A voice for the unheard achievers: An exploration of the educational narratives of achieving Black Caribbean adolescent males in secondary mainstream education

by

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ABSTRACT

Literature spanning four decades has focused upon the problematic narrative of Black Caribbean pupils as underachievers in the UK. Rhamie (2012) argued for research to shift this narrative to provide a more balanced portrayal of Black Caribbean (BC) pupils to examine their achievement rather than perpetuating stereotyped narratives associated with BC pupils, particularly males (Demie and Mclean, 2017) as educational failures.

In response, this research explores the retrospective and current subjective educational narratives of achieving Black Caribbean adolescent males in secondary mainstream education, ascertaining the key influencers in their educational experiences. Moreover, participants' future life outcomes and aspirations were explored eliciting how their educational experiences had influenced their perceptions of the future. Young people's (YP's) narratives were ascertained through semi-structured narrative interviews with four male students. A multiple case study design was adopted to avoid representing BC males' experiences as a homogenous group.

Achievement was viewed in broader terms by participants alongside academic achievement. Themes such as parental expectation, engagement and targeted support reinforced the importance of the home environment. Furthermore, the interaction between home and school domains remained prevalent in participant's narratives. In school, themes of competition, peer influence and teacher involvement contributed both positively and negatively to the educational experiences within participants' narratives. Original findings highlighted adverse experiences such as bullying contributing to additional challenges such as behavioural difficulties and other vulnerable experiences which participants detailed as significant in their educational narratives.

Wider support systems served as protective for participant's limiting the long-term impact of negative situations on educational outcomes. The themes highlighted strategies used to support and hinder their achievement over time and the impact of key influences in their educational trajectory and perceptions of their future life outcomes. The thesis examines the key implications of the findings and critically evaluates the use of narrative methodology and analysis in the research with young people and its relevance within this study. Implications for educational professionals and Educational Psychologists (EPs) are outlined.

DEDICATION

‘When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned, nor shall the flame scorch you.’ – Isaiah 43:2

To my grandad Charles and grandad Neville, thank you for the manual jobs you endured and the values you instilled in our family. Your legacy is one of achievement. We are because you were.

To my parents, I am because of everything you have done. There are not enough words to say thank you.

To my brother, Stuart, you are the epitome of Black Caribbean excellence and a key role model.

To my love, David, the one who believed in me before I believed it was attainable, you are my everything. You defied the odds to demonstrate to me that it is achievable.

To James, KJ, Kaeo and Tye, you will achieve. I hope the narratives inspire you to believe that you can.

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Mom, thank you for supporting me and proof-reading my thesis, you did it without complaint. Dad, thank you for your hugs and pep-talks throughout the three years. You both saw greater in me, than I saw in myself. Thank you for always putting us first and expecting greatness from us, particularly when I chose to leave teaching.

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ABBREVIATIONS

BC: Black Caribbean

BPS: British Psychological Society

CYP: Children and Young People

DfE: Department of Education

EP: Educational Psychologist

EPS: Educational Psychology Service

HCPC: Health Care Professions Council

LA: Local Authority

NPD: National Pupil Database

RDA: Racial Disparity Audit

RQs: Research Questions

RQ1: Research Question One

RQ2: Research Question Two

RQ3: Research Question Three

SEND: Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

TA: Thematic Analysis

YP: Young People

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This chapter is composed of my positioning as a researcher and the rationale for conducting research in my topic area of interest. This research contributes to a two-part thesis, of the doctoral course in Applied Educational and Child Psychology; it forms volume one of the two-part thesis.

The following research explored the educational narratives of achieving Black Caribbean adolescent males in mainstream schools. It sought to understand the educational experiences of Black Caribbean adolescent males who were achieving through their narration. The narratives were composed of retrospective and current experiences alongside exploring participants' future life outcomes and aspirations. This research also sought to understand the key influencers in each participant's narrative. In understanding and listening to the experiences of achieving Black Caribbean adolescent males, this research aimed to demonstrate that these students exist within mainstream education and sought to highlight what can be learnt from their lived experiences which can inform psychological practice.

1.2 Researcher positionality

I am a female of Caribbean heritage, training to become an educational psychologist (EP) at the University of Birmingham. My mother was born in Jamaica and moved to England at the age of 10. My father is of Antiguan and Anguillan descent; although born in England, he identifies as Caribbean descent. He is a first-class graduate of the University of Birmingham and a consistent high-achiever. In my personal experience, I have heard of the underachievement of Black Caribbeans in education as a narrative which has been circumvented by many Black Caribbean males with whom I am

personally acquainted. Some had significantly negative educational experience and defied the odds, whilst others continued on a steady educational trajectory opposing published statistics to become high achievers in education.

During the doctorate, I have been on placements within local authorities working with a diverse population of children and young people of differing ethnicities. In doing so, the university training during the doctorate enabled trainee EPs to become more proficient practice-researchers. As the only trainee EP in my cohort of an ethnic minority group, I thoroughly enjoyed engaging with the anti-oppressive practice module delivered during our training where topics such as race and ethnicity and its intersection with gender and social class were covered. Reflecting on the inequalities in education led me to the decision that I wanted to ensure, as a psychologist and researcher, that the voices of the under-represented and the marginalised were heard and valued. As the statistical data continued to illuminate Black Caribbean pupils' underachievement in education without reference to strategies to support this population of pupils, this area personally and professionally gained my interest.

Having been a teacher, I have had first-hand experience of the impact education can have on the trajectory of pupils and the negative discourses that can create self-fulfilling prophecy based upon teacher-pupil interactions alongside the wider systems around the child. As EPs work closely with disadvantaged groups, I was keenly aware of the need for research, support and increased awareness regarding the educational experiences of Black Caribbeans from a psychological perspective, particularly as achieving pupils were less researched.

1.3 Context

This research took place whilst on placement in a local authority in the West Midlands. The participants were recruited in two differing local authorities due to the level of diversity in the borough in which I was placed.

1.4 Rationale for research

The aim of this research was to explore the retrospective and current educational narratives of Black Caribbean adolescent males in mainstream school; whilst exploring how they narrate key influences and their future life outcomes and aspirations. Currently, there is a disproportionate number of research studies examining Black Caribbean underachievement, highlighting the persistent challenges faced by young people. Black Caribbean boys are positioned as lower achievers compared to Black Caribbean girls. Rhamie (2012) argued for a shift in the narrative, moving away from continually researching Black Caribbean underachievement to focus upon those who defy the statistics and achieve in education. This research aimed to capture the educational experiences as narrated by Black Caribbean adolescent males who are achieving academically in school in line with national standards of achievement. It is acknowledged within this research that achievement can be socially constructed and as such, the narrative approach enabled participants to share their own interpretations of achievement when questioned.

A multiple case study design was employed in this study, where four Black Caribbean males from two different secondary schools shared their personal stories through semi-structured interviews. A bespoke narrative analytic process composed of analysis of narrative form and content was utilised to analyse the transcripts which was deemed

appropriate based on the aims of the research and the focus upon the co-construction of events and experiences with multiple realities (Willig, 2013). This research has implications for educational professionals (such as school staff) and educational psychologists working with young people from a diverse range of cultural backgrounds where cultural competence is required as highlighted in Section 5 of Health Care Professionals Council (HCPC) Standards of proficiency for practitioner psychologists (2018): 'be aware of the impact of culture, equality and diversity on practice'.

This study advocates the voice of young people through the application of a narrative approach that is person-centred in nature. Reflections upon this approach are detailed with reference to EP practice.

1.5 Layout of the research

The research begins in chapter 2 with an overview of the existing literature related to Black Caribbean pupils in education and the narrative this has developed over time. The published literature examined details a narrative of Black Caribbean (BC) underachievement, reasons for the underachievement, additional disadvantages faced by BC in education and the wider context, and a rationale for a shift of narrative to examine the educational achievement of BCs in England. After this, the small body of existing literature is reviewed referencing a rationale for the research topic.

In chapter 3, a description of the research methodology and analytic procedure is outlined with justifications for key decisions made. Details regarding the methods chosen, the philosophical positioning and research aims are discussed. The data collection procedure, modifications and analysis, alongside ethical considerations, approval, participant selection and analytic process are delineated.

A summary of the key findings from this research are detailed in chapter 4.

Chapter 5 is comprised of the discussion of the findings in relation to existing literature, making reference to key findings outlined in the literature review.

Finally, chapter 6 provides the conclusion to the research, summarising key findings, and providing clear implications for practice and a critical appraisal of the research.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Chapter overview

This research focuses on the educational narrative of achieving Black Caribbean heritage boys in mainstream secondary education. This literature review adopts a 'funnel' approach, initially providing a wider research context and then expanding upon specific literature relevant to the research focus. The literature review is structured into three broad areas: firstly, exploring terminology for race, ethnicity and ethnic minorities; secondly, the Black Caribbean educational narrative in literature- a persistent epidemic; and finally, academic success and aspirations, thus shifting the educational narrative. Critically, I will appraise the small body of research into Black Caribbean boys' educational experiences and their academic success as reported by the boys themselves. The voices of the Black Caribbean boys will be prominently considered, as a focus of this research and also a professional interest.

2.2. Aims and objectives

The aim of this literature review is to provide a comprehensive search and synthesis of the current existing evidence and knowledge base with regards to Black Caribbean boys and their educational experiences. In critically appraising the existing literature and knowledge, the justification for my research will be explained. The evaluation of current literature is imperative for the identification of gaps to situate this research context.

2.3. Literature search strategy

A systematic search of the literature using the databases EBSCO, Scorpus, Web of Science, PsychInfo and ProQuest were utilised to identify relevant articles and studies in October 2018 and January 2019. Using Boolean logic and search terms 'Caribbean AND (attain* OR achieve* OR success*)' and 'Black AND minorit* AND (attain* OR achieve OR success*) systematic searches were completed. Additional searches were also conducted on Google, Google Scholar and government websites. This process was essential in widening the search to increase the identification of relevant research aligned with the research focus.

2.4. Race, ethnicity and ethnic minorities: terminology

2.4.1 Ethnicities

The Oxford dictionary (2018) defines ethnic minorities as 'a group within a community which has different national or cultural traditions from the main population'. There is a wide range of different names and descriptors adopted when defining ethnicities and ethnic groupings. The Government (Office of National Statistics; 2018) state that the UK population consists of different ethnicities: 87% of the population is White, and 13% belong to a Black, Asian, Mixed or Other ethnic group. The 2011 Census demonstrated that England and Wales had become more ethnically diverse with minority groups continuously increasing (ONS, 2018). White British form the largest ethnic group in the UK which causes the other ethnicities to be acknowledged as 'ethnic minorities'.

2.4.2 Race and ethnicity

The terms race and ethnicity are often used interchangeably and there appears to be

no single international definition of ethnicity and race or a clear distinction between the two terms (ONS, 2018). Agyemang, Bhopal and Bruijnzeels (2005, p.1014) view ethnicity as a 'multidimensional concept' that is neither simple nor consistently defined. The Office of National Statistics (ONS, 2018) explained that there is also no consensus concerning what constitutes an ethnic group; instead, it is something that is self-defined and subjectively meaningful to the individual. Despite this, ethnicity can be constrained to the options presented when completing documentation which do not always reflect the full range of ethnicities and what is meaningful to the individual.

Race is also equated with ethnicity and described as 'each of the major divisions of humankind, having distinct characteristics… a group of people sharing the same culture, history, language etc; an ethnic group… a group or set of people or things with a common feature or features' (Morning, 2005). This definition highlights the interconnection between the two terms. However, Morning (2005) distinguishes between the two terms stating that race is viewed as centering around physical commonalities.

For the purposes of critically examining the literature and published data with regards to education, the government (ONS, 2018), in their published ethnicity facts and figures, utilize the term ethnicity within their data collection as it was argued that the term 'race' for some people may be directly associated with 'racism', whereas individuals were more amenable to discuss and identify their ethnicity. Overall, it appears that the terms 'race' and 'ethnicity' conjure different meanings for individuals and may be considered as socially constructed and directed by ever-changing political, economic and historical contexts (Cornell and Hartmann, 1998). As such, in examining the data, the term

‘ethnicity’ will be utilised within this research as ethnicity is explored in the context of education.

2.5. The Black Caribbean educational narrative in literature- a persistent epidemic

2.5.1 Black Caribbean- terminology

It is challenging to identify the most accurate and appropriate terminology or phrasing to adopt when discussing Black Caribbean children. This is further reinforced by terms such as BME (Black and minority ethnic) and BAME (Black, Asian, and minority ethnic) groups which contribute to the loss of cultural identity within the ethnic minority subcategories. There is a large number of ethnic minorities and this may contribute to the interchangeable use of the terms race and ethnicity. However, the term ‘minority’ can draw connotations of marginal or less important groups whilst implying that individuals from a white ethnic group all belong to a single unified group with limited significant differences although in reality there are differences within the white population also (Agyemang, *et al.*, 2005).

The term black was socially constructed and can be viewed as a polarizing dichotomy with white. Utilising the term ‘black’ without reference to one’s origin, heritage and lineage can be viewed as ‘potentially offensive’ (Agyemang *et al.,* 2005), particularly as individuals categorised under the term physically present with brown skin. The authors state:

‘The term (black) covers a wide range of ethnic and cultural backgrounds and is

potentially offensive and unreliable. It conceals a remarkable heterogeneity of cultures among diverse African populations, and reinforces racial stereotypes… However, the need for simplicity should be weighed against the dangers of stereotyping and incorrectness' (p. 1016)

It is important that in relating and referring to an individual's ethnicity that the homogenising of ethnic groups are minimised to reflect the individual as a whole rather that reducing them to terms that do not reflect individual differences. Attempts to do so, whilst enabling the ability for data collection and analysis, give rise to a number of challenges. When conducting a literature search, differing terminology were used to reflect individuals from Caribbean heritage. Demie and Mclean (2017, p.8) describe this as 'misuse and abuse of terminology' and describe varying interchangeable terms used by authors such as: West Indian, African Caribbean, Afro-Caribbean and Black, Caribbean or Black Caribbean, African and Black. The authors argue that terminology has changed over time based upon the political and historical context and developments without taking into consideration other health and educational debates. Agyemang *et al.* (2005, p.1015) assert that within the health field, limiting ethnic groupings hides 'the huge heterogeneity' within each group and devalues the ethnic categorisation used for providing culturally suitable health care. Additionally, the authors argued that combining heterogeneous African populations under a single umbrella label of 'Black' is problematic and does not account for the considerable diversity within and between individuals of African descent.

More specifically, Demie and Mclean (2017) explored educational debates favoring increased clarity and distinction on the concept of pupils from Africa and African

descent and pupils born in the Caribbean and those of Caribbean heritage. Table 1 delineates the changes in terminology over time reflected in key papers and publications.

Table 1: Changes in terminology to reflect Black Caribbean heritage adapted from Demie and Mclean (2017)

Source (in chronological order)	Terminology used	Rationale and comments
Rampton report (1981) Swann report (1985)	West Indian-representing pupils of Caribbean origin	Rampton (1981) stated that there was no nationally recognised definition of 'West Indian' and as such the term represented those children who are 'black, whose families came originally from a group of islands known as the West Indies, and who are, generally speaking, regarded as West Indian by teachers and the community at large.' There was a recognition from the community and teachers who identified the pupils as West Indian as a descriptor, although the pupils were reportedly 'British born'.
Gillborn and Gipps (1996)	African Caribbean and Black	The authors questioned the lack of differentiation between African and Caribbean in national data collection. Afro-Caribbean and African Caribbean terms were argued to be used for political purposes to demonstrate a shared ethnic heritage within the British socio-economic structures.
Gillian and Robertson (2003)	Black people of Caribbean heritage	The authors (p.5) argue that the terminology used was a 'clearer affirmation of their identity' than the term Afro-Caribbean, adopted as an alternative to West Indian.
Aiming High: Raising the Achievement of Ethnic Minority Pupils (DfES, 2003) Rhamie and Hallam (2002)	African Caribbean	The terminology confusion is highlighted again as African Caribbean is used as an all-encompassing term defined as 'all Black people of African, Caribbean, mixed heritage and those categorised as Black Other' (DfES, 2003, p.32). Demie and Mclean (2018) argue that this does not reflect the good practice adopted by the most

		recent census and encourages schools and local government in to ignore the distinctive needs of each subgroup.

Due to semantic challenges when categorising pupils of Caribbean and African heritage, settling with the term Caribbean for the focus of this research was appropriate. There is an assumption that Caribbean pupils have African origin (Demie and Mclean, 2017). However, Gillian and Robertson (2003, p.5) argue that Caribbeans have cross-cultural roots, stating that Caribbeans are 'the product of a unique historical experience and has been affected by numerous cross-cultural influences, including African, Indian, British, Dutch, French, Spanish, Portugese and Chinese. British-born pupils of Caribbean origin also share this culture through their family background and country of origins'. In line with nationally reported school census data and making clear distinctions between Caribbean and African cultures, the term Black Caribbean (BC) has been adopted within this research. Black Caribbean, for the purpose of this research, is defined as pupils of Caribbean origin and heritage. BC's have historical prevalence in media, literature and government publications which will be reviewed with relevance to the research topic.

2.5.2 Historical context of Caribbeans in the UK

MP David Lammy (chair of the all-party parliamentary group on race and community), in 2019, raised significant concerns related to the immigration policy described in his letter to the Home Office as 'gross mishandling and abuse' of the Windrush generation, many of whom were disgracefully deported from their homes in England. This experience has been publicised nationally as the 'Windrush scandal'. The Windrush generation form a significant historical milestone in Caribbean settlement in Britain. The term is derived from The Empire Windrush ship which arrived on British shores in

1948 carrying many of the BC pupils' grandparents. Despite arriving to support the British labour force, the Windrush generation were welcomed with low paid employment, and poor living conditions alongside racial hostility (Phillips and Phillips, 1998). Phillip and Phillips (1998) assert that a high standard of education and optimism accompanied the Caribbeans although it was dampened when they witnessed the educational disadvantage experienced by their children.

In the 1950s and 1960s, the BC community grew increasingly concerned about continued poor educational progress (Demie and Mclean, 2018). Instrumental parent and community activism such as The Black Parents Movement and the Institute of Race Relations were formed to combat educational inequality such as banding systems and placing BC children in special schools alongside children with learning difficulties. With increased racially focused riots causing national awareness and concern about race relations and limited government policy, Coard's (1971) book 'How the West Indian Child is made Educational Subnormal in the British School System' expressed the outrage that the BC community had experienced with their children being labelled as 'subnormal'. Educational psychologists were reportedly 'singled out' with criticism for their role in labelling black children within Coard's analysis (Booker, Hart, Moreland and Powell, 1989, p.123).

Majors (2001) suggested a narrative within educational policy which continued to position minorities as the problem, expecting them to change and adapt, aligning with the majority, when little changes and modifications to existing behaviours, attitudes and practices were made in education to accommodate the needs of minorities. Sewell (1997) added that schools place assimilation conditions upon BC pupils where value

and reward can be provided within mainstream education when the ‘characteristics of being Black- styles of speech and appearance, value priorities, preference’ are relinquished, removing aspects of their identity whilst mastering the culture of mainstream schooling in Britain.

30 years of proaction for social justice and educational inequality were necessary for changes in educational policy. Although viewed as a significant period in BC education (Tomlinson, 1997), the narrative within literature focusing upon the underachievement of ethnic minority pupils has been a major issue in national education policy formation (Demie and Mclean, 2017). The 1980s produced the first two reports: The Rampton Report (1981) and The Swann Report (1985). The Rampton Report (1981) was first to recognise the underachievement of pupils of Caribbean background, identifying serious concerns about their unmet needs in schools. The Swann report (1985) was confirmatory of the Rampton report’s findings adding that BC children were underachieving in comparison to their White majority counterparts but also with regards to their potential.

Race relations challenges were exemplified in the Macpherson Report (1999) highlighting institutional racism as a contributory factor in the police’s poor approach to the investigation of Stephen Lawrence’s death. As a result, the Race Relations (Amendment) Act (2000) was published placing statutory duties upon public service providers such as schools, educational and local authorities, police and healthcare providers, to monitor, evaluate and improve services to the community and eradicate discrimination for any group. Additionally, in schools, this meant that ‘ethnically based data on the achievement of students in compulsory education’ was required alongside

Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) requiring the production of monitoring procedures and race equality documents during inspections (Gillborn, Demack, Rollock and Warmington, 2017). The authors added that during the 2000s, the availability of national data enabled more detailed analyses than were previously feasible, enabling researchers to 'weigh the significance and intersections of numerous factors, including ethnic origin, social class, gender, special educational needs, student aspirations and parental education' (Gillborn et al, 2017; Strand, 2008, 2014, 2015).

60 years on since the emergence of BC migrants in England, the underachievement of BC pupils continues to be well documented in research literature and government publications (Rampton, 1981; Swann, 1985; Gillborn and Gipps, 1996; Gillborn and Mirza, 2000; Ofsted, 2002; Demie, 2005; Strand, 2010; Demie and Mclean, 2017; Racial Disparity Audit, 2018). It is not a new phenomenon but a persistent narrative that has continued to retain media focus and political attention over the past three decades. As such, the attainment gap existing between White and minority ethnic pupils in the UK is reflected in literature (Gillborn 2012; Strand, 2010, 2011, 2015: Gillborn, Demack Rollock, Warmington, 2017). The next section will examine the data published comparing the achievement of differing ethnic groups, highlighting the performance and underperformance over pupil's educational trajectory at key stages.

2.5.3 Black Caribbean, ethnic minorities achievement in education

2.5.3.1 Ethnic groupings

In comparing the achievement of ethnic groups in England, it is important to have an

understanding of the major ethnic groups focused upon and the rationale of this focus. Strand (2015) examined data drawn from DfE Statistical First Releases (SFR) and additional files from the National Pupil Database (NPD) for pupils up to the age of 16. This data is reported on an annual basis and features in literature to analyse trends and changes in performance (Strand, 2015; Demie and McClean, 2018). Due to small sample sizes when broken down into gender and free school meal (FSM) data representing socio-economic deprivation, nine 'focal' ethnic groups are reported upon by Strand (2015), as highlighted in Table 2. Strand (2015) provides a clear rationale for the focus upon 9 focal groups.

Table 2: Source Strand (2015) ethnic grouping trends and rationale for inclusion in data review

1. **White British** represent the majority of students in England (73% in 2013) of the aged 5-16 school population.
2. **White Other** is the largest ethnic minority group in England and one of the fastest growing, consisting of a wide range of nationalities and speaking a wide range of languages, but predominantly from Europe including Polish (21%), Turkish (7%), Portuguese (5%), Albanian (4%) and Lithuanian (4%).
3. **Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi** groups have a long history of residence as communities in England and it is important to report their results separately.
4. **Chinese** are the smallest ethnic group included but demonstrate strong educational performance.
5. **Black African** students are the largest Black group twice as numerous as Black Caribbean. They are also one of the two fastest growing groups.
6. **Black Caribbean** students have long been a focus for concern over low educational achievement and these merits continued monitoring.
7. **Mixed White and Black Caribbean** are the largest group of students of mixed heritage accounting for around one-third (34%) of all mixed heritage students. There are also now as many Mixed White and Black Caribbean students as there are Black Caribbean students.

Trends within the ethnic groupings and considerations of the national context are important when interpreting and critically examining the published data. However, the most recent data on differences between ethnic groups in England -the Racial Disparity

Audit (2018) - was sought in order to expand upon changes over time.

2.5.3.2 Racial Disparity Audit

The Racial Disparity Audit (RDA), ordered by the Prime Minister to examine the treatment of people from different ethnic backgrounds with regards to health, education, employment and the criminal justice system, was released In March 2018 by the Cabinet Office. This document forms the most recent review of data in relation to ethnicity and education (alongside other important factors). The author (Damian Green) suggested that the audit demonstrates a complex picture identifying disparities which are uncomfortable whilst suggesting some optimism. For the purpose of this section of the review, the focus will remain upon the educational achievements of differing ethnic groups.

Nationally, children and young people's achievement is assessed at critical points in their school years. Achievement is predominantly determined based upon attainment data such as test scores measured against the national standard each year and is used to determine progression over time. The RDA (2018) published educational outcomes specific to ethnic groups and are reported in Table 3.

Table 3: Data reported from The Racial Disparity Audit (2018)

- Black African pupils showed higher achievement and progress than Black Caribbean pupils (54% of Black Africans pupils met the expected standards for reading, writing and maths compared with 43% of Black Caribbean pupils).
- In England, Chinese pupils retain the highest attainment throughout school, made the most progress and were the most likely to stay in education and go to university.
- In 2016, the data demonstrated that almost a quarter of Chinese level 3 pupils attained 3A grades or higher at A level and almost 3 out of 5 went on to university. They were twice as likely to have gone to university than white pupils.
- Throughout their school years pupils from Gypsy and Roma backgrounds

and those categorised from a Traveller or Irish heritage background had the lowest attainment of all ethnic groups throughout their school years.
- Indian pupils were much more likely to meet expected standards and make progress than Pakistani pupils (e.g. 65% of Indian pupils met the expected standards for reading, writing and maths at KS2 compared with 47% of Pakistani pupils).

Major ethnic groupings are denoted as White, Mixed, Asian, Black and Chinese (see Figure 5) whereas minor ethnic groupings are denoted in Figure 1. The Audit demonstrates clear disparities between ethnic groups, with pupils from Chinese and Indian backgrounds achieving well. However, within Asian and Black minor ethnic groupings notable differences occur. BC achievement is nationally low. It is important to consider the differences over time to further establish the critical periods and the fluctuations in academic achievement published.

2.5.3.2.1 Early Years achievement

Figure 1, published in the RDA, reported the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile results for pupils aged 5 years within each ethnic group in 2016. The data indicates that Indian, White and Asian, White Irish, White and Black African and Mixed other form the ethnic groups achieving above the average level in England. All other ethnic groups fall below the national average in England.

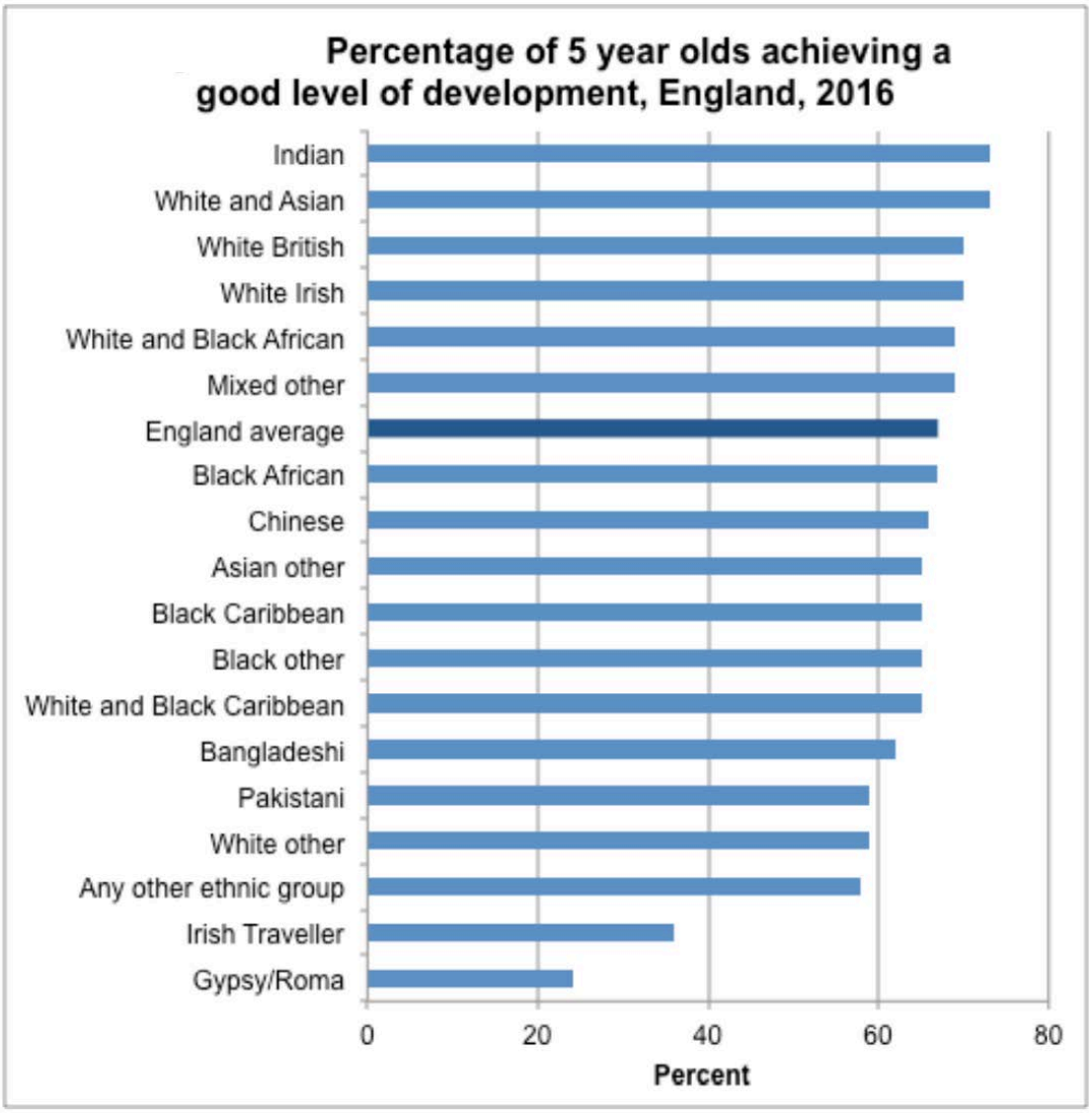


Figure 1: Early Years Foundation Stage Profile minor ethnic group results Source: Racial Disparity Audit (2018)

Further sources were sought in order to examine differences in ethnic academic performance in England in national assessments at Key stage 2 (KS2) and Key Stage 4 (KS4).

2.5.3.2.2. Key Stage 2 achievement

In examining the data published annually by the Department for Education (DfE) in 2017 and 2018, the NPD data indicated that at KS2 the attainment of Indian pupils remained high, However, there was a shift in the attainment of Chinese pupils from

below the national average in the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile results to achieving the highest of all the ethnic groups in KS2. Also, Bangladeshi pupils achieved above the national average alongside the White British pupils. Remaining below the national average for reading, writing and mathematics were the BC, White and Black Caribbean, Traveller of Irish heritage and Gypsy/Roma ethnic pupils (see Figure 2).

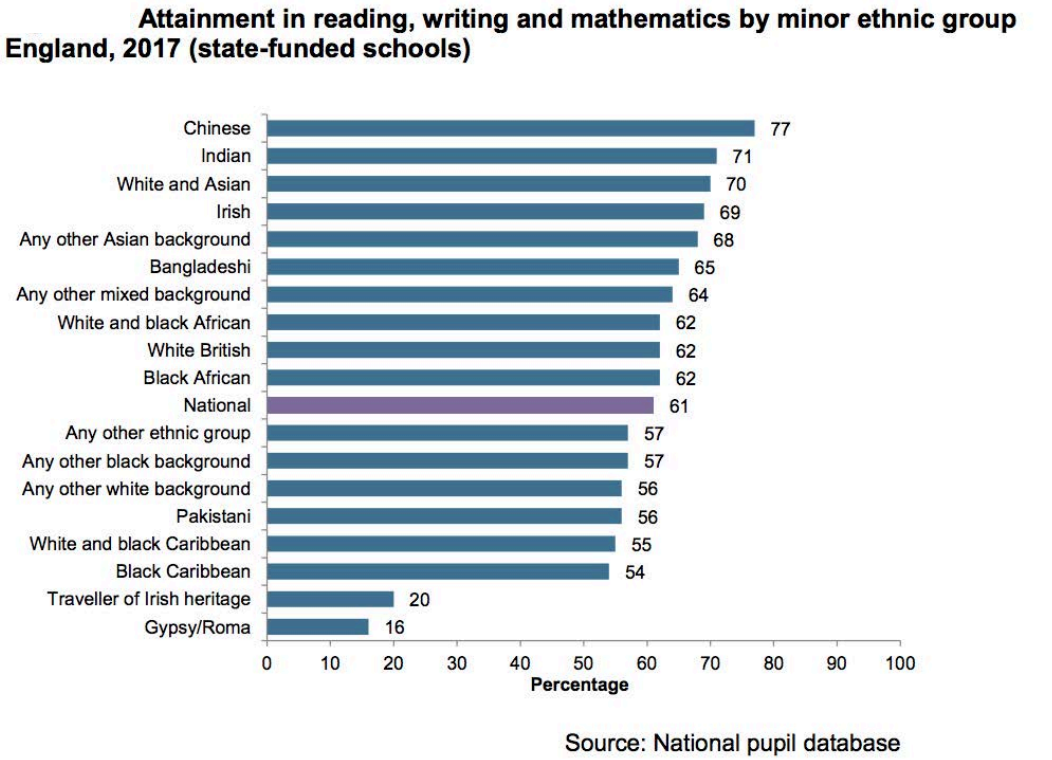


Figure 2: Attainment in reading, writing and mathematics by minor ethnic group England, 2017 (state-funded schools) (DfE, 2017)

The attainment published in 2018 by the Department for Education, did not present the data comparatively similar to the KS2 data published in 2017, instead all of the ethnic minority groups were pooled together. Conversely, the data in Figures 4 and 5, indicates the results for the major ethnic minority groups (i.e. White, Mixed, Asian, Black and Chinese) without highlighting the performance of minor ethnic groupings. The DfE (2018) report that pupils from a Black background are the lowest attaining major ethnic group with 63% attaining the national average, an increase of 3% from

2017. As such, the NPD data for 2018 was reviewed to present a more accurate comparison of the data in Figure 3. The results demonstrated that pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM) continued to attain lower than other pupils in all ethnic groups, indicating that socio-economic status plays a crucial role in educational attainment. Consistently, Travellers of Irish heritage and Gypsy/Roma groups attain the lowest overall. 58% of BC pupils attained the expected standard in reading writing and maths in comparison to 68% of Black African pupils who matched the same attainment as White British pupils. This indicates that BC pupils continued to underachieve in Key Stage 2, although the attainment gap was narrowing.

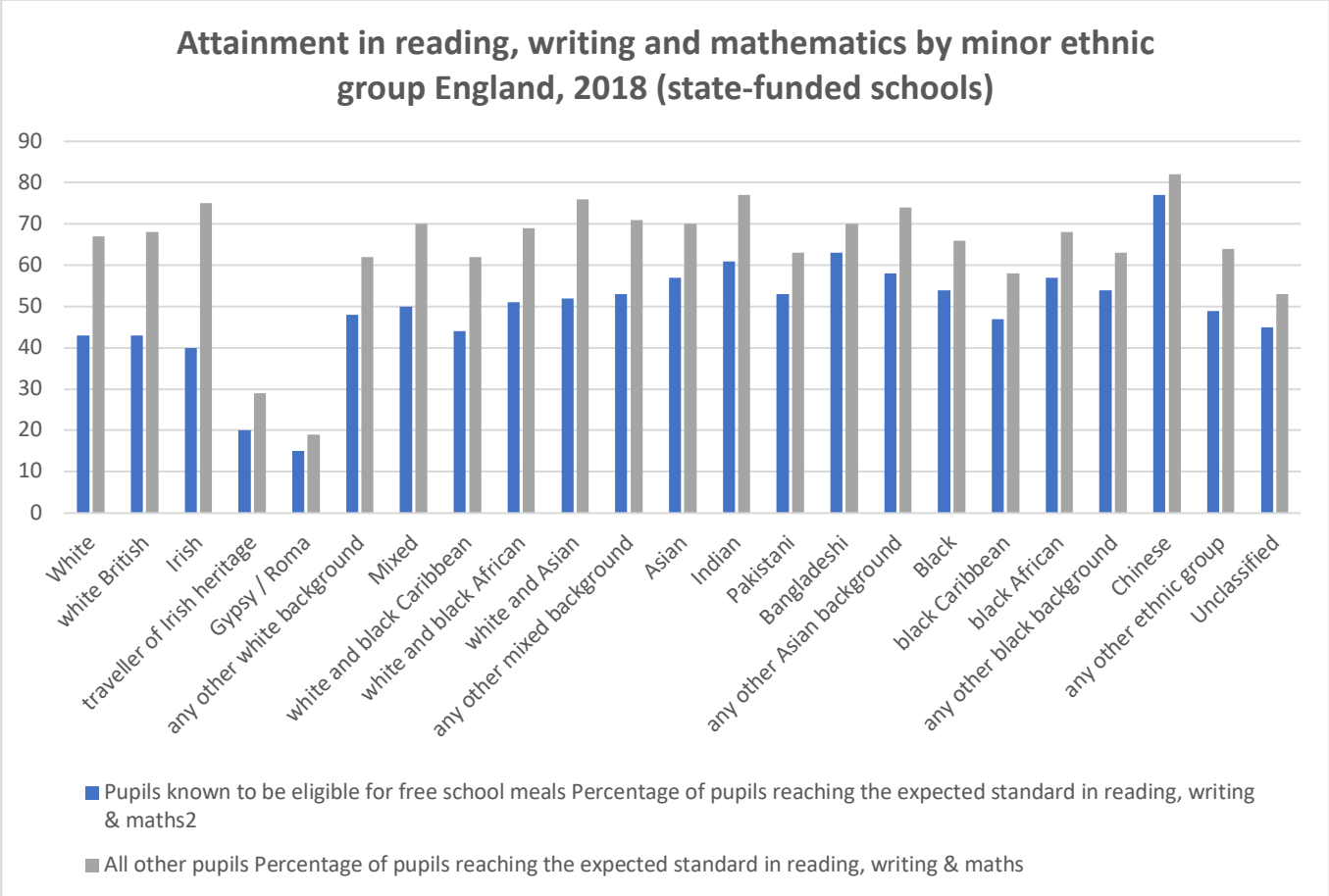


Figure 3: Attainment in reading, writing and mathematics by minor ethnic groups England, 2018 (state-funded schools) Source: National Pupil Database (DfE, 2018)

Table 11: Attainment by ethnicity, England, 2018 (state-funded schools)

	White	Mixed	Asian	Black	Chinese
Reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and maths					
2016	53%	56%	55%	51%	71%
2017	61%	63%	63%	60%	77%
2018	64%	66%	68%	63%	81%
Reaching the higher standard in reading, writing and maths					
2016	5%	7%	6%	4%	18%
2017	9%	10%	10%	7%	24%
2018	10%	11%	12%	8%	28%
Progress scores					
Reading	-0.1 (-0.1 to 0.0)	0.4 (0.3 to 0.4)	0.2 (0.2 to 0.3)	0.2 (0.1 to 0.3)	1.2 (0.9 to 1.4)
Writing	-0.2 (-0.2 to -0.2)	0.2 (0.2 to 0.3)	0.9 (0.9 to 1.0)	0.6 (0.5 to 0.6)	2.0 (1.8 to 2.3)
Maths	-0.3 (-0.3 to -0.3)	0.0 (-0.1 to 0.0)	1.9 (1.9 to 1.9)	0.3 (0.3 to 0.4)	4.7 (4.5 to 4.9)

Source: National pupil database

Figure 4: Attainment by ethnicity, England 2018 Source: National Pupil Database

Figure 12: Attainment in reading, writing and maths by major ethnic group
England, 2018 (state-funded schools)

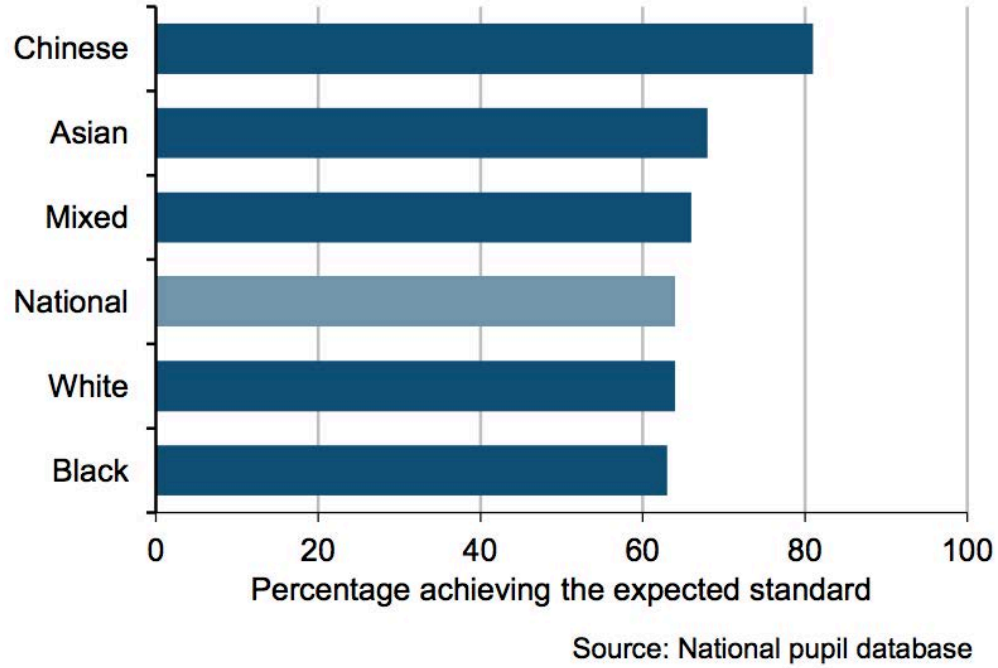


Figure 5: Attainment in reading, writing and maths by major ethnic groups in England, 2018 (state-funded schools)

2.5.3.2.3 Key Stage 4 (GCSE achievement)

Demie and Mclean (2015, p.23) reported that the proportion of 15-year old's achieving at least five higher grade passes increased by 23% between 1998 and 2013 in England. The authors argued that the findings highlighted the significance of government policy measures in raising educational standards although it was suggested that not all ethnicities had been positively impacted by such measures. Figure 3 explicates this claim. Demie and Mclean (2017, p.16) state that 'national data in England suggests that BC underachievement in education is real, persistent and they are consistently the lowest performing group in the country'.

