

Stepping into Leadership.

Final Report 2020-21



LONDON SOUTH
TEACHING SCHOOL HUB

Introduction.

This Greater London Authority funded programme aimed to equip ethnic minority teachers with the leadership skills, personal confidence and professional networks to make a successful application for promotion.

The programme was led by Diana Osagie (CEO, Courageous Leadership) and offered high quality relevant learning for ethnic minority teachers, opportunities to connect with successful, inspiring ethnic minority leaders and access to a local network of ethnic minority leaders that continues beyond the lifetime of the programme.

Participants heard from a diverse range of successful ethnic minority leaders from within and beyond education, received support to analyse structured 360 feedback, received one-to-one coaching with an ethnic minority coach and had the opportunity to shadow ethnic minority headteachers. Session themes delivered across a series of twilights included: vision and values, authenticity in leadership, exploring personal and work motives, leading, managing and empowering others and selling yourself in applications and at interview.



“Thoroughly enjoyed the programme. I feel proud to have found such an inspiring and motivated community of leaders! I appreciate your support and dedication to improve the lives of others in such an empowering way”

Evaluation.

There were 32 responses to this end-point evaluation survey out of a possible 34.

All 32 respondents to the final evaluation survey said that they would recommend the programme to future participants. When asked about the most useful elements of the programme, several respondents mentioned the value of listening to the stories and advice of successful, inspiring ethnic minority leaders including those of the programme lead, as well as coaching, shadowing and general networking. Others highlighted that the most useful aspect of the programme was the opportunity to have a mock interview with the programme lead.

All 32 respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the programme realised its aims to:

- Ensure high impact, high quality relevant learning for ethnic minority teachers
- Grow participants' personal confidence in their leadership capacity
- Train participants in key areas of school leadership identified as development priorities
- Empower and support participants to apply for promotion, including through access to coaching and shadowing
- Connect participants with successful, inspiring ethnic minority leaders
- Build a local network of ethnic minority leaders that is sustained after completion of the programme.

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The hard work put into this programme has benefited me hugely in so many different ways... I want to thank you all for your efforts and for creating a great platform for aspiring leaders to grow
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Session evaluation.

Participants attended 6 online twilight sessions which covered a range of themes. Each twilight had an inspirational guest speaker who was an ethnic minority headteacher. They gave a presentation on their career progression and answered any questions from the group.

The best rated session was the session titled 'Understanding what the best teaching and learning looks like', followed by the session which explored 'How to have difficult conversations'. All other twilight sessions were rated an average score of 'Good' or better.

When asked what the most useful part of the programme was, one participant commented: "The talks from headteachers and inspirational speakers because it gave such a good insight into career paths and first-hand experience of moving into and through leadership as a BAME leader."

In terms of key programme elements, all respondents agreed or strongly agreed that:

- The content was useful and relevant
- I know how to use what I learned on this programme to improve my own practice
- What I have learned on this programme will improve my leadership
- What I have learned on this programme will help me progress in my career
- The benefits of attending this programme outweigh any short term impact on workload
- Applying what I have learned on this programme should improve pupil outcomes
- The programme has or will help improve practice in my school

All but one respondent agreed or strongly agreed that:

- The facilitators were skillful and effective

COVID Impact.

Due to the impact of COVID-19, there were some adaptations made to the programme this year.

Residential

We had originally planned a two day residential to take place in March 2021. We took the decision to change the structure of this event in the autumn term as large gatherings were not permissible under the government guidelines at the time.

We re-designed the residential to offer two separate events for participants:

1. A Friday evening speaker event with two inspirational speakers. Each participant received a small voucher for food delivery, which was funded by residential catering costs;
2. Two interview practice sessions from 1:00 – 3:00pm and 3:00 – 5:00pm; one for class teachers and middle leaders and one for senior leaders. The sessions explored interview techniques and used role play to allow each participant to be interviewed by peers and to receive constructive feedback.

The interview practice was well received with many participants stating that it was the most useful part of the programme for them. Feedback can be found below:

- ▶ "It was so useful to have the opportunity to participate in mock interviews. It made me aware of the difference between a teacher's interview and a manager's interview. Being able to receive constructive criticism will aid my research and readjusting in my interview skills."
- ▶ "The interview sessions over the weekend were so useful. Although I felt nervous about it we were given some really helpful feedback."
- ▶ "The most useful part of the programme was the interview preparation. Interviews can be very daunting and the techniques discussed were very relevant."

