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Introduction

This study sought to shed light on the role a Black Supplementary School (BSS) played in supporting Black boys who had been labelled with challenging behaviour by their mainstream educational provision and were at risk of/or had been permanently excluded. Within the context of this study Black boys Includes Black African, Black Caribbean and dual heritage/ mixed race with Black African, Black Caribbean or any other Black nationality unless stated otherwise. For the purposes of this study I have chosen to capitalise the word “Black” as the term will be used as a proper noun to refer to a specific group of people. Guthrie (2004) argues that despite how this may contradict prevailing academic style manuals, there is a clear justification for doing so.

The Academic Underachievement of Black Boys at GCSE Level

Over the past decade the Department for Education (DfE) statistics have indicated that Black boys achieve less academically in relation to the national average at General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) level (DfE, 2012-2017,). Demie & McLean (2018b) report that concerns over the educational experience of Black boys can be dated as far back as the 1950’s. Moreover, Coard (1971) published a text titled “How the West Indian Child is Made Educationally Subnormal in the British School System”. This was one of the first publications suggesting that institutional racism was to blame for the failings of Black pupils in the UK. More recent articles have highlighted the specific impact of anti-Black racism and how this may have caused experiences of racial trauma for Black children within the education system (Agyeman & Lichwa, 2020).

Byfield (2008) argues that because of the amount of research reporting the

academic underachievement's of Black boys, they have become synonymous with the term. Yet some research has challenged these negatives narratives. Demie et al. (2006) found that within certain Local Authorities Black pupils were attaining higher than national average at GCSE level. They argue that there needs to be greater exploration of the contextual factors that enable Black pupils to succeed so that these can then be implemented into educational policies and inform effective strategies. Modood (2003) and Troyna (1984) both state that the academic successes of this group, for the most part, have been ignored and that it has perpetuated a negative stereotype of the intellectual inabilities of Black pupils.

The overrepresentation of Black Boys in School Exclusion data

The Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Code of Practice (COP) introduced the category of Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) difficulties and stated that it can manifest itself in many observable ways including displaying challenging, disruptive or disturbing behaviours (Department for Education [DfE] & Department of Health [DoH], 2015). **Children and Young People (CYP)** can be described as having SEMH needs if they have difficulties with; social and emotional functioning; their ability to regulate self and behaviour or are experiencing mental health difficulties. In this way, behaviour can be seen as communication of a child's needs or mental state (DfE, 2016).

Government statistics have consistently highlighted Black boys to be the highest group at risk of school exclusions for “persistent disruptive behaviour” (DfE, 2011; **2014**;- 2017). However, the legislative definition of what exactly constitutes as “persistent disruptive behaviour” is vague and subjective. Further, the fact that behavioural issues are the most frequent cause for school exclusions is concerning as

legislation indicates that schools have a duty of care to children presenting with SEMH needs (DfE & DoH, 2015; DfE, 2017a). The DfE “Timpson review of school exclusion” (2019) report, states that schools should be accountable for the educational outcomes of their pupils including those that they exclude. It also raised concerns over the current exclusion legislation and questioned why there is a perpetuating pattern of a disproportionate number of certain groups being excluded for behavioural issues without the identification of underlying SEMH needs. Demie (2021) investigated reasons for the overrepresentation of Black boys within exclusion statistics and found that; low teacher expectations, institutional racism, lack of diversity in the school workforce and lack of effective staff training on multicultural education, were all contributing factors.

Research has indicated that school exclusions can be an indicator for poorer long-term outcomes (Daniels & Cole, 2010). CYP who have been excluded from school are at a higher risk of; becoming offenders, suffering from low self-esteem, engaging in delinquent activities in the community, becoming Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) and experiencing social isolation, compared to pupils who have not been excluded (Daniels & Cole, 2010; Leone et al., 2003; Parsons et al., 2001). Data also indicates that there is a positive correlation between the disproportionate number of Black boys who are excluded from school, the disproportionate number of Black men diagnosed with Mental Health problems and the disproportionate number of Black men in the criminal justice system within the UK (Baker, 2017; Daniel et al., 2003; Losen & Martinez, 2013; Ministry Of Justice, 2017).

