that African Caribbean male and female students are placed, with the latter been represented as educational winners (London Development Agency, 2004; Department for Education and Skills, 2006). In this thesis, the researcher will adopt the arguments of earlier work in the field developed by Black feminists, as examined above. In more recent work, Gillborn and Mirza (2000) emphasize the complexity of the interconnections between race, gender and class involved in exploring ethnic minority (including Black) experiences of and attainment in

the context of educational inequality (see Mirza, 2004). Developing Mirza's earlier work, they argue that:

> Qualitative research showing African-Caribbean girls doing relatively well in comparison to their white male and female peers within the locality of their schools has been cited as evidence of gender-specific strategies to resist racism and overcome disadvantage. This has generally been misinterpreted to mean that it is only Black boys, and not girls, who face inequalities. However, new data from the Youth Cohort Study suggest that while the gender gap is now established within each of the principal minority groups, there are nevertheless consistent and significant inequalities of attainment *between* ethnic groups *regardless* of pupils' gender (original emphasis) (p23).

More particularly, studies in the UK have addressed the question of the interconnections between race, gender and class when pointing out that Black boys did not think it was masculine to achieve in school (Mac an Ghaill, 1988, 1994, Sewell, 1997). The equivalence in their minds between femininity and success in mainstream learning has been identified as part of the problem. However, this is a shared perception among some white working-class boys (See Willis 1977, Mac an Ghaill, 1988, 1994 and Sewell, 1997). In Willis's study, white working-class boys who were academically successful were dismissed as 'ear'oles' by boys in anti-school sub-cultural groups.

The latter study reminds us that, alongside comparisons between Black males and females, it is important to look at the question of academic achievement among white

pupils and other ethnic minority groups. Willis's study (1977) alongside other key ethnographic studies, such as Hargreaves (1967) and Lacey (1970), explored the under-achievement and alienation of working-class boys from secondary schools based on middle-class values. Plummer (2000) has shown how few working-class girls attain access to higher education. A more recent ethnographic study by Gillian Evans (2006), *Educational Failure and Working Class White Children*, illustrates that the historical disadvantage based on class stratification and differentiation in the curriculum, pedagogy and assessment systems in British schools continues to work against pupils from a working class background. This comparative exploration between white working class and Black pupils is important for two reasons. First, it helps to establish continuities and discontinuities between their respective experiences of schooling, thus helping to develop a more informed understanding of processes of racialisation of Black pupils' experiences and achievement. Second, in terms of finding an explanation for the disproportionate number of young Black pupils failing in the British education system over the last few decades it helps to make clear whether class is more significant than race as the key factor, or what kind of complex relationship exists between the two categories. For example, Mac an Ghaill (1988) argues for a class analysis of schooling, in which he sees, racism as being mediated through the existing institutional arrangements of schooling that operates against white working class youth. He further argues that a comprehensive picture is provided by exploring within this class-based framework, the specific mechanisms of 'race', including racial stereotyping, that is also gender specific. More recently, Younge (2008, p29) writing about the complex relation between class and race in the US notes: 'The monied Black middle-class…is imploding. A Pew report last year

revealed that almost half of African Americans born to middle-income parents in 1968…have ended up in the lowest fifth of the nation's earners. This was true for just 16% of whites'.

In relation to Black boys' schooling experiences, equally important to examining comparative studies on white working class experiences is to explore other ethnic groups, such as Asian and Chinese pupils. Earlier literature makes clear that a crude comparison was often made by teachers between 'over-achieving' Asian and 'badly behaved' African/Caribbean pupils (Wright, 1986; Gillborn, 1990; Mirza, 1992). At the same time, these different responses to schooling were explained in terms of 'supportive Asian families' and 'dysfunctional Black families' (Mac an Ghaill, 1988). Benson (1996) refers to this as the representation of these groups in terms of 'Asians have culture, West Indians have problems'. However, as the authors of these critical studies pointed out, there were serious flaws in these generalised claims. For example, Gillborn (1990, p110) discussing examination results appearing to show high levels of under-achievement among African/Caribbean pupils in relation to other ethnic minority groups challenges the use of the term Asian. As he argues: 'Great care should be applied when interpreting survey results…By 'collapsing Asian scores into a single category, for example, significant variations between different variations between different South Asian groups may be obscured'. For example, drawing upon a study by Kysel, (1988) on sixteen year olds in London, Gillborn points out in terms of their average examination results that the highest and lowest-achieving groups were Asian. Modood (1992) in emphasising the need to move from the category ethnicity to religion in explaining particularly Muslim

experiences of British institutions began to identify very high patterns of educational failure, particularly among children of Pakistani and Bangladeshi heritage. Later work, such as Alexander's (2000) book *The Asian Gang* clearly showed that the Bangladeshi young men in her study were positioned by school authorities and the media in a similar way to that of young African/Caribbean men were in the 1970s and 1980s and continued to be portrayed as a major social threat. Archer (2003) confirms the negative images of Muslim males at the centre of current social and educational debates, in which complex patterns of school achievement across multiple categories of class ethnicity and gender, indicate an ongoing picture in which: 'Bangladeshi/Pakistani and African-Caribbean boys have low rates of attainment and high rates of exclusion (p11).

The work discussed above in the literature review has focused on Black boys underachieving in schools and comparisons with other social groups. However, there is also other work, notably Nehaul's (1996), *The Schooling of Children of Caribbean Heritage* and Blair and Bourne's (1998) *Making the Difference: Teaching and Learning strategies in successful Multi-ethnic Schools* that illustrates academic success of Black boys and successful schools that they attend (Bhavnani et al, 2005, Majors, 2001). Much of the existing literature has failed to investigate that this group may also achieve or 'over achieve' outside school within specific institutions where education is on the agenda for example, supplementary school (see Channer, 1995; Reay and Mirza, 2001). The issue of Black boys' behaviour and progress in education outside schools is part of the focus of this study.

Black boys and schooling processes

There is a long history of texts in the literature that have examined the schooling of Black pupils across primary and secondary schooling (Wright, 1987; Gill et al (1992); Nehaul, 1996; Ladson-Billings and Gillborn, 2004). For example, Gill et al's (1992) *Racism and Education: Structures and Strategies* brought together writers who addressed the multiple aspects of the racialization of British schooling. They explored 'how routine' procedures through the curriculum, pedagogy and assessment policies and practices resulted in 'marginalizing Black pupils' (ibid., pviii). More recently, Ladson-Billings and Gillborn, (2004) have produced an edited collection that brings together scholars to critically explore the future of multicultural education in the United States and Britain. In focussing upon the complexity of everyday life in schools, these texts adopt and combine different theoretical and political positions outlined above in the former section of literature review.

There have been several ethnographic studies that have studied schooling processes specifically with reference to boys (Mac an Ghaill, 1988; Gillborn, 1990). Tony Sewell's (1997) study, *Black Masculinities and Schooling* has received extensive coverage in the media and the academy. He has written about issues concerning the development of Black masculinity and social/educational development. His primary research methods involved collating real life experiences from African/Caribbean boys and their school life. Sewell's study explored the possibility that a cultural perspective existed which encouraged descriptions of Black people as being physical rather then intellectual – the heroes in Black culture were always sports figures, musicians and artists instead of

professionals, academics, political leaders, scientists and other roles having higher social status.

Sewell explored the dynamics at work in Township school. His reporting style was very narrative in nature but as researchers we can glean some insights into the underlying social processes at work between the authority structure of the school and the Black pupils who constituted the majority of the subjects in the student population. In addition he highlighted the attitudes of teachers as comprising a wide range of positive and negative orientations. The effect of the negative approaches exacerbated the incidents of negative school behaviour on the part of the boys. There was he argued, a type of antagonistic teacher who believed:

> 'On political, moral and cultural grounds, that the sub-culture of African/Caribbean children is harmful to their social and academic progress. In addition there are teachers who believe they have identified characteristics of these boys culture and perceive it as a threat to the authority of the school' (Sewell, 1997, p37).

In other words the cultural hegemony of the authority structure was under threat, challenged, by the sub-culture of these boys. It was probable under these circumstances that the school would become more righteous than necessary about its legitimacy to exercise authority over social norms of behaviour. The result of this conflict led to defining the exercise of authority as a type of racist imperialism. In order for a school to avoid the outcomes of this paradigm a great deal of cultural amalgamation needed to occur so that fewer differences and more similarities were emphasized. Other studies, such as that by Blair (2001), emphasize the process of creating perspectives about the

'other' and the 'alien' and the definition of an adversarial dynamic about 'us' and 'them' (p55). Such ideas informing the management structure of schooling are seen to have exacerbating and frustrating effects on teacher-pupil relationships. Sewell emphasizes that Black boys responded to the derogation of their cultural heritage as a programmed gender response, which strongly influenced the boys to perform inadequately in school achievements and celebrate hostile, aggressive behaviour. The management structures when these negative processes operated produced the opposite effects from those prescribed in their mandate to operate an effective successful school.

When African/Caribbean boys behaved badly usually the school atmosphere was at fault, in the sense that when asked, the boys say 'this is what they think of us, we are supposed to be bad'. Cecile Wright (1992) argues that 'teachers have expectations of African/Caribbean children' as they see them with bad and disruptive behaviour in the first place. Public reprimands and punishments were therefore unequally given to these pupils. It was observed in all the five schools Wright studied that whenever African/Caribbean children were present they were always amongst the most criticised and reprimanded children in the group. Moreover, Wright found that there was 'a greater willingness for some teachers to reprimand African/Caribbean children (especially boys) for behaviours that were ignored when carried out by "other" children' (Wright, 1992, p19). Wright was studying primary schools, but if you had been treated this way since primary school it was quite possible that by the time the child became an adolescent this negative attitude would become ingrained.

A strong example of a negative attitude at a secondary school was presented by 'Ms Allen, a White teacher desperate to leave Township, (who) would regularly talk abusively about the Black boys she did not like, she called them "shits" and "little bastards" quite openly in the staff room' (Sewell, 1997, p133). The children had conflicts with her, the worst of which involved a boy head-butting her and breaking her nose. Even if the school management condemned both her behaviour and the resulting violence, we can imagine that the school would have to cope with attitudes from the Black boys essentially congratulating her attacker. If the school responded with a self-righteous exercise of authority it would only confirm the boys' perceptions that the institution was racist.

Black boys' responses: peer group support and racism

The literature also identified the influence of peer groups on the social behaviour of Black boys. What happened was that boys understood that certain behaviours helped them acquire status from their peer group. Peer group pressure was very powerful as a means of enforcing behaviours and attitudes that were resistant to mainstream authority. If a boy had learned that certain sorts of posturing behaviour earned him the respect of his group he would continue to highly value the behaviour and continue to present it which would then have a negative impact on the educational experience. The literature cited, however, that boys alone cannot be blamed as teachers were also held responsible for effecting the boys behaviour in peer groups (See Mac an Ghaill 1988, 1994, Gillborn; 1990, Sewell; 1997, Blair; 2001). Under very poor social circumstances boys came into contact with more mature males who had developed an uncertain lifestyle involving

either crime or the glorification of crime (Cullingford and Morrison, 1997). Some of the activities of supplementary schools and youth organisations were therefore designed to counteract these dynamics (See Reay and Mirza; 1997, Banks; 1999, Taylor; 2003). It was not the purpose of this review to investigate levels of criminality because that would be a result of various failures. This review and thesis is more concerned about the reasons for the failures not the result of the failures.

The role of peers and their influence on motivation in education has not been much addressed in research. Substantial research on the positive impact of Black peer groups, which is potentially a useful trend in educational research, could not be obtained. The researcher will further investigate if peer groups influence any sort of behavioural change and whether this affected Black boys' education. It will also be interesting to look at whether teachers caused Black boys to adopt bad behaviour.

It is also interesting to note that the literature mentioned the formation of negative peer groups amongst African/Caribbean boys as a means of protesting against their school experience. In some circumstances they used different ways of walking (Gillborn, 1990) types of dress (Sewell, 1997), but the most mature and prominent one, which they used, was Creole. Black boys used this as a code language to show peer confrontation against their teachers. Teachers and schools as institutions reacted especially negatively to this cultural dialect and the result was that Black boys were moved down academic sets to groups of more difficult students (Benskin, 1994, p60-62). Recent research into linguistics and the acquisition of languages suggested strongly that it was better to know

more than one language because language learning was hard wired in the human brain as a natural part of development and language learning was a potential talent to be developed (Eliot, 1999). Nevertheless, antipathy towards Creole by teachers was historical. Creole was perceived as linguistically deficient and interfering with the process of acquiring Standard English (Mac an Ghaill, 1988, p55).

However, maintaining Standard English in the face of natural cultural evolution is impossible. English, as a language is essentially a 'Mongrel' language deriving its lineage from various cultural invasions and interactions over the last two thousand years. It is entirely conceivable that Creole has words that can be naturally assimilated into modern English due to the fact that Creole has a complex ancestry as well. The antithesis between Standard English and Creole would then be considered no longer politically correct by contemporary thinkers. Language is an organic entity evolving according to function. The Black boys using Creole as a code language were using it for a particularly useful survival function. It helped them deal with issues in school and therefore some admiration was required. Studies by Benskin (1994) and Gillborn (1995) highlight the effectiveness of a positive emotional intelligence within a school. Simply put, children who feel liked and accepted will perform better and behave better then those who feel disliked and rejected. In this regard perhaps a more positive attitude towards Creole would encourage a more positive emotional environment.

Several studies discuss the ways in which Black peer group 'gangs' were formed for the explicit purpose of investing the boys with a sense of solidarity and a sense of mission

(Mac an Ghaill, 1988, 1994; Sewell, 1997, Blair 2001). The group's behaviour was directed against those teachers for whom there was no respect. The boys had come to the conclusion that the teachers gave them no respect and were unfairly exercising consistent misjudgements about their behaviour (Mac an Ghaill, 1988, 1994, Blair, 2001) and as a result this had a negative impact on their achievement at schools (Benskin, 1994 and Reddock, 2004). The teachers in Blair's study (2001) implied that pupils should give them respect because of their role and status as teachers; the Black boys interviewed in the study implied that they should be respected because of their common humanity and their culture, which they saw as a source of pride. There was evidence that supportive teachers who accepted Black boys and projected a caring attitude were more successful with student/teacher relationships. The previously cited LDA study called for an improvement in student-teacher relationships as a necessary step towards improving school achievement.

Bauman (2004) suggested an answer to this standoff in the 'interpreter role' as opposed to the 'legislator role' (Bauman, 2004, p414-415). If opposing sides sit down as equals who were trying their best to understand each other then the chances of success could be higher than if opposing sides sit down just to continue their argument. The latter case holds no hope of success because it would involve a 'defeat' for one of them. There were obvious problems with and limitations on this given a school's legal obligations to maintain control of the institution. If the struggle between the teachers and the boys is an attempt to define reality it is going to be very difficult for either side to give up their opinion. However if the point of the exercise was to understand the other as opposed to

dominating the other, it becomes an entirely different experience and does not involve competition.

Multi-cultural and anti-racist strategies

When attempts were made to develop a more collegiate approach between teachers and pupils in the educational environment positive results were possible, as described by Sewell (1997). A group of teachers at the Township school were identified as being supportive of the African/Caribbean boys. These teachers had found time both in and out of class to engage in activities, which the boys appreciated. This involved basketball, time to talk to boys about their own concerns, and generally they offered both acceptance and respect for their attitudes, behaviour, and demeanour. The boys responded to this by arriving early for lessons and by exhibiting a lot less troublesome behaviour in the presence of these supportive teachers. This type of operation where mutual respect caused a better learning environment to exist resulted in a better educational process. If racism was perceived as a negative judgmental critique and anti-racism was perceived as respect and acceptance it would seem that this should be an easy change to make. However, the institutional culture and history at this school meant that it was normal to be racist towards the boys, so the supportive teachers were actually being institutionally subversive. It is important to note here that other literature had also highlighted how there were some teachers who also dealt successfully with the problem of racism in schools, (Siraj-Blatchford (1994), Harrow and Smith (1995), Griffiths and Troyna (1995), Gaine (1995), Dadzie (2000) and CRE (2000)) and once these problems of racism were solved

by teachers then positive interactions occurred amongst teachers and Black pupils (Faber and Mazlish (1995), Nehaul (1996), Blair (2001), Pomeroy (2000), Rogers (2000)).

Gillborn (1995) has also written at great length about how to engage with the problem of racism. He emphasised that any attempt by institutions to deal with what was engendered by racism had to be a whole school approach and had to be deeply thought through as to how to put the policy to work in the classroom. He discussed how difficult it was to rearrange the curriculum in particular subjects so that the learning experience attracted Black boys. The vested interest in what had been already designed was a difficult thing to overcome. However it was not difficult to include knowledge from sources outside western European origins (Grosvenor, 1999 and Sherwood, 2001). Therefore, multicultural teaching - in which schools aimed to value all cultures, celebrating a range of different religious festivals and teaching non-western history – was seen as a solution to the problem of racism within schools (Woods, Boyle and Hubbard (1999), Goody and Thomas (2000), Richardson and Wood (2000), Diaz, 2001, Grant and Sleeter (2003), Palfreyman and Smith (2003), Bennett (2003), Flinders and Thornton (2004), Browne and Haylock, (2004), Gardner (2004).

Majors has also offered a solution to the problem of racism specifically for teachers. He suggested that teachers should also be trained not to be discriminatory towards Black boys, so that they could then get along better with them and thereby make them achieve in education. White reported Majors' solution in *New Nation* (2003), saying that he wanted to devise a 'Teacher Empathy programme', which involved:

> …helping teachers learn to give more respect to Black pupils, how they should talk to disruptive children outside school in order for their relationship to improve and in such an instance the child will see them as trying to connect with the teacher (p7).

Majors also highlighted how the programme would also help teachers improve educational attainment for Black boys 'through having a better understanding of Caribbean and African culture' (White, 2003, p7). If this happened then Sewell in *New Nation* stated: 'Teachers can learn a teaching style that engages Black students' which would then encourage them to have better relationships with Black youngsters and thereby make them achieve. Sewell also reported in *The Voice* how he had produced a video called *Learning to Succeed*, which could be used to advise teachers on how you 'could love and discipline the Black children you teach as you would your own child' (Snow, 2003, p17).

It has already been stated that Black boys reacted to the negative treatment they received by annoying teachers through using negative behaviour towards them, in particular, the way they used Creole. While this researcher will attempt to see whether this is the case in his own research as well as whether Black boys were moved to lower set groups due to their use of Creole in schools. In addition, and in the context of the current discussion regarding multicultural teaching, he will investigate whether the use of Creole can be seen as a positive tool. For example, do Black boys use Creole to form friendships? Could bonding between teachers and themselves be developed by use of certain terminologies? Could Black boys use Creole amongst peers to improve/understand academic work? In earlier work, researchers have tended to underplay this issue, hence

its inclusion in this study. Further, while the above studies have suggested that racist attitudes amongst teachers were commonplace, what researchers in this area have so far failed to recognize is that outside institutions (i.e. supplementary schools/youth clubs) may well be effective in counteracting teachers' racist behaviour and instead preparing Black boys for success in their education through promoting good behaviour and giving them an awareness to achieve in education.

Parental and community responses to the schooling of Black boys

The research on African/Caribbean parental interest in education presents a mixed picture. Some researchers have reported how teachers have seen African/Caribbean parents as supportive and others how the parents are perceived by teachers as negative towards education (Benskin, 1994, Gillborn, 1995, Blair and Bourne 1998). African/Caribbean people have been a visible ethnic group in England since the Second World War and thus one should be able to expect that the analysis of their attitudes towards education should present a clear picture. However, at the present time a clear picture is missing as it is difficult to access the schooling experiences of Black parents and grandparents themselves; because school achievement by ethnic group figures were not recorded until 1983 (LDA, 2004; Education and Skills, 2006). What we can assume at this point is that if the problem of African/Caribbean achievement has existed for a few generations of pupils then several of these Black parents may have spent some of their school time being 'part of the problem'.

Rasekoala (1997) conducted a survey of Black parents. She found that Black parents were the least informed of all parent groups, about the mainstream educational system. For example, only five per cent of Black parents knew what the three core subjects in the National Curriculum were compared to sixty-five per cent of White parents and eighty-five per cent of Asian parents (Rasekoala, 1997, p27). Slater and Annobil-Dodoo (2003) cited a researcher named Carole Hunte in *New Nation* saying at a conference about Black parents that:

> …In terms of parents it became very clear that at Key stage 1 and Key Stage 2 at primary, parents were very involved in their children's schools, but this paled off for secondary and parents' mainly went into secondary schools when there was a problem and for the standard parents' evening (Slater and Annobil-Dodoo, 2003, p6).

This observation concurred with achievement results declining in secondary schools as mentioned earlier. One possible explanation for parents finding secondary schools more intimidating was that their own education was limited to secondary schools.

Faber and Mazlish (1995) recognised that Black parental interest was peeling off at secondary school. They devised a book called *How to talk so kids can learn,* which advised parents how necessary it was to motivate their children in education if they wanted them to succeed at school. On the other hand, Rasekoala (1997) in her research on Black parents found that Black parents did not need advice on motivating their children in education at all because:

African/Caribbean parents attributed the under-achievement of their children very strongly not on a lack of parental interest but instead they pointed in the direction of the low expectations that teachers hold against their boys in schools, which leads their boys to underachieve (Rasekoala, 1997, p24).

Research by Blair and Bourne (1998) supported this. They found that all Black parents were concerned about the low expectations that teachers had of children from their particular ethnic group. This was said to be the main cause of low academic achievement. Low expectations were said to be rooted in stereotypes, which teachers held against their ethnic group. Parents therefore had difficulty in maintaining successful parent-teacher relationships. The issue of 'Respect' was also highlighted. 'Parents felt that teachers needed to listen to them and to respect them' instead of viewing them as aggressive Black parents due to stereotypes. However, because this did not happen: 'It was felt that teachers did not always heed parents concerns' and therefore did not respect them or their children and as a result of this, their children's education suffered at schools (Blair and Bourne, 1998, p33, 35). As a Black parent supporting this statement said:

They have got to understand us, understand our children. I think that is just stereotype that is what they have heard from the media, Black people are aggressive. Most Black people were born in this country, went to school in this country, and half of these teachers, we used to play with them. So why are they finding us so aggressive?… I think what they need to do with the children is to listen to them a bit more, give them the chance. What the teachers need to realise is to gain respect from Black children, they have to respect them as well…Listen to what the child has to say, you know what I mean and to respect them as Black parents as well only then Black boys achieve well in their education (Blair and Bourne, 1998, p36).

There were further concerns from Black parents who argued that teachers often used attendance at Open Evenings as 'a measure of their interest in the education of their children', yet for some of these parents, Open Evenings were a 'mere formality which, far from creating a sense of partnership between the teacher and the parents, reinforced their feeling of marginalization or outright rejection' (Blair and Bourne, 1998, p33). As a Black African- Caribbean parent said:

> Usually when I go to parents evenings, its like, 'Well she is doing fine'. It is such a generalisation. I want specifics and they don't seem to be able to give me specifics. You know, I'll say, How is she doing in the particular subject? And they say 'Fine'. I mean, that is why a lot of us are walking the streets because everything was 'fine' at the parents evening…So it is just the feedback that worries me… (Blair and Bourne, 1998, p34).

Blair and Bourne reported in their study that Black parents were working to counteract teachers' neglect, which led to their boys' underachievement and as a result they were seen to be engaged in a constant process showing more interest in their boys' education in order to make them succeed at schools. In addition to this, they showed their children how to act with teachers if they wished to succeed in their education. As another Black parent said:

> I try to train my child to sort of beat their thinking of how they feel Black people are. You know, to say 'Be on time. Make sure that you are there. Make sure you have got your pen and paper. Put on a tie'. So do little things like that, learn them little principles, then they may be listening more to what you say or helping you more…So I say, 'Let them show you respect, while you are showing them respect' (Blair and Bourne, 1998, p36).

By doing this, Black parents believed their boys could achieve in education and achieving by gaining 'good educational qualifications had always been viewed by Black parents as an important means toward social and personal improvement'. However, the concern of some Black parents was that the underachievement of their children in British schools would never go away despite the high level of interest they put into their children's education because they believed 'teachers would never allow their boys to succeed in education'. One parent summed up the feelings of most in the Black community: 'I tell you something, if I could…at home…teach him…then I would, because I have just got no hope at all' (Blair and Bourne, 1998, p36). So Black parents were increasingly less enthusiastic now about the chances their children had of achieving success in education because they believed there was no hope for their children to succeed at all, despite their high level of interest. In addition, parents believed that teachers saw them as coming from low-income households and therefore assumed their children were bound to underachieve (Lott, 2001, Pp247-248. See also Gillborn and Youdell, 2000).

Not, all teachers would subscribe to this belief as some African/Caribbean parents do also come from middle class households. However, even when African/Caribbean boys came from middle class households Black parents still believed their children were let down at school by teachers' attitudes towards them. As Diane Abbott, a Black Labour MP, confirmed '…middle-class Black boys are let down just as badly as working-class Black boys' (Foster, 2003 (b), p4). She offered a solution to this problem, reporting in *The Voice* (2003), a Black child who was not achieving for whatever reason in mainstream

secondary schools could then however 'excel…if they are sent to the Caribbean for their education' (Snow, 2003, p17).

Previously Howe (1996) had also reported that 'Hundreds of Black parents were sending their children back for a Caribbean education and older West Indians had fond memories of school there' (Howe, Cited in *New Statesman*, 1996, p15). Howe described, from personal experience, the education of Black children there. 'The boys are packed into classes of forty. Those who fail to make the grade are on a steep descent to semi-literacy, a life of unemployment and overcrowded prisons.   Sixty per cent of Caribbean pupils' leave school without a single O-level'. His opinion about schools in the UK was:

> Children here are not educated in classes of 40 in desks carefully arranged in single file. They gather in small groups of four or five, in classes of 25 or so. Corporal punishment is a thing of the past. No Python and Mappipire here. Even with the recent upheavals in the curriculum, self-management in schools, they have well stocked libraries, computers, nature trips and carefully produced educational television programmes (Howe, 1996, p15).

Despite this Rasekoala (1997) found that in the UK, African and African-Caribbean parents felt such despair about their children's educational outcomes that they undertook 'the desperate measure of sending their children to schools in Africa and the Caribbean to provide them with skills and qualifications, which they can then bring back to work in the UK'. They did this because they believed their children would attain there and would not be judged by their race and class in education unlike in UK (Rasekoala, 1997, p29).

Deduced from the studies above, the researcher will investigate Black parents' concerns from a number of directions. The study will explore the following questions: Do Black parents believe that teachers hindered their children from achieving? Do teachers label Black parents in ways that can only be described as stereotypical? How did parents experience the relationship with teachers? Did parents help their boys more if they believed teachers to be negligent; and finally would Black parents choose to send their boys to the Caribbean for a better education?

Youth organisations and Supplementary schools

Finally, it is useful to consider what the literature tells us regarding youth organizations, supplementary schooling and Black youth. Youth organisations designed for Black adolescents provide an environment where Black boys can have an interesting 'home away from home'. The following are the main underlying principle values youth workers in youth organizations have:

> Respect for basic human rights–e.g. Justice, freedom;
> Respect for the individual and rights to self-determination;
> Respect for the different cultures and religions in society;
> A commitment to empowerment and participatory democracy
> Collaborative working relationships and collective action; and
> An acknowledgement that all relationships and activities with young
> people and adults are based on their consent (Banks, 1999, p10).

Assuming these values were practiced, it was not hard to see why many youngsters attended youth organisations. Moreover, Morgan and Banks found that youths,

Often form close relationships with youth workers hence young people are often heard discussing their feelings and actions with youth workers and expect or request that these discussions are kept confidential' (Morgan and Banks, 1999, p145).

The existence of these youth organisations is largely predicated on the need for counteractive measures to lessen the influence of street culture on young people. The ideals expressed concerning respect, confidentiality and human value, if practiced by the youth organisation, went a long way to providing a positive replacement for peer pressure.

In the last forty years the African/Caribbean community has organised supplementary schools for their children as special interventions (Reay and Mirza, 1997). According to Reay and Mirza the organisation of these institutions was based on both need and mutual respect. Their level of formality fell between a regular secondary school and a youth organisation. The teachers and students shared a common ethnic background and the antagonism between Black boys and White teachers was absent. The supplementary schools were in addition to regular schools but they attempted to reinforce the mainstream curriculum. They usually did this by having a Black teaching force, engaged in references to Black culture and enforced the idea that Black people had to work twice as hard as others to be academically successful. The supplementary schools were organised to present successful Black role models. There were authority issues in these schools, but the boys accepted the exercise of authority, something they found difficult to do in the mainstream school. The explanation for this was that the boys understood the caring attitude behind the exercise of both discipline and high expectations. This was

discussed at length by Reay and Mirza (1997) and was mentioned in the LDA report as a way to improve student teacher relations by increasing the proportion of Black teachers and support workers to more closely match the ethnic student population figures. The supplementary school idea was about a dialogue and about recognising life experiences. There was trust and mutual respect between the teachers and pupils at supplementary schools. In a sense the supplementary school system was providing a positive image in a slightly different way from the youth organisations but shared the same major purpose. The main purpose was to find appropriate ways of counteracting the failure of mainstream educational services for Black boys (Reay and Mirza; 1997).

The researcher intends to study both youth organizations and supplementary schools because their role has not been widely explored. Since these institutions reflect positive images such as achieving respect, lessening of street culture and forming close relationships with Black professionals, this study will investigate the effectiveness of these institutions and gauge Black boys' appreciation/liking for these. The study will also explore how Black professionals encourage Black young people and if Black boys see Black professionals as positive role models. The issue of whether, or not, Black culture is being taught at supplementary schools will also be investigated.

Gaps in the Literature

Having examined the studies presented above, as well as reading extensive literature around the area of Black boys and their schooling process, the researcher identified that

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there still seems to be gaps within the literature, which need addressing. The gaps included firstly, that there seems to be little evidence showing whether Black boys in secondary schools have similar sorts of experiences/understanding with their Black teachers and mentors. Hence, the question: does this make any difference to Black boys schooling process? Secondly, in the area of supplementary schools, the researcher identified, that there seems to be little evidence to suggest how Black boys experience their supplementary school compared with their secondary school, that is, in terms of their experiences of teachers, lessons, friends, etc. Moreover does the supplementary school curriculum have any positive/negative impact on Black boys' secondary schooling process? Overall research in this area has under-represented the voices of Black boys, which this research study will highlight.

There also seems to be a general lack of research in the area of youth organizations and their educational functions in relation to Black boys. For this reason, the boys at the youth clubs and their accounts of the schooling process have not been identified. The educational interaction that youth workers may have with Black boys has further not been looked at. The impact of the activities at the youth club undertaken by Black boys which could help with their education has also not been looked at. Finally, the psycho/social influence between youth workers and boys has also not been looked at. For example, do Black boys listen to their youth workers when the latter inform them on how they could be affected in their education by appearing/presenting certain things in a certain way? Does this in any way influence Black boys in a positive/negative way? Do Black boys take into account what their youth workers have said to them? Therefore this research study aims to attempt to fill these gaps, whilst researching Black boys and their schooling

process by concentrating on three different organisations 1) a secondary school 2) a supplementary school and 3) a youth organisation.

The next section will look at the methodologies, which will be adopted in order to carry out research in these three different organisations.

Chapter 2

Methodology: Engaging with Phenomenological and Ethnographic Research.

Introduction

The main aim of this research is to evaluate how 15-16 year old Black boys perceive their education. The title of this thesis, <u>Perspectives on the Educational Experiences of Black boys</u> reflects the importance of documenting and understanding what Black boys think about their educational experience. The design of this research involves making sure that the approach to the boys is based on respect for their frame of reference so that their responses would not be influenced by the interrogative error of asking them what the problem is. The literature suggested that there were characteristics of the educational institution helping to generate underachievement. In order to generate a set of comparisons it became necessary to do research at three different institutions. The institutions differed in terms of their basic authority structure, their supportive ethos, and their basic educational mission. Essentially the hierarchy moved from a formal secondary institution to a more supportive and less formal supplementary school and finally to a youth organisation characterised by an interest in organised leisure activity. The kind of social learning experiences at these three institutions varied according to their major purpose. The level of formality in the interpersonal behaviours between staff and clienteles in these institutions allowed for the study of these relationships, including an emphasis on motivating factors, or lack there of. Implicit in much of the research literature consulted is the suggestion that although the educational experiences of Black

boys tend to be negative, there were also positive and successful institutions. Part of the research identified reasons for these successes.

In these three institutions the researcher was interested in the following distinct groups of people: these are four Black boys aged between 15-16 year old, the adults who worked with them such as their teachers and their youth workers, and in some cases the parents of the four boys. The researcher's agenda with each group was to try and establish their perceptions about the educational experience the boys were having. The areas of interest included their general attitudes and level of concern about success in education, and how active each group was in working towards that success. A related interest was the investigation of the degree to which the groups accept responsibility for achieving the goals of education or tend to blame others when things go wrong.

The researcher sought information from the parents of the boys who were willing to participate, about what they thought about their son's educational experiences, the degree of interest and support shown, the ways in which it is demonstrated, and the effects the degree of concern has on the boys. The main question for teachers and youth workers was about the attitudes they have towards Black boys and the education of Black boys and the extent to which these attitudes resulted in negative or positive consequences for the boys. The questions for the Black boys was to establish their perceptions of their educational experience, their commitment to achieving success, what they conceive of as barriers to this success, and what was recognized by them as ways to overcome these barriers.

The aim of this chapter is to delineate the research approach and the methodology adopted in undertaking this agenda. The chapter is divided into the following sections. In the first section phenomenological and ethnographic research paradigms are described and the choice of their use in this study justified. Next, the authors' own ontological and epistemological approach is described in using the phenomenological and ethnographic approach. Finally, the author looks at the advantages and disadvantages associated with using the Phenomenological and Ethnographic research methodology and articulates how these methods were applied in the study.

There are some design features, which need to be discussed first in order to set the discussion that follows in proper context. There are several stages to the research procedure. A pilot study was conducted to test the validity of the design and to fine-tune the research issues. This is an organic process involving making sure the questions used in the interviews were the right questions.

Two kinds of observations were used. Non-participatory observation involves passively noting the interactions in the research context. Participatory observation involves the researcher taking part in social interaction with the research subjects. The level of increasing contact between the researcher and the subjects informed the process of setting the research agenda. This research agenda then helped generate the questions used in the interview stage of the research. The movement, from passively observing to actively leading interaction, was monitored to ensure the research was all about the subjects and not about the researcher. Social research requires a total absence of projection in order to

claim validity.

For the researcher to carry out his pilot study and subsequently, his actual research, he used a 'purposive judgement sample'. The researcher selected from the potential participants those whom he believed were best suited for his research study. This is already a well-established method. Ritchie, Lewis and Elam (2003) define a 'purposive judgement sample' as: 'participants, in a research study are selected on the basis of known characteristics. Researchers choose certain participants because they believe their experiences, behaviour and roles, are relevant to the research study' (Ritchie, Lewis and Elam in Ritchie and Lewis, 2003, pp107-108). By adopting this approach, the researcher used the most appropriate respondents available, which in turn, generated pertinent data.

Gaining access to subjects can be a difficult issue because of having to consider the ethical issues involved. The researcher agreed with Bouma (2000) who argued:

> …All our dealings with other people raise ethical issues. Thus the key to identifying ethical issues in research is to take the position of a participant in the research you propose and ask yourself: How would you feel if you were asked these questions, observed doing things, or if your records and papers were examined for research purposes? How would you want researcher's to handle and report on the information they have about you? (Bouma, 2000, pp190-191).

Since this research was concentrating on a currently problematic demographic due sensitivity was applied during all of the research procedures. Other literature suggested that the 'participants must be consistently well informed, to be certain that the research is conducted with the right intentions so that they will trust the researcher and agree to take

a part' (McNamee, 2002, p2-3). The research gave a voice to the educational concerns of the participants. This perhaps could be one of the reasons why they possibly agreed to take part.

However, thus far the researcher has assumed that the only condition necessary was for a respondent to individually be willing to participate, but in actual fact there are a series of obstacles to overcome. It is essential to gain access from 'gatekeepers' in the research setting and to assure these 'gatekeepers' that confidentiality would be maintained and that a report would be produced upon request. The literature had often indicated the importance of showing a concern for confidentiality (De Laine, 2000). There was also the possible difficulty that the authority role of the gatekeeper could influence the extent to which participants would voluntarily take part. Headmasters are expected to see confidential material as part of their areas of responsibility, so this could influence just exactly what people are willing to say. Managing this issue required some dexterity. The literature also recognised the standard practice in educational research of gaining consent from a headteacher, which made it unlikely that anyone lower in the hierarchy, most notably the pupils' themselves, would refuse to participate (Mc Namee, 2002, p3). However, this does not control how well they participate. Further, parents were more likely to be inclined to say that the researcher could interview them and their children provided that schools had given their permission. The researcher aimed to make sure confidentiality would be maintained and personally asked all participants if they were entirely willing to co-operate with the research.

Phenomenological approach

The researcher decided to use the phenomenological approach for his interview method. Phenomenological methodology is appropriate to his research because it considers how people within society 'make situations meaningful. It focuses on the way people interpret the actions of others, how they make sense of events and how they build worlds of meaning' (Bouma, 2000, p180). Patton (2002) asserts that the way to understand the behaviour of human beings is to interact with them in order for us as researchers to understand their 'consciousness'. Consciousness cannot be directly transferred so we have to interact with people to come to know:

> …how people experience some phenomenon- how they perceive it, describe it, feel about it, judge it, remember it, make sense of it, and talk about it with others. To gather such data, one must undertake in-depth interviews with people who have directly experienced the phenomenon of interest; that is, they have 'lived experience' as opposed to second hand experience (Patton, 2002, p104).

When the subject matter was what people thought and felt about an experience, what was gleaned in an interview was their processed memory of an experience and how it was important to them, after the fact. The accuracy of the memory was not as operationally important as what was remembered and how a person felt about it. What researchers wanted to gain from participants was their subjective answers in addition to gaining meanings that participants attached to their responses. 'Subjective' meant the answers given from the participants' point of view (May, 2001, p13-14).

There was an argument in the literature about the use of questionnaires versus interviews, which references Positivism, claiming that the use of questionnaires to produce a numerical consensus provided objectivity (May, 2001), which was more important to claim than subjectivity. 'Objectivity', in this sense, meaning we as researchers do not determine the research 'setting' (Darlington and Scott, 2002, p35). Although this argument appeared convincing the problem with using a positivist approach was that there was no way to guarantee that the questions did not distort what was being investigated, in the sense that the measuring device could influence the nature of what was being measured. An example would be the careful wording of a referendum to improve the odds of the preferred result being actualised. By using the Phenomenological Approach, which consciously admitted to interaction between the researcher and the subject in order to get at what was on the subject's mind; one could claim reliability for that particular conversation. The production of a numerical consensus would rely on a summation of a number of grouped conversations purporting to have the same general issue. The advantage was that the subject had the opportunity in an interview to explore the issue from their perspective without having to deal with the constraints imposed by an external-to-the-interaction questioner. Subjects could negotiate with an internal-to-the-interaction questioner because the questioner is right there in front of them. Admittedly, this does not always occur salubriously, but there was still the opportunity for interaction to mould the flow of the conversation (Bouma, 2000, De Laine, 2000, Patton, 2002 and Mason, 2002). If a person rewords the question on a questionnaire the question appears null and void.