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This programme has been very useful for my personal development. I have been inspired by all the guest speakers when they shared their journey to Headship. The interview sessions led by Diana helped me to practice my skills and also learn from my peers

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Participant engagement

Overall we did not notice a COVID impact in terms of participants' commitment to the project. Two participants withdrew a month before the programme end due to personal circumstances relating to the pandemic.

We did have several absences from our twilight sessions towards the start of the programme from participants without sending apologies. We were able to chase them via the phone that same day and stress to them the importance of full attendance. Most of them had valid reasons and committed not to miss future sessions and to catch up with the sessions they missed using the online recording of the live session.

One participant discussed the possibility of withdrawing due to childcare commitments, but we were able to agree a mutually beneficial solution so that she could continue to attend.

We have decided for future cohorts, to only let applicants who are in a school role to apply for the programme to avoid this situation happening again.

In general, attendance was high. The importance of professional commitment was clearly articulated throughout the programme and we believe this contributed to good attendance.

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The session recordings were so helpful. When I went for my job interview, I re-watched our Zoom calls for the boost, important and useful information and above all, power and preparation.

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Coaching.

All but one participant took up the opportunity to be connected to an ethnic minority coach.

All participants were matched with an ethnic minority senior leader or headteacher and were offered 3 hrs of coaching as well as the opportunity to complete a shadowing placement at their school.

From those who responded to the final evaluation survey, 9 out of 32 participants completed their shadowing placement. Participants who were yet to complete their placement cited COVID restrictions as the main barrier for visiting their coach. A further 10 participants have plans to complete their placement after the Summer holiday.

Those who did manage to shadow found it valuable, with all but one respondent rating the experience 'Good' or 'Excellent'.

“The coaching was the best part of the programme for me. I was linked with a black male primary senior leader and it proved to be a perfect match. He and his head provided tips to improve my personal statement and then helped me with the interview process. I am forever grateful for the time they committed to supporting me.”

Feedback.

“Fantastic opportunity. The pairing was thoughtfully done which was impressive.”

“The coaching sessions helped me prepare for my middle leadership interview which took place this academic year. Even though I was not successful this time round, the coaching made me feel more confident to self-reflect and be proactive for my next steps to prepare me next time.”

“It helped me to develop my presentation of documents and evidence in preparation for leadership position interviews.”

“My coach was very supportive and helped me formulate plans for the future.”

“My coach was excellent and supported me with my application and interview practice.”

“My coach was great. She really took the time out to talk and discuss my topics.”

“The most useful part of the programme for me has been the 1:1 coaching experience. This has been such an invaluable experience.”



Race and Education workshops.

Alongside the Stepping into Leadership programme, we ran five Race and Education workshops for headteachers and governors from different local authorities in Spring 2021.

These workshops were lead by Dr Dolapo Ogunbawo. Dolapo has worked at the London Centre for Leadership and Learning (LCLL), Institute of Education, University College London, as the Equality and Diversity Associate for the South Supra Regions and as Programme Leader for senior leadership programs including NPQH – National Professional Qualification for Headship, Leadership Pathways (LP) and Equal Access to Promotion (EAP).

Dolapo agreed to run all five workshops for the following organisations:

- ▶ Lewisham council
- ▶ Southwark council
- ▶ Lambeth council
- ▶ Academies Enterprise Trust

Islington Council were meant to run a workshop but had to withdraw due to reduced capacity during the pandemic. Lewisham Council agreed to run a second workshop as they had such high demand for places on their first workshop.

Each workshop involved a full day of virtual learning with a mix of pre-workshops tasks, delivered content and break out discussions. Each organisation committed to sending 20 attendees to their workshop which represent 10 schools as a minimum. Each school sent two people and these included headteachers, business managers and chairs of governors.

In addition, we ran an 'In conversation with' event with Dr Nicola Rollock. In this event, Dr Rollock was interviewed by Naheeda Maharasingam, Headteacher, Rathfern Primary School and answered questions about her work and research in critical race theory. All participants were invited and 50 people attended in total.