The High Academic Achievements of Black Boys at GCSE Level

Research looking into the factors that contribute to the high achievements of Black boys at GCSE level is sparse (Byfield, 2008; Harper, 2009; Robinson, 2020). Nevertheless, the findings that have emerged from the small pool of research highlight some important factors. This includes pupils having support from adults who had high academic expectations of them, high levels of engagement between parents and school, parents having access to support, and pupils having a sense of racial identity (Bigford, 2015; Demie, 2005; Demie & McLean, 2018a; Robinson, 2020; Tomlin & Olusola; 2007; Osei, 2017).

High teacher expectations

Tomlin and Olusola (2007) found that high teacher expectations were an important factor in Black pupils achieving high academic attainments. This involved teachers explicitly communicating their high expectations to the pupils and encouraging them to have high expectations of themselves. They also found that high levels of parental involvement and schools working in partnership with parents positively contributed to high academic attainment.

Racialised Identity

Research looking into the high academic achievement of Black pupils has found that aspects of identity play a role in their success (Bigford, 2015; Demie & McLean, 2018a; Robinson, 2020; Rogers et al., 2015; Osei, 2017). Jaspal (2013) explains that identity is malleable and heavily influenced by both external and internal factors; it is a diverse and complex psychosocial construct. He described that changes in society impact one's concept of self. Further, he suggests that changes in an individual's life can have an impact on their own psychological concept of self, thus impacting on their identity.

Bigford (2015) researched the developed and maintained identities of high achieving Black pupils. They defined identity as something that was not fixed but rather influenced by internal and external mechanisms including external relationships with others and opinions held by the wider society and internal perspectives of self. With identity being a malleable concept, adults could help young people develop a positive identity. Key findings of the Bigford (2015) study included that pupils who attended a BSS felt that it had had a positive influence on their academic abilities and helped them to develop cultural self-awareness and self-efficacy. More details on the functions of BSS's will be given in the specified subsection.

Sense of School Belonging

School belonging is a psychological concept that has emerged in educational research over the past few decades (Kapoor & Tomar, 2016). It incorporates aspects of cognition, socialisation, emotions and behaviours in relation to feelings of connectedness to a place, culture or others. Essentially, sense of belonging illustrates how schools can be defined as a community and is thought to influence how CYP engage in learning and academic progression (Faircloth, 2011). It has been found that if CYP have a sense of identification with their school, they are more likely to develop healthier attitudes with themselves as well as with others (Kapoor & Tomar, 2016). Goodenow and Grady (1993) described school belonging as relating to a “complex web of social and personal relationships”. School belonging has been found to have influences on academic motivation, levels of engagement and levels of participation (Goodenow & Grady, 1993; Kapoor & Tomar, 2016). Siegel (2018) developed the framework “A Relationship-Based Approach to inclusion”. He argues that positive relationships within the school environment are crucial to the success of CYP, particularly those who struggle to manage their behaviour. For

schools to be able to support CYP, they need to have a community culture that actively facilitates strong connections with pupils, promotes inclusion, treats CYP with respect and ensures that they feel valued.

Bioecological Process, Person, Context, Time Model as a Conceptual Framework

Bronfenbrenner & Morris (2006) developed the eco-biological model which demonstrates the interplay between individuals and their environment and the impact that these interactions have on an individual's development. It also sheds light on the "Process" (interactions with others/objects/environment), "Person" (genetic and biological aspects of a person), "Context" (the environment of conditions an individual is in) and "Time" (the extent to which activities occur consistently in the developing person's environment) **Person-Process-Context-Time (PPCT) model. The psychology that underpins the biological-PPCT model does not look at the child from the perspective of a deficit "within child" model; it considers the systems that surround the child.**

Within the present study, the theoretical models mentioned in the introduction will be used as a guiding conceptual framework to shed light on the psychological processes that underpin the findings. Their relevance will be explored further within the discussion.

