Focus Group Questions for Exploring Black Experiences of Power in British Education

Parental/Carer Power

1. Parental /Carer Influence:

   - How do you feel about your ability to **influence decisions** related to your child's education? Can you provide specific **examples** of when you felt **empowered or disempowered?**

2. Positive Experiences:

   - Can you share a story about a time when you, as a Black parent/carer (or a non-Black parent /carer with a Black child/children), felt you **successfully advocated** for your child in the face of racism or discrimination at school? What strategies did you use, and what was the outcome?

3. Challenges Faced:

   - Have there been instances where you felt **unable to** effectively **challenge** racism or discrimination at your child's school? What obstacles did you encounter?

4. Scaling Up Influence:

   - In what ways do you think your **influence** as a parent could be **strengthened and supported** within the educational system?

5. Resource Availability:

   - What **resources** (e.g., community programs, school headteacher/governing body family support, local authority services, MP, parent organisations) have you found **helpful** in supporting your child's education? Can you **describe** how these resources have made a difference?

6. Improving Resources:

   - How do you think these **resources** could be **enhanced** to better support your child and other Black children in the school system?

7. Barriers to Support:

   - What are the main **challenges** you face in trying to support your child's educational journey? How have these barriers impacted your child's experience at school?

9. SEND Support:

If your child has Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), how well do you feel their needs are understood and supported by the school? What improvements would you like to see?

10. Imagine you set up a powerful parent/carer network to advance the education and support of Black children. What face to face and /or online support would it offer to its parents carers members?

Community Power

1. Positive Community Actions:

   - Can you share an example of a **positive initiative or action** taken by your community to combat racism or discrimination in educational settings? What was the impact of this initiative?

2. Challenges in Community Action:

   - Have there been times when you or your community **struggled** to address racism or discrimination in educational contexts? What factors contributed to these difficulties?

3. Local Resources:

   - What **resources** in your local community have you found **beneficial** for improving the educational success of Black children and young people? How have these resources been utilized?

4. Resource Accessibility:

   - Are these community **resources easily accessible** to you and other families? Have you had any personal experiences with accessing or providing these resources?

5. Improving Community Resources:

   - How do you think the **resources** available in your community could be **improved** to better support Black children's educational achievements?

6. Community Barriers:

   - What **challenges or obstacles** within your community **hinder the academic success** of Black children? How can these challenges be addressed?

7. **SEND Resources in Community:**

- Are there community resources specifically designed to support children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)? How effective are these resources, and what could be improved?

8. Imagine your community creates a number of powerful independent centres with online and face to face educational programmes for Black communities all over the UK. What would these centres provide? And How could it be sustainably funded and /or generate income?

Pupil Power (for Pupils Only)

1. Student representation

   - Do Black students have a **voice** in your school and are you **listened** to? How does this affect you?

2. Curriculum Representation:

   - Do you feel that your school's **curriculum represents** your culture and experiences? Can you give examples of when you felt included or excluded?

3. Teacher Representation:

   - Do you have any Black teachers at your school? How do you think the **presence** of Black teachers affects your learning and school environment?

4. Positive School Experiences:

   - Can you describe a time when you felt you **successfully** stood up against racism or discrimination at your school? What actions did you take, and what was the result?

5. Challenges in Exercising Student Power:

   - Have you ever felt **unable** to challenge racism or discrimination at your school? What stopped you, and how did it make you feel?

6. School Challenges:

   - What are some of the **challenges** you face at school? How do these challenges affect you and your peers?

(Facilitator prompt feeling safe on way to school/outside of school/in school, lateness, detentions, uniform, teaching quality, teacher absence/supply teachers for key subjects, exclusions, options, career advice, school rules, unfair treatment, who is in top/bottom sets, teachers absence/supply)

7. Supportive Resources and Organisations

   - Are you aware of any resources at your school or organisations outside of school that are designed to **support** and help you succeed? Have you used these resources/organisation, and how have they impacted you?

8. Feeling Empowered:

   - have you felt **empowered** or silenced in school?

Have you ever said or done something in school which changed things positively for you and other students? If so, can you share that story?

9. Improving Support:

   - How do you think your school could **better** support you and other Black students?

How could teachers better help or support you and other Black students in your school?

10. SEND Support:

- If you or a friend have any special educational needs or disabilities (SEND), how well do you feel these needs are being met by your school? What changes would you like to see?

 11. Imagine...

- Imagine you could create a powerful organisation for Black students to be more organised, resilient, more successful and stand up for what they believe in. What would this organisation offer to its student members and how could it be funded?

Teacher and School Power (for Teachers Only)

1. Positive Teaching Experiences:

   - Can you share an instance where you felt **successful in combating racism** or discrimination in your school? What steps did you take, and what was the outcome?

2. Challenges Faced:

   - Have there been situations where you **struggled to address racism** or discrimination? What barriers did you encounter, and how did it affect you?

3. Exercising Power:

   - **How** do you, as a Black teacher, navigate and **exercise power** within your school? Can you share specific examples?

4. Assets for Black Teachers:

   - What strengths and **assets** do you believe Black teachers bring to the school environment? How can these be amplified to benefit the broader educational community?

5. Perceived Deficits:

   - What are the challenges or **limitations** that Black teachers face in the school system? How do these affect your ability to teach effectively?

6. Pupil's Assets:

   - From your perspective, what strengths do Black pupils bring to the school environment? How can these strengths be better recognised and supported?

7. Pupil's Challenges:

   - What challenges do Black pupils face in your school? How do these challenges impact their educational experience?

8. Supportive Resources:

   - What resources are available to you to support Black children in your school? How have you used these resources, and what impact have they had?

9. Empowerment to Challenge Bias:

   - Do you feel empowered to address and challenge biases within your school? Can you share examples of when you felt empowered or constrained?

10. School Constraints:

    - Are there any constraints within your school that limit your ability to support Black children? What changes do you think are necessary to overcome these constraints?

11. Needed Changes:

   - What key changes would you like to see in your school to better support Black children and their educational success? How do you envision these changes being implemented?

12. **SEND Support:**

- How well do you think your school supports Black children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)? What improvements would you suggest to better address their needs?

13. Imagine you could create a top school and/or leadership training programme where Black teachers can thrive and are developed as leaders who successfully engage with their students, parents and community to produce great results. What are the key components of this and how would you implement such a school/programme?