**Trends in Music Education 2010 to 2013 – Interim Report March 2014**

**Introduction and Background**

From August 2012 a significant change took place in Music Education in England. Music Education Hubs came into being across the whole of England to deliver core and extension roles[[1]](#footnote-1) in the National Plan for Music Education. Department for Education funding was routed through Arts Council England (ACE) to a lead organisation in each area following a grant application process.

In most cases, these lead organisations were music services that, since 1998, had been in receipt of central government funding. This funding was originally to ‘protect and expand’ music services following the demise of many services in the 1990s. Subsequently, aspirations were expressed that over time, every child should be able to learn a musical instrument, play in an ensemble and sing[[2]](#footnote-2).

£40m capital funding was made available for the purchase of musical instruments and between 2008 and 2011, £300m was allocated to music services, £69m of which was specifically targeted towards meeting the aspiration for every child to learn an instrument[[3]](#footnote-3). In addition, schools had their own funds for delivering music education within their school.

Following the economic downturn, £200m[[4]](#footnote-4) was protected for music education in accordance with the National Plan for Music Education for the period 2012 to 2015. ACE is collecting data each October relating to the previous academic year. Further information regarding Music Education Hubs is available on the [ACE website.](http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/funding/apply-funding/funding-programmes/music-education-hubs/)

**Methodology**

The current research consists of two elements:

1. The NFER report *Key Data on Music Education Hubs 2013[[5]](#footnote-5)* was compared with data in the *Music Education Grant 2011/2012: Report[[6]](#footnote-6)* based on Local Authority data returns in May 2012, updated in October 2012, to examine trends over the past 3 years.
2. All heads of music services were contacted by email and asked to a) complete a questionnaire and b) send any data that were easily available for the 2012/2013 academic year.
3. The questionnaire asked respondents to answer yes/no/don’t know to the following:

* Following First Access programmes, are you able to provide available and affordable clear progression routes for all who wish to continue?
* For all existing young people who learn through your music service and who wish to continue, are you able to provide available and affordable clear progression routes?

Respondents were asked to Agree Strongly/Agree/Disagree/Disagree Strongly or answer Don’t Know to the following statements:

* Since September 2012, the terms and conditions under which staff are engaged have improved;
* Since September 2012, our ability to quality assure work has improved;
* Since September 2012, progression routes through to ensembles have improved;
* Since September 2012, overall, opportunities for young people to engage in music have improved.

Respondents were also invited to add any further comments.

1. Returns were requested providing data that had been submitted previously as part of annual data collection: access, progression, finance etc.

**Results**

**Data Trends**

The tables below enable comparisons to be made between the NFER report on *Music Education Hubs 2013* and the data in the *Music Education Grant 2011/2012: Report* based on Local Authority data returns May 2012, updated in October 2012. The questions asked for each report were not exactly the same. Direct comparisons are therefore not always possible and caution needs to be exercised when drawing conclusions. (See Tables 1 to 5 below).

**Schools**

The Music Education Grant survey only counted schools with Key Stage 2 populations in each Local Authority area and looked at the percentage that offered *first access programmes*, originally known as Wider Opportunities or Key Stage Two Instrumental and Vocal programmes. The NFER survey included all schools in each hub area and reported all those in which *one or more* of the core roles were offered.

**Table 1 Schools**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Music Education Grant Survey** | | |  | **Key Data on Music Education Hubs** | |
|  | **2010/2011** | **2011/2012** |  |  | **2012/2013** |
|  |  |  |  | **KPI1** The number and percentage of state-funded schools engaged with their music hub on ***one or more core roles*** |  |
| Schools (total) with ***Key Stage 2 pupils (KS2)*** | 16036 | 15974 |  | Primary schools (total) | 17289 |
| Secondary schools (total) | 4048 |
| Schools (total) receiving tuition within the ***Key Stage 2 Instrumental and Vocal Tuition programme (KS2IVT)*** | 11106 (69%)\* | 11424 (72%)\* |  | Primary schools in which one or more core roles are provided | 14368 (83.2%) |
| Secondary schools in which one or more core roles are provided | 3073 (76%) |
|  | \*range 0% to 100% | \*range 22% to 100% |  |  | Range not reported |

**Pupils**

The Music Education Grant survey reported total pupils in Key Stage 2 and the numbers of pupils receiving tuition as part of first access programmes. The NFER survey expressed the numbers receiving first access tuition as a percentage of the total school population as some pupils were being offered first access from year groups 1 to 9. The numbers experiencing first access programmes has dropped. If only those experiencing tuition for the first time are counted, the drop is greater.

