



Leading education
and social research
Institute of Education
University of London

The Educational Strategies of the Black Middle Classes – Frequently asked questions

1 How was the project devised?

The project was developed over a period of two years. It was subject to review by a number of internal experts and underwent various revisions before finally being submitted to the ESRC.

2 Who are the ESRC?

The Economic & Social Research Council (ESRC) funds research and training in social and economic issues. You can read more about the ESRC [here](#) [link to their website www.esrcsocietytoday.ac.uk/ESRCInfoCentre/index.aspx]

3 What do we mean by middle class?

We are speaking to parents who can be classified as working in professional or managerial occupations.

4 What do we mean by Black?

We recognise that many people of both Caribbean and African heritage may refer to themselves as Black. For this project, we are speaking to parents who self-define as Black Caribbean.

5 Why parents of Black Caribbean heritage?

Research continues to reveal the educational disadvantages experienced by Black Caribbean pupils and their families. By focusing on professional Black Caribbean parents we hope to explore and challenge some of the stereotypes associated with families from these backgrounds and also to add a new perspective to the debates about the educational experiences and attainment of their children.

6 Why only parents of 8-18 year olds?

This age group encompasses some of the key points of transition points within compulsory education (e.g. primary-secondary transfer, GCSE subject options). By including children up to the age of 18, we are also able to explore parents' views of further education, university and possible career aspirations.

7 Are we only speaking to parents based in London?

Approximately 45% of the Black and minority ethnic population of England and Wales live in London so most of our sample is London based. However, we are also speaking with Black Caribbean parents outside of London.

8 How many parents will we speak with?

We will interview 60 parents, at least 10 of whom will be fathers. We will carry out repeat interviews for a small number of this total. All interviews are carried out in confidence and we change the name of participants and any one they identify when we analysis and write up the findings.

9 Who is doing this project?

We are a team of four researchers of varying ages, ethnicities and social class backgrounds; some of us have school-aged children. Our areas of expertise include parenting, social class and race equality. You can find out further information about us on our individual Institute of Education [webpages](#)

10 Is there a project advisory group?

Our advisory group includes Sir Keith Ajegbo (Institute for Community Cohesion); Kwame Kwei-Armah (actor and playwright), Dr Debbie Weekes-Barnard (Runnymede Trust); Professor Ann Phoenix (Thomas Coram Unit, Institute of Education).

11 What will we do with the findings?

We expect the findings to feed into current debates and policy about Black Caribbean pupils and education. All participants in the project will receive a summary of our final report. We will also share our findings in a dissemination event towards the end of the project.

For further information about the project please contact Nicola Rollock at: n.rollock@ioe.ac.uk

