



# Music Education: State of the Nation

Report by the All-Party Parliamentary Group  
for Music Education, the Incorporated Society  
of Musicians and the University of Sussex



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# Foreword

There is increasing cross-party concern about the crisis facing music education in England in particular. Over the past decade there have been many positive developments, perhaps most notably the 2012 National Plan for Music Education. However, the overall picture is one of serious decline. If the pace continues, music education in England will be restricted to a privileged few within a decade, and the UK will have lost a major part of the talent pipeline to its world-renowned music industry.

The All-Party Parliamentary Group for Music Education was set up to bring together MPs and peers from all parties who believe in and support music education for our children. This report, published in collaboration with the University of Sussex and the Incorporated Society of Musicians, shows the scale of the crisis facing music education in England. It shows how Government policy around accountability measures and the curriculum has contributed to a sharp decline in opportunities for pupils to have access to a music education. Its recommendations show the breadth of the problem – but also how easily the Government could act to address some of the most pressing issues, at little or no financial cost.

We hope the Government listens to the concerns from both sides of the House and acts on the recommendations in this report, whose authors are Dr Alison Daubney (University of Sussex), Gary Spruce (Birmingham City University) and Deborah Annetts (Incorporated Society of Musicians).

**Diana Johnson MP (Labour),**  
Co-Chair and Registered Contact

**Andrew Percy MP (Conservative),**  
Co-Chair

**January 2019**

# Executive Summary

## All children should have access to a high-quality music education.

Studying music builds cultural knowledge and creative skills. It improves children's health, wellbeing and wider educational attainment. The creative industries, now worth more than £100 billion to the UK economy, rely heavily on the pipeline of creative talent from schools which has been essential in creating the UK's world-renowned music industry. Music also enables young children to develop the sheer love of expressing themselves through music, discovering their own inner self and being able to develop emotional intelligence and empathy through music.

## Music education: in crisis?

Government policy, particularly around accountability measures like the English Baccalaureate (EBacc), has significantly negatively impacted on music education in schools in England. Curriculum time for music (which is statutory for Key Stage 1-3) has reduced, along with opportunities for children to pursue music to GCSE and A Level.

The Department for Education's own data shows a fall of over 20% in GCSE music entries since 2014/2015 – a 17% fall when adjusted for reduced cohort size. Secondary school music teacher numbers have fallen by over 1,000 in the same period at a time when EBacc subjects are seeing teacher numbers rising. The decline in GCSE music is a warning for other non-EBacc subjects, with many other non-EBacc subjects suffering similar or worse outcomes.

## What can be done to reverse the decline?

To address the decline in music education the Government should ensure that all schools should teach music on a regular and sustained basis across the whole of Key Stages 1-3 irrespective of whether they are an academy or not. The Government should also review and reform the EBacc and Progress 8, to

make sure that our children are getting the education they need for the 21st century, not one which is rooted in the 1904 Secondary Regulations. And at its heart must be creative education.

## The EBacc must be addressed

Research set out in this report highlights the serious failings of the EBacc policy which urgently need to be addressed.

To date the target of 75% (90% by 2025) for EBacc take up has failed to be met by a very long way. Currently the number of students studying the EBacc has plateaued at around 38% in state-funded schools. Indeed the number of students passing the EBacc was just 16.7% in 2017/2018. And yet this failing policy is causing untold damage to music and many other creative subjects in our schools. And for what?

## Workforce under pressure

There are serious questions to be addressed regarding the music education workforce that is demoralised from the marginalisation of music in our schools, as well as facing both skills and funding shortages. As the Government has recognised previously<sup>1</sup>, children must be taught by subject specialists<sup>2</sup>, with schools supported by appropriate expertise and overseen by appropriately trained inspectors. The revised National Plan for Music Education (NPME) must also provide clarity over the roles and responsibilities of schools and Music Education Hubs ("Hubs"), and find more effective ways of measuring Hubs' success.

When schools teach creative subjects, the whole of our society and economy benefits. The music industry in Britain is worth £4.4bn a year to the economy. It punches above its weight internationally. Britain has less than 1% of the world population, but one in seven albums sold worldwide in 2014 was by a British act. This is a critical part of Britain's soft power. In the current Brexit landscape this becomes even more vital.

# The importance of music education

## What is education?

We define education as the means by which individuals and groups come to a better understanding of the world. As the music educationalist John Paynter wrote, 'The value of anything we learn in school lies in the extent to which it helps us to respond to the world around us'<sup>3</sup>.