Black Supplementary Schools

A supplementary school can be defined as a provision that provides additional learning support outside of mainstream educational institutions (National Resource Centre for Supplementary Education, 2017). As supplementary schools have a strong cultural or religious focus, they usually offer support to CYP on the basis that they identify as belonging to a particular religion or culture (Evans & Gillian-Thomas, 2015). The first

Black Supplementary Schools (BSSs) were opened in the 1960s. They began to develop as a result of concerns within the Black community that the mainstream education system was failing Black children due to racial/racist inequalities (Andrews, 2014, 2018; Dove, 1993; Mirza & Reay, 2000). Andrews (2014) argued that due to institutional racism, Black pupils were not given the necessary support to learn in mainstream educational schools, hence the emergence of BSSs as a socio-political movement. These BSSs were dedicated to developing children's understanding of their cultural heritage whilst providing them with support for their academic learning. It was hoped that these settings would encourage Black children to recognise themselves as individuals with academic potential (Bigford, 2015; Maylor et al., 2010; Mirza & Reay, 2000).

Although BSSs began to emerge more than five decades ago, Reed et al. (2017) note that such schools have not been fully embraced, supported and promoted by governments. Instead, they have been regarded with much scepticism and suspicion. Nevertheless, there is research to suggest that BSSs have been monumental in supporting the needs of Black children. Mirza (2008) suggests that BSSs help pupils to develop a positive sense of identity around being a Black person. She describes BSSs as being "sacred Black spaces", absent from any dominant White ideologies. Hence, there is a lack of White (Eurocentric) bias in the BSSs which is present everywhere else in mainstream education.

Methodology

Two overarching questions guided this research:

- What are the key curriculum features of a BSS?
- How do pupils, parents and staff feel that a BSS supports pupils' SEMH and educational development?

Black Supplementary School Sampling

Risley High (RH) was invited to take part in the study because of their specialism in supporting Black boys labelled with “challenging behaviour”. Table 1. illustrates some of the main similarities and differences of RH to other BSSs.

Table 1. The similarities and difference between Risley High and traditional BSSs	
Similarities with Risley High and other BSSs	Differences with Risley High and other BSSs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Racialised curriculum focusing on Black culture - including teaching pupils about African History and the contributions that Black people have made towards science, technology, civil rights etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide scholarship opportunities for pupils to attend boarding school.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff are predominantly Black. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are a registered charity unlike most other BSSs.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer pupils academic support. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funded by donations from sponsors and supporters - most BSSs are reliant on government funding.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take place on Saturday’s. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specialise in supporting Black boys who have been labelled with “challenging behaviour” (SEMH needs).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teach pupils about racism and how it has impacted/impacts on Black people globally i.e. apartheid, the lynching of Emmett Till. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff are employed - most BSSs rely on volunteers.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create safe spaces for Black families to discuss challenges that they are encountering in mainstream education. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organise work experience for pupils.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teach children Black cultural arts i.e. African dancing, African drumming, Caribbean steel pans. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receive referrals directly from schools.

Participant Sampling

The study explored the subjective individually constructed views and experiences of 5 pupils, 4 parents and 5 staff of RH; a BSS providing support for Black boys with challenging behaviour at GCSE level. A single case-study design was employed. This gave an idiographic perspective on the phenomenon being researched meaning that it shed light on the practices of this unique BSS (Willig, 2013). Another reason for applying a single case-study approach was that it enabled the phenomena to be explored within a holistic context. This meant that it could be researched with consideration given to the various dimensions of the context. Adopting a single case-study design allowed for data collection from a variety of sources in order to gain deeper insight and understanding of the area of investigation. Willig (2013) refers to this as triangulation. The present study collected qualitative data from parents, pupils and staff using semi-structured one-to-one interviews. The data was analysed using Thematic Analysis. Triangulating the data from these various participants strengthened the analytical claims and gave a richer picture of the phenomena being investigated (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Each data set was analysed separately, however there were overlapping themes.

Results

Two themes and one overarching theme emerged in relation to the research question, “How do pupils, parents and staff feel that RH (a BSS) supports pupils’ SEMH and educational development?”.