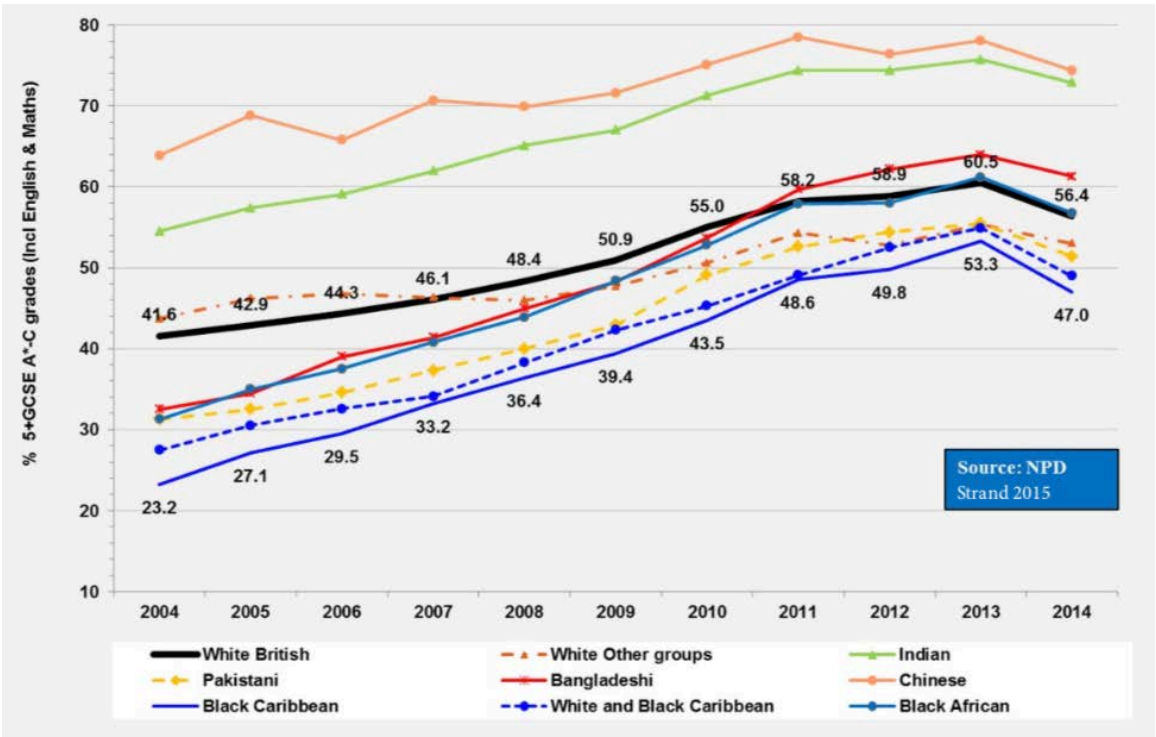


Figure 6: Black Caribbean Achievement in England (5+A-C including English and Maths)*

Recent data (2016-2018) was sought particularly as changes in education policy and the introduction of a numerical grading system for GCSE assessments (Grades 9 to 1 equivalent to A* to G) shifted the goalposts. Grade 5 achievement is viewed as a

‘strong pass’ equivalent to a high C and low B in the old grading system although, Grade 4 is still considered a pass in English and Maths. ‘Attainment 8’ figures are published representing a student’s average grade across eight subjects with English and Maths grades counted twice. The 2016/7 Attainment 8 data for children aged 14 to 16 (Key Stage 4) reported the average score of 46.3 in England with data indicating that White pupils (45.9) and Black pupils (44.8) of the major ethnic groups achieved lower than the national average. Further analysis suggested that outside of Gypsy/ Roma and Irish traveller ethnicities, BC pupils (40.5) achieved the lowest attainment 8 scores of all the ethnicities. Furthermore, in 2016/7, 42.6% of all pupils achieved grade 5 or above in English and Maths GCSE representing the national average. With 72.0% of Chinese pupils achieving grade 5 or above, BC students continue to achieve below the national average (at 28.7%) partially supporting Demie and Mclean’s (2017) claim.

Strand (2008), suggested that white working-class boys attained the lowest examination attainment at aged 16 shifting attention to social class and its intersection with educational achievement. However, Rhamie (2012) explicates that further examination of the data indicated that despite BC pupils living in homes with high socio-economic classifications, where there were high parental aspirations and high academic support, the students continue to underachieve. Therefore, Rhamie (2012) asserts that despite having characteristics for academic success BC pupils were not producing the levels of academic achievement expected.

Gillborn, Demack, Rollock and Warmington (2017), drawing upon the secondary analysis of official statistics (such as the Youth Cohort Study data and NPD data) in the last 25-year period from the introduction of the GCSEs in 1988, found that

throughout the stated period White students were always at least one and a half times more likely to attain the dominant benchmark than their Black peers. These findings indicate that BC pupils continue to underachieve in comparison to children of other ethnicities arguing that assertions such as the attainment gap 'narrowing' or 'closing' are inaccurate. The authors suggest that white/ black achievement gap remains persistent and is maintained by the actions of policy makers who change the goalposts in the benchmark definition of academic success over time without regard for the implications on differing ethnicities and race equality. Key stage 4 data supports this claim, with regards to BC pupils. However, it is important that clear distinctions are made between BC and Black African groups as the data indicates that Black Africans are growing as a population in England and are achieving above the national average with 43.5 % of pupils achieving grade 5 or above in English and Maths GCSE.

2.5.4. Gender and Black Caribbean achievement

Research indicates differences in BC boys and girls educational achievement with girls outperforming boys at each key stage (Gillborn and Gipps, 1996; Demie, 2001; Demie and Mclean, 2017). Demie and Mclean (2017) highlight the gender gap as girls appear to achieve higher averages than boys by a noticeable margin for African, Caribbean and White British pupils' at all key stages. However, for BC pupils the gap in performance between boys and girls is higher than for Black African and White British pupils suggesting the underachievement of BCs may center predominantly around boys. There is limited research exploring the achievement of BC girls who appear to be invisible in literature and may too face challenges with achievement. However, the narrative produced by published literature focuses on BC boys. GCSE Performance

data reported in Figure 7 exemplifies that BC girls have achieved above and slightly below the national standards consistently between 2010 and 2015.

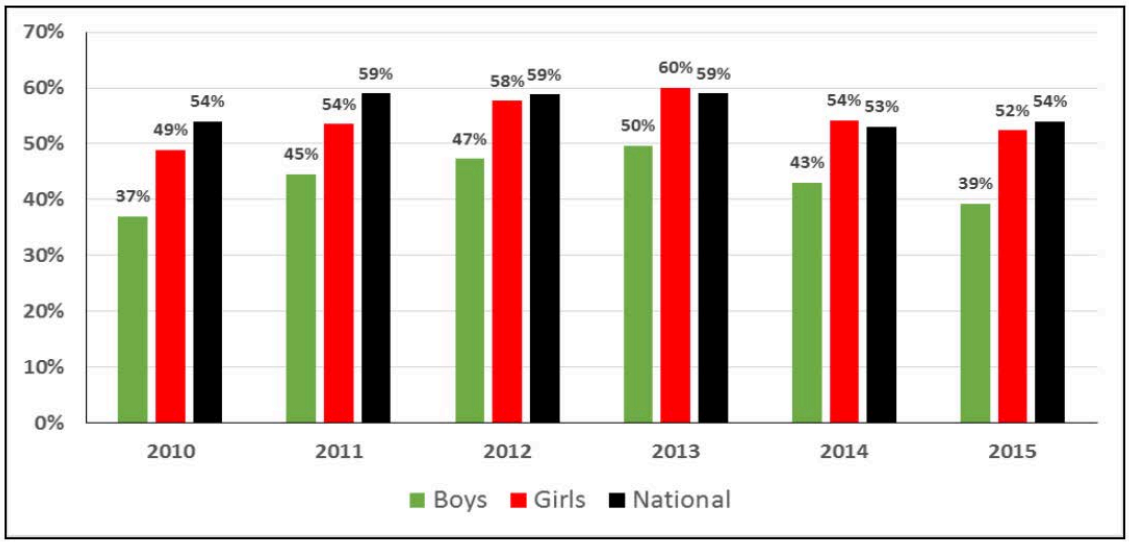


Figure 7: GCSE Achievement of Black Caribbean Pupils in England by Gender 2010-2015 (%)- Source: Demie and Mclean (2017)

2.5.5 Factors influencing Black Caribbean underachievement

Previous research has highlighted the disadvantage that black boys, specifically Caribbean boys experience, commonly portrayed as 'failures' in education and labelled as 'under-achievers' (Strand 2012; Wright, Maylor and Becker, 2016). It is easy and somewhat permissible for some BC boys to align themselves with negative attitudes, perceptions, statistical data and conclusive narratives portrayed and reported in literature and the media. Many researchers have attempted to provide explanations for Back Caribbean underachievement. Cobbett and Younger (2012; p.611) state that "the extent to which it actually constitutes a 'problem' and the ways it can best be explained and understood have been deeply contested". The authors argued that there has been considerable focus and debate with proposed solutions, rather than the root of the problem suggested as approaches to policy, adding that illuminating BC boys' underachievement as an issue leads to stigmatisation by other ethnic groups (Cobbett

and Younger, 2012).

Table 4 summarises the explanations for Black Caribbean underachievement in literature. It is reasonable to acknowledge that the explanations and reasons are 'wide-ranging and complex' (Demie and Mclean, 2017).

Table 4: Factors negatively impacting upon Black Caribbean pupils derived from literature

Factors impacting upon the achievement of Black Caribbean pupils	Literature
Low teachers' expectations contributing to low attainment amongst Black children	Demie and Mclean (2017); Gillborn and Youdell (2000); Crozier (2005); Maylor et al (2006); Rhamie (2007)
Low teacher expectation appeared to be influenced by racism as Black pupils are expected to experience difficulties, interfering with their academic performance	Gillborn and Youdell (2000); Strand (2012); Gillborn et al (2012)
Systematic under-representation on entry to higher tier examinations contributing the achievement gaps.	Strand (2012); Gillborn and Youdell (2000); Gillborn et al (2012)
High exclusion rates: Black Caribbean children are over-represented as the most excluded group of pupils and are three times more likely to be excluded from school	Sewell (1997); Demie and Mclean (2017); DfE (2015); Gillborn and Youdell (2000); Gillborn and Youdell (2015)
Lack of support from parents	Swann (1985); Rampton (1981)
Economic disadvantage	Swann (1985); Garner and Bhattacharyya (2011)
Poor home/family circumstances	Swann (1985)
Curriculum not reflecting adequately the needs of a diverse and multi-ethnic society	MacPherson (1999); Gillborn (2002)

Demie and Mclean (2017) conducted large-scale ethnographic research utilising three methodological approaches: data analysis (of 2 decades of Black Caribbean achievement in KS2 and KS4), focus groups and case studies. The data comprised of a total of 124 focus group participants inclusive of: 33 Black Caribbean pupils, 14 Black Caribbean parents, 15 teachers, 20 school staff, 7 Headteachers and 10 Deputy

Headteachers, 17 governors, 5 educational psychologists, 8 SENCos and Inclusion managers. The ethnographic case studies examined the school experiences of BC pupils and the factors contributing to underachievement. Structured questionnaire data was used to gather additional data from participants. Four primary and three secondary schools with high proportions of BC pupils with above average FSM were used in the case studies in 2016. This research forms the most recent seminal exploration of the factors which contribute to the underachievement of BC, some of which echo previous research and expand upon other factors more relevant to current issues (see Table 5).

Table 5: The main school and wider factors found to contribute to the under-achievement for Black Caribbean pupils in English schools (found by Demie and Mclean, 2017)

Main reasons for underachievement
1. Headteachers' poor leadership on equality issues 2. Institutional racism 3. Stereotyping 4. Teachers' low expectations 5. Curriculum relevance and barriers 6. Lack of diversity in the workforce 7. Lack of targeted support
Wider social issues and other underachievement factors
8. Exclusion issues and racial equality 9. Lack of parental aspiration 10. Low literacy levels and language barriers 11. Absent fathers 12. Single parent families 13. Socio-economic disadvantage 14. Poor housing 15. Social class issues 16. Lack of role models and peer pressure 17. Negative peer pressure 18. Cultural clashes and behaviour 19. Schools' ability grouping and lower tier entry issues 20. Cultural and identity issues 21. Media negative picture and stereotyping 22. Police stop and search and its negative impact on race issues 23. The pressure of the government's school standards agenda 24. Recruitment and training issues of teachers, Educational Psychologists and SENCOs

In reading the research, the qualitative accounts add to the reliability of the findings;

however, it was not apparent that the published findings were peer-reviewed. Critically, a large number of focus groups and data had been analysed to produce the findings reported. With case studies, a degree of subjectivity is found in the interpretative conclusions. The use of multiple methods supports the triangulation of findings. However, the gender differences within BC pupils, relevant to this study, were not overtly explored in order to determine whether the factors stated were universal for all pupils or whether key gender differences occurred.

Due to the complexity and wide-ranging factors reported, Demie and Mclean (2017) concluded that the challenge in combating the underachievement of BC pupils related to national policy recognising the importance in raising standards and achievement. The authors stated that there is greater awareness but less intervention work on the ground to support BC pupils and therefore the Department for Education and schools should develop targeted initiatives to address the needs of BC pupils (Demie and Mclean, 2017).

2.5.6 Narrative of Black Caribbean inequality and disadvantage

In addition to educational disadvantages, BC pupils (particularly boys) also experience other inequalities such as social class, personal wellbeing, exclusions, prison sanctions and mental health. Table 6 summarised the clear disparities and disadvantages that these pupils face.

Table 6: The additional disadvantages, disparities and inequalities faced by Black Caribbean pupils

Data reported	Source
Black Caribbeans are 8 times more likely to be stopped and	DfE(2014)

searched by police than their White counterparts.	
In 2014,15% of Black Caribbean men are unemployed in comparison to 5% of their White British counterparts. In 2017, 1 in 10 adults from Black, Pakistani and Bangladeshi backgrounds were unemployed in comparison to 1 in 25 White British people	DfE (2014) The Racial Disparity Audit (2017)
30% of Black Caribbean individuals live in poverty	DfE (2014)
Black Caribbeans are 9 times more likely to have schizophrenia and 8 times more likely to experience mania in the UK than in the Caribbean	Fearon et al. (2006)
Rates of admission and detention in Mental Health institutions for Black Caribbean and African groups is approximately 70% of inpatients, the largest of any other ethnic group.	NHS (2011)
Black Caribbean pupils are 3 times more likely to be permanently excluded and 2 times more likely to receive a fixed term exclusion than their White British counterparts	The Racial Disparity Audit (2017)
Adults from a Black background reported the lowest ratings for life satisfaction, and feelings that things they do in life are worthwhile and bring happiness.	The Racial Disparity Audit (2017)
1 in 5 children in Black households lived in persistent poverty and 1 in 10 in White British households.	The Racial Disparity Audit (2017)
Black women were most likely to have experienced a common mental disorder such as anxiety or depression in the last week and black men were most likely to have experienced a psychotic disorder in the past year than any other ethnic group. Black adults were more likely than adults in other ethnic groups to have been sectioned under the Mental Health Act	The Racial Disparity Audit (2017)
Of all defendants, including juveniles remanded at Crown Court for indictable offences, the proportion of defendants who were remanded in custody (rather than allowed out on bail) was highest for Black defendants, and particularly for Black males. Arrest rates are three times higher for Black men in the analysis of 2014/ 2015 data.	The Racial Disparity Audit (2017) The Lammy Review (2017)

Based on the data reported in national publications, an undeniably bleak overview is shared, particularly for BC males. This data expands upon the challenges that some BCs and other black ethnicities face within the UK and adds to the historic and current petitions for increased national policy to support the disadvantaged and provide race equality within a wide range of systems, inclusive of education.

Despite the narratives illuminated within education and other sectors contributing to negative representations of BC individuals, Rhamie (2007) recommended that a shift from focusing on BC underachievement and inequality was fundamental in raising the profile of their accomplishments. Rhamie, (2012) and Demie and Mclean (2017) state that their achievement should not be negated or forgotten, however, a shift in the narrative may reduce the perceptions of BC boys, as 'failures' (Wright, Maylor and Becker, 2016) and seek to understand the percentage of students who do continue to achieve. The following section will explore Rhamie's (2007; 2012) and other authors' attempts to explore the academic success/ achievement of BC's in education.

2.6. Academic achievement and Black Caribbean boys- shifting the narrative

Black Caribbean academic achievement or in some papers termed 'academic success' (Byfield, 2008; Dumangane Jr, 2017, Rhamie, 2012) is limited in research. Rhamie (2007) called for a 'new approach' away from the perpetual narrative of underachievement. It was noticed that few studies had been conducted in the UK seeking to identify the contributory factors for achievement (Rhamie and Hallam, 2002; Rhamie, 2012) which formed the focus of her research. Rhamie (2012) identified that previous research focused upon BC academic success was predominantly ethnographic in nature. It is acknowledged that success is relative and cannot be reduced to a singular factor being critical to 'academic success'. Based upon the literature focused on 'underachievement' (see Section 2.4.3), it is preferred, that the term academic achievement in line with national measures of achievement is adopted.

Academic achievement is fundamentally linked with attendance and engagement in

school and is associated with long term educational outcomes (Rothman and McMillan, 2003). Research has therefore focused substantially upon the best ways in which to promote academic achievement. This is also a crucial aspect of the EP role which is to provide increased support through early intervention in order to prevent long-term academic underachievement and improve educational outcomes for children and young people. The literature in relation to academic achievement for BC males was critically reviewed.

2.6.1 Social class and academic achievement

Social class is referenced as a determiner of academic success with patterns of increased poverty indicating lower educational outcomes for pupils (Hallam and Rhamie, 2002; Strand, 2008; 2011). Strand (2011) analysed the educational achievement and progress data for a large national sample of 11 to 14-year olds from the Longitudinal Study of Young People (LSYPE). The author found large mean attainment gaps between White British and ethnic groups (i.e. BC). Strand (2011) suggested that the socio-economic status could explain the attainment gaps for the majority of ethnic minority groups but not for BC students. Rhamie (2012) argued that on further examination of the data reported by Strand (2008) identifying White working-class pupils as the lowest attaining pupils, underachievement persisted amongst BC pupils from higher socio-economic backgrounds with high parental aspiration and high academic self-concept. This data acknowledged that despite having some of the factors identified for success, for example parental aspiration and higher social class, some BC pupils continued to underachieve.

2.6.2 Parental influence and academic achievement

Earlier research acknowledged the positive role of increased parental educational knowledge and experience (Bagely, Bart and Wong, 1979; Tomlinson, 1983). Research by Bagely, Bart and Wong (1979) and Tomlinson (1983) although dated, identified factors that support the above average achievement of BC children such as: parental awareness of school's limitation and their inherent drive to question school. Parental influence has been echoed as a contributory factor in previous research exploring academic success: Osler (1997); Sewell (2000), Rhamie and Hallam (2002) and Byfield (2008). However, Demie and Mclean (2018) highlight that BC parents of lower socio-economic status can face barriers to engagement, such as cost, time, transportation, low levels of literacy and numeracy, and a lack of confidence in supporting their children's learning or engagement in school.

Although broadly researching the experiences of Black Caribbean boys, aged 15-16 from a school where 40% of pupils were from minority groupings, Gosai (2009; 2011) found that all four participants reported their parents as being positively influential in their educational trajectory in comparison to their teachers and society, who they felt were negatively influenced by stereotypes of black males. The participants reported that the teachers lacked an understanding of the participants lived experiences, cultural nuances and social meaning from their homes and communities. In school, participants found comfort in peer support to manage negative treatment of their teachers. Furthermore, MacDonalds (2001) found that multiple factors such as respect, perseverance, overcoming barriers, parental support, increased opportunities to demonstrate achievement and acknowledgement all contribute as factors promoting achievement in Black British professionals.

2.6.3 Factors promoting Black Caribbean achievement in education

More recently, Demie and Mclean (2018) in their qualitative study of Lambeth schools from 2008 to 2015 examined the success factors which contributed to raising achievement for all pupils in an ethnographic study. Focus groups ascertaining the views of parent, pupil, governor and headteachers were conducted eliciting the strategies that supported raising achievement. Detailed case study research (n=8 primary and 6 secondary schools) was also completed with questionnaires from Head teachers, teachers, parents and pupils which were then collated and analysed. School selection criteria included schools with a very high proportion of BC heritage pupils, with good KS2 and GCSE results and outstanding Ofsted inspection reports. Interviews with school staff and parents were carried out over a four-year period.

The authors reported that pupils in the case study schools (many of whom were from disadvantaged home circumstances) improved in their KS2 results by 24 percentage points between 2008 and 2015 in comparison to 7 percentage points in all schools at a national level. At KS4, the case study schools performed 14 percentage points above the national average. The success factors are outlined in Table 7.

Table 7: Success factors which contributed to increased performance of Black Caribbean pupils in Lambeth schools

Success factors reported by Demie and Mclean (2018)	Key findings
Excellent leadership and Black Caribbean achievement	This was described as the single factor that linked all the case study schools' success in raising the achievement of Black Caribbean pupils. Headteachers presented with a strong vision, a focus on high standards and high achievement whilst devoting time and resources to staff and continuing professional development. The Headteachers reportedly led by example and a few were Black Caribbean themselves.
Effective teaching and learning	Senior staff taught and were seen to teach well and were included in lesson observations, monitoring and evaluation. All lessons needed to be at least good. Lesson monitoring was described as extensive and rigorous with support systems put in place. Pair and team engagement in discussions about pedagogy were provided to provide lessons that were inspiring and time for reflection upon lessons. Good practice visits were held to foster collaborative and good practice.
Use of a relevant inclusive curriculum	Support to provide further gains in pupil learning, motivation, enjoyment or achievement were permitted. Schools offered a wealth of enrichment opportunities, trips and visits to provide cultural, artistic and sporting experiences where pupils would be unlikely to encounter such advances at home or in the community to widen their horizons and for pupils to gain self-confidence and aspirations.
Parental engagement	Great importance was placed upon maintaining very good relationships between staff, students and parents. This was viewed as the most important factor in their continued success. Pupils with increased disadvantage were reported to receive extensive time and individual help and attention from staff where there was limited available support in the home environment. However, school staff lacked experience and training in working with parents to support their children's learning.
Link with the community	Community engagement was built through the development of relationships, equality and diversity.
The work of learning mentors in supporting Black Caribbean families	In some schools learning mentors were reported as imperative to family engagement and resultant achievement. The mentors were seen as knowing the community well and being able to engage with families.
Church and community support	The Christian Church played a significant role in the lives of Black Caribbean people with some

and guidance	participants seeking for increased Christian free schools and supplementary schools.
A clear stand on racism	Tangible attempts were made by schools to promote race equality with policies that were direct and unambiguous.
Diversity in the school workforce	The schools recruited quality teaching and non-teaching staff that reflect the languages, cultures and ethnicities of the pupils in the school to send a strong message that the community was valued and the school as a central part of the community in order to foster trust. 52% of teachers in the schools were BME staff compared to 14% nationally. Great diversity was continued with the overall workforce.
Celebration of cultural diversity	The cultural diversity within the school was celebrated with international links, special days, international projects and assemblies.
Effective use of pupil voice	There was increased opportunity to gather pupil voice. Measures such as school council meetings with senior leaders, pupil questionnaires, parent questionnaires, target setting days and consultations were sought in schools.

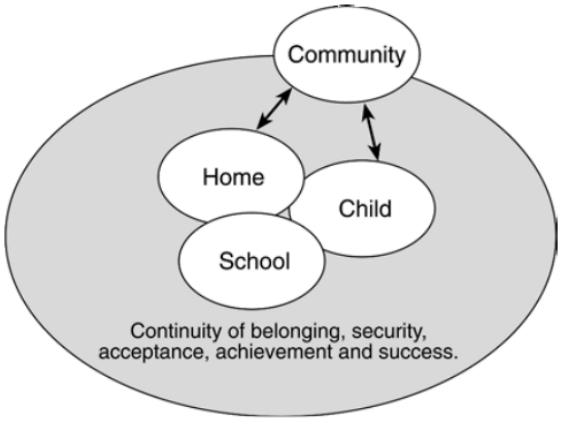
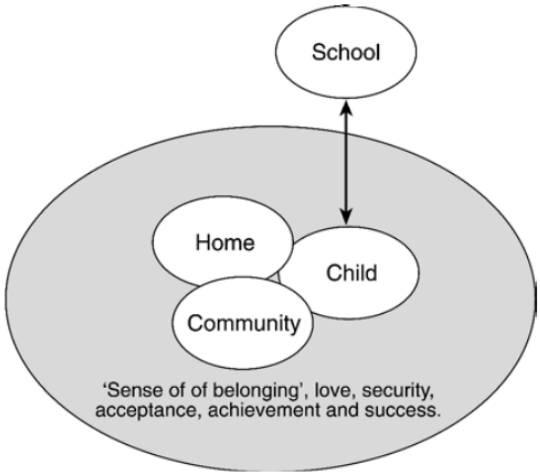
The findings of Demie and Mclean's (2018) research illuminate the achievement that can occur when strategies recommended in Chapter 2 over the past four decades are implemented. Critically, the school population reported in the study is not a reflection of every school but highlights the multiple school strategies that can make a difference. The research did not account for the individual factors which may have also contributed to the achievement of school pupils.

Rhamie and Hallam (2002) sought to elicit the educational experiences of BCs who had education at a post-graduate level through semi-structured interviews. The authors proposed two models that were used to explain the attributes which led to high achievement in a small sample of African Caribbean professionals aged 23 to 40 years old (n=13 out of the full sample of 14) who had undertaken the majority of their education in England. The sample was reported to be balanced by gender to demonstrate that BC males can achieve academically within the UK education system. However, the differing gender experiences were not explored or reported upon separately. The models proposed took an ecosystemic view of BC achievement presenting the Home-School and Home-Community models which were attributed to participants' success.

Although the results were generated from with a small opportunity sample, the data is insightful in providing emergent models of success for BC educational achievement, relevant to the topic of this research with extended detail presented in Figure 8. The four broad themes and success factors are summarised in Table 8.

Table 8: Success factors identified by Hallam and Rhamie (2002) as contributory to BC academic achievement

Broad categories	Associative success factors
Individual	• Motivation • Confidence • Awareness • Ability • Behaviour
Home	• Parents • Environment • Role Models
School	• Ethos and Type • Teachers • Organisation
Community	• Church • Music Tuition • Projects • Role Models

Home-School Based Model	Home-Community Based Model
	
The model suggests that where BC pupils attend schools with high expectations for all pupils, they respond to this ethos and make academic achievement. The model displays the home, child and school as a collective grouping, demonstrating a common purpose, shared language, and values. The goal described as academic success. Community was still viewed as important but not pivotal for success. 4 respondents were reported to fit within	Community is described as 'pivotal' in increasing the individual's opportunities to experience success. School experiences may be variable, inclusive of low expectations and varying support and encouragement by teachers and their response to the individual. Despite this, achievement is maintained by influences outside the school domain. As such, parents and community representatives are viewed as influential.

this model.	Experiences outside of the school system contributed to their success and learning experiences developing their self-efficacy (e.g. engagement in church activities, music competence and tuition). The majority of respondents' experiences were reported to fit within the home-community model.

Figure 8: The Home-School and Home-Community models of BC academic success proposed by Hallam and Rhamie (2002)

It is important to acknowledge that the findings of the research of Hallam and Rhamie (2002) cannot be generalised to reflect the experiences of the entire BC population, but instead highlight that BC individuals do achieve, inclusive of males. The experiences highlighted the predominant influence of community and home influences in the development of individual factors which contributed to the participants' achievements. School factors were important but did not feature within all participants' experiences, highlighting the need for schools to develop effective strategies to meet the needs of BC pupils.

Adding to the limited evidence-base, Rhamie (2012) analysed 78 questionnaires and interviewed 38 respondents aged 16 to 40+ years. The research investigated factors that contributed to BC high academic achievement, taking into account factors that contribute to low achievement. To remain focused upon the achievement of BC students, this summary focuses upon the 'High Fliers', namely, the high achievers as measured by national standards of achievement (5 or more GCSE A*- C grades at the end of secondary school). 7 of the 13 interview participants were BC high achieving males.

No clear analytic procedure was reported; however, an ecosystemic framework

influenced by grounded theory was detailed. As such, broad categories: home influences, personal characteristics, community and school were reviewed for both groups (low achievers and high achievers). To retain the focus upon achievement of BC participants, characterised as ‘High Fliers’, the results are summarised in Table 9.

Table 9: Key findings reported for the High Fliers group taken from Rhamie (2012)

Broad categories reported as contributory to High Fliers achievement	Key findings
Home	• Participants came from homes with positive attitudes to education, with high expectations and practical help and encouragement. • Parents gave positive messages about the importance of education. • 92% of High Fliers reported to have support from their parents. • Many reported that parents were dissatisfied with the schools their children attended and did not trust that they would receive an adequate education from school. • Participants regularly completed homework with over half as part of a regular routine. • Motivation was attributed to parental talks about education, its relevance and importance. • Success at school was attributed to participants' parents; counteracting the myth that parental lack of interest was a contributory factor in the underachievement of Black Caribbean pupils.
Personal characteristics	• Some participants were driven by competition, others aspired to achieve through religious beliefs and emphasis within church on achievement, doing well and having a relationship with God. • Goals was a theme from over half of respondents who spoke about plans and what they hope to achieve. • High educational aspirations were demonstrated through descriptions of very clear goals which was an important element in their success. • Unlike the underachievers group, few instances of difficulties or problems at home were reported. • Motivational factors propelled participants to achieve; not only at home but also with interactions in the community, specifically the church.

Community	• 77% of participants were actively involved in church activities and clubs. • A high proportion were involved in activities outside of school: 54% engaged in sporting activities. Skills learnt were reported to be applicable and transferrable in the learning environment (e.g. discipline, achievement of specific goals). • More than half of participants had instrumental lessons during their school years. The requisite skills for learning to play an instrument were beneficial for school learning (e.g. determination, willingness to practice, learning theory). The skills learnt were reportedly contributory to participants' confidence and desire to excel. • Positive influences were reported in participants' experiences from a wide range of individuals within the family, church and the community providing support and encouragement. These individuals were viewed as motivators by their example, words or own achievements (e.g. older siblings attending university).
School	• 69% (n=9) attended comprehensive schools with 2 participants who attended grammar schools, one attended a private church school and another at a grant-maintained school. • 77% of participants attended schools that they described as positive and encouraging. They also reported the schools as being 'good' schools with 'good' reputations. • Some negative issues related to being treated differently to their peers. • Fewer unpleasant school experiences were relayed compared to the underachievers and most had positive feelings about school. • All teachers with whom participants could identify with made time to support them. • Negative experiences described all took place at school but were not dwelt upon neither were there reports of strong feelings of injustice, racism or emotion.

Again with a small sample, conclusions cannot be generalised to the whole Black Caribbean population, nor taken as male or female distinctive experiences. However, factors of success were identified. Unfortunately, all participants, regardless of achievement level, had negative experiences in schools. The protective factors such as participants' wide access to support within their homes and community activities promoted and motivated school achievement. It also aided in enabling participants to conceptualise the negative experiences in schools in a different manner in comparison to participants in the Underachievers group. Rhamie (2012) called for schools, parents and communities to work together for the best outcomes for BC pupils to be achieved.

2.6.4 Faith and BC achievement in education

Although dated research, Channer (1995) used the life story method (a narrative approach) to analyse the educational experiences of twelve Black individuals who were successful in achieving a first classification in their degree. It was suggested that religious attendance at church was contributory in buffering the effects of racism but on its own did not determine nor guarantee academic achievement, implicating multiple factors. More recent research by (Rhamie, 2012, Dumangane Jr, 2017; and Demie and Mclean, 2018) made reference to faith and church as key contributory factors in academic achievement. Research suggests that faith can act as a resource assisting UK Black students in addressing and managing the challenges within education (Dumangane Jr, 2017).

Although analysed through a critical race theory lens, used to counter dominant discourses regarding race, Dumangane Jr (2017) analysed the interviews of 15 male Black African and Caribbean participants from 10 Russell group universities with 4

participants of BC heritage. 6 individuals identified their faith as an influential resource in their educational journeys: 3 participants attended Oxbridge institutions and 3 attended other Russell Group universities. The author reported five factors that emerged from the participants' narratives as being significant in enabling the young Black men to get into and remain in elite predominantly white institutions: faith as a motivator and a form of protection from destructive behaviours; church and faith as a source of skill acquisition, application and support; faith participation and protective and aspirational influences; parents, faith and effects associated with prayer; and faith's influence on civil society and community-focused goals. With a small number of participants, it is unclear how many of the 6 faith-centred participants were of BC heritage. There is therefore a limit to which the findings may present as truly relevant to this topic. However, the research demonstrated the differing functions faith played in the university students' ability to navigate and achieve in Russell group universities.

2.7 Summary

In examining the research focused upon Black Caribbean student achievement, there appears to be limited literature to support this population. Key research have attempted to bridge the gap and provide useful models of achievement with interactions between home, school and the community contributing to achievement. Due to small sample sizes, and differing approaches adopted, there is a limit to which the conclusion can be generalised to the whole BC student population. The literature reviewed, provides a greater understanding of the factors which have contributed to the educational achievement of BC pupils, however limited focused upon Black Caribbean male achievement, specifically. More research is required to distinguish between the factors which support Black Caribbean male and female achievement, reflecting the nuances

within each group.

2.8 Justification of research

This literature review has demonstrated that the majority of literature focused upon Black Caribbean pupils in the UK presents a narrative of persistent underachievement spanning over four decades. Many efforts were made to demonstrate the educational underachievement of Black Caribbean's and what is required for significant changes to occur to illuminate the need for national policy enforcement to raise the achievement of this population of students (Demie and Mclean, 2017; Gillborn et al., 2017; Hamilton, 2018). The evidence summarised has shown that some progress has been made; however, numerous audits and published research highlighting BC underachievement had not stimulated national policy enforcement and accountability within schools.

Rhamie (2012, p.685) called for a shift in the narrative and desired more detailed research to examine the success of BC students who 'defy the odds and succeed'. The author argued for a more balanced portrayal of achievement which would move away from the stereotyped narrative associated with BC pupils becoming academic failures (Rhamie, 2007; 2012). In response, this research aims to explore the educational narratives of BC adolescent males who attend mainstream schools i.e. maintained schools or academies who follow the National Curriculum and do not require students to pay fees and are not special schools. Through this research, BC males, who within literature experience the most educational disadvantage and reported underachievement, are viewed and treated less as a homogenous group but instead are appreciated as individuals. Thus, utilising narrative approaches, participants' constructions of their educational experiences may be explored openly,

in-depth. Rhamie (2012) reported that most participants in her study, regardless of their achievement levels, had negative experiences in school. This research provides the opportunity for BC adolescent males to be heard, as they trust the researcher with their personal experiences, with a method that seeks to understand and empower participants.

This research seeks to gain qualitative data about the lived experiences of achieving BC males, thus moving beyond general statements and statistics. Additionally, the research adds to the limited existent research base related to BC males' achievement therefore contributing to shifting the focus. There is a large gap in current literature regarding the experiences of BC adolescent males who are achieving and their narrated stories about education in primary and secondary school. This research provides opportunities for improved practice for professionals working with BC pupils who may be underachieving (such as mainstream school staff and educational psychologists), by providing a greater understanding of the educational experiences that have contributed to BC male participant's achievement.

Coard (1971) cited by Richardson (2005) argue that educational psychologists and other professionals should increase their awareness and support the community to stimulate changes, where needed:

'It is also written with West Indian teachers, educational psychologist, social workers and community leaders in mind; for through their awareness of the scandalous situation which befalls our children, they can help to galvanise the community for whatever actions are needed to radically alter the situation'. (Richardson, 2005, p.50)

Within the field of educational psychology, anti-oppressive practice is advocated and as such, this research sought to heed to the call from Coard (1971) albeit 40 years on, to provide increased awareness and understanding of a minority group. This research aims to contribute to eliciting the under-represented stories of achieving school-age BC males demonstrating that their unique stories exist and provide implications for EP practice, which has the potential to be anti-oppressive or oppressive in practice and can support or hinder inclusive educational experiences.

Currently, there is no peer-reviewed and published research undertaken by educational psychologists and only limited research exploring the narratives of achieving Black Caribbean adolescent males in mainstream education. This research not only adds to the evidence base but is also viewed from a differing psychological perspective and utilises an alternative method of eliciting in-depth experiences. Very few studies (Channer, 1995) within this area of research have used a narrative approach to research with BC adolescent males. It is hoped that this research will demonstrate an alternative way to elicit participants' voices.

In light of the proposed, the aim of this research is to elicit the retrospective and current educational narratives of Black Caribbean adolescent males achieving in secondary mainstream education; and explore how participants narrate the key influences in their educational history and their future life outcomes and aspirations.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Overview

The methodological approach adopted in this study is detailed within this chapter. The research aims and research questions for the current study are defined alongside my philosophical positioning which underpinned the key decisions with regards to the methodological selection. Within the methodology section, a clear rationale for the use of narrative research will be expanded upon with further details explaining why and how narrative interviews were adopted to answer the research questions. The procedural structure of the research will be outlined with information such as participant recruitment, participant characteristics and ethical standards. Additionally, an evaluation of the research will be detailed, highlighting attempts to maintain quality, rigour and transparency. Lastly, my data analysis process is explained with references to my decision-making when deciding upon my approach to analysing rich data.

3.2 Research aims and research questions

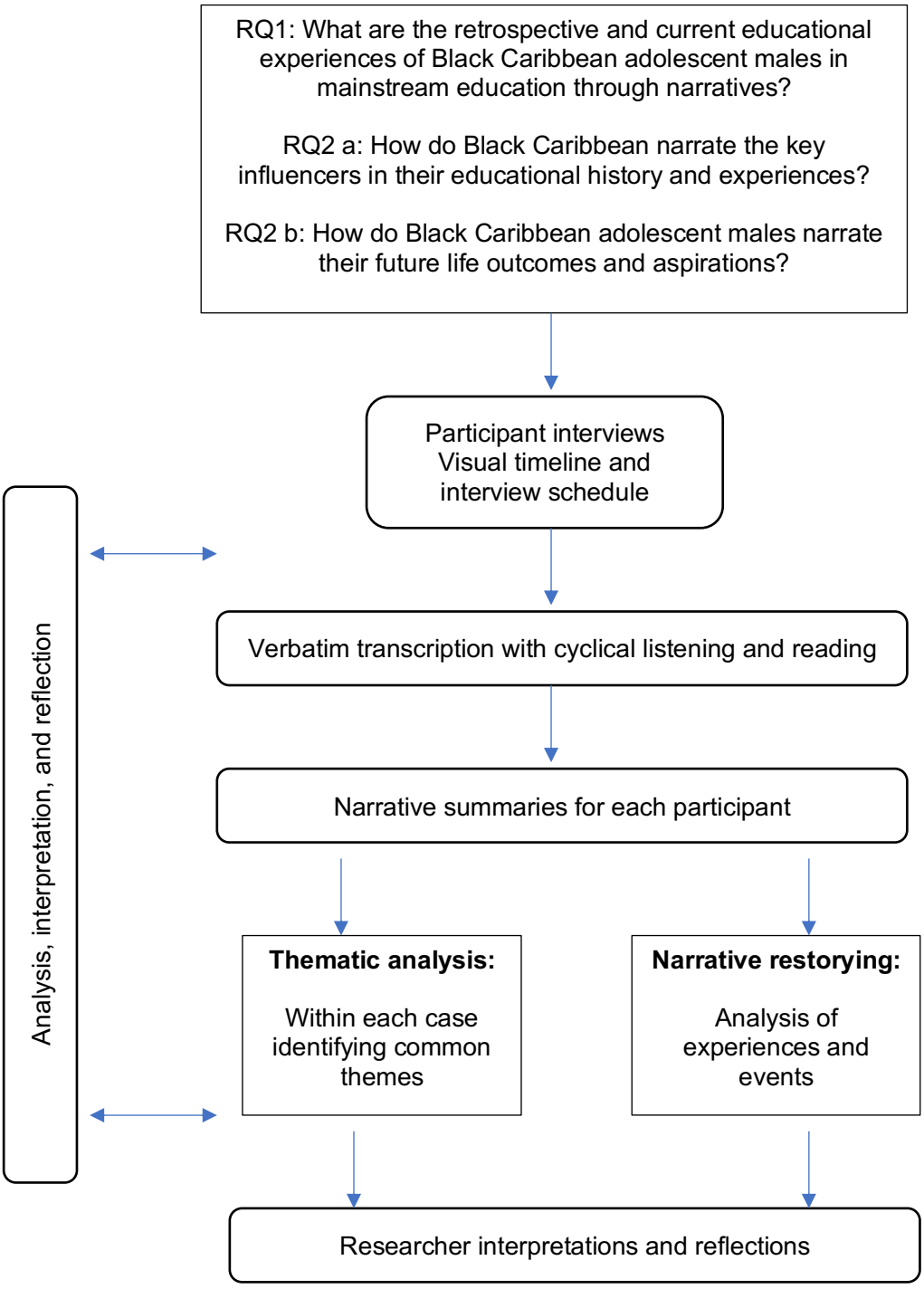
Chapter 2 highlighted clear gaps in the literature which supported the aims of this research. Likewise, the methodology should assist in addressing the primary research aims. This study aims to explore the educational narratives of achieving Black Caribbean boys in secondary education by exploring their retrospective and current experiences in education, alongside their aspirations. It focuses on the participants' recollection of key experiences and events during their educational history. These key events include their primary and secondary education with references to their aspirations retrospectively, currently and in the future.

The following research questions (RQs) aim to address the research aims:

1. What are the retrospective and current educational narratives of Black Caribbean adolescent males achieving in secondary mainstream education?
2. How do achieving Black Caribbean adolescent males narrate the key influencers in their educational history and experiences?
3. How do achieving Black Caribbean adolescent males narrate their future life outcomes and aspirations?

See Figure 9 for an overview of how the RQs have been addressed.