The researcher listened to people talking about their experiences, their behaviour, attitudes, feelings and meanings, as they related to education. The conversations were guided in the sense that there was a topic but the responses were not to be controlled. The questions in semi-structured interviews had been developed through non-participant and participant observations, so different members of the subject groups had already contributed substantially to the process of identifying these topics and relevant questions.

The researcher's ontological and epistemological position in Interviews

Ontology, in research, generally looks at how we see other people's views and opinions, as well as how this is constituted as important. Plummer (2001) for example stated that ontology meant how:

> People's knowledge, views, understandings, interpretations, experiences, and interactions are meaningful properties of the social reality which your research questions are designed to explore…you will be interested in their perceptions…(Plummer, 2001, 2002, p63) or you may be interested in the constitutional language, or in discursive construction of the self (Wetherell, et al, 2001, 2002, p63).

Mason (2002) argued that after considering your ontological position, the next step was to consider your epistemological position. Epistemology was about the nature of knowledge and how it was recognized and how it was organized. The epistemological questions in research were how should one gain data from one's participants, and what does the data mean. Mason (2002) argued that the best way to do this: '…is to talk interactively with people, to ask them questions, to listen to them, to gain access to their accounts and articulations, or to analyse their use of language and construction of

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discourse…' (Mason, 2002, pp63-64). The researcher's ontological position suggested to him that the mental framework of his participants would be useful to his research question, which is to explore different perspectives on Black boys' educational experiences. His epistemological position offered him the task of gaining an in-depth understanding of his participants' answers through using the interview method.

The advantages and disadvantages associated with using the Interview method

The researcher decided to use semi-structured Interviews. Bouma (2000) writes, 'The semi-structured interview provides the greatest opportunity to find out what someone thinks or feels, it is usually guided by an interview schedule that lists key questions to be asked, or topics to be covered, in the interview,' (Bouma, 2000, p181). Clearly the main advantage of using semi-structured interviews was that it aimed to explore human 'behaviour' through interaction, which enabled researchers to recognise their participants 'feelings and thoughts' and to gain a comprehensive understanding on the views of the respondents (Patton, 2002, p306). Since the researcher aimed to explore, through interaction with his respondents, their beliefs, concerns and issues he recognised this could have only been done through using the interview approach. When the research participants gave him in-depth explanations the researcher could then understand their feelings and thoughts. He wanted to know about their experiences, and what might have had a positive or negative impact on their behaviour. This information, the researcher believes, could only be obtained through using the interview approach.

Despite the clear benefits of interviews, as researchers we have to take into account that in using interviews to identify our participants 'feelings and thoughts' could however lead some of our participants to become more vigilant when they become aware that we are intimately doing this. As a result of this they might become apprehensive because they might fear that their identity will be revealed to outsiders. For example, Black boys might think, the researcher might tell their teachers if they told him something horrific about their teachers. In order to avoid the problem of respondents not being certain of confidentiality the researcher assured the participants that the answers would be confidential. He also offered participants the right to say no before the interview and further also gave them an option to 'decline to take part' even during the interview (Homan, 2002, p27). This is important in research especially once researchers become aware before and during the interview that their participants feel threatened (De Laine, 2000, p29). The consequences of ignoring this are severe. De Laine (2000) pointed out that this may result in 'people feeling exploited', leading to more anxiety; especially for those participants who after consenting to do the interview feel exploited. This was because 'they become aware that they will be able to identify themselves in the researcher's text, despite the use of pseudonyms and other masking strategies'. So it became necessary for researcher's to give them an option to decline the interview (De Laine, 2000, p29).

The researcher decided that his interview data would be tape recorded since transcripts of a recording can provide an excellent record of, what Silverman (2001) terms 'naturally occurring interaction' (Silverman, 2001, p13). The researcher aimed to note significant

feelings of his participants by their tone of voice. Tape recorders are less intimidating than video cameras.

Gillham (2000) observed that in order for interviewers to gain valid answers and ensure that their participants were more open, interviewers should start by asking: 'Can I start by asking you…? This 'openness' encourages the interviewee to be correspondingly open in response'. A good structuring technique when questioning will result in participants' answers being more valid (Gillham, 2000, p40). The researcher in his interviews therefore aimed to start off by asking teachers/youth workers *'Can I start by asking you from your experience how you think Black African/Caribbean men are generally viewed within society?'* This sort of question allowed participants to be more open and elicited personal responses informed by personal experience, which resulted in participants' responses being more valid. Relatedly, Legard, Keegan and Ward (2003) stated the advantage of 'using open questioning techniques in interviews, demonstrated interest and actively encouraged the interviewee to talk; by opening up and talking as opposed to giving simple answers' unlike questionnaires, etc (Legard, Keegan and Ward in Ritchie and Lewis, 2003, p147). However, it must be noted that the open questioning technique in Interviews could in some instances lead participants off the track i.e. to go off on a different topic and therefore remove the interviewers' attention from what they wanted to research altogether.

Should the conversation drift away from the set agenda there are three kinds of probes the interviewer could employ to reset the conversation. These are: amplificatory, explanatory

and clarificatory (Legard, Keegan and Ward in Ritchie and Lewis, 2003, pp150-151). Using 'amplificatory probes', according to Legard, Keegan and Ward (2003), involved 'obtaining full description and in-depth understanding of the manifestation or experience of a phenomenon'. The interviewer might ask a respondent to give an example from personal experience that illustrates a point previously mentioned. The 'explanatory probe' is used to 'explore the views and feelings that underline descriptions of behaviour, events or experiences'. You can ask 'What did you feel when…?' and by doing this could then bring participants back on track (Legard, Keegan and Ward in Ritchie and Lewis, 2003, pp150-151). Clarificatory probes are also used to 'clarify terms by asking respondents for their meanings or simply by repeating the 'word' by doing this researcher's helped to get their respondents back on to their main argument (Legard, Keegan and Ward in Ritchie and Lewis, 2003, p151). In addition to this Brenner, Brown and Canter (1985) state, "…Any misunderstandings on the part of the interviewer can … then be checked immediately in a way that is just not possible when questionnaires are being completed, or tests are being performed" (Brenner, Brown and Canter, 2002, p49).

However, because the interview is a conversation the interviewer has always to be conscious of the damages of unduly influencing the nature of the exchange. The data obtained have to be the thoughts and feelings of the interviewee. Further Gillham (2000) identified the concern that the researcher had to be careful of physical aspects when using any kind of probing with their participants. Researchers should not 'adopt a fixed smile' when probing since this may result in participants giving inappropriate answers. On the other hand, it could encourage participants to give a positive response as this 'smile' may

show a level of agreement to our participants' responses. Secondly 'eye contact' by the researcher when probing in interviews was considered important. In one way, this may signal 'interest' to our participants. However, 'too much eye contact could make people feel embarrassed and dominated'. 'Head nods' by the researcher may reveal that the researcher was sympathetic to their responses, plus this may 'encourage' participants to continue talking, or to talk more fluently, or confidently. On the other hand however, 'head nods' may appear intimidating to our respondents. The 'shrug' by the researcher may or may not reveal positive or negative attitudes (Gillham, 2000, pp30-33). The body language of the interviewer had to suggest an open non-judgemental responsiveness to what the person was saying to encourage the conversation but must not become an influence on the content. Interviewers must be careful not to 'put answers' in 'respondents mouths' (Gillham, 2000, p28).

If researchers fail to take such precautions then their research results will not be accurate because, as De Laine suggested, we are 'manipulating informants to reveal more than they intended through probing participants constantly and through our physical actions' (De Laine, 2000, p79). Further, using physical signals may result in participants giving open-handedly personal and emotional information. Although this was not necessarily always the case as De Laine noted: 'subjects are by no means dupes and suckers who are open to exploitation' (De Laine, 2000, p65). However one of the main advantages of still using the interview method was that semi-structured interviews allowed for a 'concentrated and uninterrupted focus on the person' despite the researcher using physical signs or not in the interview (Darlington and Scott, 2002, p62).

Having considered the main advantages and disadvantages of using this approach, the researcher decided to use interviews, as collecting the type of data wanted for this study is very difficult to obtain via using any other methodology.

The questions used in the semi-structured interview had been developed from previous experience with similar respondent groups e.g. through the pilot study. During non-participant and participant observation the research agenda had been refined by analysing the significance of what was observed. The development process involved observations informing the process of question development, and the responses were used to set the agenda for further observations. This produced a 'spiral' development of the complete research procedure involving many opportunities to check the content, the issues raised, and the significance of the data being collected. The research issue is about education and Black boys; however this mutual informing developmental process ensured that the agenda had been designed to get at the thoughts and feelings of the respondents about educational experiences. The literature suggested initial points to investigate but the respondents contributed to the process of making sure the researcher has made good decisions about what is significant, and therefore, good decisions about the content of the research conversations.

Next, the researcher decided to look at ethnography in social research as this would allow the researcher to gather in-depth information on people's interactions especially through the use of observations. This method resembles the interview approach in many ways, since Interviews provide the researcher with in-depth data on peoples' feelings and

thoughts. However because the researcher wants to go in-depth even more, the use of participant and non-participant observation is necessary in order to get at the true picture in more detail.

Ethnography

Bouma (2000, p180) defined ethnographic research as observing a group of people over a period of time. Ethnographic research entails using non-participant as well as participant observation. The following points showed the key advantages and disadvantages of using this approach. One of the main advantages of using ethnographic research was that it enabled researchers to study, through observing, 'people's behaviour in everyday contexts, rather than under conditions created by the researcher, such as in experiments' (Hammersley, 1998, p2). Critics of ethnography maintain that studying people's behaviour through observations on a daily basis could cause bias in ethnographic research since the ethnographer's 'presence can come to influence the field' in that normal interaction of respondents may change due to researcher's presence (Brewer, 2000, p20). For that reason it can be questioned whether ethnographers studied the normal behaviour of their participants in a day-to-day setting, or if they studied unnatural behaviour of their participants due to their presence? Although it must be noted, people get habituated to novelty after awhile and will revert to their ordinary behaviour because the researcher is not all that important to them. There is also the point that getting on with one's own business in a manner characterised by normalcy was a way to maintain power.

Hammersley (1998, p10) argued that another advantage of using ethnographic research was that it allowed participant observation to produce data of a subjective nature because the process aimed to get at thoughts, feelings and meanings through an interactive conversation. In finding out the meanings and actions of participants, ethnographic researchers were directly involved with their participants and this allowed the researcher's personal 'values to enter the research' process (May, 2001, p9). Although, ethnographic researchers stated not getting involved in the research setting could result in their findings appearing too vague; especially if the study was looking at the significance of 'meaning and emotion' as the core of the research (Patton, 2002, p48). There is also a point at which clarification becomes interpretation, which means that the researcher did not have to get involved too much with his/her participants as the participants clarified their own explanations.

It was interesting to note that Bauman (2004) talked about the nature of post-modern intellectual work as having 'an interpreter role' in contra-distinction to the legislative role of more traditional 'modern' scientific methods (Bauman, 2004, p414). In this use of the word 'modern' it was emphasising the desire of post-Renaissance scientific thinkers to find absolute laws about the nature of things. The post-modern intellectual strategy was to recognise the individualisation and immediacy of thoughts and emotions as well as meanings of one's participants. It can be argued that some of the elements of ethnographic research are post-modern to this degree. The claim inherent in the modern strategy was that absolutes and absolute truth were attainable. The post-modernists become a bit more operational and were more inclined to consider that the truth was

contextual and relativistic, as well as functional. This meant that the perceptions, feelings and meanings of individuals had a contribution to make because they could be treated as unique manifestations of a broader knowledge field. In ethnographic research data small groups were studied because there was an assumption that they had their own truth, which then made the research study more valid. In this study the researcher wanted to understand Black boys experiences of education. The researcher is not trying to understand some broad absolutist generalization about all people and education. Positivists demanded that results in order to be valid had to be replicable due to the demand for more absolute knowledge.

As Hammersley (1998) noted:

> A key feature of science is the possibility of replication, of other scientists checking the findings of an experiment by repeating it. Positivists would argue that since ethnography does not follow a well-designed and explicit procedure that is replicable, others could not check its findings through verbal descriptions and explanations (p2).

Therefore ethnographic research was unscientific. Ethnographers however responded to this by saying:

> Replication is not always possible in natural science, and it is not always carried out even when it is possible. This indicates that replication is not the only means by which scientists assess one another's work, and is therefore not an essential feature of science. Nor does it guarantee validity. The fact that it may not be possible in ethnography does not, therefore, detract from the validity of ethnographic findings (Hammersley, 1998, pp11-12).

Moreover in support of ethnography, it can be said that reliability was not always denied in ethnographic research, since replication was sometimes possible if the same research was conducted with the same group of people in order to gain similar results. Also by using non-participation observation, replication was again seen as a possibility in research in order to re-record statements in a given setting. Since the purpose of the research for this thesis is to try and understand a problematic demographic as closely as possible from their point of view it would seem reasonable to argue that the design dealt with replication in any case through repetition.

Critics of ethnography however would state that the argument did not end here. They go on to argue that ethnographers through gathering verbal and non-verbal elements by studying 'small numbers of cases were therefore then producing findings that are of little value because they are not generalizeable' i.e. results cannot be applied to the whole population (Hammersley, 1998, p11). Yet Ethnographers, by studying small numbers, can put forward their findings in a precise and meaningful manner, by explaining in the interpretation stage the meanings behind verbal and non-verbal elements in small-scale settings, which many quantitative researchers do not do. What is more, although quantitative research findings are generalizeable, how do we know that the answers given by so many respondents were actually true, since there was the possibility that the respondents could have a different agenda!

By focusing on small numbers, ethnographers claimed this allowed them the advantage of gathering their 'data in an 'unstructured' manner, as a result this did not involve them

following through a detailed plan set up at the beginning. Nor were the categories used for interpreting what people say and do entirely 'pre-given or fixed' (Hammersley, 1998, p2). Procedures were responsive to individual circumstances. Ethnographic research had been criticised on this point that due to data collection in an 'unstructured' manner there was an absence of quantification. Ethnographers responded to this statement by saying: 'there is nothing intrinsic to ethnography, which rejects quantification, and indeed ethnographic studies do sometimes employ it especially when using non-participant observation' (Hammersley, 1998, p10). Moreover by using non-participant observation ethnographers did also follow a structured plan, sometimes with codes for instances of certain behaviours and if a behavioural trend can be established through non-participant observation it can then be asked about in informal conversations and posed further in semi-structured interviews. This ensured structuring of data.

Despite the criticisms of ethnography, the researcher used this approach in his study because it allowed him to 'observe behaviours in natural settings' (Patton, 2002, p306). It also helped him to structure pertinent content questions in the interview stage.

Whilst adopting the role of the ethnographer to look at the perspectives of African/Caribbean boys in education, the researcher carried out his ethnographic research in their company at dinner times and break times at the secondary school, the supplementary school and the youth organisation. In order to maintain a record for participation observation the researcher kept a cassette recorder with him to record what the boys have to say about their education.

In summary, the researcher looks at Black boys, as well as their teachers/youth workers behaviours and attitudes towards education, through observations. The observation schedule was used during school lessons in supplementary and secondary schools and when Black boys were working with youth workers in sessions. This allowed the researcher to make a note of teachers' or youth workers' interactions with the boys as well as how the interactions affected the boys' educational performance. The researcher involved himself in using both quantitative aspects as well as the qualitative aspects when conducting non-participant observations due to the fact that he counted how many times a particular sort of interaction took place between teachers or youth workers and the boys, and also gave descriptions of the exact wording used at the time. The researcher involved himself in using participant observation to make further detailed notes on his respondents in order to gain a much deeper in-depth account of Black boys' experiences in education.

The researcher's ontological and epistemological position in Observations

Prior to identifying the advantages and disadvantages of observation, it is necessary to discuss the researcher's ontological and epistemological position in adapting the Observation method. Observation according to Mason (2002) had an:

> …Ontological perspective which sees interactions, actions and behaviours and the way people interpret these, act on them, and so on, as central. You may be interested in interactions involving large numbers of people. You may be interested in a range of dimensions of the social world, including daily routines, conversations, language and rhetoric used, styles of behaviour (including non-verbal behaviour)…in a particular setting of a particular group that you decide to study (Mason, 2002, p85).

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The researcher believed that in his research, his ontological position suggested to him that the Black boys' language, their behaviour in peer groups and as individuals, their interaction with teachers/youth workers could all be observed. This led the researcher to gain meaningful information in the sense that it allowed him to see how African/Caribbean boys behave in a setting. After this Mason suggested that having considered the ontological position the researcher can then look at his/her 'epistemological position within observation'. Mason (2002) said:

> If you decide to use observational methods you will have an epistemological position which suggests that knowledge or evidence of the social world can be generated by observing, or participating in, or experiencing 'natural' or 'real life' settings, interactive situations and so on. Or, to put it another way, you may have a position, which suggests that meaningful knowledge cannot be generated without observation… (Mason, 2002, p85).

The researcher's epistemological position suggests to him that in order to carry out research on African/Caribbean boys in education he has to conduct both participant and non-participant observation on his participants, by sometimes getting involved and on other occasions not involved with them in order to then gain an in-depth account of what his participants interaction is like in the natural setting. This interaction revealed to him how the behaviour of African/Caribbean boys and the way teachers/youth workers interacted with them impacted on Black boys experiences in education.

Advantages and disadvantages in using non-participant Observation

Before looking at the advantages and disadvantages of non-participant observation, it is necessary to define non-participant observation. Merkens (1989) defines the strategy of 'non-participant observation' as follows:

> The observer here tries not to disturb the persons in the field by striving to make himself as invisible as possible. His interpretations of the observed occur from his horizon…The observer constructs meanings for himself, which he supposes direct the actions of the actors in the way he perceives them (Merkens, 2002, p138).

The main advantage of using non-participant observation was that it allowed the researcher to record 'action' as it happened (Bouma, 2000 p179). As a result, non-participant observation informed the researcher about things that other methods of data collection could not, since non-participant observation enabled researchers to observe events and interactions as they unfold 'not filtered through the researcher's or someone else's perception of what is happening' but from the participants perspective (Darlington and Scott, 2002, p91).

To effectively observe events and interactions it was necessary to have 'a coding scheme' in non-participant observation. Later on it will be the job of observer/ researcher to 'note when the behaviours defined in the code catalogue occur in the stream of behaviour' (Bakeman and Gottman, 1997, p15). The researcher initially recorded events and then interpreted them at a later date, by using these coding schemes that come under two categories, 'the first is the physically based, and secondly there was the socially based

coding scheme' (Bakeman and Gottman, 1997, p17). The coding scheme, if pertinent to the action, allowed the researcher to keep observing after having identified a behaviour and thereby avoided the distraction of a lengthier recording mechanic. The physically based code was described in literature as they:

> Classify behaviour with clear and well understood categories involved in the observation schedule, so we know how behaviour and interactions occur according to each category of events given. Socially based schemes deal with behaviour whose very classification depends far more on ideas in the mind of the investigator and others than on mechanisms in the body (Bakeman and Gottman, 1997, pp17-18).

During this research study the researcher used a physically based coding scheme because the researcher wanted to record how teachers/youth workers and African/Caribbean boys behaved. Therefore, the researcher aimed to identify the types of behaviour that each of them follow under the relevant given coded category in the observation schedule. The disadvantage associated with using the physically based coding scheme in an observation schedule is that this type of coding scheme is very time consuming since it 'deserves a good deal of time and attention' (Bakeman and Gottman, 1997, p15) to construct. Although given the effectiveness of the technique the researcher thought that it is worthwhile to spend the time.

Atkinson (1992) emphasised another disadvantage with physically based coding schemes:

> Because physically based coding schemes are based upon a given category, they furnish 'a powerful grid' from which it is difficult to escape. While this 'grid is very helpful in organizing the data analysis, it

also deflects attention away from uncategorized activities (Atkinson, 2001, p67).

At this point an observation diary to write in accounts of things not specified in the coding scheme could be seen as a solution to this problem and make any necessary adjustments to the code.

There was a further tension in an observation schedule between trying to record everything and recording significant behaviours. The way round this issue was to allow a series of observations to suggest commonalities, persistently occurring events, so as to provide the core of the code. The code was a short hand and was not prescriptive (Mason, 2002, p89). The code was a sort of affirmation tool helping the researcher that he was noting down the right things. If it was useful as shorthand it had functionality. If not, it could be amended, and retested. Either way by doing this, this research would then claim 'objectivity' whilst using non-participant observation since as a researcher, the researcher will not determine the research 'setting' (Darlington and Scott, 2002, p75).

However, claims of 'objectivity' could be questioned when using non-participant observation as Darlington and Scott (2002) maintained that: 'Different observers indubitably notice different things' and personal 'biases and assumptions researcher's bring to the research will all influence what is noticed and what sense is made of it'. This personal bias of the researcher lead them to impose 'their own interpretations and assumptions on what is observed' and so fail to understand 'what an activity means for those participants who are involved in the setting'. Observers in their non-participant

coded observation schedule could place in categories of behaviour of what they thought best suited to go under each of their category due to their personal biases rather than taking in account of what actually happened (Darlington and Scott, 2002, p75-76).

However after having considered the advantages and disadvantages of using non-participant observation the researcher still used this method because this allowed the researcher the main advantage which was to observe the boys' behaviour in a natural setting.

Advantages and disadvantages in using Participant observation

The final method that the researcher aimed to make use of was participant observation. Bouma (2000) writes that participant observation involved the researcher engaging with their participant's activities in a day-to-day setting and in this way 'participant observers can then gain information' about their participants lifestyle as well as recollecting on their own 'reactions, feelings and understanding of what is happening' (Bouma 2000, p179). Through being openly involved with participants, researchers were able to 'understand meanings and activities' of their participants from their perspective in the field' in more depth (Brewer, 2000, p59). This understanding informed the process of generating questions for more structured interviews and therefore helped the process of gaining more useful, relevant information. In so doing, this offered researchers 'flexibility' (May, 2001, p159) to study 'meanings and activities' (Brewer, 2000, p59) carefully with their participants along with recording their participants interactions 'in the

natural setting' (Patton, 2002, p264). However this could only be possible if participants allowed researcher's to observe them and accept the researcher's presence. Since this happened in this research and the researchers participants accepted him, therefore this then facilitated the observation and the recording of 'private events and interactions' of participants (Mason, 2002, p101).

On the other hand Mason (2002) argued that observing and recording 'private' events and interactions involved researcher's 'hanging around' in an unfocused way, which can be risky at times'. He suggested: 'You will need to consider how you will generate data, or how you will ensure that you are in the right place at the right time to collect data and make meaningful observations' (Mason, 2002, p90). In this research study the researcher considered his safety as well when he was with his respondents and asked himself as, Mason (2002) suggested: '…how far it is possible to be a participant?' (ibid, p92), since the researcher is limited to observe as well as engage in those acts/interactions which could be considered unlawful i.e. taking drugs, or be observing and involving himself in conversations where an arrangement is made to attack someone, etc. However by not doing this the researcher's safety could then become an issue amongst his group. Therefore the researcher has to make set plans where he will and will not go, what he will and will not participate in and what he will and will not observe.

Besides the dangers involved in participating and observing events as Mason (2002) suggested, May (2001) noticed that the other disadvantage associated with participant observation was that by using this approach researcher's were led:

to spend a great deal of time in surroundings with which they may not be familiar; to secure and maintain relationships with people with whom they may have little personal affinity; to take copious notes on what would normally appear to be everyday mundane happenings (May, 2001, p153).

We have to take on board the fact that it was only through spending a great deal of time in participant observation with our participants that we can then understand the personality, behaviour and meanings of our participants extra thoroughly. This can only be made possible by means of verbally communicating with our participants individually and when they were in their groups (May, 2001, p163) in order to discover this information. Allowing verbal communication to be used in participant observation was one of the advantages associated with using this method. Taking into account that verbal communication was very important when conducting participant observation, May (2001) suggested that the best way to keep verbal communication ongoing required 'researchers involving themselves in a process of constant questioning' (May, 2001, pp163). This questioning improves the quality of the data.

If the researcher was persistently questioning and communicating with their participants, participant observation offered researchers the further advantage of the possibility of tape recording conversations with their participants, because of the depth of detailed information involved in the setting. This was an advantage. As Silverman (2001) pointed out 'we cannot rely on our notes or recollections of conversations'. Certainly depending on our memory, we can usually summarise what different people said 'but it is simply impossible to remember or note down events and conversations from start to end. Hence tape recording conversations was seen as ideal to do in participant observation

(Silverman, 2001, p161).

Having considered the advantages and disadvantages of using the participant observation method, the researcher still decided to employ participant observation because he believed ethnographic research offered the opportunity to gain 'validity' (Hymes in Gilmore and Glatthorn, 1982, p25) in this research by obtaining accurate knowledge of the meanings and behaviours of his participants. In so doing, this approach allowed the researcher to learn and to describe 'what is happening in settings or groups' (Heath in Gilmore and Glatthorn, 1982, p35).

In conclusion the research methodology adopted here involved performing three closely related activities. The first activity involved non-participatory observation in three settings in order to identify interactions undisturbed. The next stage involved having participatory observation sessions where the researcher got involved in conversations with his respondents. These research experiences informed the process of establishing the agenda for the semi-structured interviews. The design of the semi-structured interview was such that there were identified questions to get through so that each interview had the same basic content. The research design allowed for amendments and refinements of the questions through a process of going back to further instances of the observation stages to gain some idea of the prevalence of issues raised by individuals.

Chapter 3

Problems the researcher encountered in his fieldwork

The following short chapter outlines the problems that the researcher had encountered whilst conducting his research. The researcher had difficulties with his fieldwork because of problems around gaining access at the three institutions that he used for his research study. The first problem involved the enhanced disclosure so that he was officially, accepted as safe to work with young people. It took six weeks for this procedure to take place. With regard to the use of a school as a research base the researcher had to contact fifteen secondary schools before he got a positive response from one secondary school. It then took another four months for communication channels to be established with the headmaster. Since the headmaster was the primary gatekeeper controlling access to staff, students and parents, therefore it was necessary for him to be actively supporting the researcher's study. It took time for him to understand the research and its importance as well as relevance to his institution. He was able to support the researcher in gaining access to his subjects but a related issue was making sure that his staff, students and the parents also understood the relevance and importance of the researcher's study. Explaining the research before actively conducting it meant that the researcher had to construct simple explanations for complicated ideas that were essential to his questions before he had any real answers. The researcher solved this problem by writing explanatory letters to both the head teacher and the parents (See Appendix 1 and 4). After the headmaster had assisted the researcher in obtaining suitable respondents it became necessary to initiate the research procedure by scheduling non-participant and participant

observations. During this scheduling procedure various barriers were encountered so it took an extra two months to do what was scheduled by the secondary school even though this schedule was constructed by them. De Laine (2000) mentioned both access to the gatekeeper problem and the scheduling problem. It was very interesting for the researcher to learn that the literature really did contain warnings about these sorts of difficulties, with these results. The researcher therefore developed a sense of patience with the workings of formal institutions. As the formality of the institution became less of an issue access was both easier and less prone to rescheduling. For example, the boys involved with the youth organisation seemed to always have had time for pleasant discussions about the researcher's study and thereby concentrated well with him in participant observation. Boys at the secondary school and supplementary school had limited time available due to the working hours of school. Most of the participant observation discussions took place during their lunch hour and break times.

Problems during interviews and Ethical issues

Finding appropriate time to interview secondary school teachers was a problem, as the researcher was allowed to interview some of the teachers only for twenty minutes at lunch times. This left a number of interviews with teachers incomplete, which the researcher has not included in his findings. Some teachers however gave up their own extra time (one hour at lunch times) for the interviews but this meant a possible impact on their working performance in the sense that they had to be ready to teach and they instead got delayed talking with the researcher.

Beginning interviews was also a problem for some teachers at the secondary school as they were concerned about how the content of their replies might affect the way management judged their performance. The researcher had to assure staff that only those results of his interviews would appear in his research which they consented to saying without any sense of betrayal of confidentiality. This involved changing names and making sure that the teachers were relaxed enough about his presence, so it did not influence their behaviours. Most teachers were content with the situation after the researcher had conversations about the nature of interviews with the teachers. Next the language terminology that the researcher used, coming as it did from the literature of sociological research, was slightly 'alien' both to the teachers and youth workers. For this reason, he started to use terms that seemed more appropriate to them. For example, he changed the name 'Semi-structured interviews' to 'Interview chat' because the less formal attributes of this term was something they understood. Also they understood that a chat was a chat and therefore, the researcher was able to obtain a close approximation of their perceptions about his research issues in a relaxed and pleasant situation. The researcher became sure that this was one of the reasons some of the transcripts of their conversations went on for two pages of uninterrupted speech. This caused some editing problems in terms of succinct presentation in the results chapter.

One of the gatekeeper issues that caused ethical dilemmas had to do with confidentiality. In the school, the headmaster wanted to be completely informed about the researcher's findings long before his research agenda would have been completed. In order to maintain his ethical standards as a researcher he had to become very verbally astute in his

'briefing' conversations with him. One of the issues had to do with incriminations concerning racist behaviour of staff members by other staff members. The researcher felt constrained by issues of confidentiality in that instance due to various working condition regulations under which the concerned staff members operated. The researcher was able to solve this problem by not discussing this sort of information with the headteacher, seeing as one teacher in particular stated at least five times that he did not want his tape recorded interview to be heard by the headmaster or anyone due to his sensitivity to what he was actually saying. There were things that were off the record.

Surveillance problems

As with the problem encountered in the use of sociological language when interviewing teachers, the researcher also encountered similar problems whilst conducting his participant observation with his respondents, since the language terminology involved in research that the researcher used to describe participant observation to the boys appeared 'alien' to them. The Black boys began to ask lots of questions about this. The researcher therefore changed 'participant observation' to mean 'ethnographic chat' whereby the researcher then explained to his respondents that he would be speaking less formally and more on everyday issues with them. Therefore it was a chat about what they felt on certain things. This then resolved the boys' queries and they were then more willing to chat daily to the researcher.

After this, one of the smaller problems under the heading of surveillance was the reaction of some of the researcher's respondents' acquaintances to his presence and activity whilst conducting participant observation. It took a short time for their reactions to extinguish. The novelty issue wore off quite quickly, allowing the researcher to continue without this sort of hindrance. This was an example of De Laine's (2000) hierarchy of gatekeepers. He mentioned that one of the issues in research was that when the researcher was involved with one particular respondent his friends wanted to become involved as well. This was because in an informal peer group interactivity was one of the things that made it informal, so the concept of interrupting could not apply.

Moving on, the coding system that the researcher constructed for his non-participant observations also became an issue, as it needed to be revised on a number of occasions due to 'unaccounted behaviour outside the boxes'. The researcher had two solutions to the problem. One was to revise the coding system and the other was to adopt a 'diary' method of recording the essentials of observed behaviours. There was always a tension between a coding complex enough system to be an accurate shorthand for the observed behaviours and getting a record of all the behaviours. The Diary was used to emphasise particular examples of behaviours indicative of the researcher's interests in the Black boys reaction to situations involving the exercise of authority either official or assumed. Sometimes a staff member would be attempting to control behaviour and sometimes a Black peer group would be challenging behavioural norms through group behaviour. The situations were complicated. The researcher's code could, for example, indicate authority issues, but he needed to know the content of the interaction. This kind of

interaction/altercation was usually too complex a behavioural dynamic for a coding system to ratify. Therefore, the researcher had Diary notes in it concerning what in hindsight now appeared to be outrageous examples of challenging and difficult behaviour. At the time of recording the researcher was too busy making sure he had an accurate description to actually have had the time to judge the behaviour. These problems were well documented in literature within the methodology section, where Patton and Mason (2002), specified that 'it is difficult to note down information in the observation schedule, when there are so many things going on in one classroom' (Mason, 2002, p89).

The observations informed the process of creating the questions for the semi-structured interviews. Some of the observations were so individualized that the researcher had to think about their usefulness as the basis for questions. The participant observations were helpful in choosing 'issue questions' because when a particular topic raised serious issues, the respondent was then very loquacious. The literature research component of the researcher's topic and the contributions from his participant observations took a serious amount of time to process. The tension was between the literature describing the reality, which the researcher was measuring and seeing if the content of his observations was supported. He was able to come up with questions that reflected both of these sources. However, it was necessary to find terminology that did not have the effect to constitute leading questions. Even though one of the research issues of this thesis was the extent to which Black boys thought White teachers were 'racist', the researcher at the secondary school, never asked a question like 'Do you think White teachers are racist'? Despite this in the process of establishing a normal conversational interchange it was fairly easy to get

at the respondents perceptions without using pejorative labels.

Lastly during a non-participant observation in a secondary school classroom the teacher in charge asked her students to be on their best behaviour because of the researcher's presence. She was using the researcher for her own purposes. The presence of a 'measuring device' could in some instances confuse the normalcy of the research field. In this instance the class behaved eventually in a way that indicated any sense of novelty had been extinguished. The researcher's impact on the normalcy of the research field was mentioned in the literature within the methodology section (See Darlington and Scott, 2002).

Language problems

Cecile Wright, in Connolly and Troyna (1998), discussed how being Black was an aid to her research on Black pupils. The researcher was not Black. He is Indian and during his primary years of language acquisition he was living in India speaking Gujarati. To further explain this language issue, if you were 'very English' and somebody called you a 'Dhordio' you would probably think it was not a very good term, because of English sound connotations. Actually it is a perfectly good Gujarati word for a White person. When the researcher heard various words like 'wagwan' it was difficult for him to grasp that this was a perfectly good word for 'Hello', and 'Boss' meant someone was their friend.

A vaguely related issue to 'normalcy' had to do with some of the parents that the researcher interviewed having had such a broad accent that it was difficult for the researcher to understand them. The actual tape recordings of some of these conversations took an extra long time to transcribe. In addition, some of the Creole words used by some of the boys as well as some parents and also some of the slang expressions they used were very difficult to spell. For example 'eine', which stood for 'isn't it', which could be spelt 'innit', but 'innit' just was not what it sounded like. So, the researcher had left the German looking 'eine' because it is pronounced 'enn-ee'. So this was an accent issue, possibly even 'a Brummy' accent problem. Doing ethnographic research *(and interviews)* was raising this sort of problem but the literature suggested that the problem could be eradicated by the researcher being quick and easy with his/her learning curve about this sort of new situation. Slang and colloquialisms were mentioned in the literature (See Willis 1977 and Mac an Ghaill, 1988, 1994). Language was an issue in Ethnographic research due to innumerable islands of usage.

<u>Interpretation of body language</u>

Some of the Black professionals used body language to emphasise the enthusiasm they held for the ideas they were expressing. For example, the body language definitely indicated intensity of feeling about caring for Black boys as a means of counteracting racist stereotypes. This made some of the Youth workers very enthusiastic. It was difficult during the transcription process to deal with their language patterns because punctuation did not seem to have signs for body language. The researcher noticed that

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some of his transcriptions continued without any punctuation at all because this was the closest way to represent their speech patterns. Thinking about the conversations now the researcher could remember them punctuating their sentences with hand and arm movements. However, the researcher felt that it was more appropriate not to add artificial use of punctuation to their speech.

Sometimes it was clear that the boys' physical behaviour played some part in their language patterns but it was difficult to interpret. As a consequence, the researcher was unable to assign meanings to some of their behaviour. This was noticeable in the cases of Matthew and Bob, who had a number of physical movements that seemed to have intended meanings but they were by no means clear to the researcher. The researcher had to spend extra time being clear in the transcription process because he wanted to concentrate on their verbal contributions.

Research persona

Having had to deal with a variety of personalities during the research procedure occasionally brought up issues concerning the researcher's role as a researcher. Occasionally the Black boys wanted to receive the services of a 'Mentor' and 'Counsellor' from the researcher. He had to make sure therefore to redefine his role as a researcher and to make sure that his relationship with them was focussed on his major purpose. Some of the boys did seem in need of interaction with adults. Some of the parents and Black professionals also seemed to need interaction with the researcher outside the scope of the research parameters. He dealt with these kinds of needs by

suggesting other avenues for the pursuit of their concerns. The sensitive issue surrounding the relationships between the researcher and participants had been dealt with in the literature by discussing the extent to which the researcher was limited to give advice to his respondents. '…because the researcher is likely to be culturally incompetent with their subject hence researchers might end up making mistakes' (De Laine, 2000, p40). The researcher decided to be an interested researcher as opposed to a long lost friend or a therapist. He did this on more then one occasion because as a researcher his responsibility was to obtain and maintain accurate valid data without any bias.

<u>Issues with transcribing records</u>

Finally, after obtaining suitable recordings, they had to be transcribed. The researcher had mentioned some of the punctuation problems with his respondents' speech patterns previously. He bought a computer package named 'Via Voice' in order to speed up the process. First of all he transcribed by hand all of the tapes. Then he started typing them on the computer. He began to suffer from repetitive strain injury after fifty pages or so. The use of 'Via Voice' programme speeded up the typing. However it still took six months or even more to generate all of the transcripts. It took the researcher an average of one day per interview transcription to get the task completed. He had fifteen hundred pages, single-spaced font size twelve, of transcriptions. This was a rather large collection of raw data, which could not be quantified into tables and other data presentation devices (see Gillham, 2000). The literature had also highlighted the long duration of time

involved in having to produce transcriptions (see Bouma, 2000, p181). In writing up the results chapter the researcher had therefore taken commentary as needed.

In conclusion, the researcher seemed to have encountered numerous problems whilst conducting his research, a majority of these problems were already predicted by the literature. Therefore it did not come as a surprise to the researcher when he also encountered similar problems but some of the problems the researcher had encountered were quite new to him; like the usage of sociological language used within social science research and how the researcher managed to alter this to suit his respondents and how this then allowed the flow of proper effective communication. The next section of the study will present the research findings to show how the researcher gained valid results after having tackled all these problems.

Chapter 4

Boys at the Meadow secondary school

Meadow secondary school is a state comprehensive school situated in Birmingham. A recent Ofsted inspection revealed that it is considered to be a very good school in terms of its academic standards. The location of the school is a long distance from the city centre and it is based in a working class area with many nearby residents working in retail shops, factories, building work, garages, etc. However beyond this where the main road is located, residents have middle class professions, such as, teachers, social workers, bankers, etc. This sort of information was revealed to the researcher by the head before the start of the research when he went for his interview with him. The school is a larger than average 'comprehensive' school. There are more boys than girls among the 800+ pupils of the school which includes a Sixth Form. Their average class size is around 22-25 pupils. The school draws its pupils from a wide area and also has a mixture of pupils attending the school from both working class and middle class backgrounds. Some of the students (i.e. Black African/Caribbean's) at this school are living in the Meadow area of Birmingham and the majority of the other pupils travelled relatively long distances from the 'central' area of Birmingham and beyond. Most of the pupils who 'travel' are of White/European and Asian background. Around 40% of the pupils are believed to be from an African/Caribbean origin, 40% from the Asian and White community and around 20% from Chinese and other backgrounds.

