

<b>Institution:</b> Anglia Ruskin University		
<b>Unit of Assessment:</b> UoA23		
<b>Title of case study:</b> Transforming the Career Prospects of LGBT Teachers: A Programme to Help Them Secure School Leadership Roles		
<b>Period when the underpinning research was undertaken:</b> July 2017–December 2020		
<b>Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:</b>		
<b>Name(s):</b>	<b>Role(s) (e.g. job title):</b>	<b>Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:</b>
Dr Catherine Lee	Deputy Dean	2011 - present
<b>Period when the claimed impact occurred:</b> July 2016 – December 2020		
<b>Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014?</b> No		
<b>1. Summary of the impact</b> (indicative maximum 100 words) <p>Research at Anglia Ruskin University has increased the number of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) teachers in school leadership roles in the UK. The research directly informed the design and delivery of the Courageous Leaders Programme (CLP), the UK's first school leadership programme for LGBT teachers. With an 80% success rate, the programme has supported 60 teachers to gain promotion to Headteacher or Senior Leader in schools, roles participants stated they would not have achieved without the programme. After initially funding CLP for two years (2016–2018), the Department for Education (DfE) extended the funding until 2020.</p>		
<b>2. Underpinning research</b> (indicative maximum 500 words) <p>There are an estimated 50,000 LGBT teachers in UK schools, but almost no openly LGBT Headteachers or Senior Leaders. Despite recent advances in equalities legislation (e.g. the Equality Act 2010 and the Equal Marriage Act 2015), research included in this case study [4, 2019 and 5, 2020] shows that many LGBT teachers do not yet feel safe or adequately protected in their school workplaces and this inhibits their career development.</p> <p>The underpinning research for this case study was conducted by Dr Catherine Lee, Deputy Dean for Education at Anglia Ruskin University (ARU) and employed there since 2011. Lee's monograph [1, 2017] interrogates heteronormative discursive practices in the rural school community in which she lived and worked as a teacher. Her autoethnography supported by external data demonstrated that homophobia and heterosexism remain unchallenged in rural areas of the UK, resulting in significant professional and personal consequences for those affected. Lee's findings highlighted the incompatibility of private and professional identities for LGBT teachers, investigated the moral panic that surrounds teacher sexuality in schools, and considered the impact of homophobic and heteronormative practices on health, well-being and identity. Lee [2, 2019] critically reflects on her experiences as an LGBT teacher, interrogating the use of data sources in autoethnography and considering the ethical challenges of writing autoethnographically about workplace homophobia.</p> <p>Lee [3, 2019] also studied the legacy of complex identity management for LGBT teachers left by Section 28 of the Local Government Act (1988–2003), which stipulated that state schools in local authorities must not 'promote the teaching in any maintained school of the acceptability of homosexuality as a pretended family relationship'. Lee's survey of 105 LGBT teachers showed that those who experienced Section 28 still perceive the school workplace more negatively than LGBT teachers who entered the profession after the repeal of Section 28 in 2003. Lee found that teachers who had experienced Section 28 were, in 2018, less open about their sexuality and gender identity to other teachers, pupils and especially parents of children at their schools. They were less likely to attend social events in the school community and more likely to suffer from</p>		

anxiety and depression based on their sexual identity and role as a teacher. Lee concluded that despite advances in equalities legislation to protect LGBT teachers in the workplace, Section 28 has left a damaging legacy for teachers who lived through it.

Lee researched the challenges facing LGBT teachers in rural schools compared with their peers in urban and suburban school workplaces [4, 2019]. She found that those in rural schools find their personal and professional identities incompatible, leading to low self-worth and high rates of depression and anxiety. 64% of LGBT teachers in rural schools accessed help for anxiety and depression, suggesting a link between the extent to which LGBT teachers were able to be open about their sexual and gender identities in the workplace, and their mental health and well-being.

Lee used her research findings to design, set up and deliver the Courageous Leaders Programme, the UK's first leadership course exclusively for LGBT teachers. Lee's research with CLP participants [5, 2018] examined the distinct leadership development experience provided by the programme and identified the way in which teachers were supported to apply for promotion into leadership roles and reasons for their success. At a time when the average length of service for a headteacher in the UK is just three years, Lee's research showed that the CLP presents an important vehicle for improving the diversity of teacher leaders and facilitates school cultures which enable teachers to be their authentic selves and flourish within the profession.

Lee [6, 2019] drew on models of authentic leadership to examine the ways in which LGBT school leaders perceived their own authenticity in comparison to their heterosexual and cisgendered peers. Lee found that LGBT teacher leaders rated themselves more negatively than their heterosexual/cis counterparts in all areas except values and behaviour, where they reported that they over-performed as a defence against discrimination. LGBT teacher leaders rated themselves lowest on relationships and connections with other school stakeholders, revealing tensions between being authentic in their workplace relationships and keeping their sexuality and gender identities in the private realm.