F*igure 9: Research strategy to address RQs*



3.3 Philosophical approach

It is important to highlight my ontological and epistemological positioning so that the reader has a greater understanding of my research perspective. Willig (2013)

distinguishes ontology as questioning ‘what is there to know?’ and epistemology as ‘how and what can we know?’ Thus, ontology is concerned with beliefs about the nature of social reality (Bryman, 2012) and epistemology refers to the nature, acquisition and communication of knowledge (Cohen et al., 2007). The philosophical positioning held by the researcher inevitably guides their research process and decision-making (Cohen et al., 2007; Thomas, 2013). I retain a social constructionist perspective - the approach that has guided this research. Willig (2013) highlights that a social constructionist researcher is concerned with the construction of ‘knowledge’ and how participants construct their versions of reality through the use of language. As such, a singular objective truth is not acknowledged (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Social constructionism rejects the notion of realism, that there is a ‘real’ world that can be objectively identified and unbiasedly studied (Brown, 2017). Instead, the social constructionist views the world and associative experiences as interpretations, with multiple ways of knowing social reality (Brown, 2017). This research aimed to gain insight into the socially constructed realities of Black Caribbean adolescent males.

In line with social constructionist narrative research, Reissman (2008) asserts that we do not have direct access to an individual’s experience. However, within narratives we understand their representations of it through their account of constructed realities. Reissman (2008, p.45) critiques the realist position, stating:

“sceptical about a correspondence theory of truth, language is understood as deeply constitutive of reality, not simply a technical device for establishing meaning. Informants’ stories do not mirror a world ‘out there’. They are constructed, creatively authored, rhetorical, replete with assumptions and interpretive”.

Social constructionists believe that different constructions of reality are portrayed to reflect an individual's range of experiences, knowledge and reality. It is my belief that knowledge is socially constructed within a social process through interactions with others (Burr, 2003). Bruner (1986) declared that storytellers could construct multiple realities with differing intentions. Caine, Estefan and Clandinin (2013) suggest that a narrative ontology calls for the researcher to enter into the participants' and their own experience to enter the artistry of lives lived. It is acknowledged that meaning through language is co-constructed within the social constructionist lens. Therefore, the relationship between the researcher and the participant is interactive (Mertens, 2014). Narrative researchers retain the belief that through the inter-weaving of explored experiences, participants are able to gain a deeper understanding of themselves and their position within the social world (Elliot, 2005).

3.4 Research Design

A multiple case study design was used in order for the educational accounts of Black Caribbean adolescent males in mainstream education to be understood at a deeper level. This design was suitable for my RQs as in-depth, rich data was sought exploring a small sample of participants and their educational experiences over the course of their life to date (Thomas, 2013). Differing methods were adopted in order to strengthen the elicitation of participants narratives over their educational life (see Figure 9).

During the analysis process cross-case comparisons were not completed In order to emphasise the uniqueness of each participant. Each case was viewed as distinct and the stories remained as separate accounts, highlighting their individuality. Gorard (2013, p.13) suggests that the case study design 'will always tend to be the

least convincing design' due to its lack of control; however, the aim of the research is to elicit the participants' real-world accounts. Arguably, the study could not be replicated as the accounts are idiosyncratic in nature and applicable to the individuals at a snapshot in time. Nevertheless, the results are not less valid but provide meaning and understanding for a distinct period and position in time.

3.5 Research methods

3.5.1 Narrative research: key features

There is a long literary history of studying narratives (Elliott, 2005). The interest in narratives has extended beyond the remit of literary theory to the social sciences and other disciplines (Czarniawska, 2004). Brown (2017) explains that the application of narrative approaches has been diverse in a range of fields such as, history, philosophy, sociology, anthropology, education, social work and psychology. It is also extensively used in health research (Riley and Hawe, 2005). Sarbin (1986), a seminal writer in the field of narrative psychology, asserted that we are born into a world where our lives consist of creating and sharing narratives. Sarbin (1986) suggested that humans are intuitively able to create narratives. McAdams (1998, p.1) describes storytelling as 'giving a narrative account of an event, an experience, or any other happening'. Narratives may be viewed as the organisation of a sequence of events into a whole, with narratives conveying the meaning of events (Elliott, 2005). Furthermore, Riley and Hawe (2005) highlight that the terms 'story' and 'narrative' are often used interchangeably but are in fact analytically distinguishable with narratives deriving from the analysis of stories. Bruner (1986) argues that the narrative mode of thought enabled individuals to organise everyday interpretations of experiences and events through stories. Connelly and Clandinin (1990) highlight the importance of experience as they suggest that people share the stories of their lives. Additionally, narratives have

been defined as fundamental schemes for connecting individual actions and events into a contextualised whole (Polkinghorne, 1988; Hiles and Čermák, 2007).

Elliott (2005, p.4) emphasises three key features of narratives. He indicates firstly, that they are representative of a sequence of events and therefore reflect a *chronology*. Secondly, they are *meaningful* and thirdly, there is a *social* dimension as they are often produced for a specific audience. It is recognised that the sequencing of events is distinctive and meaningful (Bruner, 1990). Temporality is accepted as a key feature of narrative form (Elliott, 2005). When considering the chronology of the narrative, ideas can feature fluidly from the past, present or future (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000). Elliott (2005, p.7) explains that 'stories rely on the presumption that time has a uni-linear direction moving past to present to future'. Reissman (2008) suggests that careful and meaningful construction of the sequence of events generates a plot by the individual's process of organising, connecting and evaluating events.

McAdams (1998, p.7) propounds that stories 'make the implicit explicit, the hidden seen, the unformed formed, and the confusing clear'. It is proposed that narratives can provide organisation and structure to phenomenon which may be perceived as 'confusing' or disorganised. The narrator, accordingly, is able to make sense of and add personal meaning to the events and experiences they share (Murray, 2008). Squire (2008) distinguished between event-centred and experience-centred narrative research. It is argued that experience-centred narratives move from past tense to first person recollections of salient events (Labov and Walestky, 1997) to include past and future stories about individuals and others (Squire, 2008). Consequently, an experience-centred narrative could include a life story or biography or address a life-

turning point, a realisation or a more general experience (Squire, 2008). It is acknowledged that overlap of the two may occur. However, it is argued that experience-centred narrative research does not neglect key elements such as: co-constructions of stories between the narrator and the listener and not neglecting wider factors when solely focused upon events (Squire, 2013). Moreover, Hiles and Čermák (2007, p.48) suggest that 'events do not present themselves as stories, but it is the experience of an event that becomes a story'. Within the current study, both event and experiences were explored, providing the freedom for each participant to share what was considered to be most important.

Another key feature is the contextual nature of narratives. Hiles and Čermák (2007, p.148) state that 'narratives enable human experiences to be seen as socially positioned and culturally grounded'. Thus, the narration of the story may include contextual information such as the participants in the experience, the time, scene and setting (Reissman, 2008). Elliott (2005) highlights that narratives are produced to make sense and extract meaning for a specific context and audience, thus highlighting the variation that may occur dependent upon the context and the purpose of the story-telling. Narratives are centred around the storytellers' cultural, social and historical context and within their values.

3.5.2 Approaches to narrative research

It is acknowledged that there is no singular or best way of defining or studying narratives (Mishler, 1995). As there is no prescriptive single method of conducting narrative research, it was helpful to explore the narrative approaches adopted most

frequently (Robson, 2016), as indicated in Table 10. Robson (2016, p.373) describes narrative research as a 'family of approaches':

Table 10: Narrative approaches to research denoted in literature

Biographical	A narrative relating to the key events and facts about a person's life from a first-person perspective
Autobiographical	A narrative about a participant's experience
Life history	A narrative depicting the participants' complete life histories
Oral history	A narrative based upon the reflections on event, causes and consequences
Personal experience	A narrative exploring the experiences of individuals with focused upon single or multiple episodes, private situations or folklore.

Within this research, I chose to use a personal experience narrative approach whilst adapting the life story interview (McAdams, 1995). Life story interviewing is a qualitative research method used for gathering the story that a person chooses to tell about the life they have lived. The recount is based upon what the individual remembers, as a result of a guided interviewer (Atkinson, 2007). In considering my RQs, it was important to focus on the multiple (retrospective and current) educational experiences of BC males achieving in education. Although, elements of the life story interview were adapted, the narratives did not depict the participants' full life histories. Therefore, the personal experience narrative approach was appropriate.

3.6 Method: Narrative Interviews

3.6.1 Rationale for using narrative interviews

I was provided with the freedom to decide upon the methodological approach which was appropriate for my RQs and fidelity with the narrative approach. I considered this a privileged position to explore the different qualitative research methods to address my RQs in seeking to hear the stories of achieving BC adolescent males. It was therefore important to select a method that would provide a forum for the participants

to share their stories in a comfortable, sensitive manner, maintaining respect and fidelity to their experiences and stories as individuals. I recognised that discourses about Black Caribbean males could perceive the sample as a homogenous group. I actively wanted to steer away from this discourse. Moreover, I felt that it was important to demonstrate the uniqueness and individuality within each participant's experiences. I sought for a research method that adhered to my values and considered a range of qualitative approaches, before deciding upon narrative research (see Appendix 1 for the differing approaches considered and rejected).

Elliott (2005, p.6) posits common themes prevalent in the application of narrative research as:

- An interest in people's lived experiences and an appreciation of the temporal nature of that experience.
- A desire to empower research participants and allow them to contribute to determining what are the most salient themes in an area of research.
- An interest in process and change of time.
- An interest in the self and representations of the self.
- An awareness that the researcher him-or herself is also a narrator.

These themes aligned strongly with my values as a researcher alongside the RQs of this present research. Throughout my practice, a firm commitment to social justice and the empowerment of others through my decisions and actions are values that are upheld and demonstrated.

It is acknowledged that as narrative inquiry relies upon the retrospective recollections of an experience, factors as such, memory and the time-consuming nature of eliciting the narrative can be a challenge (Riley and Hawe, 2005). However, within the narrative research lens, there is less focus upon the elicitation of a fully accurate recall of experiences but rather the meaning attached to the experiences shared (Reissman, 2008).

Narrative inquiry requires the researcher to have an in-depth engagement with and understanding of the participant's experience (Riley and Hawe, 2005). The authors suggest that this can cause a 'blurring of interpretive boundaries between the researchers and the participant' (Riley and Hawe, 2005, p. X). Reflexivity is proposed as crucial as it is acknowledged that the inquiry process is open to criticism without highlighting the participatory role of the researcher as part of the situation, the discursive context and the phenomenon of study (Hiles and Čermák, 2007). As narrative inquiry offers the framework for reflexivity, the methods used to demonstrate reflexivity are discussed in section 3.9.

Atkinson (1998) proposed nine benefits of narrative sharing, outlined in Table 11. It is acknowledged that narrative inquiries can trigger some negative feelings when retrospectively recalling experiences. However, Atkinson (1998) also highlights that positive outcomes can be produced despite the process.

Table 11: Potential benefit of sharing a narrative as denoted by Atkinson (1998, p.25)

1. A clearer perspective on personal experiences and feelings is gained, which brings greater meaning to one's life. 2. Greater self-knowledge and a stronger self-image and self-esteem are gained.

3. Cherished experiences and insights are shared with others.
4. Joy, satisfaction, and inner peace are gained in sharing one's story with others.
5. Sharing one's story is a way of purging, or releasing, certain burdens and validating personal experience; it is in fact central to the recovery process.
6. Sharing one's story helps create community and may show that we have more in common with others than we thought.
7. Narratives can help others see their lives more clearly and differently and perhaps be an inspiration to help them change something in their lives.
8. Others will get to know us and understand us better, in a way that they hadn't before.
9. A better sense of how we want our story to end, or how we could give it the "good" ending we want, might be gained. By understanding our past and present, we also gain a clearer perspective on our goals for the future.

Furthermore, narrative inquiry was judged to be an appropriate method for the study of educational narratives, influencers and aspirations of Black Caribbean adolescent males because:

- Narrative inquiry is judged an appropriate method for use with marginalised groups (McAdams, 2005);
- Storytelling is an everyday, natural skill which would be a familiar process for participants and could potentially increase their engagement as there are no right or wrong answers (Reissman, 2008; Thompson, 2017);
- Differing methods were provided to support in the elicitation of participants' narratives and to account for fatigue, communication difficulties and comfort in talking for extended periods of time. Providing a range of methods was arguably important in rapport-building and participant engagement;
- The educational trajectory and its transitions can be adequately explored with visual prompts as interview guides;
- Adolescence is judged as a period of identity development and reinforced the participant's ability to reflect upon their lives within a narrative framework (Arnett, 2000);

- There is limited published literature exploring the educational narratives of Black Caribbean adolescent males who are achieving (see Chapter 2, Section 2.6).

3.6.2 The narrative interview

Mischler (1986) argued that there are many forms of research interviews, inclusive of structured, semi-structured and in-depth interviews. There remains no prescriptive approach to conducting narrative interviews, although it is suggested that the process should be unobtrusive in nature (Elliott, 2005). Structured interviews can suppress stories through neglecting to allow the participant to provide in-depth responses. It is therefore argued that the researcher can limit the participant to short statements or succinct answers through the use of closed or poorly framed questions. In support of this view, it is suggested that interviews should stimulate the participant's interpretative reflection (Holstein and Gubrium, 1995). Thus, the narrative interview should be a forum for narrative production and the exploration of meaning within the research framework.

Thompson (2017) suggested that purist narrative researchers may approach the interview process reducing their involvement and guidance. The interview process may be initiated with an open-ended statement such as, 'tell me about your life from the beginning, until we are here today' (Horsdal, 2017). Dependent upon the participant sample, this could cause discomfort with participants preferring increased direction. Cresswell (2007) highlights data collection methods such as: journaling, participant observation, accessing documents and archival material alongside open-ended

interviews. However, Czarniawska (2004) suggested interviews as the prime means of gaining first-hand narrative accounts.

Semi-structured interviews were held with four participants who matched the sample characteristics. All participants and their parents provided fully informed consent and consented to the audio-taping of their interview for the purpose of transcription and analysis. An advantage of utilising a qualitative interview as a method of data collection relates to the researcher's ability to gather rich, detailed information about an individual's lived experiences. Therefore, the semi-structured narrative interview allows for the detailed narratives, limiting the likelihood of short and rigid responses through the use of carefully selected questions (Reissman, 2008).

Semi-structured interviews rely upon the skill of the interviewer, to provide sensitive and careful redirection when necessary (Thomas, 2013). There should be a balance between questioning and organic narrative accounting so that rigid expectations are limited (Thomas, 2013). Interviewer skills remain a criticism of semi-structured interviews that structured schedules would overcome. Within the narrative research frame, a structured schedule is not advised and would restrict the open flow of dialogue sought from the young person. In the current study, information was disseminated prior to the interview with content that could support in the reflection and recollection of key events and experiences relevant to the research in advance. It is possible that this may have influenced the level of detail shared.

Mishler (1986, p. 118-119) indicates the aim of empowering respondents by obtaining their narratives through interviews:

“Various attempts to restructure the interviewer-interviewee relationship, so as to empower respondents, are designed to encourage them to find and speak in their own ‘voices’. It is not surprising that when the interview situation is opened in this way, when the balance of power is shifted, respondents are likely to tell ‘stories’. In sum, interviewing practices that empower respondents also produce narrative accounts.” Mishler (1986, p.118-119)

Central to my values is the theme of empowerment; it was my intention for participants to be empowered through the shifting of power, placing it in the hands of the narrator. The narrative interview design accounts for this. It is important to emphasise the term power balance, as it is recognised by Reissman (2008) that the researcher and the narrator engage in a process of co-construction and therefore the power is equally distributed.

Elliott (2005) provides clear guidance for eliciting narrative through interviews, which were considered when developing narrative interview schedule. It was recommended that qualitative researchers should refrain from using sociological terms referencing ‘everyday’ language as preferable. In addition, the questions asked should be open-ended and broad enough to allow the participants to provide detailed narrative accounts with restriction based upon the researcher’s interests. This meant that leading and closed questions were not helpful in the elicitation of data. Emphasis upon the relationship and rapport between the participants and the researcher was necessary to ensure that the interview was predicable with a clear structure and to build the interviewer-interviewee alliance (Elliott, 2005). It was suggested that use of a

pre-prepared life history grid presented at the beginning of the interview would support participants in being able to discuss specific times and situations within their narrative (Elliott, 2005).

3.6.3 Development of the narrative interview schedule

In order for the semi-structured interview to provide a balance between relevant, chronological questioning and naturalistic conversation, careful considerations were made when developing the interview schedule. McAdams (2001, p.102) argued that "people begin to put their lives together into self-defining stories'. The author suggested that causal coherence was exhibited in adolescence explaining how one event 'caused, led to, transformed, or in some other way is meaningfully related to other events in one's life' (p.105). I anticipated that the narrative interview schedule adopted should account for the key events and experiences within each participant's educational narrative. Ochberg (1996; p.97) stated that interviews allow participants to 'choose the events that matter to them and put their own construction on them'. In reading McAdams (1995) narrative life story interview, the procedure appealed, in its structure, to my research questions with adaptations in wording. Questions were grouped according to the chronological trajectory of children within mainstream education: primary, secondary, and post 16. These themes were also visually presented as a grid in line with the life story interview schedule sections: peak experience, low (nadir) experience, turning point and influencers. These themes remained somewhat open-ended enabling participants to place their own constructions within each section.

The revised life story interview schedule (McAdams, 1995) is highlighted in Box 1. Table 12 highlights the adaptations made, in line with my RQs. Justifications for the adaptations are provided in Table 12. The final interview guide used in this research and interview script is detailed in Appendix 2.

Box 1: Revised Life story Interview Schedule (McAdams, 1995)
1. Life Chapters 2. Critical Events: i) Peak experience ii) Nadir experience iii) Turning point iv) Earliest memory v) Important childhood scene vi) Important adolescent scene vii) Important adult scene viii) One other important scene 3. Life challenge 4. Influences on your life story: Positive and negative 5. Stories and the Life Story 6. Alternative Futures for the Life Story: Positive and negative future 7. Personal Ideology 8. Life Theme 9. Other

Table 12: Interview schedule adapted from McAdams (1995) in line with this research

Interview Schedule	Justification for adaptations
1. Life Chapters	Participants within the interview schedule were asked to provide 3-6 chapters to reflect and summarise their educational narrative. All participants were given the opportunity to draw on the educational story grid where the chapters started and ended for increased clarity. It was recognised within the educational story grid that their story had a beginning, middle and end presented as 'primary', 'secondary' and 'future' acknowledging that the education system generally follows a linear staged progression aligned with age.
2. Critical events i) Peak experience ii) Low experience iii) Turning point	McAdams (1995) defines a peak experience as a high point or best moment; a low point as the opposite of a peak experience one that elicited negative emotions or unpleasant memories; and a turning point as a moment of substantial change. It is important to note that these moments relate to the participants' understanding of themselves and their own experiences. Exploring these experiences within each participant's educational history in primary and secondary school was an important way to provide key details to be expanded upon. Subsidiary questions were asked in order for individuals to expand upon scenes, experiences and memories of their choosing. The three key critical events were mainly related to the RQs as they enable participants to reflect upon the past and evaluate their memories to select the most positive and negative memories. Questions focused upon 'the most important childhood scene' and 'the most important adolescent scene' and 'the most important adult scene' were omitted from the interview schedule as it was felt that this was more relevant for extended life story interviews rather than episodic experiences.
3. Life challenge	Challenges within the participants' educational narrative were posed as subsidiary questions enabling participants to expand upon their experiences.
4. Influences	This question formed a key aspect of the interview schedule for this study. It was included as it relates directly to the RQs but also enabled reflection and evaluation of influential individuals over time, both positively and negatively.

5. Stories and the Life Story	Questions focused upon stories heard and stories watched; stories read were deemed irrelevant to the RQs and were omitted.
6. Alternative futures	This question was included in exploring the future aspirations of participants. It enables participants to consider what they would like their life to look like and to evaluate what would contribute to their alternative futures.
7. Personal Ideology	Due to the complexity of this question, it was omitted. It was deemed that this question may lose sight of the focus of the research and could be challenging to access for some participants who may not have formulated responses to questions regarding their political stance.
8. Life Theme	Participants were asked to consider a 'life theme' to reflect the title of their educational story. It was thought that this would enable them to reflect upon their narratives from a macro level and consider the story as a book or a film as a whole.
9. Other	McAdams (1995) suggested that this section should enable participants to explore if there was anything else, they would like to add. This aspect was included to give participants the opportunity to reflect upon their experiences and evaluate whether any key information had been omitted.

The wording and construction of the questions used were influenced predominantly by McAdams (1995), Atkinson (1998) and Elliott (2005). The composition of questions included open-ended questions (to elicit rich, detailed responses), structural questions (to organise information), and clarifying questions (for the expansion and clarification of meaning) (Atkinson, 1998). I also used verbal probing (i.e. tell me more) aimed at aiding in further elicitation and expansion of narrative accounting.

The final interview schedule in detailed below in Table 13. It was essential that advocating and eliciting participant's' voices and experiences was facilitated by the questions used on the interview schedule in addressing the RQs for an extended rationale for advocating the voice of children and young people).

Table 13: Final interview schedule questions (adapted from Atkinson, R. (1998) 'The Life Story Interview')

Section of the educational experiences' timeline	**Questions focused upon critical events i.e. a peak experience, a nadir (low) experience and a key turning point**
Primary school	What was your first memory of attending primary school? How old were you in that memory? Tell me about your primary education. Did you enjoy primary school in the beginning? What was your best memory of primary school? What do you remember most about primary school? What was your worst memory from primary school? Who do your remember most from primary school? What activities were you involved with in school? How did they influence you? Who are your key influences in primary school? How did they influence you? Did you have a favourite adult? Have you got a story about them you would like to share with me? How did this adult influence you? What did they teach you? Why were they significant to your primary school experience? What were your aspirations in primary school? What accomplishments in primary school are you most proud of? What contributed to your accomplishments? Was there a key turning point for you in primary school? Can you share what influenced the change? Why was a turning point necessary in your view? What did you learn most about yourself in primary school?
Secondary school	What was your first memory when you started secondary school? Tell me about your secondary education. Did you enjoy secondary school in the beginning? Why? What has been your best memory so far in secondary school? What has been your worst memory of secondary school so far? What accomplishments in secondary school are you most proud of?

	What contributed to your accomplishments? What activities have you been involved with in school? Who are your key influences in secondary school? How do they influence you? Do you have a favourite adult or adults? Have you got a story about them you would like to share with me? How has ____ influenced you? What have they taught you? Who is significant in your life at the moment whilst at secondary school? What are your aspirations now? Has there been a key turning point in secondary school so far? Can you tell me what contributed to the turning point? Why was a turning point necessary in your opinion? What have you learnt so far about yourself in secondary school?
Future	What do you think your future will look like: - next year? - at the end of secondary school? - when you are an adult? What do you hope to become in the long-term future? What role will education play in your future goals? Who would you like to be significant influencers in your life in the future? Who do you think will be your key influencers in the future? What would you like your life to look like in 10 years time?
	Question prompts to facilitate elaboration: Go on… Anything else… That's interesting, go on… Can you expand on that? Have you got any more stories you would like to share?

3.6.4 Narrative interview procedure

3.6.4.1 Piloting the procedure

A pilot interview was carried out with a participant who matched the sample criteria during a school visit. This provided the forum to evaluate the length of the interview, the questions and wording and to identify useful amendments. The pilot study was effective in providing valuable feedback regarding the wording of the questions and the wider interview process. It also provided the opportunity to reflect upon my role as the researcher in co-construction. The interview enabled me to view the importance of building rapport at the start of the interview process as it placed the participant at ease and also highlighted that the researcher was asking in-depth questions about participants' experiences; time should therefore be allowed for relationship-building to create a safe and comfortable environment for sharing.

As a researcher, I recognised the power of silence, enabling the participant to expand upon their experiences by providing the forum for their reflective thinking. Although there was an interview schedule, the pilot interview highlighted the flexible nature of narrative research and the need to avoid adhering to the schedule rigidly but allowing the narrative to flow naturally. Atkinson (1998) highlights that interviews should be informal and loose similar to a conversation with the participants doing the majority of the talking. This meant that I would not be steering the conversation but facilitating the direction of the flow of conversation, navigated by the participant, whilst remaining authentic to exploring the experiences highlighted in the interview schedule. Although the participant utilised in the pilot interview was articulate and open to expand upon his experiences, a fairly structured format was necessary when considering other

participants who may require scaffolding without the expectation of extended prose (see above for prompts used in Table 13: Final interview schedule questions).

Following the pilot interview, the interview schedule was refined by posing more specific questions, for example when asked ‘who influenced you?’ in the fieldwork testing, a clarifying question was returned by the participant, who stated ‘in school?’. Within the final interview schedule, this question was replaced with: ‘who influenced you most during this chapter?’ The need to explain what a ‘turning point’ was to enable participants to have greater clarity was also felt, thus reducing jargon and creating linguistic simplicity (Atkinson, 1998). In terms of my interviewing skills, I felt it was more beneficial to refrain from asking subsidiary questions and allow enough space for participants narratives to flow organically, creating a fluid conversation.

3.6.4.2 Final procedure

A visual life story grid was on display once participants entered the interview room. Initial ethical procedures were adhered to: participant consent was obtained, parental consent forms were checked, and the information sheet read. Rapport-building questions were asked and environmental checks (such as the room temperature) were made. Interviews lasted between 40 and 90 minutes. On one occasion there was a break in the middle of the interview. However, in all other interviews, participants chose to continue for the full duration of the interview. They were offered a break whenever they felt was necessary; only one chose not to take up this offer. Elliott (2005) suggested that 90 minutes was the optimum amount of time for narrative interviews. However, when working with adolescent participants, time modifications were made to ensure that fatigue and distress were minimised. I was, however, privileged to engage

with articulate participants with 3 out of 4 participants providing clear, coherent responses. In adhering to the principles of narrative research, I felt it important to enable participants to inform me when they had completed their narrative, even if this went outside of the optimum time frame.

3.7 Participants

3.7.1 Participant recruitment

Adhering to my application for ethical review, I approached the EPs in the local authority where I was placed and the recruitment advertisement (see Appendix 3) was consequently sent to the secondary schools there. An EP was contacted by a school in the local area in response to the advert. I contacted the school's link professional. We discussed this research during a telephone consultation and I forwarded the documentation requested for distribution (i.e. recruitment advertisement, information sheet for parents and participants and parental consent forms). All questions and queries were answered.

The Assistant Head Teacher identified three individuals who met the participant criteria. The necessary documentation consisting of the information sheet for parents and young people, parental consent form and recruitment advertisement were sent. Unfortunately, only one participant returned the necessary documentation in the initial recruitment round. Creswell (2013) proposes that up to three participants are recommended for narrative research. As I sought for 3 to 5 participants for this research study, I approached another local authority adopting the same strategy. I was contacted by a subject leader from a secondary school to find out more about the research as she had found three males who matched the sample characteristics. Fully

informed consent was provided by parents and the date and time for participation was scheduled. All ethical considerations have been expanded upon further in section 3.9.

3.7.2 Participant selection

Purposive sampling was adopted for the identification and selection of individuals who met the inclusion and exclusion sampling criteria and were knowledgeable about the foci of the research (Cresswell and Plano Clark, 2011). This criterion remained consistent throughout the study, with intentions to achieve a depth of understanding rather than a 'breadth' (Patton, 2002). Table 14 outlines the inclusion and exclusion criteria:

Table 14: Inclusion criteria

Inclusion criteria/ Exclusion criteria
• Self-identify as Black Caribbean descent • Male • Mid-high achiever (i.e. on track or attaining above average/ target grades) • Aged between 12 and 16 years old • Expressive and receptive language and communication skills to engage in an interview where they will be able to recall key events from their lives • Have attended a mainstream educational setting for a minimum of 6 months • No statement of Special Educational Needs or Education, Health and Care Plan in place

Discussions with the link professional at each (n=2) school was conducted to ensure that the sample characteristics were adhered to. One participant attended a grammar school. The other three participants attended another secondary school. This sampling and selection posed limitations. One example included the exclusion of pupils who were in Year 7 who were still attending secondary school, however, the research sought to explore the historicity of participants' experiences. As the interviews were conducted in November 2018, it was considered that the participants would not have spent enough time within the secondary school system to explore their personal experiences in-depth.

3.7.3 Pen portraits of participants

All participants chose pseudonyms to be used in the current research which represented them. Efforts were not made to provide culturally sensitive names to reflect the participants, however, culturally sensitive names were chosen by most participants without prompting.

Participant 1: Introducing James

James was a 13-year-old boy, who told his own story of his experiences in mainstream education.

Table 15: Introduction to James

Pen portrait	Reflective notes in reference to the interview
James enjoys playing football and playing on his X-Box. He is in Year 8 at school and attends a single-sex grammar school full time. James attended primary school at a mainstream comprehensive school. He is of Jamaican descent (with both parents from Jamaica) and lives at home with his parents and twin sister. James' twin sister also attends a single-sex grammar school which is more local to their home compared to James. He also has an older sister who is currently at university.	During the interview, James presented as articulate, open and comfortable about sharing his views about education and personal experiences. He was mature in his approach to sharing his story and aspirations for the future. It was evident that he had been reflective previously and his responses were clear. James also shared the experiences within his education that had affected him emotionally. He was able to be open on an emotional level to express how he coped with some of his challenges.

Participant 2: Introducing Boris

Boris was a 14 year old boy in Year 10, who shared his educational experiences and reflections from nursery onwards.

Table 16: Introduction to Boris

Pen portrait	Reflective notes in reference to the interview
Boris enjoys playing the piano and coding with different software. He	During the interview, Boris presented as engaged, intelligent and open with his

attends a mainstream secondary school full time. Both of his parents are from Caribbean descent (Barbados and Jamaica) and he lives at home with his parents and his older brother who is 18. Boris is in the process of working toward his GCSEs and has aspirations for the future. Boris' educational experiences centre in the same geographical proximity near his home.	experiences. He was realistic about his future and also his past and present experiences. Boris was transparent with his responses and expanded his answers with minimal prompting.

Participant 3: Introducing Jonathan

Jonathan was a 14 year old boy, who is in Year 10 and has had a range of educational experiences in and out of city.

Table 17: Introduction to Jonathan

Pen portrait	Reflective notes in reference to the interview
Jonathan loves athletics and participating in competitions. He also enjoys other sporting activities at school such as football. Jonathan lives with his mom, stepdad and his older brother, who is 21 years old. He has a supportive family network inclusive of his aunty and uncle and his brother who are all active in his life. He also knows and sees his biological father. However, the majority of his time is spent with his mother. Jonathan remained with his aunts and uncles during his early years' education and moved north to attend school in Year 1 with his paternal aunt and uncle for a year. Jonathan is not clear about the reasons for this but on returning to his current city, he was placed in the wrong year at school; following school investigation he was moved into the correct year group. Due to bullying incidents, Jonathan was moved in Year 2 to a different mainstream primary school where he remained until it was time for secondary school. He has attended his current mainstream secondary school since Year 7. Jonathan's parents are of Jamaican descent.	During the interview, Jonathan presented with charisma and was keen to participate. He sought to share his experiences in detail, often maintaining long pauses as he attempted to recall key information. It was very easy to build a rapport with Jonathan. In the middle of the interview, due to the duration of the exchanges, Jonathan was given a break. He returned after 15 minutes and continued the interview with ease. Jonathan took a reflective approach to story-telling and considered the structure and content of his narration. It was evident that Jonathan struggled to outline his thoughts coherently and he was therefore given time to compose himself. He found the experience cathartic and expressed that telling his story enabled him to get a lot off his chest.

Participant 4: Introduction to Rio

Rio was a 14 year old boy, who is in Year 10 and shared his experience in relation to his educational narrative.

Table 18: Introduction to Rio

Pen portrait	Reflective notes in reference to the interview
Rio is of mixed heritage. His father is of Jamaican descent and his mother is White British. He self-identified as Black Caribbean. Rio's hobbies include cooking and creative projects. He lives between his mom and dad's homes. At his mom's, Rio lives with his mom and step-dad alongside his older sister and young brother. Rio's father lives on his own when Rio is not with him. Rio spends 3 days at his mom's and 4 days at his dad. However, the time rotates on a weekly basis. Rio is currently working towards his GCSEs. He passed the grammar school entrance exam but chose not to attend with the support of his biological parents. Rio felt that grammar school education would predestine his future and did not perceive that he fitted in with its ethos.	Rio was persistently keen to be part of this research and attended the interview engaging well. Although of mixed heritage, Rio articulated himself reflecting elements of a Jamaican accent. Rio's narration demonstrated his core values and beliefs about the world. He was open to share the peak and low moments within his educational narrative. He demonstrated a level of maturity in his narration which suggested that he had previously reflected on his experiences. Rio identified how culture played a role in his educational trajectory and experiences and presented as determined, intelligent and pragmatic.

3.8 Evaluation of research

Terms, such as, validity and reliability are suggested as crucial in conducting quantitative research (Thomas, 2013). However, within qualitative research the quality of research is also determined outside of realist assumptions. It is therefore challenging to adopt the terms valid and reliable as validity seeks to capture reality (Braun and Clarke, 2013). Capturing an absolute reality does not fit in with the social constructionist paradigm on which this research is founded. Additionally, this research explores multiple realities and individual truths as narrated by participants (Mertova and Webster, 2007). According to Webster and Mertova (2007) alongside other

literature (Reissman, 2008 and Yardley, 2017), narrative research should not be judged against the same criteria as traditional, quantitative research methods. The authors suggest that reliability refers to dependability of data, whilst validity is concerned with the strength of the analysis and the trustworthiness of the data. In re-orientating the measures adopted in the evaluation of research (suggested by Polkinghorne, 1988), Table 19 highlights the considerations and steps taken to address the dependability, trustworthiness and quality of the research.

Table 19: Considerations and steps taken to address the trustworthiness, dependability and quality of the research taken from Reissman (2008) and Yardley (2008)

Criteria reported by Yardley (2008) and Reissman (2008)	**Steps taken to address criteria within this research**
Sensitivity to context: Contextualising the background research in relevant literature, sensitivity to the socio-cultural context and sensitivity to the perspectives of participants to ensure they are accurately and sensitively conveyed	• A systematic review of existing literature was completed to develop a clear understanding of previous literature and to identify current knowledge alongside gaps for further research. • An inductive and deductive thematic process was conducted. The deductive thematic process utilised the headings provided by McAdams (1995) in reference to peak and low experiences, key influencers and turning points. This matched explicitly with the RQs. The inductive process sought to explore patterns to ensure that the themes generated were not imposed by the researcher. • Quotations and examples were added to the finding section. • Reflexivity was explicitly referred to and acknowledged, with considerations for my ethnicity, positionality and how my actions may have been influential in the data collection and analytic process. • Use of narrative analytic process was supportive in accurately reporting participants' accounts.
Commitment and rigour: Detailed data collection, analysis providing depth and breadth of analysis and methodological	• Inclusion and exclusion criteria delineated and substantiated. • Methodology uniquely used and suitable for the research questions and topic. Justification of the methodology in line with literature provided.

competence to engage effectively with the topic	• Narrative analysis enabled for detailed analysis of individual participants' educational narratives and accounts.
Transparency: Clarity and description of information and interpretation of data, inclusive of justifications of methodological decisions and process. Due consideration of reflexivity of the researcher.	• The methodology chapter has provided a review of the differing qualitative methods considered in line with the RQs and a rationale for the use of narrative methods. • A clear and detailed explanation was outlined in reference to the data analysis process and procedure (inclusive of the step by step process of generating themes) • My positionality and characteristics were made transparently clear, demonstrating an awareness of the impact this had on the data and the participants themselves. This highlighted subjectivity and interpretative bias. • Appendix 5 highlights the process taken in developing codes, the description of codes and generative themes for each case.
Impact and importance: Research should demonstrate practical importance, socio-cultural impact and theoretical influence to support the reader in considering their understanding and perspective about a topic	• This research has reviewed existing literature and has aimed to build upon gaps in research in this area (see Chapter 2). A justification for the research in reference to socio-cultural impact was discussed. • Implication for practice, inclusive of cultural competency and awareness to inform improved practice can be found in Chapters 5 and 6.
Coherence: Clear links made with regards to the chronology, coherence and order of the narratives. Established links made to the research as a whole	• Methodology demonstrated knowledge of a range of methodological choices and their theoretical frame. • A rationale for the methodological choices in this research evidence links and coherence between RQs, methods and outcomes of research considered. • Pen portraits and narrative summaries provided for each case and transformed through narrative restorying into personal educational accounts for the purposes of a wide-range of audiences.

3.9 Reflexivity

The positionality of the research has an influential impact upon the production of knowledge (Burr, 2015). Reflexivity forms an essential part of the research as the researcher's values, knowledge, experiences and subjectivity cannot be readily

detached or forgotten within the research journey (Robson and McCartan, 2016). Openly considering and articulating how these characteristics have influenced the research, Elliott (2005) suggests, enables the credibility and trustworthiness of the research to be enhanced.

As a woman of Caribbean heritage, I accept that my ethnicity and gender have influenced the data collection process and the interpretation of data. Although my Caribbean heritage is somewhat similar to the participants', I arguably adopt an 'insider position' (Berger, 2015). On the other hand, it should be appreciated that the Caribbean is a collection of islands with differing cultures, values and constructs. Furthermore, I do not hold an insider position when considering my gender. I acknowledge that I have had experiences with males with Caribbean heritage but I have not walked in their shoes.

Being a researcher of Caribbean heritage may be viewed by some as having a negative impact on this research. However, on reflection, my knowledge of the nuances within Caribbean culture aided in the rapport-building process and may have contributed to the comfortability and detail shared in the interviews as a shared understanding may have been assumed by the participants. I acknowledge that retaining the researcher role would not separate my experiences and identity from the research process (Andrews, Squire and Tamboukou, 2013). Holsten and Gubrium (1995) suggest that the overt recognition and expansion of identity is crucial in engaging participants in the focus of investigation.

My interest in anti-oppressive practice within educational psychology and my personal interest in the narratives of Black Caribbean males in education led me to conduct research in this area. My experience of growing and developing around Black Caribbean males who had excelled, despite educational disadvantage and challenges, reinforced my interest when shared literature highlighted 'under-achievement' and 'educational failure'. My social constructionist stance recognised that the findings with this research are derived from co-construction through interaction between myself and the participants.

It was important that reflexivity and reflection was a cyclical process. This was achieved through explicitly stating my characteristics during the rapport-building process and to create equilibrium in relation to the power dynamics. Additionally, critical awareness and discussion was implemented through the use of academic supervision and peer review. This was suitable for the verification of interpretative analysis and reflecting upon the interview process and the findings.

3.10 Ethical considerations

In order for this research to be conducted, during the planning phase of the research, the University of Birmingham's Ethical Board provided ethical approval (see Appendix 4) which was accepted in July 2018. The research adhered to the British Psychological Society, Code of Ethics and Conduct (BPS, 2018) and Code of Human Research Ethics (BPS, 2014). Furthermore, ethical considerations were judged in line with the British Educational Research Association's (BERA) 'Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research' (2011). Table 20 details the ethical considerations and actions taken to adhere to ethical standards.

Table 20: Ethical considerations and action to address potential issues

Guideline	Ethical consideration	Actions taken to meet ethical standards
Responsibilities to Participants	Individuals should be treated fairly, sensitively, with dignity, and within an ethic of respect and freedom from prejudice regardless of age, gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, class, nationality, cultural, identity, partnership status, faith, disability, political belief or any other significant difference.	• With a commitment to anti-oppressive practice to which this research to founded upon, in this study the sampling process, interviews and analysis assured that no prejudicial; or oppressive actions were taken. • This remains my ethical duty as a researcher and I appreciate that the narratives shared were if fact gifted to me (Horsdal, 2012), to be treated respectfully. • Many of the characteristics remain unknown to me as a researcher outside of the inclusion and exclusion criteria, unless offered through the interview process.
Voluntary Informed Consent	Participants must understand the process they are to be engaged in, including why their participation is necessary, how it will be used and how and to whom it will be reported. Consent must be provided freely without pressure or duress.	• All participants were informed of what the study consisted of and the expectations of them through oral and written information. • Oral and written consent were asked for prior to their involvement. It was made clear that participants could refrain from continuing and not participate at any time without explanation. See Appendix 6 and 7 for the information sheet and consent for CYP.
Openness and Disclosure	Researchers much secure voluntary informed consent and must avoid deception and subterfuge unless the research design specifically requires it to ensure the appropriate data is collected or that the welfare of the researcher is not put in jeopardy.	• No deception was necessary or required for this research. The aims of the research were therefore shared with participants on the recruitment advertisement and information sheet prior to the scheduled interview process.

Right to Withdraw	All participants must have the right to withdraw from the research for any reason, and at any time. They also need to be fully informed of this right. Any decisions to withdraw must be accepted. Decisions to persuade them to re-engage must be taken with care and no use of coercion or duress of any form must be used.	• All participants were notified that they had the right to withdraw at any time in writing and orally. Participants were also provided with the contact details of myself and my academic supervisor should they wish to withdraw at a later date. They were also provided with a date after which, it would not be feasible for participants to withdraw during the debriefing process. • No consequence for withdrawal was shared with participants. They were informed that the audio-recording of their interview, any transcription completed, would be removed and any data stored destroyed. No data would be reported in the research from participants who had chosen to withdraw.
Children and Vulnerable Young People	Researcher must comply with Articles 3 and 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. The best interests of the child must be the primary consideration. Children who are capable of forming their own views should be granted the right to express their views freely and be facilitated to give fully informed consent. Researchers must recognise that participants may experience distress or discomfort and take all necessary steps to reduce the sense of intrusion and to put them at ease.	• The Rights of Child are of paramount importance and were adhered to. Measures such as terminating interviews with immediate effect if any distress was detected and signposted support provided. Support systems were put in place and made available to all participants who were made aware of them pre and post involvement. • The information shared by participants was respected and dealt with in a confidential manner. Their views will be presented accurately without interpretation on the audio-recording and the unedited transcriptions. • The length of time and expectations of participants were shared to make the interview process predictable and consistent for each case.