The total number of pupils *continuing* after their first access experience has dropped from 44% in 2011/2012 to 35.6% in 2012/2013. It is not known whether the definition of ‘continuation’ has changed. (See Table 2).

**Table 2 Pupils**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Music Education Grant Survey** | | |  | **Key Data on Music Education Hubs** | |
|  | **2010/2011** | **2011/2012** |  |  | **2012/2013** |
| Total number of ***KS2 pupils*** | 2148316 | 2160080 |  | Total pupils in state-funded schools | 5116135 |
| Pupils receiving tuition within the ***KS2IVT programme*** | 552139  (26%) | 593878  (27%) |  | **KPI2** The number and percentage of pupils receiving at least ***one term*** of whole class ensemble tuition (WCET) (for each year group 1-9) | 531422 (437975 for the first time 8.6%) |
| Pupils receiving tuition within the KS2IVT programme: ***numbers continuing immediately after the first free year*** | 214753 (42%) | 245640 (44%) |  | **KPI3** The number and percentage of pupils ***continuing their musical education*** beyond whole class ensemble tuition (WCET) | 175374 (35.6%) |

**Standards**

The data on standards in these two reports appears to be directly comparable. At least 4000 intermediate pupils have progressed to advanced level (some advanced level pupils will have left school); a similar number of pupils have progressed from Foundation to Intermediate standard and from Entry to Foundation standard. However, the total number of pupils learning has decreased with more than 100,000 fewer pupils reported at entry level. (See Table 3).

**Table 3 Standards**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Music Education Grant Survey** | | |  | **Key Data on Music Education Hubs** | |
|  | **2010/2011** | **2011/2012** |  |  | **2012/2013** |
|  |  |  |  | **Please indicate the standards achieved by pupils in your hub area in the Academic Year.** |  |
| Entry: Pre Level 1 NQF/First Access | 793074 (77%) | 824639 (78%) |  | Entry: Pre Level 1 NQF/First Access | 721578 (75%) |
| Foundation: Level 1 NQF/Grade 1-3 | 176329 (17%) | 175060 (17%) |  | Foundation: Level 1 NQF/Grade 1-3 | 175600 (18%) |
| Intermediate: Level 2 NQF Grade 4-5 | 40787 (4%) | 39293 (4%) |  | Intermediate: Level 2 NQF Grade 4-5 | 44407 (5%) |
| Advanced: Level 3 and above NQF Grade 6 and above | 17203 (2%) | 17517 (2%) |  | Advanced: Level 3 and above NQF Grade 6 and above | 21047 (2%) |
| e) Total | 1027393 | 1056509 |  | e) Total | 962632 |

**Ensembles**

Data relating to ensembles were collected in 2010/2011 for the first time. Each year this data has become more accurate with more schools contributing information. The number of ensembles by schools has increased, but the numbers provided by others have decreased. Overall, the total number of ensembles has increased as has the total number of pupils known to be attending ensembles.

Data is now also collected in respect of gender and key stage. Overall there is a 6:4 ratio of girls to boys. There is only a slight variation across the key stages with 58% of those learning at key stage 1 being girls, rising to 61% for key stages 2 and 3, dropping to 60% at Key Stage 4 and to 58% at Key Stage 5.

A total of 14.8% of children receive a subsidy to assist with attendance and 7% of those who attend have Special Educational Needs.

**Table 4 Ensembles**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Music Education Grant Survey** | | |  | **Key Data on Music Education Hubs** | |
|  | **2010/2011** | **2011/2012** |  |  | **2012/2013** |
|  |  |  |  | **KPI4** The number and percentage of pupils participating in school- or hub-led instrumental ensembles and choirs |  |
| 4 Number of Ensembles: (include all ensembles ***not*** organised by a school or schools) | 19384 | 22222 |  | Ensembles organised by the hub lead organisation or by others in partnership with the hub lead organisation. | 7194 |
| Pupils attending Ensembles in 4 above | 270117 | 289031 |  |  |  |
| 4.1 Other ensembles not included in 4 above (if known) | 9788 | 21366 |  | Ensembles organised by schools alone or in partnership with the hub | 37835 |
| Pupils attending ensembles in 4.1 (if known) | 177637 | 244639 |  |  |  |
| Total Ensembles | 29172 | 43588 |  | Total Ensembles | 45029 |
| Total Pupils (if known) | 447754 | 533670 |  | Total Pupils | 618952 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Singing** |  |  |  | **KPI5** The number and percentage of pupils who sing regularly in school- or hub-led ensembles |  |
|  | No separate data collected | |  | This precise question was not included in the survey.  Hubs supported 9014 (62.4%) primary schools and 1576 (51%) secondary schools with singing strategies.  14770 school choirs were organised and delivered by hubs and their partner schools. | |

**Questionnaire responses**

Eighty music services responded to a series of questions via Survey Monkey.