Feedback from this event included:

- ▶ "Hearing about micro-aggressions and racial battle fatigue. I had not heard that terminology before. The whole session was very thought provoking."
- ▶ "I found it all useful but particularly the thought provoking questions on how to improve racial justice in a school context."
- ▶ "I liked the format: open discussion, relaxed, considered, thoughtful, well-paced."

Feedback.

The workshops received excellent feedback, a sample can be found below:

"The session was well suited to meet the needs of our group; Dolapo took great care to ensure that everyone felt comfortable to share experiences and ideas which made for interesting conversations and reflective thinking throughout the day. It was a thought provoking, well-paced workshop with a good mix of presentation and break out discussions. I thought the day might feel long (being online) but it didn't at all. Lots of information, resources and ideas to discuss further with colleagues going forward – including some practical strategies that could be put into practice straight away. Thank you to everyone involved in making this opportunity available to our cluster of schools – it has been a really valuable experience."

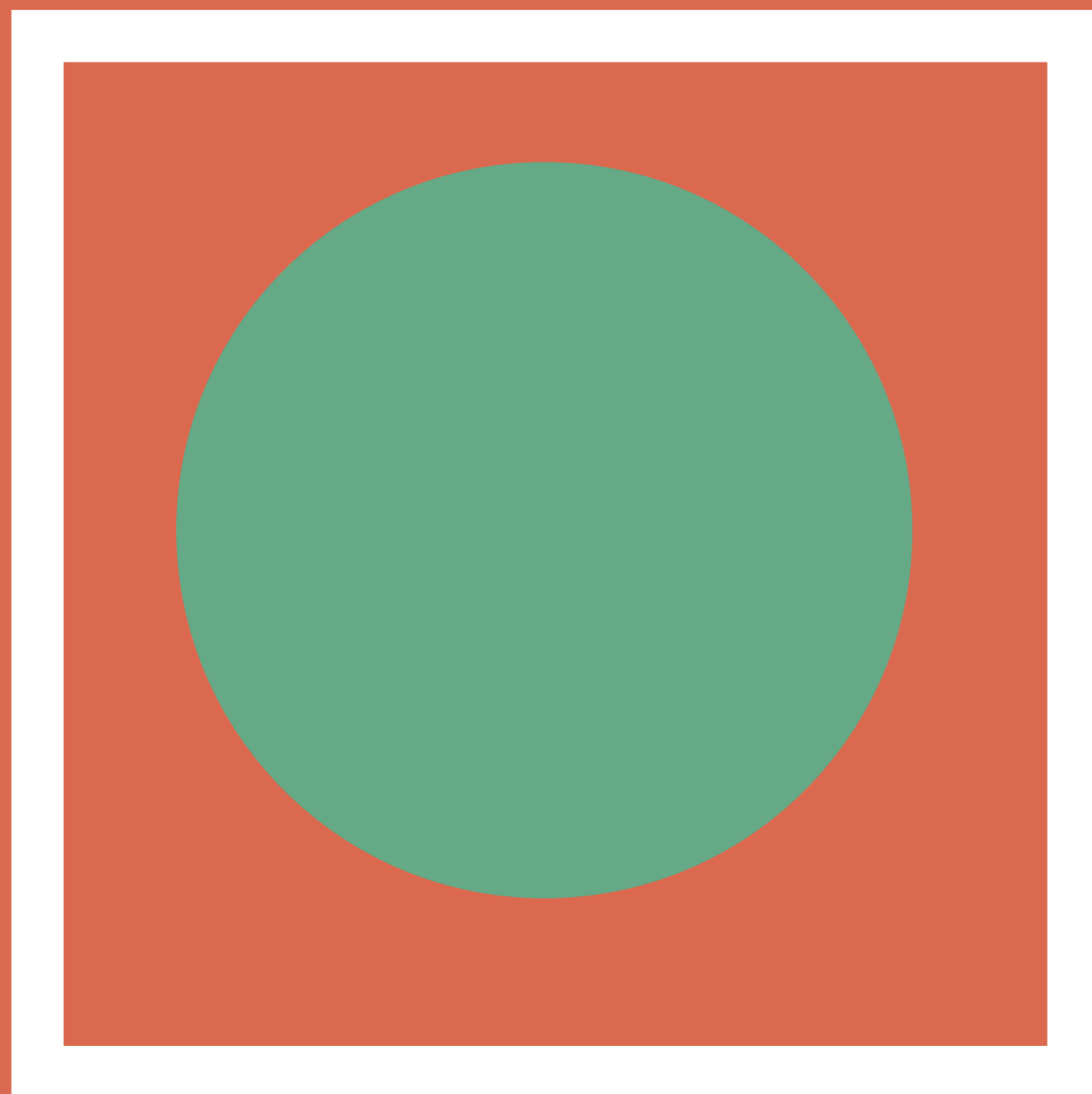
"I really appreciated the facilitator's approach which was direct, informative and thought provoking. The break out rooms I felt worked really well and I was able to pick up a variety of different perspectives. I came away feeling that I had learned something new and/or solidified things I already knew. The videos in particular were the most powerful I have seen in a long time and will be a useful resource ... to further explore unconscious bias, how it is planted and how it manifests..."