	The legal requirements for working with children and vulnerable young people and adults much be complied with. All actions that may cause or result in emotional or other harm must be desisted.	
Detriment Arising from Participation	Researcher must inform participants (or their guardians or responsible others) of any predictable or unexpected detriment arising from the process or findings of the research. Unexpected detriment must be alerted and brought immediately to their attention.	• All participants were read the information sheet and were provided a forum to ask any necessary questions and to clarify any points raised. • Based upon the topic of ethnicity and school experiences, there was always a chance that some negative and distressing life circumstances could be surfaced. Participants were informed about the actions that were available to them inclusive of support systems.
Privacy	All participants' data must be treated with confidentiality and anonymity. Recognition of participants' entitlement to privacy must be duly given and must accord them their rights to confidentiality and anonymity. Researchers must also recognise the participants' rights to be identified with any publication of their original works or other input, if they so wish. Comply with the legal requirements in relation to data storage and the use of personal data as outlined in the Data Protection Act (2018). Participants must know how and why their data is being stored, to what uses it is being put and to whom it may be made available. Participants have	• Recordings and transcriptions were treated with anonymity (with pseudonyms used from the beginning of the interview) and confidentiality. A pseudonym was used to protect participants' names and a code provided to match audio-recordings to their associative participants. • Data, recordings and transcripts were not shared with third parties. • Names of the participants' schools and LA were also anonymised for their protection. Additional notes and comments that would make participants identifiable were removed in the written research. • All sensitive data was stored securely, using encryption and will be destroyed appropriately after its usage. Participants can request their data. Contact details were shared for requests to be made.

	the right to have access to any personal data that is stored in relation to them. Data must be kept stored securely and publication should not directly or indirectly breach agreed confidentiality or anonymity measures.	• Any publication would not breach confidentiality and the anonymity of participants, unless they had requested so in advance. No participants requested their accurate names to be used.
Disclosure	Any consideration to disclose actions or behaviour to the appropriate authorities must be done with due care. The decision to override confidentiality and anonymity must be taken after careful consideration and deliberation. It may be in the best interests of the researcher to make notes on decisions and the reasoning behind them, in case a misconduct complaint arises. Researchers must debrief participants at the end of their research and provide them with copies of any reports or other publications. All participants should be ensured of the outcomes of the research.	• It was recognised that asking participants to recall aspects of their school and wider experiences may cause negative accounts to be relived and to resurface. There was a chance for participants to disclose sensitive issues. Due to the topic of research, a strength-based approach was attempted. However, in exploring low experiences, participants were informed of their right to withdraw. • Careful consideration was made to ensure that all participants met the mental capacity act (2005). As such, expressive and receptive language skills were used as inclusion and exclusion criteria. Safeguarding procedures were also followed. • All participants were informed when the research had been completed and information will be shared with the participants. All outcomes of the research and publication will be shared.
Methods	Methods employed must be fit for the purpose of the research undertaken. A full, honest and amenable justification on the final choice of methods should be offered.	• The methods utilised have been carefully considered, described and justified. Clear considerations were made in relation to the time restrictions and feasibility. • The reliability, validity and generalisable ability of the findings were critically discussed.

	Communicate the extent to which the data collection and analysis techniques, and the inferences to be drawn from the findings, are reliable, valid and generalizable.	• Two full days of narrative training were attended to develop the researcher's skills and knowledge in narrative research in 2018, prior to data collection.
Publication	Recognise the right of the researchers to independently publish findings of their research under their own names. Fulfil obligation to ensure that the findings are placed in the public domain, and within reasonable reach of educational practitioners and policy makers, parents, pupils and the wider public.	• This research will be placed into the public domain in line with the University of Birmingham Thesis guidance. • This thesis will be published under my name as the main contributor.
Responsibilities to the Community of Educational Researchers	Act in a way that is in line with the responsibilities of all those engaged in educational research including academics, professionals, teachers and students.	• The responsibilities of the research community were adhered to when carrying out this research.
Misconduct	Protection of the integrity and reputation of educational research by ensuring the research is conducted to the highest standards is paramount. The research should not bring disrepute. Concerns of malpractice and potential malpractice should be presented to the researchers involved. Researchers should avoid bringing the community into disrepute through public accusation or allegations.	• In practice and in this research, my actions were made with continual consideration for the integrity and standards which I uphold. I made every effort to ensure that the research community was not brought into disrepute. • Malpractice on my behalf or on the behalf of other parties will be reported to the necessary parties. • External and internal scrutiny will be given and has been provided in academic supervision. • Chapter 5 provides critical comments about the use of narrative methodology and improvements that would be suitable. Additionally, other methodological approaches were referenced in

	Researchers must accord due respect to all methodologies and related methods to generate improvement in practice and enhancement of knowledge.	the consideration of future research for improved practice with reference to the research topic and existing literature.
Authorship	A list of those who have made a substantive and identifiable contribution to the generation of the publications. The order of authorship should reflect the relative leadership and contributions made by the researchers concerned.	• The necessary parties who have contributed to the research will be named.
Responsibilities to Educational Professionals, Policy Makers and the General Public	Responsibility to seek to make public the results of their research for the benefit of educational professionals, policy makers and a wider public understanding of educational policy and practice. Communicate findings and the practical significance of their research, in language judged appropriate to the intended audience.	• Findings from the current research may be shared through professional journals to increase awareness of the topic of research. • Research publication will be made public in attempts to share the research with other professional and a wider audience. • Findings were communicated to participants with participants receiving an Amazon voucher as a gift for their time and their narrative restory as a momento. Additional communication of the findings will be provided to any other contributors.

3.11 Data Analysis

3.11.1 Overview

The data analysis process will be delineated with rationales for the narrative analytic procedures provided in reference to: narrative summaries, thematic analysis and narrative restorying. It is argued that it is important for researchers to be more methodologically explicit about the analytic process, particularly within qualitative research (Elliott, 2005; Mauthner and Doucet, 1998; Yardley, 2017).

3.11.2 Transcription process

I transcribed all of the interview audio recordings, despite the challenges highlighted concerning the time-consuming nature of transcription (Atkinson, 1998) and the need to develop a strategy to overcome the complexity of translating interactive dialogues into written form without the loss of additional meaning (Reissman, 2008). Atkinson (1998) suggested that it can take between 3 and 6 hours of transcribing time per 1 hour of audio taping. This view was consistent with my transcription time diary as transcribing the raw data without editing took over 13 hours. Nevertheless, I viewed this aspect of the analysis process as a requirement from the researcher's perspective of knowing and understanding the data in depth and also for increased understanding of the researched group (Elliott, 2005).

The transcription process took place a few weeks after the interview dates; contemporaneous notes were made after each interview denoting each participant's presentation, their demeanour and approach to the interview, alongside my own

reflections as a researcher upon the interview process. As recommended by Elliott (2005), the original transcripts were edited, removing non-lexical utterances (such as ‘umm’, ‘erm’ and ‘err’). Emphasis and extensive pauses were highlighted for more detail enabling the reader to have a greater understanding of the meaning. The content of the narrative remained at the fore of the transcription process and therefore the cleaning process was supportive in emphasising the chronology of events, although the chronology of events was not adhered to in all cases (Elliott, 2005). My voice remained transparent in the transcriptions as I played a role within the sense-making and elicitation process. This enables the reader to have a greater awareness of the context of the narrative (see Appendix 8 for exemplar transcript).

3.11.3 Analytic procedure

Elliott (2005, p.36) asserts that ‘there is as yet no single analytic approach’ that is adopted within narrative research. Arguably, there is no standard, prescriptive, procedural approach recognised as representing narrative analysis but rather a multitude of differing approaches (Elliott, 2005; Reissman, 2008). This can be viewed as a criticism of narrative analysis; however, a range or combination of approaches can be accepted in line with the RQs and the researcher’s values. Mishler (1985) argues that there are three differing approaches to narrative analysis: meaning/ content, structure/ form and the interactional context. On the other hand, Lieblich et al (1998) referenced a different typology suggesting that the wide variation in analytic approaches may be simplified to two dimensions. Firstly, narratives can be characterised by the researcher’s examination of content or form. Secondly, the narratives can be analysed as a whole (i.e. narrative summary) or in short sections, categorised (i.e. category-centred analysis). Table 21 highlights the differences

between narrative analysis based upon content and form adding to the rationale for a bespoke analytic approach incorporating both analyses in answering the RQs.

Table 21: Content and Form analysed within narrative research (Reissman, 2008)

	Content	Form
Description	• The content of a narrative is composed of events and experiences that have occurred over time. • Analysis occurs at the individual level alongside appreciating and understanding the interaction between the individual and key individuals described within the content of the narrative. • Categorical analysis is permitted to identity recurrent themes within the narratives. Collective themes can be identified through cross-case comparison or similarities identified within each case as separate cases.	• The form of the narrative relates to the interwoven story. • The unit of analysis relates to how the story as shared has been pieced together as opposed to the content shared. • Analysis of the form of a narrative enables for deeper reflection upon the individual's means of sense-making of the social world.

It is important to distinguish between the terms 'narrative analysis' and the 'analysis of narratives', as Polkinghorne (1995) described the latter as a bottom-up inductive process generating common themes from the data, whereas narrative analysis evaluates events, linking common threads to produce event-centred descriptions which generate a plot. In line with the RQs (See Section 3.2) and remaining transparent in the description of my analytic approach, both inductive and deductive analyses were

adopted. Labov and Waletsky (1967) presented a model utilising differing component to analyse narratives, proposing the adoption of a structural model. Critically, this model suggests a linear, ordered process; however, accounts are not often presented in a neat conjunctional manner. In line with my RQs, the 'complicating action' component (Labov and Waletsky, 1967) and 'turning points' enable the transition between particular periods of time to be evaluated in understanding what particular events meant to the participants and how it impacted upon their educational narratives over time (Czarniawska, 2004; McAdams, 1995).

Figure 10 details the analytic procedure adopted with reference to the three key analytic processes completed for each individual narrative, namely: narrative summaries, (inductive and deductive) thematic analysis and narrative restorying.

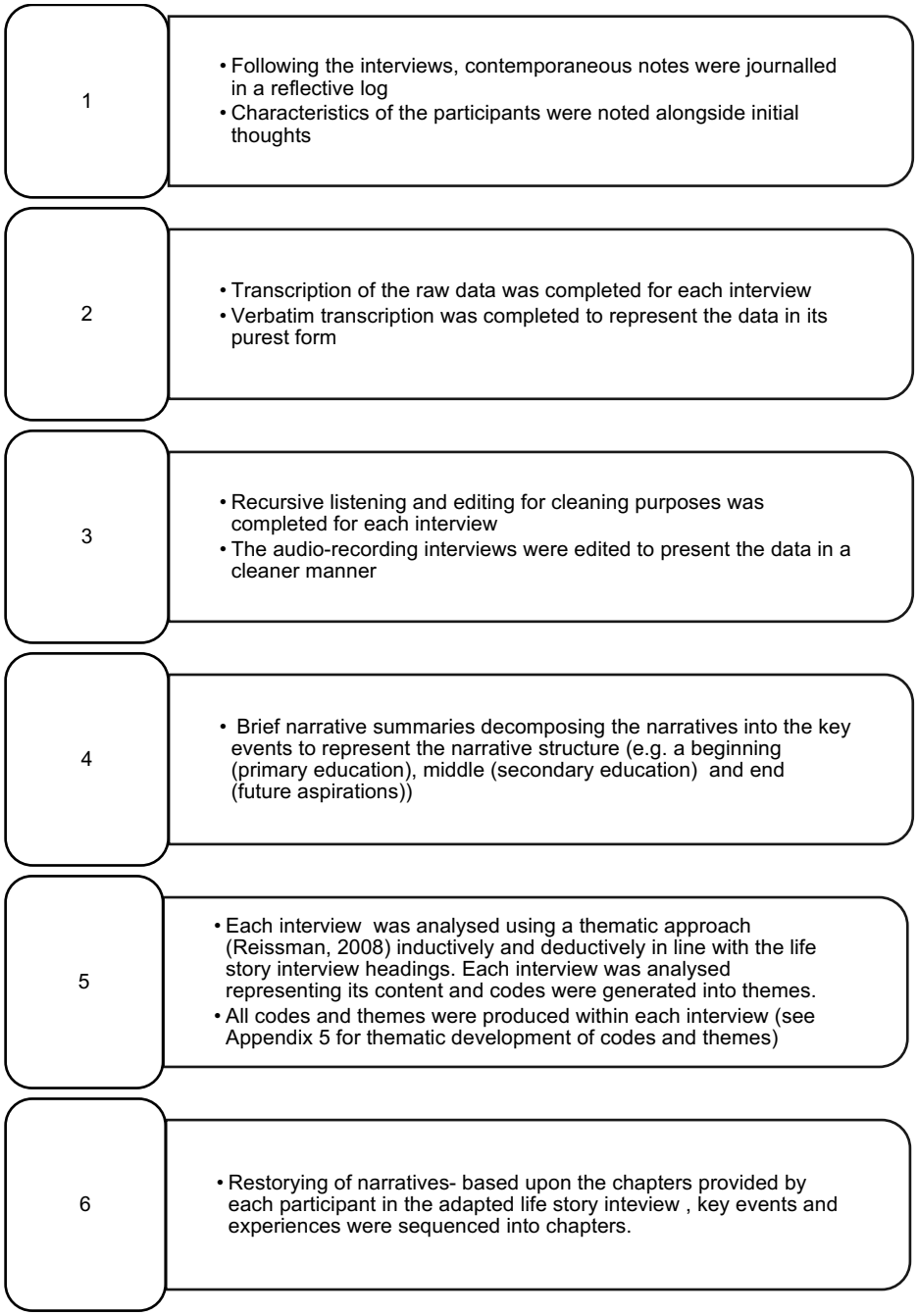


Figure 10: Data analysis procedures used to produce the findings of the current study

3.11.4 Rationale for multiple analytic procedures

3.11.4.1 Short narrative summaries

As suggested by Murray (2015), short summaries of each narrative were completed in order for the reader to become familiar with the different narratives as a whole. Each

summary was decomposed into a story format with a beginning, middle and end (Murray, 2015). This aligned with the heading's primary education, secondary education and the future and related to the RQs well (see Chapter 4). It was crucial that a separate summary for each participant was created to reflect their unique, idiosyncratic nature and narrative.

3.11.4.2 Thematic analysis (inductive and deductive)

Reissman (2008) denotes thematic analysis (TA) as the most common approach adopted within narrative analysis. The author highlights that TA can be used as a single analytic approach within the narrative orientation or as an approach amongst others, in order to appropriately meet the research aims or the epistemological positioning of the researcher. With an interest in the content and common themes within each narrative, an inductive process which was data driven was appropriate. This content was inclusive of the evaluative aspects of the narrator's experiential accounts of events (Mischler, 1995). Opposing Polkinghorne's (1995) approach to identifying common themes 'across' all four narratives, I chose to retain each individual's story without critical comparison and cohesion. The following sequential process was adopted as outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006) for each participant separately. Appendix 5 outlines the exemplar list of codes and themes generated through the process outlined in Table 22.

Table 22: Thematic analysis process

Thematic Stage	Inductive process	Deductive process
1-Familiarising myself with the data	On completing the transcription of all the audio recordings, I listened to the audio recordings again. For each individual case, I read and re-read the transcripts. Emergent codes developed as this process continued.	
2-Coding the data	Data-driven coding of the data for each participant was manually completed.	The key headings used within the semi-structured interview were derived from

	Many codes were identified to present all of the patterns within the data set. The names of codes were generated by me and related directly to the emergent patterns within the data. The names of the codes differed from case to case.	McAdams (1995) to code the data. This approach did not impose my own theory on the data but linked my research questions to the data specifically. Theme headings included: peak experiences, low experiences, key influencers, aspirations. The themes were then broken down into the three phases: primary education, secondary education and the future.
3-Generating themes	The relationships between codes were explored and collated into overarching themes to depict the data. It was important to note that the themes were generated by the researcher, but careful consideration was made in order to retain the representation of the participants' sentiments and accounts. Appendix 5 shares the process of converting initial codes into themes.	
4-Reviewing and ratifying themes	Once all the data for each participant (separately) was collated into themes, I re-listened to the audio recordings to ensure that the authenticity of the data was represented accurately within the generated overarching themes. Some amendments were made due to amend the theme names to represent the data with greater clarity. I also engaged in peer review of the themes (see Chapter 4).	Once all the data for each participant (separately) was collated into themes, I re-listened to the audio recordings to ensure that the authenticity of the data was represented accurately within the generated overarching themes. Some amendments were made due to missed aspects to be changed.
5-Defining final themes	In analysing the themes and patterns, I denoted a title for each theme. Following the peer review of my themes, some of the	The theme headings were pre-structured but adapted to address the RQs based upon the McAdams (1995) life story interview.

	theme names changed for increased clarity.	

3.11.4.3 Narrative restorying

The main focus of the research was to explore the educational narratives conveyed by Black Caribbean adolescent males who are achieving within mainstream education. It was therefore important to generate a story that was representative of participants' accounts. Concepts from Polkinghorne's (1995) 'emplotment' process to synthesise the content of the data in order to present a cohesive, full narrative account were adopted. All of the elements described by Polkinghorne (1995) were not used due to suitability. The restorying process was concerned with linking key events together rather than providing full explanations for the events shared.

The restorying process was focused on providing an in-depth and powerful understanding of participant's narrative accounts. Key events and experiences were identified and linked within the story (Labov and Waletsky, 1967). Explicit evaluations of participants' experiences were included as this reflected their interpretations of experiences and events in their own way (Elliott, 2005). These comments were evaluated based upon the repetition, emotive nature, emphasis and context within which they were made. Turning points within the narratives were also added to represent the changes and transitions within the participants' educational journeys which in some cases contributed to their achievement. The restorying process was a culmination of interpretative co-construction and conclusions made from the analysis of the data.

4.0 FINDINGS

4.1 Overview

In this chapter the research findings are presented as my interpretations of the educational narrative of Black Caribbean adolescent males in mainstream education and their educational achievement. I discuss the findings of all four participants. Due to the wealth and depth of data obtained though the narrative approach and my fidelity to retaining the unique voices of each individual case, supplementary material is evidenced in Appendix 5, 9-12 and 16.

The four participants' narratives were analysed separately in order of data collection to remain akin to my commitment of viewing each participant's story as unique and individualised. As a Black Caribbean female, myself, I acknowledge that my own experiences, knowledge and understanding, may influence my interpretations. It is imperative that as a researcher, self-awareness of my own experiences is highlighted for the reader's purposes. I also acknowledge that as a researcher of the same descent as my participants, a key strength of the research includes my ability to understand the nuanced subtleties that were culturally-specific and eluded to in the participants' story-telling that may have required further questioning (interrupting the flow of the narration) by another researcher. Additionally, I judge it important to emphasise that the interpretation detailed within this research are my own and influenced implicitly by my own experiences.

This section details the findings from each case's narrative, systematically adhering to the three stages of analysis outlined in Section 3.11.4- namely:

1) Narrative summary

2) Thematic analysis
3) Narrative restorying.

These analyses were selected in order to directly address the RQs as outlined in the methodology. One of the main stages of data analysis focused on outlining the narrative as a whole is the narrative summary. I begin reporting the findings reflecting the narrative as a whole, before presenting the analyses focusing on the narrative in its parts. Quotations are used from each case's original transcript in order to continually maintain the authenticity of participants' voices within the interpretations and also to evidence my interpretative process.

4.2 "Working Hard To Achieve"- James' Narrative

4.2.1. Narrative Summary

The narrative summary provides an overview of James' entire educational experiences as a whole. As the focus of this research is based upon educational narratives, representing retrospective and current experiences and also exploring the aspirations of participants, representing the key events under the headings of 'Primary', 'Secondary' and 'Future'. I believe that this reflects the 'beginning', 'middle' and 'end' of James' and subsequent cases educational experiences. The headings I have selected have not been chosen by James' himself. Instead as part of the adapted life story interview, James chose chapters for his educational narrative, detailed in section 4.2.3.

Table 23: Narrative summary of James' educational story

	Researcher's interpretation
Primary	James attended a local primary school with his twin sister. In his educational history, he was well aware of his academic attainment in comparison to his peers. James also explained that his school was not 'the greatest' based upon its Ofsted rating and his experience of

	high staff turnover. Comparison and competition were commonplace in school and home context. However, this had a positive impact upon James' achievement, through his determination and the support of his siblings and his father. Education was a priority in the home with high expectations and highly set standards by James' older sister. James' parents' high aspirations and appropriate support for their children enabled James and his sister to gain entry to single-sex grammar schools.
Secondary	When James was 11 years old, he started at his current grammar school. However, geographically, the school was far away from his home. Having achieved highly in his primary school, James continued to engage in education. Unfortunately, he became aware of the academic positioning of his peers whose higher levels of achievement were causing him to develop coping strategies to process his own grades. James described this experience as upsetting when his grades did not match up to his peers' and he experienced feelings of academic exclusion. Peer influence was predominantly evident within James' secondary experience. Although, challenging at times, peer support also motivated James tp develop a determined effort to achieve goals.
Future	James has very clear aspirations for his future in becoming an investment banker. His articulation of his future goals demonstrates a linear progression and somewhat causality with hard work. His understanding of university and careers demonstrate that his knowledge and research are supported by his older sister as a role model. Meritocracy and parental values appear to support James' description of his aspirations. Working hard is predominantly featured in his future outcomes and throughout his educational narrative.

4.2.2 Themes

The key themes outlined below were reviewed for reliability by a female PhD researcher who had experience in using inductive and deductive thematic analysis. The quotations from James' narrative were provided alongside the key themes generated from the inductive thematic analysis derived from the researcher of this study. The PhD researcher was required to match the quotations to the themes in order to review the inter-rater reliability of the key themes. In reviewing her thematic analysis and observing her process, a reliability of 89% was derived. It was evident when observing her that some of the titles used for the key themes were not specific enough and therefore were changed. For example, transition was adapted to represent transition and independence. The peer-review process was completed for all four

participants. However, in Table 24, James' key themes and the researcher's interpretations of the themes are outlined in Appendix 5.

Table 24: Thematic analysis: inductively derived themes from James' educational narrative

Key themes
• Academic positioning, comparison and competition
• Parental values, expectations and support
• Sibling role model and support
• Positive and negative peer influence
• Academic achievement and progression
• Transition to greater independence
• Mental resilience
• Meritocracy and values
• Behaviour
• School and teachers
• Aspirations

Interpretation of research questions derived from thematic analysis:

RQ1: What are the retrospective and current educational experiences of Black Caribbean adolescent males in mainstream education?

Peak experiences

James' peak experiences in primary education related to his educational experience in class, such as lessons and also his academic achievement. James' recalled his positioning in class as achieving well without being at the top or bottom of his class.

"You know when we were broken into sets. I was never the very smartest or the very fastest but I was always doing quite well." Line 46

Additionally, James was able to recall fond memories of his peers during unstructured times. One of James' peak moments was gaining entry into his current grammar school.

He recalled this experience with a high sense of achievement due to the effort he and his family had made to accelerate James' progress. Although James felt that he did not perform to his best ability and was unsure about taking the test, he appeared pleased by his achievement. Overall, James' peak experiences were predominantly academically driven.

Low experiences

James' recalled incidents of negative behaviour such as fighting as a collective group and being told off as low moments in his educational history. James experienced worry and disappointment when considering his parent's reactions and the consequences of his behaviour.

"probably when I got in trouble. When you get in trouble sometimes .. (you think) why did you do that? And what are the repercussions... sometimes you over- worry about what's going to happen" Line 64

"..trying to make sure you do well, so you don't want to disappoint my mom and my dad" Line 64

Additionally, he expressed an experience of being a victim of bullying through a physical altercation with older children where his mother supported the school in resolving the issue. In secondary school, James' low experiences pertained to his academic positioning in grammar school.

"Each term we get grades, I don't think I did too well- that's a negative moment"

“ Then (the) next day when you get into school, everyone’s sharing their grades. Everyone’s saying they’ve got this and that. Its sort of not feeling part of that.” Line 113

James identified the differences between where he was positioned in primary school as the higher achievers were sat next to each other. However, in his current secondary school, all of his peers are high achievers which impacted upon his sense of self. Despite his parent’s approval of James’ grades, James experienced internal conflict in reassuring himself that his own grades were still adequate and of a good standard despite the higher achievement of his peers.

<u>Key turning points</u>

In primary school, despite having poor influences around him, James also had his twin sister who acted as a moral compass to mediate his poor choices. James recognised in primary school that following the example of poor influencers would lead him to make poor decisions.

“although I had lots of friends, sometimes they could be like a bit of bad influences.. sometimes although you can hang out, some of the stuff that they’re doing you shouldn’t also be doing.” Line 80

In secondary school, in an environment with peers who were academically driven, James’ turning point showed mental resilience in understanding that despite his grades, if he continually tried hard and was determined, he would improve over time as observed in his primary school experience.

RQ2: How do Black Caribbean adolescents narrate the key influencers in their educational history and experiences?

During James' primary education, he recalled that his parents and sibling played a significant role in his educational achievement and drive through their support and academic standards within the home.

"I'd mainly say just my sister really. I'd always had my twin; we'd always see who got higher. One year it may be me who got higher grades, next year it could be her. We could always see that." Line 70

Alongside his home influences, James reflected on the influences of his peers particularly a friend who he regularly competed with in primary school. This competition enabled James to remain focused on his educational progression with determination. Teachers were mentioned as influencers in James' primary history, however, their influence was less specifically recalled and variability in teacher support was narrated.

"some teachers were more helpful than others" Line 60

"some would really try and push you to get ahead" Line 62

In secondary school, James shared that he had a bet with another peer based upon their academic ranking once assessed. It was evident that competition was a motivational factor for James which he viewed as a means of promoting educational achievement.

*"I'd say my older sister- now she's at university. Everything she did, we would be able to compare. She'd do well and we would be able to think, 'well that's what we need to sort of live up to'. She set us a high standard. I'm pretty sure in her GCSEs she got all A's and 11As and 7 of them being A*s. She sets the standard we have to live up to" Line 56*

Similar to his primary experiences, James recalled his older sister as his academic standard and role model, following in her footsteps of academic achievement. I inferred that he had an internal drive to work hard in order to maintain the family standard of achievement. In his future, James narrated the influences of his older sister, following in her footsteps through university attendance and having an understanding of the university experience by his current exposure to it. In James' narrative it was evident that during his secondary years, so far, his peers have become more influential. In future, he suggested that his peers would be influential due to common career paths that they aspire to attain.

RQ3: How do Black Caribbean adolescents narrate their future life outcomes and aspirations?

In James' narrative, it was evident that his aspirations had become personalised, specific and detailed over time. His aspiration to become a runner was based upon his sister's achievement in athletics.

"I think when I was younger I wanted to be a runner cause my sister at the time she was the 2nd fastest in Great Britain for 100 metres. I saw that and wanted to do the same." Line 74

Through James' educational environment at his secondary grammar school (advocating, for example, the exploration of careers earlier on his education), James had a clearer understanding of his short-term goals.

"I'd have chosen my GCSEs, be on course for getting into sixth form and then going onto university and planning the options for university." Line 133

Moreover, James was able to detail his future life outcomes in detail as a factual account, appearing confident that he would achieve his goals and aspirations as long as he worked hard.

4.2.3 Narrative restorying

As part of the narrative restorying process, James' narrative was restructured into the chapters he suggested to represent his educational story. In line with my commitment to advocate each participant's voice and unique experience, the educational narrative has been developed using James' words as transcribed in the original transcript. Minimal editing has occurred; a few single words have been added in order to aid the flow and grammatical accuracy. (please refer to Appendix 9).

4.3 "Focus"- Boris' narrative

4.3.1 Narrative Summary

The narrative summary provides an overview of Boris' entire educational narrative as a whole.

Table 25: Narrative summary of Boris' educational story

	Researcher's interpretation

Primary	Boris attended his local primary school where he was initially nervous and quiet, developing friendships over time. In his educational history, Boris was aware of his academic attainment in comparison to his peers as he was moved into the year above, due to his educational achievement, until Year 3. Boris was also able to narrate his struggles in English, notably his inability to understand and the failure of his teachers to demonstrate how he could make the desired level of progress. Parental support was relied upon for his academic progression in English until Year 5. In Year 5, positive teacher support was eventually received to enable Boris to understand how to improve and make progress in English effectively. Boris was positively recognised within school for his performance and behaviour. He struggled to navigate negative peer relationships in school, seeking to maintain friendships even when they were of negative influence. Boris described this experience as hurtful. This did not, however, deter him from his academic progression but caused him to reflect upon the impact it had upon him.
Secondary	At 11 years of age, Boris started his secondary education. Having achieved well in primary school, the educational trajectory continued throughout the next stage. Boris was consequently happy with his achievement in school. High parental standards and aspirations were held by Boris' mother seeking even more from him academically. Peer influence was again predominantly evident within Boris' secondary experience. Boris had developed coping strategies to manage negative peer influences and sought happiness from his positive peer relationships in school. He engaged with learning outside of school also to develop his skills and knowledge relevant for his future goals. Although aware that equal opportunities were not provided to all in society, Boris remained optimistic and determined to work towards his future and complete his GCSEs with good grades.
Future	Boris has clear aspirations for his future of becoming a game developer. Boris' focus will be more related to his short-term goals of achieving the best grades possible to sustain increased opportunities for the future. Parental and peer support appeared instrumental in his future whilst focussing on his goals.

4.3.2 Themes

In Table 26, Boris' key inductively-derived themes and the researcher's interpretations of the themes.

Table 26: Inductively-derived themes from Boris' educational narrative

Key themes
• Positive teacher feedback and support

• Poor teacher feedback and support
• Positive and negative peer influence
• Academic achievement and progression
• Parental standards and influence
• Self-determination and competence
• Equal opportunities in society
• Autonomy
• Aspirations

Interpretation of research questions derived from thematic analysis:

RQ1: What are the retrospective and current educational experiences of Black Caribbean adolescent males in mainstream education?

Peak experiences

Boris' peak experiences in primary education related to his peer relationships. He thoroughly enjoyed being with his friends. This was consistent over time. In secondary education, Boris recalled his excitement in spending time with his friends during unstructured time

"It would probably be in Year 6 maybe; just being with my friends in general would count as my best moment. I couldn't really pin it to one thing. I'd just say being with my friends." Line 37

Additionally, his educational achievement formed a part of Boris' peak experiences. Boris, (and others, recognised that he was an outstanding student in the early stages of primary school.

"The truth is, I never was actually in my class. I was actually moved into Year 1 because I was seen as an outstanding student. Although, there wasn't any true learning. I was moved

to Year 1 or the year in front until Year 3. The teachers were really happy with me and liked the way of the working and that moved me forward. I think I was fine." Line 20

Boris had acknowledged experiences of positive teacher feedback and his educational ability in comparison to his peers. This highlighted his positioning in school and his academic achievement.

"Just because, they seemed happy whenever they talked to me. They always used to ask me the questions. Like what would be seen as a difficult question in Year 1 of course is quite easy now. For example, even like cards of different items, then like there was a picture of a dog's paw and everyone else said hand then I said paw. Then the teacher said well done!" Line 22

<u>Low experiences</u>

Boris recalled not having many friends at the beginning of school. Over time, he developed friendships but also was required to navigate negative peer influences. In primary school, I inferred that he sought to please others, even to his own detriment. The consequences of following the demands of negative influencers, such as Fred, were described as hurtful, highlighting his desire to be seen in a positive manner by others in school.

"The main low moment that I can remember was when I had this other friend. Lets just call him Fred. Of course, Fred seemed like a great person because I was the person who showed him where the toilets were and that's how we became good friends. Later on in Year 6, he would be a lot different to us so we didn't see him as much as a good friend. He would always back out when something went wrong. We were always straight with him. Because I

was too scared to say no to him every time, I always did what he asked of me. Of course, it led me into a lot of trouble as well. That kind of got to me." Line 49

In secondary school Boris also mentioned negative influences but shared that his coping strategies included ignoring others who were described as not worth his time. Despite recalling negative influences in school, positive peer relationships were also detailed as a coping mechanism. Boris described this experience as 'ying and yang', I inferred this to mean that his positive relationships provided balance to the negative influences.

Boris detailed his progress in English during primary school as a low moment. He expressed that he struggled in English without teacher support, instead disapproval was apparent in his narrative without adequate guidance for progress to occur. His mother's support was therefore paramount.

"In English, I always used to write either too little or spend too much time on what I wanted to choose. So the teacher kept on talking to me about that and every single parents' evening, I was just really sad because I never really understood what I was doing wrong. The teacher always just seemed dissatisfied with what I was doing. But I never understood what I was doing wrong to like get a level 5." Line 30

<u>Key turning points</u>

In primary school, Year 5 formed a key turning point in Boris' educational achievement in English. His teacher provided the necessary support he sought for over many years of primary education.

"I think it was just mainly my teacher because I think she specialised more in English than other subjects so she might have known more about it and like knew the better vocabulary and everything. I think that really helped" Line 33

In secondary school, Boris found increased purpose and drive as he chose his Year 9 subject options. This experience also contributed to increased autonomy for Boris within school and linked with his aspirations for the future. This turning point provided direction and clearer focus for Boris.

"A key turning point in secondary school would probably be in Year 9 as soon as I started my options. I just thought this is what I'm going to be doing, this is what I should be doing. I should start now with my options." Line 106

RQ2: How do Black Caribbean adolescents narrate the key influencers in their educational history and experiences?

During Boris' primary education, he recalled that his mother played a significant role in his educational achievement, particularly in supporting him with English at home.

"Well my mother used to always help me outside of school with my English because every time it was the end of parents evening, she always used to tell me like you should probably do this better e.g. pick better paragraphs or something else. But inside of school I think it was just the same issues kept on coming up over and over again. I don't think I got very much help as I did in Year 5." Line 31

Boris did not detail how much support he received and in what form, but it was evident in his narrative that his mother played an instrumental part in his education. In secondary education, parental influence continued with Boris acknowledging that his parents were there whenever he needed them. Furthermore, Boris detailed his contentment with steady academic achievement but acknowledged the high expectations and standards that his mother set for him.

"I'm getting the grades I'd like to have. Of course, my mother would always want me to do one better. I'd say I'm doing quite well." Line 69

In the future, Boris expressed his espoused belief that his parents would continue to influence his aspirations.

RQ3: How do Black Caribbean adolescents narrate their future life outcomes and aspirations?

During Boris' narrative, it was evident that his aspirations had become clearer over time. In recalling his retrospective primary school aspirations, he stated that 'I did not know what I was doing'. In secondary school, he has a clearer focus upon attaining the best GCSE grades that he possibly can. This was demonstrated during his reflections on the future and his goals. Boris' goals were modest; I inferred that he found this more comfortable than perhaps overestimating his opportunities and ability to attain his future aspirations. He identified education as playing a crucial role in his future success.

"I think it will play a large role because, for example, I said I wanted to be a game developer. So coding and learning all of the software will be quite important for like my interview and

maybe work experience for right now because I'm planning to go to a game developer company so I can actually learn about how they work and what I can do to get there. So hopefully, I can put something on my CV so I can increase my chances of getting that job." Line 122

Boris' narrative highlighted his concerns about equal opportunities in the employment market. He described his hopes of attaining a job, being treated equally despite being of darker complexion.

"In a job, as we all know the world isn't very nice out there, so like opportunities hopefully they stick with me. And obviously, I'm of a darker complexion, hopefully, they will also treat me equally to the rest." Line 116

4.2.3 Narrative restorying

As part of the restorying process, Boris' narrative was restructured into the chapters he suggested to represent his educational story. The educational narrative has been developed using Boris' words as transcribed in the original transcript. Minimal editing has occurred; a few single words have been added in order to aid the flow and grammatical accuracy of Boris' story (please refer to Appendix 10).

4.4 The end is only the beginning- Jonathan's story

4.4.1 Narrative summary

The narrative summary below provides an overview of Jonathan's entire educational narrative as a whole.

Table 27: Narrative summary of Jonathan's educational story

	Researcher's interpretation
Primary	Jonathan's earliest memories start from nursery school. He moved to another city in Year 1 for approximately a year. Once back in his native city, Jonathan attended a local primary school. Due to negative experiences there in Year 2, Jonathan was moved to another primary school until Year 6. Academically, Jonathan did not find school challenging but felt the pressure of assessments in upper key stage 2. Key influences were named, including family members and key staff at school and their influence upon him during primary school was identified. Jonathan shared the development of his strengths and the influence this had on his aspirations.
Secondary	Jonathan described the value of transition to secondary school and the impact this had on his integration into his new school. Year 9 was identified as a key turning point and the changes that occurred were shared. Variable experiences in teaching, lessons and with different members of staff were expressed. Key learning experiences were shared indicating how Jonathan developed additional skills and recognised his strengths in English. Jonathan was able to articulate his strengths and areas for development in his academic work and how this would influence his academic progress.
Future	Jonathan could clearly outline his options when referring to his future after secondary education. He placed significant emphasis on becoming self-sufficient and developing the skills to function independently, with education retaining a prominent role.

4.4.2 Themes

Table 28: Inductively-derived themes from Jonathan's educational narrative

Key themes
• Peer relations, influence and recognition
• Family support, influence and praise
• School changes
• Academic pressure and challenge
• Care free education
• Bullying and anger
• Teacher influence
• Accomplishments and pride
• Teaching and learning
• Independence
• Self-reflection and character building

Interpretation of research questions derived from thematic analysis:

RQ1: What are the retrospective and current educational experiences of Black Caribbean adolescent males in mainstream education?

Peak experiences

Jonathan's peak experiences in primary school related to his accomplishments and the praise and affirmation that came with his success as an athlete. Parental praise and being known by his peers were important for him. Jonathan was able to identify his key strengths in maths and creative writing which continued from primary school to secondary school.

Educational performance was not deemed as a peak experience but peers who supported him were recalled as helpful. It is possible that movements between schools increased, for him, the importance of peer relationships and the need for integration, particularly as Jonathan experienced such negative experiences in primary school.

In secondary school, peak experiences related to both accomplishments in sport and also some subjects that Jonathan did not find challenging. Jonathan recalled identifying additional strengths in English composition, despite his difficulties in other areas of English language.

Low experiences

Jonathan detailed experiences of bullying at primary school which he believes contributed to his challenges with anger management.

"At the time, in the school I did get bullied by three people. They tried to fight me and then like I would defend myself. After probably three times, I got moved, I moved school to XX. Then I was there since Year 2 all the way to Year 6." Line 18

Jonathan suggested that the teaching approaches used in some classes did not extend his learning, neither were the teacher's perceived as being able to manage behaviour in those classes or assert their authority appropriately. Jonathan preferred lessons where he had to think, process, research, apply and answer questions. He was able to distinguish the lessons that provided the style of teaching and learning that worked effectively for him.

"But the other lessons, in my opinion, some teachers didn't know how to teach. Some teachers just didn't know when to assert themselves at the right times. Some teachers were unjust, some teachers gave up easily. Some teachers just the way of teaching didn't really like sink in well with me. Like the way that they taught, some teachers just like stand at the board and we copy down. For me that's just a lesson where I wouldn't have to do anything."

Line 119

Having been a victim of bullying, Jonathan also retained a defender role when he viewed bullying in secondary school. I inferred a strong sense of justice due to the unfairness he had experienced in the management of his bullying in primary school.

<u>Key turning points</u>

Jonathan identified key teachers who provided support for his struggles with anger management, resulting in an increased ability to conduct himself in a more appropriate manner.

"In all honesty, he taught me how to conduct myself cause one of the times since I've got anger problems at the time, I had him as my primary school teacher. I got into a fight and

then since he knew that I wasn't the one who started the fight, I wound up getting angry. Then he took me out and then he was just talking to me for like a brief couple of minutes. Then he was telling me that I can't really let these things get to me cause it's gonna happen a lot of the time but you can't let them get to you like this." Line 72

In secondary school, Jonathan identified Year 9 as a key turning point which ensured that his attention was maintained in class. Prior to this, his attitude towards educational achievement was 'care free', apart from his attainment in English which required increased focus and attention.

"Year 7 was care free. Throughout Year 7, 8 and sometimes in Year 9 was for me, it was care free. Like around probably after the Christmas in Year 9, I started paying more attention. Apart from in English, I was paying attention all the time in English." Line 117

RQ2: How do Black Caribbean adolescents narrate the key influencers in their educational history and experiences?

Jonathan identified a wide family support network including his mother, older brother, aunt and uncle. He described the differing roles each one played in his education but also in building his self-esteem, with his mother being a key influencer throughout his educational narrative.

"*My mom- she is like extremely strict. She is like the tough love kind of person, well she is the tough love kind of person. Like she will make something sound bad just to me make me like push me further. My brother is like the total opposite. He'll make me feel good about myself. He'd push me up in that way." Line 42*

Jonathan's mother's high expectations and standards were identified throughout. However, in primary and secondary education, Jonathan recalled examples of key teachers who played a positive role in his personal and educational development.

"Another good teacher has to be the one and only Miss B. She's like a step mom. Strict, harsh, caring, just like a mom basically because she pushes me but at the same time scolds me like just the way I was brought up. It's just like similarities to me." L142

"there are a lot of teachers that help me." L40

Miss B, identified by Jonathan, was his English teacher of Black Caribbean origin. His close relationship with her contributed to his engagement and progression in English during his secondary education. However, there were also teachers who Jonathan identified as being influential.

RQ3: How do Black Caribbean adolescents narrate their future life outcomes and aspirations?

Within Jonathan's narrative, during his primary education, he had a concrete aspiration of becoming an athlete. However, over time his options for the future had widened to explore apprenticeships and higher education routes at university. Jonathan shared his long-term outcomes for the future as an adult with an ideal future of assets (e.g. a home and a car) but also a vested interest in becoming more independent and self-reliant.

"being realistic about it, depending on like how old I am by the time probably like get to like live by myself, get to have the foundation of like tax, job, how to organise my time properly, learn how to save money better cause I really cannot save money, like communicate better with people, see opening, just more room to do more things cause when I become an adult since I'm always wondering to myself about how my mom is so strict with protection and love but when I become an adult I hope to become more independent and do more things for myself." Line 157

In the future, Jonathan aspired for his family, friends and potential relationship to be significant.