### 3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

All research subject to rigorous peer-review.

1. Thompson-Lee, C. (2017) *Heteronormativity in a Rural School Community: An Autoethnography*, Sense Publications. Rotterdam, New York. ISBN 978-9463-00934-8. Submitted in REF2.
2. Lee, C. (2019) "Capturing the Personal through the lens of the Professional: The use of third party data in Autoethnography", *Methodological Innovations*: Vol. 12 Issue 1, pp. 205–220. <https://doi.org/10.1177%2F2059799119825576>
3. Lee, C. (2019) "Fifteen Years on: The Legacy of Section 28 for LGBT+ teachers in English Schools", *Sex Education*. Vol 8, Issue 1, pp1–16 ISSN 1472-0825. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14681811.2019.1585800>. Submitted in REF2.
4. Lee, C. (2019) "How do Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Teachers Experience UK Rural School Communities?", *Social Sciences*, Volume 8, Issue 9 pp.249–258. <https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci8090249>
5. Lee, C. (2020) "Courageous Leaders: Promoting and Supporting Diversity in School Leadership", *Management in Education*, Volume 34, Issue 1, pp5-15. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0892020619878828>. Submitted in REF2.
6. Lee, C. (2020) How does Openness about Personal, Sexual and Gender Identities Influence Teacher Leaders' Self-Perceptions of Authenticity? *Educational Management Administration and Leadership*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1741143220929036>. Submitted in REF2.

**4. Details of the impact** (indicative maximum 750 words)

Lee's research beneficiaries have been: 1. UK-based LGBT teachers; 2. schools in the UK and internationally wishing to be more LGBT-inclusive; 3. the Department for Education (DfE) as funders of CLP.

**1. Promotion of UK-based LGBT teachers through CLP**

Lee's research directly informed the design and delivery of the Courageous Leaders Programme, focusing on: empowering teachers to challenge heteronormative school practices; encouraging critical reflection; promoting the importance of diverse role models for young people in schools, and helping LGBT teachers to reconcile and celebrate their personal and professional identities. Between 2016 and 2020, 79 teachers attended the year-long programme, and 60 achieved the career goal they had set for themselves at the start of the programme. Feedback from participants (A1, 2, 3) demonstrates how significantly their confidence, self-esteem and ultimate ability to succeed were changed by CLP:

*"The network of people I met through the programme made me feel braver and more able to make further leaps up the career ladder. As a direct result of this programme, I had the confidence to pursue my dream of becoming a Headteacher."*

*"As a result of this course I feel more open and confident at school. I have set up the school's Equality and Diversity society, and am much more open about my personal life... I have also organised the school's first diversity week and have confidently challenged staff and students who were resistant to taking part."*

*"You gave me the confidence to survive in a very homophobic school and slowly change the culture...I am now out about my sexuality...and started an LGBTQ+ society...We have changed the culture significantly...and this has helped us address other areas including race."*

Participants on the CLP originated from around the UK, were based in the state (90%) and independent sectors (10%), and spanned teaching in early years (5%) to sixth form (15%) and further education (5%). Media interest in the programme [B] also generated interest internationally, and for the 2019–20 programme 18 UK teachers were joined remotely by two colleagues from International schools in China, one of whom subsequently achieved the promotion he had sought. During lockdown in June 2020, Lee chaired a remote one-day CLP conference via Zoom, which was attended by 24 participants from the UK, USA, New Zealand, Canada and Spain.

**2. Impact on schools wishing to be more LGBT inclusive**

School leaders report making a number of changes as a result of CLP. For example, the CEO of Hearts Academy Trust in Essex, who promoted three Courageous Leaders participants to headteacher, noted the following whole-school improvements as a result of their appointments:

- A new Trust recruitment strategy recognising the positive impact that diverse voices and increased representation brings. Hearts now adopts a 'blind' recruitment process which has built staff confidence to apply more readily for internal promotion.
- A revised curriculum which is values- and knowledge-driven and has a more thoughtful and rigorous approach to what is studied, including LGBT-inclusive relationships education.
- A renewed commitment to staff and student well-being including independent counselling and support, and a staff workload charter recognising work-life balance [C1].

A teacher from Courageous Leaders promoted to deputy principal in Bedfordshire created two new LGBT+ support officer roles in his school. These volunteers have specific LGBT+ related training and are there to augment existing pastoral support and provide LGBT+ role models for

young people. The school also decided to insist on the inclusion of gender pronouns in all staff email signatures [C2].