The immediate surroundings and housing outside the school are very clean and tidy. Gates and bushes surrounded the school; the school seemed clean at the entrance door. The buildings looked in good condition and little graffiti is noticed around the school. As one arrives closer to the reception there is a large car park located in front for staff and visitors. The reception is located in a large corridor in the middle with several rooms surrounding it side by side. Next to the reception there are stairs located nearby leading up to different floors within that particular building. The lessons that are particularly taught in this building are Maths and Science. The school is divided into huge blocks and it took a good 4-5 minutes to get from one block to another. The location of the classrooms in general is very good, the desks and chairs in every room are in a good condition and the overall environment in each block of the school whilst sometimes cramped is conducive to study.

The overwhelming majority of the pupils use English as their main language to communicate within the school and are fluent speakers. However, recent years has seen small increases in the number of pupils who have little spoken/written English on arrival at the school. The school employs 51 teachers including the headteacher. Of these, 42 teachers along with the headteacher are of a White, European background, four Asian and five African/Caribbean. Among the support staff there are 10 from ethnic minority groups.

At the school, a majority of pupils gained 5 A*-C grades. The School Report (2003) suggested average to able pupils are achieving and underachievers are not improving.

This is seen to be confirmed by reports of the pupils' achievements at Meadow Secondary School. The teachers from White European backgrounds mixed well with pupils from White European, Asian, Chinese and other backgrounds. However, this is not seen to be the case with Black African/Caribbean pupils, as the research findings below will reveal. What is more, the attitude of the headteacher is very unclear towards African/Caribbean pupils. The researcher identified this on the very first day when he went in to see him. The head teacher was saying how pleased he was with the idea of the research project and then all of a sudden he got up from his chair and started to walk towards his office window, opened it and identified a Black boy in the playground. He told him off for misbehaving and then commented to the researcher: 'Its typical isn't it of this attitude and again it's a Black boy!' He smiled at the researcher whilst saying this, presumably because the researcher was about to engage his research on Black boys.

Despite this incident, there is evidence in school policy statements that it is concerned to provide good quality education for all pupils, whatever their age, gender, ethnicity, attainment and background. The aim is to encourage, support and enable all pupils to reach their potential by ensuring that all pupils had equality of access and opportunity in all aspects of the curriculum as well as being treated with respect. The school was openly committed to promote racial equality and good race relations as well as tackling discrimination wherever it might occur within the school environment (The School has a legal requirement to do the above). The school's aim is to take a whole school approach in this context, aiming also to work in partnership with parents and the wider community. The commitment to race equality covers all aspects of the school's work including:

- Progress, attainment and assessment

- Behaviour, including exclusions

- Personal development and pastoral care of their pupils

- All aspects of teaching and learning with the whole school curriculum

- Admissions, attendance and punctuality

- Staff recruitment and professional development

- Partnership with parents and the wider community

- Environment and ethos

- Policy, leadership and management

- Monitoring

The school further aims to identify and adopt good practice strategies in order to reduce the overall number of exclusions and the differences in rates of exclusion of pupils from differing ethnic groups and backgrounds. Their policies and procedures for managing behaviour are transparent and fair according to the headteacher and they are equally applied to all regardless of ethnicity and background. The process of excluding a pupil is free from racial discrimination and their strategies of integration and re-integration accommodated the needs of pupils from all ethnic groups and backgrounds.

Staff at the school also according to the headteacher, challenge stereotyping and promoting racial equality in post 16 education, employment and training choices. Pupils are encouraged to think likewise and be prepared to consider thoughtfully the making of non-traditional choices. The school ensures that there is no racial discrimination for

pupils on work experience or in any aspect of the curriculum that involved outside agencies. The school policy regularly informs all parents of their child's attainment, achievements and progress. They also aim to inform them, when it is felt appropriate, of any concerns. The school endeavours to involve ethnic minority parents in the life of the school, including serving as a governor. The school also promotes active links with community groups and organisations representing people of different ethnic groups and backgrounds. Opportunities are taken to involve these in the learning experiences of the school community. Recruitment and selection procedures are consistent with race relations' legislation and operate within the framework provided by the LEA. Steps are also taken to identify, support and provide opportunities for the professional development of staff from all ethnic groups and differing backgrounds.

The headteacher and the governing body ensure that the school functions appropriately in terms of race relations legislation as well. In addition, a senior member of the school staff and a member of the governing body have specific responsibilities to promote racial equality policy and good race relations. Parents, pupils, staff and other interested parties are made aware of the racial equality policy when entering the school and the school aims to work in partnership with parents and the wider community. The policy is rigorously monitored vis-à-vis the intended outcomes. Data is collected, analysed and evaluated on a whole school level. In the light of this aspects of the policy may need amending on an ongoing basis. Further amendments may also be necessary to take account of current issues. In addition to this a full review of the policy takes place on a regular basis as part of the cycle of reviewing all policies.

Researching the Meadow secondary school boys

To repeat it was the researcher's intention to determine how 'Black' 15-16 year old boys viewed their experiences within the British education system. These experiences were germane to their construction of their future. At Meadow the researcher interviewed four African/Caribbean respondents. The boys were all fifteen or sixteen years old. Bob was regarded by the school as being of low ability. Richard was seen as of average ability and Jenkins and Matthew were regarded as higher ability students. The school helped to identify these pupils. The researcher initially obtained information about the boys by using a non-participant observation technique. He also used an observation schedule and a diary to record the statements made and any important events. The researcher thought that this was particularly appropriate as an initial technique because it enabled him to obtain a general overview of the boys' educational experiences.

The researcher also conducted interviews with the boys' respective teachers and with their parents. The teachers and parents broadened the database used to construct an understanding of the educational experiences of the boys. The interviews with the teachers were usually one hour long but in one instance the interview was an hour and a half. Audiotapes were used because the teachers could not afford the time it would have taken to make written notes during interviews. Due consideration was given to authenticity when transcribing the audiotapes. The duration of the interviews was influenced by the schedules and timetables of the interviewees. This was more of an issue at Meadow Secondary School than at the other sites, and more of an issue with students

and teachers than with parents. It was interesting to note that this issue of 'timekeeping' directly reflected the formality of the research site. The less formal the site, the less difficulty presented by time constraints (see chapter 3).

Due to the amount of raw data collected in Meadow Secondary School, consideration was given to presenting and highlighting those aspects most representative of the views of the sample. (A similar approach is used in chapters five and six). Longer texts have been included to allow voices to speak for themselves. Commentary has been provided on the material to summarise the content and to pull issues together to clarify the points, the researcher's respondents were making. The researcher had been sensitive to the issue of avoiding interpretation of the data while winnowing, organizing and presenting the data. Interpretation, analysis and interventions were appropriate to concluding sections. The researcher has organised the results chapter this way because if he had added much on his interpretation in this section then, not only would this have increased the word limit, but would have also limited him in expressing the opinions of his respondents. In order to place the boys' accounts within a broader theoretical framework, where appropriate reference is made to evidence found in the research literature to identify areas of consensus in terms of understanding the school experience of Black boys. The sources for the transcriptions, which follow, are identified with an 'I' for semi-structured interview (Interview chat) and 'E' for participant observation (Ethnographic chat).

<u>Boys at Secondary school</u>

To gain an immediate impression of their perception of the education experience at school the researcher asked the boys what they thought about their recent progress at school, to which they replied:

Bob: (I)

> "Ok."

Jenkins: (I)

> "Alright."

Matthew: (I)

> "Alright."

Richard: (I)

> "Well yeah I am doing pretty well…but I still feel I need to achieve my best…."

The researcher asked them to comment further on their progress.

Richard: (I)

> "I think so I am doing pretty well, well average cos it's mainly because of my effort and not the teachers' if you get me? They won't let me succeed."

Matthew: (I)

> "Because I am not pushing myself further because of the teachers."

Bob: (I)

> "Well am doing ok simply cos of teachers, they won't let me succeed you
> see, so am doing ok then by myself but if they liked me maybe then I
> could do even better."

Jenkins: (I)

> "Well am doing alright at school cos as you know some teachers push you
> and some don't."

The researcher asked them if they had any particular reasons why they thought their

teachers were responsible for their disappointing progress.

Matthew observed: (I)

> "Well teachers basically don't like me you can tell, but if they paid more
> attention to me and not ignore me because of my race then maybe … I
> could keep alright maintaining my coursework and stuff; but because they
> don't do that it then puts me off."

And Richard said: (I)

> "It's hard to say but I feel since I come into this school I know I have the
> potential to do well even though teachers have walked over my confidence
> in a negative way. They don't let me succeed by treating me unfairly
> compared to others. Simply cos of my race I think, therefore they go to
> other race of pupils' first and give them help rather then coming to help
> me cos of my colour you see. So I am not going to be doing that well then
> in my education you see…."

This same issue was also highlighted in the LDA study (LDA, 2004); this suggested the

issue was still very much alive in schools. Researchers working with an earlier

understanding of socialization have written about teachers as 'significant others' in

inducting pupils in to the school's values and wider institutional culture (Lacey, 1977).

From this perspective, the Black boys considered the White teachers to have failed. The

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researcher moved on to asking who else could have influenced how the boys perceived their education. In contrast to the White teachers, the Black boys' parents are seen as actively supporting in the development of their learner identities (Youdell, 2004).

Bob (I) stated:

> "My mother says that she won't expect like a lot from me but she has a positive impact on me by telling me to work hard at school unlike my teachers who don't."
> Nisheet: What about the society and the environment that you live in? Do they not motivate you to work well in education or anything else?
> Bob:
> "No cos it's a rough area so you don't expect to do well and the society well they ain't liking us cos they call us racist names and treat us differently like be bad to us and cos they have an image about us so they are not kind…like they are with other people. So no I would say both of them don't encourage me or have a positive impact on me to do well at schools."
> Nisheet: Which one or more, then, would you say has an impact on you to do well in education your parents, your teachers, the society, environment or anything else you feel motivates you to do well in education, is there anything?
> Bob:
> "Parents in particular."
> Nisheet: Ok why not anything else?
> Bob:
> "Teachers, society and people in your environment cos they have an image of us, so they then be racist to me by treating me differently but it's only my parents who motivate me to do well otherwise all the others have a negative impact on me."

Bob clearly perceived his mother as a motivating factor, which suggested that his parent had a positive influence upon his education. Although the absence of his father had imposed limitations upon the amount of support available from his mother because she had to do all the parenting. Bob felt that he would be capable of achieving to a higher standard if his father was around.

Bob : (E)

> "My mum although pushes me to do well but she has got other things to
> do as well but I think yes if my dad was there he could have pushed me
> more and I would have to listen."
> Nisheet: So do you think he would have encouraged and pushed you in
> your education more than your mother and therefore make you achieve in
> your education more?
> Bob:
> "Yes if he was with us I could be doing better then as he would push me
> and when dads push you, you have to do well cos they speak with that
> strength, that you have to listen but cos he's not there I am relaxed about
> my education."

However Matthew (I) on the other hand informed the researcher that he had not been

affected by his father's absence. He said the following:

> "My mother is always there for me." "She like ask me what I need help
> with and then she helps me, so even though my dad don't live with us I am
> not bothered as my mother is enough in pushing me and encouraging me
> at schools."

Matthew thought his mother had a positive impact on his education while teachers and

society did not. He (I) gives an example of this when he had difficulties with the

attitudes of people in shops.

> "…'You can never afford that not now or ever, so no point asking about
> price' (Told to Matthew by shop personnel). So definitely the society
> doesn't encourage us to achieve in education, as they think you are not
> capable to afford anything simply cos they think you are failing at schools
> and therefore will never have that much good money in the future to pay
> for any costly item. So basically they see us as failures, the society…and
> teachers basically I have to say they ignore me all the time in school, they
> never give me help. So society and teachers they are all prejudice as they
> don't like Black people cos they have seen them in a bad light, so
> basically they don't want me to do well, it's only my mother that wants
> me to do well."

Richard and Jenkins in their interviews also commented on the supporting role of their parents.

The respondents unanimously agreed that it was mainly their parents who had a positive impact on their education. They agreed some teachers and society in general did not play a positive role in their education. They all thought the negative stereotype held in society against Black men was responsible. There is strong evidence here of the boys strong sense of the White teachers' dis-identification with them as made clear in terms of the racial stereotypes with which they operated. This will be further explored later in this chapter in the context of Jenkins (2004) work on identity.

Richard: (I)

> "People have a bad image about Blacks as they see us as rude, loud, bad attitude, dangerous, violent, so criminals you see, that's about it."

The researcher aimed to explore the actual impact that these detrimental attitudes towards the boys had on them, as well as more specifically upon their education and all the boys said that they were negatively affected by these stereotypes. Perhaps the most relevant concern being that their teachers picked up on these stereotypes and were seen by the boys to operate with them in the classroom, to the boys' detriment. In the following example, Matthew indicates that the teacher racial stereotypes were also gendered, with the idea of a violent masculinity generalized to all Black pupils (Hooks, 2004). As Matthew stated: (I)

"More then anyone stereotypes are having an impact on our teachers. So for example teachers see me in a fighter stereotype especially who will not achieve highly I mean teachers have said this exactly to me when they see me fighting with my mates. So like they have the power eine the teachers, so they help you or not help you then in making you achieve. So people like us sometimes get left behind cos teachers don't come to help me cos of this so called Black fighter image that they have against me like viewing me as a fighter and probably as something negative as well like you know how Black men are portrayed in society. So they say 'don't expect me to help you when all you do is fight and that's just typical isn't it?' they say…."

Jenkins voiced a similar view in his interview.

This could be further illustrated by an instance during the researcher's non-participant observation schedule in a Mathematics lesson where the teacher was a White male, who epitomized the teachers who were operating with the stereotypes the boys objected to, by responding to many of their queries with, "I am not going to be helping you as you aren't listening. If you did, you wouldn't ask for help. You are just typical aren't you?" The researcher observed that the majority of Black boys in this classroom were not given help by this teacher. It seemed to him that this teacher was expressing contempt for the boys' behaviour in a way that could be interpreted as operating with a negative stereotype. On the other hand, when Asian boys required his assistance he was more than willing to help, as he enthusiastically replied, "What is it you want help with young man?" White boys seemed to be preferentially treated by instantly being told by the teacher "Yep, so do you need help, can I be of any help to you sunshine?" This suggested that the teacher had stereotyped the boys with a White ethnic origin. It would seem logical to assume that Black boys' could have interpreted this behaviour as an implied negative stereotype of themselves due to obvious differences in treatment of different groups of students by this

teacher. This observation occurred early in the school year, so the teacher must have made some early decisions about who was worth teaching in his class.

Other non-Black teachers were also influenced by the negative stereotypes operating against Black boys and this was demonstrated by the following examples of teaching behaviour the researcher observed. When observing an English lesson with a White male teacher, the researcher noticed that when Black boys were seen not working in lessons, they were then told by the teacher to: "Get on", "Come on", "Hurry it", "Come on lads" and "Oi lads…." The researcher would consider this to be perfectly acceptable behaviour by the teacher, if it were not for the fact that White boys however were told, "Come on what's wrong?" and Asian boys were told, "You know better then that don't; you, so please do get on." Thus the teacher created the impression that he was attempting to encourage the White and Asian boys by using more polite language with them as contrasted with the tone taken with Black boys. In a French lesson, when Black boys were not working, the White female teacher told them: "Just get on", "Oi, don't mess up everyone else's work. Don't be tatty", but in contrast to this she spoke much more politely to the Asian boys saying "Do it please" and the White boys were told "Please complete it." There was an obvious difference in register according to which ethnic group she was speaking to. The researcher observed in his observation diary that when in science classrooms, Black and Asian boys were seen pushing each other off stools, the White teacher told off only the Black boys by telling them to stop bothering the Asians. The Black boys responded by saying they were just playing and this was normal for them.

Bob presented an accompanying theme. Bob was explaining that certain of his behaviours were just part of his identity. Bob thought he was not behaving badly. Bob thought he was just being Bob (I):

> "…we recognise through teachers' treatment then that teachers do mistreat ya by not treating Blacks equally, so you know when they do this, they make you go down in education and we all know why that happens cos they see Blacks being portrayed with bad attitude in society due to bad attitude stereotypes that they see of us in society. So cos for instance cos of this even when I follow a certain behaviour by talking loud or doing the opposite of something, then teachers mistake this as well for the bad attitude stereotype and therefore teachers end up placing me like this as well in a bad attitude stereotypes then. So then they think what's the point of helping me as, they say to me for example 'your bad attitude by you shouting at me makes me not motivated to help you' bot here you see they don't realise I don't shout, it's just me cos I talk loud but they mistake this for shouting and then think all this is bad attitude as they don't believe this is the way you talk but believe me it's the normal me of how I talk which they misunderstand…."

It is evident that the three boys (Matthew, Jenkins and Bob) thought their teachers endorsed stereotypes through their behaviour towards them. So because of the clear need to solve this problem, this could have been done through providing their teachers with training in understanding the boys' cultural identity, which would challenge their racial stereotypes. Bob's comment can be understood in terms of key terms in the social science literature, that of identity and culture (Williams, 1963; Gilroy, 1992). He makes a claim that White teachers do not understand the lived experiences, social meanings and cultural differences that Black pupils carry with them from their home and community into schools (Carby, 1982; Grosvenor, 1997). As Bob in his interview revealed:

> "…yes they do need re-training then in that area to understand us, that we are all different. So don't view all Black people as the same in these negative stereotypes. So for example I know Black people are naturally loud bot when White and Asian teachers see me like this, they shouldn't take it the wrong way that I am falling into the bad attitude stereotypes by

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speaking like this but instead they should learn to recognise this as our cultural behaviour and through teachers learning Black culture in their teacher training course and then teaching Black culture to us would then hopefully make them understand us more and recognise us more in on our cultural behaviour and thereby will not view us in a negative stereotype hopefully then….”

Nisheet: So can you tell me a bit more about what teachers could actually learn?

Bob:

"Walking as in like I walk sideways whereas they walk straight, I talk loud they speak slow but this is just how I am, I am not being bad or falling into any gangster stereotypes like non-Black teachers seem to think I am when I do all this cos I mean, this is how I am naturally in fact, we all Black people are like this, it's cultural behaviour of all Black boys but teachers think when we Black boys do this, we are then stepping into bad attitude stereotypes….”

Youdell (2004, p99) had spoken similarly and pointed out that 'the bodily practices of Black boys are not intrinsic markers of a Black challenge to school authority'. However, because of the teachers' misinterpretation of Black boys' behaviour this then resulted in teachers having misconceptions towards them.

White was therefore accurate in his interpretation of Major's commentary in the *New Nation*, that non-Black teachers could only raise educational attainment of Black boys once they started to 'have a better understanding of Caribbean or African culture themselves' (White, 2003, p7). It was necessary to determine which elements of these cultural behaviours were acceptable and which were not. The established behavioural norms of an educational institution existed so that education could take place. However, it was not respectful of cultural norms to eradicate them insensitively. In order to improve the success of Black pupils' in school, the school had to be seen as a place where they were welcome. If they were just "Being Black", to coin a phrase and they got disciplined

for it, the institution was involved in a process constituting serious rejection. The clash between institutional and cultural norms for discerning appropriate behaviours was at the root of the sense of institutional alienation, which the Black boys were reacting to.

The boys emphasised the positive effects of the Black cultural expertise of their Black teachers. The boys reported a very strong sense of identification from Black teachers towards them. In response, the boys claimed that they identified positively with them. This was experienced by the boys as central to their motivation and helping produce a positive learner identity. Richard, (I) for example stated:

> "Well however I have to say Black teachers on the other hand, do motivate me to work more and achieve in their lessons cos they don't follow these bad stereotypes about Black people that they have seen within society on us simply cos they know our culture, they therefore understand our culture as it's the same and they also then understand that our cultural behaviour, language style and experiences are the same as well you see. So they are then better understanding to us and thereby not telling us of for displaying any of our cultural behaviour as they understand it. So I want to do well in their lessons then and therefore work harder and achieve more in their lessons then in White and Asian teachers' lessons."

Matthew (E) similarly declared:

> "Yes cos Black teachers understand our culture therefore I then want to achieve in their lesson as they go by treating us as individuals which is cultural. I mean this is part of Black culture that you treat everyone as individuals and not someone who is different and not go by having a view about our race as all the same."

Bob in his interview seemed to agree with Matthew. Recent social science work has suggested that questions of identity and identification are increasingly complex and depend on specific contexts to make sense of interaction between individuals and social groups (Mercer, 1994; Jenkins, 2004). However, this aspect of pupil identity formation –

Black pupil/Black teacher - within mainstream schools remains under researched (see Reay and Mirza, 1997; Majors, 2001).

The researcher asked then, other than stereotypical views that teachers might hold, did they believe that there were any other reasons leading their non-Black teachers to label them negatively? For example, had they themselves shown any negative behaviour to teachers, which might have caused them to be negatively labelled by their teachers? Although they said yes, that there had been instances when they had demonstrated negative behaviour towards teachers, which led their teachers to label them, they also suggested that it was due to teachers provoking them in the first place. As Matthew (I) explained:

> "Yes teachers do label us when we really do, do naughty things which determines teachers to label us negatively. So it's not always cultural behaviour that is misunderstood and thereby teachers label us, as sometimes it's our own fault too which determines teachers to label us negatively but you see the thing is, that teachers make you bad in the first place. So for example cos I am coming into form room yeah and I sat down and the teacher called out my name cos she was taking the register so I said 'yes miss' and she goes 'I didn't hear you' so I said 'yes miss' [he said this slightly loudly and very quickly to demonstrate to the researcher how he said it at the time] and then she shout at me saying 'you have a bad attitude because you are rude by shouting loud at me'…."

From a research point of view, the researcher found this a very interesting comment. Listening to White teachers and Black pupils, it often felt as if the two groups were experiencing different realities of school life (Hall, et al, 1986; Wright, 1992). In trying to make sense of this, Matthew's comment illustrates the complexity of pupil identity formation within a racially structured institution. The simple request of a teacher while taking a class register, results in opposite meanings being given to the pupil's response.

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This in turn reinforces the white-Black divisions that seemed to operate across the school; the White teacher sees the incident as evidence of the negative attitude that Black boys have towards authority; the Black pupil sees this racialised interpretation as causal of the behaviour of Black boys within the school (Blair, 2001).

Bob (I) said teachers also provoked him, which then caused his teachers to have a negative impression of him. He said:

> "…when something went missing in the classroom and my English teacher blamed me and it wasn't me. I tell you really it wasn't me but he was accusing me as a thief constantly. So I told the teacher, I would kill and kidnap his wife because he provoked me to say this by blaming me unfairly and the teacher said to me 'students like you have a bad attitude anyway, so I will not be surprised that you will in a couple of years be going to end up in prison'. Anyhow I got expelled for saying this. So this affects you in education as you think that they already label you as a criminal from a young age, so this then puts you off further achieving in education."

A similar situation was also described in the literature where a 15-year-old African/Caribbean boy stated:

> "Mr Stanley came into the class and came over to me and said, Where is it? Hand it over'. I didn't even know what he was talking about, but he just took my bag and started searching it. Only later when I was about to go home and he came over to me and apologised because someone had lost their personal stereo and he just assumed it was me" (Blair, 2001, p82).

The researcher's investigation and that of Blair (2001) demonstrate that some teachers always looked upon some Black boys unfavourably especially when something of value went missing within the classroom. However if this issue kept repeatedly occurring then

Black boys would seem to lose confidence in teachers and this resulted in a negative impact on their achievement in education.

Having concluded that the Black boys did not find much support from their non-Black teachers, the researcher went on to ask them about their Black friends. He wanted to investigate what some teachers had expressed to him as a concern about 'gang behaviour'. He asked his respondents about their Black friends, who they seemed to consider a source of comfort and support to go to when teachers treated Black boys in a negative manner, because they were seen to be listening and consoling each other. He asked his respondents, besides Black friends being a source of support for them in times of need; did their friends also support them in other ways as well, related to their education?

Richard (I) answered:

> "Yes some of my Black mates also encourage me in school work as well I
> must say and therefore expect me to do well."
> Nisheet: Right have they talked to you about this?
> Richard:
> "Yes."
> Nisheet: How do they show this?
> Richard:
> "Just say my Black friends in school tell me you know cos they know I am
> average that I can do it well. So they say just go and get your good GCSEs
> we will be happy for you even if we don't get as good marks as you, so
> you just keep working. So I am motivated to work in my lesson cos of
> them as well."

As indicated in Chapter One, the social science literature tends to focus on the negative aspects of Black boys' peer groups. What remains under researched is the positive impact of male peer groups on increasing motivation and self image. For example, Jenkins

informed the researcher sharing the same language with his Black friends was a source of

encouragement and support for him:

Jenkins: (I)

> "Yes my Black friends do support me in education and they normally do
> this through speaking Creole with me and encourage me then that way,
> through using Creole language. As they say to me in Creole 'lets work
> hard and if you don't understand something in class then speak to us in our
> language, so I know you need help and we will therefore help you' and
> you know my Black friends says this to me cos if I ask teachers then me
> and my friends know that we will get shouted at by them in front of the
> whole class saying 'oh you don't even understand that?'. So you speak
> Creole then to ask friends for help…."

Here is a good example of Black culture, in terms of the shared use Creole acting as a

productive resource in the development of the boys' learner identity within a school

context. Matthew along the same lines agreed to how friends on the other hand were also

helping him to go on in further education as well, as he said: (I)

> "After 16 I want to do Arts, go to Arts College. My Black friends also
> support me in this. So they are very keen for me to do this eine, as they
> say if you go in it; so will we. So I am going in this cos of them now…."

Richard in his interview mentioned that he received encouragement regarding his future

from his peers.

Although Black friends at school remained a source of encouragement to respondents in

their education, friends out of school did not.

Bob: (E)

> "…friends that I have outside, I suppose I go out with them more and smoke and drink with them more. So some days I won't come into school cos I had too much, so then you end up not achieving as well at schools but my mates outside always tell me to drink more alcohol and smoke more and don't pay attention to school work. So I suppose I don't do as well then at school to achieve or to want to achieve."

Matthew: (I)

> "Friends outside school yeah I suppose maybe they can have an impact on me school work like negative impact cos we stay out more and mess around; so can't be asked to do any school work, we just chill out go about getting in trouble cos this is the normal us outside schools with friends."

There were similar statements from Richard in his interview. It would appear that in contrast to their friends in school, the boys felt that their friends outside of school had a profoundly negative impact upon their education. However, there were occasions inside the school when boys appeared to influence each other in terms of negative behaviour. Examples were provided from the classroom observation where in a number of lessons paper was thrown by Black boys across the classroom towards their friends. Also, many of these boys had headphones hanging out of their ears, were eating, drinking and talking to each other during lessons, as well as sleeping on desks. This mischievous behaviour and their peer group interaction in lessons had a further negative impact on their education. Such incidents confirm existing work on Black pupils that identifies male pupil sub-cultures as working in opposition to academic success (Sewell, 1997).

This showed that Black boys behaviour was a contributory factor in them not achieving in their education at school and that the stereotypes of society that had influenced

teachers were not entirely responsible, because when they were doing the aforementioned acts of behaviour then they were not likely to be working on their education and teachers as a result told them off. Thus teachers cannot in actual fact be blamed to the extent to which the Black boys suggested earlier. Although this evidence must be treated with caution because the above-mentioned bad behaviour, which the researcher had observed in lessons, did not clearly reveal to him whether Black boys acted this way because of their outside school friends influence or whether they were doing this based on negative stereotyping and inappropriate labelling which they received from their teachers in the first place.

In conclusion, what was clearly seen was that Black boys experiences in education were influenced by White and Asian teachers who were perceived to be having a predominantly negative influence on their education, though their behaviour, society and their outside school friends also made negative contributions, despite the positive influence of their parents, Black teachers and Black friends in school who made their experiences in education meaningful. The most prominent factor seemed to be their White and Asian teachers who they strongly asserted to have had a negative impact on their education and thereby made their experience in education exasperating. Consequently, the researcher now went on to consider the teachers' point of view, as to how far they contributed in playing a role in making Black boys experiences in education meaningful and whether they were or not in any way being an obstacle in Black boys education? So the researcher next interviewed teachers to gather their perspectives.

Teachers at the Secondary school

The four student respondents have all explained that their negative attitudes towards education were predominantly attributable to non-Black teachers treating non-Black students preferentially. The boys felt that they were less inclined to work hard and behave well in lessons because of this unfair treatment. They said that their Black teachers contributed to their achievement because they understood them and could relate to them better and, in particular, Black teachers understood their cultural behaviour. The boys thought teachers who were not Black often berated the boys for behaviour that was simply a result of their cultural heritage. It was difficult to engage in a value-neutral discussion of these claims. Therefore it was necessary to consider the views of other groups in the research model.

We now progress to investigating all this information from the teachers' perspective. The researcher interviewed teachers of different ethnic background at the secondary school to explore, from their perspective, if non-Black teachers were discriminating against Black boys and were playing a part in reducing the chances for the boys' success. The researcher also wanted to determine if the Black teachers did actually understand and relate well to the Black pupils, and if so, did this have a positive effect upon Black boys' education. He interviewed the following teachers who were all male and had been identified by the school:

Teacher 1 is a White English teacher.
Teacher 2 is an Asian Science teacher.

Teacher 3 is a White ICT (Computer) teacher.

Teacher 4 is a Black Music teacher.

Teacher 5 is a Black Mentor.

Teacher 6 is a Black PE teacher.

The researcher initially asked these teachers to talk about how they viewed Black men in general. He wanted to begin by examining if teachers were sharing a particular stereotypical opinion of Black males in society. The researcher was sensitive to the possibility that this could be construed as a leading question so he had put it in the context provided to him by the Black boys.

Teacher 1:

> "…In society I have noticed that a majority of Black men do have problems. So that's how they are seen then negatively.…"

Teacher 2:

> "Em, Black people are always seen as bad people in society because that's how they are represented.…"

Teacher 3 also said:

> "Black men are seen not in a good light because of the image which is negative…."

Teacher 4:

> "I see Black men as always positive by having a good mind and wanting to go ahead in jobs and education, but you see it's the image of how we look which makes people think of us as of not good characters. So I have seen situation…if you don't look the image within society, automatically,

they automatically put you back and put you down more or less. They try and tell you that you are of a lesser person-the Black man…You know the Police and them lot also never listen to a Black man. So basically this society little by little take human rights away from you, give you no professional jobs to be in or in some cases they don't get jobs at all but that's because that's how they are seen as in society in a low way but me I think Black men can reach to the highest peak if they were given a chance and if they were seen in the right positive image by people in society."

Teacher 5:

"…to start off with I think Black men are viewed probably, they are seen as negative in society always I have to admit but I know Black men out there who can really achieve and get good jobs…."

Teacher 6:

"…I believe that Black men are positively seen in my eyes cos we are not how people portray us as 'bad', we are good characters i.e. good family men and good achievers but obviously looking at this society it's White dominated. Therefore everything to do with White is seen as perfect, so if you look at notice boards, you walk down the high street of any major city or town, they all have something to do with United Kingdom, and you will see a lot of the posters on train which are European based and so therefore you straight away realise if you watch TV, you see a lot in media a lot is pushed through European based of people as good characters but anything which comes across as African or African men in particular, then it is usually negative whether it be coming from society, media etc."

The responses the researcher gained from teachers suggested to him that non-Black teachers did seem to have negative stereotypical opinions of Black men in society. This suggests that earlier research on relations between Black male pupils and White teachers that found the latter worked with racial stereotypical images of Black youth is still present (Mac an Ghaill, 1988, Gillborn, 1990; Sewell, 1997). Hall (1990) has described the contradictory nature of such racial stereotyping in terms of complex interactions between social groups. Although, Black teachers viewed Black men positively, they also

confirmed that within society Black men were always seen in negative ways. Teachers, regardless of race, all agreed that Black men were perceived in a negative way within society.

As a result of this the researcher then asked the teachers more specifically what sort of stereotypes society had concerning Black men. For example, what roles did people see them having in society and how did this give people discriminatory opinions of Black men.

Teacher 1 stated:

> "…well they are seen as drug dealers…in gangs and always seen as robbers...As I see it in the news all the time, crime statistics probably shows this. So this is what people see and believe then...."

and Teacher 6 observed:

> "Well often the image of the mugger, the stealer, portrayed as a bad Black guy, that's how they are seen also Black males are seen as having behavioural problems. All you have to do is look at the English language which describes Black men like this and they talk about the Black market, they talk about the Black day and all these are negative associations with Black people, and they put me for example the society as a bad person as they see all Black men like this. So they think we are all like this and this is like the self-fulfilling prophecy. So yeah in this society we are viewed as being negative in the stereotypical image that I mentioned to you…."

So now the researcher wanted to determine whether stereotypes had any impact on the way teachers viewed Black boys at their school. He asked teachers if they believed that Black boys at their school were showing signs of these stereotypes that were operating

against Black men in society. The researcher wanted to know if the boys fit the stereotypes as far as their behaviour was concerned. He also wanted to know if the stereotype was operational in causing the behaviour.

Teacher 1 stated:

> "…I have been teaching throughout my twenty years and I have noticed that a majority of the boys I teach who are Black do have behavioural problems, so its not surprising that they will follow later on the image of Black men as thieves, drug dealers and in gangs where bad behaviour is always involved. I mean you see them thieving things at school when they are caught, so yes they do follow these stereotypes and then act rude. So how can you think they will achieve, they don't cos these stereotypes are having an impact on them as well as their behaviour and therefore they will not achieve and you know what! Some of them in a few years, I think will be in lock ups soon if they don't stop thieving."

And Teacher 3 observed:

> "Black kids in general they are not very well motivated from my personal experience you can just see this from their bad behaviour probably because sooner or later they know they might be leading their lives as thieves or whatever, so they are acting bad now. Bob is not very motivated and acts bad, so it could be a possibility that, that's the reason why because of the stereotypes. Therefore he's copying stereotypes, cos I have seen him stealing and then acting aggressive. So he's not really achieving is he then? And you can just really see this through his exam marks and other Black boys who are like Bob are probably in the same position as well, I have to say."

Although not as profound these responses were reminiscent of research by Gillborn (1990) where he identified that teachers' perspectives at City Road Secondary School were influenced by the societal myth that all African/Caribbean pupils' were constantly challenging authority, which meant that when 'any offence by an African/Caribbean pupil was committed it was interpreted by teachers as indicative of a more general 'attitude' of all African/Caribbean people hence, then some teachers treated Black boys

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unequally at their schools' (Gillborn, 1990, p59). Likewise Sewell's (1997) research at the Township school, identified that there was a group of teachers who were named the 'Antagonistic teachers' because they were overtly racist and felt that the stereotypical displays of Black boys were a negative-essentialist characteristic of all African-Caribbean people' (Sewell, 1997, p37).

The researcher therefore then asked teachers if they took any measures at their schools to try and stop Black boys from following negative stereotypes given that they were aware of its potentially significant negative effect upon the boys.

Teacher 2:

> "…the stereotypes they pick up in society and you see Black boys following them in school well, to that then, well I have to say that well, I don't well, I don't say anything to them about this. Therefore if they then don't end up achieving there is nothing we can do about it anyway its expected with some of them that they will not achieve, especially because they know where they will be ending up sooner or later."

Teacher 3:

> "No I wouldn't do anything about it because you can see them following these society images. So they be confrontational and when they are like this, I ignore them and if this affects their achievement, let it, … not my fault…after all I know the ones who will underachieve anyway and will end up being what they want to be anyway. So if a criminal then a criminal. So what can I do about it nothing! ."

Black teachers on the other hand informed the researcher that they did take measures by making a conscious effort to try to stop Black boys following any negative stereotypes of Black men.

As Teacher 5 said:

> "…, me being of that background as the same background as them. I mean
> I then look at the children and speak to them and deal with them in a
> personal way and tell them why it's necessary not to follow this bad image
> of whatever they have seen operating in society towards Black people."
> Nisheet: How would that be?
> Teacher 5:
> "Relate-ability. I have greater understanding of their plights where they
> are coming from and the struggles they may encounter because I have
> been a student at school before and it's based out on skin colour. So I
> know besides teachers treating you bad at school because you are Black,
> you don't want to make this worse by further acting bad by following
> these negative images of Black men in society…."

Teacher 6 explained this by giving an example of how he actually went up to Black boys
and attempted to discourage them from copying these stereotypes.

It was clear that the Black teachers and the non-Black teachers had different opinions
concerning Black people in society. They differed to the extent to which they thought the
education of Black boys was important, or possible. The Black teachers were more
encouraging, trying to make sure that Black pupils' avoided any behaviour that portrayed
the negative impressions of Black men held in society. The non-Black teachers' worked
from a view about the high probability of the Black boys failing to achieve in school and
ending up as criminals. The education of Black boys was therefore at risk proportional to
the degree to which this dichotomy was present throughout the educational context.
The researcher wanted to pursue this whole issue further so he asked the teachers to
explore the origin of this racial stereotyping dynamic.

Teacher 6:

> "You see it's the Black boys' gender and their race then which definitely…distracts…their European and Asian teachers here first cos they think Black boys are coming from that colour and gender whereby everyone expects them to be 'bad' cos that's how Black men are seen in society. So Black boys therefore get mistreated at school by teachers then without any fault of the Black pupil…."

Teacher 5 agreed, while Teacher 4 stated:

> "…I once overheard an Asian teacher say to a White teacher about a Black boy 'well it's not as if…(name of the Black pupil was mentioned) will get far, boys of their kind don't, you see this everywhere in Black males therefore it's a good job, I didn't from the beginning you know bother with him otherwise I would have wasted my time' believe me this is exactly the words of one of the teachers here…."

As indicated in Chapter One, Jenkins (2004) suggests that the term identification is more useful than identity to suggest an active process between individuals and social groups. The Black boys, as illustrated earlier, felt that in the schooling process that White and Asian teachers actively dis-identify with them. Black teachers provided evidence to support this claim. At the same time, White and Asian teachers also provided evidence themselves in terms of their behaviour with Black pupils and in their discussion with the researcher. However, it was not simply a question of the ethnicity of the Black pupils that was identified as a problem. The opinion held by Black teachers that non-Black teachers were affected by the ethnicity and gender of Black boys was supported in statements made by non-Black teachers themselves.

As Teacher 3 said:

> "…it just so happens that they are…Black and the gender is an issue which I think makes me realise not only now but from when they enter

secondary school that they aren't ever going to be achieving especially most Black boys and they don't, you know, they prove my thinking right and so most of them will end up being like Black men out there. So I mean, you just, you know, think why bother putting too much into them at times. Sorry I shouldn't have said that but that's the way it is…."

In earlier studies of Black boys' schooling, social class was identified as important alongside issues of racism (Wright, 1986; Gillborn, 1990). More recently, with the media focussing upon a suggested crisis in masculinity, Black boys' masculinity has been emphasised as particularly a problem (Blair, 2001; Mutua, 2006).