4.4.3 Narrative restorying

Similar to Boris and James' narratives, Jonathan's narrative was restructured into chapters suggested by Jonathan to represent his educational story. Additional editing was required to ensure that grammatical accuracies were provided (please refer to Appendix 11).

4.5 "Experiences: Trying to remain as positive as I can"- Rio's story

4.5.1 Narrative Summary

The narrative summary provides an overview of Rio's entire educational narrative as a whole.

Table 29: Narrative summary of Rio's' educational story

	Researcher's interpretation
Primary	Rio attended his primary school and described himself as a 'good' pupil. He recalled his early memories of attending residential in Year 4; he struggled to recall information earlier than Year 4. Rio described himself as being actively involved in school activities and achieving well through school. Parental influence was described as influential

	in ensuring Rio remained on track in school. Rio recalled his main aspirations in primary school as being able to achieve Level 6 SATs, despite the reservations held by some adults of his capabilities. His primary school memories were described overall as happy.
Secondary	After rejecting a place at grammar school, despite passing the entrance test, Rio attended the same secondary school as his older sister. His key turning point occurred in attending secondary school; he explained that his demeanour changed dramatically. Rio's father had a significant influence upon Rio's educational perspective. Furthermore, Rio's church attendance was a key factor in his change of perspective. Rio recognised that the negative influences of others impacted upon him emotionally. Changes in his influences, environment and family circumstances were a key realisation point for him.
Future	Rio demonstrated clear aspirations for the future and confidence in his own ability to complete his examinations and achieve the goals that he has set for himself. Furthermore, Rio expressed his capabilities in attending university and college without hesitation, detailing his options for future careers. Rio identified his beliefs about education and learning which lay both within and outside the academic domain.

4.5.2 Themes

Table 30: Inductively-derived themes from Rio's' educational narrative

Key themes
• Parental influence
• Positive and negative peer influence
• Teacher influence
• A good, happy person
• Accomplishments
• Self-assurance and confidence
• Values
• Church influence
• Negative behaviour

Interpretation of research questions derived from thematic analysis

Please refer to Appendix 16 for the interpretation of research questions with reference to Rio's narrative.

4.5.3 Narrative restorying

Rio's narrative was restructured into chapters suggested by Rio to represent his educational story. Minimal editing occurred (please refer to Appendix 12).

4.6 Chapter summary

This chapter detailed the analytic process adopted to analyse all participants' narratives and provides my interpretation of the data. Additionally, the application of the analytic process was demonstrated for each case.

5.0 DISCUSSION

5.1 Chapter overview

The key findings from this research, are discussed with reference to Chapter 4, and expanding upon relevant existing literature (see Chapter 2). As in-depth information was elicited from participants, every finding is not discussed for every case with reference to existing literature. Instead, the discussion of key findings from the detailed narratives has been prioritised for this discussion section. Key findings have been determined by key themes identified in participants' narratives; dominant themes that were recurrent in multiple case's narratives; and relevance to professional practice. A summary of the key findings will be provided, before outlining the contributions of the current study to the wider context. Implications for EP and school-based practice are considered, and methodological limitations are evaluated.

5.2 Discussion of findings with reference to RQ1: What are the retrospective and current educational narratives of BC adolescent males achieving in secondary mainstream education?

5.2.1 Achievement

Previous literature acknowledged that it is impossible for a singular factor to explain educational achievement (Rhamie, 2012). However, nationally, and at times locally, pupil achievement is measured solely by performance in assessments as demonstrated in Chapter 2.5.3. In Chapter 4, participants expressed the educational experiences salient to their educational narrative. Achievement within their narrative was academic but also personal. For example, Rio's peak experience in primary school related to academically achieving Level 6s in national examinations. However, over

time, he acknowledged the value of completing his GCSEs successfully with grades he was proud of but considered his character development (becoming a happier, positive individual) of equal importance. This research has highlighted that achievement should be judged on a broader scale in schools alongside academic performance. Achievements were socially constructed by participants to involve accomplishments such as independent competence at playing instruments, identification of new skills (for example poetry skills in Jonathan's narrative) and changed behaviour.

5.2.2 Individual characteristics

Both extrinsic and intrinsic motivations were demonstrated by the participants' narratives (similar to the findings of Rhamie and Hallam, 2002). James, for example, thrived under conditions of competition and sought to succeed due to his school's ranking system but also his family script of high achievement. Rio, on the other hand, having experienced negative issues in school was intrinsically motivated and determined to achieve and his narrative demonstrated a theme of self-confidence in his capabilities, based upon previous academic success. These personal characteristics of motivation, confidence, awareness of ability and determination supported findings detailed in Hallam and Rhamie (2002) and Rhamie (2012). However, James' narrative added a new finding with respect to his mental resilience. This was crucial to James' ability to reframe his academic achievements in the midst of high-achieving grammar school students. Despite his high achievement and progression over time, he was required to reaffirm that his grades were 'good enough' when making comparisons with high-achieving peers. This finding had implications for school systems where BC pupils may receive education in sets. The key individual

characteristics that supported in the participants' educational achievement also interacted with home, school and community systems (in line with the findings of Hallam and Rhamie, 2002).

5.2.3 Home

Supporting previous literature, the findings indicated that home and family environments were significant to the educational narratives of all participants (Osler, 1997; Sewell, 2000; Hallam and Rhamie, 2002; Byfield, 2008; Rhamie, 2012: Wright, 2013). This finding contradicted the belief that BC parental engagement and family practice in education were explanations for underachievement (Wright, 2010). Boris and James' narratives indicated that increased parental knowledge and experience of the education system were supportive in their targeted development areas. These findings align with previous research highlighting parents whose active support in their child's education outside of school was contributory to academic achievement (Rollock et. al. 2012; Rhamie, 2012). Participants' narrative acknowledged, examples of extensive parental support (e.g. James' story). Boris' narrative illuminated the usefulness of parental support in his drive to participate in extra-curricular activities such as learning the piano independently.

Information pertaining to parental levels of occupations and levels of education would have been useful in determining whether parental educational knowledge and experience impacted upon the educational achievement of participants (like Rhamie, 2012) However, the degree to which the information was necessarily relevant to the research questions is debatable (Tomlinson 1983). Despite this, all participants detailed the home values and high expectations which contributed to their perceptions

of high educational achievement; for example, Boris, who expressed that he was personally content with his achievement to date, while pointing out that his mother would be satisfied with even achieving even more.

Demie and Mclean (2017) identified wider factors that contributed to the underachievement of BC pupils, two of which were absent fathers and lack of role models. Within the educational narratives of Rio and James, their fathers played a prominent role in their narratives and progression. Rio detailed that his father's narrative was a key turning point in enabling him to become focused upon his educational outcomes and brought about positive behavioural changes. It is possible that the role of male figures in the participants' narrative supported their achievement. There is limited research which explores the impact of family composition on the educational achievement of this population. Where fathers were not stated as playing a prominent role, mothers and wider family support networks were outlined as projecting high expectations and standards.

5.2.4 School

Participants' narratives provided salient recollections of experiences within schools. For three participants, Year 9 was recalled as a pivotal turning point with respect to their attitudes to learning. As greater opportunities for autonomy were provided through the selection of subject options, Boris expressed education as purposeful. Other participants (i.e. Jonathan and Rio) noticed a shift in their attention, attitude and engagement in lessons. All participants shared their understanding of academic

strengths and areas of development with motivations to continually progress and work to improve their attainment.

Competition featured significantly as part of the school ethos in James' grammar school. This fostered increased motivation and awareness of his ability and academic achievement in comparison to his peers. This competitive environment enabled James and his peers to continually strive for better (for example, improving their ranking position). On the other hand, this caused some emotional discomfort, when achievement was measured solely by performance. This was a new finding as previous research (e.g. Rhamie, 2012) had identified competition as a positive driver of achievement without consideration of the negative emotional impact this could have in differing schools (e.g. grammar schooling).

Perceived ineffective teaching and learning was a feature in the participants' experiences, particularly in primary school. Three out of four of participants' narrative detailed experiences where additional parental support was necessary and influential in their academic progression due to poor teaching and monitoring. Reliance upon parental support for academic progression suggests that effective teaching and learning (reported by Demie and Mclean (2018) as a key contributory factor for increased performance of BC pupils) was inconsistent. This was further exemplified in Jonathan's narrative as he shared his experiences of good and poor teaching where his learning was not expansive with limited challenge in secondary school. These accounts support Rhamie's (2012, p.700) view that 'schools have responsibility for educating African Caribbean pupils to achieve their full potential'. The findings indicated that quality first teaching and learning were required and missing at pivotal

moments as shown in participants' narratives. Participants, such as Jonathan, were able to detail teaching approaches that were beneficial and conducive to his educational progression. Targeted monitoring and intervention in school would have benefitted both Boris and James, whose parents' targeted support enabled academic progression. However, it is the responsibility of teachers to ensure that all students make adequate progress over time, particularly for disadvantaged pupils and those at risk of underachievement (DfE, 2011).

Despite evidence of variable teaching approaches, both positive and less effective from the participants' perspectives, all were able to suggest at least one teacher who was supportive within their narrative. As three of them attended the same school, a BC teacher was described as a key adult who supported them academically in English but also personally. This reflection of BC cultural nuances provided a sense of cultural connectedness for participants aligning with expectations, guidance and support from home where were mirrored in school (Gosai, 2011; Demie and Mclean, 2018). As suggested, by Demie and Mclean (2018) this significant adult described by a participant as a 'step mom' highlighted the impact of diversity within the school workforce with nurture, accountability, trust and a sense of belonging being developed within the school environment as cultural nuances were understood and recognised (Gosai, 2011).

Similar to Rhamie's (2012) findings, despite participants' achievement levels, they all had experienced negative issues in their educational narratives at school. Although previously attributed to racism and negative views of BC young people (Majors, 2001; Sewell, 1997; Gillborn and Mirza, 2000; Gillborn and Youdell, 2000), within participants'

narratives, peer conflict such as bullying, and the development of anger issues appeared more prominent in their recollections of low experiences within school. There was evidence of low teacher expectations (Crozier, 2005; Maylor et al., 2006; Gillborn and Youdell, 2000; Demie and Mclean, 2017) with a lack of targeted support with educational progression as exemplified by Boris's narrative.

Like Rhamie (2012), all the key low experiences shared took place at school. Rio also mentioned the impact of his mother's illness upon him emotionally but did not suggest that this affected his academic achievement. Two participants (i.e. James and Jonathan), whilst engaging in the research, were comfortable enough to share their low and vulnerable experiences of bullying. Negative peer pressure was a feature of underachievement in research (Demie and Mclean, 2017). However, strong supportive home environments enabled participants to counteract the negative impact of school experiences such as bullying. In support of Rhamie (2012), the interaction between the home and school systems provided what was necessary for negative trajectories, for example, with Rio, to make a positive turn with limited effect to his academic achievement.

5.2.5 Community

Participants engaged in hobbies and activities outside of school, such as clubs and church activities. Two participants mentioned church as contributing to positive changes, supporting previous research (Channer, 1995; Rhamie, 2012; Dumangane Jr, 2017 and Demie and Mclean, 2018). Rio, for example, detailed that re-engaging with church attendance partially contributed to changes in his negative behaviours in school. He described the key messages that assisted in his ability to distance himself

from negative peer influences to develop positive peer relationships which were a source of support during his low moments (e.g. his mother becoming ill). This supported findings by Dumangane Jr (2017) where practices of faith formed a protection from destructive behaviours. In Rio's case, this related to positive behaviour changes. Sporting activities were prominently referred to in Jonathan's narrative as a source of accomplishment and team interaction, alongside discipline to achieve specific goals. The interaction of school, home and community provided participants with a sense of accomplishment, increased skills and greater awareness of the wider context of achievement outside academia.

5.3 Discussion of findings with reference to RQ2: How do achieving BC adolescent males narrate the key influences in their educational history and experiences?

5.3.1 Parental influence

All participants acknowledged parental influence throughout their educational narratives in the form of guidance, practical help (for example, tutoring and buying additional books), praise and affirmation. Parents were described as being actively involved in the participants' education with high standards and expectations. Additionally, narratives such as those of Boris, Rio and Jonathan highlighted the challenge that their parents placed upon them to continually succeed. Rio explained that his father regretted wasting the educational opportunities he was afforded in England and therefore sought for his son to avoid similar mistakes. Alternatively, aligned with cultural values described by Phillips and Phillips (1998), high standards of

education were passed down to participants and reinforced within the home environment.

5.3.2 Key role models

The findings indicated that key role models played an influential part. In James' narrative, he expressed increased knowledge and exposure to higher education due to his older sister's influence and achievement. He described his older sister as the benchmark for him to follow the family script to achieve highly both academically and outside of school. James had been exposed to university life by staying with his older sister; this provided him with a greater understanding of how his aspirations could be realised and an improved awareness of route needed in order to access higher education. James demonstrated determination to avoid deviating from the path outlined by his sister.

5.3.3 Peer influence

All participants placed great emphasis upon peer relationships in their retrospective and current experiences with a view to retain positive peer influences in the future. Due to negative issues in school, all participants had learnt over time how to distinguish between positive and negative peer influences. The latter included incidents of bullying, negative peer pressure, and following negative behaviour. In previous literature, navigating negative peer influence is not prominently illuminated as a factor that is influential in the achievement of BC adolescent males, although it is acknowledged as a wider factor of underachievement in English schools (Demie and Mclean, 2018). Positive peer relationships were viewed as a support system when difficult personal

circumstances occurred and supportive within the school environment. The emotional impact of negative experiences was processed reflectively by Rio and Jonathan. The narrative methodology allowed for insight into the development of Jonathan's challenges with managing his anger which stemmed from his experiences of bullying and the injustice experienced in his primary school environment. Although self-motivated, Rio also reflected upon the emotional impact of following negative peer influences in secondary school, highlighting the emotional heaviness he experienced.

5.3.4 Teacher influence

Despite some negative experiences, participants could name teachers who were positively influential within their school environment. This was a key finding of this research; however, it may be limited in its applicability as every school is different with differing staff compositions. However, this finding highlights the importance of having nurturing, understanding teaching staff; diversity within the school workforce; and ensuring that trainees understand the unique needs of minority ethnic groups and race equality for this group of YP.

This research supports, Demie and Mclean (2018), call for an increase in diversity within the educational workforce and excellent leadership prioritising high standards and high achievement for all pupils. This was beneficial for two out of four of the participants, where the boys expressed their close relationship with a BC English teacher who was perceived as 'a step mother' to whom they could speak to about 'anything'. The participants' narratives highlighted the influence and value of the teachers in understanding them and the ability to discuss pertinent issues with a sense of connectedness. The value described by the participants suggested a cultural

dimension that supported in fostering connectedness. However, this was not exclusive to BC teachers. Additional teachers were named as influential due to their actions, nurturing approach and openness in understanding of the male participants' characters in negative situations.

5.4 Discussion of findings with reference to RQ3: How do achieving BC adolescent males narrate their future life outcomes and aspirations?

5.4.1 Goals

All participants had goals and aspirations for the future, many with academic short-term goals (for example, completing their GCSEs achieving target high grades or grades they would be proud of). James, based upon his older sister's academic pathway, had a family script of high achievement and therefore his aspirations were motivated by following her footsteps in attending university. James' aspirations were linear with a clear direction. Additionally, in school, career options and pathways had been discussed from early on in his secondary experience. He was able to detail salaries and what was required in order for him to pursue differing careers. This was a key finding and has implications for school professionals. It is possible that with early awareness of the varying roles and career options available, BC pupils may be more fully engaged in education with a clear purpose and goal for the long-term future. Furthermore, associating with peers who shared similar high aspirations for their future was supportive in developing clarity concerning future life aspirations (Robertson and Symons, 2003).

Education was regarded as crucial in all of the participants' narratives, indicating the value they place upon education and life outcomes. Some participants had clear ideas including the appropriate work experience in their desired field of work, such as Boris. Rio, on the other hand, focused more on his immediate goals in achieving his target grades in his GCSEs and felt that his personal development was as important as his educational outcomes. Rio and Jonathan highlighted the value of educational achievement alongside life skills, such as financial management, managing a home and their independence. This also suggests that schools have responsibilities outside the curriculum to ensure the development of skills that will enable students to develop wider life skills essential for their future independence.

Future life outcomes also caused Boris to consider equal opportunities. His narrative highlighted race as a potential barrier to increased opportunities. Boris hoped that he would be 'treated equally' explaining that he was of a 'darker complexion'. I inferred that race and equal opportunity in the wider society was worrying for Boris and that despite his educational outcomes, he may continue to be restricted in his aspirational opportunities. Consequently, he was seeking to gain earlier experience to place him in good stead. Race discrimination is not new in BC research, although educational disadvantage was previously attributed to cultural differences (Coard, 1971; Swann, 1985; Rampton, 1981). Hamilton (2018) highlighted, in assessing Birmingham's BC higher education context, that despite BC students entering universities at the appropriate age and having the highest overall proportional representation in the high education sector during 2007-2013, the proportion of their white British counterparts attending Russell group institutions was three times higher than that of BC students. It was suggested that the lower incidence of BC students in Russell group higher

education institutions ‘valorised by employers in professions’ limited the economic opportunities and employment options in the future.

5.5 Ecological System Theory

Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) ecological model, which explores a range of interconnecting factors, was identified as a useful framework to understanding the narratives of the participants in this study. Similar to the approach adopted by Rhamie and Hallam (2002), the emergent findings provided an application of the ecological systems model where both contextual, family, school and individual factors were contributory to the educational achievement of participants through their narratives. This model enabled participants to retain educational achievement and resilience despite the negative experiences narrated. Furthermore, the findings exemplified that individual characteristics were not enough to overcome the challenges participants faced.

5.5.1 Theory application

The ecological model (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) enables the holistic examination of environmental factors, their influence and dynamics. The five ecological systems consist of the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem and the chronosystem. All systems are interconnected, exemplified in each participant’s narrative as clear examples of the system relations emerged from the findings. Examples at each system will be given demonstrating the ecological theoretical application and how this relates to the understanding of the participant’s educational experiences.

The ecological model begins with the individual at the center, as such, this research has gained the participant's personal experiences through oral narration. By considering factors outside of themselves, participants were able to contemplate and evaluate how experiences had impacted upon them at various levels in the ecological system.

Firstly, the microsystem examines individuals as objects within the immediate environment and its influence upon the individual. For Rio, he evaluated negative and positive peer influence, parental influence, key teachers and church affiliation as impacting upon his educational trajectory.

Secondly, the mesosystem explores the influence the microsystems upon each other such as home, school and community relationships and dynamics. Within Rio's narrative, it was evident that his father's own narrative sharing provided a positive shift in Rio's mindset and attitude towards his education and school focus. The mesosystem allows for positive and negative experiences (Ungar, 2012).

Thirdly, the exosystem explores external environmental influences such as media portrayal, school perspectives and wider social systems. Boris shared his worries about whether he would be treated fairly and be provided positive employment opportunities as a Black Caribbean male.

The macrosystem focuses upon cultural ideologies, attitudes and beliefs. This commonality was particularly evident when participant's spoke about their parents. High parental expectations were detailed in all four narratives and coupled with

parental support demonstrating parental responsibility for advocacy and targeted support. For example, James' father bought resources and spent consistent time with his son and daughter to extend their skills in numeracy and literacy to propel their educational attainment.

Finally, the chronosystem, focused upon time linked with the structure of the interviews as participants considered their educational experiences from the past and the present, informing what they sought for the future. The narrative interview allowed for the evaluation and reflection of participant experiences over time with participant's detailing significant events that shaped their perceptions. For example, for Jonathan he shared his disapproval when viewing the bullying of others based upon his own experience as a victim of bullying in primary school. He reflected upon the development of behavioural difficulties as a result of his experience and was acutely aware of injustice as a result.

5.6 Implications for practice

In this section, the implications drawn from this current study will be discussed with reference to education and practice. Implications for staff and professionals who work in educational settings will be outlined. Finally, further implications for EP practice will be discussed.

5.6.1 Implications for schools and professionals working within schools

5.6.1.1 Teaching and learning

BC students should receive universal support alongside all peers but BC pupils in line with their disadvantages should receive targeted support to ensure that they achieve national standards and make adequate progress in school as a population. A participant highlighted a preference for teaching approaches incorporating the practical application of learning rather than didactic styles of teaching delivery. It may be beneficial for teachers to provide varying learning tasks to cater for a variety of learning styles in most lessons, thus ensuring the progression and engagement of all pupils. As recommended by Demie and Mclean (2018), lesson monitoring with rigorous support systems in place for lessons that are deemed less than good would be reasonable in troubleshooting poorer standards of teaching and learning, whilst offering pair and team engagement in discussions about pedagogy to provide lessons that continually inspire pupils so that good practice is embedded throughout BC pupils' educational history.

Findings within the current study suggested that, whilst participants were individually motivated to learn and achieve, some found elements of their education challenging and identified areas of development to enable them to thrive in lessons. The majority of participants identified English as a challenging subject. It is possible that some BC pupils may experience difficulties in this area and therefore schools should consider the use of internal assessments to determine how targeted support should be delivered. This will ensure that key developmental skills required throughout the key stages are achieved without the need for additional parental resources. Quality first teaching and monitoring should be consistently delivered with early interventions provided where necessary.

School and family systems play substantial roles in the participants' educational experiences and their levels of achievement. Being able to access teaching staff who present as positive role models for BC pupils themselves or those enacting positive messages about BC male capabilities and ability to succeed can be addressed through inclusive curriculums and diversity in the taskforce (Demie and Mclean, 2018). Greater awareness and professional development for all school staff is also beneficial. This could include multi-cultural competence and anti-oppressive practice development. Schools need to be forward-thinking and inclusive in their approach to curriculum delivery with increased sensitivity to the needs of differing ethnic groups in order to promote positive identities and a culture of increased respect for racial diversity.

5.6.1.2 Teachers, the workforce and leadership

Leadership teams in schools should develop whole-school approaches to targeting pupils at risk of underachievement and promoting the achievement of pupils who are achieving. Schools should support BC pupils to explore post-16 employment options critically and develop their understanding of the range of pathways available to them in attaining their aspirations. This study identified that all participants in Year 10 identified Year 9 as a pivotal point in their educational focus, although one may argue that it may be the year that was easiest for them to remember more clearly. Justifications contrary to that proposition relate to the participants' ability to describe the curriculum changes in expectation and demand, alongside the perceived purpose of education in learning subjects of personal relevance. In Year 7 and Year 8, it is important that leadership teams in schools strategically monitor and track the achievement of BC males in school and provide targeted interventions that retain their school engagement such as peer or pastoral mentoring, strength-building interventions,

and extra-curricular activities for the development of prerequisite skills applicable for learning. Based upon the findings of this research, navigating peer relationships can present a challenge for BC male pupils and contribute negatively to a decline in educational focus and attainment. BC males need to be taught how to manage and differentiate between positive and negative peer influences and how to develop the confidence and skills to be assertive in their management of social situations.

In adhering to the Equalities Act (2010), schools have a duty and responsibility to ensure that racial equality is enacted. Locally, it is necessary for schools to strategically identify and address how their current expectations and ethos impact upon and promote BC pupil's educational achievement. Teacher expectations of all students should be high in line with BC's parent's standards for their children. Support through reflective practice and peer supervision within schools would be advantageous in expanding upon perceptions or strategies to support in BC achievement in class. EPs are well-placed to deliver this (Callicott and Leadbetter, 2013).

In view of the findings related to experiences of bullying, schools need to devote time to exploring the deeper issues that may not be visible on the surface. For example, in Jonathan's case, his behaviour may be misconstrued without further exploration and critical reflection upon what may have triggered his emotional outbursts. Schools should continually review their inclusion and bullying policies, with support from external agencies (for example, EPs) who are skilled in considering strategies necessary to promote a culture of positive wellbeing for all pupils, contributing to a school ethos of achievement.

5.6.1.3 School-based interventions

Positive relationships between schools and families should be developed and maintained in order to support communication, partnership-working and expectations that, when mutually embedded, can contribute to educational achievement. Collaboratively, schools and families can be instrumental in supporting pupils to navigate the challenges experienced in secondary education. Targeted additional support should be offered to BC males where irregularities in their demeanour, attainment or wellbeing occur. EPs can be instrumental in supporting schools, families and individuals in providing targeted intervention.

5.6.1.4 Behaviour

Transition to secondary school was highlighted in the findings as a daunting task. Strategies that supported a smooth transition with minimal challenges, related to primary school facilitation. For example, where multiple pupils were moving to the same secondary school, peer relationships had been intentionally fostered within primary school. In addition, attendance at summer schools offered by school partners or the schools themselves can be instrumental in the development of positive peer relationships and the development of social skills prior to secondary school attendance. For pupils who may be more vulnerable to challenges in secondary school, transition programmes and early identification through information gathering and provision planning can be supportive for the receiving school in preparation for new pupils. Established provision and support systems within the receiving school for pupils, who are high attaining, though at risk, can be developed in partnership with the Educational Psychology Service or the link EP during planning meetings.

EPs work alongside school professionals and wider agencies in recommending or implementing preventative, universal or targeted approaches for the development of emotional regulation skills, and cognitive- behavioural approaches. Regarding pupils who present with emotional regulation difficulties (e.g. managing feelings of anger), EPs are well-placed to look beyond the behaviour and consider what the young person is communicating. Constructions of a BC male who presents with emotional regulation difficulties can be damaging or sensitively considered. With BC males being at high risk of exclusion, it is important for schools to provide targeted support and forums for difficulties to be critically explored in greater depth, taking into account differing perspectives of a perceived problem and potential biases. EPs enactment of anti-oppressive practice and their advocacy role are crucial in such situations. Schools should consider the role of positive peer mentorship in schools as a preventative strategy to support BC pupils in managing challenges such as: work demands, relationships with peers and teachers and social situations.

5.6.2 Implications for EP practice

The findings of this research support EP understanding of how best to promote BC male achievement through understanding the educational experiences of participants. It also demonstrates that Black Caribbean adolescent males who are articulate, reflective, motivated and achieving exist in secondary mainstream education and have high aspirations for their futures. Additionally, the findings support in identifying how BC adolescent males have been able to ‘defy the odds’ in maintaining achievement levels despite articulating adverse experiences which could have had longer term negative impacts upon their educational attainment.

Booker, Hart, Moreland and Powell (1989) asserted that EPs have a clear role in ensuring that what is provided by school actually embodies equality of opportunity. The authors highlighted that Coard's (1971) analysis of the EP role as being 'labellers' of black children was with justification in the 1960s and 1970s. Although the need to establish racial equality in education was crucial in the 1970s, it is equally important now, with emphasis upon needs-based assessments and movement away from deficit models, that EPs work as critical friends with service users such as schools to challenge any evidence of inequality, injustice, negative constructions or low expectations of the abilities of Black Caribbean adolescent males. EPs bring a range of skills which are beneficial to BC young people, for example, consultative skills of exploration, clarifying and exploring constructions of a problem with key adults and the individual.

Within EP practice, constructions and narratives concerning pupil achievement are explored and formulated. EPs should actively seek to be aware of individuals who may be achieving academically but present with risks in other areas of their development such as their social or emotional wellbeing. Achievement should not only be measured by academic performance alone but should include the exploration of wider influences and interacting factors that are commonplace in the formulation of a concern. EPs have a role in supporting pupils with special educational needs; however, this role is broad enough to also include the implementation of preventative measures.

In reference to this study, EPs could offer preventative group interventions and bespoke training to raise awareness and provide group supervision to encourage reflective practice in teachers and staff who require development in raising and

maintaining minority achievement (Dunsmuir and Leadbetter, 2010). This supportive forum would be instrumental in exploring systemic issues and uncertainties and also disentangling beliefs within a school culture.

This research has demonstrated the importance of employing differing approaches which are ethnically sensitive in nature. Person-centred approaches are advocated by the SEND Code of Practice (2015) and also the Children and Families Act (2014). This research has demonstrated the richness of data that can be achieved utilising person-centred approaches grounded in Roger's (1959) person-centred theory. The participants demonstrated determination towards their own personal goals of growth. Narrative approaches can be used by EPs in a therapeutic forum to enable individuals to make sense of their experiences, reflect upon the impact of their experiences and the role it has played in their identity development before providing motivation for change and increased control. The success of such work would be based upon the individual's motivation and openness to exploration and change. This was deemed as a positive experience for all participants but could possibly be coupled with individual or group interventions focused upon identity development.

I propose that EPs should act as advocates for young people, provide them with a voice to empower them to reflect upon their experiences and motivate changes for the future. This is necessary in light of the negative portrayal of BC young people in literature and publications, as they are often characterised as failures and poor achievers in society. Shifting the control and choice that BC males have over their life choice can motivate change. I propose that the EPs' role is not only to emphasise ways in which BC male aspirations can become reality but also to facilitate interactions

between the CYP and other individuals within their environment that can play an instrumental role.

EPs' work at a school and family level can be instrumental. Through assessments of need and interventions, EPs can have a greater understanding of the cultural and family narratives and their impact upon the individual (Ncube, 2006). Although, participant's parents were supportive and instrumental to their achievement, EPs need to be cautiously aware and open to the possibility that some BC adolescent's parents may need support themselves. Not all parents may have the educational knowledge or experience of the education system to be aware of effective strategies to support their CYP's educational progression. Greater support and engagement in family-based interventions may be required and beneficial in an individual's achievement.

5.7 Contributions of research to knowledge

5.7.1 Black Caribbean males and educational achievement

This research was conducted to contribute to a gap in the existing literature concerning the educational narratives of Black Caribbean adolescent males who were achieving in secondary mainstream education. Questions concerning the small body of literature focused upon BC males achieving in educational experiences and non-existent literature from a psychological perspective were raised. In light of what was found in chapter 2, the current study builds upon the existing knowledge about BC academic success to provide the educational narratives of BC males utilising a narrative approach, highlighting the importance of key influences from home and school domains, the need to provide key role models and the need for targeted support for

BC males to navigate challenges without impacting upon their achievement. In addition, the current research contributed original findings, highlighting that participants have adverse experiences such as bullying and the manifestation of anger issues as a result of targeted bullying experiences. The results highlighted the vulnerabilities that BC adolescent males also experience and that mental resilience and wider support from peers, parents and key adults can buffer the effects of negative experiences.

The current study has provided additional knowledge in the field of Black Caribbean educational achievement, seeking further research in this under-developed area (see section 5.8). This research adds to the body of research in shifting the narrative from a persistent focus upon underachievement to learn from the achievement of Black Caribbean pupils. Additionally, this research highlighted the importance of viewing BC males as individuals with unique, idiosyncratic experiences rather than a homogenous group.

5.7.2 Narrative methodology- contributions and critique

In implementing narrative approaches within research, I suggest that this approach has a lot to offer in providing rich, in-depth insight into a research area of the lived experiences of adolescent participants. Research seeking to capture the voice of young people should consider utilising narrative approaches in seeking to understand complex processes and experiences in detail. It is important to note that by adopting the narrative approach, power imbalances are managed by placing the participant with greater control over what they seek to share as salient and meaningful to them.

In future research adopting a narrative approach, researchers need to consider whether using the narrative interview with limited researcher questioning promoting open-ended exploration, is truly appropriate for the developmental stage, cognitive ability and linguistic level of their and the research questions. McAdams (2005) suggested that narrative inquiry required higher cognitive skills such as the ability to reflect upon experiences and provide detailed evaluations of actions. Researchers should consider whether providing targeted support to develop these skills with participants would influence the data collected. Jonathan was able to reflect upon his experiences but struggled in his articulation of experience requiring additional clarifying questions to check that clarity of understanding was elicited.

Training and practice in the application of narrative methods are necessary to provide a balance between organic storytelling of experiences and co-construction between the researcher and the researched. EPs in training are encouraged to elicit the pupil voice; narrative methodology has a clear rationale for being further explored on Educational Psychology courses, particularly in the study of under-represented group. Furthermore, in working with ethnic minority groups in practice, using narrative approaches in research has provided a strategy that is transferable to my practice when conducting consultations with parents, young people and staff. It has therefore enhanced my own professional practice and my reflexivity skills.

5.8 Evaluation of research

5.8.1 Dependability and trustworthiness

The trustworthiness and dependability of this research was outlined in Chapter 3 section 3.8.

In this study, it has been continually acknowledged that the findings from the data represent an interpretation that has been influenced by my personal beliefs, values and assumptions. I addressed this by remaining transparent with my choices and the rationale which guided my methodological approach and analytic process. The findings of this research, however, demonstrated the value of qualitative research with its ability to draw insight from participants' individual experiences of a specific phenomenon.

As a Black Caribbean female researcher, the trustworthiness of the participants' educational narrative may be scrutinised, as participants may have shared experiences that they believed I wanted to hear, rather than what was most relevant to their experiences (Reissman, 2008). Equally, participants may have omitted information of value expecting me to understand or infer more of their cultural experiences than was detailed. In practice, based upon the open-ended questions used, participants shared openly what appeared pertinent to themselves.

As retrospective recollections of experiences and events were required, it is possible that incomplete and inaccurate summaries of memories may have been shared in an attempt for participants to make sense of their experiences (Polkinghorne, 1995). Accounts were shared from the present stance; thus, it is likely that some experiences lacked the level of complexity and depth than when previously experienced in the moment. In research with retrospective experiences, it is impossible to truly reveal the

past, neither was this the aim of the research (Reissman, 2008). The subjective and salient truths were sought from participants.

All participants stated that they were happy to hear the outcomes of the research. This exercise will also increase the dependability of the data by gathering participant feedback (Yardley, 2008).

5.8.2 Limitations of research

It is important to acknowledge that the findings were derived from a small sample of participants. Selecting narrative methodology and a multiple case study approach contributed to this. In light of the sample size, broader generalisations and transferability to all Black Caribbean adolescent males would be unethical; this research has drawn some recommendations for future consideration which require professionals to use their judgement based upon the individual case presentation and the system to which they are immersed. Furthermore, participants were recruited from two local authorities in the West Midlands and only with parental and informed consent were participants able to engage. Seeking a population who were on track and achieving the expected level of achievement limited the number of participants who were able to participate.

Wider generalisations and conclusions from this data were neither sought nor relevant for the purpose of this research. Moreover, it does not align with the narrative methodology. Even with the small sample, valuable insight can be gained from the under-represented population, as exemplified by this research. The strength of this

research lies in its focus upon a particular context in within the findings remain relevant whilst implication can be drawn with key recommendations made.

Confirmation bias may be arguably present in the process of data collection and analysis, as literature was read and searched in the completion of the application of ethical review prior to the data collection phase of the research. In the information sheet and recruitment advertisement, key publications were shared indicating my knowledge of key literature with relevance to the study. As such, efforts were made to ensure that open questions were used to allow participants to shape the interview process as I responded. Data-driven inductive thematic analysis was conducted to limit theme generation based upon my own assumptions (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

The research questions were influenced by the life story interview; this may have reduced and restricted the responses provided. Broader questions may have influenced the data obtained with a wider range of issues elicited. However, this decision was justified with reference to the age of the participants.

5.9 Future research

A criticism of the application of a small case-study design is the size of the sample and therefore future research may seek to benefit from wider research with larger groups to identify patterns and trends with generalisable characteristics. There is an ongoing need for further research to support and build upon these findings (see Table 31).

Table 31: Future research to build upon current findings

Future research recommendations	Rationale
Revisiting the participants a year after this research to assess the changes occurred since their initial engagement	This research could evaluate the impact of narrative methodology use on the participants' educational trajectory and achievement. Additionally, adjustments to the methodology

	could be made, such as triangulating other people's views to aid in narrative elicitation.
Larger stratified sample	This research would be able to assess the differences in experiences between individuals, schools and geographical areas. This would aid in understanding how variable factors impact upon educational achievement.
Replicate research with differing cultural backgrounds	This research would be able to assess whether the educational experiences detailed by participants were unique to BC adolescent males or whether other ethnic minority groups experience similarities. As White and Black Caribbean ethnicity are a growing population in England, it would be important to examine whether the educational experiences mirror similar findings delineated in this research and how dual heritage impacts upon educational experience.
Triangulation of parental, school and pupil narratives	This research could examine the perspectives of school, home and the individual experiences of retrospective and current educational achievement to assess the factors which contributed to achievement. Teachers, parents and siblings could be interviewed to ascertain their perceptions of each focus participant's educational achievement.
Ethnographic study of BC adolescent male educational achievement in school	The research would permit the researcher to be immersed within the school and home culture in order to develop a greater understanding of the educational experiences first-hand with the ability to examine the ethos and values in action with key recommendations for the future.
EP role in supporting BC pupils and their educational achievement	The research could seek to understand what EPs perceive their role to be in supporting the educational achievement of BC pupils. The research could seek to understand how much is known about the factors that place BC pupils at risk of underachievement and the degree to which, in practice, EP support is sought and in what capacity.
Replicate research with BC adolescent males who are underachieving	This research could empower individuals who are underachieving to consider and reflect upon their retrospective and current experiences of education whilst exploring positive future life outcomes linked with their aspirations.

5.10 Concluding remarks

The aim of this research was to represent the multiple realities and truths of unique Black Caribbean adolescent males who were achieving in secondary mainstream education. Through co-construction between he researcher and the researched, valuable insights into participants' educational narratives were derived. This research demonstrated that these individuals do exist and therefore their achievement is possible with the right guidance and support. EPs have a role and a contributory skillset in supporting this population and empowering others to know that it is achievable overall. The research aimed to empower the participants, but in fact, as a practitioner it has positively shaped new ways of working and enacting anti-oppressive practices so that the under-represented continue to have a voice that is heard. Additionally, it has changed the way in which I listen, hear, interpret and question others.

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7.0 APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: Differing methods considered

I initially considered different qualitative research methods such as grounded theory (GT), interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) and discourse analysis (DA). GT (Glasser and Strauss, 1967) sought to generate a theory grounded in the systematically analysed qualitative data. Although, GT seeks for the theory to be inductively generated from the data, the GT method did not align with my epistemological positioning as I was not seeking to generate a theory but to represent the experiences as discrete cases rather than theory-derived data.

IPA (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009) was more aligned with my research questions in the exploration of participants' experiences, perceptions and views. However, IPA researchers tend to seek to find a homogenous group of which the research question would be appropriate. However, in exploring its epistemology, IPA draws upon realism so identify what and how people think and express their experiences. IPA seeks for the researcher to put aside their own assumptions and biases. Indeed, as a researcher, I sought to gain an understanding of how the participants made sense of their educational experiences, however, I wanted to move away from the notion that Black Caribbean males are a homogenous group. Instead, I sought to share each story as a unique experience rather than describing participants as a group through group-generated themes. As IPA methodology would subject me to seeking meaning across the research group as well as individually, I rejected IPA as a consideration.

Finally, as DA (Potter and Wetherell, 1987) aligns with social constructionism epistemology and ontology (Willig, 2013) and focuses on language as meaning, I explored DA as a consideration. However, with further exploration, DA seemed

inappropriate as language is viewed within social contexts where patterns of discourse may be analysed with focus upon the language itself as the unit of analysis. However, DA is interested in 'the ways in which language is constructive and functional' (Willig, 2013, p.43) as opposed to representational in nature. Thus, DA is concerned with not only the content but also the style and strategies adopted by the language users (i.e. how they share their views (Robson, 2016).

It is suggested that the role of the researcher is that of an author of the research and the researcher is not a witness nor a discoverer (Willig, 2013). As such, DA examines how understanding is produced through an analysis of content, exploring how the story is told, what identities, relationships, and shared meaning are created through language (Starks and Trinidad, 2007). Therefore, the researcher's role is to examine their own place in the discourse(s). According to Stark and Trinidad (2007), it is argued that DA argues that 'language and words, as a system of signs, are in themselves meaningless; it is through the shared, mutually agreed-on use of language that meaning is created'. Although, I am a Black Caribbean female, I did not consider my role to be a participant in the research to situate the analysis based upon my knowledge of the area of research but attend to the participants' accounts with an open mind, highlighting the importance of reflexivity (Starks and Trinidad, 2007). With this in mind, I rejected DA and chose narrative research as my appropriate chose of methodology.

APPENDIX 2: Final interview guide and interview script

2.1 Educational timeline

(used as a visual prompt and a writing/ drawing prompt should the participants feel more comfortable to use the resources)- enlarged to A1

Timeline of my educational experiences

	Primary school	Secondary school	Future
A peak experience (best moment)			
A nadir experience (worst moment)			
Significant people/ characters			
Future			

2.2 Final Semi-structured interview schedule

Beginning the interview

Warm up questions (examples)	o Age and school year o Hobbies o Who do you live with? Who is in your family? Siblings? Do you get on? o What part of the Caribbean are your family from? o How long have you attended_____?
Environmental/ wellbeing questions	o Do you feel comfortable? o Is it too hot? Too cold? o Would you like an adult to be present with you? o Would you like a break? Remember that we can stop and reschedule, if necessary at any point.

Life Chapters (McAdams, 1993)

- Participants will be presented with the educational time line and are invited to choose preferred colours to draw/ write on time line, if they want to.
- Explanation of the timeline to be explained to participants i.e. to plot events in chronological order. Participants will be encouraged to share their story and annotate the time line with key words, pictures or notes. Shapes and notes can be used as a code within their timeline and used to facilitate discussion, if necessary.
- Participants will be asked to imagine their educational life as a film/ story book divided into three chapters: primary school, secondary school and the future. This would form a series of 'chapters', with a format of the past, present and future. Participants will be aware that they can have many chapters but ideally 3-6.
- Participants will be asked about the chapters and their titles at the end of the interview.

Life story questions (adapted from Atkinson, R. (1998) 'The Life Story Interview', California: Sage Publications)

Section of the educational experiences timeline	**Questions focused upon critical events i.e. a peak experiences, a low experience and a key turning point**
Primary school	What was your first memory of attending primary school? How old were you in that memory? Tell me about your primary education. Did you enjoy primary school in the beginning? What was your best memory of primary school? What do you remember most about primary school? What was your worst memory from primary school? Who do your remember most from primary school? What activities were you involved with in school?