In response to the question “Following First Access programmes, are you able to provide available and affordable clear progression routes for all who wish to continue?” three out of four hub leaders reported that available and affordable clear progression routes were being provided. One in five was not able to provide these opportunities and 2.6% didn’t know. (See Figure 1).

*Figure 1*

The question: “For all existing young people who learn through your music service and who wish to continue, are you able to provide available and affordable clear progression routes?” showed that four in five respondents were able to provide available and affordable clear progression routes for existing learners. One in seven was not able to do this. 3.9% didn’t know. (See Figure 2).

*Figure 2*

Seven out of ten respondents reported that, since September 2012, progression routes through to ensembles had improved. One in four respondents disagreed with this statement. (See Figure 3).

*Figure 3*

Almost six out of ten respondents disagreed with the statement that terms and conditions had improved. Almost one in six disagreed strongly. By contrast, one in ten agreed that terms and conditions had improved and one in ten didn’t know. 1.3% agreed strongly that terms and conditions had improved. (See Figure 4).

*Figure 4*

In response to the statement that “Since September 2012, our ability to quality assure work has improved”, half of the respondents agreed or agreed strongly, but half disagreed, disagreed strongly, or didn’t know. (See Figure 5).

*Figure 5*

Respondents were also asked to consider whether, since September 2012, overall, opportunities for young people to engage in music have improved. More than three out of four respondents agreed or agreed strongly with this statement. Fifteen percent disagreed and 6.5% didn’t know. (See Figure 6).

*Figure 6*

**Additional Comments**

Hub leaders also had the opportunity to provide further commentary. Fifty respondents commented on a range of issues with some respondents commenting on several different issues. Some comments were overwhelmingly positive.

Two hub leaders commented on the benefits of working together with more than one music service or in partnership with other organisations:

*Bringing together the expertise from three music services has supported the positive development of the Hub. The strategic approach to partnership work and genuine interest of partners to support the musical pathway for young people has truly enhanced the music education engagement opportunities for young people in our schools and community.*

*Although we have always worked in partnership the creation of the hub has provided a formal structure through which we can work more effectively and plan provision across the sector based on need. With significantly less funding this way of working has enabled us to continue to provide high quality opportunities for all. The LA funding presently in place has also made a significant difference in ensuring access.*

One hub leader stated, in respect of quality assurance:

*I feel our quality assurance has always been strong and this has kept constant.*

Two further positive comments related to progression:

*We have sometimes struggled to provide progression in schools so from April 2014 we will have progression tuition available through Music Centres.*

*Some positive initiatives have helped with progression, especially the Mayor’s Fund for Young Musicians in which we have 9 scholars funded for 4 years following Whole Class Ensemble Teaching for instrumental lessons, ensemble membership etc.*

Singing also received a positive comment from one hub leader:

*Singing strategy has seen a greater involvement in singing across the borough especially at primary level.*

One hub leader reported, in respect of commitment from staff:

*The level of commitment from staff has improved.*

And the aspiration in the National Plan to reach all young people received the following comment from one hub leader:

*Diversity, Inclusion and participation have all improved.*

The reporting on young people classed as ‘disadvantaged’ has improved markedly. Disadvantaged pupils (as measured by those receiving free school meals) make up 18.3% of the school population, but according to the NFER report, only make up 14.8% of those taking part in ensembles and choirs. However, a total of 7% of participants in ensembles and choirs have Special Educational Needs, compared with 2.8% nationally.

A number of hub leaders commented on a range of challenges and areas for improvement. In particular, funding related issues (both locally and nationally) featured in a number of comments as the following six examples demonstrate:

*Levels of local & national funding have decreased since September 2012. Despite this we have managed to maintain quality & access however this will not be possible should there be further reductions in local and national funding.*

*We have managed to continue to offer good services and opportunities to C&YP, but further cuts in funding will start to make this task almost impossible.*

*We continually strive to improve the service we offer for our young people and are just managing to maintain our high levels of access, participation and quality despite National funding diminishing. We are supported financially by schools within the Local Authority however this funding is increasingly under threat.*

*Numbers of groups have dropped due to lack of funding and more strain on fewer staff to deliver more.*

*Funding, including funding cut, does not allow us to provide the opportunities to continue beyond first access that we would wish to.*