The researcher then became interested in the notion that the curriculum too had a negative influence on the experience of Black boys in education because of comments made concerning their tendency to be hyperactive and resist the abstract level of instruction required by the curriculum. The solution was to provide practical learning experiences for them, so they could relate to something more concrete, more hands-on:

As Teacher 5 said:

"…I promote my race and gender to Black boys advantage as I tell them that I understand you being a Black man; that you don't need written work all the time to make you understand because I know you will understand through practicalities better because you are a Black hyper man who needs practical stuff more then written work to make you work then and achieve. Just like how I wanted the same when I was at school and this is how we Black men work better and achieve through doing practical things as we use our right hand side of the brain more...So you see in my classroom, then I give them practical things to do more, to make them understand, as well as then make them use their hyperness in doing that piece of work. So thereby they then understand the work properly more in my lessons then and thereby are motivated to achieve and they do achieve…."

Howard Gardner (1993) in 'Frames of Mind' writes how psychologists have demonstrated a link between the use of abstract cognitive powers and kinaesthetic learning experiences (Gardner, 1993). This basically meant that these two kinds of intelligence were working together. So in a sense the boys would be thinking with their hands, but understanding things cognitively at the same time. This might lead to the boys being more effective learners as Teacher 5 was hoping. However, a more negative reading of the above teacher is that he is working with a fixed notion of culture, in which he defines the educational needs of Black boys in practical rather than academic terms that has been challenged by anti-racist theorists (Gill et al, 1992; Bhavnani, 2005). This is further developed below.

Teacher 4 took a different approach, claiming that although the curriculum was not assisting them in achieving highly at school, that instead of practicalities being introduced into the curriculum to make Black boys achieve, the school curriculum should introduce teaching Black history.

> "We don't need practicalities what Black boys need instead is certain things that we need to know about ourselves as Black people to then make them achieve in their education. So Black boys need to know about our history, we need to know about our leader, our great people's right before Black boys actually accept everything else our way. We need to know where we are coming from as our people, we need to know everything of Black people…there is a lot of things in our history as a race of people that has been taken away from us through colonial control of Africa."

Teacher 6 held a similar opinion.

The researcher asked the non-Black teachers if they also believed that the curriculum had a negative effect upon Black boys' performance at school. They agreed that the curriculum was responsible for reducing the Black boys' achievement at school. They also said that the lack of practicalities being taught in the curriculum contributed to this. Hence they agreed with some Black teachers that more practical things should be taught to Black boys in order to encourage them to achieve more.

As Teacher 3 said:

> "…Black boys…the curriculum is probably is not helping them or making them succeed but not because there is something missing about their culture in the curriculum that they don't achieve since Asian and Chinese children achieve and we don't teach them their culture yet they achieve. So Black boys I think, they almost need some form of practical life skills course that could make it exciting for them and thereby then make them achieve. I mean that's why we have ended up doing our own thing…."

Teacher 1 agreed.

This statement implied that teachers thought that Black boys could only achieve in their work through physical actions and not through abstract thinking, as a result teachers became anxious to help Black boys achieve in this way, but if teachers also encouraged Black boys academically, then maybe Black boys would achieve just as much as they did through physical actions. As the Black boys suggested, further professional training by the White and Asian teachers might open up some of these assumptions that they make about Black pupils learning. However, the above comments suggest that there is a need to go further than simply addressing the White and Asian teachers racial stereotyping of the Black boys. Some Black teachers have views about teaching and learning that is

intended to help Black boys adopt a more positive approach to their schooling, but these views have unintended effects. One thing that would help here is for all teachers to be more aware of the complexity of cultures and identities and how they operate within particular institutions like schools (Hall, 1992; Woodward, 2000). At the same time, there is a need for all teachers to shift in their thinking about 'failing Black boys' to focus on the academic success of Black boys and how successful schools work (Nehaul, 1996; Blair and Bourne, 1998).

Although Teacher 2 would not agree with this statement as he said:

> "…you know for Black boys the curriculum, it just doesn't help Black boys psychologically at all to achieve in education, so there's no point in asking them to push more on their thinking power because they understand only through action."
> Nisheet: What would you mean by this?
> Teacher 2:
> "Well I would like to say, it's not really what they are interested in, when it comes to thinking and writing written work, it's not science then for them. It needs to be more vocational science to make them achieve."

The researcher then investigated what emerged as an issue, the teachers' accounts of their perceptions about Black parents affecting the performance of the boys.

Teacher 3:

> "Yes so like you know Black parents can be blamed because from parents evening all I can say is that a majority of them don't pay attention to what teachers have to say. They are not bothered about their children's behaviour and in general they don't seem to bother too much that their children achieve at school. So I think you know when they have this attitude it's not surprising for me to see why so many of their children from their race tend to underachieve at school and to be honest most of them don't even attend Parent's evening, so it just shows they are not bothered."

Teacher 4 opposed the statements about parents made by some teachers and used an example of how Black parents were very much concerned with their children's educational progress.

Teacher 4:

"...there is one Black chap that you saw me with em, I don't want to mention his name right. His parent don't regularly come to parents evenings, yet they care about his education especially I know this when I rang them up because after that, their son came up to me the next day in school and was saying to me 'Sir well why did you have to ring my parents, why did you have to do this'?...so his father came in and he apologised on his son's behalf and says he wants his son to do well therefore he has had a good word with him that will result in him of not doing anything bad now and to achieve in his work instead...."

Teacher 4 continues:

"...but there is some poor Black parenting going on as well because we do get some Black parents who are saying things like 'Oh I can't come into school to see the teachers because the school is too far away'...."

So some teachers thought that Black parents were having significant negative effects upon their boys' performance in education. A few teachers thought that Black boys' own behaviour also had a prominent negative effect upon their education and that this was often similar to the behaviour of their parents.

As Teacher 1 said:

"Black boys bad behaviour, originates from their parents I think because they just act aggressive like their parents, all them Black boys out there because parents haven't taught them any manners...."

Teacher 3 in addition to this also said:

> "Although some Black boys bad behaviour does originate from their parents therefore parents can in some cases be held responsible for their boys bad behaviour, which eventually affects their boys achievement in education but in addition to this I also think, we also have to consider that when Black boys are in peer groups their bad behaviour starts to develop then on as well, which then eventually affects their achievement. So I mean I know this because one Black boy, he was never presenting any aggressive behaviour here till he started hanging around with his mates here regularly, after that, he became a riot and did no work in my lesson when all of them were together. So I think then you know when you recognise this then, you never should argue with Black pupils' when they are in peers and not working but you debate it because of their peers otherwise they will all end up coming in your face, when they gang up all I mean, be together and argue with you and not do anything constructive in my lessons, like achieve for example."

This suggested that teachers were finding it difficult to handle Black boys in peer groups and that they found them threatening in their behaviour towards them if disciplined in front of their peers. Teacher 6 took this a step further by explaining why this happened. When Black boys were in peer groups their behaviour became a masculinity issue.

As Teacher 6 said:

> "Some of the children here are so dam smart it's unreal right but they don't pay certain amount of attention in front of their Black peers because it's seen as un-cool for Black boys to work in classrooms. So they end up disrupting each other and sometimes cause chaos, not in my lesson but in other lesson. So you get groups of Black boys shouting at each other, making gestures at each other you know just, just so that they can be like their friends, so they act that way and also in terms of their achievement they don't want to achieve too highly cos they consider that then their Black friends will not act well with them. So they then act like 'rude boys' but in this instance when I see them acting like a 'rude boy'. I then tell them individually at break times, look at your bad behaviour now and before you were complaining to me about how teachers, mistreated you very badly cos you were shouting across the classroom and were

misbehaving generally when in peer groups. Are you surprised now? I tell them why teachers tell you and your friends of badly, for shouting and misbehaving. I am not surprised, look at all your bad behaviour first and sort it out! I tell them. But they say 'we are boys' sir we got to act hard and shout in classroom to stay with our group to accept us sir, otherwise we will get picked on and if we start to do too well with books then we will be called 'woosey' (meaning gay). So we got to act like how our friends want us to act'…."

Studies by Mac an Ghaill (1988) and Sewell (1997) mentioned terms of disparagement such as 'gay' and 'pussy'. These words effeminised intellectual activity in school. Therefore, boys had a reason not to succeed if they were being teased for using their intelligence. Gender role development of minority ethnic groups in the UK was mentioned in the literature especially in Mac an Ghaill (1994) 'The Making of Men' and Sewell (1997) 'Black Masculinities and Schooling'.

Teacher 6, in contrast to the above negative experience, gave an example of how positive behaviour in peers did contribute to Black boys achievements:

"…one particular Black boy that we had around and he really started to mess up not in my lesson but the English lesson I went to help out in. So his Black friend said to him instantly then 'come on we can't be doing this, we got to do well man'! And he stopped and was working, also another Black lad in the playground field I was teaching them and all of a sudden I had to go inside the school building to get some equipment and I left them whilst they were doing a warm up and he got this one Black lad, his friend to run round the field because he was messing up right and when I come back (respondent laughed) and I asked this boy what you running around the field for? and he goes such and such sent me out you know and I says well why? and he goes 'well because I was messing around sir' and all of a sudden this person who made him go around the field, this African lad had become me. He knew what to do, he knew how to control them, he knew what to do if they were messing up and get them working and basically making them achieving in their education in my lesson. So having good peers does also help them in their education as well…."

However Teacher 1 said:

> "Regardless of what anyone thinks, but I think that Black peers always have a negative effect upon each Black boy, em because of peer pressure, since according to their peers they tell them, it's not seen to be cool to be working or achieving em undoubtedly. So they never work or achieve in my class, you notice Black boys in peers chucking papers at each other, chatting to each other and messing around not doing work. So yes behaviour in peer groups does hold most Black boys back to achieve…."

A variety of things have now been recognised which affected the experiences of Black boys in education. The researcher wanted to gather information from teachers on what they thought were the most prominent factors, which affected a Black boy's experience in education.

Teacher 6 said:

> "Em the realisation at the end of the day that this society isn't necessarily in their favour. The realisation that parenting is poor but the main one is the White and Asian teachers who mistreat Black pupils'."
>
> Nisheet: When you said stigma before did you mean coming from all non-Black teachers towards Black boys in particular only or not?
> Teacher 6:
> "Yeah."
> Nisheet: What type of stigma?
> Teacher 6:
> "It's primarily this person who is going to be excluded or this person is going to be out of the class for the next day or so and you think why is it always that a majority of these are Black boys, that teachers pick on here and you think to yourself hang on a sec there's other people."
> Nisheet: Who are doing exactly the same?
> Teacher 6:
> "No they are doing worse…and I think why hasn't that person been excluded when he/she has done this."
> Nisheet: And what race of people are these?
> Teacher 6:
> "These are non-Black pupils', these are Europeans and they don't get told anything or get excluded even though they do worse than Blacks. So you know there's racism operating against Black kids at this school. So then White and Asian teachers are to be blamed as the key main factor

effecting Black boys performance at schools, as Black boys don't get motivated to achieve in their education because of them."

Teachers 4 and 5 also held White and Asian teachers accountable and as profound factors in negatively effecting Black boys' achievement at school.

All of this data supports those studies which argue that racism is still very much active within British schools especially in the unequal treatment that Black children, received from their teachers (see Mac an Ghaill, 1988, Gillborn, 1990, Wright, 1992, Sewell, 1997, Blair, 2001, LDA, 2004).

There was a contrasting opinion when the researcher asked non-Black teachers what the main factors were, according to them, which effected Black boys' performances in education. They never once held themselves accountable and instead they argued that it was the behaviour of Black boys which, linked with their parents and that was the main reason for Black boys' underperformance in education.

As Teacher 3 said:

> "…behaviour it has to be behaviour."
> Nisheet: Behaviour, as in what, challenging behaviour or something?
> Teacher 3:
> "I don't know why but Black pupils', it's got to be their challenging behaviour…they present always challenging behaviour. I don't know why exactly though but this does have an impact on their education as they don't do well but to be honest, it's got to be, it has to be the parents as well. I am sorry it has to be some parental environment and involvement in that, there has to be a link. I mean probably because they come from low class therefore parents don't teach their children manners, so they appear bad and thereby not achieve and also parents I say again because I haven't seen a lot of their parents on parents evening. So they don't look interested in their education and so their boys underachieve and also it has

to do something with the, how do you put it? The way Black boys look in appearance wise, present themselves in speech wise, etc. It just shows they come from low class backgrounds, as their parents don't teach them the right way to present themselves. Therefore their children are bound to underachieve then, you just have this vision."

Teacher 4 explained why non-Black teachers thought this:

"….So it's the social environment that is a problem you see, so teachers in this social environment always then think that Black pupils' are coming from low class families as a result they think overall Blacks must be poor then. Therefore they recognise that most of the times that these Black kids parents cannot possibly have enough money to support their kids. As a result, their children look the way they are, so teachers then see Black children as typical underachievers then when they dress in a certain way, or have their hair cut in a certain way, etc because basically it represents that they come from low class families and as a result their parents…made them look unpresentable and therefore their children are bound to underachieve then but teachers fail to recognise that when Black people dress up in a certain way or have a haircut in a different style, they only do this cos they like being different and fashionable….Even when Black boys speak Patois on odd occasions teachers instead of recognising that this is our cultural speech, they would instantly see this as a sign of underachievement coming from Black boys and teachers would also see this as bad manners coming from Black low class parents as well, who are teaching their kids this low language but you see this thinking of teachers then has a major negative impact on Black boys education at school especially when teachers hear Black boys speaking in Patois."

One of the most profound ways in which a Black boy could have demonstrated his cultural difference involved speaking in Creole/Patois. The researcher therefore asked teachers exactly how did speaking in Creole/Patio effect Black boys' education.

Teacher 6:

"…Well you see, I know many times therefore Black children speaking in Creole/Patois here then results in non-Black teachers to determine children's set group in a negative way as well because they think they are not speaking in correct tone of English because their parents haven't taught them this, when actually they are speaking in the correct language

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but what it is, is that the European teachers find it difficult to understand them and therefore then put them in lower sets."

Similarly, the 'Old Disciplinarians' and the 'New Realists' teachers in Mac an Ghaill's (1988) study thought that. 'In practice, the use of Creole within an educational context was associated with the low status of "low-ability" students by these teachers and therefore they described the language of Creole used by the Black youth as 'aggressive, babbling, loud, meaningless, argumentative and jabbering. In interviews with these teachers they maintained the same derogative view of Creole' (Mac an Ghaill, 1988, P55-56).

Therefore it became clear that these opinions have long been held by many teachers, and could easily be construed as a way in which a lack of understanding of Black culture can negatively affect education progress; since speaking a certain Black culture language can lead teachers into the misconception that the boy is of low ability.

So the researcher next asked Teacher 6:

> How do you know this, that Black boys are put in lower sets because they speak Creole?
> Teacher 6:
> "Believe me I know its true from staff room chats and everything it's obvious how the teachers speak and set. So not always are set groups determined by academic performance but other ways as well like I mentioned to you…."

However other teachers had opposed this statement, when they suggested to the researcher that the setting of Black boys was determined purely on their ability and not because of the way they spoke in Creole.

As Teacher 1 said:

> "No I don't think them speaking in Creole affects their set groups and that's not how we set groups, well I would certainly hope not, it's based on ability only."

Regardless of whichever way the setting was organised the non-Black teachers informed the researcher that they did not see many Black boys achieving very highly in their education, which then undermined their potential to go into highly skilled occupations. So even if Black boys were in top set groups, the majority of non-Black teachers still thought Black boys would not achieve and end up in lower skilled occupations.

As Teacher 1 said:

> "…I don't see many Black boys achieving whichever set groups they are in and the ones who are in top sets will not perform that well I don't think cos you see a majority of them more then likely will end up going into working class occupations because they will want to follow their parents and in this area they are mainly coming from working class households…."

Teacher 2 said:

> "…Overall Black boys don't achieve it's a fact and to be honest I have never asked the Black boys in my classroom of what they want to go into because even though the set group I teach is the top. However I think the Black boys which are few in my group they are not capable to go further, they don't think they would be capable none of them, well oh sorry I think they might be capable but they probably might want to get in the same working class jobs as their parents are in now, after sixteen…."

This shows low expectations by non-white teachers. On the other hand, we can say that because Black teachers seemed to have recognised these negative views of non-Black teachers regarding Black boys, they were then more inclined to encourage Black boys to stay on for post-sixteen education.

As Teacher 5 said:

> "…because I know how some White and Asian teachers thinking is here towards Black pupils' which is negative. I have to say, as they don't even consider that Black boys will go into high occupations even though some are achieving very highly in their respective set groups. So I make Black boys eyes open then because you know when Black kids come to school and not know why they have to go to school, it's just something that has to be mandatory done. But when you give them the awareness of why you going to school and achieving your grades is important, if you want a nice job and if you want a nice house, you know because if you want a good house then it is determined when it's triple your salary. Therefore I tell them in order to achieve this, they have to start doing well from now at school and I tell them that, that's why it's also necessary for them to stay on after sixteen in their education to achieve this good lifestyle, job, etc for their future…."

Teacher 6 agreed.

To conclude this section it is necessary to point out that the evidence gathered indicates that non-Black teachers did contribute in making Black boys experiences in education less meaningful and thereby were obstacles in their education through having a negative view of the boys, their parents and their culture. Black teachers tended to have a more positive view and had accepted a professional duty to improve the educational experiences of Black boys. Their commitment was confirmed when they discussed their methods of doing this. Black teachers demonstrated their understanding of Black culture, their understanding of Black boys, their belief in education and their belief in the boys' potential to succeed. By having this understanding Black teachers related well with Black boys and this, in turn, according to the Black teachers, had a positive impact upon Black boys' educational experience. Therefore it can be said that Black teachers were playing a more positive role in the education of Black boys at their secondary school than non-

Black teachers.

Since the parents of Black boys received a great deal of blame for the approach to education taken by their children, the researcher will now consider their understanding of the educational experiences of their children.

Parents at the secondary school

There is a long history in the literature on schooling of White teachers racially stereotyping Black parents as primarily responsible for their children's negative response to schooling (Mac an Ghaill, 1988; Mirza, 1992). Other research has challenged these negative perceptions by providing evidence of Black parents actively acting to counteract teachers' contribution to the educational under-achievement of their children (Blair and Bourne, 1998). Teachers at secondary school had suggested that the parents were partly responsible for the disappointing academic performance of many Black boys. In order to find out the perspective of parents, the researcher initiated the interviews by asking those who volunteered to take part in the research, how they thought their child was doing at school? The parents were interviewed individually but their responses have been grouped. Bob's Mother said:

> "Well at present I know he's doing ok when I look at his school work
> although he is not achieving high but he is doing ok…."
> Nisheet: When you told me that your son is doing ok in education, what
> did you mean by that?
> Bob's Mother:
> "Well for me he's pretty ok, though low I would say in most of his
> subjects at school anyway and for him he's saying that he's doing ok and I
> know he's doing ok but I think, well he could do high if only the teachers

pushed him…at school….”

Jenkins's Mother:

"Think Jenkins is doing well especially when seeing his exam marks but I think he could do better.”
Nisheet: So how could he do better?
Jenkins's Mother:
"If teachers pushed him more well to do in his education then he could be doing better.”

Richard's Father:

"Em, I would say quite well, em, when I see his school work and test marks, he does do well because, Richard seems to grasp the education so he does well; but at times he does struggle a bit more because of other people not pushing him but overall good.”

The researcher immediately recognised that the parents were concerned about their children's education. They had a clear desire for their children to succeed. However, it was apparent that the parents generally thought that the fact that the boys were currently achieving below their capabilities was actually attributable to their teachers. This was in marked contrast with the comments made by some teachers who had avoided accepting their responsibility and had blamed the parents. The researcher thought that it was necessary to ask exactly what the parents thought the teachers could do to improve things. He wanted to get at their reasons for blaming the teachers:

Jenkins's Mother:

"I think teachers could, I think that they could, em, you know, sort of get him as an individual person and say you know sort of give him that little bit of extra encouragement you know but a lot of it I work on him at home anyway to get him more out there, go and get it, grabbing while you can.”

Parents wanted White teachers' to help their children in order to improve Black boys chances to succeed in education. Parents on the other hand were also aware of the importance of non-White teachers in helping their children in education. As Richard's father commented:

> "I give Richard the push he needs to achieve, but I think if White teachers were showing more encouragement to him then this would make Richard be pushed more into achieving as well. But all I hear from Richard is that he's not encouraged, so he's not bothered too much with school work. So I gather that Richard isn't doing as well at his school you see but I suppose some of his Black teachers are very encouraging and want him to do well; also some of his Asian teachers as well, he tells me at times."

Parents thought the reason why non-Black teachers were accountable for the lack of achievement by their boys was that they simply did not offer sufficient encouragement to the boys. This led to a general lack of motivation amongst the boys.

Parents went on to suggest that this lack of encouragement was because of the negative stereotypes that were present in society against Black boys. Some teachers they felt had been influenced, subconsciously, by these negative stereotypes. This had ultimately culminated in the boys under-achieving at school. This view was epitomised by Bob's mother:

> "…you know what! Society is always on about Black boys doing this and Black boys doing that and they are always portrayed in a negative way, which is sad because not all Black boys are like that; but anyhow because of this portrayal Bob then gets treated unfairly even at schools as well by teachers, as teachers pick up from society the negative stereotypes, so they will always then show lack of encouragement and neglect towards Bob within classrooms as well…."

The researcher wanted to know exactly which stereotypical opinions the teachers seemed

to have had acquired that prevented them from giving sufficient encouragement to the

boys. Matthew's Mother said:

> "Black boys in society are always seen in stereotypes like that of
> underachievers, illiterate basically. So then teachers pick up on this and
> therefore then say to Matthew at school that 'I don't see you as a very high
> achiever' and they say this cos in society they see young Black boys as not
> high achievers anyway. Teachers therefore don't encourage Matthew too
> much further in his education because they think, he will underachieve
> anyway at some point in his life because in society they see many Black
> boys who have not achieved and therefore are in lower occupations…."

Jenkins's Mother, Richard's Father and Bob's Mother all shared similar opinions.

The researcher thought it was necessary to confirm whether parents thought the teachers

treated all Black boys in this way, rather than the teachers holding a grudge just against

their own sons:

Jenkins's Mother:

> "Yes from what I have heard he does say all Black pupils' are treated
> unfairly as they do get ignored, he tells me about occasions, he's put his
> hand up and when other Black boys in his class have put their hand up and
> yet the teacher don't go to them first but instead goes to an Asian or a
> White person and then their turn comes…."

The other 3 parents also thought that the Black boys were being treated differently at

school.

The researcher had also observed in his observation diary that Black boys were overall

seen as getting negatively treated. He had recorded an incident where he observed an

Asian girl complaining about how long it was taking for her work to come out of the printer. She accused the Black boys who were present there of messing about with the printer, causing the delay. She complained to the teacher. The teacher told the boys to leave the printer alone if they did not know how to work it. The researcher had observed the boys being patient, being pleasant to the girl and explaining the delay as part of the system. He was quite surprised when the teacher automatically assumed the Asian girl was correct and the Black boys were wrong.

The parents unanimously agreed that the teachers discriminated against Black boys and because the Black boys perceived they were not being treated fairly they were not motivated to achieve. When their boys recognised this discrimination against them by their teachers it negatively altered their perception of the lesson and made them less inclined to work well in that particular subject. As Richard's Father explained:

> "…When Richard sees unfair treatment by teachers towards him and other Black boys, he then doesn't like the teachers then especially in subjects like Languages, English, Science and Maths, as he says his teacher doesn't listen or believe Black boys or trust Black boys or treat Black boys equally compared with other race of children, therefore he doesn't then like these lessons. Whereas in the lessons he likes he doesn't see this type of behaviour coming from teachers towards Black boys, probably because they are coloured teachers in there and where these things don't happen. I mean differences being created but once Richard recognises in the lessons that all Black boys are treated differently, he doesn't enjoy those lessons then or gets motivated to achieve in them."

Bob's and Jenkins's Mothers argued along the same lines.

The parents also made it clear that it was not only discrimination from the teachers that adversely affected the boys' education. Their White peers had a similar effect. Bob's

Mother commented:

> "…you know what! Apart from teachers, it's also the White boys that Bob is with who hold him back as well in not making him wanting to work in lessons. I will give you an example, something happened in the dinner queue and it wasn't Bob's fault but because his actions were the ones which stood out the most he got accused, so he got blamed for it and he was saying, it wasn't fair, how come he only got kicked out and the other person this White boy involved didn't get kicked out at all you know what I mean! That person had to stay on in school while he got kicked out. Well but like I explain to him that your actions were the one that got caught, that's' why they didn't want to hear your side of the story but at the end of the day what my saying is that his White fellow pupils' at this Secondary school blamed him and made him get kicked out. So yes White pupils' do then have negative impact on him but this affected his work then you know as when he came back to school, he wasn't working much in the lessons when this White boy was with him. As Bob told me this and he also told me that he can't concentrate then in his work when he sees him in his lesson cos it makes him remind of that incident and so he gets put of working in the lessons he sees him in."

Mathew's mother similarly agreed.

Bonnett (2000) has written of the way that studies of whiteness have developed across America and Australia but has not had the same high profile in Britain. This is part of broader shift in the social sciences in which social majorities, such as men, heterosexuals and white people, are increasingly the focus of research inquiry. One effect of this shift is that the presentation of social majorities as the 'norm' in social relations is questioned. In Meadow Secondary school, White teachers never considered their whiteness as important in terms of interactions with Black pupils and parents. Further, the curriculum was presented in normative terms with no awareness of how the power position of whiteness affected the school's teaching and learning (Sollis, 1996). Hence, White teachers never considered the possibility of Black culture as a curriculum resource. In contrast, Black

parents thought the State Education System was responsible for their boys not wanting to

work in lessons, partly as a result of not including material about Black culture with

which their children could identify. In turn, Armstrong (2003) argues, this might increase

Black pupils self-esteem.

Jenkins's Mother:

> "…state education is responsible as well in not making him work in all
> lessons. So you see by not providing the knowledge of Black culture to
> Black kids. Therefore Jenkins isn't then going to appear to be working in
> all his lessons as well, you see as there's no push, no lesson where he or
> any other Black kids in fact can be motivated to work in them or get
> inspired through Black culture to work in all lessons…."

Richard's father, Matthew's and Bob's Mothers agreed on this point.

The researcher asked what changes could be made to the curriculum to give recognition

to Black Culture. Jenkins's Mother stated:

> "…so yes teachers could then introduce teaching a lesson based on Black
> Studies, that's what it should be called where Black culture is recognised
> then Black kids will know where they are coming from. There's too much
> of things like Kings of England, Queens of England, you don't know
> anything about, you know before colonial days about, who ruled the
> Caribbean, who…ruled Jamaica, who ruled Saint Kitts or somewhere like
> that, you know, there's none of that and I think they need to know their
> roots, they need to know where they are coming from…."

Richard's Father, Bob's Mother and Matthew's Mother agreed to Black Studies being

introduced within State education to make Black boys work and achieve more in lessons.

There is a long history of Parents sending their children back to the Caribbean and Africa

to increase their educational opportunities (Howe, 1996; Rasekoala, 1997). Parents at

Meadow Secondary School also thought that the boys' education would be improved if

the parents were more wealthy and able to afford to send the boys to the Caribbean to

receive a better education.

As Richard's Father said:

> "Well I think, I would send him over there because over there the equal
> opportunities are better for Black children they get to study hard then, the
> environment of school life is strict there whereas over here teachers'
> labelling, the racism they see, experience…here is all not there. So they
> would achieve better there then and because we have the fee system there,
> children would be doing a lot better in education there. So yes if I had
> extra funds I would send him there…."

Jenkin's and Bob's mother similarly agreed with sending their boys to the Caribbean if

they had additional funds available. However a brief review of websites showed concern

with the education system in Jamaica because of the disadvantages children there had to

face due to corporal punishment (www.corpun.com/jms00106.htm). This could be an

issue for Black parents to consider before sending their boys there.

Though sending the boys to the Caribbean was not possible for parents to do, Black

parents took other measures to improve their boys' education, by attending parents'

evenings, buying educational resources, and offering encouragement wherever possible,

and by building self-esteem. It was interesting to note the following statement by

Jenkins's Mother:

> "I also keep more in touch with his education by regularly attending
> parents evening. So parents evening well all of them I attend because it's

not like as if we are in the Caribbean and we know teachers treat each kid the same. We are in Britain and because our kids can't go anywhere from here. So we have to keep an eye on how they do in this country, so attending parents evening regularly is a way which I do, otherwise if we don't then teachers in most cases with the very little help they now give to Black kids will also stop entirely if they see us not paying attention as parents…."

Matthew and Bob's mothers and Richard's father made similar comments. A similar concern to that expressed by Jenkins's mother appeared in the literature in Blair (2001).

The parents also encouraged their children to stay on in post-16 education. College level education required a sufficient level of achievement and appropriate mature behaviour.

Matthew's Mother:

"I keep on telling him that it's also beneficial for him to stay on in his education as well even after sixteen, as I know Matthew's White and Asian teachers will never do this cos they view Black boys badly in every way whether it be in behaviour, lifestyle, background or going in gangs. So then I have to do all the encouraging all the time to push him to go further in his education and therefore I would love my child to go to a university. I don't think Mathew wants to go to university but I do insist and tell him you must stay on after sixteen, as your teachers or the society will never want you to do as well…."

A study by Sewell (1997) also confirmed this negative belief of parents. As he found a White Antagonistic teacher named Ms Kenyon in his research saying:

"…I actually think…the Afro-Caribbean boys are more louder…Afro-Caribbean children come from single homes…there is a feeling…of not being wedded to this society…" (Sewell, 1997, p61).

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She further added:

> "…Caribbean boys don't succeed…they are more interested in being …posse…or the life on the streets…I think they've already been drawn elsewhere" (Sewell, 1997, p62-63).

This showed that teachers by having such negative misconceptions against Black boys were then inevitably not going to encourage Black boys to succeed in further education. So it was necessary for Black parents to then encourage their boys in further education because they knew such belief operated. As Jenkins's Mother said:

> "I want him to stay on in education even after sixteen as well. I have said to him that education at this time is very, very important you need to stay on at school and to do your A' Levels, he tells me he wants to study medicine. Therefore I tell him you need to stay on and get your, your qualifications, and for you to get to uni; to do what you want to do. So by telling him that, it's made him realise that yes that's the only way, I am going to get what I want, he tells me this and I tell him good you listen to me as you know I am the only person who will advice you positively of how to get your qualifications this way as your White and Asian teachers will not give this positive backing to you…."

Bob's mother encouraged her son to pursue post-sixteen education as well.

Self-esteem and self-respect were also issues that Black parents believed were essential for educational success. Jenkins's Mother:

> "…self-esteem and self- respect he gets taught personally from me as well, as I know he will not get this from his teachers but they should teach this at schools but because I teach him this, therefore this then encourages him in his education now and that's why he wants to go further in his education after sixteen."
>
> Nisheet: Right. Can you describe how?
>
> Jenkins's Mother:
>
> "Self-respect for himself meaning always think highly of yourself, no matter what people say don't let people bring you down always think highly of yourself and push yourself forward. Anything that you want in

life, you can always get it as a Black man providing that you work hard at school, you work hard to enter a career and you know the world is your oyster out there…."

So parents were doing everything on their part to make sure that their boys education did not suffer, they prepared their boys emotionally through instilling in them the positive self-esteem required to succeed in education and this they believed would then not only make their boys succeed in education but would also structure the development of a good personality in them.

As Bob's Mother said:

> "I am building on his self-esteem to make him achieve and I know through this I am teaching him to be a good person as well with a good personality and looking at within yourself as a person who can achieve in life despite teachers putting you down. So he listens then and he's encouraged then."

In conclusion, Black parents were overall found to be very supportive and interested in their boys' education. They recognized that their boys were affected negatively in their education in various ways. Since they had knowledge of discrimination against Black people in society, they were therefore very interested in giving them the appropriate assistance necessary for academic success. For that reason the interviews with the parents would suggest that the parents had a positive influence on the boys' experience in education, and clearly contrast with the views of those teachers who regarded some parents as being responsible for Black boys' underachievement. The parents did have some sense of cultural differences in education based on their current knowledge of education in the Caribbean and education here. The next chapter shifts the location of the research to the supplementary sector.

Chapter 5

Boys at the "Black Success" Supplementary School

An indicator of the perceived failure of the English education system to meet the needs of African/Caribbean students has been the growth of supplementary schools. These schools, operating outside the formal education system, offered another way of investigating how boys were performing in mainstream schools by providing a space where boys could comment on their experience of schooling but from a position outside of the system.

The 'Black Success' supplementary school in Coventry is located on two sites, one a densely populated area to the north of the city, and the other in the city centre. On a Tuesday the school takes place for three hours in the city centre in a hall above a public house. Entrance to the hall is via a ground floor corridor leading to stairs. On entering the corridor it is possible to see the bar area. The hall is very large about 5 metres long and 7 metres wide with a laminated floor and many tables and chairs. There are some small rooms and a toilet surrounding off the hall. On Saturdays the school occupies another hall for three hours outside the city centre. The hall is average in size, with many tables and chairs. To the rear end of the hall on one corner there are also toilets and on the opposite side there is a kitchen. The windows are small inside the hall. Outside there is a car park to the side of the building for visitors.

The supplementary school has around 40 African/Caribbean students. There are three age groups: a 5-7 age range of 5 boys and 5 girls, an 8 –11 range of 4 boys and 6 girls and the

final group, 12-16 of 12 boys and 8 girls. These students study in the same room but within different groups, taught different subjects by different teachers. There are three female African/Caribbean teachers. The academic provision at the supplementary school enabled pupils to be taught extra curricula activities, with Black culture and history being integrated into the curriculum. Respect is central feature of the school's ethos and it is readily visible to any observer through the friendly relations between staff and students. Alongside this, teachers also pick up pupils in their cars to bring them to the school on both Tuesdays and Saturdays if their parents are not available. Most of the pupils are linked to the church which sponsors the school. The pupils come from a range of areas, although a majority came from working class areas in Coventry.

In consultation with the supplementary school manager four boys were selected for the research to interview and observe. These were Tom and William, regarded as high achievers, Steve, regarded as a low achiever, and Joseph, regarded as an average achiever. They attended four different secondary schools in Coventry. Their level of achievement was assessed by their supplementary school teachers.

As in the previous chapter the researcher will link his findings where appropriate to the current research literature on Black experience of schooling in the UK.

The researcher firstly asked the respondents how they felt about their overall educational progress at their secondary schools before asking how well they felt they were working at the Supplementary school.

Tom said: (I)

"I think I am doing all right at my secondary school."
Nisheet: Alright as in like good/bad/in the middle?
Tom:
"In the middle."
Nisheet: How do you think you are doing at supplementary school?
Tom:
"I think I am doing much better at my supplementary school in terms of education."

William: (I)

"…I think I am doing…ok in my education at my secondary school…."
Nisheet: And over here at your supplementary school how do you feel you are doing?
William: "In my studies here I am going to the top here even better then my secondary school."

Steve: (I)

"I am doing all right at my secondary school."
Nisheet: What about over at this supplementary school….?
Steve:
"I am doing fine here but a bit better than school, because they are teaching me mainly manners and they are helping me with Black history; as well as giving us learning more about my own culture which pushes me to do well in education here."

Joseph: (I)

"I am going on ok at my secondary school you know."
Nisheet: Ok, as in what, are you doing brilliant, well, average, etc.
Joseph:
"Well."
Nisheet: What about over at this supplementary school, how are you doing in terms of education?
Joseph:
"Am doing extremely better in my work here."
Nisheet: Extremely better! Why do you say that?
Joseph:
"Because I learn more."

Each boy thought they were performing better at the Black Success supplementary school than at their secondary school. The researcher asked why this was the case and the reasons they gave indicated that the boys thought that the secondary school teachers were one of the main reasons for their below-potential performances:

Tom: (E)

> "I just don't like them, the teachers, at my secondary school cos they keep blaming you for no reason for anything wrong that happens. So I don't do very well then and instead just do all right at my secondary school in education."
> Nisheet: Why do your teachers at secondary school blame you for no reason?
> Tom:
> "Because of my colour probably, they don't like me and treat me different."

William: (I)

> "…I am doing only ok at my secondary school cos of White teachers because they don't like me, as well as other Black people and therefore do things to annoy you, like this happens also with my Black mates too. So this puts me off achieving in their lessons. So I say that I do ok then only at my secondary school but I think coloured teachers they are better as they want me to do well at my secondary school but I only have one coloured teacher."

Steve in his interview also thought that the teachers were mistreating him, as well as other Black boys and that this adversely affected their education.

As suggested above, it was apparent that the boys thought that the way their secondary school teachers treated them was the reason for their disappointing performances. Their

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teachers at their secondary schools caused them to lose the desire to achieve to a high standard in their classes. The boys thought their secondary school teachers held negative opinions of them. The researcher wanted to determine how their teachers had formed these opinions. The boys' responses were similar to those in Chapter Four, suggesting that people in society held negative stereotypes of Black men and that the teachers identified with this and had transferred it to them and treated the boys unfairly (Ross, 1998; Wright, et al 1998; Majors, 2001; Youdell, 2004). The boys told the researcher their White and Asian 'friends' treated them in the same way as their teachers and this was again due to the negative stereotypical views about Black people that existed within society:

As Joseph said: (I)

> "…you see it's because of negative stereotypes that are present against Black men in society therefore teachers then end up seeing us in that stereotype…So then you know teachers are copying this stereotype that they have seen about us as a race in society on to us and therefore treat us differently in a negative way at schools also you get racism from schoolmates as well, who are not Black. So like Whites and Asians cos they all think of Black people as bad and call us names, which again operates in society. So names like 'gang boy, 'mugger' and so on…."

Tom also said: (I)

> "Well teachers just see you in a society stereotype. So when something goes missing they just look at all Black kids first and check them first and in some cases they have directly blamed them first without inquiring. So you know then cos they have seen this 'gangster' stereotype about us in society in the first place. So I think that makes them then behave like that towards us Blacks in the first place and that makes them then treat us unfairly overall then compared with any other races of pupils'."

William in an ethnographic discussion and Steve in his interview agreed.

The above accounts reinforce what was outlined in Chapter Four about pupils sense of their secondary school White teachers not accepting them as learners. Further, they also saw a difference between educational spaces. A number of geography scholars have pointed to the importance of space in the development of young people's lives, suggesting that particular aspects of identity can be performed within different contexts (Massey, 1994; Valentine, 2004) More specifically, theorists of ethnicity and racism have examined the importance of institutional contexts within which different cultural spaces help shape ethnic identity (Donald and Rattansi, 1992; Gill et al, 1992; Dixson and Rousseau, 2006). The Black pupils at the supplementary school made an important contrast between the negative impact of the White space of mainstream schooling compared to their transformation into confident learners within the safe context of the Black supplementary school.

In order to further explore the impact of different institutional spaces on the boys, the researcher asked his respondents how they felt they had to adapt to the negative stereotypes that teachers and their White and Asian friends held and most importantly, if this ultimately had any affect on their achievement at school. Tom said: (E)

> "…sometimes you think if our White and Asian friends but mainly teachers at school think about us like that and treat us like that, then let's just be bad in our attitude and steal and create our group of small gangs at school…So then you think you might as well be what teachers see and treat you in and live up to that stereotype. So even though I might want to do well, I sometimes feel I don't cos this all does at times affect me…."