"A very valuable conference – really appreciated the last session where I could discuss with my colleague our thoughts and how we want to move forward as a school. I would recommend this conference to other colleagues."

"This was a very useful day which gave me a great deal to think about – including a clearer sense of how we can move things forwards in our school. We came away with a positive action plan and have already begun to work towards implementing these ideas. Thank you!"

“ It is the beginning of our school journey, educating ourselves on race. The pace was pitched just where we needed it to be, an opportunity to reflect on what we already knew. The reading material pre-session was essential and a great resource to use at school with all staff. It allowed confidence when discussing ideas on the course and reflections on the subject. Importantly I felt that the facilitator was non-judgmental and so it was very quickly a safe space to discuss some of my own ignorances. I appreciated the break out rooms and also the longer session in the afternoon as there were four people from my school and we were able to talk through our next stage. A great day.

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In the final evaluation survey, participants were asked which of the following statements applied to them since joining the programme. The following responses were received out of 32 participants:

I have secured a promotion	5
I have applied for a promotion	16
I have taken on additional responsibilities	9
I understand what my next steps are to progress as a senior leader and towards headship	32
I feel more motivated to progress as a senior leader	31

When asked when they expect to apply for 'next stage' promotion, 16 out of 32 participants responded 'in the next 12 months'. A further 11 participants responded 'in the next 12-24 months'. There were 3 respondents who said 'in the next 24-36 months' and 2 respondents said they hope to apply for promotion in the next 3-5 years.

Case study.

Emmanuel Awoyelu

Emmanuel has been teaching for five years. Prior to that, he was a learning support assistant supporting children with SEN. Emmanuel has recently been appointed Assistant Headteacher at New Rush Hall School.

What made you decide to take part in the Stepping into Leadership programme?

I always knew I would someday get into leadership because I knew the impact I could make across the school in my role as a teacher. When the leadership programme was introduced to me I was keen because it was specifically tailored to people from the BAME community. I recognise that we need programmes that are rigorous in their approach to promote diversity across SLT in schools. I was also encouraged to see Dianna Osagie as the main facilitator. I attended a leadership course as an NQT where Diana had spoken and she was inspiring. It was an easy choice to join a programme where she would be the trainer.

Prior to joining the course, what did you perceive as the main barriers for you in terms of achieving leadership?

I believed my lack of teaching experience in a mainstream school would be a barrier to securing a senior leadership role in other settings. I also believed that opportunities to showcase my ability in my current school were limited when it came to leadership. This seemed to be a barrier for me when it came to writing my personal statement for leadership roles because I believed I hadn't had enough experience as a leader and I didn't have enough proof of my impact as a leader. All of this was of course untrue. I didn't see the value in the things I did every day that contributed to my effectiveness as a teacher and middle leader. My coach helped me see my value and more importantly, I was able to articulate this confidently by the time the course was complete.

What were your personal highlights?

In the programme, I took part in a range of activities such as interview practice, CV Building techniques and 'defining your brand'. The highlight for me was the interview practice as it was beneficial to watch my colleagues perform in an interview with the group providing feedback. This helped immensely for my own interview shortly after.