	How did they influence you? Who were your key influences in primary school? How did they influence you? Did you have a favourite adult? Have you got a story about them you would like to share with me? How did this adult influence you? What did they teach you? Why were they significant to your primary school experience? What were your aspirations in primary school? What accomplishments in primary school are you most proud of? What contributed to your accomplishments? Was there a key turning point for you in primary school? Can you share what influenced the change? Why was a turning point necessary in your view? What did you learn most about yourself in primary school?
Secondary school	What was your first memory when you started secondary school? Tell me about your secondary education. Did you enjoy secondary school in the beginning? Why? What has been your best memory so far in secondary school? What has been your worst memory of secondary school so far? What accomplishments in secondary school are you most proud of? What contributed to your accomplishments? What activities have you been involved with in school? Who are your key influences in secondary school? How do they influence you? Do you have a favourite adult or adults? Have you got a story about them you would like to share with me? How has ____ influenced you? What have they taught you? Who is significant in your life at the moment whilst at secondary school? What are your aspirations now? Has there been a key turning point in secondary school so far? Can you tell me what contributed to the turning point? Why was a turning point necessary in your opinion? What have you learnt so far about yourself in secondary school?
Future	What do you think your future will look like: - next year? - at the end of secondary school? - when you are an adult? What do you hope to become in the long-term future? What role will education play in your future goals?

	Who would you like to be significant influencers in your life in the future? Who do you think will be your key influencers in the future? What would you like your life to look like in 10 years time?

Question prompts to facilitate elaboration:
Go on…
Anything else…
That's interesting, go on…
Can you expand on that?
Have you got any more stories you would like to share?

Reflections on the narrative:
- Participants will be asked to summarise their whole school experience.
- Participants will be asked to identify any themes that run through the story.
- Participants will be invited to consider a title for their narrative.

Debrief:
- Participants thanked for their involved and asked to reflect upon the interview experience and how they were left feeling afterwards.

APPENDIX 3: Recruitment advertisement

UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM

'Trusting and being heard': Exploring the narratives of Black Caribbean adolescent males in secondary mainstream education.

This information sheet has been provided in the hope that you may be able to identify young people as prospective participants in our research study. Before you decide, it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it will involve.

Sasha Simon, a full-time postgraduate research student at The University of Birmingham, undertakes the research project and she is a Trainee Educational Psychologist working at XXX Educational Psychology Service. This research project forms part of her qualifying doctorate in Educational and Child Psychology.

Description of the study
The project aims to explore the narratives of achieving Black Caribbean adolescent males, attending mainstream education, to consider how their school experiences have contributed to their achievement and their identity, and what implications this has had for their future life outcomes and aspirations.

Purpose of the study
With the introduction of two government publications, The Lammy Review (2017) and the Racial Disparity Audit (2017), there has been increased national awareness concerning the disadvantages that Black Caribbean's experience. Researchers have called for a shift from the negative outcomes, depictions and stereotypes that are published in literature, media and the wider society, towards a strength-based approach of exploring the experiences of successful Black Caribbean males. As a result, this research aims to use an alternative approach to explore the experiences of achieving Black Caribbean adolescents in mainstream education. This research aims to give Black Caribbean males a voice in order to share their individual experiences of education and to tell their story authentically.

Details of the study
The study will involve the young person, following parental consent, to engage in an interview with the student researcher to share their educational experiences from Primary and Secondary education. This means asking the young person to recall and reflect upon key events throughout this time and describe them in detail. The interview will be audio-recorded so the researcher can listen back to the story, as not everything can be written down at the time.

Participant requirements
Participants for this study should meet the following profile:

- Self-identify as Black Caribbean descent;
- Male;
- Mid-high achiever (e.g. on track or attaining above average/target grades)
- Aged between 12 and 16 years old;
- Expressive and receptive language and communication skills to engage in an

interview where they will be able to recall key events from their lives;
- Have attended a mainstream educational setting for a minimum of 6 months
- No statement of Special Educational Needs or Education, Health and Care Plan in place

APPENDIX 4: Approved application for ethical review

UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM
APPLICATION FOR ETHICAL REVIEW

Who should use this form:

This form is to be completed by PIs or supervisors (for PGR student research) who have completed the University of Birmingham's Ethical Review of Research Self Assessment Form (SAF) and have decided that further ethical review and approval is required before the commencement of a given Research Project.

Please be aware that all new research projects undertaken by postgraduate research (PGR) students first registered as from 1st September 2008 will be subject to the University's Ethical Review Process. PGR students first registered before 1st September 2008 should refer to their Department/School/College for further advice.

Researchers in the following categories are to use this form:

1. The project is to be conducted by:
   - staff of the University of Birmingham; or
   - postgraduate research (PGR) students enrolled at the University of Birmingham (to be completed by the student's supervisor);
2. The project is to be conducted at the University of Birmingham by visiting researchers.

Students undertaking undergraduate projects and taught postgraduate (PGT) students should refer to their Department/School for advice.

NOTES:

- An electronic version of the completed form should be submitted to the Research Ethics Officer, at the following email address: aer-ethics@contacts.bham.ac.uk. Please **do not** submit paper copies.
- If, in any section, you find that you have insufficient space, or you wish to supply additional material not specifically requested by the form, please it in a separate file, clearly marked and attached to the submission email.
- If you have any queries about the form, please address them to the Research Ethics Team.

☐ **Before submitting, please tick this box to confirm that you have consulted and understood the following information and guidance and that you have taken it into account when completing your application:**

- **The information and guidance provided on the University's ethics webpages (https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/finance/accounting/Research-Support-Group/Research-Ethics/Ethical-Review-of-Research.aspx)**

- **The University's Code of Practice for Research (http://www.as.bham.ac.uk/legislation/docs/COP_Research.pdf)**

UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM APPLICATION FOR ETHICAL REVIEW	*OFFICE USE ONLY:* Application No: Date Received:

1. TITLE OF PROJECT

'Trusting and being heard': Exploring the narratives of Black Caribbean adolescent males in secondary mainstream education.

2. THIS PROJECT IS:

University of Birmingham Staff Research project ☐
University of Birmingham Postgraduate Research (PGR) Student project ☒
Other ☐ (Please specify):

3. INVESTIGATORS

a) PLEASE GIVE DETAILS OF THE PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS OR SUPERVISORS (FOR PGR STUDENT PROJECTS)

Name: Title / first name / family name	Mr Nicholas Bozic
Highest qualification & position	Academic and professional tutor
School/Department	School of Education (Disability, Inclusion and
Telephone:	0121 414 5959
Email address:	n.m.bozic@bham.ac.uk

Name: Title / first name / family name	Mrs Sue Morris
Highest qualification & position	M. Ed. (Ed Psych) / Programme Director of
School/Department	School of Education (Disability, Inclusion and
Telephone:	0121 414 4880
Email address:	s.k.morris@bham.ac.uk

b) PLEASE GIVE DETAILS OF ANY CO-INVESTIGATORS OR CO-SUPERVISORS (FOR PGR STUDENT PROJECTS)

Name: Title / first name / family name	
Highest qualification & position	
School/Department	
Telephone:	
Email address:	

c) In the case of PGR student projects, please give details of the student

Name of Course of Principal	Sasha-Louise Simon Applied Educational Mr Nicholas Bozic	Student No: Email	[redacted] Sxs1413@bham.ac.uk

Name of Course of study: Principal		Student No: Email	

4. ESTIMATED START Date: May 2018 **OF PROJECT**

ESTIMATED END OF Date: June 2019 **PROJECT**

5. FUNDING

List the funding sources (including internal sources) and give the status of each source.

Funding Body	*Approved/Pending /To be submitted*
None.	

If you are requesting a quick turnaround on your application, please explain the reasons below (including funding-related deadlines). You should be aware that whilst effort will be made in cases of genuine urgency, it will not always be possible for the Ethics Committees to meet such requests.

Sasha-Louise is in Year 2 of the three-tear, full-time postgraduate professional training programme, of which completion of this research forms one of the assessed research requirements. The thesis needs to be submitted in June 2019 for viva voce examination in July/ August of 2019. Thus, ethical approval will enable the empirical/ fieldwork components of the study to begin sooner, causing timely completion and the submission of this work to be more feasible.

6. SUMMARY OF PROJECT

Describe the purpose, background rationale for the proposed project, as well as the hypotheses/research questions to be examined and expected outcomes. This description should be in everyday language that is free from jargon. Please explain any technical terms or discipline-specific phrases.

Purpose

The proposed study aims to explore the narratives of a small sample of achieving black adolescent males of Caribbean heritage, under-represented in literature, to consider how their educational experiences have contributed to their achievement and success and the implication this might have on their future. The proposed research will therefore take a strengths-based perspective. Within the context of this research, the term 'black' refers to students of Afro-Caribbean heritage (who self-identify as 'black'), including those students who are British born individuals of immigrant parents and/or grandparents as well as those students who were born in the Caribbean and then raised in the UK.

Background Rationale

Demie and Mclean (2017,13) states England to be 'one of the more ethnically, linguistically and culturally diverse countries in Europe'. The 2014 census data states that 31% of the school population are from Black and ethnic minority groups. London serves as the city with the largest proportion of Black Caribbean pupils, however, when exploring the variation across Local Authorities, Birmingham retains the largest cohort of Black Caribbean pupils in England of 7407 pupils (Demie and McLean, 2017). Previous research has highlighted the disadvantage that black boys experience, commonly portrayed as 'failures' in education and labelled as 'under-achievers' (Strand, 2012a; Wright, Maylor and Becker, 2016). Demie and Mclean (2017) highlight the gender gap as girls achieve higher averages than boys by a noticeable margin for African, Caribbean and White British pupils' at all key stages. However, for Black Caribbean pupils the gap in performance between boys and girls is higher than for Black African and White British pupils, suggesting the underachievement of boys.

The underachievement of African-Caribbean children overall is not a new phenomenon and has continued to retain the focus of the media and political attention over the past two decades. The attainment gap existing between White and minority ethnic students in the UK is reflected in literature (Gillborn 2012; Strand, 2010, 2011; Gillborn, Demack, Rollock, Warmington, 2017). Strand (2008) highlighted that white working class boys attained the lowest examination attainment at aged 16, however, Rhamie (2012) explicates that further examination of the data indicates that despite African Caribbeans living in home with high socio-economic classifications, where there are high parental aspirations and high academic support, Black Caribbean students continue to underachieve. Thus, Rhamie (2012) illuminates that despite having the characteristics for academic success Black Caribbean students are not producing the academic achievement expected. Gillborn, Demack, Rollock and Warmington (2017), drawing upon the secondary analysis of official statistics in the last 25-year period from the introduction of the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE), in 1988, found that throughout the stated period White students were always at least one and a half times more likely to attain the dominant benchmark than their Black peers. These findings indicate that Black Caribbean pupils continue to underachieve in comparison to children of other races.

In addition to educational disadvantage, Black Caribbean's also experience other evidence of inequality. The following data was reported by the DfE (2014):

- Black pupils are 3 times more likely to be permanently excluded from school than their White peers.
- Only 16% of all Black Caribbean men attend University.
- Black Caribbean's are 8 times as likely to be stopped and searched by the Police than their White counterparts.

- 15% of Black Caribbean men are unemployed in comparison to 5% of the White British counterparts and 30% of Black Caribbean individuals currently live in poverty.

- Lack of support from parents, economic disadvantage, poor housing and home/ family circumstances (Swann, 1985).
- Curriculum not reflecting adequately the needs of a diverse and multi-ethnic society (MacPherson, 1999; Gillborn, 2002).

Race equality over that last year has appeared high on the politic agenda with two government publications: The Lammy Review (2017) and The Racial Disparity Audit (2017). The Racial Disparity Audit (2017) provided an updated overview of the clear disparities and disadvantages that black pupils face (in particular Black boys):

- In terms of their personal wellbeing, adults from a Black background reported the lowest ratings for life satisfaction, and feelings that things they do in life are worthwhile and happiness.
- Black African pupils show higher achievement and progress than Black Caribbean pupils (54% of Black African pupils met the expected standards for reading, writing and maths compared with 43% of Black Caribbean pupils). Black Caribbean pupils fell behind the national average.
- In 2016, Black pupils were 3 times more likely to be eligible for Free School Meals in comparison to their Chinese counterparts.
- Black Caribbean pupils are 3 times more likely to be permanently excluded and 2 times more likely to receive a fixed period exclusion than their White British counterparts.

Despite such negative representations of Black Caribbean students, Rhamie (2007) recommends that a shift from concentrating on Black Caribbean underachievement was necessary to raise the profile of their accomplishments. British Black Caribbean academic success continues to be under-researched (Byfield, 2008; Dumangane Jr, 2017) with few studies in the UK seeking to identify what contributes to achievement (Rhamie and Hallam, 2002; Rhamie, 2012). Rhamie (2012) despite highlighting some improvements in Black Caribbean pupils achievement, calls for a 'new approach'. Rhamie (2012) argues that few studies have explored academic success and what the contributory factors are, thus this was the focus of her study. However, a narrative approach was not adopted, therefore this research aims to add to the body of literature related to Black Caribbean boys' achievement.

Rhamie (2007) argues for a more balanced picture of achievements which would move away from the stereotyped narrative associated with Black Caribbean pupils becoming academic failures. By exploring the narrative of Black Caribbean adolescent boys, who are achieving, it is hoped that Black Caribbean males will be viewed and treated less as a homogenous group but instead viewed as individuals. Thus utilising a narrative inquiry approach provides a means to openly explore participant's constructions of their educational experiences. Rhamie (2012) reported that most participants in her study, regardless of their achievement levels, had negative experiences in school. This research would provide the opportunity for Black Caribbean adolescent males to be heard, as they trust the researcher with their experiences. The Educational Psychologist role includes demonstrating cultural competencies, and advocating the voice of all children, particularly those who are under-represented and in some cases, unheard.

Expected Outcomes:

The research study will highlight narratives of Black Caribbean adolescent males who are achieving and attending mainstream education settings. In doing so, the research will provide opportunities for improved practice for professionals who work with Black Caribbean pupils (for example, mainstream school staff and Educational Psychologists) who may be underachieving by understanding the educational

Research Questions

The following are the research questions to be addressed by this research:

- What is the retrospective and current educational experiences of Black Caribbean adolescent males in mainstream education?
- How do Black Caribbean adolescents narrate the impact of their achievement and educational experiences on themselves and their wider community?
- What is the contribution of past and current educational experiences to the achievement of Black Caribbean adolescent males in mainstream education?

7. CONDUCT OF PROJECT

Please give a description of the research methodology that will be used

Qualitative methods of narrative inquiry will be used in this research. Each young person, with the consent of their parent, will produce an educational timeline (see Appendix 6), which will involve sharing orally or noting down important events

This research will seek to elicit the narrative of a sample of Black Caribbean males and their educational experiences. For this purpose, the research will utilise a narrative approach in order to understand how the key events are perceived, recalled and reflected upon. Each participant, with the consent of their parent, will be given the opportunity to reflect upon key events sequentially. The narrative design enables each participant to be recognised as unique and individual, enabling participants to share their educational story in chronological order, retaining its authenticity and enabling each event to be reflected upon, considering how cause and effect processes may link the events. As a researcher, the narrative design also enables space to explore how the participants have recalled and evaluated key events in their individual stories. Particularly for the sample of study, it is important to represent the diverse range of experiences and the uniqueness of their individual stories, which this approach accounts for. This counteracts the labelling and stereotyping, which has had damaging effects upon the black community as discussed in literature (Demie and McLean, 2017). This research seeks to understand these participants' individual stories, as opposed to attempting to generalise or provide commonalities in shared experiences, which other phenomenological approaches highlight.

Phenomenological research allows the researcher to gain insight into the lived experiences of individuals and is appropriate to the study of individuals from minority ethnic groups. This approach also recognises the role of the researcher and their past experiences, in the research process. As a Black Caribbean researcher, undertaking research focused upon Black Caribbean boys has its benefits particularly in understanding their cultural nuances, however, it is also essential to utilise an approach which aims to minimise the researcher leading or imposing their own values, knowledge or experience onto the participants. Giorgi (2009) discusses reflexivity, self-awareness and bracketing off past knowledge about specific areas of interest.

This research will adopt individual face-to-face, qualitative, semi-structured interviews with 3-5 participants. Each interviewee will speak about their educational experiences in primary and secondary education, providing current and retrospective recounts. This differs from the typical 'life story' interviews in which the interviewee shares with the interviewer their entire life story, thus the interviews would be considered as 'episodic' interviews (considering primarily their educational experiences). An adapted version of the McAdams' (1993) personal narrative interview protocol was produced, making specific amendments to match the research questions and the participants, was created (see Appendix 7). This interview guide was developed to broadly structure each interview.

In line with Murray's (2009) view that the researcher should adopt a technique, which enables the participant to feel comfortable enough, to share and develop their narrative account, visual and creative resources such as visual cues, storyboards, sentence completion tasks, timeline drawing, and/or

8. DOES THE PROJECT INVOLVE PARTICIPATION OF PEOPLE OTHER THAN THE RESEARCHERS AND SUPERVISORS?

Yes ☒ No ☐

Note: 'Participation' includes both active participation (such as when participants take part in an interview) and cases where participants take part in the study without their knowledge and consent at the time (for example, in crowd behaviour research).

If you have answered NO please go to Section 18. If you have answered YES to this question please complete all the following sections.

9. PARTICIPANTS AS THE SUBJECTS OF THE RESEARCH

Describe the number of participants and important characteristics (such as age, gender, location, affiliation, level of fitness, intellectual ability etc.). Specify any inclusion/exclusion criteria to be used.

It is proposed that 3-5 participants will be interviewed in this study. An additional participant for the pilot aspect of study will be utilised. All participants will self-identify as a Black Caribbean male (see section 6 for definition of 'black') attending a mainstream educational setting consistently for a minimum of 6 months. All participants will be in Year 8-11 (12-16 years old). The recruiters will identify all participants as participants who are mid-high achievers, deemed as successfully attaining, whom they believe will be suitable to take part in the project.

Due to the nature of this research in exploring Black Caribbean boys who are achieving well at school, young people with Special Educational Needs (as defined by the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice (DfES, 2015) will be excluded from the project.

10. RECRUITMENT

Please state clearly how the participants will be identified, approached and recruited. Include any relationship between the investigator(s) and participant(s) (e.g. instructor-student).

Note: Attach a copy of any poster(s), advertisement(s) or letter(s) to be used for recruitment.

In order to identify the context for which this research will take place, the researcher will approach Educational Psychologists in Local Authorities in the West Midlands, starting with the Local Authority in which the researcher, as a Trainee Educational Psychologist is based.

The Educational Psychologist who has experience working with mainstream secondary educational settings interested in engaging in the research, will act as a gatekeeper for the research. Therefore, information sheets for parents/ legal guardians and young people (see Appendix 3 and Appendix 4) and recruitment sheets (see Appendix 2) will be given to pass to young people and their parents, if staff believe that a Black Caribbean student may be suitable and willing to take part.

Participants will be provided with a stamped address envelope to post a form where they specify that they are willing to take part in the study and to be contacted to arrange a visit to the school.

Prior to the interviews, individual meetings will be held with the young people whose parents/ carers have given written consent, with parents/ carers present if this wish is indicated. I will explain the remit of the project and what it entails both verbally and in written form (see Appendix 5). All participants will be informed of their right to withdraw at any time during or after the interview. Additionally, face-to-face meetings will also take place with parents want to discuss the research opportunity further.

11. CONSENT

a) Describe the process that the investigator(s) will be using to obtain valid consent. If consent is not to be obtained explain why**.** If the participants are minors or for other reasons are not competent to consent, describe the proposed alternate source of consent, including any permission / information letter to be provided to the person(s) providing the consent.

Consent will be obtained from the Head teachers of the schools where the participants attend and their parents have shared interest in engaging in the research. The content of the research process, interview guide and information sheet, will be shared.

Parents/carers/legal guardians of the participants who may engage in the research will provide written consent, following the receipt of the parental information sheet (see Appendix 4 and Appendix 4a) and having the opportunity to discuss any concerns or questions about the research project. The information sheet will outline clear ethical considerations regarding the right to withdraw; participant expectations; voluntary consent; confidentiality; and data protection/ storage.

Voluntary, informed, written consent will be obtained from all participants, following parental permission. All participants will be in receipt of an information sheet for their reference and all participants will be given time in order to ask any questions they may have about the research (Appendix 3). Once participants report that they understand the information given, a sign consent form will be required to indicate they have understood and are willing to participate with the demands of the research.

It is essential that parental and participant consent be obtained as Isaken and Roper (2010) highlight that to interview young people under 16 years, consent must be obtained from their legal guardians and the participants themselves. This viewpoint is in line with Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, which proposes that children who have the capabilities to form their own opinions should be given the right to make decisions about matters that affect them. In relation to this research project, all participants will be asked to share their views and opinions; therefore, they have the right to provide fully informed consent also.

In the pilot interview, the consent form and information sheet will be presented and used as an opportunity to clarify and obtain feedback regarding the quality of the forms. In order to match the literacy levels of participants and to make the process of confirming or declining consent easier and more accessible, I will:

- Use accessible, simplified language on the information sheet and consent form;
- Discuss with legal guardians and stakeholders about what the research entails; and
- Be clear concerning the possible risks and benefits of participation.

The contact details of the researcher and my supervisors will be given to participants and their parents.

Note: Attach a copy of the Participant Information Sheet (if applicable), the Consent Form (if applicable), the content of any telephone script (if applicable) and any other material that will be used in the consent process.

b) Will the participants be deceived in any way about the purpose of the study? **Yes** ☐ **No** ☐

If yes, please describe the nature and extent of the deception involved. Include how and when the deception will be revealed, and who will administer this feedback.

N/A.

12. PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK

Explain what feedback/ information will be provided to the participants after participation in the research. (For example, a more complete description of the purpose of the research, or access to the results of the research).

After completion of the interviews, participants will have the opportunity to ask questions and/or seek further information about the study. Furthermore, participants will receive personalised 'I poems' reflecting their oral narratives as a memento and a short summary of their data and my interpretations of what this has told me about each participants educational experience, will be provided.

A follow up letter will be sent to parents and head teachers once the data has been analysed summarising key findings from the research project as a whole. Any quotations included will be anonymised to protect the identity of participants. Every care will be taken to ensure quotations involving very specific and sensitive information about a participant will not be revealed, to maintain confidentiality.

13. PARTICIPANT WITHDRAWAL

a) Describe how the participants will be informed of their right to withdraw from the project.

In the consent form and on the information sheets, participants will be made aware of the right to withdraw from the study and will be given information regarding who to contact and how in order to withdraw from the study. Participants will be free to withdraw at any time prior to or up to one month after the interview. It will be noted orally and on the information sheets that participants will have one month following the data collection phase of this project to contact me to ask for their data to be withdrawn from the project. Participants will be informed of the time limit when they

b) Explain any consequences for the participant of withdrawing from the study and indicate what will be done with the participant's data if they withdraw.

If participants withdraw after data collection, consent forms, interview audio-recordings and transcripts will be deleted and destroyed. This data will not be included in the data analysis.

There will be no consequences for participants (in either the pilot or full research study) if they wish to withdraw from the research study.

14. COMPENSATION

Will participants receive compensation for participation?

i) Financial

Yes ☐ **No** ☒

ii) Non-financial **Yes** ☒ **No** ☐

If **Yes** to **either** i) or ii) above, please provide details.

At the end of the project, each participant will be presented with his story as an 'I Poem', a gift voucher of a value of £10, along with a certificate for taking part. To ensure that the compensation does not influence an individual's decision to participate, potential participants will not be informed of the compensation beforehand.

If participants choose to withdraw, how will you deal with compensation?

Participants will be able to retain their gift voucher and certificate if, after the interview, they ask to withdraw from the study.

15. CONFIDENTIALITY

a) Will all participants be anonymous?
Yes ☐ **No** ☒

b) Will all data be treated as confidential?
Yes ☒ **No** ☐

Note: Participants' identity/data will be confidential if an assigned ID code or number is used, but it will not be anonymous. Anonymous data cannot be traced back to an individual participant.

Describe the procedures to be used to ensure anonymity of participants and/or confidentiality of data both during the conduct of the research and in the release of its findings.

Due to the nature of the methodology within this research project, using a narrative approach, direct face-to-face contact with participants will be used. Therefore the identities of participants will not be anonymous within the study. As I will be utilising a small sample, pseudonyms (chosen by the participants) will be used, to ensure that all participant's full names will not be used at any point during the data collection, analysis or write-up. These pseudonyms will also enable each participant's data to be linked by an associated code. Thus, their data will be able to be identified and withdrawn on request.

The data will therefore be confidential, but not anonymous. Each participant will be referred to throughout the research by their pseudonym rather than their real name.

Name of people and places will not be recorded in the findings of the research. Demographic information such as age and sex will be included. No information within the reported findings will be recorded which may make the identities of participants traceable.

Participants will be offered a high level of confidentiality and will be informed of the limits to confidentiality when they give consent. Participants will be informed of the circumstances in which confidentiality may need to be broken, for example, if the individual is at risk to themselves or others, or if there was a safeguarding or criminal activity disclosure.

If participant anonymity or confidentiality is not appropriate to this research project, explain, providing details of how all participants will be advised of the fact that data will not be anonymous or confidential.

Anonymity cannot be offered as the study involves carrying out face-to-face interviews. Participants will be informed of this in the information sheets and consent forms. Confidentiality procedures will be outlined orally and in written form included in the information sheets and consent forms.

All participants will also be informed that their real names will not appear in the final report and will be given the opportunity to provide a pseudonym instead.

16. STORAGE, ACCESS AND DISPOSAL OF DATA

Describe what research data will be stored, where, for what period of time, the measures that will be put in place to ensure security of the data, who will have access to the data, and the method and timing of disposal of the data.

Interviews will be recorded using a storage device and then transcribed (removing names/personal details in the transcription). After an individual interview, electronically audio-recorded data will be moved onto a password-protected and encrypted computer file that only the researcher has access to. The audio files will then be deleted from the audio-recorder. Any written notes taken during the narrative interviews will be stored in a locked drawer when not being used and any notes uploaded onto a computer for university use will be held on an encrypted USB. Once the hard data are stored electronically, all paper noted will be shredded and destroyed.

Participants names will only be included on consent forms which will also be kept in a locked drawer in line with Local Authority Information Governance Procedures, before being transferred onto an encrypted USB.

Details of which participant pseudonym aligns with the participants initials will only be kept on an encrypted USB.

The data will be stored for ten years, in accordance with the University of Birmingham research code of practice.

17. OTHER APPROVALS REQUIRED? e.g. Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks or NHS R&D approvals.

☐ YES ☒ NO ☐ NOT APPLICABLE

If yes, please specify.

As a Trainee Educational Psychologist on the App Ed and Child Psy D programme the researcher holds enhanced DBS clearance.

18. SIGNIFICANCE/BENEFITS

Outline the potential significance and/or benefits of the research

Benefits of this research:

- This project enables Black Caribbean adolescents a voice to express their perspectives
- It enables for Black Caribbean adolescents a means to be listened to as the research is concerned with what the participants share about themselves rather than what others say about them
- In research, improved psychological wellbeing for participants have been linked with narrative approaches.
- The research addresses a gap in literature, which considers the elicitation of the voice of achieving/ successful Black Caribbean boys.
- Findings may hold implications for improved educational practice by staff, professionals and families to support in improved outcomes for Black Caribbean boys by understanding what has contributed to achieving participant's educational experiences.
- The research may be beneficial for other researchers in providing useful insights into carrying out narrative inquiry with young people in a meaningful way.
- The young people's narratives may reveal oppressive practices which need to be recognised and addressed
- The study may help contribute to challenging societal views about Black Caribbean boys by highlighting their strengths and what has contributed to their current achievements in educations.
- The research itself may have a therapeutic impact upon participants, through being listened to and heard by engaging in an opportunity to share their unique narrative accounts in a meaningful way.

19. RISKS

a) Outline any potential risks to **INDIVIDUALS**, including research staff, research participants, other individuals not involved in the research and the measures that will be taken to minimise any risks and the procedures to be adopted in the event of mishap

Risks to Researcher:

Personal physical risk to the researcher is minimal. I will be carrying out 1:1 work with the individual, potentially in the school environment during the school day. To minimise the risk, I will ensure that I adhere with the school safeguarding procedures and that a key adult is aware of the interview venue and is on hand should their assistance be required, during the interview. Emotional personal risk to the researcher is also minimal, but to minimise this potential risk, care must be taken by the researcher to be safe-aware of emotional responses to interviews and use supervision with the research supervisor and peer supervision to monitor this.

Risk to Research Participants:
There is no physical risk to the participants; however, there is a potential risk that some of the interview questions may lead to upsetting recollections of upsetting/ distressing experiences for the participants involved. In these cases, sensitive planning is required. Participants will be interviewed in a manner, which bears in mind and respects individual differences with regards to age, gender, sexuality, religion, disability, class and race.

If the young person presents as distressed or upset at any point during the interview, the interview will be adjourned until the young person had recovered emotional equilibrium sufficiently to wish to continue the conversation. If emotional discomfort is experienced, participants will also be signposted to a designated teacher identified beforehand to provide follow-up support to pupils if necessary. Additionally, I would offer to discontinue the interview and return on another day or, if preferred close the research process. In order to reduce the likelihood of distress occurring, the focus of the interviews will be positively and openly framed with the aim of empowering the participants.

Participants will be debriefed after interviews in order to give participants the

b) Outline any potential risks to **THE ENVIRONMENT and/or SOCIETY** and the measures that will be taken to minimise any risks and the procedures to be adopted in the event of mishap.

There are no anticipated risks to the environment and/or society as a result of this research.

20. ARE THERE ANY OTHER ETHICAL ISSUES RAISED BY THE RESEARCH?

Yes ☐ No ☒

If yes, please specify

21. EXPERT REVIEWER/OPINION

You may be asked to nominate an expert reviewer for certain types of project, including those of an interventional nature or those involving significant risks. If you anticipate that this may apply to your work and you would like to nominate an expert reviewer at this stage, please provide details below.

Name
Contact details (including email address)
Brief explanation of reasons for nominating and/or nominee's suitability

22. CHECKLIST

Please mark if the study involves any of the following:

- Vulnerable groups, such as children and young people aged under 18 years, those with learning disability, or cognitive impairments ☒
- Research that induces or results in or causes anxiety, stress, pain or physical discomfort, or poses a risk of harm to participants (which is more than is expected from everyday life) ☐
- Risk to the personal safety of the researcher ☐
- Deception or research that is conducted without full and informed consent of the participants at time study is carried out ☐
- Administration of a chemical agent or vaccines or other substances (including vitamins or food substances) to human participants. ☐
- Production and/or use of genetically modified plants or microbes ☐
- Results that may have an adverse impact on the environment or food safety ☐
- Results that may be used to develop chemical or biological weapons ☐

Please check that the following documents are attached to your application.

	ATTACHED	NOT APPLICABLE
Recruitment advertisement	☒	☐
Participant information sheet	☒	☐
Consent form	☒	☐
Questionnaire	☐	☒
Interview Schedule	☒	☐

23. DECLARATION BY APPLICANTS

I submit this application on the basis that the information it contains is confidential and will be used by the University of Birmingham for the purposes of ethical review and monitoring of the research project described herein, and to satisfy reporting requirements to regulatory bodies. The information will not be used for any other purpose without my prior consent.

I declare that:

- The information in this form together with any accompanying information is complete and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief and I take full responsibility for it.
- I undertake to abide by University Code of Practice for Research (http://www.as.bham.ac.uk/legislation/docs/COP_Research.pdf) alongside any other relevant professional bodies' codes of conduct and/or ethical guidelines.
- I will report any changes affecting the ethical aspects of the project to the University of Birmingham Research Ethics Officer.
- I will report any adverse or unforeseen events which occur to the relevant Ethics Committee via the University of Birmingham Research Ethics Officer.

Name of principal investigator/project	Nicholas Bozic
Date:	27 March 2018

Please now save your completed form, print a copy for your records, and then email a copy to the Research Ethics Officer, at aer-ethics@contacts.bham.ac.uk. As noted above, please do not submit a paper copy.

APPENDIX 5: Development of codes and themes (exemplars)

Thematic process:

- Data was transcribed
- Recursive listening and editing occurred to clean the data, removing non-lexical utterances
- Narrative summaries were decomposed and represented as key events to represent the narrative structure
- Inductive thematic analysis was completed (see Table 22 for detailed process)
- Deductive thematic analysis completed utilising the life story interview headings adopted in the final interview script
- Restorying of narratives completed based upon chapters derived from participants during the interview process

5.1 Thematic analysis process (James)

Key themes	Quotations
Academic positioning, comparison and competition	47, 62, 70, 101, 109, 113, 117 46,47, 101, 113
Parental values, expectations and support	52, 54, 78, 50, 70, 78, 115, 135
Sibling role model and support	56, 74, 135, 141, 58, 70
Positive and negative peer influence	80, 40,42, 84, 117, 143
Academic achievement and progression	76, 88, 109, 127, 135
Transition	86, 88
Mental resilience	101, 111, 109, 111, 113, 115
Meritocracy and values	131, 139
Behaviour	64, 66, 68, 121, 82
School and teachers	60, 62, 72, 119, 34
Aspirations	125, 129, 133, 135, 145, 147

Development of codes identified through recursive listening to the data

Code name	Quotation line(s)
1. School judgement	34
2. Awareness of academic positioning	46,47, 101, 113
3. Comparison and competition	47, 62, 70, 101, 109, 113, 117
4. Sibling role model	56, 74, 135, 141
5. Parental support	50, 70, 78, 115, 135
6. Parental expectation	52, 54, 78
7. Meritocracy	131, 139
8. Sibling support	58, 70
9. Behaviour and Conflict	64, 66, 68, 121
10. Negative peer influence	80

11. Transitioning	86, 88
12. Independence	86, 88
13. Self-management	88
14. Mental resilience	101, 111
15. Being good enough	109, 111, 113, 115
16. Academic achievement and progression	76, 88, 109, 127, 135
17. Peer influence and support	40,42, 84, 117, 143
18. Future aspirations	125, 129, 133, 135, 145, 147
19. Teachers	60, 62, 72, 119
20. Being a disappointment	64
21. Accountability	82
22. A job for freedom	137

Key themes and their associative codes in James' narrative

Key themes	Codes	Adaptations
Academic positioning, comparison and competition	2 and 3	Separated from academic achievement as distinctive themes
Parental values, expectations and support	5 and 6	
Sibling role model and support	4 and 8	Sibling role model needed to be separated from family influence as an over-arching theme.
Positive and negative peer influence	10 and 17	
Academic achievement and progression	16	
Transition	11, 12 and 13	
Mental resilience	14 and 15	
Meritocracy and values	7	Values added based upon review of themes (inter-rater reliability check/ peer validation)
Behaviour	9, 20 and 21	
School and teachers	1 and 19	
Aspirations	18	

5.1 Inductively-derived themes with researcher interpretations and coded examples

Key themes	Quotations	Researcher's interpretation
Academic positioning, comparison and competition	"I had another kid who was quite good and generally we would compare scores. One of my best friend generally I sat next to him in maths so we could see how each other was doing. Most lessons, it was just like competition whose gonna finish first who gets the most right." "slowly as it carries on it's different because at my old school there was a higher set.. (in) this school everyone is of a high set.. although lots of people are getting high marks, what I am getting is still really good" "sometimes you've got kids getting mostly A*s and its like you've still got to remember if you're getting Bs and As that's still really good." "Each term we get grades, I don't think I did too well- that's a negative moment" " Then (the) next day when you get into school, everyone's sharing their grades. Everyone's saying they've got this and that. It's sort of not feeling part of that."	Comparison and competition featured as a key theme in James' story. It was evident that competition was a motivator in James' educational narrative and academic progression. James' noticed and compared his performance to his peers in class in primary school. However, comparison featured on a macro level in secondary school where the ethos created a culture of competition and as a bi-product comparison. However, over time, comparison has impacted negatively on James' mentally where social exclusion can occur based upon academic performance and position. As such, James has developed an internal script to remind himself that his grades are 'good enough'. In the home context, James also experienced comparison and competition as a twin.
Parental values, expectations and support	"Yeah, they always just said to make sure (you) try your hardest always" "..just try and do well at school so you can get a good education and a good job" ".. in situations, they just sort of would give me that extra push" "..because of SATs and stuff.. my dad bought all the books and got all this stuff. Once we kept that, we had to have go and do this and do this. So when the test came I felt ready." "my parents were saying you just need to work on it and get better"	James' parental influence has had a significance in his educational trajectory. Their values are represented in James' narrative concerning work ethic and academic progression through determination and the provision of extra resources. James' parents adopt a social mobility model using education as the driving force. James' parents investment

	“my parents always say they’ll be able to get me into whichever university I want as long as I’ve got the grades for it” “Naa, my mom and my dad are sort of very into education so (they) just kept telling me to keep pushing at it.” “I struggled with times tables.” “Each week we would get a sheet with.. times tables.” “At first, I was generally at the bottom of my class then slowly my dad (got) sheets and had quizzes with me and my sister. I ended (up) at the top.”	in their children was evident through quizzes, extra homework and the identification of their children’s areas of need. Fundamentally, James’s highlighted his parents’ interest and educational capabilities and ethos which supported all of their children. Interestingly, James’ father was predominantly mentioned as taking an active role in his son’s educational trajectory particularly during primary school and his admission to grammar school.
Sibling role model and support	“I’d say my older sister- now she’s at university. Everything she did, we would be able to compare. She’d do well and we would be able to think, ‘well that’s what we need to sort of live up to’. She set us a high standard. I’m pretty sure in her GCSEs she got all A’s and 11As and 7 of them being A*s. She sets the standard we have to live up to” “We work hard. Then she was just always helping. If I don’t understand, my twin would help and is she didn’t understand then I would help her.” “I’d mainly say just my sister really. I’d always had my twin we’d always see who got higher. One year it may be me who got higher grades, next year it could be her. We could always see that.” “Then my older sister could always say you’re doing well and could help me with it.” “.. probably still my family because with my sister going off to university, I can see what she does and see what I want to do.” “Now she’s at university, we go there and see the system she’s got, what she does and see what its like and think that’s what I want to do and that’s how I want to do it.”	Alongside his parents, James’ had an older sister who was high achieving, setting what he named as a ‘standard’ for him to adhere to. James’ identified his older sister as a key influencer and role model for him academically. Due to age difference, James’s sister also enabled him to consider what is required in his long-term future and what contributes to university education. It is my view that James’ exposure to higher education supported in his solidified and linear view of his secondary and higher education aspirations. Moreover, having an academic standard contributed to his motivation in progressing within education. The competitive element of his home, school and sibling relationships have both a positive impact

		on his academic motivation but also a negative impact upon his sense of self.
Positive and negative peer influence	“although I had lots of friends sometimes they could be like a bit of bad influences.. sometimes although you can hang out, some of the stuff that their doing you shouldn’t also be doing.” “In school, I’d say my friends. We talk about our grades cause each year we have an end of year test. This year, we got like a bet with another friend to see who does best.. cause I know last year, he did quite well so then he’s staying to see how I did. In one or two grades, if it went up its just working hard. Although we are in the same class, there is competition but it’s just to help everyone on.” “still friends aswell… as there is a couple of us that want to be investment bankers. We did a quiz for what job we want to get. Then after you did the quiz, cause they’re online, you could see different jobs and salaries. There’s a couple of us that don’t have many aspirations but still want to do well and earn money. We saw the job and we all thought that’s a good job and saw the hours. You could look at the hours and we thought if we do that although it may not be interesting it means we can just do the job, get it done and then go on and do what we feel like.”	Regardless of his academic achievement, James experiences negative peer influences in school. In his narrative, James disclosed an incident of peer bullying which he relied upon his mother to handle in school. James described guilt and disappointment as driving forces for change when around negative influences. However, a protective influence continued to be his educational achievement and the competition experienced in primary and secondary school. In secondary school, James shared positive experiences with his peers who used their time to explore future occupations. With peer who has a similar educational drive to succeed positively reinforced his thoughts towards becoming an investment banker.
Academic achievement and progression	“my grade.. before I was 120 in the year. Last year I ranked 40 something.. for sixth form you need 5 As.. seeing that I’m well on track for that and over it cause I ended up with 5A*s.. just seeing you’re well on track for it” “Not particularly, trying to figure out what you want to do.. they start preparing you early about what job choices you want to do. I’m not passionate about too many subjects so its just finding the right job.” “What I’ve hear from school its like.. its finding the right university for you”	James had a clear understanding of his academic positioning and progression over time with ranking in secondary school. Summative assessments enabled him to recognise that he was achieving in line with his goals. Moreover, James recognised the school’s influence in ‘preparing you early’ and considering job opportunities in advance in order to plan for his future.