This comment strongly suggests that the negative stereotypes became a 'self-fulfilling prophecy' for Black boys as they lived up to teachers expectation, and after initially

intending to work hard and succeed, they eventually decided not to, in response to the unfair treatment by their teachers. The existence of the stereotype-based attitude in society was in actual fact responsible for many people actually filling the stereotypical role. The concept of self-fulfilling prophecy regarding Black boys was identified in the literature (Mac an Ghaill, 1988; Gillborn, 1990, Blair, 2001). Steve (I) informed the researcher that he too fulfilled this self-fulfilling prophecy of teachers:

> "I follow what teachers expect me to follow, so I be a dosser at schools just like Black men out there in society who do nothing…..When I come to this supplementary school this is all changed I mean my thinking and instead I feel the need of wanting to achieve here instead in my education."

Fanon (1970), writing of the burden of Blackness in white institutions, highlights the dynamic possibilities for developing alternative representations of Black people in Black contexts (see Youdell, 2004). Here, the respondents stated that a major reason why they attended the supplementary school was to prove dominant teacher stereotypes wrong by demonstrating that Black boys could achieve high standards in their education.

Tom: (I)

> "…So that's the reason why I come to this Supplementary school to wash away these stereotypes from my mind and instead to get more and more motivated to get further in life through education instead, as there is a realisation of this from within me especially by attending here. So when teachers here say to us 'We care for you, so don't fall in bad images cos you won't achieve then and you will end up like how people see you in a negative way. So if you don't want that, then learn to ignore stereotypes and just concentrate in achieving'. So I feel within me then, that we really shouldn't then go by the stereotypes and you know what! Their saying has influenced me so much that I am also now achieving at my secondary school cos I have learned from my teachers here to ignore stereotypes and instead to achieve at secondary school as well as in my education here."

Joseph in his interview also seemed to appreciate the support of the teachers at the supplementary school. By helping him remove himself from negative stereotypes, his teachers had encouraged him to achieve in his education instead.

Steve in his interview went a step further by explaining how he learned to ignore stereotypes by learning Black history at the supplementary school. As he said:

> "…so you see teachers here by teaching us Black history and telling us through it that we should not follow stereotypes and instead achieve in life, like how in Black history famous Black people did. So we must as well follow this and one-way we can achieve is through achieving in education….so you then feel motivated to achieve as well in order to be like them, therefore you know, I do well in all subjects here then and you know what! I do well here even in those subjects that are previously disliked by me at my secondary school….So that's why I can say, I like coming here and am determined to keep on attending here cos you get this inspiration to achieve and teachers do this by constantly inspiring you through their Black history teaching and reminding you that you have to do well in education because these famous Black professional people did well in history through education…."

The above statement corresponds well with the researcher's observation schedule where a teacher said to a Black pupil who was not working in classroom to "come on get working and work harder you have to get it right; remember I taught you about Nelson Mandela and how he's achieved through his rights. So you want to as well, to get inspired don't you and not fall into one of the stereotypes like other Black boys have. So if you don't want to fall into this and also in future achieve like Mr. Mandela then you need to get working here and to achieve now, as you want to achieve don't you here"? And the boy replied, "Yes I do, I want to be like our Black leaders instead of being another negative stereotype Miss…."

Virk (1998) argued being taught about 'positive Black role models higher up in the hierarchy are crucial for Black pupils to then succeed in education' (Virk, 1998, p18). Supplementary school teachers therefore attempted to instil a desire both to work hard and to achieve in the boys by helping them to realise the importance of such characteristics. In order to determine whether or not this was actually favoured by the boys, the researcher asked the boys if they preferred their supplementary school teachers to their secondary school teachers.

Steve: (E)

> "Yes I love my supplementary school teachers better because they make us achieve simply by telling us the importance of why achieving is a must in education and therefore this helps to get rid of bad stereotypes then. So you feel then you do prefer your supplementary school teachers cos they are genuinely interested in you achieving and also like if you are on your work half way they will try to help you and show us how things are done and also most importantly they show you equally how to work out things and so they never treat you differently and this gives me motivation and confidence to work even more harder in my work here and makes me achieve here then…."
>
> Nisheet: What about your secondary school teachers, do you not get encouragement from them?
>
> Steve:
>
> "Not as much plus they don't give you the importance of why achieving is important in life because they have too many students and sometimes they don't really seem to care like for Black students but you know over here the teachers ask you, 'How you are?' 'What you have done?' Etc. They take an interest in you and tell you why it's best to achieve in life to move forward and get a reputable position in society as Blacks…."

This conversation clearly highlighted that Black pupils felt that secondary school teachers were not able to relate positively to them and as a result pupils did not feel encouraged and therefore this eventually had an impact on their level of achievement, whereas at the supplementary school the teachers were able to relate to Black pupils by being friendly in

their approach and this determined the boys to succeed. As William said: (I)

> "I find my teachers' at supplementary school as friendly and good, that's it really, that's why I prefer them and that's what makes me motivated to achieve here compared with my teachers at secondary school
> Nisheet: Why do you say friendly what have they done that makes you think that supplementary school teachers are friendly?
> William:
> "Like you can mess about with them, like they are your friends they won't shout at you, telling you to go out and whatever which teachers at my secondary school would do."
> Nisheet: How do you find your teachers at your secondary school?
> William:
> "Unfriendly and I just wouldn't want to talk to them or do anything that they ask me to…."

Post-structuralist literature on ethnic identity formation is very useful in helping to understand teaching and learning in the different sites that the researcher has chosen to investigate (Hall, 1992). However, a major limitation of post-structuralist theories is that they are often not connected to empirical research within social institutions. So, their general claims to explain identity, culture and the self can often seem far removed from the everyday lives of Black students and the accompanying 'racism and antiracism in real schools' (Gillborn, 1995). However, carrying out empirical work in different social institutions enabled the researcher to make sense of the theoretical claims found in the literature by linking them to everyday interactions between Black boys and their teachers. For example, in trying to make sense of the positive identification between the boys and their teachers at the supplementary school, the researcher noted in his diary that the latter seemed to have had a friendship bond with their students and this was evident when they were using the same words that their students used in order to relate to them well. So for example, words like 'likel' (meaning little), 'biag' (meaning big), 'safe' (meaning good) 'nuatting' (meaning nothing), 'tings' (meaning things) 'wagwan' (meaning hello) were

used by teachers to form a friendship bond with their students and the Black boys in turn would also speak back to their teachers using these words in order to show that the desire for friendship was mutual. This concrete practice illustrates how Black culture, in this case use of language, can act as a teaching resource to build up trust between teacher and learner that is central to education for all young people (Woods, 1990).

However, the boys informed the researcher that if they used any of these words at their secondary school, the teachers would not perceive it as the boys attempting to be friendly but would instead take an increasingly negative view of them. In other words the boys suggested that White and Asian teachers were unable to understand the coded meanings of their interaction with these teachers and the cultural exclusions based on a White school perspective (Bonnett, 2000).

As William stated: (I)

> "The teachers at my secondary school instead of understanding that I say hello to them by saying 'wagwan' or 'safe' meaning good you ok, etc. So instead of seeing this as our cultural language that I am being friendly with them when I use these terms, they instead end up always labelling me as negative cos they don't understand my language. So therefore I then don't perform well in their lessons."
> Nisheet: What label would they put upon you then?
> William:
> "….I am labelled as bad attitude boy in fact all Black boys are when they speak like this to teachers at schools…..Therefore teachers instantly say to us when we speak patois by saying 'wagwan' that 'you are a common bad attitude boy aren't you'? So a label they give you automatically, they tell you off for using this word without even attempting to understand what we said…."
> Nisheet: Ok do you go by this bad attitude label then?
> William:
> "No I am just what I am, they label me wrongly cos they don't understand my language. If they said nicely to stop, I would stop speaking like in

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patois and explain to them that I am not being rude but it's the normal way of me talking in patois to bond with them by saying 'wagwan' or whatever but because it's lack of understanding of my culture that teachers at school then end up then labelling me negatively. Whereas this don't happen at this Supplementary school cos they understand our culture and know why we talk the way we talk to bond with them. Therefore teachers here have told us 'We will not tell you off then because we recognise you in your attitude and behaviour through teaching you Black culture of why you act the way you do with us. So we won't tell you off for cultural behaviour and attitude, we are just more concerned about you achieving'. So you see my point is that teachers here respect us in the way we talk to them and they know exactly of how to treat us then by saying these things to us and thereby this then get us achieving then at their supplementary school because they are not telling us of for presenting cultural speech, so you feel motivated to achieve then…."

In sum, the supplementary school teachers assisted the boys in doing well in their education by taking a more friendly approach, making sure through their understanding to encourage rather than discourage the boys, regardless of their current level of achievement.

The researcher asked if anyone else at the Black Success supplementary school also inspired them to success in their education. They said their friends were a major source of support and as a result helped, make them achieve well in their education at supplementary school. As Tom said: (I)

> "My friends as well here motivate me to achieve but not my school friends at secondary school but over here I can definitely say that my friends do motivate me to achieve well in education because like you know the Black teachers that come here saying that we have to work twice as hard because we are Black male, so we then have to achieve. Then when me and my friends get talking in lesson here, he tells me, out of the blue also then 'come on man lets stop playing up now and get going in what we are doing and lets do well cos as Black males we have to achieve, remember they tell us this here'. This comment therefore then also makes me want to do more well as well then because my friends are saying this and I remember his words at school as well you know when I slack around in

lessons at my secondary school now…."

This showed that Tom seemed to have understood from his friends that they must not misbehave and instead achieve because they were Black males. In addition, Joseph in his interview went a step further by revealing that his friends also informed him of the likely danger that they will have of falling into the 'loser' stereotype if they did not stop messing around in lessons. As he said in his interview:

> "My friends here I suppose they are good cos they do definitely motivate me to work well in my work…by them saying 'lets not mess about man otherwise we will fall into the 'loser' stereotype…."

Steve in his interview agreed.

Much of the research in the literature on male peer groups in schools tends to focus upon negative attitudes developing among students who are seen to form anti-school cultures. For example, early studies, such as Willis's (1977; see also Evans, 2006) ethnography highlights how working-class lads contribute to their ending up in working-class jobs. Other ethnographies put a similar stress on male oppositional cultures among Black and Asian boys (Wright, 1986; Mac an Ghaill, 1988; Gillborn, 1990; Sewell, 1997). In contrast, qualitative research on Black and Asian female students makes clear that they develop a wide range of sophisticated strategies of peer-group survival. These strategies, built around Black female friendship groups, included forms of resistance and accommodation (Fuller, 1982; Anyon, 1983). These studies illustrate how Black and Asian girls can combine opposition to racial aspects of schooling, while working hard to achieve educational success. The above accounts about positive male friendship groups

developed within a Black supplementary school suggests that Black male students might learn from Black female responses to mainstream schooling. Further, mainstream teachers have something to learn from supplementary schools about the cultural complexity of Black boys supporting each other that does not have to be labelled in a stereotypical way as in opposition to the educational values of the school (Marriot, 2000; Majors, 2001; Annobil-Dodoo, and Moore, 2003).

Friends and teachers at the supplementary school were then seen as very encouraging and contributed to the respondents doing well. It is clear that the supplementary school teachers had a great influence upon the Black boys. They were very open about their high expectations. The boys were just not allowed to be slack. As William (I) revealed:

> "…well to be honest with you despite teachers and friends encouraging you to do well, I find that it's actually mainly its cos of teachers strictness here in the first place, which is, then, making us do well in our education overall. So they tell us off by saying 'why can't you ever get that or do that?' They shout this at us, when we don't do our work here but when they have said this in a strict way, we then get our work done and do it and prove to them then, that we can do, what we are set out to do. So cos of teachers strictness here mainly we then do well. So in any case we have to do well and achieve."
>
> Nisheet: What about at your secondary school. Do you get any strictness from teachers there, to do well?
>
> William:
>
> "No and nothing like this happens as teachers don't bother telling you off in lessons on your education. Instead, they tell you off more on your behaviour and also even when teachers shout at us to make us do things in lessons sometimes, they still after that have an arrogant behaviour towards you, so they are not like supplementary school teachers who show you affection even after shouting at us."

Joseph and Tom in their interviews agreed. In addition to this the researcher also noticed a strict attitude amongst many of the supplementary school teachers within lesson time. The following is an extract from the researcher's observation schedule and reveals this strict approach. When boys were seen throwing things and misbehaving their teacher shouted: 'I come here to teach and you learn' before adding, 'It's your loss not mine, so stop now you understand and concentrate'. Moreover on other occasions when negative behaviour was shown by Black boys, a teacher shouted at them saying: 'I am not interested in you I am interested in you learning so get going ok?' Furthermore, when boys were not working in lessons teachers shouted at them saying: 'I am losing my patience with you man, so do listen to me and work otherwise I will really go mad?' Also on other occasion when boys were not working they were also shouted at by teachers, this time saying: 'Look I am not forcing you. If you don't want it go, if yes then stay I am not repeating myself" and each time that a boy was disciplined in this way he immediately proceeded to work harder for the remainder of the lesson.

As a result of this strictness the Black boys thought their teachers at the Supplementary school were very well trained, as they knew exactly how to make them achieve in their education. As William in his interview pointed out:

> "My supplementary school teachers are very well trained then cos they understand us and know we need to be told off in an encouraging way to make us achieve and when they do this, they then make us realise the importance of our work, so therefore in this way they make us work more and achieve more here…."

This raised another issue for the researcher and he wanted to determine exactly why the boys' thought the teachers shouted at them, and why they thought this was justified. The

boys all said that this happened simply because supplementary school teachers were the same ethnic background as they were and therefore, had a good understanding of the fact that if they were to achieve highly as a Black person then they had to be strict with them, but in an encouraging way. As Tom said: (I)

> "Well cos my supplementary school teachers are Black they are therefore then strict here with us. So they shout at us by saying, 'if you like it you do the work, if you don't then leave the classroom', but then they do tell us that the same will happen to us at our secondary schools as well but over here they shout time and time again saying that 'we shout at you because you know we are the one's who will still push you to do well cos through Black and Black we relate and understand what struggle is out there for us, so you better understand and get working' and we know then what they have said is true therefore they shout at us, to make us work then and thereby to make us achieve well here. So we do then get working then in our work and then you realise you have got to achieve high in your education both here and at schools to face this struggle and get past it, through achieving in your education overall and so I do now both here and at my secondary school achieve now."

Joseph in his interview agreed.

The fact that teachers at supplementary school were of the same ethnic background resulted in the boys feeling the teachers could identify with each of them very well. Black boys were more determined to achieve when a Black teacher wanted them to. In other words the supplementary school teachers were playing a positive role in the Black boys' education. A significant part of their method of achieving this was by being strict with the boys. The boys accepted this strictness because they knew their teachers cared about them personally, cared about being Black and cared about the struggle Black people had in British society. While the data has been collected here is about their experiences in the supplementary school in some of their responses they are also offering a critique of their

experience in their secondary school.

The parents of the boys were also strict when encouraging their sons to do well in their education because they were aware of the struggle that existed in the wider society for Black people (Nehaul, 1996). As Joseph said: (I)

> "My parents have taught me that there are some things in life that I just need to accept like racism and all that and therefore they tell me I got to then work hard by achieving in my education cos they say when going for employment bosses are hopeless, as they will give the White person the job. So therefore I got to then work twice as hard and get 200% when they get 100%. So I got to then achieve well in my education….my parents say this and my parents besides telling me to achieve they make sure that I achieve as well in my education cos they keep on buying me educational books, computer packages that will benefit my education here and at secondary schools also they regularly attend open evenings to check up on my progress… if they notice me even after all their contribution towards my education that I am not performing well then in my education…they will shout at me very badly saying 'You are not working hard in your education, so you will not be allowed to watch TV for a whole week, not going out to play and not doing anything that you like because you are falling into a typical stereo'."

Steve in his Ethnographic discussion agreed.

It was clear that the researcher's respondents derived so much inspiration from their supplementary school teachers and their parents that they not only wanted to do well in their education at both their secondary and supplementary schools but also wanted to continue doing well in post-sixteen education. As Tom: (I) stated:

> "I am going to be staying on in sixth form cos my parents and my teachers at supplementary school have encouraged me, so I want to stay on now and do well in education."
> Nisheet: And what do you intend to study after sixteen?
> Tom:
> "Do my AS level and A' Level and that."

William, (I) in turn, observed:

> "I want to work more in my education after sixteen cos you can get a good
> chance if you have good GCSEs and A levels, you can get a good job. So I
> want to stay on after sixteen and achieve."
> Nisheet: How did you realise this?
> William:
> "By my parents and teachers at this supplementary school who always
> encourage me and tell me the benefits of achieving through education
> basically to get further in life as a Black man in higher occupation, so we
> can earn more and not end up bad like everyone thinks we do. So this
> motivates me then to continue in my education after sixteen to achieve
> this."

This showed that Black boys were motivated to achieve further in education simply

because of their parents and teachers encouragement. However, Joseph in his interview

suggested that his teachers and parents were not only encouraging him but were also

working with him on his education and this made him further realise that he should

continue on in further education. As he said:

> "…cos of parents and teachers at supplementary school cos they have
> worked with me more in my education at all stages by helping me in my
> education always and also showing me ways to write better, speak better,
> has all then encouraged me more to stay on in education further. As I want
> to make their effort worthwhile. So I want to now continue in education
> even after sixteen."

Steve (I) also said:

> "Yes I want to go to college to study further, so I want to stay on after
> sixteen and teachers here and my parents have all worked with me more in
> my education to then make me want to stay on after sixteen. So I feel
> motivated to stay on after sixteen in my education."

These Black boys realised the importance of achievement in education because of the

advice and help that they received of their parents and their supplementary school

teachers. However, if these two sources of inspiration were absent, there would be an

inevitable decline in their achievement. The boys discussed with the researcher how to some extent this happened at their secondary schools due to their teachers but due to their parents and especially their supplementary school teachers backing, they now believed that they would not falter in their education and instead would be more motivated and determined to achieve in their education.

The boys recognized their supplementary school teachers and their parents as authority figures, but as authority figures who treated them with respect, and cared about their success. Therefore the researcher overall established that this resulted in supplementary school boys' experiences in education to be of benefit to them. The researcher in interviews with teachers and parents now wanted to understand this dynamic from their perspective.

Teachers at the Black Success supplementary school

The agenda with the Black supplementary school teachers was to investigate their perspective on why the boys all held positive accounts about their educational experience at the supplementary school. The teachers volunteered to take part in this research. The researcher interviewed three African/Caribbean female supplementary school teachers named, Daisy, Mary and the Manager. Prior to conducting the interviews, the researcher was informed by these supplementary school teachers that the boys were able to relate to them because they were Black teachers who had endured the same types of discriminatory behaviour that the boys were subjected to in their everyday lives (Weeks,

et al, 1998). So, for these teachers the issue of shared Black identity was more significant than gender in terms of the boys' positive identification with them. The researcher recognised that the unacceptable treatment of many of the Black boys by society in general was due to negative stereotypes operating against them (Majors et al, 2001; Youdell, 2004; Mutua, 2006). A method used to motivate the boys was to inform them to avoid exhibiting behaviour that followed the negative stereotypes because such behaviour contributed to the existence of such views in society. The aim of their school was to help turn the boys around so that they could actively engage in the educational process. The boys needed something to be proud of so they could feel proud of themselves.

The researcher asked the teachers what sorts of stereotypes in particular operated against Black men. Mary said:

> "Well they are seen as criminals basically with no education and no brain of their own. So because of friends who I know who have been pulled over by police and questioned and cars been checked over looking for drugs, because they see Black people in a criminal stereotype, in particular Black men I have to say, that all of them are drug dealers or other types of criminals. So you know the Police look for a chance to try and basically get them arrested, purely because they see them with a nice car which they must have got through drug dealing and not because they are in well educated professional jobs, the Police think this. So this is the stereotype they will see all Black men in as well. So you see then, Black men they suffer this in society all of them and some of them end up copying the stereotypes i.e. that people have of them then but you know I always think Black men should be seen in good roles because there are some Black male professionals who are out there and who have achieved but even they are unnecessarily stopped and harassed as well by Police and this happens simply cos of the more negative stereotype that they have seen against Black men in the first place."

This point was supported in an article by Slater (2003) published in the *New Nation* who reported that Herbert a part time judge, found himself targeted by Police, because like

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other Black men, he was also time and time again stopped by Police whilst driving his Mercedes car. He had to buy a new licence plate, which read P400 LAW. Police officers then left him alone (Slater, 2003, p2). Slater argued that Black men, whether they were professionals or not, were always suspected by Police. He reported that, "Nationwide, Black people were still seven times more likely to be stopped and searched by the police compared to Whites" (Slater, 2003, p2). Daisy and the Manager also agreed with this line of thought.

The researcher then explored whether or not the problems associated with negative stereotypes were actually applicable to the boys (Bhavnani, et al, 2005). Mary stated:

> "Yes Black boys here are also affected by stereotypes, therefore they want to copy the bad stereotypes and not achieve and I have seen it in one of the boys that you are looking at, he wasn't achieving because he thought that, you know, that he would go out there and make his money by selling drugs…."
>
> Nisheet: So did you do anything….?
> Mary:
> "I asked him why and he said 'well you know because of the way I could get rich' and then I said, I also told him well if he was to get caught with those drugs, what kind of sentence he would be looking at and then what would happen to the money then? You know at the end of the day I told him we have set up this supplementary school in particular to eradicate this sort of thing from your mind from an early age because we know these stereotypes will affect you. So I told him that we are here exactly because of this. So we can divert your minds and get you thinking about education instead. So I told him instead you need to be looking at getting a career with your education and therefore be achieving in your education now, rather then following the stereotype and getting your money quick and also probably ending up like getting locked up for a very long time and then having … your freedom taken away from you. I explain this to him, just to then get his mind more on his education, rather then following any stereotypes."
>
> Nisheet: Did he listen to you?
> Mary:
> "He did because he stopped and thought about it because you know at the end of the day, it's all good saying that but when you stop and you think,

well there's a possibility you could get caught and what kind of prison sentence you are going to be looking at, can you deal with that, then is the question? So then he said after a couple of minutes 'well education must be the best option then, therefore I got to start doing well in it now isn't it?' So you know he has listened to you then."

This interview demonstrated that supplementary school teachers were trying their best to explain to the boys about the negative consequences that could occur if Black boys followed negative stereotypes. The efforts of these teachers actually worked because Black boys realised that the consequences were far more severe than the gains. The researcher wanted to take this issue further so he asked teachers whether besides informing the boys of the consequences, there was anything else they did in order to counteract negative stereotypes. To this the Manager responded by saying, she showed Black boys positive images of Black men as well in order to then inspire them to success. As she revealed:

"Well besides telling them, we also present them with living examples of positive Black male stereotypes to see as well cos we know Black boys learn more when they are shown practical things, and therefore they are then more motivated in education and we know they don't get this at schools by teachers. I mean positive practical examples of Black male stereotypes to see, and so, you get Black boys who underachieve but here they achieve because we present to them positive practical Black male stereotypes to see. So for example, we have got Mark (fictitious name) a Black male teacher for them, he comes in to do careers with them regularly on a Saturday and he is a classic example because he was around in Coventry for a very long time. When things were a lot more racist and he had a lot of pressure growing up as a young Black lad in Coventry you know and going through the typical teenage years, sporting dreadlocks and all this, you know, kind of things and Black males following negative stereotypes, right, etc, etc…..Mark even goes so far as to say he is a Black male to the boys here. So he can relate to them especially when informing them that being a Black man he hasn't been influenced by stereotypes and the other professional Black males who come in to teach them also emphasise that they haven't gone with these bad stereotypes that operate against Black men. So Black boys should also similarly follow their style. So its a positive stereotype that the boys will see Black men in and it will

make them think that, they also want to be a Black male professional then as well and not follow these negative stereotypes of Black men just because they have seen the positive stereotype of Black man now in front of them….”

This showed the successful role of the supplementary school in helping to eliminate the negative stereotypes of Black people and alternatively replacing them with positive Black male role models. As Reay and Mirza (1997) claim: “Saturday school is about...being exposed to [positive] Black [male] role models.…” (Reay and Mirza, 1997, pp491-492). In addition, the supplementary school teachers also concentrated on building self-esteem in order to support the Black children's educational achievement.

This is clearly captured in the following response from the Manager:

“…Most Black children go to school not feeling confident you know thinking ‘I don’t really want to be there cos teachers don’t treat my race of people right’ due to stereotypes that their teachers have seen against Black people. Therefore Black children also then enact on these stereotypes that their teachers have said to them, which leads to their eventual failure in education and I think that’s very, very, bad because I think Black kids should always be made to think positively about their Black self-identity from their teacher and if they do then only will their self esteem improve in education and thereby make them then achieve in education but because we know from the boys that attend here, that Black kids are not getting that at school by their teachers which then results in their underachievement and also results them then to copy all these bad stereotypes operating in society. So you know, we are then helping them then emotionally, through this supplementary school to then have a sense of positive Black achievement here you know whereby they feel encouraged to achieve when we tell them. Ok it might not be really exciting or whatever but we are helping them to you know, make them feel good about their race. So we know then that at least their self-identity is improved and so their self-esteem will automatically boost up in education. So we tell them to think like, ‘that I can achieve as a Black man so much just like others’ and this way you know their self-identity and self-esteem in education automatically gets improved….”

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In addition to this type of support, the Manager thought that the more appropriate curriculum taught by the Supplementary school contributed in helping the boys achieve as well. In particular, she thought that the lack of Black culture in the secondary school curriculum was a prominent reason for the boys underachieving at secondary school, suggesting that it was not only the secondary school teachers, but also the national policy that was to blame. As she said:

> "…Besides teachers who are blamed for effecting Black boys achievement at schools. I think also now the school curriculum, you see, I would have to say, is also to blame as well. As I don't think it's benefiting any Black boys achievement at all, at their secondary school, cos you know there is something that is against the children in there. For example if you look at history lessons where is there a positive side represented about Black people? It's always about colonialism and things that are mentioned and Black people represented in low stereotypes like slaves, etc …."
>
> Nisheet: So do you think anything new should be introduced then in the curriculum that would not be against these children and thereby make Black boys achieve in their education?
>
> The Manager:
>
> "Yes I think a bit of what we are doing, introducing cultural aspects of things. So like teaching them what Black culture is all about and that's what they will then recognise in there the Black positive men and women in Black culture. So they are bound to then want to be like them and therefore achieve well. So schools should follow curriculum like this if they want to make Black kids achieve like we do here."

Daisy thought that the school curriculum also contributed to negative images of Black people, which inevitably had an adverse effect upon the Black boys' achievement. She provided an interesting example of how having Black culture in the curriculum could however help boys improve their educational performance. She described her own practice at the supplementary school:

As Daisy said:

> "…So you will get them achieving here then…due to our Black cultural teaching given to them. Therefore for example once, when I was teaching Black culture to kids here I then taught them about some of the history of Black people and after that I then heard one boy here say to me 'I want to be like Olaudah Equiano and achieve like he did in education, so I will study hard and therefore I will fight for my rights at every stage just to achieve then in my education and become a famous person Miss'. Now this guy Olaudah I will explain, was there between 1745 till 1797 and he was kidnapped in West Africa at the age of 10 right and taken as a slave to Barbados, America and England. He then managed to get his freedom for £40 and he thereafter travelled the whole world and did very well in his education then to become a doctor's assistant. In England he also fought hard against slavery and he also then wrote his own book about his life and this was a roaring success. So I mean this kind of teaching had inspired this Black boy to be like him and to be like these characters they need to study hard and fight for their rights to become recognised professional Black men. Like Olaudah who studied and got to where he wanted to be. So I mean if the secondary school also had something about Black culture inputted into their curriculum then the same could happen there and Black boys would be motivated to achieve there as well then and also you know what! I have noticed a great deal in the improvements of the marks of this Black boy after he said he wanted to be like Olaudah. So you know then Black cultural teaching is affecting them positively as they are achieving more due to this in their education then."

From a research point of view, one of the major achievements of Black supplementary schools, as is shown throughout this chapter, is that as a Black institutional space, it makes clear that alongside 'the troubling discourses of working-class masculinities' (Reay, 2002, p221) that 'failing' white male students experience, there is a need to address the racial exclusion of Black culture that Black male (and female) students experience in mainstream schools. More positively, as Majors reported to Armstrong in the *New Nation*, Black boys would seem to achieve once they identified well with their own culture. He further reported to Armstrong that: "We're trying to educate Black children by denying culture. Culture is nothing more than a tool and a resource that helps

us understand and guide our children. Without Black children having a sense of who they are, where they come from or what they are, they have no sense of identity. So they end up not achieving at their mainstream school." (Armstrong, 2003, p6).

The supplementary school teachers did however add that these notions of blaming the stereotypes, secondary school teachers and the national curriculum were not actually applicable to absolutely all of the boys in undermining them in their education. Some of them made a negative contribution themselves, as Daisy observed:

> "…you can't always blame stereotypes, teachers and the curriculum in school which affects Black boys in not doing well at schools cos you also have to look at their behaviour as well you know. I mean I know this from the chat I have with the boys here in our break time, they tell me that they mess around in classrooms, swear in classrooms and shout loud across in classrooms at their schools and because of this their teachers then tell them off and they get annoyed with teachers about this but you see I then inform the boys to identify their own fault in their behaviour before blaming anyone else like their teachers at schools cos I tell them if you present bad behaviour then teachers will tell you off. So why present bad behaviour in the first place?.…"

The literature also highlights how boys of different ethnic groups, including white working class boys, in schools appear to be boisterous and thereby behave badly as well as not performing well in education (see Willis, 1977, Mac an Ghaill, 1988, 1994, Sewell, 1997, Martino and Meyenn, 2001, Martino and Pallotta-Chiarolli, 2003). However, the Manager analysed this further to suggest that the blame also did lie with the teachers.

> "…ok it might be perceived that Black boys are boisterous by behaving badly, but it's not Black boys' fault always for this behaviour. I think it's because they are put like that by teachers at times, as a result some appear challenging and boisterous, and thereby not do well at school but then again, at the end of the day, teachers are making them like this."

Mary gave an example of this to show how strong an accusation it was.

> "…there was a fight at school between him (one of the researcher's respondent) and this other White boy about some issue and the White boy kicked him and he kicked him back but when the matter was investigated by his secondary school teachers then one of the Black pupils' that you are looking at got suspended whilst the White boy was never suspended. So what is a Black child suppose to do when he comes to rejoin the school? He retaliates and becomes bad and boisterous by challenging and annoying teachers at school and generally then he fails at school. I am not surprised the school system makes them fail you see, so I would have to say, yes in this sort of circumstances, Black African boys are treated differently by their teachers at schools and they end up making them disruptive pupils'…due to unfair treatment by teachers in the first place…."

Supplementary school teachers discussed their own methods for dealing with disruptive pupils'. Secondary school teachers for them were seen to contribute to the poor behaviour of some Black boys.

As the Manager said:

> "…when they do disrupt our class cos secondary school teachers have made them like that, as they do tell us that it's cos of their secondary school teachers that's why they are use to naughty behaviour even over here but you see then in these circumstances what we do also as another option is that we send them out of classrooms on occasions, when it gets really bad and they don't listen to us but I don't do this often… because they already get that at schools and they don't need it here and when I have sent them out it's no more then five minutes and then I bring them back, well we, all three, teachers here do this when this sort of situation occurs."

The evidence here illustrates that supplementary school teachers were concerned about the boys' educational progress hence they brought them back into the classroom in order to ensure their continuity in education despite their bad behaviour. Mary went further by giving explanations about this, as well as informing boys as to why they should avoid bad

behaviour and ensure their continuity in education. As she said:

> "I think the general message…is …by not sending them out for more than five minutes, they will then come to realise our understanding that we still care for them, are concerned about them and do still want them to achieve therefore we are bringing them back after five minutes because although we as teachers tell them off … when bringing them back we still make sure that we listen to them about why they misbehaved, talk to them and then bring them back in our lesson and get them working and thereby achieving then educationally and we are making sure that they do well then because we also inform them when we go out to bring them back after five minutes. We inform them then, that we are investing in them through our workshops to make our community recognise us as Black achievers here … because we tell them through these workshops only then will they benefit in their education here as well as at schools now. So that's why they should not misbehave and just instead concentrate on achieving in education. They understand this you know and therefore once they come to rejoin the class, you see them working and thereby they then achieve this way in their education…."

Supplementary school teachers also acknowledged the importance of the role of the

parents in helping their boys to achieve in their education. As Mary stated:

> "I think besides us certain parents are also definitely playing a good part just as much as us, because they are pushing their child in the secondary school as much as they are pushing them at the supplementary school you know to learn and achieve well. I have had parents telling me they want their sons to achieve at both schools therefore they buy new computer packages that will benefit their son's education, educational equipment, and so on. So this all then contributes to them in helping their son to learn more and achieve in their education both here and at secondary school. Also you know they support us in whatever we do here, which shows us that they really do care about their boys' education."
> Nisheet: How do they support you?
> Mary:
> "Basically for one just letting the child come here is one way of supporting us…."
> Nisheet: Will they help you in activities?
> Mary:
> "Yes they will, if we ask them they will help out in activities."
> Nisheet: Voluntarily?
> Mary:
> "Yes, yes, that's not a problem at all and you know that all counts."
> Nisheet: Towards making their children achieve?

Mary:

"That's right and they attend all the parents evening here and at their boys secondary school as they tell us this. They also get very expensive books for them to achieve well here and at school as they show us the books they got for their boys, for them then to do well in their education. So this helps in making their boys achieve here as well as at schools and therefore this proves to us that they want their children to achieve and thereby show us that they are very much taking a part by being interested in their boys' education."

However the Manager said:

"In my experience most of the children we have here sometimes their parents don't help them and don't make them achieve in their education at all whether it be here or at their boy's secondary schools."
Nisheet: Why do you think this is so?
The Manager:
"I don't know, it's a number of factors again sometimes they are single parents with a couple of jobs, sometimes its time factor, but the main one I think is that Black parents a majority of them, they don't seem bothered about their boys education and you know in an ideal world, parents should sit down with their children to be able to help them but this don't happen because parents don't seem interested. So Black parents cos of not taking an interest they are then not making their boys achieve in their education whether it be here or at schools but you know what! We fulfil their lack of role in children's life by pushing their boys in education…."

Regardless of the presence or absence of parental guidance, the supplementary school teachers all proved beyond doubt their complete dedication in assisting the boys now, as well as showing their dedication towards motivating the boys to continue into post-sixteen education.

As Mary said:

"Definitely I mean I do encourage them to achieve not only now but even after sixteen I want them to achieve, therefore I tell them to stay on after sixteen…."
Nisheet: So what would you say to them?
Mary:
"First of all I say to them, what are you achieving at schools in? So I try

and find out from them then, what it is that they are going to be doing after sixteen and if they tell me they are doing well in this or that subjects. I then tell them that stay on after sixteen in their education and do A-level in it or you need to start looking at colleges, where actually you can go on to progress to do this by doing this such and such course. So that's how I encourage them to stay on after 16 in their education."

Black boys agreed with this statement. Daisy, also went further and highlighted that the other reason why they encouraged the boys to continue on in post sixteen education was because she thought that the boys might not get this sort of guidance from anyone else. As teachers it was their role to encourage them, if no one else did. As she said:

"I think the message is…that we do encourage them whether anyone else does or not, we do however make sure to encourage them to continue and excel in education even after sixteen, so we are always telling them that. We feel this is our duty, so we do it if no one else does."

In conclusion, the Black teachers at the Supplementary school were highly motivated in contributing towards the Black boys achieving higher standards in their education. Possibly one of the most effective aspects of their method was the fact that they identified factors which could potentially have had negative effects on the boys, including negative stereotypes in society, secondary school teachers, parents as well as the boys' behaviour and addressed each of these particular issues in a manner most appropriate for each individual boy. The Supplementary school teachers not only helped the boys to achieve higher standards in their education, but helped them deal with other problems that could arise in their lives as members of society which discriminated against them. Supplementary school teachers were effective in enhancing Black boys experiences in education. There was still a degree of uncertainty regarding the role that the parents had, with some teachers thinking that it was consistently positive whereas others were less

certain and questioned the influence of some parents. The next section presents the views

of parents.

Parents at the Black Success supplementary school

Blair and Bourne et al (1998, pp135-153) in their report on teaching and learning

strategies in successful multi-ethnic schools outline specific strategies for parental

involvement. Black parents at the supplementary school volunteered to take part in the

research. For the researcher, their discussion of their experience of the Black

supplementary school highlighted that the above strategies seemed to be absent from

mainstream schools with a significant population of Black students. The researcher began

talking to parents by asking a general question about their interest in their son's

education:

Tom's Mother:

> "Yes I do take an interest in his education from seeing his exam marks etc,
> and I gather that he is doing all right in his education but he needs
> pushing, he needs encouragement but he is doing all right."
> Nisheet: When you say he needs pushing and encouraging, whom would
> that be from?
> Tom's Mother:
> "He's doing ok, it's not that he is not doing well, he is above average but
> it's just that the teachers wouldn't think so, that he's more then average
> and that's why I say teachers need to push him and encourage him to his
> level of ability only then will he achieve what he is capable of."
> Nisheet: Why wouldn't teachers think he is more then average?
> Tom's Mother:
> "Well because of the stereotypes as Blacks are considered not looking as
> the intelligent type. That's why teachers sometimes without even
> acknowledging his ability straight away put him down…rather then
> encourage him. So at the moment I don't think he's achieving as highly as

he should be."

William's parents and Steve's mother mentioned the same concerns. There was a shared opinion that some secondary school teachers did not treat Black boys fairly, but it was not universal. Joseph's parents did not entirely blame the teachers. They said that sometimes the secondary school teachers were in fact very encouraging and this suggested that it may not necessarily always be the fault of secondary school teachers that the boys underachieved. Joseph's Parents observed:

> "…he's doing reasonably well. I wouldn't say he is at the bottom of his class, he is just average but I mean overall I would say he's doing quite well, he can hold his own so to speak."
> Nisheet: What about the teachers, how are they informing you as to how he's doing?
> Joseph's Parents:
> "They're pretty good, the school he goes to are quite good, when he first started there, because as you know my son wasn't born in this country and he came to this school in the Year 1998 and because his school system in the Caribbean is so different to the system up here. What we found when he came here was he was about two or three years behind the children in his class and secondary school were very good and he had one to one tuition and a reading partner that read with him, did English with him and he had additional Maths tuition on a Wednesday morning….." However I have to say recently I have noticed that teachers are not encouraging my son in education because although they did all this encouragement when he was younger in year 7 when he came from Caribbean, but as he's got older from year to year and when he come into year 11 especially, the encouragement is no longer there especially in his core academic subjects rather the encouragement by teachers is shifted in his less core academic subjects…."

So despite this partial satisfaction with the teachers, the fact that even at certain ages the teachers were not encouraging the boys in core subjects was a concern and therefore this showed that the teachers did in fact have an adverse influence upon the boys' education (Hallam and Rhamie, 2003). Consequently the researcher asked the parents how they

became aware of this lack of encouragement provided by the teachers, to which the

parents seemed to think that the curriculum that the teachers had to follow was not

suitable for them to take supportive roles for the boys; and that when combined with

stereotypical opinions led to very little effective academic encouragement for the Black

boys (Rollock, 2005).