What were the sessions like?

Each session had a particular focus or activity but there was always a guest speaker or two who would come and impart some knowledge and be available for questions. Each session would vary in topic. For example, a session may focus specifically on 'selling yourself', defining your brand or building your confidence. We were always prepared for what each session would be and we always had some sort of pre-reading that would help us grasp the main concept before the session itself.



What impact has the programme had on your teaching and overall career so far?

The programme has had a great impact on my teaching career because it has built up my confidence and given me practical tools to help me in an interview scenario. It has also helped clarify what is required in my personal statement for future roles. The programme has also helped me review and evaluate the impact I have in the classroom and has brought to my attention a range of theories that can be applied to my every day practice.

What are your plans for the future?

I will be beginning a new role as Assistant Headteacher and joining the SLT of an all-through school in Barking. My area of focus will be Inclusion and SEN. During my time in the role, I hope to be able to complete my masters. I also hope to complete my NPQSL within the next two years.

“ I think the unique thing about this programme is the access we had to Headteachers who were literally giving away gems and valuable tips. Just hearing their experience and their words of wisdom made everything feel real, relatable and achievable. ”

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Further comments.

Other comments about the programme can be found below:

"Very glad to have been part of a course that genuinely added value rather than ticking boxes. It's so important that this course continues to allow global majority groups the opportunity to excel where they are often underrepresented. "

"Thank you to Diana and all the guest speakers for sharing their career journey as leaders in education. It has been inspiring to see other educators who look like me and who share similar cultures to be representing at a high standard. It made me become more engaged and excited about my future and the possible influences I can have on other BAME colleagues but most importantly our students."

"I look forward to helping other potential leaders in the future."

"This is a wonderful programme and I feel very grateful to have been accepted and taken part. Thank you all!"

"I am now more equipped and motivated to aspire to any position."

"I have a new job due to start in September. I looked at applying for assistant head roles, and used the advice of highlighting the job spec to see what I COULD do and I was more than capable of fulfilling the post. I have already spoken to the headteacher at my new school about the prospect of leadership. I really thought about how this programme has prepared me for leadership, and I feel that I would be able to do it. I am moving forward, fast, where I have previously been stagnant for so long. If I had one regret, it is not starting this course many years ago."

"I applied and secured 4 interviews this year. Nonso and Diana's interview strategies were amazing. I just have to practise more."

"The programme was to the point. It inspired then taught, and enhanced skills that are needed in different situations that we face as leaders. Furthermore, when possible, we were allowed to have a go practising these skills."

"I found this course very useful and inspiring. Some of the aspects I found useful were the interview practice and the session on how to prepare for an interview. I found the session on having an 'accurate conversation' quite useful as this was one of the areas I was concerned about. I found the 360 survey extremely useful as it allowed me to reflect on my strengths and areas of development. Overall I felt that the sessions we had with Diana were truly inspirational and I feel more confident in applying for leadership roles."

"This programme was a valued opportunity to learn about and from the speakers' life experiences and their stories, their values and how these play out in the real world of leadership in schools. Diana is an extremely clear and inspiring leader, who gave honest and strong input in each session."

"Empowering. Should be a must for all coming into the profession. Relatable scenarios, stories of journeys including learning reflections and successes. Tips that can be applied instantly for impact."

"It has given me confidence to apply for posts that I could not see myself in before. I can now see why this is a vital component to success. Diana has saved me years by teaching us the invisible aspects of leadership such as how to manage difficult conversations, be an inspirational leader and so much more!"

"Overall a fantastic programme that enabled me to look at my strengths and areas for improvement. The course gave clear tools and exercises for building character and utilising resources and skills for leadership. Hearing from black leaders was also inspiring."

"The programme was incredibly beneficial for me. It boosted my self esteem and motivated me to apply for senior leadership positions. It also provided me with the relevant tools needed to succeed in the application and interview process."

"As a female leader – I often question my abilities and whether I am making the right decisions within my leadership role. After speaking and listening to fellow colleagues, I have built my confidence to stand up for what is right and needed in the education world. The course has helped me feel confident to break the 'glass ceiling' and to continue aspiring to lead a school one day."



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