THE UNHEARD VOICES OF BLACK CARIBBEAN BOYS ON EDUCATION

Background
- Caribbean children as a group are underachieving in the education system (Swan, 1985).
- Black Caribbean and Pakistani pupils are the worst performing groups, with Black Caribbean pupils showing the greatest change in levels of attainment during compulsory schooling. Overall, the disparity in achievement between ethnic groups increases significantly over the course of schooling. Black Caribbean pupils make the least progress between key stages, e.g. only 48 percent of those who achieved the expected level at KS3 went on to gain five or more A*-C GCSEs (Bhattacharyya, Ison & Blair, 2003).
- UK Government statistics from the National Pupil Database in 2013 reported that pupils from Black ethnic groups are still performing below, and in particular Black Caribbean boys. Only 46.9 percent of Black Caribbean boys achieved 5 or more GCSEs (which was the lowest percentage between all ethnic groups) (DfE, 2013).
- Increasing opportunities for pupil voice to be heard has been brought to the fore of current legislation (Children and Families Act, 2014) and is a major theme of the revised SEN Code of Practice (DfE, 2014b).

Methodology
- A constructionist qualitative exploratory design was used. This allowed for in-depth examination of the perceptions of individuals (Hammersley, 2013), which emphasised pupil voice.
- Participants: 12 Black Caribbean boys in Year 10/11 attending mainstream secondary schools in inner London Local Authorities.
- Measures: Semi-structured interviews - Some open-ended questions were also included as Holloway and Jefferson (2013) suggest that this can allow greater access to a person's motivations and emotions than a closed question.
- Analysis: A six-stage thematic analysis proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006, 2013) was used to analyse the data, with an add-on to the fifth stage which has been adapted from Attride-Sterling (2001). The transcriptions were analysed using Atlas-Ti Software.

Thematic Analysis

P10: “I do not like some of the rules: they are kind of unfair like if chew chewing gum you have to come in on Saturday for two hours in the morning at 8 o’clock and you finish at 10. That is it for me, just the Saturdays.”

P5: “I want to become a basketball player but my mum said I need a plan B but I can’t think of one yet.”

P6: “Some of the teachers are difficult, sometimes I am different in terms of learning. I don’t learn the same way that other people learn and some of the teachers don’t understand that so I wouldn’t really learn in some subjects and what is that going to do? It teachers knew how I would learn then that would help.”

P7: “Sometimes they help and sometimes they don’t. Sometimes in lessons they bother me and if the lesson is boring. It is good to have a fun in lessons if you are always doing work but I know it is not good.”

Recommendations for Practice
- EPs can inform school staff on cultural awareness and differentiation using INSET and/or staff sharing. Future EP practice can bring awareness to school staff on the importance of pupil voice and implementing ways in which pupils and staff can work together to support Black Caribbean boys by helping them to holistically develop as individuals while assisting them to be motivated to academically achieve and subsequently achieve their aspirations.
- Future practice can also involve family by making them aware that they too play a vital role in the academic achievement of their children.
- Future research and practice can assist in creating positive learning environments with clear boundaries and where failure is seen as part of learning (Bielby et al., 2012), regardless of their ability or need.

References