Transition to greater independence	"I'd say on the open days, we had one or two open days" "making friends, going around the school at the time I didn't really know my way around.. it all seemed sort of huge" "I went round, slowly (and) started to think where I went before was close to where I live (this wasn't)"	Attending open days and familiarisation of his secondary environment was supportive in enabling James to navigate his new secondary environment. Additionally, James reflected that he had to become more independent as his twin sister did not attend his school.
Mental resilience	"..you've got kids getting mostly A*s and like As it's like you've still got to remember if you're getting Bs and As that's still really good." ".. at my old school, I saw where I sat. When I came to this school, (I thought) I'm probably not going to be at the top. Then I had an idea that I would slowly be working my way up and trying harder then I can realise that everyone is trying harder and harder. My parents see the grades a really good but I'm seeing all these other people are getting higher grades. It's getting to the stage where you see your grade and still thinking this is definitely a good grade. It's just that these people are getting really good grades." Each term we get grades, I don't think I did too well- that's a negative moment" " Then (the) next day when you get into school, everyone's sharing their grades. Everyone's saying they've got this and that. Its sort of not feeling part of that." "It sort of upset me a bit then slowly you begin to realise lots of people aren't as happy with their grades."	James' narrative indicated scripts that he used in order to increase his mental resilience when in attending secondary school populated with high achievers. Since attending a primary school with mixed ability, it appeared to be culture shock for James when he realised that all pupils were working as hard as him and achieving. In response to this, James developed a mental script of being 'good enough' and attempting to rationalise his scores in comparing them to his peers. When his achievement was not as high as his peers, James discussed experiencing social exclusion e.g. 'not feeling part' of a group of higher achievers. Eventhough his parents were reportedly content with his achievements, James described discontentment and attempts to build himself up through mental rationalising.
Meritocracy and values	".. if I try hard that I definitely can do what I like and encourage others when they aren't doing well.. (I) know that even when someone is doing better than you, you can work towards that."	James' narrative indicated his values and belief in meritocracy (e.g. getting the grades would permit him to attend the university of his choice). I interpret a

	"investment bankers are (working with) maths. So once I get the grades and get into the right university then it shouldn't be too hard to find where I want to go."	paradigm shift, as James sought to encourage others to 'work hard' and sought to nurture others through his negative experiences of not achieving as well as his peers.
Behaviour	"it can mainly be little stuff like talking in lessons, it keeps happening. It is sort of a problem. Other kids have had larger problems. Generally just one or two but (for most of the class its talking in lesson" "..trying to make sure you do well, so you don't want to disappoint my mom and my dad" "I would just tell my mom and she would come into school and most of the time it got sorted out." "I stuck to my work, sometimes I got in trouble but more or less it was alright."	Behaviour featured as an occasionally, with experiences of low-level disruption and becoming negatively influenced by others. James expressed that issues at school were resolved through parental influence. James was motivated to achieve by the thought of disappointing his parents. He recognised their influence and approval was of value to him.
School and teachers	"school wasn't always the greatest. We didn't have a very good Ofsted rating. We had a change in head teacher and then had more problems after that." "some teachers were more helpful than others" "some would really try and push you to get ahead" "a teacher called Mr R.. for a couple of years he was my teacher that we had for most lessons. Then next year, we just had him for maths. It was quite good cause he was sort of a friendly teacher. He (would) come to help if you were struggling." "My history teacher.. my old old RS teacher and our form tutor.. although my class gets the highest grades out of all the other classes and does the best sometimes we've had problems with behaviour and it reflects on the whole class" "our form tutor (is) always super positive"	School was a predominant theme with reference to some teachers who were supportive and accelerated James' progress both in primary and secondary schools. In James' primary school experience, he reflected that his school was not perceived as 'good' by Ofsted demonstrating his understanding of the wider school systems and judgements. Additionally, James appeared to recognise the influence of staff turnover and the difficulties within his school environment.
Aspirations	"In 10 years time, 23. Probably, finishing university thinking where I want to go for my job, probably thinking whether I want to come home depending on how much and if I can afford a property somewhere."	James' aspirations were evident throughout his narrative. He has specific and linear aspirations of succeeding and

	"..use the money certainly investing which by the time I'm earning enough money that I no longer have to work. As long as you keep reinvesting your money, probably investing into companies and inventing maybe." "I'd have chosen my GCSEs, be on course for getting into sixth form and then going onto university and planning the options for university." "..have a good idea of what job I would want to do and going onto a university of my choice."	achieving good GCSE grades, attending the university of his choice and becoming an investment banker. James has researched what he would like to become and has a rationale for his educational trajectory in order to be able to reinvest his money until he is able to retire. James expressed an awareness of options after finishing university and has ideas of what he may choose to do.

5.3 Deductively-derived themes from James' educational narrative related to the research questions and the adapted life story interview themes

Research Questions linked with adapted life story interview sections	**Primary School Experiences (with exemplary quotations)**	**Secondary School Experiences (with exemplary quotations)**	**Future (with exemplary quotations)**
RQ1: What are the retrospective and current educational experiences of Black Caribbean adolescent males in mainstream education?	**Peak experiences** "I had a lot of good memories mainly going out with my friends towards the end." Line 40 "Lessons were actually quite good. I did well in my class" "You know when we were broken into sets. I was never the very smartest or the very fastest but I was always doing quite well." Line 46	**Peak experiences** "mainly getting into this school" Line 76 "..because of SATs and stuff.. my dad bought all the books and got all this stuff. Once we kept that, we had to have go and do this and do this. So when the test came I felt ready." "I didn't feel I did too well in the test.. I don't think I was originally going to take it cause (school was) so far away" Line 78	

		“my grade.. before I was 120 in the year. Last year I ranked 40 something.. for sixth form you need 5 As.. seeing that I’m well on track for that and over it cause I ended up with 5A*s.. just seeing you’re well on track for it”	
	Nadir (low experiences) “probably when I got in trouble. When you get in trouble sometimes .. (you think) why did you do that? And what are the repercussions... sometimes you over-worry about what’s going to happen” Line 64 “..trying to make sure you do well, so you don’t want to disappoint my mom and my dad” Line 64 “its generally that then there were some kids.. some of the older kids tried to touch me so I had to get that sorted out” Line 64 “I would just tell my mom and she would come into school and most of the time it got sorted out.” Line 64 “once I got in a fight. I did not start the fight” Line 66 “when you fight they take everyone who was in it and everyone gets in trouble. If some of my friends are just messing about	**Nadir (low experiences)** “.. at my old school, I saw where I sat. When I came to this school, I’m probably not going to be at the top. Then I had an idea that I would slowly be working my way up and trying harder then I can realise that everyone is trying harder and harder. My parents see the grades are really good but I’m seeing all these other people are getting higher grades. It’s getting to the stage where you see your grade and still thinking this is definitely a good grade. It’s just that these people are getting really good grades.” Line 111 “Each term we get grades, I don’t think I did too well- that’s a negative moment” “ Then (the) next day when you get into school, everyone’s sharing their grades. Everyone’s saying they’ve got this and that. Its sort of not feeling part of that.” Line 113	

	sometimes you are the one getting caught.” Line 68		
	Key turning point “although I had lots of friends sometimes they could be like a bit of bad influences.. sometimes although you can hang out, some of the stuff that their doing you shouldn’t also be doing.” Line 80 “It was mainly my twin sister because she’s always there. If she saw me doing anything she was gonna tell my mom.” “I knew that the stuff they were doing would get me into more and more trouble.” Line 82	**Key turning point** “Not particularly, trying to figure out what you want to do.. they start preparing you early about what job choices you want to do. I’m not passionate about too many subjects so its just finding the right job.” Line 127 “.. if I try hard that I definitely can do what I like and encourage others when they aren’t doing well.. (I) know that even when someone is doing better than you, you can work towards that.” Line 131	
RQ2: How do Black Caribbean adolescents narrate the key influencers in their educational history and experiences?	**Influencers** “I’d mainly say just my sister really. I’d always had my twin we’d always see who got higher. One year it may be me who got higher grades, next year it could be her. We could always see that.” Line 70 “some teachers were more helpful than others” Line 60 “some would really try and push you to get ahead” Line 62 “a teacher called Mr R.. for a couple of years he was my teacher that we had for	**Influencers** “In school, I’d say my friends. We talk about our grades cause each year we have an end of year test. This year, we got like a bet with another friend to see who does best.. cause I know last year, he did quite well so then he’s staying to see how I did. In one or two grades, if it went up its just working hard. Although we are in the same class, there is competition but its just to help everyone on.” Line 117	**Influencers** “.. probably still my family because with my sister going off to university, I can see what she does and see what I want to do.” “Now she’s at university, we go there and see the system she’s got, what she does and see what its like and think that’s what I want to do and that’s how I want to do it.” Line 141

	most lessons. Then next year, we just had him for maths. It was quite good cause he was sort of a friendly teacher. He (would) come to help if you were struggling." Line 72 "I had another kid who was quite good and generally we would compare scores. One of my best friend generally I sat next to him in maths so we could see how each other was doing. Most lessons, it was just like competition whose gonna finish first who gets the most right." Line 62 "Naa, my mom and my dad are sort of very into education so (they) just kept telling me to keep pushing at it." Line 50 "..trying to make sure you do well, so you don't want to disappoint my mom and my dad" Line 64 "We work hard. Then she was just always helping. If I don't understand, my twin would help and is she didn't understand then I would help her." Line 58	"I'd say my older sister- now she's at university. Everything she did, we would be able to compare. She'd do well and we would be able to think, 'well that's what we need to sort of live up to'. She set us a high standard. I'm pretty sure in her GCSEs she got all A's and 11As and 7 of them being A*s. She sets the standard we have to live up to" Line 56	"still friends aswell… as there is a couple of us that want to be investment bankers. We did a quiz for what job we want to get. Then after you did the quiz, cause they're online, you could see different jobs and salaries. There's a couple of us that don't have many aspirations but still want to do well and earn money. We saw the job and we all thought that's a good job and saw the hours. You could look at the hours and we thought if we do that although it may not be interesting it means we can just do the job, get it done and then go on and do what we feel like." Line 143
RQ3: How do Black Caribbean adolescents narrate their future life outcomes and aspirations?	**Primary aspirations** "I think when I was younger I wanted to be a runner cause my sister at the time she was the 2nd fastest in Great Britain for 100 metres. I saw that and wanted to do the same." Line 74	**Secondary aspirations** "I'd have chosen my GCSEs, be on course for getting into sixth form and then going onto university and planning the options for university." Line 133	**Future aspirations** if I try hard that I definitely can do what I like and encourage others when they aren't doing well.. (I) know that even when someone is doing better than you, you

		"..have a good idea of what job I would want to do and going onto a university of my choice." "As long as you've got the grades for it, you can go. That's the best place for what you want to do." Line 135	can work towards that." Line 131 "I'd have chosen my GCSEs, be on course for getting into sixth form and then going onto university and planning the options for university." Line 133 "..have a good idea of what job I would want to do and going onto a university of my choice." "As long as you've got the grades for it, you can go. That's the best place for what you want to do." Line 135 "..probably, quite a good job. Although I am not really for any job for any job, I have an idea that I'd rather go for a job and not enjoy it too much but have a big enough salary that afterwards I can go and do what I 's like to do. So work hard (as) it means that I can work in my free time enjoying what I want to and do what I want to do." Line 137

			“investment bankers are (working with) maths. So once I get the grades and get into the right university then it shouldn’t be too hard to find where I want to go.” Line 139 “..use the money certainly investing which by the time I’m earning enough money that I no longer have to work. As long as you keep reinvesting your money, probably investing into companies and inventing maybe.” Line 145 “In 10 years time, 23. Probably, finishing university thinking where I want to go for my job, probably thinking whether I want to come home depending on how much and if I can afford a property somewhere.” Line 147

APPENDIX 6: Information sheets

6.1. Information sheet for participants

Hello,

My name is Sasha, and I would like to invite you to be involved in a project that I will be involved in.

I am training to become an Educational Psychologist. This job involves working with lots of young people to work with them to support them in their education.

As part of this training I am conducting research about the experiences of Black Caribbean males in education who are achieving well and I would like to invite you to be a part of this project. I am interested in finding out about your story of how you have experienced education in primary and secondary school.

As well as making sure that you are happy to take part in this project, I have also asked permission from your parents/carers.

I believe that it is important that you have a voice and you are able to share your story. BUT, it is **YOUR CHOICE** whether or not to participate in the study.

What will happen?

- If you decide to agree to take part in my project, I would ask you about the following experiences:

  - School experiences in primary school
  - School experience in secondary school
  - Your achievements
  - Your future plans

- I would like to be able to share your educational story, to share your experiences, how it made you who you are today and the events that have helped you achieve to become the person you are today.
- Prior to the interview, I will go through the details of this information sheet to ensure you are informed of everything that is required of you, your rights and so you can ask any questions you may have. This should take 10- 15 minutes.
- One interview which will last about 40 minutes at your educational setting with me. You can have another adult with you, if you think this will enable

you to feel more comfortable and relaxed. The interview can take place over 2 sessions if you would prefer this.

- The interview will be an in-depth discussion of your experiences. There are no right or wrong answers as it is your story that I am interested in. The session should be fun with opportunities to talk and record using drawing.
- The interview will be audio-recorded so that I can listen back to your story, as not everything can be written down. This information will form part of my research write up.
- At the end of the project, I would like to give you a poem reflecting your story, views and experiences.

If you choose to take part here are the benefits and risks:

Benefits of taking part	Risks of taking part
Information gathered may help others to learn more about what can support other Black Caribbean males to achieve in education. Talking about your experiences and having someone listen to you and be interested in your story can make you feel good.	No physical risk- you won't be hurt. During the interview there may be some experiences that you discuss which may cause you to feel upset. You can stop the interview at any point if you become upset and we can rearrange the session, if you prefer.

If you have more questions you would like to ask me before you agree to be involved. I would be more than happy to answer them. You can contact me on [insert contact details].

If you would like to take part in the project, please write your name in the space below, or contact [insert point of contact in setting].

Sasha-Louise Simon **(Student Researcher, Trainee Educational Psychologist)** University of Birmingham School of Education Edgbaston Birmingham B15 2TT Phone: XXXX Email: XXXXX	**Nicholas Bozic** **(Academic and Professional Tutor)** University of Birmingham School of Education Edgbaston Birmingham B15 2TT Phone: XXXX Email: XXXXX

Please keep this Information Sheet in a safe place in case you want to read it again in the future.

My name is _____ and I would like to take part in Sasha's project.

6.2 Information sheet for parents

UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM

'Trusting and being heard': Exploring the narratives of Black Caribbean adolescent males in secondary mainstream education.

This information leaflet has been provided because I am seeking your child's consent to take part in a research project, which I am undertaking. I am a full-time postgraduate research student at The University of Birmingham, undertakes the research project and I am a Trainee Educational Psychologist working at XXX Educational Psychology Service. This research project forms part of my qualifying doctorate in Educational and Child Psychology.

Before deciding whether you would like to take part, please read the following information so that you have a greater understanding of why the research is being conducted and it will entail. If you continue to have further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me so that we can discuss your queries (please see the end of the leaflet for details).

Description of the study
The project aims to explore the narratives of achieving Black Caribbean adolescent males, attending mainstream education, to consider how their school experiences have contributed to their achievement and their identity, and what implications this has had for their future life outcomes and aspirations.

Purpose of the study
With the introduction of two government publications, The Lammy Review (2017) and the Racial Disparity Audit (2017), there has been increased national awareness concerning the disadvantages that Black Caribbean's experience. Researchers have called for a shift from the negative outcomes, depictions and stereotypes that are published in literature, media and the wider society, towards a strength-based approach of exploring the experiences of successful Black Caribbean males. As a result, this research aims to use an alternative approach to explore the experiences of achieving Black Caribbean adolescents in mainstream education. This research aims to give Black Caribbean males a voice in order to share their individual experiences of education and to tell their story authentically.

Details of the study
Participation in the study would enable me to understand your sons school experiences, recalling both primary and secondary events, his experiences, which have contributed to his achievement, and the impact this may have had on his aspirations and his views and his wider community. This would mean exploring his lived experiences chronologically from primary to secondary education: for example, when he first went to school, what activities he did at school, what relationships he formed, key events that he can recall.

This would form your son's educational life story. I am interested in how your son recalls his educational life story. This would be carried out using a life story interview, focused on his education. I would like to meet with your son at his educational setting for approximately 1 hour. The first 15 minutes would involves your son reading an information sheet explaining what the study entails, his rights and what would be required of him. The following 40 minutes would be used to interview your son. After which, there will be a 5 minute debrief.

In sharing our experiences, participants may become upset. If this is the case, your son will be given the opportunity to adjourn the meeting permanently or reschedule it for another time.

Your son will be informed that he is allowed to bring an adult with him, if this would make him feel more comfortable and relaxed to share his experiences.

What will happen to the information gathered when meeting with my son?
All interviews will be audio-recorded to ensure that I have an accurate record of what has been said during the interview. The audio-recordings will only be accessible to me and will be deleted following the transcription of the interview.

The research will comply with the Data Protection Act 1998, to ensure the safe storage of personal data and restricts the communication of personal information, in order to provide confidentiality and privacy. Your son's name will remain anonymous and a pseudonym will be chosen by him to protect his identity. All information shared in the interview will be kept confidential and not shared with third parties, unless a safeguarding risk arises. In the unlikely case that information is disclosed which places your son or others at risk of harm, I am obliged to report such information, based upon the Local Authorities safeguarding policy.

Once the data has been analysed of all of the interviews, I will write up my findings in my doctoral thesis. This may include some extracts from your son's educational life story. Again, his name will not be disclosed to protect his identity.

Can we change our mind about being part of the research?
Your son's participation in this project is voluntary and you and/or your son are entitled to change your mind or withdraw from this research **at any time before, during or up to a month after the interview.** If you wish to withdraw from the study, please contact me. If you contact me within the time frame stated above, I will destroy and disregard any information you have provided.

Parental Involvement
It is essential that your consent is provided for your son to be involved in this research. If you are happy with the information you have read, please fill out the form attached.

I have further questions and need more information

Please do not hesitate to contact me regarding the research or if you would like further information before agreeing for your son to participate. My contact details are recorded below. Alternatively, you can contact my university tutor.

Sasha-Louise Simon **(Student Researcher, Trainee Educational Psychologist)** University of Birmingham School of Education Edgbaston Birmingham B15 2TT Phone: XXXX Email: XXXXX	**Nicholas Bozic** **(Academic and Professional Tutor)** University of Birmingham School of Education Edgbaston Birmingham B15 2TT Phone: XXXX Email: XXXXX

APPENDIX 7: Consent forms

7.1 Consent form (young person)

Consent form

Today, I have spoken with Sasha and she has informed me about the project and provided me with an information sheet to read, understand and ask any questions I may have.

Please read the following sentences below and tick whether you understand and add to each statement.

	I understand ✓- YES X- NO	I agree ✓- YES X- NO
I consent to take part in this research and confirm that I am choosing to take part and have not been pressured.		
I consent to talk to Sasha and share stories about my experiences.		
I am happy to answer questions about my life experiences and understand that I do not have to answer any questions during the session.		
If I no longer want to be involved in this research I understand that I can stop at any time.		
I have chosen a pseudonym (another name) to be used to protect my identity.		
If I share an experience that causes Sasha concern about my safety or the safety of other, I understand that she will have to pass the information onto someone.		
I understand and consent to Sasha using my story as part of her research. I understand that the things I talk about will be written in a report but no accurate names will be used.		

I understand that the session(s) will be audio-recorded so that there is a good record of what was said.		
I understand that Sasha will hear the interview recording and some sections may be looked at by individuals from the University of Birmingham. All data will be locked and kept securely.		

Name: _____

Date: _____

Signature: _____

Thank you for taking the time to read and complete this form ☺

Yours sincerely,

Sasha

(Sasha-Louise Simon, Student Researcher and Trainee Educational Psychologist)

1 original copy for participant, 1 copy for study file.

7.2 Parental consent form

Consent form for parents/ legal guardians

Please read the following statements and tick the statements you consent to.

	I understand and agree (✓)
I have read the information sheet provided and understand the nature of the research project.	
I understand that this project forms the University of Birmingham postgraduate doctoral research towards Sasha's professional qualification as an Educational Psychologist.	
I consent for my son to take part in the research project outlined in the information sheet with Sasha.	
I understand that I have a right to withdraw from this research project at any point before, or within one month after the interview has been conducted, as can my son.	

Signed: _____

Initials: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX 8: Exemplar transcript

Key: Transcription codes

… Short pause (3 dots)
….. Long pause (5 dots)
S Researcher speaking
J Participant speaking (J as the initial for participant)
XXX Information anonymised to protect participant's identity
( ) Parentheses
[ ] Actions (e.g. laughing)

Line no	Initial of speaker: Original transcript without editing non-lexical utterances
1	S: So.. how old are you James?
2	J: 13
3	S: 13.. And what year are you in?
4	J: Year.. 8
5	S: Ok.. what do you like to do? What are some of your hobbies?
6	J: Ermm.. football I'd say and playing on my Xbox
7	S: Yeah ..that sounds fun [laughs]. So.. who do you live with at home?
8	J: I live with my umm.. mom, my dad and my twin sister
9	S: Oh wow, you've got a twin sister, wow that's fabulous. Do you get on with your twin sister?
10	J: Yeah most of the time.
11	S: Yeah, yeah I can understand. Sometime people say that twins have a way of being.. that they know a lot about each other and sometimes can predict how each other wants to respond, in different ways. So what part of the Caribbean is your family from?
12	J: Erm.. Jamaica
13	S: Oh ok..Same as mine [laughs], part of the family anyway So how long have you attended this school?
14	J: Ermm, now, its third year.
15	S: Ok that's brilliant. So we are just going to think about the room. Are you hot, are you cold, are you ok?
16	J: Yeah. I'm fine
17	S: Do you need anything?
18	J: No.. I'm fine
19	S: Perfect. Ok. I'm going to ask some questions about different aspects of .. erm.. your life and experience. So we are going to think about primary school, secondary school and also we're going to have a think about some of your best moments and some that may have been ow moments and also significant individuals who have been throughout these periods of your life. So this research is looking at your educational story but there may be things that are outside of your school life that have influenced your educational experience. So I have sheets of paper if sometimes you want to write things down or jot things down that you want to come back to talk to me about. That's fine aswell.
20	J: Yeah.

21	S: So, I will leave that there for you. Here's some pens if you want to use those as well. But generally, I'm just interested in having a conversation with you and understand you a bit more.
22	J: Yeah.
23	S:.. About your story. So, if we start with primary school that was a long time ago but hopefully you can think about then. What was your first memory of attending primary school?
24	J: Umm… turning up umm on the day cause umm my nursery umm is
25	S: Yep
26	J:.. just up the road from my primary school
27	S: Ok
28	J: lots of kids I knew from there were also there [at his primary school]. When I got there [his primary school] umm I met umm two kids, asked them their name, and from there we were sort of friends for most of primary school
29	S: Oh brilliant. So you were quite confident to talk to them.
30	J: Yep.
31	S: From the first day and you were quite close throughout the year. So that's brilliant. So how were you if it is nursery, how old is your earliest memory
32	J: Ermm.. I'm not sure how old you are when you start nursery. But I'm pretty sure it was the first day.
33	S:Ok so maybe, 4 or 5, that sort of age range. So tell me about your primary education?
34	J: It was quite good. Umm..school wasn't always the greatest. We didn't have like very good Ofsted rating and stuff. It was quite good growing up. Umm..we had like a change in head teacher and then sort of had more problems after that. But just sort of stuck umm to my work, some times got in trouble. But more or less it was alright
35	S: Ok that's pretty good. Ermm did you enjoy primary school at the beginning? What aspects can you remember that you really enjoyed at the beginning of primary school?
36	J: Umm.. primary school umm it starts off really easy cause you didn't really have that many lessons really. So its generally just doing a little bit of work and then most of the time is just playing and stuff.
37	S: Yeah, so that's quite enjoyable.
38	J:Yeah.
39	S:Ok, what can you think of that is your best memory from primary school?
40	J: Ermm.. hmm.. I'm not really sure actually. I had a lot of good memories mainly going out with my friends towards the end.
41	S: ok, do you want to tell me a bit more about that, what was positive about it?
42	J: It wasn't really too much, just sort off because it was summer, we went out to the park a couple days and stuff. That was pretty good. Just played football really.
43	S: So, can you tell me a bit more about some of the activities you were involved in, in school?
44	J: Umm, in school, I did a couple. We didn't really have many teams at the time. Sadly, my year missed doing football. It was only later, umm we had a

	football team which I was in. Umm, and then, think more or less that was the only after school stuff we had.
45	S: So how were lessons? How did you find lessons in primary school? You may think about earlier on or later on in key stage 2?
46	J: Lessons umm were actually quite good. I did umm quite well in.. sort of in my class. Like..You know when we were broken into sets, I was never like the very smartest, or the very fastest. But I was always doing quite well.
47	S: Okay, how did you know that you were doing well?
48	J: Umm. Well when we compared scores and stuff you could see how others were doing. Cause we had 4 sets, top set, middle set, bottom set, and because our school had a lot of people who did not really speak English, we had another set for that. And then, within the set, I did quite well and stuff. Except for probably Maths which I just slowly worked at.
49	S: Ok, and who helped you to work on that, did you work on it by yourself, was other people involved?
50	J: Naa, my mom and my dad are sort of very into education so just sort of kept telling me to keep pushing at it. Cause like, I struggled with times tables. Each week we would get a sheet with like to do these times tables. The first times tables were just ermm do your times tables up to ten, in order and then they changed it around. At first, I was generally at the bottom of my class then slowly my dad gets sheets and stuff and have like quizzes with me and my sister and I ended at the top.
51	S: That's brilliant, how did that make you feel at the beginning and how did you feel as you were working at it?
52	J: Umm,, quite good, as I was getting ahead, I was slowly progressing and stuff. And then my mom and dad would always want me to keep working on it till I got it.
53	S: That's brilliant, so would you at that your parents have been quite significant and influential in your experience?
54	J: Yeah, they always just said to make sure try your hardest always and stuff and just try and do well at school so you can get a good education and a good job. So then like in situations, they just sort of would give me that extra push and stuff.
55	S: Yeah, yeah. Who else would you say was really influential in your achievements in primary school?
56	J: I'd say umm my older sister. Cause umm now she's at university. Sort of everything she did, now, we would be able to compare like. She'd do well and we would be able to think, well that's what we need to sort of to live up to. She sort of set us a high standard, I'm pretty sure in her GCSEs she got all A's, and like 11As and 7 of them being A*s. So sort of as she sets the standard, sort of like we have stuff to live up to and stuff.
57	S: Ok, and how do you find living up to the expectations?
58	J: Quite well. Cause we just sort of work hard and stuff. And then like she was just sort of always like helping and stuff. If I don't understand, my twin would help and if she didn't understand then I would help her.
59	S: Was there anyone in school you felt was quite influential in your education, in primary school?
60	J: Umm some teachers umm were like more helpful than others
61	S: Hmm.

62	J: and like umm Some would like really like try and push you to get ahead. I had another kid who was umm quite umm good and like … generally we would compare scores and stuff. One of my best friend, generally I sat next to him in maths so we could see how each other was doing. Most lessons, it was just like competition whose gonna finish first, who gets the most right.
63	S: Right ok. So you talked a lot about significant people and also about some positive experiences in school and your progressions, which is brilliant. But sometimes there are those negative experiences as well. So what were some of the lowest experiences or moments that you had in primary school?
64	J: Umm probably, when I got in trouble. Cause when you get in trouble sometimes, you just know, that it's like why did you do that? Then its sort of like the repercussions and then you just sort of like sometimes over worry about what's going to happen. Sort of like trying to make sure you do well, so then you don't want to disappoint my mom and my dad and stuff. It's generally just that then there was some kids which were like some of the older kids tried to touch me so I had to get that sorted out. I would just tell my mom and she would come into the school and most of the time it got sorted out.
65	S: Tell me a situation that you got in trouble for.
66	J: I think… ermm… Once I got in a fight. I did not start the fight
67	S: umm hmm
68	J: but then its just sort of.. when you fight they just kind of take everyone who was in it and everyone gets in trouble. If some of my friends are just messing about sometimes you are the one getting caught. Cause we weren't allowed to bring in footballs and weren't allowed to play football. If you bring in one of the smaller balls and get caught then you could get in trouble.
69	S: So in primary school who do you think was your key influence?
70	J: Ermm I'd say.. ermm I'd say mainly just my sisters really. I'd always had my twin who'd always see who got higher. One year it may be me who got higher grades, next year it could be her. We could always see that. Then my older sister said, umm always could umm say you're doing well and could help me with it. And then my dad cause for a lot of it.. he'd go over stuff with us, make sure we know what we are doing, sometimes teach us.
71	S: brilliant, so who would you say in school was one of your favourite adults?
72	J: Umm… a teacher called Mr Reiss, he was..I'm pretty sure, for a couple years he was my ermm teacher that we had for most lessons. Then next year, we just had him for maths. It was umm quite good cause like, he was sort of like a friendly teacher. He come to help if you were struggling.
73	S:Mmm ok.. What were some of your aspirations in primary school? What did you want to be?
74	J: Umm.. I mainly for a long time just wanted to become some sort of person that invents stuff. I didn't know what that was. Then I wanted to do something like that. I think when I was younger I wanted to be a runner cause my sister at the time, she umm was the 2nd fastest for.. in Great Britain for 100 metres. So then. I sort of saw that and wanted to do the same.

75	S: ok brilliant.. soo… what accomplishments in primary school are you most proud of?
76	J: Umm.. what accomplishments? Umm.. mainly getting into this school.. and ..
77	S: ok and how did you find the process in getting into this school?
78	J: It wasn't too bad because before it, cause, umm, because of SATs and stuff.. my dad bought all the books and stuff and got all this stuff. And then once we kept that, we had to have a go and do this and do this. So when the test came, I sort of felt ready and stuff. I didn't feel I did too well in the test and stuff.. and cause I don't think I was originally going to take it cause its so far of way it is. I sort of applied a bit late. So although cause my sister's definitely, she goes to a local grammar school so cause she's definitely going to take it and dad didn't want me falling behind. It's always just and you'll do it with her so when I was put into the test although it's a bit late. I was just sort of ready for it.
79	S: Ok brilliant. Was there ever a turning point in your primary experience? Where you noticed, I need to change something?
80	J: Umm. Yes sort of. Cause umm.. although I had lots of friends sometimes they could be like a bit of bad influences and stuff. So sometimes although you can like hang out and stuff, some of the stuff that their doing you shouldn't also be doing.
81	S: How did you know that you shouldn't be doing it and how did that change the friendship?
82	J: It was mainly my twin sister because she's always there. If she sees me doing anything, she's gonna go tell my mom. Then it's stuff like parties and stuff like, she would be like is it that one your bringing as well. So then umm then I just sort of knew that stuff they were doing would get me in more and more trouble.
83	S: Yeah. What did you learn most about yourself in primary school?
84	J:Umm.. Just more like.. stuff.. I'm quite sociable, I like to make friends and how to make friends and stuff.
85	S: Yeah. So you've told me a lot about primary school and that's really useful. Your story is really helpful. I think that it is going to be really helpful for you to also think about secondary school and some of your experiences. I know that you worked hard to get into this school. You were able to get in. What has been your first memory of starting at this school?
86	J: Umm.. I'd say it was on the open days. Umm we had 1 or 2 open days.. Sort of like.. making friends.. going round the school. At the time I didn't really know my way around. And it all seemed sort of huge and stuff. So big, I went round, slowly started to think.. cause where I went before it was close to where I live. I always had my twin there, so I sort of saw it as a step of being independent.
87	S: Yeah.. how was that transition?
88	J: Itw as quite good actually. One of the main transitions, before at my old school, we had one homework for one lesson a week. But when I came here, there was lots more. But I was always sort of prepared for the worst that I was going to have lots of homework so I got stuck in and realised that this is what I do. Cause like, I don't really like doing lots of stuff, my attitude sort of is, as soon as I get my homework, if I do it then it means Saturday

	and Sunday, I have no homework and later on. So if I leave it then I won't ever get onto it.
89	S: So you have a system that you follow that works for you?
90	J: Yeah.
100	S:Brilliant. So tell me about your secondary education, so far?
101	J: Mmm.. it's gone quite well. Umm. After I like started it was sort of a lot then slowly I thought it will be fine, slowly as it carries on it's sort of like different because at my old school there was like a higher set and stuff. This school there is sort of like everyone is sort of like a high set. So then it is getting used to.. although lots of people are getting high marks, what I am getting is still really good. Cause sometimes, like you've got kids getting mostly A*s and like As its like you sort of still got to remember if youre getting Bs and As that's still really good.
102	S: So, what has been your best memory so far?
103	J: Best memory would have to be, some of the sports that we do now. I don't really.. we do rugby.. I don't really enjoy it that much but I like my position. Cuase I play wing, away from getting tackled and stuff but then probably the best would eb house athletics.
104	S: Because you like running..
105	J: and Its sort of like a good day, its just sort of everyone else and it just means that there's no lessons
106	S: How often do you have that?
107	J: Once a year.
108	S: that sounds really fun. Brilliant. What would you say has been your best accomplishment since being in secondary school?
109	J: I'd say mainly.. ermm.. my grade.. cause like.. before I was 120 in the year. Last year I ranked 40 something. Then I'm looking at it and then you are looking at what you need to get into sixth for. Sixth form you need 5 As sort of just seeing that like I'm well on track for that and sort of over it cause I ended up getting 5A*s. So just seeing you're well on track for it. So just knowing that like as long as you keep up what you are doing. What you're doing is good enough even if like its not the highest in the class or anything. Its still good enough to do what you need to do.
110	S: You talked a lot about this idea of being 'good enough', where does that come from for you?
111	J: Sort of like, at my old school, I saw where I sat. When I came to this school, I'm probably not going to be at the top. Then I sort of had an idea that I would slowly be working my way up and trying harder then I can sort of realise that everyone is trying hard and trying harder. It sort of gets you sort of thinking. My parents seeing the grades, they are seeing these grades are really good. But I'm seeing all these other people are getting higher grades. Its getting to the stage where you see your grade and still thinking this definitely is a good grade. Its just that these people are getting really good grades.
112	S: Yeah, so at the moment you've talked about growing and ermm working hard, some of your accomplishments, but what are some of the negative memories or the low experiences that you've had in secondary school?
113	J: Umm. Each term we get grades, I don't think I did too well then that's sort of like a negative moment. Cause then next day when you get into school

	where everyone's sharing their grades and stuff. Everyones saying they've got this, this and that. Its just sort of feeling not a part of that.
114	S: nd what does that do for you inside?
115	J: It sort of like upset me a bit, but then like slowly you begin to realise lots of people aren't as happy with their grades. Just sort of my parents were saying you just need to work on it and get better.
116	S: Ok, again, who influences you in school?
117	J: In school, I'd say my friends. We talk about our grades and stuff. Cause each year, we have an end of year test. This year, we got sort of like a bet with another friend to see who does best. Cause I know last year, he did quite well, so then he staying to see how I did. In one or two grades, if it went up, its just working hard. Although we are in the same class, there is competition and stuff but its just to help everyone on. I'm here in class, if I do this much better, then how would you be doing.
118	S: Are there any adults who are influential to you?
119	J: I'd say.. umm.. umm.. my history teacher.. my old RS teacher and our form tutor. Cause like, although my class gets the highest grades out of all the other classes and does the best. Sometimes we've had problems with behaviours and it just sort of reflects on the whole class. It just sort of means, when you go into new class, umm, then teachers sort of have ideas. Our form tutor always super positive.
120	S:And what type of situations happen in terms of behaviour? Are they things your involved in? or is it other children?
121	J: It can mainly be little stuff like classes talking in lesson. It's just cause it sort of keeps happening. It is sort of a problem. Other kids have had larger issues. Generally, its just one or two but most of the class its talking in lesson.
122	S: So who is significant in your life at the moment, aside from friends, is there anyone else? In terms of family still significant? Anyone else you think is really important?
123	J: Ermm.. not really. Just my family.
124	S: So what are your aspirations now?
125	J: Ermm.. to get into sixth form and then to go onto ermm probably be an investment banker.
126	S: Ok.. and has there been a key turning point or change in your secondary school education so far?
127	J: Ermm.. mmm. Not particularly, just sort of like trying to figure out what you want to do. Cause like they start preparing you early about what job choices you want to do. I'm not appsionate about too many subjects, so its just finding the right job.
128	S: And a job is quite important to you?
129	J: Yep, planning ahead for the future.
130	S: So what have you learnt about yourself since being in secondary school?
131	J: Ermm that.. I'm like.. mm that if I try hard that I can definitely do what I like erm and encourage others when they aren't doing well. And know that even when someone is doing better than you that you can work towards that and stuff.
132	S: Ok we've talked a little bit about primary school, secondary school, about significant people, ermm we've talked about low experiences, peak

	experiences. But I also want to understand a bit more about your future and what your future may look like. So we are going to not think about the present but prospectively think about the future. The first questions I want to ask you, what do you think your future will look like in the next year?
133	J: In the next year probably, I'd be, I'd have chosen my GCSEs, be on course for like ermm hopefully getting into sixth form and then going onto university and stuff and sort of planning the options for university and stuff.
134	S: ok and what do you think your future will look like at the end of secondary school?
135	J: Umm probably.. have a good idea of what job I would want to do and going onto a university of like my choice. What I've heard from school its like.. its finding the right university for you, cause my parents always say they'll be able to get me into whichever university I want as long as I've got the grades for it. Just the same as my sister cause now she's in XXXX, XXXX university. As long as you've got the grades for it, you can go. That's the best place for what you want to do.
136	S: ok. What do you think your future will look like when you are an adult?
137	J: Umm probably, quite a good job. Although I am not really for any job, I sort of have the idea that I'd rather go for a job and not enjoy it too much, but have a big enough salary that after, I can go and do what I'd like to do. So work hard so it means that I can work in my free time enjoying what I want to and do what I want to do.
138	S: So you talked about becoming an investment banker, what role do you think education is going to play in your aspiration and goals?
139	J: Umm, just sort of. Investment bankers are just sort of maths and stuff, so just sort of work hard in that so once I get the grades and stuff and get into the right university then it shouldn't be too hard to find where I want to go.
140	S: Who do you think.. ermm.. are going to be or likely to be significant influencers in your life in the future?
141	J: Ermm probably still my family. Cause with my like sister going off to university, I can see what she does and see what I want to do and stuff. Like how she does stuff. So now she's at university, we go there and see like the system she's got, what she does and see what its like and think that's what I want to do and that's how I want to do it.
142	S: Anyone else who you'd think would be significant in you life?
143	J: Ermm.. probably still friends aswell. As there is a couple of us that what to be investment bankers. We did a quiz for what job we want to get. Then after you did the quiz, cause they're online, you could see different jobs and salaries. There's a couple of use that don't have many aspirations but still want to do well and earm money. We saw the job and we all thought that's a good job and saw the hours. You could look at the hours and we thought, if we do that, although it may not be interesting it means we can just do the job get it done with and then go on and do what we feel like.
144	S: What would you use the money to do?
145	J: I'd probably use the money certainly investing which sort of means by the time I'm earning enough money that I no longer have to work. As long as you keep reinvesting your money, probably investing into companies and inventing maybe.
146	S: Brilliant. What would you like your life to look like in 10 years time?

147	J: In 10years times, 23. Probably, finishing university, probably thinking of where I want to go for my job. Umm but umm probably also thinking of whether I want to come home depending on how much and if I can afford a property somewhere.
148	S: So those are all the questions I have for you. Are there any questions that you would like to ask me or any details that you think oh I should have told Sasha this.
149	J: Not really no.
150	S: So if, if we were thinking about your whole life and you had to give your life a title about your educational story, what would you say?
151	J: Working hard to achieve.
152	S: Ok and if you were going to put your educational story in themes, what themes would you have in there?
153	J: Umm, probably like, umm primary school, friends, probably just, first few years in secondary school and sort of like how that's been, work and then probably GCSEs, working on that, university and what like where I am, probably just finding where to go for a job.
154	S: If you want to summarise your whole narrative, your story, your experience in 3 or 5 words, what words would you pick? It could be individual words or a short phrase.
155	J: It's pretty good.
156	S: It's pretty good. I like that. Thank you so much for your time and for talking to me. I'm going to stop this recording now.

APPENDIX 9: "Working Hard To Achieve"- James' narrative

Working Hard To Achieve: James' narrative

Chapter 1:

"Primary school"

I stuck to my work, sometimes I got in trouble but more or less it was alright.
Lessons were actually quite good.
I did well in my class.
I was never the very smartest or the very fastest, but I was always doing quite well.

I struggled with times tables.
If I don't understand my twin would help and if she didn't understand then I would help her.
At first, I was generally at the bottom of my class then slowly my dad got sheets and had quizzes with me and my sister.
I ended up at the top.
I was slowly progressing then my mom and dad would always want me to keep working on it till I got it.

When I got in trouble, when you get in trouble sometimes you think why did you do that? And what are the repercussions? Sometimes you over-worry about what's going to happen.
It was mainly my twin sister because she was always there.
If she saw me doing anything she said she was going to tell my mom.
Once I got in a fight.
I did not start the fight.
I would just tell my mom and she would come into school and most of the time it got sorted out.

I think when I was younger I wanted to be a runner because my sister at the time, she was the 2nd fastest in Great Britain for 100 metres.
I saw that and wanted to do the same.

Chapter 2:

"Friends"
I had a lot of good memories mainly going out with my friends towards the end.
It was summer, we went out to the park for a couple of days.
That was pretty good.
We were just playing football really.
I'm quite sociable, I like to make friends and know how to make friends.

I had another kid who was quite good and generally we would compare scores.
One of my best friends, generally, I sat next to him in maths, so we could see how each other was doing.
Most lessons, it was just like competition- who's going to finish first? Who gets the most right?

Although I had lots of friends sometimes, they could be a bit of bad influences.
Sometimes although you can hang out, some of the stuff that their doing you shouldn.t be doing.
I knew that the stuff they were doing would get me into more and more trouble.

Chapter 3: The first few years in secondary school

When the test came, I felt ready.
I applied a bit late.
My sister goes to the local grammar school.
Because she was definitely going to take the test, dad didn't want me falling behind.
It was always 'you'll do it with her'.
So I was put into the test although it was a bit late.
I was just ready for it.

On the open days, we had had one or two open days.
Making friends and going round the school at the time I didn't really know my way around it seemed sort of huge.
After I started it was a lot then slowly I thought it would be fine.
At my old school there was a higher set but in this school everyone is in a high set.
Although lots of people are getting high marks, what I am getting is still really good.

At my old school, I saw where I sat.
When I came to this school, I thought "I'm probably not going to be at the top'.
Then I had an idea that I would slowly be working my way up and trying harder.
Then I realised that everyone is trying harder and harder.
My parents see the grades as really good but I'm seeing all these other people are getting higher grades.
It's getting to the stage where you see your grade and still think this definitely a good grade.
It's just that these people are getting good grades as well.