As William's Parents said:

> "You know what! Teachers don't encourage Black boys in core academic
> subjects and they use the curriculum involved in state education, which
> makes them push Black boys in certain areas and not so much in other
> areas. So you see teachers when they see William doing well at sports,
> they will encourage him only in that field and not anything else cos they
> don't think William being a Black would be capable to achieve outside
> sports…."
> Nisheet: Is that the way then you think teachers would push William back,
> or not?
> William's Parents:
> "So then you get within the system some people through the curriculum
> who are made to achieve and some not achieving because of the teachers.
> So teachers make sure the ones that are to achieve can be White, Asians
> etc. So we can then say teachers by doing this then make Black boys go
> down now in schools as well as later on in life …whereby they then can't
> gain professional jobs and this happens simply because teachers in
> important subjects didn't encourage them because they don't see Blacks in
> society achieving educationally, so this happens. Whereas their White and
> Asian students will get ahead in terms of their occupation, as teachers
> encouraged them in important subjects and teachers can see their race
> achieving in society as well, so this encouragement towards them happens
> as well, so they can get ahead in occupations and to be honest, this is what
> I have to say originally the working society wants as well, I mean
> professionals and non-professionals to benefit the job economy and the
> school system does do this job very well for the job economy at teachers
> hands who use the curriculum in making professionals and non-
> professionals and this proves they have followed the stereotypes in making
> non-Black as professionals and Blacks as unprofessionals…."

Steve's mother and Joseph's parents agreed as well.

The above statement supported two aspects in the literature. Firstly, it was in tune with Blair's (2001) study where she showed that teachers were seen to be encouraging Black boys more in sports simply because teachers saw Black boys 'as more able at sports than intellectual pursuits' (Blair, 2001, p84). This again demonstrated how the teachers did not actually encourage the boys to pursue academic success, but instead were encouraging them to pursue sporting interests that were far less likely to lead to a successful career (see Carrington and Wood, 1983). Secondly, the above respondents' statement reflects the Neo-Marxist argument that 'the curriculum of schools reflect and reproduce the cultural interests of dominant groups' in capitalism in order to get through them a professional and non-professional labour force. The teachers therefore fulfilled this function for capitalism by using the curriculum to push certain individuals in professional jobs and certain individuals in non-professional jobs to give a balanced labour force to capitalism (Blair, 2001, p 21). Joseph's parents in addition to this stated that although the subjects involved in the curriculum were helping teachers to undermine Black boys in their education and this did benefit capitalism as it helped to produce non-professionals workers. However they also highlighted that in some cases the curriculum can itself be directly held responsible for not making Black boys achieve and thereby pushing them into low paid non-professional jobs as well. So teachers could not entirely be blamed. As they said:

> "Teachers thinking is that if you are Black then you have got to be good at sports and that you are no good at English and Maths and that doesn't matter, so much as long as you can run fast then we could encourage you and do something with you, and teachers do this….So this is one way how teachers through using the curriculum can be blamed but not entirely as I think besides this another way the curriculum can now directly itself be held to be responsible for not making...Black boys be encouraged to achieve in their education and thereby making them go into low paid non

professional job is linked directly through the contents of the curriculum itself in the first place…within the important curriculum subjects, Black role models are not shown. So therefore...Black boys have no one to identify with...since they don't identify with their race positively in the contents of the curriculum as no famous Black Astronaut, Scientist, Mathematician, Historian, etc is shown to them in books whereby they can then identify with their race properly and thereby be then determined to achieve at schools. So…Black kids all of them get put off so much that they then end up underachieving as they don't have anyone positively to identify with. Therefore then when they enter the economy without any good qualifications then you will get these sorts of workers to do low paid non professional jobs…."

The researcher's next question was what should be introduced into the curriculum to improve the chances of Black boys. Steve's Mother said:

"…So therefore they need to introduce something about Black people's culture their history and so on, just for Black boys to do well then you know cos they will strive to do well in every subject then by themselves naturally when they get taught about positive Black role models cos when Black boys get taught about a positive Black role model who has achieved they will also then be motivated to achieve in their education overall as well. Otherwise you won't find them motivated at all to achieve…."

In addition to the boys' education suffering directly from lack of teaching regarding Black culture, Tom's parents thought teachers who lacked knowledge of positive aspects of Black culture were more likely to operate with negative stereotypical views. As Tom's Mother said:

"…You know teachers because they don't teach Black history therefore they are too then also not understanding Tom's culture, his behaviour, etc which Black history could teach, if teachers taught this to Black boys. As you know like from Black history our cultural behaviour becomes recognised; so when you teach Black history you will also automatically learn that some behaviour of Black people is actually cultural and not one of the stereotypes as teachers would think but because teachers at secondary schools don't understand this, as they just view it as another stereotypical behaviour…it's for example when Tom speaks loud or sucks his teeth or says 'man' or 'rude boy' this is cultural speech and style. When he does this and it's just all Black boys way of expression that they

normally do this but secondary school teachers think Tom is being disobedient and rebellious always when he does this and so they label him this way but I mean if they taught Black history then they would be able to recognise through that, that this behaviour of theirs is actually cultural and has been going on for ages by other Black people too. Therefore we shouldn't then put a negative label upon Joseph or make him underachieve by telling him off. As this is the normal Black people's cultural style but this thinking will never come by teachers and they further more and more keep on misunderstanding them…."

Steve's mother and Joseph's parents agreed.

Many parents had therefore been motivated to send their boys to the supplementary school because they knew that this sort of negative labelling by their teachers would not occur. Teachers there taught Black history and because of this, Black parents believed that their boys would not be misunderstood. This made the teachers more effective in helping the boys succeed in their education. As Steve's Mother said:

"At Supplementary school well, he never gets nasty labels put upon him like his school teachers put on him with regards to his behaviour at secondary school now and thereby then not make him perform well in his education but instead at supplementary school they label him positively like 'well behaved boy', therefore I keep on sending him there and he's treated equally and teachers understand the pupils' there, you understand cos of the Black history teachers know and teach there. So boys come to recognise that their teachers through teaching Black history therefore then also come to understand their cultural styles in all ways as well, whether it's loud behaviour or anything else. So in this case he will achieve in his education then…."

Steve's mother contrasts the trust that she has in the Black supplementary school teachers compared to those in the state school. She gave an example of how at parent's evening she did not get accurate information on her son's progress:

"…To tell you the truth they never speak bad about him in parents evening you know (she laughed) as a hypocrite (laughed) because you go to the teacher and you say I am so-and so's mother, I come to find out and hear how he's getting on in class. They say oh Mrs…(she mentions her surname) your son is so this, so that, you would not believe."

Nisheet: Why's that?

Steve's Mother:

"How them praise him you call that hypocrite because they have been ringing home before and saying he's this that and the other, he does this, etc. So he has already got these bad labels on him by them. So which way you go? Which way one believe? We won't believe when them praise him."

Nisheet: So you don't think that they are telling you the truth?

Steve's Mother:

"No"! (She spoke in a high-pitched voice).

Blair and Bourne et al (1998, p34) in their research had highlighted similarly how Black

parents had complained of being misled by the teachers on parents evening.

William's parents talked about parent's evening in a similar way.

"You know I mean when we go to parents evening at his secondary school, his school reports and stuff, everything physical is what he is really good at and praised for, like football… but with his academic abilities, you know, it's not as good but this is what I want to know. I mean how can he improve on his academic subject but they never give deeply, give details with all that. They just say 'oh he's doing well' and that's it but what I am thinking is why is it not reflecting this then in his report for all his subjects."

Nisheet: So teachers basically misguide you. Is this what you are saying, or not?

William's parents:

"Yes exactly this is what I am saying and they are not bothered about my son."

This sense by Black parents of being excluded or marginalized from mainstream schools

reflects a long history in the literature of white teachers holding a culturally deficit view

of Black parents (Wright, 1986; Gillborn, 1990). In contrast, Nehaul's study of primary

schools that were positive in their pedagogical approaches to children of Caribbean descent, reports on teachers developing partnerships with parents. These partnerships were seen as of central importance in promoting children's academic progress.

One of the consequences of negative parental experience at parents' evenings amongst the respondents was an increased determination to help their own sons achieve in education. As William's Parents said:

> "…You know I got determined to help my boy more when teachers misled us on parents evening. So you know that was one of the main reason … why I work on him more now on his Maths, English, Science, or whatever he has homework on. Therefore in a way I make him improve to do the work by helping him and getting him to get good marks then, in his work because I know secondary school teachers will never help Black kids achieve educationally. So I am the one who will have to do it and I do and supplementary school teachers have always showed me the areas where I always need to give him help in…."

Joseph's parents further went on to say how they also thought their indirect help further encouraged their son to achieve even more now in his education as well. As they said:

> "…besides helping Joseph directly in his education….I also tell Joseph that…being Black you have to work twice as hard in your education…although I am qualified for the job but I have to go to that interview and give 200% and beat the other person to get that job simply because I am Black….So you see I give this advice to him, which will then make him improve in his education and thereby get him more motivated to achieve in his education… I tell him for you to do this, then you got to do well in your education at both your supplementary school as well as at your secondary school to then come out and hold your head up high as a professional Black man."

William's parents also said that they provided their son with indirect help, which demonstrated the extent to which the parents went to ensure that their boys had the best possible education.

Another example of such measures being taken by parents was how they also provided

their boys with additional educational materials wherever possible. As Tom's Mother

said:

> "It has got to be done even though I have financial difficulties I still buy
> him the relevant education material he needs…."
> Nisheet: So you will make sure that you get them despite, financial
> difficulties?
> Tom's Mother:
> "Yes and you know what supplementary school teachers always motivates
> us as well to keep on getting these things for him to make his performance
> improve and then to make him achieve by being top in his education both
> at supplementary school then as well at his secondary school. So I do
> this."

Steve and Joseph's mothers also did this. Some Black parents stated they were so

determined to make their boy's progress in their education that they would even consider

sending their boys to the Caribbean if they had extra funds. As Steve's Mother said:

> "Even though I have financial problems I tell you I would still not step
> back from sending him to the Caribbean for better education because I
> think Caribbean, if I really had the money, would then really be a better
> place for him."
> Nisheet: Why would you say that?
> Steve's Mother:
> "…it's about putting more into them and treating them equally in the
> Caribbean school system and I think that they don't do that here, meaning
> secondary school in particular, cos of racism coming from teachers
> whereby they then don't let the Black boys progress but in the Caribbean
> nothing like this happens also teachers in the Caribbean are so good they
> involve the parents a great deal and tell them exactly the true picture about
> their boys progress they don't misguide you there. So if only I had the
> money I would love to send him there."

William's Parents also said:

> "I would consider William to be sent to the Caribbean even though I can't
> afford it but I would like to try to send him there if I could, cos Caribbean
> school system is good as the kids in Caribbean turn out to be better in

terms of education there, whereas here the kids spend too much time around a television, PC or whatever on games, etc. In the Caribbean however there is not much television. I don't know but over there, there is something about the culture from a child growing up. So Caribbean children achieve academically but you know the system in Caribbean is that if you haven't got the money to fund kids' education, therefore they then stumble along the way but if you have the money, kids are taught better and the teachers due to strict behaviour makes everyone achieve and race is never an issue…."

Tom's mother had similar thoughts about sending her boy to the Caribbean if she had extra funds. This supports the findings of Rasekoala's, (1997) research.

However, while parents maintained that, due to financial constraints, they were unable to send their children to the Caribbean they still wanted their boys to do better in education within Britain. They went on to say that they did not just want their boys to do well up to school leaving age in Britain, but, even after sixteen, they wanted their boys to continue in education and achieve even more:

As Tom's Mother said:

> "…I tell him I don't just want to see you do well up till your school age, as I tell him I want him to stay on after sixteen, as well and do sixth-form because I always tell him that although we cannot afford to send you abroad or offer you to go to a private school. So what you have got, that's what you have to make the most out of and achieve because you know you can't have all these facilities of going here and there for better education but you can still get better education if you do well now at school here and I not only want to see you do well in education up till sixteen at your secondary school but also even after sixteen at your secondary school, I still want you to continue in education and achieve…."

In their determination to see their sons' succeed they also pointed to the important role of the supplementary school teachers.

As William's Parents said:

> "We tell William yes to achieve not only now in school but also after he leaves school. We want him to achieve in life and get ahead. I tell him this and I tell him, even if we can't send you to the Caribbean, I still want you to do well now and even after sixteen in your studies. So you see, I am encouraging him to stay on after sixteen in his education and his supplementary school teachers are also encouraging him to stay on after sixteen in his education as well. As he tells me that, 'they say to us mum, that I have got to get, ahead and so I got to stay on after sixteen and achieve after I get my GCSEs, so this is positive backing for me."

Steve's mother and Joseph's parents shared similar opinions.

The stories encountered at the Black Success Supplementary School confirm some of the findings, which surfaced in the interviews and observations at Meadow Secondary School. First non-Black teachers, on the whole, were seen by the pupils', teachers and parents as a barrier to Black success in education. Secondly the Black pupils' at the "Black Success" attributed their success in the supplementary school to the influence of Black teachers and the existence of a learning environment, which accepted and reflected Black culture. Finally, while some Black teachers at the supplementary school thought Black parents could also represent a barrier to success, the majority of parents the researcher saw were however having a positive influence on the Black boys. This view, based on the data generated by this study's interviews is one that the researcher would endorse.

Chapter 6

Boys at the "Stockton Yellow Youth Club"

The 'Stockton yellow youth club' is situated one mile away from Birmingham city centre and is sponsored by the local council. The area around the youth club is highly populated by young people of different ages, covering a diverse range of ethnicities. Stockton area is seen as a deprived working class area where there is not a lot of social activities for young people to be involved with, especially as there are limited funds available. So, a lot of youngsters end up being involved in so called anti-social activities. Examples of this include: robberies around shops, shootings, muggings, etc that are all seen as common occurrences in this area. The 'Stockton yellow youth club' is located near a major road. Immediately outside the youth club, there are council houses and nearby there is a train station, local shops and a bus stop.

The youth club has its own separate area where it is located and upon entering, metal gates at the front with metal rods surrounding the whole of the youth club can be seen. There are trees around the youth club, and it has its own car park. When entering the double doors inside the youth club, one can see they are painted in a bright yellow colour. Immediately, there is a small corridor with toilets and a room for church meetings located inside it. On one side to this, there is a flight of stairs leading up to a large canteen. At the end of this room, one can see a long corridor leading towards a large room for young people to play computer games, etc. Straight opposite there is a large sports hall where games are played. Towards the corner of this sports hall are a flight of stairs leading to

the basement where there are four large rooms for youngsters to play, there is also a kitchen and snooker tables in two large rooms. From the basement there are flights of stairs leading to the very top of the building, where a long corridor meets many office type rooms surrounding each other, here there is a special room for karate/gymnastics, etc. There is a large main office for the youth workers and a personal office further along the corridor for the head youth worker. All rooms throughout the youth club have neatly organised tables and chairs located inside them, also the floors to this building are all well maintained with good-layered carpets covering them. In addition to this, all the doors and windows to this building are painted in yellow and are in a very good condition.

The youth workers are very busy since they are involved in many activities with youngsters, including organised play, doing academic work with them, etc. A main interest to the youth workers when the researcher went to conduct his research was developing a programme of music that would make young people think deeper about the type of music they are listening to. In this project youth workers aim to challenge the perceptions of how a lot of young people receive urban music. The youth club has identified there is a need for this in order to enable young people to develop a critical response to listening to urban music. The youth workers planned to be involved in a 12 week project based on urban music for 15 young local people (the youth club has three youth work tutors to aid the project and their development). This project will have workshops and discussions on the lyrical content of modern day music as well as discussing its affects on society. In these informal sessions their aim is to look at the origins of various types of urban music. The participants will have the opportunity to

record their own track to represent the youth centre and where they live. This project will also work with various types of multi-media equipment/software that most of the group would not normally have access/opportunity to use.

Alongside this, the youth club's current main aim is to work with young people to address various issues that are relevant to them, including: drug use, gun crime, anti-social behaviour, racism, education, abuse, etc. This aim is set out in a number of objectives:

- To break down stigmas and stereotypes that exists around ethnicities and cultures of different communities.

- To aid discussion through informal learning and give the group access to training around various types of multi-media equipment/software.

- To have an emphasis on breaking down stigmas and stereotypes so, empowering young people to make positive criticism about life and still enjoy it.

- To work with their peers and youth work tutors, which will enable them to work with professional music equipment so that they are able to create their own music, which will represent the centre and the area they live in.

- To give the group an opportunity to experience and participate in fun activities away from their own environment.

- To build and increase self confidence/creativity amongst members of the youth club as well as offering future stimulating projects that will keep them off the streets and encourage them to be more pro-active and positive citizens.

- To encourage regular evaluations so that the young people involved in any projects will have the opportunity to give positive criticism and this will then allow the development of youth workers' practice to be more effective.

- To deliver training for local young people around the area in relevant issues as well as the lyrical content of modern day music.

- To use compact disc and vinyl mixing as an incentive to encourage them to increase their knowledge.

- To expand the learning opportunities for local people in and around the Stockton area using literacy and numeracy skills (Stockton Yellow Youth Club leaflet).

These objectives are offered to youngsters within an institutional facility where young people feel safe and supported by peers and qualified staff.

The 'Stockton yellow youth club' run their boys sessions on Wednesday and Friday for three hours in the evening and it has around 40 boys of African/Caribbean heritage, as well as 10 mixed race pupils and a White boy attending the youth club regularly. Their age ranges from 8 to 16 and above. On other days the youth club operates for girls only and it has 45 girls attending. The researcher concentrated on just the boys session due to the nature of the research.

The purpose of the research at the Stockton Yellow Youth Club in Birmingham was to gain an understanding of how Black boys were doing in education from a situation outside a school context. The researcher also wanted to find out if the youth club was effective as an agent of change in helping Black boys become more educationally successful. Much of the material gathered was quite similar to that obtained from the two schools. The purpose of the Youth Club was not the same as the purposes of the schools since it was essentially a supervised, supportive, social situation. The boys were chosen by the manager at the youth organisation. They were a different set of boys from those chosen at the secondary school. There was therefore no connection between them. The researcher talked to Neil and Roger, high ability boys; Louis, an average ability boy; and Kristin, a low ability boy. These ratings were based on youth workers' assessments. As

with the previous two chapters where findings reflect the current literature on Black experience of schooling references will be identified.

All of the interviews began by seeking to gain an understanding of how the boys thought they were currently performing at school.

Kristin:

> "Well to be honest with ya I am not doing that well, if I compared myself with other kids and also because of who I am my colour. I mean this has influence on my education in not doing that well cos people in society constantly see you in stereotypes, whereby they then know your colour won't achieve especially if you are a Black man, so you end up getting put off and not achieving."

Roger:

> "Well am doing alright personally but you know how it's like with Black men, the way they are seen by many people in society. So you don't do as well even though you are capable…."

Louis:

> "Yeah I am expected good GCSE grades. So am doing well in education even though you have obstacles in your way cos of your colour and how we are viewed as Black males in society which then does at time put you off."

Neil:

> "…although doing well but you know being Black and being out there in the world, people are not going to see us well, as in like really bright even when you are bright cos this is not how they expect Black men to be due to various stereotypes that they have seen of our race of Black men in before. So you know, you get affected now and then in your education in not achieving fully to that high peak."

When considering the above statements the researcher established that his respondents appeared to believe that their achievement at school was affected by how people perceived their ethnicity and more generally how they thought Black people were perceived by society (Sewell, 1997; Ferguson, 2000; hooks, 2004). As Neil and Louis commented:

Neil: (I)

> "People see us in like, hmm, basically single parent figures, drugs, crime abuse, fathers that have children all around, and leave their women, Black males underachieving and Black is seen as a matriarchal family instead of a patriarchal family basically going against all the ideal concepts basically."

Louis: (I)

> "…criminals, drug dealers, members of gangs, people who like to rob people em we are seen like this by many people."
> Nisheet: Nothing positive you think?
> Louis:
> "Well just like good at sport stuff mostly we can run faster then White people and all dat bot that's about it, if you ask me."

However, it was essential to acknowledge that the boys also informed the researcher that their youth workers were helping them to eradicate the effects of these negative stereotypes against Black men in society, in order to enable them to focus more on their achievement, especially through their education. They provided the specific details about the support offered by youth workers that included close identification with them and access to resources (Jenkins, 2004). This is an important point. In America, recent research has criticised psychological-based studies for over-concentrating on Black boys' identities, in terms of cultural attitudes and motivations (Mutua, 2006). In this book it is

argued that there is a need for more resources to be allocated to Black youth to enable

them to develop positive Black masculine identities. In Britain, Reay and Mirza (2001)

have similarly argued against simplistic ideas of changing attitudes, pointing to the

importance of cultural resources that are made available in Black cultural spaces that

need more government support. This argument could also be used about Black-led youth

clubs. Secondary schools can then look at the educational success carried out in these

places and adopt some of their strategies and processes into the curriculum. As Kristin

observed: (I)

> "…cos youth workers, cos they are Black….So when you converse with
> them here, they already know how we are seen and treated in
> society….They tell us to just take this image out of our head of what
> people think of us and concentrate just on what we are doing like
> education and achieve in there to get further in life. They also say to us
> 'look we have got computers here for you to help you do your coursework
> and achieve better and thereby if you achieve this way then you won't end
> up in the underachiever stereotypes'. So you know what! After they
> encourage us like this I take their advice and feel that I have to do well in
> life and this can be done through education only. So you will find me as
> you have probably seen me like last week when I was doing my
> coursework on the computer here at the youth club. Now that helps me
> then to achieve in my education cos I ain't got a computer at home and at
> schools, computers are difficult to get hold of at lunch and break times cos
> there's so many pupils' on there and you can only use the computer for a
> short period, even if you have booked a session."

These notions were also supported by evidence from the researcher's observation

schedule, especially when he noticed a youth worker saying in his words of

encouragement to Kristin that: "Good to see you finishing off your coursework on

computer here, I like that, just keep at it, cos you got to achieve remember at schools and

not end up in bad roles like other Blacks have in the underachiever role, so you definitely

are going about it the right way, especially after I told you that."

The youth workers were inspiring Black boys to achieve in their education instead of following negative stereotypes. The Black boys recognised that their youth workers generally cared about their success hence they encouraged them and as a result Black boys motivated themselves in education and became inspired to succeed. The boys seem to be experiencing the outcomes suggested by Nehaul (1996), who outlined high academic achievement among children of Caribbean heritage in positive classrooms.

As Roger said: (I)

> "I reckon youth workers inspire me as well you know through telling you quietly why we should achieve in education instead of following, you know Black men in bad stereotypes like drug dealer and whatever and we have to listen to this, I feel cos we have experienced what the world is like against Black people….So I then feel, as if at least someone cares and wants us to do well and you know what! When they motivate us in education, so I then listen to them and then motivate myself at school in doing coursework, exams, etc."

On this point, the researcher observed in his observation diary that other Black boys were also seen listening to their youth workers when they were telling them not to follow stereotypes and instead to concentrate on doing well in their education. To give an example from the researchers' observation diary, he observed a boy saying to his youth worker that he does drugs, i.e. sells them, because he needed good clothes. The youth worker explained to him, saying, "You shouldn't do it because that's how people in society want to see Black men and you are only just going to be reinforcing the stereotype further by acting out this role." Unfortunately the boy did not seem to listen to his youth worker, so the youth worker took him to a corner and explained to him. "Why you want to be another bad Black stereotype, this is your age you study. Do you really want to lose your study, your career by getting caught up?" The boy thought for a while

and then said, "I suppose you are right you know although I want to do this but then I really ain't thought about the consequences like you tell me now and that's got me thinking… I really don't want to get caught up and lose out on anything…" The youth worker replied: "Yes so I want to see you stop doing your dealings, you got to get out of it and just concentrate on doing well at school." The boy replied, "Ok, I will."

However this advice did not necessarily always work. The researcher recorded that another Black boy wanted to sell and take drugs himself and this time a female Black youth worker told him, "I have tried drugs at a young age because like you I also got affected of how we were seen, in society. So I took drugs but believe me, it's not good because it's bad to take as it will really harm your body and if you sell it, it just gives a chance to people to see Black people again in a more negative stereotype then. Why don't you instead concentrate on other things like improving on your education?" The Black boy wouldn't listen, as he said he would take drugs himself and also start selling drugs too by taking it to Paris; and in doing so, acting like one of the negative stereotypes present in society.

The boys compared the positive support they received from the Black youth workers, to that of their secondary school teachers, who did not motivate them to achieve because they still continued to view them in negative stereotypes (Marriott, 2000; Davis, 2001; Mutua, 2006). As Neil said: (I)

> "…you know despite youth workers motivating you in education at school. The teachers however at school do not motivate us as Blacks because I think they still expect you to be bad because you're a bloke and you are Black. So you have to be bad, that's their attitude cos they have

seen stereotypes about us Black men."

Given the seriousness of such statements, the researcher asked his respondents if they could give him any examples of this.

Roger: (E)

"Yeah like because like for example…detentions there's one female White teacher I was walking past one classroom and there was detention in there and there was just free, (meaning 3) there was just tree (meaning again 3) White people in there and she went out. This is an example it did happen and she went out, she left her hand bag on one side and she went out but every time I have been in that detention or me and my Black friends have been in that detention, when she's going out, she's always taken her hand bag with her, jus tings like that."
Nisheet: So are you saying this could be the case because she might have seen negativity of Black men somewhere therefore she does these types of things?
Roger:
"Yes that's correct, teachers' most of the time see us as tiefs on tele; when we are not all like that and by taking her bag she just proved this point in thinking that Blacks are all tiefs".

This statement resembled a similar account of a pupil in the Wright et al's (2000) study, where one Black pupil similarly stated: "…most teachers…they think that all Black people do is steal things…" (Wright, Weekes and Mc Glaughlin, 2000, p78).

Kristin provided a further example of how teachers were influenced by negative stereotypes and then applied it to Black pupils at schools:

Kristin: (E)

"…I knew the head teacher was in for me cos like they view all Blacks at our school in stereos, due to society stereotypes that they have seen of us

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as Blacks in, so they pick up on this then and apply it to us. So like cos of this then, like bid (meaning it) got to a stage that even when you weren't doing anyfink you would just get called out anyway cos you are seen in stereos."

Kristin (E) informed the researcher how he felt teachers also further misunderstood his behaviour due to the stereotypes.

"…Black people are known in society for talking loud and going on and on. So teachers pick up on this as well and think we are also like that, all Blacks. I mean if they hear one Black person talking loud like in streets, in media, etc then, they think we are all loud as Blacks. So when in classrooms like there is loud talking going on or sumfink and the teacher don't know who is talking and like he will call all Blacks names and tell them to quieten down; by asking all of us to speak slow and one time happened and he called my name and said stop talking loud and I am like I ain't even talking loud. I was just talking normally amongst the whole group of my Asian friends but he said 'No I just heard you talk loud' and like all my Asian friends are laughing and saying 'this is the normal way he talks' and it even got to a stage where some of the other non-Black pupils' have gone that 'It weren't him talking so loud anyway, it was us on this side, you get me and the teacher still insisted that it's me and to cover dat I just thought I can't be bothered no more cos they view Black people in stereotypes as always loud talkers anyway; so they won't listen even if you say so, so I just left it."

Kristin's statement reflects a similar situation observed by Maud Blair (2001) in her research. She similarly highlighted that when observing a science lesson, the teacher heard talking, and turning around, threw a piece of chalk at the sole Black student in the class. At this, one girl said to the teacher, "But Miss, the talking wasn't even coming from where Joe (a Black boy) is sitting, you always pick on him." There was a chorus of support from the other students as well (Blair, 2001, p78) but in any case Black boys were always blamed, which again demonstrated the way in which the teachers were influenced by the negative stereotypes present in society; this was also exemplified in Gillborn's (1990) study.

The inevitable consequence of this treatment by teachers was that the boys were less likely to perform to the best of their ability. As Kristin (E) said:

> "When you ain't done anyfink and you get treated badly cos teachers are simply viewing us in stereotypes, so then I have got to a stage, where I don't go to the lesson…so you know then my achievement does get affected and I underachieve but if only they knew us as a race by understanding us, our behaviour, then none of this would happen."

Roger also said: (E)

> "At schools yeah, I reckon yeah, the way schools are now it's just that you cannot get anywhere further in your work to achieve because teachers simply go by the negative stereotypes and treat Black boys all of them like this and what's more they also fail to understand your behaviour and mistake it for stereotypes instead. I have experienced this."

Given the seriousness of this particular problem the researcher asked the boys how they thought this problem could be resolved. They agreed that by incorporating Black culture into the curriculum teachers could then better understand the boys' behaviour; as well as being less inclined to be affected by negative stereotypes. More importantly, this would make them further likely to achieve in their education as well. As Neil said: (I)

> "…teachers should study culture awareness that this is not always true this image that they have of us."
>
> Nisheet: How could they learn cultural awareness?
>
> Neil:
>
> "Well teach us Black culture or something to do with it. So this will make us motivated more in education, and through teaching Black culture this will also make teachers automatically learn how we are and why we are what we are in our behaviour, it's all cultural and once they have this understanding of Black culture they can then treat us fairly like how our youth workers treat us fairly, simply because they understand our Black culture and behaviour. So then you get motivated to do well in activities here but teachers at schools just don't understand Black culture or Black cultural behaviour.

Kristin took this point further and said that if Black culture was not introduced into their teaching programme then injustice would keep on occurring and it would enable teachers to put more and more negative labels upon them, like they did now because teachers simply failed to understand them and instead followed stereotypes:

Kristin: (I)

> "You see cos teachers don't teach or don't learn about professional Black people in history and know nothing about their culture, they then therefore end up viewing us wrongly and instead end up giving more negative labels to Black kids especially...."

When the boys suggested that White teachers needed to know more about Black culture, they seemed to be referring to more traditional ideas about Black culture in history and literature. In contrast, in recent work in America, there seems to be an emphasis on Black popular culture as well the more traditional issues.

The respondents thought that because nothing about their culture was taught at school, the teachers often mislabelled them and they started to rebel against their teachers and they did this through annoying their teachers by speaking in Creole/Patois to them, once they recognised that their teachers went along with mislabelling them. As Neil in his interview explained:

> " In one of the lessons, can't remember which one, I was having fun fights with my mates and the teacher became horrible to me and labelled me by saying 'you are a troublemaker and it's typical', now why did he say typical, I tell you why, it's cos I am Black. So I then got pissed off and spoke to him in Patois and then said it really in a way that my teacher wouldn't understand pure Patois, no form of English in that and he couldn't understand and he was like 'why you speaking your language! You never use to do this before. We never speak your language!' and I

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was like excuse me what you mean? and he goes 'I know you were talking about me' and I just acted like as if I didn't know what he was on about. I was to be honest, though I was yeah but he hasn't got any evidence to prove that I did cos he don't speak or understand Patois you see...."

As Frances Benskin (1994) points out: 'if children feel that the school teachers have mistreated them, they are more likely then to develop anti-school attitudes, rather than those who see the school teachers as providing then with the skills and knowledge that will help them later on in life' (Benskin, 1994, p180). This point had also been supported by other researcher's (Mac an Ghaill, 1988; Sewell, 1997; Blair, 2001).

The boys acknowledged that speaking in Creole/Patois in order to defend themselves against their teachers often had a negative effect upon Black boys' education. For instance, Louis in his interview said that speaking Creole at his secondary school determined some of his lower set groups. As he said:

> "...with Black kids set groups are already made for you. So even if you are in a middle or top sets, teachers always find ways of moving you down. So for example in my case, I got moved down from my group when they heard me speak in Creole and I was only doing this to get on teachers nerves when they were nasty to me for no reason but they end up getting back at me by moving me in lower groups."
> Nisheet: How do you recognise this?
> Louis:
> "Cos all this time I was in middle set, then when I started to speak in, on one or two occasions, in Creole, to annoy teacher, he moved me down straight away."

Kristin: (I)

> "...so once you move from the set and arrive in say middle or bottom sets cos you have spoken in Creole to annoy the teacher, then in this case you then never get moved up, this is teachers tactics with Blacks, you never get moved up, no Blacks do, other kids do get moved up from lower sets

but Blacks never."

This showed that teachers, according to the boys, were very powerful and could make sure that the boys never moved up in set groups, once they were transferred to lower sets.

Roger (E) gave an example of this:

> "...in my Science lesson I was in the top group but didn't get along with the teacher cos I spoke to him in Patois when he kept on annoying me for no reason, so then I was moved down a group. I then got further moved down from the middle group cos the same problem happened with the teacher and now I am in bottom group for Science and I got a high level in my stats for Science. So basically I was doing work that is rubbish for me and then on my test, when my test keep coming up I like… get high score but they wouldn't move me back to the middle or higher group because of the teacher….But a White and two Asian boys who were in my group doing just the same as us getting same marks etc, they got moved up but not us."
> Nisheet: Why not?
> Roger:
> "Because White teachers don't like Blacks even if they are clever, so even if a Black person in particular who is doing above average in bottom set groups they still wouldn't be moved to top or middle sets you get me."
> Nisheet: So this is because of your race you think and not anything else?
> Roger: (he took a long time to think) "Possibly because of my colour yes cos other race of boys/girls get chances to go up in sets, it's just Blacks who don't, but when this happens I then gang up with my Black friends in my set group when in classrooms…."

Placing the Black boys in low ability sets allows them to develop friendships with other Black boys who are in similar positions and this further infuriates the teacher and therefore, further worsens their treatment.

Roger: (E)

> "...so we as Black pupils' when we get put down in sets…and cos we don't get moved up even when we are performing well in lower sets and you see other race of boys getting moved up but not you or your race of pupils'. Then you know what! In that lower set group we do develop

> friendship more with Black boys, who are like in our situation and then in
> that group we get nasty with teachers' who are nasty to us. We just be
> nasty to them back cos most of the time in lessons we are together in our
> groups, so we get like that then but this all happens cos they misplace us
> all in sets. So we Black boys get together then, just to annoy teachers."

Several researchers, including Gillborn (1990), Benskin (1994), Mac an Ghaill (1994) and Sewell (1997) have identified the formation of peer groups among Black pupils, as a reaction to perceiving mistreatment by school authorities. This building of a defensive stance among young people against adults in positions of authority who are seen as unfairly treating them is a wider practice found among Asian and White pupils (Willis, 1977; Archer, 2003; Evans, 2006). As explored in earlier chapters, this perceived dis-identification of White teachers with Black pupils also has class and gender dimensions, with some earlier theorists suggesting that a larger percentage of Black girls are more successful in resisting teacher stereotyping and discrimination (Fuller, 1982; Anyon, 1983; Sewell, 1997). This may influence the higher academic achievement of Black female pupils (Department for Education and Skills, 2006). However, it is important to include Mirza's (1992) warning against any simplistic comparisons between Black females and males, that may have the effect of underplaying the way power operates within schools against Black females, involving racist, sexist and class discrimination.

Kristin (E) explained that he and his friends resisted the authority of teachers by finding ways to intimidate them:

> "…once we are together then me and my Black mates have shouted
> together at teachers, so as friends we do this then to get back at teachers.
> Although I wouldn't say the f-ing but like don't touch us and keeping like
> a deep voice as a kind of warning, teachers then get the message, then not
> to mess with us but again when I tell my youth workers this they say I
> ought to be polite to teachers and not do this, so I might in the near future

just stop this."

Bourne (1994) in a similar context wrote:

> 'On the one hand stands the White teacher, trained in a very orthodox view of schooling. On the other side stands a Black child. He (African-Caribbean boy) already anticipates that teachers will fail him; it has already failed his brothers and sisters who did badly at school, cannot get jobs, often get stopped by the police, find themselves and their peers vilified by the media. So he has then created a Black counter-culture with a strong macho image amongst his peers at schools' (Bourne, 1994, p35).

Some of the boys commented that, when being in friendship groups and acting hard against the teachers, these circumstances led teachers to recognise this behaviour of the boys and view it as a threat to them when teaching their set group. Therefore, teachers had then started to split up Black boys from their friends. Louis commented: (E)

> "In our set groups teachers have started to break us up as friends, they split you up in the way you can sit with them in classrooms. This not only applies to me but to all my Black mates at school and that's what I think makes Black people, I think more and more angry…."

Unfortunately, the reaction to being split up was to not work in lessons. As Kristin said: (I)

> "It's affected me work as well yeah when they split us as friends sometimes ya end up smoking to get out of frustration then do naughty tings in classes and not work in yer classrooms…."

Neil: (I)

> "…cos teachers separate friends right, so you get put of working at school then and therefore you then start to neglect and not work in classrooms at all and then you start wagging lessons as well simply cos teachers have split you with your friends."

Roger (E) was affected when teachers split him up from his friends, but he received support from his parent on this issue.

> "…there was one stage where I use to be getting into arguments with all the teachers then after they split me up with mates, and treat me differently etc…and we just use to argue and argue and it use to get well out of hand. So I wouldn't be working then in most lessons and then when my mum started to hear about dat she use to say to me: 'When the teacher is shouting at ya just don't say nating you can fink what you want to fink just don't say nating'…My mother is always helping me emotionally by saying 'don't worry you are not a failure you can still achieve, just make sure…that you don't think about all this and instead just get working in your work, you will achieve because you are a clever man'. So I listen to her and maybe that's why I am still at school and improving on my grades…."

The researcher had therefore established that his respondents' parents acted as an encouraging factor and as a result the respondents listened to their parents, in particular because of the emotional support they provided. In addition to this the researcher also noticed that his respondents' parents were also giving practical educational support to their sons as well in order to make them further achieve in their education. As Neil said (I):

> "Yeah my dad…he buys me many things to help me achieve in my education, so he's got me books, computer, cassettes and videos to do with education also any time I needed help with any assignments he would practically help me as well...Any problems I had or have with revision he will help me, my mum as well but my dad basically he's that way inclined when it comes to education. So he helps me more and then sits down with me to help me with my homework."

Youth workers according to Louis (I) gave similar support.

> "…youth workers by listening to your problems and respecting you as young adults then, so you know through this way they [youth workers] would then be emotionally encouraging you more in your education that way."

Taylor (2003) also reported this in his research on youth organizations, where he found

that the young people who attended the youth club most appreciated 'being listened to'

and 'treated as adults' when they attended (Taylor, 2003, p88).

In addition the youth workers also offered more direct educational help to the boys. As

Louis said: (E)

> "…I would say…youth workers by directly helping us in activities here by
> providing us with facilities here and therefore by participating in them
> with us, this then does make me also achieve in my education as well
> because…we learn about educational things in sessions here when they
> teach us with regards to our school work and therefore this then makes me
> achieve higher then in my educational work at school."

Kristin gave the researcher an example of this. As he informed him: (I)

> "…so we have a session on fixing things here with youth workers, where
> they bring in for example scrap pieces of car parts here and they show us
> of how to fix cars, how to install bulbs on cars, etc, at the club they teach
> us this. So we do this and this I mean helps me in my DT lesson at school
> cos I know when I have to design things in that lesson, I then know clearly
> then of how to use the technical and practical side to it."