Theme 1: Strong Sense of Belonging

This theme captured the participants’ perceptions about the type of relationships that were facilitated through attending RH. They shared ideas about the positive relationships that they had experienced. They also highlighted some unique aspects to how useful these

relationships were in relation to the pupils` development and learning. They described feeling a strong family type connection and this impacted on the participants` sense of belonging. All the participants described the family orientated atmosphere of RH as something positive.

...the one saving grace I had was RH were on board and I could call them anytime and like I said Staff-D (RH CEO) was uncle Staff-D, so uncle Staff-D would always be there to talk to him (her son) and instil in him (her son) family values... (Parent-B).

The parents and pupils not only felt as though RH was like a family, it was a place that they could find comfort and acceptance. The pupils described it as a place where they could be themselves and were treated with non-judgement.

...when I got into year seven that`s when my dad first left the house and that was a bit of struggle for me and over the years I`ve been getting used to it and RH was like a second family to me where I could come and be myself... (Pupil-E).

All participant groups expressed that this sense of family was a defining feature of RH. Participants felt that this had an impact on the way they were able to connect, resonate with and understand each other. The staff themselves felt that they played a significant role in facilitating this.

...I`ve had to learn to put on different caps for different students. And it`s to ensure that each child that comes here feels a sense of family and feels a sense of home and a sense of a place where you can grow. Because we grow sometimes in a place where, well where we`re comfortable, but we feel loved and nurtured. And that`s what we try to emulate here at RH and through knowing each child knowing their parents” (Staff-A).

The fact that the participants used words such as ‘family’ to describe the setting encapsulated the feelings of belonging to the RH community and how this enriched parents, pupils’ and staff’s lives. Additionally, the discussion of the different types of relationships experienced at RH illuminated the fact there was a significant level of

closeness within groups. The pupils described how they had managed to build strong bonds between each other over time: "...I think now I have a really really good relationship with them (other pupils) I know most if not all the students who come here..." (Pupil-A). The "good relationship" Pupil-A identified was something that the staff felt was explicitly encouraged throughout RH. The importance of peer relationships was described as significant. Additionally, these bonds were highlighted as being "life changing" and "life-long", extending to life outside of RH and even when their paths had taken them different ways.

...in fact (son's name) is in contact with most of the guys of his year. Some of them are at university now and some of them still live in (name of area) so they link up whenever they come home...(Parent-A).

...the relationship they (RH pupils) form once they are here is life changing for them because it's outside of their experience of meeting other young people. But also it is life-long because these friendships remain as a consequence of RH" (Staff-B).

The parents also felt that they had created significant bonds with other parents. Through their child attending RH, they were able to meet with other parents who were having similar experiences to themselves: "...I mean yea lifelong friends erm now and I guess when you have a group of parents who are all striving for the same thing you have a connection..." (Parent-D).

...when you're listening to other parents, you're thinking wow that's what you're going through. Because you always think that, gosh you're going through the worst thing. When somebody goes through worse, you're able to give some advice and you're able to help or console...(Parent-B).

Likewise, staff also spoke about the relationship they held with each other. They had a clear respect and cohesive approach to their work at RH: "...we form a shoulder-to-shoulder body of staff erm where we are consistent and compliant and incredibly helpful

to each other so that that is all we are able to give to everybody else...” (Staff-B). Peer relationships were a momentous aspect of pupils’, parents’ and staff’s experience of RH. The school facilitated not just the friendship between pupils, but also between staff and between parents. Thus, there was a high level of trust between peers. Team building activities also helped to facilitate a strong sense of belonging for the pupils. It was felt that through these activities, a deeper level of respect and understanding of the importance of working as a team would be achieved. This was identified by the pupils and staff: “...I think the same way that they relate to staff we teach them to be respectful towards each other and to work together as a team. So, they do get a lot of team building activities...” (Staff-D).

...a lot of the time anything we do will be done in groups. So, we have to do help build teamwork. You have to do it with other people and often, the groups are like muddled up a little bit so you’re not always with the same people. So, you have to learn how to work together and to work well with other people (Pupil-A).