*The nature of opportunity has changed. Due to council funding cuts and support from local councils there is less sustainable work but more one-off project working as a result of the hub. We have found that teachers pay and conditions have been undermined, firstly by the academies programme some of which forced staff to become self-employed; and then by the need to make savings due to grant and council cuts. These have not bottomed out yet and the uncertainty surrounding future spending plans is driving staff out of the service. This will lead to more fragmented and patchy delivery.*

Closely linked to funding issues were comments on affordability:

*The question of affordability is huge as we can no longer subsidise costs.*

*As the grant has reduced we rely more heavily on schools buying back additional support. Some of these costs are passed onto parents. Many find it difficult to pay.*

*Due to DfE and local authority funding cuts, most music providers are having to increase their costs to the 'consumer' (schools and families) - music teachers still need to be paid and core organisational overheads covered. The cost therefore for music lessons is becoming less affordable to parents/schools. Music hours are decreasing - not increasing. Hub Partners are not there to provide 'free' music tuition (i.e. as 'volunteers') - they are real people who need to earn a living. Music is becoming elitist under this Government. Music is no longer affordable for all.*

*Do our progression routes offer good value for money? Yes. Can all parents afford the charges we are forced to levy for progression routes? – No.*

Relationships with schools featured in comments from some hub leaders, particularly in relation to progression:

*Where obstacles exist in accessing progression routes these are frequently out of our hands: schools are gatekeepers in allowing learners access to progression routes in many cases.*

*We are able to provide this, but require the partnership with schools to work for it to happen. There are some schools who chose not to offer progression opportunities after first access programmes.*

*I believe that we have the mechanisms in place that can provide ready access to high quality and meaningful musical opportunities for all young people and that the progression routes are clearly defined. However, this only works when we are able to engage in a full and frank conversation with school leaders who 'get it'. Sadly, this continues to be a major issue and previous success is no guarantee of ongoing engagement. The majority of school leaders do work well with us to the benefit of their young people. However, there remains a core of sceptics that will not engage in this conversation and the continued move to academy status in so many schools seems to be exacerbating this trend. My fear is that this route will lead back to a very fragmented music delivery model with high quality work in one location and few if any opportunities, in some cases, literally next door. The situation would be considerably improved if the DfE or OFSTED would 'put their money where their mouths are' and give hub leaders some authority to challenge schools rather than telling us in one breath that this is what we must do whilst at the same time refusing to give us any authority or powers.*

*First access programmes are well embedded but progression is patchy depending on schools' ability to pay. Number of progressing pupils has declined as schools are charging to cover cost of delivery and the 'squeezed middle' can no longer afford fees. Progression to ensembles has not improved as we now have to charge for them, and parents can't afford both lessons and ensemble fees. I think we are just about holding the ground in terms of numbers engaging, but definitely many fewer staying the distance in terms of progression to intermediate and advanced levels of attainment.*

*I am unable to provide progression routes for all young people to continue learning due to several barriers. They are: lack of engagement in some schools which Ofsted have given us a remit to improve; lack of continuing funding for instruments, with the consequence that certain instrumental disciplines are diminishing in favour of cheaper instruments; pressure on the school curriculum focussing on English Maths and Science which reduces the available teaching time (more schools asking for afternoon, lunchtime or after school lessons) and thus reduces our capacity to provide lessons for all.*

Several hub leaders also commented on quality assurance:

*Capacity to quality assure has diminished in the fight to produce ACE documentation, and deal with budget cuts, fewer staff able to do QA work*

*Although I have indicated that our ability to QA teaching in the field has improved, this has been due to our training senior/experienced tutors to support this work. One of our targets was to reduce the formal QA process down from every 15 months to a 12 month period. However, with a significant further cut in funding from April 2014, this will once again be the reverse.*

*Constantly reducing national funding has impacted on our services' ability to provide high quality musical opportunities. Staffing hours are having to be reduced. Quality assurance is suffering as a result. ACE contractual requirements are creating a lot of additional paperwork. Prioritising management time is becoming increasing challenging.*

*Our own Quality Assurance procedures remain strong, but there is no longer any national monitoring which would enable us to subject ourselves to scrutiny and comparison.*

*Since ACE has become the fund holder, all they are concerned about is meaningless paper. They are not concerned about standards in teaching and learning, quality of provision, assessment for learning. They are more concerned with quantity rather than quality.*

*Strongly disagree about quality assurance because, even though we have increased expertise in recent years, decreases in funding have led to significantly reduced time availability within the team to keep on top of QA. We're reduced to firefighting on a shoestring.*

