

Department for Education – 'Evidence check' memorandum Music education

National curriculum

1. Music remains a statutory subject for 5- to 14-year-olds in the new national curriculum, which will be taught from September 2014. The new music curriculum includes an increased focus on activities to be undertaken 'musically' with reference to learning to play a musical instrument, and a greater focus on the historical development of music and listening to the work of great composers.
2. At key stage four, the "arts" remains one of four "entitlement areas" within the national curriculum. Maintained schools must provide access to at least one course in each entitlement area, and the arts entitlement area includes music, art and design, dance, drama, and media arts.
3. Recent reforms to the education system, including qualifications and accountability, reinforce the place of music in schools. GCSE and A level music are being reformed to ensure that they are rigorous, and prepare pupils for the next level of study.
4. In addition, from 2016, schools will be held to account through a new progress measure, which will be based on pupils' achievements across a suite of eight qualifications, including in subjects such as music, and art and design. This will encourage schools to offer a broad range of subjects.

Dedicated programmes.

5. £246 million is being provided to a network of *music education hubs* for August 2012 – March 2016. Hubs are required to deliver four core roles, which include ensuring that every child aged 5-18 has the opportunity to learn a music instrument through whole-class ensemble teaching, and ensuring that clear progression routes are available and affordable to all young people. Hubs are expected to broker local partnerships to strengthen music teaching in their area. Funding for music hubs is calculated on the basis of pupil numbers, with additional weighting for children who are entitled to free school meals.
6. We also support pupils in six areas of very high deprivation through the 'In Harmony' programme, which aims to improve the life chances of participating children through community-based orchestral music-making, and the Music for Youth programme, which provides high-quality performance opportunities to around 53,000 young people per year.
7. We provide further funding to support talented pupils to reach their potential. Through the Music and Dance Scheme (MDS), the most talented children receive subsidies to attend world-renowned establishments, such as the Purcell School. We also support the National Youth Music Organisations, which provide high-quality opportunities to play in national ensembles.

Evidence base

8. Darren Henley's review of Music Education in England¹ was informed by evidence collected from nearly 1,000 written responses and discussions with 72 people. The summary analysis² highlighted a number of issues, including: provision was too patchy with funding

¹ www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/175432/DFE-00011-2011.pdf

² [www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/180857/Music Education in England cal l for evidence analysis.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/180857/Music_Education_in_England_cal_l_for_evidence_analysis.pdf)

inequalities; resources from other sources were not being levered in; primary teachers lacked the necessary knowledge and skills; and poor partnership working. Suggested changes included: a greater emphasis on learning music from a young age; clear progression routes; the need for core entitlements for all children.

9. The last triennial Ofsted report³ (March 2012) on music was based principally on evidence from 194 specialist music inspections and good practice visits in schools between 2008 and 2011. The report considered provision in class lessons, additional instrumental and vocal tuition, and extra-curricular musical activities, and found wide differences in the quality and quantity of music education across schools. Other findings included that too much music teaching was dominated by the spoken or written word, rather than by musical sounds, meaning lessons were planned but not always sufficiently musical, and there was considerable variation between the participation rates of different groups of pupils.

10. These findings from the review and Ofsted informed the National Plan for Music Education⁴ (published November 2011, in response to Darren Henley's review), in particular the design of the music hub model, and the core roles set out for those hubs. Data⁵ from the first academic year of the hubs' operation (2012/13) showed that over 500,000 pupils had received at least one term of whole-class ensemble teaching, over 600,000 pupils had regularly attended at least one school- or hub-led instrumental ensemble or choir, and that nearly 15,000 school choirs were supported by hubs.

11. Data shows that entries at key stage 4 for music qualifications has increased by 7% since 2010, the year the EBacc was introduced, and entries into GCSE music rose between 2013 and 2014, from 46,231 in 2013 to 47,125 in 2014.

12. The National Plan also includes an academic literature review which highlights, for example, research confirming a direct link between learning music and improved reading ability, a link between music teaching and improvements in some elements of mathematics, and connections between music and the development of creative skills. The literature review also suggests there is some evidence of music's social value in terms of impact on personal and social development. This evidence supports the case for the considerable investment in music education that has been made by this Government.

13. Early findings from the In Harmony NFER evaluation⁶ include case studies suggesting that children's musical enjoyment and musical skills are being enhanced, as well as their social and emotional wellbeing. The evaluation of the programme is on-going.

14. The MDS 'Access to Excellence: The DfE's Music and Dance Schools' report⁷, commissioned by the heads of the MDS schools advises that virtually all MDS musicians go on into music conservatoires, universities or other HE institutions; and then into the profession. Exam results achieved by pupils in MDS schools have been consistently high: MDS pupils regularly achieve pass rates at A-level and GCSE of between 95 and 100%. MDS pupils are also regular finalists, and winners, in major competitions such as the BBC Young Musician of the Year. In school year 2012/13, nearly one in four parents (24.2%) of children on the scheme were entitled to full remission of fees.

³ www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/music-schools-wider-still-and-wider

⁴ www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/180973/DFE-00086-2011.pdf

⁵ www.artscouncil.org.uk/media/uploads/pdf/MEH_key_data_final_report_28_02_14.pdf

⁶ www.nfer.ac.uk/publications/ACII01/ACII01_home.cfm

⁷ www.isc.co.uk/Resources/Independent%20Schools%20Council/Documents/Find%20a%20School/access-to-excellence-the-dfes-m-and-d-schools.pdf

15. A report published in Oct 2013 by CFE Research⁸, commissioned by Arts Council England, found that 88% of current music teachers believe the current music GCSE needs improving. In particular, they reported a need for a stronger emphasis on composing and improvisation; and that this is also needed in the assessment standards.

⁸ <http://cfe.org.uk/our-work/key-stage-4-arts-gcse-research>