Another aspect of the team building was that it made the pupils feel as though they could depend on each other. They were taught that a central aspect of teamwork was them being responsible not only for themselves, but also their peers: “...like doing teamwork activities and stuff so that we really, yea we help each other. So, if someone’s struggling with something everyone is always there for each other... (Pupil-D).

Having team building tasks embedded within the curriculum was important to the pupils’ understanding and developing peer support skills. In the following extract, Staff-B likens it to belonging to a football team: “...I think they they form a bond which they wouldn’t otherwise have unless they were part of a football team but a football team that is two hundred and odd student big is quite rare...” (Staff-B). Activities and lessons were

structured with the specific purpose of enhancing the pupil's ability to work with different peers. It also taught them about responsibility and being dependable.

Theme 2: Knowing and Growing Thy Self

Another factor that contributed to supporting SEMH and academic progression was the pertinent role of developing the pupils' self-awareness which was embedded within the RH curriculum. Participants identified aspects of themselves that had been developed through being a part of the setting. They spoke about the role that RH played in promoting racialised self-identity. One of the aspects of identity involved elements of history and geography. Pupils felt as though they had a stronger sense of who they were and where they came from. Pupil-A illustrated the sense of empowerment he felt through learning about African history.

...so, we would do the history of African nations in the summer. Last year we looked at the Mali empire and Mansa Musa. So again, all of this is the history that you're not really taught in school but is really important. Like on the world it's a really important part of history that they don't really show you, so it does show you that there is rich Black history all over the world, in Africa in America even in Europe. So, I think it's just very important to show that... (Pupil-A).

Parents also spoke about feeling that they had a stronger sense of racialised self-identity from attending meetings at RH. Parent-A expressed how she benefitted: "...Brother Zephi used to come in and do the Black history month and take us to places with his speech where we've never been, I've learned about our culture..." (Parent-A). The staff spoke about how having a sense of racialised identity not only impacted on pupils in terms of having a deeper sense of self, they felt it transcended into becoming a part of who they were as a person. Staff-A reflected on his own experience of attending a BSS and the impact that it had.

...the fact they're here and they're in an environment that supports and encourages their development I think is unique. I've been a student on a similar programme erm and that really helped me to have a sense of purpose and identity and then enabled me to become who I am today" (Staff-A).

Staff felt strongly that having activities that were targeted towards raising a deeper understanding of self was a vital part of the curriculum. Not only was it something that helped with the promotion of self-identity, it was also something that helped them understand their position in society and in the world.

...so they look at their name and its meaning, their ethnic origin, their journey, their own personal geography in history erm their significance in the world, stuff around religion who they are, not just what they do... we are trying to teach them to work out who they are by their character and that sort of thing. So, I think that's something that permeates everything that we do is their identity and who they are... (Staff-D).

The promotion of racialised self-identity was essential to RH pupils, staff and parents. They felt that learning about things such as their history and their ethnic origins helped them to develop confidence and a deeper understanding of who they were. This was further encouraged by the high expectations that were put on pupils, staff and parents to produce their best efforts in every task. The pupils recognised the effort that staff put into supporting them. They were also aware of the expectations that staff had of them and this inspired them to try and live up to those expectations.

...everyone's really nice. They're all here to benefit us and I think all the students know that. And yea they always put like 100 percent effort into everything they do, and we know that and we try to duplicate that... (Pupil-D).

...when you're treated as an adult and have expectations to behave as one, you want to, you sort of want to fulfil that and show that you can behave well and be better. I think so, I think that's just the overall feel that I get from RH... (Pupil-A).

Not only were there high expectations from staff to commit to the pupils, and for pupils to perform at their best, there were also high expectations for parents to be a part of the process as well. In this way the parents were as invested in as the pupils.

...the same way we are with our children with the high expectations and the very clear boundaries, we're the same with our parents. Because it's really important that they're following the very same, I guess call it expectations as their children otherwise it collapses" (Staff-B).