Chapter 4: Work

Sometimes you've got kids mostly with A*s and you've still got to remember if you're getting Bs and As that's still really good.
Each term we get grades, I don't think I did too well- that's a negative moment.
Then the next day when you get into school, everyone's sharing their grades.
Everyone's saying they've got this and that. It's sort of not feeling part of that.
It sort of upset me a bit then slowly you begin to realise lots of people aren't as happy with their grades.

Chapter 5: GCSEs

Before, I was 120th in the year. Last year I ranked 40 something.
For sixth form you need 5 As.
Seeing that I'm well on track for that and over it as I ended up with 5A*s helps.
Just seeing you're well on track for it helps.

Knowing that as long as you keep up with what you are doing, what you're doing is good enough.
Even if it's not the highest in the class or anything it's still good enough to do what you need to do.

My older sister, she's at university.
Everything she did, we would be able to compare.
She'd do well and we would be able to think 'well that's what we need to sort of live up to'.
She set us a high standard.
I'm pretty sure she got all A's, 11As and 7 of them being A*s.
She sets the standard we have to live up to.

Chapter 6: University

If I try hard I definitely can do what I like and encourage others when they aren't doing well.
I know that even when someone is doing better than you, you can work towards that.
My parents always say they'll be able to get me into whichever university I want as long as I've got the grades for it.

In the future, I'd have chosen my GCSEs, be on course for getting into sixth form and then going onto university and planning the options for university.
I'd have a good idea of what job I would want to do and going onto a university of my choice.
As long as you've got the grades for it, you can go to the best place for what you want to do.

There is a couple of us that want to be investment bankers.
We did a quiz to find out what job we want to get.
There's a couple of us that don't have many aspirations but still want to do well and earn money.
We saw the job and we all thought that's a good job.
We thought we could get it done and then go on and do what we feel like.

APPENDIX 10: "Focus"- Boris' narrative

Focus: Boris' story

Chapter 1: I found friends

My first memories in primary school would be me nearly breaking down and crying as soon as I started because I was not really used to having friends.
At the very start of reception, my mother was in the corner of the room and she was just smiling at me.
She was there to comfort me.
But as soon as she left, I just started crying.
After the first day, I started to find friends.

The truth is, I was never actually in my class.
I was moved into Year 1 because I was seen as an outstanding student.
I was moved to the year in front until Year 3.
The teachers were really happy whenever they talked to me.
They used to ask me questions. For example, there was a picture of a dog's paw and everyone else said hand, but I said paw.

In Year 3, I did not start to dwindle in intellect, but it seemed that everyone started to catch up with me.
I always used to struggle with English.
My favourite subject would have been Maths.
I like numbers in general.
In English, I always used to write either too little or spend too much time on what I wanted to choose to write.
The teacher kept on talking to me about that.
Every single parent's evening.

The same issues kept coming up over and over again.
I was really sad because I never understood.
The teacher always seemed dissatisfied with what I was doing.
My mother always helped me outside of school with my English.
At the end of parents evening, she always used to tell me 'you should probably do this better', for example use paragraphs.

But inside school, I think it was just the same issues coming up over and over again.
I never understood what I was doing wrong until Year 5.
I don't think I got very much help as I did in Year 5.
My teacher, I think she specialised in English so she might have known more and knew better vocabulary.
I think that really helped.

My Year 6 teacher was just like the others but every Friday there was a football table where we used to twist it and the little men inside kicked the ball.
We used to have so much fun.
The teacher joined in and she was incredibly good at it.
That just made me feel like 'she's a really fun teacher to be with'.
Also, in lessons, she truly boosted me.

She boosted me quite a lot.

I wouldn't say I had a best moment in primary school.
It would probably be in Year 6, just being with my friends.
I got general awards for outstanding performance or outstanding behaviour.
But I'd say my friends really helped me feel better about myself.
For example, in reception, I kept on crying, then I found one of my best friends.
We both liked the same things.
We were able to talk to each other easily then other friends started coming.
It was nice.

I had this friend Jim.
We both liked cars and we talked to each other.
Everytime at break or lunch we would run around with each other and had fun.
I met another friend called Alfie and he was really sporty.
He knew what he was doing when it came to sports but he always struggled when it came to learning,
He was sort of socially scared of other people but he really shined when he was with my friend Jim and I.
He was fantastic.
I was that friend you come to for help, mainly.
I wouldn't say I'd be the best socially but whenever it came to helping someone else in school with grades, I'd say the correct answer.

The main low moment, that I can remember, was when I had a friend called Fred.
Fred seemed like a great person, because I was the person who showed him where the toilets were, we became good friends.
In year 6, we didn't see him as a good friend.
He would always back out when something went wrong.
We were always straight with him but because I was too scared to say no to him, I always did what he asked of me,
Of course, it led me into a lot of trouble as well.
It wasn't big trouble, but I got a warning.
Obviously, to me that really hurt but to anyone who was a troublemaker that would do nothing to them.

I did not have any true aspirations as I did not know what I was doing.
I didn't understand anything about my future, I just wanted to go through primary school.
I thought I could settle in secondary school and pick my options.

Chapter 2: Losing friends

When I started in Year 7, I had to restart.
I had one friend that came from my primary school.
Let's call him Jonathan.
I got on really well with him but he also had other friends outside of school.
I became friends with them also.
I think I actually fit in really quickly instead of have to find friends on my own because I have back up.

Along the way in Year 8 and 9, I found more and more friends.

I think that, if I was on my own, then school wouldn't bring me happiness.
The main thing for me is that my friends bring me happiness.
We help each other in group projects and that is quite useful.
My best memory in secondary school is the same as in primary school- just being with my friends.

I guess, once again, some people bring you down sometimes.
Friends bring you back up.
It's kind of like ying and yang.
There is not a really bad moment right now that I can think of, I'd say bad influence.
I just ignore them as it's not really worth my time talking to them in general.

A key turning point in secondary school would probably be in Year 9 as soon as I started my options.
I just though this is what I'm going to be doing and this is what I should be doing.
I wasn't doing any lessons that I didn't need to do,
I wasn't much of a fan of geography or history or any of the humanities.
But I knew that I was doing the lessons that I wanted to do and all of the core subjects, I feel like I have a proper professional reason to go to school.

I would say secondary school is going well right now, when it comes to revising and getting things done.
I'm getting the grades I would like to have.
Of course, my mother would always want me to do one better.
I'd say I'm doing quite well.

I'd say a lot of my teachers are key influencers.
For example, my maths teacher, I'd say she helps me within lessons.
I'd say I'm doing fine in lessons.
My parents influence me, whenever I need help, I can always ask them and they'd tell me.
I would also say my friends, of course, they help me to do extra-curricular activities like the science project we were doing.
We were making future buildings for the rest of society.
We came second behind some sixth formers.

I think getting my GCSEs would be what I'm truly proud of because it's what I'm working towards.
My aspirations are to get the best GCSEs that I can; to get my favourite job and not be stuck in the workhouse.
Hopefully, I'll be revising a lot more.
I will get the GCSE results I'm hoping for so I can stay with my friends.
In a job, as we all know the world isn't very nice out there,
Hopefully, opportunities stick with me.
I'm of darker complexion, so hopefully, they will treat me equally to the rest.

With politics for example, Theresa May and Donald Trump, everybody knows something is happening on the side lines that regular people do not know about.

The media does because the media can control us in certain ways that can change everything.
I think it is quite dangerous.
I feel like, I will be able to get by.
I'm not saying I will do badly.
I will be able to do well enough to be happy with myself.
I can't aspire too high.
Hopefully, I could be doing well enough to retire, having a medium house, a medium everything.

Chapter 3: University, newer friends, work

Education will play a large role in the future.
I want to be a game developer.
Coding and learning all of the software will be quite important for my interview and work experience.
For work experience, right now, I am planning to go to a game developer company so I can actually learn about how they work and what I can do to get there.
Hopefully, I can put something on my CV do I can increase my chances of getting that job.

I feel like getting new friends seems like a difficult task but as soon as you find them it is quite easy,
I'm now in a position where my friends are still here.
Hopefully, they stay with me into adulthood so I will talk to them instead of having to find new ones constantly.

APPENDIX 11: "The end is the beginning"- Jonathan's narrative

The end is only the beginning

Jonathan's story

Primary

Chapter 1: Fresh start

I remember my nursery and being dropped off by my father.
Every day I went there.
It was care free.
It would be for any nursery child.

I was just at home.
My mom had to go to work at the time.
I remember waking in the morning and my mom would be ready to go to work.
She would drop me off at my uncle and auntie's.
Then my brother would drop me off to my uncle and auntie's.
I would stay there for the day.
I would just watch TV as I didn't really have anything else to do.
When my mom was finished, she's pick me up.
Then I'd come home.

Between reception and Year 2, for about a year, I was living with my aunty and uncle on my dad's side.
I was in Year 1.
I'm sure it was a year.
It was far up north.
The only thing I remember is coming back on Mondays to write about our holiday.

By Year 2, I got put into primary school.
I went to school and they were asking what year I was in.
I wasn't sure what year I was meant to be in.
I thought I was in Year 1.
I put myself a year lower than I was meant to be.
I was there for about two terms.
They found out and put me into the right year.
A teacher came to class, made me stand up, then put me in a higher class.

Chapter 2: Problems

I was in the higher class and didn't know anybody.
I was just by myself basically.
When I don't know anybody, I'm like an introvert.

In the school I got bullied by three people.
I would be hanging out with my two friends at the time.
Three of them would come and start pushing me and my friends.
They kept on doing it because I never ran away.

My friends ran away.
They tried to fight me.
I would defend myself.
I pushed on of them back.
Then the other two came for me.
I just started kicking them.

The school blamed me and made me sit out when I did not start it.
I would be minding my own business when they started upon me.
Sometimes I would be left in class.
After three times, I got moved.

It was my first time coming into contact with bullying.
It didn't impact me as a whole even though it was my first time coming in contact with bullying.
When it comes to bullying now, I know how to deal with it- well, sometimes.
When I see somebody get bullied, I don't like the sight of it.
I try to stand up for them sometimes.

In primary school, there was a person called C.
He was very annoying.
I would get hurt because of him, multiple times.
One time, I was sorting out the pens.
He was telling me to leave them.
I said that I wanted to sort them.
He threw one at me.
I didn't do anything.
Another time, I was tying my shoe lace.
There were some drawers under the table.
C kicked the drawer and it hit my head.
It was the worst moment for me because I ended up having anger problems.

When you cannot control anger or when you get angry you just don't conduct yourself in the right way.
Currently, I am better with my anger.

In X school, I was there from Year 2 all the way to Year 6.
I was quite quiet.
I didn't know anybody.
I was just to myself, like an introvert.
The only friends I had at the time were the people on my table.

Chapter 3: Overcoming

At the new school, there wasn't really any bullying.
It was a better environment for me.
I felt better because I felt safer.
I didn't get bullied or pressured by anyone.

In Year 4, school wasn't really challenging, now that I think about it.

I didn't really learn anything.
From Year 5 upwards, I learnt things that are important to my school work now.
Some of it was a nuisance.

The turning point was the pressure.
In Year 5, I had a lot of pressure.
I guess it was the pressure for my SATs.
They rushed me and didn't spend a lot of time to do things.
I wasn't used to it and didn't agree with it.

Some of my teachers, my mom, brother, aunts and uncles were significant to my education.
My mom- she is extremely strict.
She is the tough love kind of person.
She will make something sound bad just to push me further.
My brother is the total opposite.
He makes me feel good about myself.
My uncle wasn't the person who would talk to me about education.
He was more of a fun person.
My aunty was a mix of my mom and my brother.
Sometimes she would give me tough love and sometimes she would be care free.
I guess she was a medium between the both of them.

I remember one teacher called Mr C.
In my opinion, he was a phenomenal teacher because he knew when to talk.
He didn't force himself on you.
He knew how to handle things appropriately,
He knew how to teach properly too.
In primary school, he was probably my favourite teacher.

In all honesty, he taught me how to conduct myself.
At the time, I had anger problems.
I had him as my primary school teacher.
I got into a fight.
Because he knew that I wasn't the one who started the fight, I wound up getting angry.
Mr C took me out.
He was just talking to me for a brief couple of minutes.
He was telling me that I couldn't let things get to me because it's going to happen a lot of the time and that I couldn't let them get to me.

Chapter 4: Favoured

When I got to Year 3 and higher, I started to talk to more people and make more friends.
I started to become more favoured by everybody.
In Year 3, I went to a running competition with my school.
I went with 5 other students.
We were training and I was wearing shorts that were uncomfortable.
I did my qualifiers, heats, semi-finals and then I reached the finals.

I was shaking a lot.
I thought, ‘what if I lose’, ‘what if I lose, I’d feel humiliated’.
I was ready to run.
The gun went off.
I saw a boy blow past.
I was going my hardest.
I caught up and I came first.

I got in the school newsletter.
I gave it to my mom.
I was in the living room and I heard her cheering.
She pointed to the part that she wanted me to read.
It said, ‘congratulations to Jonathan, who is the fastest boy in Year 3’.
I was overwhelmed.
It was a lot to take,
I felt famous.
By Year 6, I was quite known.

I wanted to be an athlete in primary school.

Chapter 5: The End

Life is long but also short.
If you’re not careful, in the blink of an eye, you can just be 18 years old.
At the same time, it’s also a long journey.
Depending upon what you do it can end at any time.
I’ve got to do the correct thing no matter what happens.

I wanted a lot of things in primary school.
I wanted an X box, play station, a big tv, big house and a girlfriend.
The reality came to me at the end of Year 6 and the start of Year 7, that you’re not going to have all of that.
You are going to have what you give to yourself.

Secondary

Chapter 1: Foundation

I went to summer school for two weeks in the holidays.
I was quiet because I didn’t know how to talk to people.
If I liked something different from them, they would think of me as weird.
I just didn’t want that.
I just didn’t assert myself.
I didn’t force myself into anything.

When I was eating, a student called O came up to me and were started talking.
We instantly became good friends.
I started hanging out with him in summer school.
Then I started hanging out with more people then school started.
I knew quite a lot of people.

At school, I could go and be comfortable with people.
As the year went on, more and more people started to know me.

Chapter 2: High year

Year 7 was care free.
Throughout Year 7, 8 and sometimes in Year 9, for me, was care free.
After Christmas in Year 9, I started paying more attention.
Except for in English, I was paying attention all the time.

In the other lessons, some teachers did not know how to assert themselves at the right time.
Some teachers were unjust.
Some teachers gave up easily.
Some teachers and their way of teaching didn't sink in well with me.
Some teachers just stand at the board and we copy down.
That's just a lesson where I wouldn't have to do anything.
I don't have to think about what I am writing.

That is not really geared to my brain.
I like to do things that's using my eyes and my hands.
Some lessons, like science, they would make us write notes and write questions on the board for us to do.
It helps.
English was a lot!
It's not stressful, it's just a lot.
You get shown a text, expected to read the text and analyse the text.
Miss helps us with the text, gives us ideas and then we have to do it by ourselves.

Some science lessons were good because we had different teachers in science.
One teacher was very good.
One teacher could sometimes teach but didn't know how to assert herself.
Then one teacher just made us copy information down and we barely did any questions.
I didn't like her style of teaching.

Chapter 3: The Base

In English, Miss made us write a poem about Macbeth for homework.
I didn't really find out that I could write lyrics.
I knew that I was good at rhyming and that I could write poems at a decent level.

I was at home doing my homework.
I was trying to make my work link and sound good.
I heard it in my ears and wrote it down to make it flow.
I said my poem and thought it was nice.
I folded the poem up and I put it in my bag.

School came and I pretended that I didn't do my homework because I normally do that to raise people's blood pressure.

Then I pulled it out to calm their souls.
Everybody was reading their poems and I was getting giddy about mine.
The person before me was saying his poem with lots of gestures and was moving quite a bit.
I decided to add some of my own.

So, I stood up and while I was reading, I was acting out the story like I was acting for a movie.
I was completing the last four line and doing the actions with it.
Then I said the last two line and dropped the paper- everybody started cheering.
I walked out of the classroom proud of myself.

Chapter 4: Problems

At the end of Year 8, I didn't run in any competitions.
I won the competition in Year 8, I did the 200 metres, the relay and the hurdles.
In the hurdles, I was about to come first and I clipped on the last hurdle, then fell.
I quickly came back up and finished.
In the 200m, I came first.
In the relay, I took the third leg, the last bend.
It was coming to me, then I took it and started running.
I was ahead of everybody by a long way.
I must have felt my right hamstring.
I felt a very sharp pain in my leg.
I stumbled two steps and then I started dragging my leg.
I gave it to S and we ended up coming first.
I started limping off the track.
I couldn't do physical activities until the start of Year 9.
Every time, I tried, it would hurt again.
It didn't stop me, I kept playing football.
I guess I made it worse and it had not healed.

I've learnt that I am too kind for my own good towards others.
I was talking to someone my age at church about it.
Why do I have to be so kind when bad people treat you a bad way?
When you're kind, people look up to you.
Some people change but some people stay the same no matter how you treat them.
Sometimes I'm too kind for my own good because I give somebody something when I would like something back, they completely disregard it.
Just like in primary school, nothing goes the way you want it.

Chapter 5: Solutions

I also learnt that depending on the subject and how it is, I am sometimes a quick learner.
Sometimes there are things that will take me a very long time to apply but I can actually become decent at subjects.

Teachers, parents and friends influence me.
The friends that I've got now are like my primary school friends.

They are more annoying, but they are still there when I need them.
There are a lot of teachers that help me.

A PE teacher, he was favoured by me but he's left now.
My business teacher, Mr K- he's really a character.
There's a lot of good teachers and some bad teachers.
Another good teacher has to be the one and only Miss B.
She's like a step mom.
She's strict, harsh, caring, just like a mom basically.
She pushes me but at the same time scolds me just like the way I was brought up.
It's like similarities to me.

Chapter 6: Authority

In Maths, I'm not going to say that I'm great at any subject but I'm not going to say that I/m the worst.
In primary school, I was really bad at maths but in secondary school, right now the topics I'm learning, I don't find challenging.
I find it extremely easy.
When it comes to circumference and shape; and decimal places, I find that quite hard.

Some things in English are easy.
A lot of things in English are very hard.
I know how to do the work but sometimes I don't show it off as I should.
My weakness in English is probably punctuation.
I'd probably write a sentence and keep carrying on and forget to put full stops and commas in the right place.
I would have to correct it.
Some things in English are easy like poems and writing stories because I'm quite imaginative.
When I see a picture, like on Paper 1 quest 5, creative writing, where it says, write what you can interpret from the picture, you can make your own story.
In any story, I come up with a picture I could probably write about.
I could see a person's face and the emotion on their face and the way that they feel.
I can just write about.

Chapter 7: Control

Next year, I will be sitting in the hall and doing a test.
At the end of secondary school, I would have begun to go to college or on an apprenticeship.
With an apprenticeship, I can learn what I want to do a specific thing whilst earning money.
It sounds like quite a good foundation to start off with.
Or I can just go to college and have a part time job.
If I am still learning about all the subjects of my choice, I am going to probably get A-levels, a degree and masters whilst earning money just to support myself later on.

Chapter 8: The End

I hope that my future will be just luxury, to be honest.
I want low working hours, lots of money with 6 figures, a big car, a big house, a beautiful wife, lots of things.
Being realistic about it, depending upon how old I am, I would like to live by myself.
I want to get to have the foundation: like learning about tax, how to organise my time properly, learning how to save money better because I really cannot save money, learning how to communicate better with people.
I'm always wondering to myself concerning how my mom is so strict with protection and love but when I become an adult, I hope to become more independent and do more things for myself.

APPENDIX 12: "Experiences: Trying to remain as positive as I can"- Rio's narrative

Experiences: Trying to remain as positive as I can

Rio's story

Chapter 1: The shy Rio

In primary school, I was good.
I was a good child.
I remember when I went to my first residential trip- that was about Year 4.
That was literally the first time that I had stayed outside of my mom, dad and grandma's houses.
I was proud of myself and thought, 'I can do it'.
I can go to the one next year.
I was proud of myself for staying away from home for so long.

I don't really remember much before then.
I went through primary school well.
I was never in trouble.
In primary school, I didn't have much of an opinion.

Chapter 2: The excited, happy and loud Rio

At school, I literally joined as much activities as possible.
I joined after school football.
I was one of those kids that was eager to do as much as I could.
At lunchtimes and breaktimes, when the Year 6s helped out in nursery, I did things like that.

To keep me on track, I always had my dad.
My dad would and will always keep me on track throughout my whole life.
If I ever had any questions about school or worries about school, I'd always ask my dad.
If I was in school, I'd probably have just asked my class teacher.

When I got into Year 6, they entered me for higher SATs so I could do my level sixes.
I always needed a push.
I used to be the child that would give up.
If I didn't understand something, I would give up.
I would always go back to my dad and he would say that I need to try.
The best part of primary school was actually when I got my SATs results.
Some teachers said that I would struggle with them, but I ended up getting level 6 in Maths and English!

Getting Level 6 was my main aspiration in Year 5 and 6.
I was going to go to grammar school, but I went to visit one and changed my mind.
They weren't for me.
I thought they would build your pathway for you.
I wanted to build my own pathway, so I decided it wasn't for me.

My mom and dad were supportive of me.
I decided to come to this school.
My sister was here.
I got the grammar school results and I could have been there.
I thought this school was better for me.

The main turning point for me was when I went into secondary school.
In primary, I was just happy.
Obviously, some days I'd go home and be like 'I don't wanna go to school'.
My dad would say, 'you've got to go, I've paid for your uniform, you've got to go to school'.

Chapter 3: Year 7- shy to horrible

I don't know what happened.
I just went from being a good boy in Year 6 and became naughty in Year 7.
I was literally going through a reckless stage.
I didn't care.
I was just naughty.

I was getting in trouble.
When I was in trouble, I was cheeky and get into more trouble.
Teachers were always on me because I got level 6 in SATs.
I have high target grades.
They would tell me, 'you can't be messing about'.

Because of the choice of friends I made in Year 7, I'd say they impacted upon me being naughty.
They didn't get in trouble at home.
They must have been running free so they were alright to be naughty.
I thought, 'oh well, I'd be alright to be naughty'.
So, I tried but it made me get into trouble at home.

Chapter 4: The naughty me

My dad carried on telling me off and telling me off and telling me off until he started telling me about his stories.
He was telling me about what happened to him when he was naughty in school.
This is where I started to change again to be a happy person.

When my dad was naughty in school, he got sent to England.
His dad was Jamaican and he was living with his mom in Jamaica.
His dad came to work in England.
My dad got sent to England 'cause he was naughty in school in Jamaica.
He was the only black boy in his class.
When he was being naughty in school in England, they would say it was his fault because of where he came from.
My dad said that he wished he was good in school and got my grades so he didn't have to go through his experience.
My dad has just got enough money to pay his rent and buy food.

He said that he could have had so much more money but he chose not to ‘cause he was naughty in school.
So I went home and thought to myself- there is no point in me being naughty.
It’s tiring and it’s not going to end up being better for me in the long run.

It wasn’t just my dad’s stories.
About a month and a half ago, I started going back to church again.
When going back to church, they’ve been telling me to be good in school.
They’ve told me lots of things and it’s made me want to be happier.
There is no point having negativity- it’s not good for you.

Chapter 5: Still naughty; you need to change now; starting to change

My realisation point was also when we all got into trouble at school and the blame was passed to me,
I thought to myself, they are forcing negativity on me and making me carry it.
Negativity is heavy.
‘It’s going to drag you down’, ‘why should I have to carry it all’, I thought.
It’s not that I wanted to distribute it to everyone, it’s that I wanted to leave it aside.
I realised , it’s a new day, I need new friends.
I went home and told my dad.
So I just stopped speaking to them.

My previous friends and I fell out and I’ve got new friends now.
The friends I’m now with are my ‘happy’ friends.
They’re who I want to be my friend.
They don’t surround me with negativity.

I’ve had bad moments at home.
Recently my mom has become ill.
It was bad for me in school.
I couldn’t concentrate.
I had a really negative mind space.
It was just really bad.
My friends helped me through by saying, ‘it will be ok’, ‘you can get through it’.
I am getting through it.
I’m trying to become positive.
If someone comes to me with negativity, I tell them don’t tell me as it is going into my mind and I’m trying to keep as positive as I can.

We have end of year assessments and when I do good in them it makes me feel better.
I feel accomplished when I’ve done good on tests.
An accomplishment for me is looking at where I’ve been, looking at where I am now and looking where I am going to be.
I know where I want to be and I’m going to get there eventually.
Looking back at where I was, I see that as an accomplishment.
I think I’ve come a long way.

Chapter 6: Starting to be happy

Teacher-wise, Mrs S influences me and Mrs B.
If I have a problem, I know I can always speak to Mrs B about it.
Because Mrs B is Jamaican as well, I can make that connection instantly.
She moved here from Jamaica and my dad came over here also,
It's one of those things.
We had that instant connection and it grew and grew and grew until I can speak to her about anything.

In the future, I'll be doing my GCSEs.
I want to be motivated to do them.
I want to know that I'm going to do good.
I don't want anything to be blurry for my GCSEs.
I want to know it all and get good grades.

I'll try and get my grades and be happy.
People think I'm happy now but I'm not as happy as I want to be.
I'm not as positive as I want to be.
In primary school, I was a really happy person.
I'm coming back to being that happy person.
I'm becoming that happy person again.

I'd like to go to college and university because I have the capability to do it.
I'm not one of those people who are saying, 'no I can't do it', when inside I know I can.
If inside I know I can do it then I'm going to do it.
I will tell people, I will do it!
I know I have the capabilities to go to college and university, so I'm definitely going to do it.
Right now, I don't know what I want to do.
I'm studying psychology at the moment.
I don't know whether I want to go through with A-Level Psychology because it is quite hard.
I want to do cooking because that's my hobby.
I would like to do it as a job.

I don't think I should decide what I want to do,
I've got to make choice, drop some subjects and pick up new ones.
I would like to just choose subjects and then let them lead me onto my future and what I want to do.
If you choose what you want to do now, you're not going to be open to new things.
I want to keep my career path as open as possible.

In my experience, I think life is about discovering new things about myself.
I think I'll still be discovering things about myself before death.
Experiences shape you.
Your experiences forever shape you throughout your life.

My dad will always be there.
My dad is always at the top of my list,

If I meet new people and they're positive, nice people then I think they will influence me.

My education is everything.
Education isn't just school.
When you are younger you are educated to wash yourself, to dress, so education is everywhere.
Every new Saturday when I go to church, I learn something new.
It's not just learning something new about the bible, sometimes it's learning something new about yourself and how you believe.
A lot of things I do believe but sometimes, I think well no.
I just take it as there is a difference between me and other people.
I know I am special in my own type of way.

APPENDIX 13: Advocating the voice of children and young people

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1990) Article 12 clearly outlines that any child capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely and be provided the opportunity to do so. Additional legislation in the UK is supportive of this conventional right, namely the SEN Code of Practice (2015) and the Children and Families Act (2014). This right is not unknown to educational psychologists who adhere to the code of practice in having regard for the views of children and young people, particularly in the completion of Education, Health and Care needs assessments. Within research, EPs have published articles focused upon ways to consult with, empower and elicit the voices of children and young people (Burton, Smith and Woods, 2010; Davies and Lewis, 2013, Grieg, 2013).

Greig, Hobbs and Roffrey (2014) argue that:

It is incumbent on adults to support and encourage the young to enquire into options in their lives, to ask questions about what is or might happen and give their opinion on this. This not just about gaining views but, also about developing their participatory skills within a democratic society. This means that as EPs we need to reflect on our expertise in enabling young people to feel confident and capable in giving their views whatever their difficulties and recognising that if we are less successful with some, then we need to find different and better ways of hearing their narratives.

(Greig, Hobbs and Roffey, 2014, p.10)

Research is a fundamental aspect of the EP role, a requirement in completing qualifications to become accredited. As a practitioner, I am committed to utilising a

range of strategies to elicit views, likewise the narrative approach provides an opportunity for valuable insights and experiences to be explored and researched. Benefits of listening to the voice of CYPs include 'allowing respondents to provide narrative accounts of their lives and experiences can help to redress some of the power differentials inherent in the research enterprise and can also provide good evidence about the everyday lives of research subjects and the meaning they attach to their experiences' (Elliott, 2005, p.17). Additionally, in capturing the views and lived experiences of CYPs through research, wider impact may be achieved for other children, practitioners and policy-makers. As aforementioned, exploring the narratives of Black Caribbean adolescent males who are achieving within the education system is needed in response to the limited literature representing their voices.

APPENDIX 14: Reflective journal example (notes made after James' interview and analysis)

James' interview took place in the morning during assembly and break time. When obtaining parental consent, it was specified that James should not meet any of his lessons in order to take part in the research. It was evident that his parents were advocates in supporting his educational achievement even before commencing the interview through the specificity of their request.

James and I took part in the interview in a small, quiet room at his secondary grammar school. There were three chairs in the room, and James and I sat on two of them sitting opposite from one another. During the analysis process, as a researcher, I recognised that I had some strong emotional and reflective moments derived from James' story. It is imperative a researcher to reflect upon and be transparent with regards to the impact that the analytic process had upon me. My emotional reactions reflected similarities with my own personal experience of grammar school education and the mental resilience required to rationalise performance as 'good' amongst high attainers as reflected by James.

Having some shared thoughts and experiences, I could empathise with the coping mechanisms that James was attempting to adopt to remember that his grades were still 'good enough'. This made me feel upset that James was having to rationalise his grades and reaffirm himself as he was still achieving well. Additionally, it is challenging as a trainee EP to hear a young person having to make themselves feel better when comparison is commonplace and can be isolating (in his experience). As a trainee EP, I can be in a position to support the individual and those who support them to make adaptations in order to make positive change. Maintaining my role as a researcher was more challenging as I felt somewhat helpless in supporting James and felt guilty about questioning him about the lowest moments in his educational experience. However, I reflected upon the experience and my emotions and I recognised that providing a forum for James to process his thoughts and feelings could equally enable positive change and empower him to voice his concerns elsewhere.

APPENDIX 15: Reflections on the use of narrative methodology

Reflections upon the use of narrative interview

Narrative interview modifications	Reflection upon narrative interview implementation in practice
1. **Visual story grid**	The visual story grid was a modification that was implemented to support in the elicitation of participant's narratives. Due to not knowing the participant's expressive language skills, I did not want to solely rely upon participant's oral responses. I considered that discussing low experiences may have elicited an emotional response. To accommodate for this, I felt that visual story grid would be advantageous to visualise, note and conceptualise experiences. However, in practice, this was not necessary, nor used for the participant's involved. The adolescent males preferred to engage in a conversational style narrative interview.
2. **Key questions used**	Following the pilot interview modifications were made to ensure that the wording was simplified to enhance participant's understanding. I reflect that the majority of questions were understood by participants. I needed to paraphrase and reinforce what was meant by 'accomplishments' and 'turning point'. I think that a visual cue would have been advantageous in order to ensure that all participants understood the key terms adapted from the life story interview (McAdams, 1995). Utilising the term turning point may need to be changed to something that is simplified or readily accessible for young people rather than an abstract concept.
3. **Seeking chapters and a title for each narrative**	Due to participant's age, they had a good understanding of story structures and therefore appeared familiar with the concept of chapters and titles. Despite this, I felt that participants required additional time to consider relevant chapters to their narrative experiences. It is possible that re-visiting the participant's a second time to review their narrative stories would have been advantageous in corroborating whether the chapters provided in the first interview aligned with the narrative restory provided. Although able to identify chapters, Jonathan chose chapter names that did not relate exactly to the data he provided. It was therefore, more challenging as a researcher to complete the narrative restory process. It is also important to consider and plan for differing ways of construing a 'story' as young people may not have positive emotions when considering books and stories. The life story interview (McAdams, 1995) also considers the use of 'film' or 'comics' as a way of conceptualising a story.

Reflections upon the designed interview schedule

Limitations of interview schedule design	Rationale
Reduced the focus of the interview to centre upon educational experiences without directly questioning about the family structure and qualifications	The interview schedule was developed by adapting the life story interview directly. There were differing sections of the interview guide that were not included. Questions about life challenges could have been expanded upon to gain deeper understanding of the challenges that participants faced. Despite not including some of the life interview schedule detailed in Box 1, participants divulged positive and negative experiences in depth.
Participant's expected me to understand cultural nuances and therefore did not expand upon their experience to the same degree as with a researcher who may be of a different ethnicity	Within the interviews, it was evident that participant's felt comfortable enough to share strengths and vulnerabilities. With minimal time used for rapport-building, participants were open to discuss peak and low moments with me. As identified as achievers, knowing the conceptualisations of Black Caribbean males in media and publication, participants may have attempted to convey a positive view of themselves. I ensured that participants knew that I wanted to hear their narratives and would openly listen to their experiences both the high and low experiences. It was explained that there were no wrong and no right responses but their realities.
Modifications to the life story interview could risk fidelity and authenticity to the approach	Reissman (2008) highlights that narrative interviews should enable research questions to be answered and allow participants to provide an extensive account. I prioritise the latter and linked this directly with my research questions. It was essential to provide space for participants to discuss what was salient and pertinent for them rather than strictly retaining the format of the interview schedule.

Reflections upon narrative methodology

Strengths	Limitations
• It incorporated a range of methodological stances such as naturalistic (used in this research) with a focus upon rich descriptions of the content of individual's experiences. Alternatively, a literary stance and a sociocultural methodological stance (Pinnegar and Daynes, 2007). • Provides a voice to participants to share what is pertinent and valued by themselves. • Collaborative approach where the researcher and researched co-constructs the narrative. • Provides a means to support others in understanding phenomena through the analysis of rich, in-depth data. • Captures the subjective experiences (Flick, 2004) • Narrative data requires the participant to provide more than a simple answer to a question. The open-ended nature of questioning requires for	• Narrative methodology as used in this research elicited a limited number of experiences as shared by participants. Researchers then use what has been offered to approximate a coherent narrative. Considerations need to be given to identify what may have been left out of individual's oral accounts. This could have been addressed through multiple visits to participant's in order to ratify the analysed data. Time and commitments in school did not allow for this to occur. • Confirmation bias- participant's may share experiences that are manipulated or expanded upon due to their interpretation of what is desired by the researcher. • Interpretive approaches with multiple ways of analysing the data. • Ethical considerations and decisions are necessary in determining who owns the narratives. The researcher is privileged with ascertaining key life experiences in detail from participants. As such, the data is based upon participant's accounts of their key experiences. On the other hand, in sharing the experiences with the researcher, the data is then deemed to be co-owned by them. Anonymity should be highly prioritised. • Alternative methods could have been used alongside oral interviews to elicit participant's narrative such as diaries, and observation alongside interviews (Pace, 2008). • Providing an open forum for participants to share their experiences also places the research focus at risk as individual's may share information of varying degrees that the researcher may not be actively seeking for. Additionally, crucial information pertinent to the research focus may be missed out due to adherence to the fidelity of a naturalistic narrative methodological stance.

narrators to share relevant information to recreate a story. • Narrative data was permitted to be elicited through interviews (Elliott, 2005). • Provides access to sensitive issues that may be difficult to ascertain through other data gathering tools. • Narratives may enhance internal validity as the method may allow data that is more trustworthy and accurate to be elicited in comparison to standardised, structured questioning (Elliot, 2005). • Moving away from structured interview schedules can allow additional space and time for new emergent research findings to emerge.	• Researchers need to be skilled at finding a clear balance between stimulating open-ended narratives and deepening questions (Flick, 2004). Some direction with regards to timings and time frames (e.g. primary school) was useful to limit the widened time frame providing a clearer focus (Elliott, 2005). • Researchers need to retain patience and active listening skills and be comfortable with allow space and time to pass when narrations are being shared. This is important as in practice, participants can appear to be processing information, such as memories before sharing them orally. On the other hand, researcher should also carefully guide the narrator to remain within the parameters of the research topic where possible and reasonable.

APPENDIX 16: Interpretation of research questions derived from thematic analysis- Rio's narrative

Interpretation of research questions derived from thematic analysis:

RQ1: What are the retrospective and current educational experiences of Black Caribbean adolescent males in mainstream education?

Peak experiences

Rio's recollection of his primary experience was mainly positive. He described himself as a pupil who was 'good and happy'. This appeared to be a direct contrast to his early secondary school demeanour. Nevertheless, achieving Level 6 in his Year 6 SATs assessments was a peak experience for Rio. He also described moments of pride such as attending residential with his peers away from his support network (i.e. his family) in year 4.

"Getting my SATs and just doing stuff like going away on that residential because I've never, that was literally the first time the ever time I'd stayed outside my mom or dads house or like my grandma's house. That was like the first time cause I was like proud of myself cause I thought I can do it. I can go on the one next year. I was proud of myself for staying away from home for so long." Line 57

In secondary school, academic performance continued to make Rio feel good about himself. However, Rio reflected upon wider accomplishments and his personal growth when considering his presentation and behaviour in Year 7 and the positive steps he had made to return to the 'happy' version of himself.

"Like we have end of year assessments and that and when I do good in them it makes me feel better. I have like accomplishments when I've done good on tests and that but then like I.. an accomplishment for me is looking where I've been and looking where I am now and looking where I'm going to be. Cause I know where I wanna be and I'm gonna get there eventually. Looking back to where I was, I see that as an accomplishment for where I am now cause I think I've come a long way." Line 86

Low experiences

In primary school, Rio could not recall any low experiences. I, on the other hand, inferred that low expectation of teachers had the potential for Rio to underperform in his Level 6 SATs: what appeared to mediate this was his own self-confidence and determination to succeed.

"The best part of primary school was actually when I got my SATs results because they entered me for the level 6s and some teachers said that I would struggle with them but I ended up getting level 6 in Maths and English." Line 33

In Rio's narrative, he detailed the beginning of his secondary school experience as 'reckless' as he began to associate with peers who exerted a negative influence on his behaviour. Rio acknowledged that his behaviour was unsatisfactory and as a result caused his father to intervene in order to ensure that he did not waste his educational opportunities. This experience was detailed as Rio's low experience in secondary school.

"Because of the choice of friends I made in Year 7, I'd say they also impacted upon me being naughty. Because they didn't get in trouble at home, they must have been free running, so they were alright to be naughty. So I thought 'oh well I'd be alright to be naughty'. So, I tried to be naughty but then obviously it made me get in trouble at home."
Line 80

Key turning points

There were no significant turning points in Rio's primary education. However, in Rio's secondary narrative his father's educational narrative formed a key turning point in his educational trajectory. Rio shared that teachers were concerned and relayed his target grades which were higher due to his SATs results. However, his father's intervention (narrating his own experience) was instrumental in Rio beginning to change both his behaviour and his choice of peers.

"When my dad was naughty in school, he got sent to England. Well his dad was Jamaican and he was with his mom in Jamaica and his dad came to work in England so he got sent over to England 'cause he was naughty in school in Jamaica. When he got sent to England he was the only black boy in his class so he was like, when he was being naughty in school in England they would say it was his fault because of where he'd come from. So my dad was saying that he wished I was good in school so I could get my grades so I didn't have to go through that and so I didn't have to stress my dad and stress my mom. I just wished I was good in school because he doesn't have the best job now. He's just got enough money to pay his rent and buy food. Dad said 'I could have had so much

more money but I chose not to'. So like I went home and I thought to myself, there's no point in me being naughty. It's tiring. It's not going to end up being better for me." Line 68

Furthermore, Rio shared that his mother had become ill and during this time he received positive peer support. He recognised that the negative peer influences caused him to be weighed down by negativity which he did not want to perpetuate throughout his secondary school experience.

"I've had bad moments from home like just recently my mom's got ill so obviously it was bad for me in school. I couldn't concentrate but then like my friends helped me through saying it will be ok, you can get through it. I am getting through it." Line 78

Finally, Rio shared that attending church and the messages that he heard supported in him releasing negativity and becoming more positive in his outlook and his environment.

RQ2: How do Black Caribbean adolescents narrate the key influencers in their educational history and experiences?

Rio's father played a significant role in his educational trajectory by demanding high educational standards and expectations of him.

In secondary school, Rio valued relationships with peers who had a positive impact his life.

"But the friends I'm with now are my happy friends, they're who I want to be my friends. They don't surround me with negativity, it's just like come on you can get on with it" Line 74

Alongside peers and family influence, Rio recalled key teachers, particularly Mrs B (a Jamaican teacher) with whom he had a close relationship in school.

"Teacher-wise who influences me? Mrs S influences me and Mrs B. If I have a problem, I know I can always speak to Mrs B about it." Line 82

"Cause she's Jamaican as well, I can make that connection like instantly. What Jamaican people do if someone asks a Jamaican they can have a conversation about it. It's just because she moved here from Jamaica, my dad came over here from Jamaica. It's just one of those things, we had that instant connection and it grew and grew and grew until I can speak to her about anything." Line 84

In the future, Rio acknowledged the key people who would be important in his life.

"My dad will always be there. Like, my dad's always at the top of the list but I think that depends on people who I'm gonna meet in my future. If I meet new people and they're positive, nice people then I think they will influence me." Line 119

RQ3: How do Black Caribbean adolescents narrate their future life outcomes and aspirations?

Rio's primary aspirations were related to his SATs performance. Once achieved, Rio's secondary aspirations were more related to his happiness and academic achievement in his GCSEs. Rio shared his self-confidence in his capabilities to achieve his predicted grades.

"I'd like to go to college and university because I know I have the capability to do it. I'm not one of those people who are saying no I can't do it, no I can't do it when inside I know I can. If inside I know I can do it then I'm going to do it. I will tell people, I will do it! So, I know I have the capabilities to go to college and university so I'm definitely going to do them but right now I don't know what I want to do. I'm studying psychology at the moment now, but I don't know whether I want to go through with A-Level because it is quite hard. But I want to do cooking because that's my hobby and I'd like to do it as a job. It would just be good." Line 105

In terms of Rio's future goals, it was outside his value system to state exactly what career path he wanted to take. However, he shared some of his interests and was assured that whatever he decided to do, he had the ability to do so and education would play a significant role in his future.

"My education is everything really. Education just isn't school cause like when you're younger you're educated to wash yourself, to dress so education is everywhere. Obviously, you'll have education throughout your whole life because you learn new things." Line 115