Neil and Roger in their interviews gave similar examples.

Besides youth workers providing practical and emotional support to help improve the

performance of Black boys in their education, they also provided a Connexions service

(Career information) to the boys to encourage them to stay on in education after sixteen

and be able to develop their careers through further education. As Neil said: (I)

> "Well youth workers have provided us with a valuable asset to motivate us
> to stay on after sixteen in education and that is by introducing us to
> Connexions. So you see I know about how to go about going in my future
> career educationally then cos when the Connexion man comes in at the

youth club he says 'stick to further education and do business studies A-Level' because he knows I want to own my own business one day, so he therefore advices me to take this route but at schools they don't say any of this instead they say, when you tell them you want your own business they say 'obviously owning your own business is not common', so it seems unorthodox to the careers man at school and therefore they don't give you any good advice on how to go about this at school…."

Roger, Louis and Kristin in their interviews agreed with the point of the benefits in receiving information from the Connexion Services at the youth club. The researcher noticed that a majority of boys under sixteen were seen involved in talking to the Connexions man, who offered advice about careers and prospects they had in mind.

In conclusion, Black boys attended the youth club because they believed that the youth workers were skilled at understanding them. They received educational and emotional support. Attending the youth club assisted the respondents in achieving higher standards in their education.

<u>Youth workers</u>

After speaking to the boys who attended the youth club, it was necessary to consider the perspective of the workers at the club in order to determine the extent to which the boys attended the club with a view to improving academic performance and to investigate what the youth workers knew about the boys' education? Further, having used this line of questioning to determine the interest of the youth workers in the boys' education, as well as their understanding of the system in the secondary schools, the researcher wanted to explore whether or not the youth workers did anything to directly influence the boys'

performance in their education. The youth workers volunteered to take part in this research. He interviewed four African/Caribbean youth workers, Pamela, Chris, Justin and Daniel. He began by asking them why they thought Black boys attended their youth club. Pamela said:

> "Well seeing that a Black man can come in and have a manager role or as a head youth worker leader and for them it's like, oh ok Black men can achieve and be in higher occupations! So it's a positive Black role model that they see and that's one of the main reason why they then come here. To possibly then be inspired to be like him; as they think its positive image seeing a Black man in authority unlike how they are always portrayed in society."

In studies by Imam (1999), the notion of the desire amongst young Black boys to seek out a positive Black role model, was observed. Black boys attended youth organisations, which had mainly Black youth workers because Black youngsters found that one of 'the strengths that Black youth workers had was their ability to be seen as good role models' (Imam, 1999, p136). Within the three institutions that the researcher carried out his research in, there seemed to be agreement among the Black Boys and Black adults that the issue of race was of primary importance in terms of having positive role models.

The youth workers were clearly aware of the significance of the boys seeing them as Black role models. However, none of them clarified exactly how they themselves thought that Black men were portrayed by society. The researcher asked them questions relating to this. Justin said:

> "Basically I think Blacks especially men are viewed negatively by what they do, I mean they judge us as a whole…within society, if we dress a certain way and look a certain way they paint us all over with the same brush and that is negative…."

This issue of image associated with the way in which people dress had been a very controversial issue and was reflected in the literature. Blair (2001) mentioned a fifteen-year-old Black boy in her study saying, "… the way we are dressed, we get stereotyped …" (Blair, 2001, p81). Chris added to this and said that it was not only the way in which Black people dressed that contributed to this negative image. As he said:

> "…Black men are viewed negatively always in society due to so many bad stereotypes operating against their race...It's like for example the way some Black men hang around on the streets, when people see this, they will then view them instantly in stereotypes and the Black boys here know they will be viewed the same as well when they are with their group of friends on the streets…."
> Nisheet: So can you tell me what have you seen on the street that makes you say this?
> Chris:
> "…what I have seen on the streets! So far Black men hang around in a clique, that means in a crowd in certain places where people see them. They just feel that they have got to be up to something negative then because they have seen negative stereotypes of Black men before when they are with their group of friends, so this happens…."

Daniel also agreed. Gillborn (1990) also gave examples in his research study of the 'clique' experience.

It was clear all of the youth workers agreed that Black men were perceived in a negative way by society. The researcher decided to explore with them what sorts of stereotypical opinions society had in particular against Black people (Majors, 2001; Jones, 2005). Justin commented:

> "In society cos we Black men are seen as negative therefore people see them in stereotypes such as a criminal, rude and a gangster boy, so basically negatively seen."
> Nisheet: So have you ever or any of the boys attending here had this sort of personal experience as Black males where people see you in this sort of stereotype?

Justin:
"Yeah all the time, for example me I have had it all the time but it doesn't bother me…. I was walking on the road and they stopped me just like that. I can tell you why, it's because I am Black, because I am dressed the way I am dressed. So what they told me, the Police is that they stopped me because they see me in this young criminal gangster look stereotype and this is the same with all the boys here they tell me they get the same problem all the time, we all get stopped often by Police. I mean Black men should get use to this now."

Pamela argued along the same lines.

The above comments corresponded with Solomon who in *The Voice* newspaper pointed out regarding Black people that being unfairly stopped and searched was still commonly experienced by many Black youngsters and that this treatment by the police was a consequence of the stereotypes in society (Quinones, 2003, p2).

In order to gain an understanding of the extent to which these stereotypes were present throughout society, as well as the likelihood of them remaining in the future the researcher decided to ask where they had originated.

Chris:
"I think it's historical you know…mainstream society now as it is and as it was in the past history, the thinking hasn't changed…this is all historical belief which is therefore coming out in present and future thinking of White people…."

For Pamela, the media was centrally important in portraying negative stereotypes of Black men. As she said:

"Eastenders is a right example with that Black family. I can't remember their names of the top of my head, but em the Trumans family and in that

family you have got the brother who is a Doctor and then he slowly went down the ladder. Then you have got the dad, he seems just to be stuck in a time warp sometimes because he lives the old day and the old times of how his life seems to be going. He seems to be stuck with that. The other brother, he just seems to be a drug dealer like there seems to be no other way to live his life."

The literature also points to how Black men were negatively portrayed within the media (see Ross, 1998).

However, regardless of whether the stereotypes had been developed from historical sources or through the media, they had a prominently negative impact on non-Black teachers as the youth workers informed the researcher that they thought teachers then had this stereotypical image of the 'bad Black man' developed within them and, as a result of this, teachers treated Black boys differently (Gillborn, 2008). As Pamela said:

> "These stereotypes that runs then starts to have an effect on non-Black teachers in treating Black boys differently then from when they are at school. So like Black boys here they feel like they are being treated bad then by teachers, due to these negative stereotypes which they know their teachers have picked up on and as a result teachers have then labelled them directly in these negative stereotypes as well...."

In order to really understand the severity of the consequences of these negative stereotypes the researcher asked how they thought they affected the boys. Daniel said:

> "…yes stereotypes do then have an impact on Black boys here firstly because they end up copying these stereotypes which teachers have told them in and secondly this then has an impact on their achievement as well…."

However, rather than merely assuming that the stereotypes affecting the teachers were exclusively responsible for the boys' current disappointment with their education, the

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researcher asked if any other factors also contributed to this, to which youth workers said

Black boys own behaviour in peer groups was sometimes also to blame for becoming an

obstacle to their achievement.

As Pamela said:

> "Well in general for all the boys here, I would say it's about the company that they keep sometimes which affects their achievement in education at schools as well. It 's like I am still going through this thing at the moment with a lot of the boys at the club, they feel that they are getting blamed for a lot of things…by teachers at schools. Simply cos teachers don't approve of their friends, since when they get together with friends they then present bad behaviour hence they get told of more by teachers and this results then in them not doing well at schools but I keep saying to them it's because you all hang around in that gang and behave like a rude boy then. So as far as people are concerned they know it's that clique …."
> Nisheet: So does peer groups overall result in their underachievement/ achievement at school?
> Pamela:
> "Under-achievement yeah because a lot of them are behaving inappropriately when in peer groups. So this then has an effect on their achievement negatively at schools."

Daniel also agreed.

Some youth workers thought that the parents had an adverse effect upon the boys'

education as well. As Daniel said:

> "I think parents are an issue as well in Black boys education here, as they play a major part in not making their boys to achieve at schools but one of the biggest problems we have at present is that they just do not understand, or do not know how to help their son/daughter with their homework; because they don't understand the type of work that they do at school…."

Rasekoala (1997) explored this difficulty. She reported Black parents had less useful

information about their children's schools than other ethnic groups. There is literature,

which stressed the other side of the argument (see Morgan, 1996; and Blair and Bourne et al, 1998). Chris, in agreement with the latter researchers, said that Black parents played a positive role in making Black boys who attended their organisation achieve in their education. As he said:

> "Well just you know the boys here say my parents always encourage me in education cos they know I have to fight against racism, so they will always make sure they encourage me in education and then they will say 'oh my father did this for me for my schoolwork', which shows they are receiving help and they might be asking help of their parents; and they are therefore getting positive feedback from parents and also achieving cos of their parents. As they show me their work and say how their parents helped them and therefore they got good marks. These are the boys you have looked at in particular I am talking about."

Justin also thought that the parents encouraged their boys to achieve more highly.

The researcher moved on to asking the youth workers about how far they thought the school curriculum also affected the extent of the boys' achievement and in which ways. Justin answered:

> "…well you see the present curriculum is not helping as it's not benefiting young Black boys here at all in education at their schools, therefore you see them not achieving in education because there is nothing in the curriculum that they can relate to. So you see I think there should be."
> Nisheet: Like what, can you give me any examples?
> Justin:
> "Like more Black culture in school. I mean teach them about us Black people and teachers would also automatically then learn more on how to deal with Black people."

Daniel and Chris expressed their concerns over the suitability of the current curriculum, which revealed that this was clearly another factor that affected the boys' performance in education. Having identified a number of factors effecting the boys' education, the

researcher thought that it was necessary to explore which was the most prominent.

Pamela said:

> "…probably teachers is main, in not making any Black boys here go higher up and the Black boys they just say that they feel that they are not achieving, because they as well as their Black friends when they are together or on their own then they are not being treated well or being listened to by their teachers. They don't feel like they are being given a chance at times due to teachers seeing their race in stereotypes in the first place and they just feel like it's always teachers' bad answers towards them which puts them off…."

Justin and Daniel agreed.

Having established that the youth workers were aware of the many difficulties that Black boys encountered in their education, the researcher asked what they did then to help the boys and to this Pamela said she helped the boys emotionally. One of the techniques she used was to explain better methods of dealing with authority. She gave examples, she is emotional herself she told the researcher and the researcher could tell from her tone that she cared very deeply for her charges.

As she said:

> "…cos they are close to me, so I therefore then help them emotionally and I do this by telling them, 'I am listening to you'. So you tell me about any problems or any queries that you have at school, and they tell me, 'cos you understand my emotions, so I am telling you that when I am mad and teachers have got me mad because teachers treat Blacks differently due to having seen stereotypes against our race; and as a result of this they tell me and my Black friends off more in lessons for behaviour and treat us differently and also don't give us help at school or to any other Blacks. So when I see this all the time happening to Blacks only then do I not work or achieve in lessons and therefore I feel, that I just want to fight and argue with teachers; there's nobody stopping me because as far as I am concerned I just want to kill them!' Then I am going to them, 'Why do

you get to this point? Ask yourself, is this fight worth it with the teachers, or is it not worth it? and if it is worth it, then how do you do it in a way of not getting kicked out of school? How do you do it in a way of not showing anybody that I am really, really ticked of with this person? Or this is the only way I can handle it. You have got to kind of control your anger as well', I tell them….So I tell them, 'even though teachers ignore you or be bad to all Blacks, you just stay calm, learn to control your emotions and still do your work in lessons and do continue to achieve at schools. Why get put off with teachers and not achieve then? Cos if you don't achieve then, it's not as if it will affect your teachers; it will be you who will not achieve in your life'. So I tell them, 'Keep it 'safe' with teachers no matter if they ignore you or treat you and other Black boys differently…."

This showed that the youth workers were teaching the boys 'the hidden curriculum' (Titman, 1994, Eggleston, 2000 and Muller, Davies and Morais, 2004) required for them to succeed at schools, by teaching them the attitudes necessary to succeed in their education. Chris said he too gave advice to boys in order to support them achieve in their education at school. This sort of help was discussed by Taylor (2003) who said, in most cases, many youngsters listened to their youth workers advice because 'trust was often maintained by the youngster towards the youth worker' (Taylor, 2003, p123). Furthermore, Armstrong's (2003) suggestion that in order to increase Black boys' self-esteem, there is a need for more Black teachers can be applied to Black youth workers. Daniel provides an example of this:

"Well I try to boost their 'self confidence' and 'self-esteem' to make them stronger here and let them know that there are things you can actually do, you can show the community and prove to yourself that you can reach a higher level by achieving in your education and not always go by your teachers saying to you that you are a tief, criminal and the rest of it."

Yet despite the clear benefits of this emotional help the youth workers still thought that it was necessary to give direct educational help, because the youth workers were aware of the boys' specific educational problems. As Justin observed:

> "Yes we also give them educational help directly as well here, just to make them achieve more in their education at school, as we know of the reasons why they are not achieving that much at schools. So we have to help them some how or the other. So therefore for example, we have educational activities organised here for them, where we teach them in sessions about how to use computers, internet facility. Which will then eventually help their school work when they come to do their Information Technology lesson at school. Also we have sessions on how to fix cars, motorbikes as well which helps their Design and Technology work at school, as well as their Art work at school cos we teach them the techniques of how to design and paint a car, motorbike…."

The youth workers seemed to think that a large reason for the improvements in the behaviour, academic performance and emotional stability of the boys achieved via their visits to the youth club were because of the respect that they were given. As Pamela said:

> "…you see in the very first place they enjoy coming here and do well in their activities organised here then at their secondary schools is because we make them firstly feel that this is your home, we tell them this and we also give respect to them mainly, which I feel they do not get that at school, the under sixteen ones…."

This seemed logical when considering that a study by Mac an Ghaill (1988) explained how Black boys turned out to become 'Rebels' at schools when they did not get respect and were not made to feel at home. This lack of respect transferred to the teachers. When questioned by Mac an Ghaill on whether they respected teachers, a member of one of the rebel groups said: "How can you respect 'em when they don't respect you"?'(Mac an Ghaill, 1988, p104).

There is a long history in the literature and the media that pathologises absent Black fathers as a main cause of Black boys' educational under-achievement (Hobson, 2002). More recently, the issue has returned to a high profile in the media. What is often missing in the literature and media is accounts of positive images or progressive identities of Black fatherhood. Daniel linked a discussion about respect to that of father figures and the need to encourage the boys to learn more educationally from activities organised at the youth club. He stated:

> "…if you want to make a difference to somebody's life then for me I do this through playing respectful roles. So I am being like your father, if I have to be your father and supporting you and encouraging you in whatever, if I have to do this, I do this then, just to make the boys listen to me and thereby making them work more and making them enjoy, as well as encourage them to pick up something educational from activities here that will then benefit their school work and you know what! It works because they know they should listen to a Black man because they see him as a parent figure, I always tell them to view me like this, so we can bond more then as males in a family relationship and once we bond, they then know that they have to do well in a majority of activities and learn from them something educational here….So my respectful gender role is having a positive impact on boys here I would say as Black boys come to realise through me being a man and them being a man they can then see this as a personal relationship relating then to their overall achievement."

On the other hand, these methods did not always work. In some situations the youth workers gave valid reasons to the boys as to why it was necessary to work hard at an activity that they did not enjoy, if they could gain educational benefit from it.

As Daniel said:

> "However even my gender and race I have to say always don't work to my advantage on the boys here cos there are some sessions where they will just not perform well….So for example, well at present em I have got a project together called "Success making" which is a Literacy and

Numeracy project, so they are just not working in there as they find it boring but I always then in those situations make them think realistically then to get them to work in that session, not forcing but telling them, why it's necessary to read up on it. As I tell them, this is exactly what you will get at schools, but if you learn it here, then for one you know you will not get told off for it, for doing it wrong as we won't tell you of. Secondly by doing it here it can improve your set groups at schools in these subjects. Thirdly by performing well in this activity here your future grades will improve and lastly, I tell them, if you do well in Literacy and Numeracy here then even when you are facing the bad world out there which is against Black people, then you will find that at least with your good Literacy and Numeracy skills you can then challenge people when speaking or even when in working out things ...."

Daniel had a wish list for improving the youth club. He wanted more computers and a homework club; he wanted to test Black boys in their subjects and to have head phones for the Black boys so that they could work without distractions. He also wanted parents and Connexions involved in their planning for careers and post sixteen education. This motivation, which Daniel showed towards Black boys, was also expressed by other youth workers, especially in encouraging them to stay on in post sixteen education. As Pamela explained:

"I am explaining to them, that it's very necessary that you choose a good occupation which will require you to use education at a very high level; so for them to do this I tell them, that then it's very necessary for them to stay on after sixteen in their education. So for example I tell them if you feel that you are good at that Maths then achieve it, go for it become like a Maths teacher and if you want to become a Maths teacher then you have to achieve in that subject by staying on after sixteen and continuing with it, yeah go on and stay on at school or whatever,…I tell them here, the boys at the club…."

Chris also said:

"I do encourage them as well to choose a profession after sixteen where education is needed and whereby this then requires them to stay on in their education after sixteen at school to achieve this but whether they want to

do it is a different thing."
Nisheet: So how do you encourage them?
Chris:
"Well, by saying these exact words to them and also we offer connexions to them, to help build up their careers in education as well, in whatever they want to do. So they know that they then really have to achieve in their education at school."

The youth workers were then seen to be playing a positive role not only in making Black boys under sixteen at the youth club do well in their education at present, but also in their near future (Reach Report, 2007). This was effectively summarised by Daniel who said: "…we are here to support present formal education and further education as well and we do this in an informal way." Daniel explained how the youth club did this:

> "…By providing educational sessions for the under sixteens and also by offering advice when they turn sixteen plus from their youth workers to continue in education. As a result this then makes it more a safe environment for young people to be in and they don't feel threatened by teachers and they are more vocal here about their needs. This is the sort of open environment that we are giving them a chance to open their ideas and not be scared to express them like at schools and be open in their way to interact with people here and so all this then improves their education now and even after when they go into further education after sixteen."

In conclusion, youth workers made Black boys' experience in education meaningful because they understood Black boys more than teachers and were therefore, more able to relate to them. As a result of this youth workers were motivating the boys in their education by giving them emotional support as well as by providing specific educational activities at their youth club. They provided this service to the boys because they knew that the boys were not getting this at school from their teachers hence they were not performing to the best of their ability. This eventually benefited the boys' education, as the boys figured out that their youth workers cared. Caring engenders respect. Respect

was the secret to the boys' future success in education.

Chapter 7
Conclusion

Whilst conducting the research for this study, the researcher established that it was necessary to engage with the main participants, including Black boys, parents, teachers and youth workers in a range of different educational contexts in order to obtain the best possible data. When effectively collated, these data enabled the researcher to gain a comprehensive understanding of these participants' perspectives on the educational experiences of Black boys. This concluding section of the research study is divided into five sections which identify each setting in terms of similarities in findings, differences in findings, originality in findings, the impact of research for policy and practice and lastly ways the current research could be built upon through giving suggestions for extending the research.

For the purpose of this study three different educational contexts were explored. These were a secondary school, a supplementary voluntary school, and a youth organization. Collating information from these different sites of learning provided the possibility of collecting a range of insights. The research process enabled an informed representation of the educational perceptions of his target groups. These groups were Black youngsters, Black parents, Black youth workers, Black teachers and White teachers. The three institutions where the research was carried out differed as to compulsory versus voluntary attendance, the use or absence of examinations and other assessments, the degree of parental support and approval, the nature of the supervision provided, the dress code, and the different purposes of the institutions. Also of importance, were differences in what

constituted 'acceptable' behaviour. The three institutions differed as to what was 'allowed' and differed as to 'ethos'. That is, the institutions had different cultures (Jenkins, 2004).

These different cultures were of importance for a study that is particularly concerned with examining the reasons as to why these different institutions had different levels of success in making Black boys' educational experiences more meaningful and the implications of this for secondary schooling. Of major significance for the findings were the key concepts that the researcher used to frame his understanding of Black boys' schooling experiences. The researcher began with more general concepts from sociological and cultural studies literatures which provided a view of the 'bigger picture'. He then drew upon concepts from the educational literature which addresses the specific dynamics of Black boys' interaction within educational institutions. The concepts that were drawn upon included: culture, identity and identity formation; masculinities; Black culture and racial stereotyping.

Similarities in findings across research settings

Whilst considering the perspectives of Black youngsters, we find, as discussed in the three results chapters, that the researcher's respondents all mentioned that they had experienced negative stereotyping. They thought that this stereotyping, especially with regard to Black men, pervaded British society. In particular, the issue of negative teacher expectations was highlighted as being a consistent factor, contributing significantly towards the defamation of Black boys by society on a day-to-day basis. These

experiences and the resulting perceptions of the respondents corresponded with the literature on African/Caribbean communities in British urban areas (Gillborn, 1990; Wright, 1992; Benskin, 1994; Sewell, 1997). Furthermore, the respondents all expressed the view that teacher negativity had a negative influence upon their performance at school. This was also well documented in the literature (Gillborn, 1990; Blair, 2001).

In other words, many of the respondents were identifying what is often referred to in the literature as a 'self fulfilling prophecy' (Rosenthal and Jacobson, 1968). More specifically, this involved the Black boys assimilating the teacher's negativity and reacting to it by behaving in such a manner as to adversely affect their educational outcomes. The comparative perspective across three sites of learning suggested that the Black boys did not necessarily assimilate the secondary school teachers' stereotyping of them, but they had to find strategies to respond to these negative images of Black masculinity. The Black professionals in the study indicated that, as a result of this constant pressure on the boys, they consistently challenged these dominant images by encouraging Black boys to achieve. This was carried out by guiding the Black boys away from following negative stereotypes providing them with emotional and educational support which to the researcher was predicated upon a seemingly unconditional mutual respect. Those professionals who recognised the negative stereotypes as an extreme mis-representation were especially effective in assisting the boys. This re-enforced the importance of the 'self fulfilling prophecy'. Teachers (non-Black) holding negative stereotypical views tended to adversely effect Black boys' education but professionals

(Black Teachers/Youth workers) holding positive stereotypical views perceived themselves as change agents with boys responding positively towards them.

Black professionals recognised that there were methods of assisting the Black boys in fulfilling their academic potential alongside offering emotional support and learning assistance. Studies have suggested it is the responsibility of teachers to recognise the different learning styles of pupils (Reay and Mirza, 1997). For example, Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences, explores the different ways in which people display intellectual engagement (Gardner, 1993). The majority of Black professionals who were consulted stated failure to acknowledge the learning styles of Black boys was the predominant factor in preventing the boys from achieving as highly as they could. The Black professionals suggested that a way to engage Black boys was to provide practical, hands on, learning experiences. They felt that the traditional curriculum in secondary schools involving continuous written work over-emphasised academic study. Practical actions utilized what these Black professionals envisaged as the particular strengths of Black boys, there-by effectively maximising their chances for success. For example, Teacher 5 (A Black Mentor) expressed himself as follows:

> "…So…I tell them that I understand you…that you don't need written work all the time to make you understand because I know you will understand through practicalities better because you are a Black… man who needs practical stuff more then written work to make you work then and achieve,…and this is how…Black men work better and achieve through doing practical things.…So you see in my classroom, then I give them practical things to do, to make them understand…."

Another aspect makes this a more complex issue. The Black professionals constantly heard from the boys about White teachers' dis-identification with them as made clear in terms of the racial stereotypes with which they operated. In contrast, for the Black professionals there was an active positive identification with the Black boys. This seemed particularly strong among Black male professionals who suggested that the mutual experiences of Black men and Black boys encouraged a strong bond between them. It was on the basis of this bond that the Black professional males at both secondary school and at the youth club felt that the boys aspired to be successful like them. In addition at the supplementary school it was evident that this bond between males was encouraged through the curriculum that was taught.

One response to this argument about a practical curriculum is to acknowledge that the variation in learning activities practiced by good teachers is an example of attempting to maintain interest levels by engaging different kinds of intellectual talents. It is probably an interesting idea for further research to investigate the extent to which the more carefully constructed balance between focussed intellectual activity and more practical activity/action could influence curriculum content. It would also impact on teaching and learning methodologies. But this is not just a Black educational issue.

One advantage of reading a wider research literature is that it enables the comment of teacher 5 to be placed in a wider context. Historically, a main issue in British education research has been the under-achievement of the white working class with a particular focus on white working-class boys (Hargreaves, 1967; Willis, 1977). During the 1960s

and 1970s, there were a range of suggestions about how to enable more boys to succeed within the schooling system. One argument was to include working-class culture within the curriculum. Another argument suggested that a more practical curriculum should be implemented for working-class pupils. The latter was challenged for assuming a myth of cultural deprivation among these pupils (Keddie, 1979). Placing the comment of teacher 5 within this discussion, his argument could be seen as reinforcing a cultural myth about Black pupils and more particularly, Black boys. This issue has been documented in earlier educational research (Eggleston et al, 1985). A main point to emerge here from the study is that in making sense from the data collected on (white and Black) professionals' accounts of Black parents involvement in their sons' education, using an historical perspective and addressing multiple social categories, for example class and ethnicity in this case, enables a wider understanding of current educational practices**.**

Other research has been conducted to investigate the notion of how teachers could support Black pupils' high academic achievement. Sewell (1997, p43) recognized "consistency" and "security" as having a positive impact on the teaching/learning situation. This stemmed from students knowing what to expect and then having that happen. This resulted in a sense of confidence about the ability to cope with the demands of the learning situation precisely because they were both known and familiar. A positive emotional background to the learning situation enabled students to engage with new material. A student could cope with many challenges as long as these stayed within the parameters of an established routine. What is significant about Sewell's suggestion is that it equally applies to all pupils. For the researcher, this kind of research finding fitted

into the theoretical framing of his study, in shifting away from assuming that the education of Black boys can simply be discussed in terms of issues about ethnic minority groups or racialisation.

Black parents were regarded by some teachers and youth workers as an obstacle in the Black boys' education because they did not demonstrate positive parental interest towards their children's education. Some Black professionals considered that parents were very much exerting a prominent negative influence on their boys' achievement. The generalizations about Black parents here applies to the experiences that these particular Black professionals have had in their working situation and were not intended to be applied outside of that context.

Studies have highlighted how weakness in parental cultural capital has contributed to the barriers to Black boys achieving at school (Rasekoala, 1997). However, assumed weakness in parental interest in education across the wider general population could be considered primarily as a result of class differences and different values in the wider British society (Reay, 2004). For example, historically, studies of white working-class pupils' schooling constantly refer to teachers 'blaming parents' for their children's educational under-achievement. A recent ethnographic study by Gillian Evans (2006), *Educational Failure and Working Class White Children*, illustrates that this is still the case with parents represented as working against their own children's educational interest.

In order to emphasize a sense of caution about generalizing from findings about weakness in parental interest, mention can be made of researchers such as Blair and Bourne et al (1998) who maintained that many Black parents showed concern for their sons' education, as they went to great lengths to maintain and protect the rights of their boys in the education system. The findings in this research support Blair and Bourne et al's findings, indicating that many Black parents showed encouragement to their sons. This challenges the negative views of some of the Black professionals about Black parents, referred to above. The Black boys at the three organisations in this research unanimously agreed that they had received support from their parents. This support included advice about how to tackle racism and how to succeed in their education. Alongside this, Black parents were actively involved in their sons' schooling.

Positive encouragement was demonstrated by regularly attending parents' evenings, buying educational material for their boys and by personally helping their boys with schoolwork. Parents considered sending their children to the Caribbean because teachers gave equal treatment to all children there but Black parents were unable to do this due to financial constraints. Their intention to do so not only demonstrated their interest in the education of their sons, but also indicated that parents were engaged in a comparison of educational values embedded in the different cultures they experienced. Parents also indicated that they thought the curriculum made a negative contribution to the performance of Black boys in education because aspects of the curriculum were not accepted as relevant. Research studies have also highlighted this point. The curriculum is seen as not connecting adequately with what Black boys wanted to learn (Mac an Ghaill,

1988; Sewell, 1997).

Many of the Black respondents made comments about how improving motivation to achieve could be addressed by access to Black Studies. Some boys stated that introducing Black culture into the curriculum would not only motivate them to achieve, but would also enable teachers to recognize their Black cultural behaviour. For example, the boys thought that, when Black children were 'messin about' together, they were exhibiting Black cultural behaviour. They thought they should not be punished for this because they considered it normal behaviour. Therefore, by understanding this part of Black culture, their teachers would not waste time punishing the boys inappropriately. They thought this would be a benefit to Black boys because teachers could concentrate more on encouraging Black boys in their academic work rather than on concentrating on behavioural problems. The boys mentioned that the Black professionals did not tell them off for displaying this sort of cultural behaviour. The boys thought this improved the emotional atmosphere and left them more willing and able to achieve in their set tasks.

It was important to distinguish between behaviour on the part of Black boys that arose from their understanding of cultural norms that could be tolerated, and bad behaviour that was just very plainly unacceptable in terms of school discipline. For example, when Black boys shouted across the classroom this was not an instance of cultural behaviour. Sometimes, they did this to annoy teachers and so needed to be disciplined. This research study showed that Black professionals recognised this negative reaction on the part of boys who felt that they were being disciplined inappropriately in their secondary school.

Black professionals attempted to create a safe environment within which the boys could identify their own mistakes, persuading the boys to assume ownership of the problem. By helping them consider their own faults before blaming their teachers, they further also condemned any boisterous behaviour that the boys might display. So, Black professionals made positive interventions and positive contributions to the maturation process. This dynamic is not culturally specific but can be seen to be operating wherever adults are engaging in good practice, as they help youth engage successfully with adult society. Research studies have highlighted how bad behaviour affects children's achievement (Cullingford and Morrisons, 1997). The good practice occurred when the teacher and the student had established a good communality of purpose.

Black boys in this research study triggered the question of why some Black boys behave badly. They informed the researcher that sometimes they were compelled to act badly in response to what they considered the unjust negativity of their teachers. They thought their teachers did not behave respectfully towards them. This caused resentment thus contributing to their failure at school. These perceptions concerning negative bias and unfair treatment leading to alienation and misbehaviour have been explored in the literature (Blair, 2001). All of this emphasised the enormity of the Black professional's task as they engaged in good practise, helping Black boys to overcome this particular hurdle. It also added a complicated dimension to the non-Black professional's task.

The perception by the boys of biased and racist tendencies among their secondary school teachers 'wielding' authority over them was a constant theme in this similarities section.

The lack of respect between the two groups could be explained by them both demanding that they deserved respect and it should be given to them automatically. Meanwhile they were both expecting the other to provide them with evidence that respect was deserved.

Differences in findings across research settings

Secondary school

At the Meadow Secondary School the researcher found that teachers perceived Black parents to be obstacles to their boys' education. For example, they pointed out that Black parents did not attend open evenings regularly or participate in helping their boys with their school work. The teachers initially stated their belief that because a majority of Black parents did not possess the necessary qualities required to-maximise their boys' success in education, they considered that this condition then led to their boys' negative performance at school.

According to some non-Black teachers, the reason Black parents did not possess the necessary qualities to support their boys' greater success in education was because the majority of Black parents originated from working class backgrounds. Teacher 4 (Black Music teacher) stated that, non-Black teachers assumed Black boys came from working class households by pre-judging the boys' appearance and speech styles at school. This, according to Teacher 4, caused non-Black teachers to think that the boys would also be led in the direction of working class occupations, because their parents did not teach them

the appropriate way to present themselves in terms of dress and did not teach them the necessary language styles to enable the boys to succeed in education. As a consequence of this, it was not surprising to see Non-Black teachers believing that the boys would eventually enter low-class jobs as their parents did. This had the effect of discouraging teachers from encouraging the Black boys to succeed further at school; as they thought there would be no improvement no matter how hard they tried**.** The literature suggests, similar findings, that teachers' judgements of Black boys' backgrounds, especially with regards to their parents, made them less inclined to encourage the boys to succeed (Benskin, 1994; Blair, 2001). This finding needs to be placed within a historical perspective, in which research has shown teacher low expectations of white working class pupils as continuing over the decades despite a wide range of curriculum initiatives to raise (white) working class pupils' achievement. For example, the literature suggested that working class speech patterns inherited from their parents were a disadvantage for all working class children and contributed to their not succeeding at schools (Derrick, 1977; Bald, 1981; Jeffcoate, 1982; Edwards, 1983; Tomlinson, 1983).

Regardless of the class background of Black parents, the researcher established that overall Black parents were showing an active interest in their boys' education. Furthermore, when questioning parents about who they thought negatively affected their boys' education, the researcher discovered that parents blamed teachers as well as White pupils who they saw as contributing significantly to undermining their boys' performance in education. Parents blamed White pupils who they perceived as 'causing trouble' by unnecessarily blaming their boys for bad behaviour that resulted in the Black boys

exclusion from schools. Therefore Black parents blamed White pupils for having a significantly negative impact on their boys' education. This point has also been supported in the literature. It has been recognised that non-Black student peer groups are a key factor in forming negative relationships with Black children at school, which contribute to their low academic performance (Gillborn, 1990; Wright, 1992; Connolly, 1995). Alongside White peers in school, the researcher also found from the Black boys' accounts that their Black peers outside school also had a negative effect on their education. They suggested to him that when they were in their company, they misbehaved more frequently outside schools and contributed to their bad behaviour inside school. Other researchers have supported this point (Cullingford and Morrison, 1997).

In contrast, it was noted that the Black boys indicated that their Black peers inside school were however very helpful to them and had a positive influence upon their education. They helped teach other by speaking their own cultural language (Creole) to make understanding clearer when in lessons. This was particularly useful because Black boys knew that teachers ignored them if they asked for help, so they supported each other by speaking in their own cultural language. This is an important finding. Earlier educational literature has tended to explain Black boys' schooling in terms of the boys adopting different trajectories, of pro-school' or 'anti-school' perspectives. There is evidence in this study that this simplistic division fails to offer an explanation of the complexity of young Black males' responses to secondary schooling that can include identification with academic learning alongside a dis-identification with formal schooling. A further aspect

of this complexity is that Black boys were a cultural resource for each other's classroom learning. Earlier educational research with a focus on 'failing' Black boys has tended not to report such positive peer interactions operating among male pupils who are seen by researchers and teachers as simply anti-school. This links into the discussion in Chapter One of the complexity of culture. In this case Black male peer groups offered a complex set of meanings that included being used as a cultural resource to both interrupt classroom learning and enable collective understanding of what was being taught.

<u>Supplementary school</u>

The parents at the supplementary school suggested to the researcher that secondary school teachers were to blame for negatively affecting the performance of Black boys in education. They informed him that secondary school teachers used the curriculum specifically to undermine Black boys' performance. For example, teachers encouraged the Black boys in Sports, Drama, Art, and Music rather than in subjects like English, Mathematics or Science. They claimed that pupils of other ethnic groups were encouraged in these subjects by teachers. According to parents, teachers were making Black boys less likely to achieve in the education system because of a lack of encouragement given to them for studying important academic subjects. Research studies have suggested a similar argument (Carrington and Wood, 1983 and Blair, 2001).

Black parents suggested that the White teachers' approach benefited the economy because generally employers wanted workers available for both higher and lower skill

occupations. Teachers used the curriculum to do this for employers. The ones, who do not achieve, namely the majority of Black pupils', would go into non-professional jobs for which they have been prepared by being encouraged to take less important curriculum subjects. This is a similar argument presented in Bowles and Gintis (1976) book, *Schooling in Capitalist America*, about white working class pupils' failure in the education system.

Some Black parents went on to indicate that it was the content of the curriculum which undermined Black boys in their education and that this eventually benefited the job market by providing low paid workers. They were especially concerned that the subjects in the curriculum did not reflect Black positive role models such as well known Black people who were successful in different high status areas of society. They felt that this was especially important because of the wide ranging negative stereotypes of Black men operating in society which contributed a barrier to their sons achieving their full potential at school. There was support from parents for Black Studies.

The literature states that supplementary schools were established to provide awareness of positive Black role models in curriculum subjects, in order to inspire Black children to achieve more in their academic work (Reay and Mirza, 1997). The way they were taught about well known Black role models was through teaching Black history culture at the supplementary school. The literature suggested that Black boys over the years have wanted Black culture to be introduced into their secondary school curriculum in order to encourage them to achieve more in their education (Mac an Ghaill, 1988). The researcher

found that currently Black boys were keen to learn about different cultures and were particularly enthusiastic to engage with Black history and culture. They felt that this would give them more confidence in their learning and help them to achieve academic success. These accounts can be contrasted with the discussion of academic achievement in the educational literature, explored in Chapter One. Whereas in the latter there is a more technicist approach to increasing academic achievement, the Black boys' accounts suggested a more complex reality in the 'real world' of the classroom. For example, their accounts could be linked to the sociology literature on the formation of African/Caribbean masculine identity, outlined by Hall (1991), who points out that we need to understand identity as a process of identification that is grounded in specific institutions, such as schooling.

Black parents at the supplementary school stated that teaching Black people their history and culture would also help White teachers understand the cultural behaviour of Black boys. Teachers would become more accepting of certain behaviours and be able to concentrate on helping their boys academically. Another issue mentioned by parents at the supplementary school was that parents thought that their boys secondary school teachers were giving out false information to them on parents' evening by telling them that their boys were doing well when this was clearly not represented in their boys' progress reports (Blair and Bourne et al, 1998). This is supported in the literature (Tomlinson, 1984; Blair, 2001). In contrast, the teachers at the supplementary school were familiar with Black culture and were also able to give advice to parents on how they could contribute to the educational success of their boys. This is an important research

finding. In much of the literature on the schooling of Black pupils, Black parents are seen as a major barrier to their children's education. There is the potential here for policy makers and teachers to learn from the supplementary school's interaction with Black parents to develop a more productive response from mainstream secondary schools. This would mean schools acknowledging the evidence reported across the three learning sites that Black parents are the first educators of their children.

Youth organisation

This third site presented additional evidence which connected to that found in the other two learning sites, either through reinforcing points made or in detailing other aspects of the processes by which educational underachievement was fostered. One of the key aspects that emerged in this context and not elsewhere was the significance placed on stereotyping. Youth workers gave examples of Television programmes such as "Eastenders" to illustrate how Black characters were portrayed negatively and hence not shown as positive role models. The literature has shown that, whether it is Michael Jackson (Pop star) or a range of other famous Black stars, they are always portrayed in a negative light at some point (Ross, 1998).

Some of the youth workers disagreed with the media being the origin of the negative stereotypes. They thought that although Black characters were portrayed negatively, this was due to historical tradition and not because of the media. Regardless of the origin of the stereotypes against Black people, youth workers agreed that Black boys attended the

youth club in order to experience positive Black role models, which could possibly then inspire them to achieve in their education. The boys felt that their secondary school teachers held these stereotypes and as a result treated the boys negatively (as mentioned in the similarities section).

