



Head Teachers in all schools in England over the next five years.

The '[Leaders Like Us](#)' scheme, which is now open for applications, aims to equip UKME teachers with the skills for headship, and has funding to train more than 450 teachers by 2027.

Around one in every three students in schools in England are from UKME backgrounds, but there are fewer than 400 headteachers from the same backgrounds in total, out of more than 20,000 schools.

Research shows that the impact of teacher and school leader representation on students is significant; their attainment and likelihood of progressing to tertiary education is exponentially higher when students see leaders like them. Their exclusion and suspension rates decrease and future aspirations are also measurably lower.

However, data shows that teachers from UKME backgrounds are much less likely to progress to senior positions within their schools than their white peers, becoming increasingly under-represented the more senior the role. A recent report from the National Foundation for Educational Research showed that rather than improving over the last few years, there has in fact been a decline in representation.

The Church of England's 'Leaders Like Us' programme seeks to double the existing number of headteachers from UKME backgrounds over the next five years. It utilises the research around what is known to work in the recruitment, progression and retention of UKME school leaders, as well as the Church's extensive networks of schools from which both participants and mentors will be recruited.

As with all Church of England programmes and networks, 'Leaders Like Us' is open to anyone who would like to learn and develop within a values-led environment built upon Christian foundations.

The course is fully funded for teachers through a Racial Justice Grant from the Church of England's Committee for Minority Ethnic Anglican Concerns (CMEAC).

The programme has four strands: access to accredited training, shadowing an experienced headteacher in another context, mentoring to support progression and networking together as a cohort of leaders. It has been devised by successful UKME headteachers, drawing upon their own experience to devise a programme which is grounded in research.

The scheme is one of a number of initiatives enabled by the Church of England through [funding increases announced earlier in 2022](#) which are particularly aimed at supporting young people and disadvantaged communities.

Bola-Alysia Ayonrinde, the Church of England's National Education Lead for Racial Justice said: "The research is clear that when children are taught by teachers and leaders who look like them, this is of significant benefit in all aspects of their education. It enables them to flourish.

"The Church of England is committed to supporting children and adults, and every member of staff in our schools who wants to aspire to leadership should be given the opportunity and support to do so. The evidence is clear that diverse teams are more effective and more creative, and help to create numerous opportunities for both staff and pupils."

The Bishop of Durham, Paul Butler, the Church of England's lead bishop for Education, said: "I'm delighted that this scheme is now [open](#) for

applications. Leaders Like Us can be a key part of addressing the imbalances that mean that school leadership is not yet fully representative.

"The Church of England is funding this programme as part of its commitment to leading by example and promoting diversity throughout the church to ensure that we resemble and bless the communities we serve."

'Leaders Like Us' launches in January 2023 and Applications are now open to teachers from all schools.

Teachers from all schools are welcome to apply. While the Church of England is unable to fund the training element, a National Professional Qualification (NPQ) course, for teachers in independent schools, all other elements are covered as for maintained schools.

More information

- [Leaders Like Us - How to Apply and more information](#)

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