Parent-D also expressed similar feelings: "...it was like the investment in the parents was just as much the investment in the children..." (Parent-D). Not only were there high levels of expectations for pupils, parents and staff to be their best, the school tried to support them to be able to achieve this. Personal bests were not based on the performance or capabilities of others, they were individualised and recognised by the amount of effort they put into each task. The RH curriculum was something that offered the pupils skills that they felt were transferable and that they could implement in various parts of their lives. For the parents, RH provided their sons with brighter futures and was a place of sanctuary. It was clear that pupils felt more confident in many areas of their lives by attending lessons and partaking in activities.

...most of the skills that I've learnt at RH are holistic but because they are transferrable I myself have taken it upon me to make it my responsibility that I'm applying the things I'm learning at RH to my academic as well as like me a person... (Pupil-B).

Parents also commented that the transferable skills also included certain aspects that contributed to the family. Parents felt as though RH was able to not only teach the pupils but also to show them and explain to them how and why it was important to be respectful in the family context.

...they basically helped him with his school work they helped him to sort of settle down and to focus and for me that was the main thing; another thing that was really important

for me is that Staff-C spoke about respect - respect in the home respect for other adults and how it should look...(Parent-B).

Staff were very aware that the teaching style they had adopted was very different from many mainstream settings. They prided themselves on being able to take an individualistic approach to learning strategies whilst also being able to provide their pupils with a curriculum that supported them holistically: "...erm I'd say the difference in the staff relationship here as opposed to other educational contexts where I've worked is that because it's kind of an approach through which we support the whole child..." (Staff-E). Parents were very thankful and appreciative of RH and the unique educative learning style that they employed. All the parents reported that they felt that if their sons had not accessed the support of RH, things would have resulted in far worse outcomes for them.

...but I know this if he, if he wasn't at RH I think he would have done very very poor because the structure and the other what it took to get him to get those grades is because of RH if he hadn't have got that I think he would have probably have flunked it... (Parent-D).

...if it wasn't for the RH staff, who knows what my son would have ended up with and you know I just thank God that he wasn't one of those that, you know, went down that wrong path to end up in prison because it could have very easily happened... (Parent-B).

"Knowing and Growing Thy Self" gave voice to the participants experiences of personal discovery whilst being a part of RH. It was evident that the education that both parents and pupils received was multifaceted and impacted on their sense of self in various ways.

The two themes, "sense of belonging" and "Knowing and Growing Thy Self" gave insight into the mechanisms that specifically supported SEMH and education. Two further themes emerged that were central to the other research question, "What are the key curriculum features of RH (a BSS)?".

Theme 3: Pupil Empowerment through Unique Opportunities

Participants frequently spoke about the experiences and opportunities that were facilitated through RH. They also spoke about how these opportunities had empowered the pupils. Pupils, parents and staff felt that these opportunities were particularly valuable to the RH families as they were unlikely to experience them otherwise such as work experience opportunities: "...there have been quite a number, as I said, of opportunities to attend and to understand the industry experience. Like work experience in the industry and meeting people..." (Parent-C).

...they've helped me meet some entrepreneurs such as (name of person) who is one of the richest Black men in the country. Being able to meet him to speak to him in person and to hear his story that is somewhat similar to my situation... (Pupil-A).

The pupils not only felt positive about the work experience opportunities but also reflected on skills that they had developed during the process. In the next data extract Pupil-C explains how performing well on work experience lead to further opportunities.

...before the summer there was like a three week course about making engineering fun. So, we did a programming project at the end where we played with Lego and we had to kind of make it do stuff. We had to make it move around by coding with a laptop. The first two weeks we also did interview skills where I actually won something, I got two weeks paid work experience for that... (Pupil-C).

Underpinning RH's ability to provide their students with such vast work experience opportunities was the connection they had with other businesses and successful professionals. Staff-D explained how the school had established relationships with various businesses and influential people.

...I think with our broad connections our access to probably fifty millionaires a year erm our ability to go behind the scenes of things like the national theatre, our opportunities to erm access people in government who come here, or we go there... (Staff-C).