*The concern is the our capacity to effectively manage QA and development issues for different sectors (instrumental teachers, schools) and the continual shifting of the focus of our work as demanded by various organisations.*

The issue of capacity and management/staff related issues also came up in other comments:

*Most Hubs will be working with a very small team in trying to keep all this going given the additional pressures being applied. As a result, terms and conditions for staff have not improved, but far more is being asked of them.*

*This has been a challenging time for Music Hubs, not least that other 3rd sector music organisations just see the lead organisation as a central bidding opportunity for funding. There has been a lot of time and effort channelled into articulating what a hub is (should be).*

*Onerous reporting and (over) accountability systems and requirements are reducing available management time for Q.A. Further, the need to establish, manage and report upon numerous alternative funding streams (against falling central budgets) also places a heavy burden on management time. There is increasing need for strategic and entrepreneurial development activity which is changing management roles at all levels.*

*Since September my ability to effectively manage my music service has decreased and meant that I have had to increase my management team’s size. I am also spending more and more time completing paperwork for ACE and jumping through hoops that keep me away from pushing greater engagement and raising the quality, breadth and depth of provision for all young people.*

*We are currently undergoing restructure as teachers’ mainscale and upper pay spine and pay and conditions are no longer affordable.*

*Hubs have moved away from employing colleagues on QTS Payscales. We now have to write School MEP's which demand challenging school conversations - with very few QTS colleagues to actually do this work!*

*Ofsted and exam pressure means we operate in an increasingly hostile environment. Much of the Hub development, whilst creating opportunities has often been at the expense of effective day to day interaction and monitoring. Simply having the capacity to respond to increased admin is very difficult.*

*Apart from laying off a layer of staff to cope with the large cut in funding in government grant, and the massive additional requirement for paperwork which limits the time I have to quality assure, there has been no difference to music education here. The only difference my senior managers and I have noticed is that I/we have to attend lots more 'events' which have limited/no impact, and we are required to produce a great deal of what seems like irrelevant paperwork. Then we have to redo each piece of paperwork so the relationship manager can understand it. All our payments have been delayed for this reason. We like the NPME and are doing everything we can to deliver that and we completely agreed with the spirit of partnership and stakeholder management; we just want to have the time to get on and do this rather than spend endless days creating paperwork!*

**Other data that were easily available for the 2012/2013 academic year.**

In addition to answering the above questions and providing additional comments, hub leaders were asked to provide any other data that were easily available for the 2012/2013 academic year similar to that which had been submitted previously as part of annual data collection: access, progression, finance etc. Thirty one hubs (25%) responded representing 41 Local Authority areas. Twenty eight of these hubs forwarded their ACE questionnaires which formed the data set for the NFER research. One return was incomplete. Three hubs returned a range of other information. The number of responses is insufficient to provide statistically meaningful data. Also, as these are self-selecting responses, they cannot be considered to be a representative sample from which to draw national conclusions. However, some data may still be of interest to music services and hub leaders when considering their own situation in the context of this information.

**First Access Programmes**

The percentage of primary schools receiving First Access programmes ranged from 23% to 100%. (N=28) Average 61%.

The duration of these First Access programmes was as follows:

Duration of First Access programmes: (N=28)

* One term: 20%
* Two terms: 8%
* Three terms: 69%
* Schools with a mixture of programme lengths: 3%

Continuity beyond First Access (N=28) averaged at 31% with a range of 5% to 70%.

**Standards and Progression**

Standards and progression responses also range quite widely (N=28):

* Beginner: 42% to 92.5% (average 71.8%)
* Foundation: 5.9% to 48% (average 21.5%)
* Intermediate: 1% to 14.5% (average 4.7%)
* Advanced: 0.3% to 10.9% (average 2%)

**Singing Strategy**

Of the 27 music education hubs with comments on singing strategies, the range of schools worked with was between 14% and 100% (average 55%).

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1. National Plan for Music Education <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-importance-of-music-a-national-plan-for-music-education> page 26 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. See Research Reports DfEE RR229; DfES RR478; RR700; and DCSF RR014 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. See reports by the [National Music Participation Director](http://www.dickhallam.co.uk/articles-publications-and-reports.php) [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. 2012/2013 £75m; 2013/2014 £65m; 2014/2015 £60m [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. The report focuses on the main key performance indicators agreed between Arts Council England and the Department for Education (DfE) in January 2014. <http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/funding/apply-funding/funding-programmes/music-education-hubs/> [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. [National Music Participation Director](http://www.dickhallam.co.uk/articles-publications-and-reports.php) [↑](#footnote-ref-6)