A teacher promoted to deputy headteacher at a faith school (again through the Courageous Leaders Programme) came out to the entire school community and set up an LGBTQ+ society. She reported that once the society was set up, staff gained greater confidence to challenge other areas of inequality, and an Afro-Caribbean society soon followed. All staff, governors and students at the school now also undertake diversity training [C3].

### **3. Influencing policy and practice and securing future DfE funding**

Positive evaluations from CLP participants prompted the Head of the Career Progression and Innovation Division in the DfE Teacher Workforce Development team, to invite Lee to provide a summary report to the DfE on her research into the challenges facing LGBT teachers. Lee subsequently advised the DfE on how to encourage schools to be more inclusive for LGBT teachers. The DfE disseminated aspects of Lee's report on their Equality and Diversity Leadership web pages [D1].

In 2019, the DfE invited Lee to help them evaluate the CLP, resulting in her summary report based on her research findings [D2]. As a result of this evaluation, the DfE extended the funding beyond the original two years (2016–18) and CLP was funded until 2020.

The CLP was visited by the leader of the DfE's School Leadership Unit (June 2019) who observed Lee's workshop based on her Authentic Leadership research. She said: "I enjoyed joining participants at courageous leaders yesterday – the programme has certainly been designed and delivered expertly and tailored to participants so well". She added: "I certainly took away a lot in terms of how it can inform the work the Department does, what we need to improve and how far we still need to go. I will be feeding this back to my team and the Teacher Diversity Unit." [D3]

### **4. Raising awareness and understanding nationally and internationally**

Lee's edited book, *Courage in the Classroom: LGBT Teachers Share Their Stories* [E] features chapters from Courageous Leaders participants. Each contributor shares key issues in their lived experiences as LGBT teachers and recommends how schools can be LGBT inclusive. The Centre for LGBTQ+ Inclusion in Education at Leeds Beckett University said of the book on Twitter: "We're so excited! This new text edited by @DrCatherineLee uses stories to highlight the implications and challenges of succeeding as your authentic self" (May 2020).

The Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) course at the UCL Institute of Education has added the book to their reading list for trainee teachers. A review of the book in *Schools Week* magazine described it as "an empowering manifesto for LGBT teachers" (June 2020).

In August 2020, a teacher from the Netherlands contacted Lee and asked her to work with him to set up CLP there. Also in 2020, Lee started working with a teacher who attended the Courageous Leaders Programme in London and was due to return to his native New Zealand, to set up a version of the programme there.

Between its publication on 17th April 2020 and the end of the year, the book sold 121 copies, including sales in the USA, Canada, Brazil, Australia, New Zealand, China, Japan and Spain.

Lee has set up a Courageous Leaders website [F] and this features a number of her research papers and workshop slides. The materials provide an important body of information for school leaders, teachers and policy makers. Lee has also coordinated networking activities via a CLP WhatsApp group and a 70-member closed Facebook page. In these groups, LGBT teachers solve problems together, network, share new opportunities and provide for each other a vital source of peer support.

Between 2018 and May 2020, Lee raised awareness and understanding of the issues facing LGBT teachers in rural locations by media appearances on ITV news, BBC Radio Essex (twice), Talk Radio, three podcasts and Pink News [G1]. In May 2020, the *Guardian* published an in-depth article on Courageous Leaders, quoting Lee and her work [G2]. This was widely discussed on social media nationally and internationally; a Twitter comment from Australia read: “A great program in the UK... Unfortunately in Australia LGBT teachers can be legally discriminated against in publicly-funded schools.”

Lee’s research and work to promote LGBT teachers has been recognised through a number of national award nominations [H]. In July 2019, the *Independent* newspaper’s Pride Power List named Lee as one of the top 100 LGBT people in the UK. In November 2019, Lee was Runner-Up in Emerald Publishers’ Real Impact Award. In February 2020, her work was recognised by *Diva* magazine, which describes itself as Europe’s leading magazine for Lesbian and Bi women, where she was nominated as a Diversity Champion. The Courageous Leaders Programme was a finalist in both the British Diversity Awards 2020 (Community Project of the Year) and The Pink News Awards (Community Group of the Year).

#### 5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

- [A] Feedback from Courageous Leaders Participants.
- [B] Social media interest in the Courageous Leaders Programme.
- [C] Evidence of changes made in schools as a result of the Courageous Leaders Programme.
- [D] Evidence of work with the DfE.
- [E] Copy of the book by Courageous Leaders Participants: Lee, C. Ed. (2020) *Courage in the Classroom: LGBT Teachers Share their Stories*, John Catt Educational Ltd., Melton, Suffolk. ISBN-13: 978-1912906963
- [F] Courageous Leaders website <http://www.courageousleaders.org.uk/index.html>
- [G] Media coverage of Courageous Leaders and Lee’s research.
- [H] Evidence of the award nominations for Courageous Leaders and Lee.