Pupils, parents and staff felt that the work experience opportunities were not only useful in a practical sense but exposed the pupils to industries that they might otherwise not have access to. They were introduced to successful businesses and businesspeople, many of whom were from the same racial identity as themselves. The high calibre of these people/organisations impacted on the pupils in a positive way, as it gave them something to strive towards. The parents and staff also identified that pupils were paired up with mentors who were able to act as role models to them. This extra layer of support provided them with opportunities to build relationships with adults who were able to offer them further advice and guidance.

...I don't think he did have a really positive erm role model until I came to RH. And then he had a mentor and that was something that I forgot to mention (son's name) had a mentor within RH who helped him and coached him and supported when I needed help... (Parent-B).

...it so happens that the photographer, the guy that saw that potential in him, has linked him up with someone now who is, although he's at uni he's getting some work. You know so he's growing he's being taught and he's practicing what you know what he's learning... (Parent-A).

Staff identified that it was the high quality of the professional adults that the pupils were paired up with that made the mentoring so influential. Staff-C identified the uniqueness of the mentoring opportunities at RH and how this put them in an advantageous position.

...our children get mentored by sort of very well you might term them successful people. Our children get taught by some of the best teachers in the country, if not the world. They come and teach drama and science and so on, so I think they get a lot more than the average child...(Staff-C).

Theme 4: Supporting Systemic Strategies

Systemic support and strategies were put in place to ensure that, not only the pupils were supported, but also their families. Parents and staff identified that one of the key curriculum features of RH was the way they supported the parents. This included organising various meetings and parent focused activities: "...we will have parent meetings erm what we will have is get togethers and socials with parents as well, so that they feel a sense of community..." (Staff-A). All the parents expressed how positive they found the parent focused activities and felt that it ensured that they were included and a valued part of the RH Community. In the following extract Parent-B explains how there were events that were more focused on enjoyment and bonding whilst others focused more on discussion and problem solving. The parents were also given homework tasks and exercises that were aimed at strengthening their parenting skills and equipped them with practical strategies that they could use in the home.

...parent university which meant that I was able share with other parents you know what I was going through and other parents did the same. We were able to erm share good practice... We had exercises that we could, and I don't mean physical, as in we would have work that we were able to take away with us to think about... (Parent-B)

...it's just helped me to flourish, to be a better parent, to manage my money a bit better. I'm not saying I've perfected it yet, but it has helped me to be better at what I do. And it also helped me with being confident. When I started RH, because of what I was going through you know, I wouldn't participate I was here for the kids to drop them off and pick them up. I was a bit reserved erm and it has helped me to be a bit more open erm to accept people and just to be myself" (Parent-A)₂

The parents found the parents' workshop invaluable and felt as though RH supported them almost as much as they supported their pupils. Although there was a focus on

learning for parents, they also made the learning environment fun and engaging which made the workshops feel less formal. It was very apparent that the support the pupils received from RH included advocating for them. This included writing letters, attending meetings and having drop-in clinics where parents could receive advice.

...we are still helping parents deal with erm appeals when their son has been excluded from school. And we do find that Black boys are still more likely to be excluded for the same thing that a White boy has done and hasn't been excluded so there's clearly still issues in the system which we continue to work with... (Staff-D).

The parents expressed how RH staff were a monumental support to them at periods when they felt most helpless and powerless in fighting against decisions the mainstream school were making about their children. This made them feel more able to challenge the schools and question their decisions.

...they have been very supportive of me because the last, this last year has been one of the hardest years of our lives because my son was expelled permanently from the school after the incident. So before even that they took me to all the meetings all the appeals. I got all the support" (Parent-C).

...if I needed them to go into school that was something else that they would do. If I needed support in school, they would come in and offer that support whether it would be Mr Staff-D or he would send a member of staff. So, I'd have that person with me so I didn't feel alone and I didn't feel intimidated by people (mainstream school staff) who felt that they knew more than me" (Parent-B).

The "Supporting systemic strategies" shed light on the layers of support RH provided for their families. The strategies they used were there to enable the families and pupils to get the most from being a part of the RH community.