The youth workers stated that the Black boys attended the youth club, not just to experience positive Black role models, but also for the respect shown to them by the workers. They claimed that this was partially because this type of respect was not given to them at school, and that receiving it contributed to them being able to achieve higher standards. The literature recognises that when Black boys do not receive respect from teachers at schools, they are more likely to act negatively and be remonstrative in their behaviour towards their teachers (Mac an, Ghaill, 1988; Sewell, 1997).

The research presented here suggested that the Black boys adopted negative attitudes when teachers did not give them respect at their secondary school, as they said that they became involved in 'challenging' and or 'protest' behaviour towards their teacher when they perceived unfair treatment. Connell (1995) referring to this as a form of protest masculinity, discusses this in terms of a wider group of white working class boys who feel rejected by the school system. The researcher found that one way that the boys acted out their protest was by speaking Creole in front of the teachers to annoy them, but what was disturbing was that the respondents were aware that in doing this, it often resulted in their own education being negatively affected. For example, the teachers would put them down into lower ability groups when they heard Black boys speaking in Creole, even

when they were 'just speaking in their own language to each other'. The literature suggests that Black boys often get disciplined or reprimanded for displaying cultural behaviour (Major, Gillborn and Sewell, 2001). This indicates the potential benefits of the teachers gaining an understanding of Black culture because it would then enable them to understand the boys better and therefore teach them more effectively.

The respondents went on to describe just how serious a problem this was because there was clear evidence of a 'slippery slope' effect, since having been put into lower groups they formed friendships within them and created trouble once again for the teachers. The inevitable consequence of this was to further increase the level of resentment from the teachers, which led to them further resenting the boys and thus being less effective in helping the boys to achieve. Evidence to support this line of thinking was provided by studies which showed that African/Caribbean boys formed peer group relations once they realised that their teachers had treated them unfairly. The only option left for them was to form their own group or 'gang' and then use it against teachers. Some of the key research in this area undertaken by Mac an Ghaill, 1988; Gillborn, 1990; Connolly, 1995; and Sewell, 1997, illustrates the long history of such responses.

This research study provided evidence that youth workers recognised that Black boys did present negative behaviour when in peer groups at school. Consequently, youth workers attempted to focus Black boys on their education, by talking to them and providing educational activities for them at the youth club. Youth workers were consistently

demonstrating care and concern regarding the Black boys' lifestyle. This aspect of the role of youth work has been described in the literature (Morgan and Banks, 1999).

In general, the youth workers were competent in recognising the problems that the boys encountered at secondary school. The youth workers attempted to encourage the boys by making it enjoyable for them, by providing educational activities for the boys and by presenting them with positive role models. Additionally, they gave them respect and made them feel at home, which meant the boys enjoyed their time at the youth club and all of these factors benefited their educational prospects. There was a necessary difference in the ethos between the secondary school and the youth organization due to the purposes of these institutions. However, there is a need to stress here that an advantage of the comparative approach of researching the range of learning sites is that the data from the Black supplementary school and Black youth organization illustrates that they have beyond earlier educational research, demonstrating 'alternative professional ways' of engaging pupils positively in the learning process.

Originality and contribution to the field of inquiry

The aim of this study is to look at Perspectives on the educational experiences of African/Caribbean boys. In doing so, the researcher has examined the experiences affecting the success and failure of Black males in English state secondary schools. Alongside the research in a secondary school, the study also used comparative research findings from two 'non-school' institutions, a supplementary school and a youth organization in order to gain additional data about Black boys' experiences of secondary

school. The study makes a number of key inter-connecting contributions to the field of inquiry.

First, theoretically, the study is situated within the context of two fields of educational literature: that focussing upon secondary schooling and Black male pupils (Mac an Ghaill, 1988 and 1994; Gillborn, 1995; Sewell, 1997; Blair, 2001; LDA, 2003) and academic work produced on Black educational organizations (Reay and Mirza, 1997). This enabled the study to draw upon findings from earlier educational research on secondary school, while at the same time going beyond it by developing a wider lens of analysis provided by exploration of Black boys' interaction with Black educators/youth workers in the 'non-school' sites. The study is particularly concerned with exploring the Boys' accounts of why these institutions were successful in making their educational experiences more meaningful. A further issue, explored below, is the implications of these institutions' pedagogical processes for secondary school policy and practice. In addition to the educational literatures, addressing the specificity of contemporary Black boys' experiences of school life was further enabled by the researcher's framing of the study drawing upon key social and educational concepts: culture, identity and identity formations; masculinities; Black culture and racial stereotyping. These concepts were derived from the literature which has critically examined Black underachievement in schools.

Second, in carrying out research in the 2000s, the study makes a contribution to the field by adopting an historical perspective on secondary schooling. This revealed the

continuities in the curriculum, pedagogy and assessment across different periods and experienced by different social groups. This then enabled a critical exploration of the specific impact of mainstream secondary schooling on Black boys and their responses, in relation to research findings on other social groups, for example, white working class boys, Black girls and other ethnic minority groups, who are represented in the research literature as having negative experiences of schooling and low achievement.

This is not to suggest that explaining Black boys negative experiences of secondary schooling is the same as white boys, resulting from the impact of social class nor that the Black boys' experiences are the same as other minority ethnic groups as a result of racism. Rather, the historical perspective provides a deeper understanding of how the similarities and differences experienced by different social groups are understood. In researching Black boys' education, there is a need to move beyond the single category of ethnicity, to address other categories, such as class and gender, both in terms of how they impact on other social groups and how the categories interact for a specific social group. For example, most of the Black boys in this study were of working class origin and at the same time, their responses to secondary schooling was shaped by current stereotyped images of young Black African Caribbean masculine identities. Earlier studies highlight the similarities and differences between groups. For example, Mirza (1982) has illustrated how Black female pupils developed gender specific strategies of accommodation and resistance in response to racialised schooling. More recent academic work on poor white girls suggests that they are currently been pathologised as Black pupils were in the past and are developing their own strategies of survival in 'failing

schools' (Plummer, 2000; Evans, 2006).

Third, methodologically, the study makes a contribution to the field by adopting a comparative approach in carrying out empirical research across three sites of learning. A major issue to emerge from this research study is the different 'social realities' experienced by different participants in the schooling of Black boys. In terms of the key focus of the study, Black boys' experiences of secondary school and the accompanying academic under-achievement, different participants had radically different understandings of the complex interactions between Black boys, white teachers and white boys. Earlier literature in the field of education has discussed the construction of Black male pupils' responses to secondary schooling. Recent sociological and cultural theories, outlined in Chapter One provided major insights into the identity formation of Black masculinities and culture. However, ideas of 'social construction' and 'identity formation' can seem abstract from the everyday reality of Black boys' interaction with white teachers in secondary schools. The major methodological advantage of drawing upon these literatures, while carrying out research across three learning sites was that the complexity of these differences can be highlighted. Most importantly, there was clear evidence that Black boys who were disengaged from the mainstream secondary school curriculum, were actively engage in the learning opportunities offered by the supplementary school and youth organization. In other words, Black boys' experiences of and responses to teaching and learning were shaped by the pedagogical conditions in each site. Most significantly, this was illustrated in the supplementary school and the youth organisation that enabled Black students to find a cultural space in which they could build their self-

confidence in terms of a positive learner identity. This was identified as of major importance to Black teachers and parents (Rattansi and Phoenix, 2005).

Impact of research for policy and practice

This research is of key importance in providing an up to date picture of contemporary schooling after a number of decades in which a wide range of multicultural and anti-racist initiatives have been put in place. Without generalising to other schools, the research indicates the gaps between policy rhetoric and practice. Placing the research in the context of earlier educational literature enables us to see the non-implementation of policy and therefore the continuation of ineffective practice. The comparative method of exploring three sites of learning is particularly significant for policy and practice. The research provides evidence of social relations operating within the supplementary school and the youth organisation based on cultural understanding, mutual respect and active support that could be reproduced within the context of secondary schools. Hence, it moves beyond the literature on 'failing Black boys', demonstrating how to develop an inclusive curriculum and pedagogy with a positive focus on achievement for Black boys within the context of whole school curriculum for all pupils. What now follows are a series of recommendations which reflect issues that have emerged from this research project.

This is an area for very fruitful expansion through the role of secondary school teachers as researchers in educational settings. This research study indicates how teachers could investigate why Black boys behave the way they do at school in relation to major influences on them (including stereotypes, curriculum organisation, parents and teachers) and in response to develop strategies to include them. They could also investigate Black boys' identity formation within the context of the school and the central role teachers play in this.

Teachers need to ensure that the discipline process involving Black boys includes time spent in debriefing sessions more than is currently the case, so that Black boys perceive that there is a sense of care and social justice behind school procedures. This was clearly illustrated in the supplementary school and youth organisation.

Teachers need to be encouraged to scrutinize their language usage when offering chastisement to make sure what they say is seen as appropriate by the students. For example, "It's typical of you lot!" When this is said and taken in good humour it is acceptable, but when misunderstood it can be a deep insult that reinforces stereotypes.

Teachers need to be aware of the emotional needs of all pupils.

Teaching methodology should provide examples pertinent to various learning styles more

than presently is the case. Research needs to clarify questions about whether there are preferred culturally aware learning styles. For example, according to the researcher's Black respondents, they preferred kinaesthetic learning styles.

Teachers need to engage with Black boys informally, for example, at break or lunch times, to explain the importance of why learning and achieving are important in education. This can help shape and improve Black boys' performance at school. Tutor time could be used for this purpose and could be used for Black peer mentoring, and to invite visiting Black speakers, for the benefit of the whole population.

The perception by some Black respondents was that non-Black teachers held stereotypical views that Black pupils' came from lower socio-economic classes and hence often assumed that they were 'naturally' anti-school. This needs further investigation to develop an understanding how multiple categories of ethnicity, class and gender interact and influence teacher interactions.

Issues surrounding respect between various groups in the educational setting needs to be very closely examined. The literature indicates that the question of cultural respect has been a major issue for the Black community within schools and the wider society.

Teachers need to learn to view cultural language, for example, Creole/Patois, in a positive manner as part of a wider school policy on language.

As suggested by Black parents, teachers need to learn to give positive encouragement to Black boys in all curriculum subjects and not to direct them to take 'non-academic' subjects.

Black boys and their parents need to receive a very thorough explanation of current exclusion policies within a context of a whole school policy on discipline.

Teachers need to encourage Black boys individually and in peers to build up their academic and future career prospects.

The secondary school environment needs to engage more systematically with Black history and culture.

Teachers need to perceive Black student peer groups more positively and as a potential cultural resource within the classroom.

The Teacher Development Agency is well placed to address the above recommendations and to translate them into practice through teacher-training courses. Currently employed teachers could be offered workshops and senior management training that emphasised the need to establish an inclusive curriculum, pedagogy and assessment for all pupils, thus ensuring that they act as change agents in their schools. In keeping with the requirements of Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, training on race equality issues should be part of continuing professional development and should constitute a keystone in initial teacher

training and training for management positions. The National College for School Leadership could prioritise as a central curriculum issue the question of academic achievement and Black boys' accounts of schooling as a racialised space of learning. The earlier chapters clearly illustrate the contrast between the latter and the positive learning space created by the supplementary school and the youth organisation. The introduction of the mandatory MA in learning and teaching for all teachers also offers an opportunity for change.

Local Education Authorities also need to address what mechanisms are most effective to ensure that school policies are translated into practice.

School governors could also act to ensure that such recommendations were monitored regularly and provide clear guidelines on the implications of school policies not being put into practice.

Finally, OFSTED also has a key role to play in relation to such recommendations. For example, they could address the question of why some Black pupils underachieve within the context of Black pupils' accounts of negative teacher stereotyping and lack of encouragement that they experience from some of their teachers. This could be part of a wider approach from OFSTED to include a wide range of pupils' voices, to include all social groups that are under-achieving alongside those pupils from these groups who are achieving to identify what works. As this research suggests in earlier Chapters, OFSTED's aim of raising Black pupils' achievement needs to be placed within a wider

arena of addressing all pupils' experiences, achievement levels and responses in schools.

On the area of parents and teachers at school

Communication channels between teachers and Black parents need to be improved so that mutual understanding can develop. Teachers need to make parents feel welcome on parents' evenings and arrange more time to discuss how they can work together in the education of Black boys.

Teachers could discuss with Black parents how they could support their sons by suggesting appropriate extra learning resources.

Teachers and Parents require the development of highly innovative ways of facilitating face to face communication. In agreement with the LDA report (LDA 2004, p157), education ministers should introduce legislation which would entitle each parent or carer up to three full days (or six half days) paid leave from work per year in order, to attend school meetings about the progress and achievement of their children. This would go a long way to alleviate the sense of stress associated with the time constraints of parents' evenings. It would also demonstrate that society was taking a practical and realistic view of parent-school partnerships so necessary to the success of all students.

The Teacher Development Agency could put in place the above recommendations in their courses, in order for teachers to learn more about interacting with Black parents, as part

of a wider whole school policy on supporting parents to encourage their children to achieve highly in education.

Governors should keep more in contact with parents and teachers to monitor the quality of their interaction.

On the area of school

Black history and culture should inform all curriculum subjects. The earlier chapters suggest that this might serve two primary purposes. First, it could challenge a mono-cultural curriculum with its potential to exclude Black pupils, thus institutionally lowering their motivation to learn. Equally important in a multi-cultural society in the 2000s, there is a need for all pupils to engage with a wide range of histories and cultures of fellow pupils. As illustrated in this thesis, pupil identity formation requires positive images that reflect different cultural communities. Second, introducing Black history and culture into the secondary school curriculum would enable teachers to place themselves in relation to this broader curriculum in terms of their own history and their current teaching practices within the school.

Set groups need to be regularly checked in order that pupils are assigned to appropriate sets. Black boys need to be given more opportunities to move out of low set groups to which they are disproportionately assigned. In some cases set groups need to be re-considered as to whether or not they are necessary. Setting itself requires a rethink in

relation to its purpose within the context of a whole school curriculum.

More Black teachers and teachers from other ethnic minority groups need to be employed in at schools in order for Black boys to see more 'non-white' adults in positions of authority as positive role models. Currently first degrees from the Caribbean and from most of Africa are not recognised as equivalent to UK degrees. This poses a barrier to getting Black overseas professionals to come and work in the UK. Alongside the recruitment of Black teachers, there is considerable room for an increase in Black mentors and support staff. Schools need to have more Black supporting adults coming into the lessons. For example, as this Study illustrates Black youth workers and supplementary school teachers can support secondary school teachers in addressing Black pupils' achievement in school. Schools can also make links with Black academics and Black University students to visit schools, to help motivate Black pupils' to attain university education.

The government needs to address the above recommendations in the context of wider policy making in education. The DfES could develop strategies for funding Local Educational Authorities or Children's services Black attainment improvement initiatives. It is important that LEAs develop programmes in schools so that the staff who are directly interacting with pupils can develop a sense of ownership in developing an empowering curriculum.

The system of reporting racist incidents needs to be refined so it includes a means of identifying whether some teacher disciplining of Black boys is racist, as on occasions the boys claimed.

LEAs should also regularly monitor Black pupils progress, teachers' professional development.

Finally, this research study claims that if Black Boys are to achieve their full potential within secondary schools, then they need positive support and a range of new strategies introduced into the education system to enable them to progress academically and thereby promote career paths into successful professions. The above recommendations focus on the need for key agencies, such as central government, local education authorities, OFSTED, the Teacher Development Agency and the National College for School Leadership to provide support to the major participants in educating Black boys, including teachers, Head teachers and school governors. Most importantly these agencies and participants need to develop a inclusive curriculum and pedagogy in partnership with Black parents, who are the first educators of their children. The comparative dimension to this Study that carried out research in a supplementary school and youth organisation as well as a secondary school makes clear that the former are a vital cultural resource for the latter. At the same time, the historical perspective adopted by this thesis, drawing upon educational and sociological concepts suggests that the most effective way of addressing Black African Caribbean boys' school experiences, achievement levels and

responses is to develop a curriculum of empowerment for all subordinate social groups, across the social divisions of ethnicity, class and gender.

The most recent research in this field of inquiry argues strongly for the continuing need for educational based research to address a major social issue in the 21st century. Sandra Richards (2008) in her book, **The Way We See it,** illustrates how empirical research drawing on educational and social literatures can help teachers to transform their everyday practice to support children at risk.

Suggestions for extending the research:

In the context of all of the above findings, there are several ways in which the research could be expended. Future researchers should in their research include a comparative dimension, by carrying out the same research here at the three organisations for six months and doing the same research elsewhere, say in Manchester, for six months in order to see if people's opinions differed in different localities. The areas of highest concentration of African/Caribbean pupils' were London, Leeds, Manchester and the West Midlands. The two strongest concentrations were London (60.9%) and the West Midlands. (London Development Agency, The educational experiences and achievements of Black boys in London schools 2000-2003, September 2004, p157). This research was just based in the West Midlands and now the researcher considered that it should be done on a larger scale to see whether Black boys educational experiences really did differ or not? It must be noted for future researchers that six months in the field was too short a

time for any researcher to assess fully the respondents' attitudes. So in the future, other researcher's would at least need a full year in the field to carry out their research. The researchers' agenda would change to seeking evidence of good practice and dealing with the educational problems of Black boys. The statement in the London Development Agency report was that British education had been failing Black boys for fifty years (LDA 2004, p155), the hope for the future would be that researcher's would find evidence of some positive change. Prospective researchers in this area should extend this research by researching post sixteen educational institutions to see how more mature Black boys were thinking about their education and then compare it with secondary school boys to see if opinions differed and why? This was because in casual chats with college students at the youth club the researcher found they had said they liked the college environment because it was not childish! and that they engaged in the courses at Colleges better than when they were at schools.

Future researchers should challenge a dominant and media account of Black male academic failure with Black female academic success (*The Ethnicity and Education*, 2006). In contrast, it is important for researchers to situate the schooling of young Black females and males within specific contexts in which multiple social divisions help shape how different individual pupils make sense of their school lives (Mirza, 1992).

Finally, if there was any applicability to the concepts mentioned concerning legislative and interpretive behaviours, it would be really interesting for future researchers to then observe special events in secondary schools designed to temporarily suspend the

authority structure and have teachers and management and 'unruly/difficult students' engage in an interpretive dialogue based on equality. The difficulty of course with this scenario is that the legislative role is so embedded and acts implicitly as a source of conflict. The design of such events could be a direction for future researchers to consider.

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Appendix 1

Nisheet Gosai

Dear Head teacher,

My name is Nisheet Gosai and I am a PhD student who is currently undertaking research on looking at the educational experiences of Black African/Caribbean boys at schools.

Thus I would like to ask you for your help in helping me gain permission at your secondary school in order to carry out my research on these boys between the ages of 15-16. I would be highly grateful to you if you could assist me with your help.

I would like to assure you that my main purpose of research is to see how I can as a doctoral student find ways on improving more on these boys academic standards, moreover find out their concerns and issues which I can then inform to teachers as well as their parents and see if any improvement can be done in these boys educational performance.

My research will thus generally entail carrying out observation with classrooms where I will notice how teachers and pupils interact amongst themselves and see if the behaviour of pupils can or not be improved within classrooms. I will then carry out participant observation with boys in order to know a bit about their culture, behaviour, lifestyle, peer groups, etc in more detail and see whether or not any of this does or not have any impact on their educational performance and finally I aim to interview their parents, teachers and the boys themselves in order to know their concerns in the British educational system and whether they think the British education system has any positive/negative impact on black boys educational performance? also they can suggest whether they feel that there are any improvements that they want within schools which can be beneficial to black boys educational performance.

I would like to inform you that I am not carrying out any unethical work since I am doing this piece of research simply only on the basis for my doctoral study; and although my research might sound very intense to you and that you may be thinking I am invading your privacy; however I would like to inform you that this will never be my intention, as my main aim is without intruding too much in the boys lives to then gain perspectives on their education and to find out why they like attending your school?

What is more, I feel that at the end of my research I not only aim to be the main person benefiting from gathering data, because I feel that after I give my end report to you on my thoughts and issues on what I have researched then maybe your school will also benefit through understanding their pupils more and see if anything needs to be looked at further especially in terms of their education, for that reason I believe that my research might help you in achieving this.

I hope all this information does helps you and if it does not then can I please suggest that you ask me verbally for more information, as I will be happy to help.

Kind Regards,

Nisheet Gosai.

Appendix 2

Nisheet Gosai

Dear,

… (name) my name is Nisheet Gosai and I am a PhD student who is currently undertaking research on looking at the educational experiences of Black African/Afro Caribbean boys at schools, youth organisations and supplementary schools.

Thus I would like to ask you for your help in helping me to gain permission at your supplementary school in order for me to carry out my research on Black African/Caribbean boys between the ages of 15-16. I would be highly grateful to you if you could assist me with your help. I was given your phone number by …. (name) and I was told by … (name) and …. (name) at the … (name) Development project that you will be able to assist me, although …. (name) will allow me to carry out my research at her institution, however because she has insufficient boys at the age group that I am looking at, she has thus guided me to your institution.

I would like to assure you that my main purpose of research is to see how I can as a doctoral student find ways in helping these boys to achieve, moreover find out their concerns and issues which I can then inform to your teachers as well as their parents and to then see if any improvement can be done in these boys educational performance.

My research will thus generally entail carrying out observation with classrooms where I will notice how teachers and pupils interact amongst themselves and to see if behaviour of pupils can or not be improved within classrooms. I will then carry out participant observation with boys in order to know a bit about their culture, behaviour, lifestyle, peer groups, etc in more detail and see whether or not any of this does or not have any impact on their educational performance and finally I aim to interview their parents, teachers and the boys themselves in order to know their concerns in the British educational system and whether they think the British education system has any positive/negative impact on their boys educational performance also they can suggest whether there are any improvements that they want which can be beneficial to these boys educational performance.

After my research, I aim to give you a review of my results and to let you know whether there is something that you can do or not in order to improve these boys educational performance or what you are doing right that is helping these boys in their secondary education which they cannot seem to get when they attend their own secondary schooling.

Let me also inform you that I have a personal interest to carry out my research on Black African/ Caribbean boys because there is a major concern on these boys educational performance now; since research mainly suggests that they underachieve but my research wishes to know as to why this is the case? And is this the same everywhere i.e. in supplementary schools as well or not? I

aim to be very confidential in my research thus taking in account the ethical issues involved in my research. I will therefore not be naming anyone in my research or do anything that is not welcomed by your institution.

On a final note I would like to mention that my research agenda has also been the same as Diane Abbott a Labour MP and her conferences have been very beneficial to my research, also finally Birmingham LEA have also constantly helped me with my research with providing relevant data to many schools having this problem, so I hope you can also assist me as well with my research? Please let me know your response as soon as possible on whether or not I can undertake my research at your institution?

Yours sincerely,

Nisheet Gosai.

Appendix 3

Nisheet Gosai

Dear (youth workers name),

As you are already aware that I am a PhD student from the University of Birmingham, currently undertaking my research on how 15-16 year old Black African/Caribbean boys are doing in education; hence I aim to obtain this information through using various research methods to gain these boys present perspective from both within and outside their schools in order to see exactly as to whether they are underachieving/achieving in their education?

I have asked for your permission to do my research at your institution simply in order to know; how 15-16 year Black Afro/African Caribbean boys are doing at your institution in order to gain an outside school perspective in my research and to see things like, as to what they are learning with you that they don't learn within schools and is this or not benefiting them in any way towards their education?

Whilst commencing on my research at your institution I will be conducting interviews with 15-16 year old Black African Caribbean boys, the youth workers will be interviewed; provided that I gain their permission as well as your permission firstly in order to interview them. In addition to this, I aim to carry out firstly non-participitant observation with the youth workers and the boys themselves, in so doing I will thereby keep an observation schedule whereby I will be recording how Black African Caribbean boys interaction is like with youth workers etc within sessions, secondly I aim to conduct participitant observation with these boys; here I aim to participate with them in some activities and see how their behaviour and attitudes is towards the youth club and their education in general. I also aim to keep a tape-recorder on with me to record these informal conversations simply because it will help me in my writing up stage at the end of my analysis and lead me to elaborate upon my views as to what the boys had exactly told me whilst I was in their company.

I would like to inform you that I am not carrying out any unethical work since I am doing this piece of research simply only on the basis for my doctoral study and although my research might sound very intense to you and that you may be thinking I am invading your privacy; however I would like to inform you that this will never be my intention, as my main aim is without intruding too much in the boys lives to then gain perspectives on their education and to find out why they like attending your youth club.

What is more, I feel that at the end of my research I not only aim to be the main person benefiting from gathering data, because I feel that after I give my end report to you on my thoughts and issues on what I have researched then maybe the youth club will also benefit through understanding their youths more and see if anything needs to be looked at further especially in terms of their education, for that reason I believe that my research might help you in achieving this.

I hope all this information does helps you and if it does not then can I please suggest that you ask me verbally for more information, as I will be happy to help.

Kind Regards,

Nisheet Gosai.

Appendix 4

Nisheet Gosai

Dear, Parent/Guardian

My name is Nisheet Gosai and I am a PhD student from The University Of Birmingham. Currently I am in a process of undertaking my research to see how Black African/Caribbean boys are doing in education both inside and outside schools. As you probably know, from your own and your children's experience that Black males in particular seem to be left behind at schools due to various reasons, therefore in order to investigate why this happens I wish to know the parental perspective, hence I aim to ask for your permission on whether or not I could come in to interview you (using a tape-recorder) and talk to you about how you feel your son is doing at his secondary school? What are your concerns, issues, etc? How you feel your son is improving generally in education? Why do you send him to this particular school? and How you feel your son benefits in any way by attending this school? etc. These are just some of my Interview aspects that I wish to know from you which later on in my research I aim to highlight when my work becomes published and hopefully through this means, I can then put forward issues to policy makers on whether or not Black children's education is/not improving through knowing their parents and their sons perspective in-depth and find ways on how things can be improved regarding Black boys education because my main intention is through my research to put forward ideas to improve Black boys education.

If you do decide to help me out by providing answers to these questions then I would be very much grateful to you. I would also like to ask you whether it is possible or not for me to carry out my observations and interviews on your son as well, just so that I can then gain a clear picture on how exactly Black African/Caribbean boys are doing at school. Your son will be participating with other Black African/Caribbean boys too, so that he does not remain on his own.

I aim to be strictly confidential in my research thus your name and your sons name will never be mentioned in my research.

I hope you can help and look forward to hearing from you soon. At your convenience I am ready to interview you either at your home or at the school. Please inform me as soon as possible of your decision by filling in the slip below and handing it over to your son who can return this slip back to me in order to inform me of your decision also can I ask you to provide me your name, address and telephone number as well if you wish for me to contact you. If you decide not to be interviewed or do not wish you son to partake in my research then I would still like to take this opportunity to thank you now for taking your time out to read my letter.

Thanking you once again.

Regards,

Nisheet Gosai.

…………………………………………………………………………………………………..

I would like my son to take part in this research

      Yes   No

I would like to be interviewed? (Please circle)

      Yes   No

Name

Address

Telephone number

Appendix 5

Teachers Behaviour Towards Boys

	How Many Times			Responses From Teachers		
	Black	**Asian**	**White**	**Black**	**Asian**	**White**
Words of Encouragement						
Words of Discouragement						
Asks Questions						

Boys Behaviour Towards Teachers

	How Many Times			Responses From Teachers		
	Black	Asian	White	Black	Asian	White
Positive Behaviour Towards Teachers						
Negative Behaviour Towards Teachers						
Questions Answered (Help Given)						

Boys At Work

	How Many Times			Responses From Teachers		
	Black	Asian	White	Black	Asian	White
Working						
Not Working						

General Behaviour In Classroom Of Boys

How Many Times   **Responses From Teachers**

	Black	Asian	White	Black	Asian	White
Positive Behaviour In Classroom						
Negative Behaviour In Classroom						

Appendix 6

Interview questions asked to African/Caribbean Boys in the secondary school, the supplementary school, and the youth organization.

1) Can you tell me how you feel you are doing in education compared with other Boys at your school? Is this institution benefiting you in terms of your education and why?

2) Can you tell me what your neighbourhood is like?

3) What factors do you think determines how much you work at school?

4) What are the stereotypes that you believe the society has of Black men in general and is this in any way reflected here at this organisation?

5) Do you believe that by coming here, this helps you to do well at this organisation with your educational performance, and can you suggest reasons for your answer?

6) What made you come here and has it been according to your expectations and can you suggest reasons for your answer?

7) Do you feel that by coming here you learn anything that will benefit your education and why?

8) How do you find your teachers, (youth workers) and fellow mates here and do they or not in any way motivate you to do well in education?

9) Is there any kind of pressure at your present institution which could possibly result in you doing well or not well in education and why?

10) Do you think your teachers (youth workers) are well trained to teach you, or do you think something should be done to educate them?

11) Do your agree or disagree that your teachers (youth workers) race in any way motivates you to do well or not to do well at your school?

12) Do you feel that you get labelled by your teachers (youth workers)? Are there any positive or negative labels that you believe they have of you that causes you to behave in certain ways?

13) Is there any basis that determines if your teachers (youth workers) do/not label you in any way and does this have an impact on your education? Can you explain your answer?

14) Do you believe teachers stream you correctly in groups at your secondary school and does this streaming cause you to develop any attitudes in the classroom towards your teachers? Does this in anyway determine your behaviour?

15) Can you tell me whether you do or not use any Creole/Patois features at school and at this present institution? Do you believe this affects your educational performance?

16) Do you agree/disagree that teachers (youth workers) treatment towards you is the same/different when compared with other children and can you give reasons for your answer?

17) In your experience do you think that other children at this institution do better compared to you and can you tell me the reason behind this?

18) Do you have here, or outside, any friendship circle, and if possible can you tell me what is accepted in your group of friends, or just by yourself, that reflects the normal you. Do you think this has any influence on your teachers (or youth workers) which results in you doing well/not well in education?

19) Do you feel that you are working/not working more when you come to this institution and can you suggest reasons for your answer?

20) Do you think that your teachers (youth workers) have attitudes towards you than compared with other children and does this affect your educational performance and why?

21) Do you think that your teachers (youth workers) treatment has affected you and your family in anyway and can you tell me how you feel about your teachers (youth workers) treatment towards you at present and the past and has this in any way had any impact on your education?

22) Would you consider continuing education after 16 if you get the chance and why?

23) Do you know anything about what your teachers (youth workers) expect from you? What sorts of occupations do they want you to go into?

24) Can you tell me whether you have any aspirations because you come to this institution?

Appendix 7

Interview Questions asked to teachers in Secondary schools and Supplementary schools

1) To begin with, how you think Black men are generally viewed within society, and does this in any way determine your attitude toward them or not?

2) Many people seem to have stereotypes of African/Caribbean Boys. What is your opinion of this and have you had this type of experience or have you noticed African/Caribbean Boys reflecting on any image of Black men in society?

3) Can you tell me how well you think African/Caribbean Boys in your classroom are performing in education compared with other children?

4) Can you tell me whether or not you do anything specifically to encourage African/Caribbean Boys to improve?

5) Many people argue that African/Caribbean children come from a particular social group, what is your opinion on this and what sort of occupations do you see the African/Caribbean Boys in your classrooms going into and why?

6) Do you believe African/Caribbean Boys' social class position, neighbourhood, gender, race, or anything else will in future or at present contribute to their level of achievement in schools and can you suggest reasons for your answer?

7) What do you think is the effect of the school curriculum on African-Caribbean Boys? Would you like to see something new in the curriculum, which would benefit them, and can you give reasons for your answer?

8) Recent research studies now suggest that African/Caribbean children are prevented from achieving. How far would you agree with this statement and is your experience the same or different?

9) Do the parents of African/Caribbean Boys play a part in their performance in education and why?

10) Do you think peer pressure affects African/Caribbean Boys that you are dealing with now in terms of level of achievement in education?

11) Do you believe that there is any other kind of pressure affecting how well African/Caribbean Boys work at this institution and why?

12) It has been said by many people that the behaviour of African/Caribbean children, Boys in particular, is more challenging than other children. How far in your experience with them do you agree with this?

13) Would you agree that African/Caribbean Boys are in any way different compared to other children that you deal with, and can you give reasons for your answer?

14) Do you think the Black African/Caribbean Boys that you deal with are more or less likely to be working compared with other children when given tasks to do?

15) How often do you think you send disruptive children out of the classroom, give them exclusions etc, and for what reasons?   What proportion are African/Caribbean Boys?

16) What do you think are the main factors affecting the level of achievement of Black Boys?

17) Many people seem to suggest that African/Caribbean Boys seem to be deprived because they use Creole/Patois, and as a result they are placed in lower streams. How far would you agree with this statement from your experience as compared with other children in your classroom?

18) In this year at your school which streams are African/Caribbean Boys more likely to be in and why? Do you know whether African/Caribbean Boys enjoy being in these streams?

19) Do you believe there are any lessons where African/Caribbean Boys display different behavioural characteristics and why?

20) Do you feel that your race affects the way Black children respond to you, and do these Boys think that you treat them equally or not?

21) Do you know what Black African/Caribbean Boys like and dislike most within and outside schools? Does impact on their education?

22) Are you taking an interest in making their performances improve in schools and why?

23) Do you encourage African/Caribbean Boys that you are dealing with now to make them go further in education, i.e. to stay on after 16, and why?

Appendix 8

Interview Questions

Interview questions asked to parents at supplementary and secondary schools.

1) Can you firstly tell me how you think your son is doing in his education?

2) Many people seem to have stereotypes of Black African/Caribbean Boys.

What is your opinion on this and have you ever experienced this?

3) Do you think that the state education here leads Black children into being   low achievers? Would this be your experience and can you give me reasons for your answer?

4) How do you think the school curriculum at present affects African/Caribbean Boys, and would you like to see any changes in the curriculum and can you give reasons for your answer?

5) Many people and parents argue that African/Caribbean Boys are prevented from achieving at school, i.e. teachers labelling, racism, etc.

How far would you agree with this view and can you suggest reasons for your answer?

6) Do you believe your son's social class position, neighbourhood, gender, race, or any other factor will contribute to their achievement/underachievement and can you suggest reasons for your answers?

7) Can you tell me whether factors such as the teachers, parental help, your son's behaviour, or anything else, contributes to your son's achievement or underachievement at their school?

8) Do you think that peer pressure, or any other kinds of pressure, have any impact on your son and why?

9) Do you believe your son is in any way encouraged or discouraged in school, society, etc to do well in education and can you suggest reasons for your answer?

10) Do you think your son is more or less likely to be working compared to other children when given tasks in schools, and do you think they learn anything, or not, by coming to school?

11) From your knowledge can you tell me how you think teachers in schools treat your son at school, in comparison with other children, and can you give reasons for your answer?

12) Many people seem to suggest that African/Caribbean Boys seem to be disadvantaged at school, because they use Creole/Patois, meaning they get placed in lower streams because of it. How far would you agree with this statement from your experience as compared with other children?

13) Can you tell me whether or not you know which streams your son is in for each specific subject, and whether or not you and your son are satisfied with these streams or setting and can you suggest reasons for your answer?

14) Do you believe there are any lessons where your son displays more positive or negative behaviour and why?

15) Do you in anyway help your son with educational resources?

16) Would you like to, or are you at present, sending your boy to supplementary school, or giving him tuition or anything else that you think might benefit him in education?

17) How often do you attend Open Evenings? Are you members of any school governing bodies?

18) Do you believe parental income in any way affects the way you show an interest in your boy's education? Do you feel this contributes to your son's achievement in education?

19) Do you think your motivation to help your son in education is determined by your understanding of the school system here, compared to the Caribbean and why?

20) Would you send your son to the Caribbean if you had sufficient funds, or would you want your boy to be educated here and can you give me reasons for your answer?

21) Does your characteristics like class/gender/race or your position determine how much you help your son with his education?

22) What do you think are the main factors, which influence the level of achievement of your son?

23) Will you encourage your son to stay on in education after 16, or will you let him do what he wants and why?

24) Can you tell me whether or not you are satisfied with your own position in life, and if you want your boy to be in the same profession or another?

25) Can you tell me whether or not your son is taught anything from you that is different than what they get taught in their secondary school?

Appendix 9

Interview questions asked to Youth Workers

1) Can I ask firstly, of how do you think Black men are generally viewed within society and does this in any way determine your attitude and behaviour towards them?

2) Many people seem to have negative stereotypes of African/Caribbean Boys. What is your opinion on this and have you had this type of experience or have you noticed African/Caribbean Boys reflecting on this negative image of Black men in society?

3) Can you tell me how African/Caribbean Boys that you are dealing with at present are progressing at your institution?

4) Can you tell me from your knowledge and experience with them whether you feel that teachers, parental help, peer pressure, the boy's behaviour (i.e. challenging behaviour) or anything else contributes to African/Caribbean Boys level of achievement at their school and is your contribution in any way helping to improve their performances in education?

5) From your experience in dealing with African/Caribbean Boys do you believe they are in any way encouraged or discouraged in school, in society, to do well in education and can you suggest reasons for your answer?

6) Can you tell me how the African/Caribbean Boys that you are dealing with now are benefiting from coming to you and why?

7) Can you tell me whether or not the African/Caribbean Boys that you are dealing with now are taught anything from you that is different from what they get taught in their secondary schools?

8) Can you tell me whether or not you do anything to encourage African/Caribbean Boys in activities here?

9) Do you believe that there are any kinds of pressure on African/Caribbean Boys to do well at this institution?

10) Do you think the African/Caribbean Boys that you deal with are more likely to be working compared with other children when given tasks at this institution?

11) What do you think are the main factors which affect how much Black Boys achieve in education? Have the Boys told you anything about this issue?

12) Many people seem to suggest that African/Caribbean Boys seem to be deprived because they use Creole/Patois and are placed in lower streams because of this. How far would you agree with this statement from your experience in dealing with them?

13) Do your racial characteristics in anyway affect African/Caribbean Boys in terms of their performance here when conducting activities?

14) What factors do you believe influence African/Caribbean Boys' degree of success at this institution?

15) Do you think the school curriculum at present affects Black African/Caribbean Boys and have the Boys in any way told you that they would like to see something new in the curriculum which would benefit them?

16) Recent research studies now suggest that African/Caribbean children are held back from achieving. From your knowledge and experience with

them how far would you agree or disagree with this view and can you suggest reasons for your answer?

17) How far would you say African/Caribbean boy's parents play a part in their performance of them achieving or not achieving in education? Do you think parental income in any way affects Black Boys to perform well in education?

18) Do you think peer pressure has any impact on African/Caribbean Boys, that you are dealing with now, to do or not to do well at this institution and in their education generally?

19) Have the African/Caribbean Boys told you about which activities they like or dislike doing here at this institution, and do you see them displaying different behavioural characteristics as a result?

20) Can you tell me whether you know anything about what African/Caribbean Boys like and dislike most within and outside school, and do you think this has any impact on their education?

21) How does this institution help African/Caribbean Boys improve in school?

22) What sort of profession do you think you would like African/Caribbean Boys that you are dealing with now to go into and do you think they will make it in that profession and can you suggest reasons for your answer?

23) Do you ever encourage African/Caribbean Boys that you are dealing with now to make them go further in education i.e. to stay on after 16?