Overarching Theme: Education is more than academia

The belief that 'Education is more than academia' encapsulated the philosophies that underpinned RH's bespoke curriculum. All the participant groups felt that RH's curriculum was robust and centred around developing a range of skills and abilities, including but not exclusive to academic performance. Thus, the ethos held within the setting was that education was a multifaceted phenomenon and required several different approaches to its delivery.

Discussion and Implications for Policy and Practice

The key findings of this study revealed that education was perceived to be far more than academia by the BSS. The participants felt a strong sense of belonging with RH and felt empowered through engaging in unique opportunities, and deepening their knowledge of self. Supportive systemic strategies were identified. Imperatively, RH has a holistic approach to supporting pupils. Further, they ensured that there were strategies not only to support pupils but also their parents.

The B-PPCT model provides a conceptual framework which provides clarification of how the BSS supported the different systems over time. Participants' narratives of the RH experience revealed that the BSSs processes interplayed with different systems of the B-PPCT model. Although RH itself is positioned in the microsystem, there were elements of the curriculum and the participants' experiences that involved all the systems. Further, it provided a framework for making sense of the specific context for the pupils; from the immediate to the impact of community and culture. For example, on an individual level there were aspects of RH BSS that specifically targeted the pupils' understanding of themselves and their behaviour. This included supporting the development of a greater sense of racialised identity and the positive impact this had on the way they viewed themselves. The "Person" component of the B-PPCT model

describes resourceful characteristics as those that relate to mental, emotional and social resources, such as access to educational opportunities that suit their individualised needs. This was achieved through various strategies such as teaching about Black history, finding positive role models and mentors for 1:1 work and having clear boundaries so that the pupils knew what was expected of them.

The awareness and acknowledgement of the proximal processes were also central to the effectiveness of RH. Thus, the interactions that took place within the microsystem influenced the development of the pupils; RH staff demonstrated that they were aware of it. They understood the needs of their pupils and families. They understood that being labelled with challenging behaviour as well as being Black and being a boy made them extremely vulnerable within mainstream schools. RH therefore, used their position to not only focus support on the pupils, but also on the parents. The proximal processes that the pupils encountered at their mainstream school seemed sometimes to be detrimental to how they perceived themselves.

RH's curriculum was used as a tool of empowerment not only academically, but culturally. The pupils were exposed to positive historical facts about their ethnicity. Hence RH was able to use their cultural knowledge and educational stance challenge race and gender inequalities. This had a positive impact at the Macrosystem level; it provides evidence as to why BSSs play a significant role within the Black community.

Implications for Mainstream Educational Provisions and Educators

This study demonstrates the significant impact a BSS had on the education and development of pupils it supported and identifies key features at a systemic level. The

ethos and effective practices of the BSS has clear implications not only for other BSSs, but arguably also for mainstream education in terms of developing policies and professional practice.

It is imperative that educational provisions create a learning environment where all CYP feel wanted and valued and are not discriminated due to SEMH needs, race or gender. One way this can be achieved is by following a culturally rich curriculum that sheds light on the histories of various cultures. The pedagogy of educational provisions can help to develop pupils' racial identities and sense of self. Black history should be a central feature of the curriculum at all key stages, recognising the contributions that people of colour have made historically.

The findings of this research indicate that some pupils may find it difficult to feel a sense of belonging in school. Schools can develop pupils' sense of belonging by creating strong bonds between peers. They could facilitate peer bonding with team building activities. Pupils may need support in learning how to manage peer relationships as well as how to view each other as a valued team member since schools are places where CYP learn about covert social rules.

The findings of this study suggest that parent involvement is central to supporting Black boys who have been labelled with challenging behaviour. It is imperative that schools create opportunities for home-school liaisons that are not just based on "negative" behaviour. Schools should adopt creative and diverse opportunities to increase parental engagement particularly when there are concerns around SEMH indicative behaviours.

Declaration of Interest Statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

Data Availability Statement

Due to the nature of this research, participants of this study did not agree for their data to be shared publicly, so supporting data is not available.

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