## What does music contribute to our economy?

Music has a significant impact on the UK's economy. UK Music's 'Measuring Music' reports the following headline figures for the contribution of music to the UK economy in 2017<sup>4</sup>:

- £4.5 billion gross value (GVA) contribution to the economy
- £2.6 billion total export revenue
- 145,81<sup>5</sup> full time equivalent jobs are within the music industry (an increase of 3% from 2016)
- 12% increase in overseas

The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) Sector Economic Estimates showed the value of the creative industries rose by 7.1% in 2017 (from £94.8 billion in 2016 to £101.5 billion in 2017), almost double the 4.8% increase across the UK economy as a whole. As the UK Creative Industries Council (CiC) points out, this means that 'the UK's creative industries contributed more than £278 million a day, or approximately £11.5 million in every hour of 2017'<sup>6</sup>. CiC also notes how from 2010-2017 'the creative industries subsectors' (which includes music) grew by 53.1%

*This is ...the fastest growth rate of any of the categories overseen by the Department of Digital, Culture, Media & Sport, which has responsibility for areas including tourism, telecoms, gambling and charities, and makes the creative industries among the best performing of any industrial sectors<sup>6</sup>.*

## Music's contribution to cultural life

From symphony orchestras to brass bands, rock groups to chamber music ensembles and cathedral choirs to spectacular musical theatre, music making in the UK is defined by its excellence and diversity. Each musical tradition has its own distinctive practices and measures of quality and each makes a unique contribution to the nation's culture. For UNESCO, 'Culture is the fountain of our progress and creativity and must be carefully nurtured to grow and develop'<sup>7</sup>.

*Deep in our hearts, we all understand that the quality of our lives depends, to a great extent, on our **being able to take part in**, and benefit from our culture. We instinctively know, with no need for explanation, that maintaining a connection with the unique character of our historic and natural environment, with the language, the music, the arts and the literature, which accompanied us throughout our life, is fundamental for our spiritual wellbeing and for providing a sense of who we are. There is an intrinsic value of culture to a society...*

UNESCO <sup>8</sup>

## Music's contribution to social and individual wellbeing

Significant research has demonstrated the positive impact of participation in the arts on wellbeing and physical and mental health<sup>9,10</sup> and also on how participation in music, coupled with a coherent and sustained music education, can deliver positive benefits to wider cognitive development (e.g. improved literacy and numeracy skills<sup>11</sup>). Music plays a role in the individual lives of everyone, the way individual and collective identities are expressed and given meaning<sup>12</sup>, and marks special occasions.

The index of wellbeing compiled by Age UK marks the leading factors in being happy as 'cultural

participation, physical activities, cognition, mental wellbeing, education, no diagnosed health conditions, an open personality, no limiting long-standing illnesses, and social participation.<sup>13</sup>

## What can music education contribute?

*Subjects like design and technology, music, art and drama are vitally important for children to develop imagination and resourcefulness, resilience, problem-solving, team-working and technical skills. These are the skills which will enable young people to navigate the changing workplace of the future and stay ahead of the robots, not exam grades. These meta-skills are critical in all sectors, not just the creative industries.<sup>14</sup>*

**Tristram Hunt**, Director of V&A (2018)

Music education in its many forms and settings provides the foundation for the diversity and excellence that characterises music making in the UK and ensures there is a ‘talent pipeline’<sup>15</sup> that sustains the economic benefits as outlined above.

Professor Gert Biesta, Professor of Education at Brunel University, states that a good education performs three core functions<sup>16</sup>:

1. To produce a suitably qualified workforce (**Qualification**) which can support the economic wellbeing of the nation;
2. To induct children and young people into the values and norms of society including its cultures and traditions (**Socialisation**);
3. To support children and young people to become autonomous, creative and individual thinkers and actors (**Subjectification**).

A strong music education contributes to all of these three functions. *Qualification* ensures that there is a steady supply of performers, composers and arrangers that have the necessary musical skills for

employment in the creative sector. *Socialisation* ensures that children and young people know about, and engage with, music in society. The third function, *Subjectification* is considered to be the most valuable contribution made by music education.

Biesta states the present emphasis on accountability and measurement in education has restricted the *subjectification* function, which is vital in meeting the challenges of the future including preparing young people for employment. The issues of employability highlighted by Hunt and Biesta are reinforced through research undertaken by NESTA and the Creative Industries Federation:

*Our future economy will be built on creativity and technology. With artificial intelligence taking over routine tasks, there will be immense opportunities for people who combine creative, technical and social skills – skills that are resilient to future automation.<sup>17</sup>*

A recent report<sup>18</sup> by Carl Frey, co-director of the Oxford Martin programme on technology and employment at Oxford University, suggests that 15 million jobs are at risk of automation in the UK. Artists, including musicians, are at low risk of automation (1.49% chance), alongside doctors, surgeons, audiologists, prosthetics makers and occupational therapists. In 2018 the CBI President Paul Drechsler called on policymakers to prioritise teaching that encourages creativity and teamworking<sup>19</sup>.

Therefore in the age of increasing automation we need an education system which has at its heart subjects like music which expands minds and builds problem solving skills and creativity. The industry is clear what it needs – but unfortunately current education policy runs counter to the needs of business.

# Music education in England

Music has long been considered a part of a broad and balanced school curriculum<sup>20</sup>. It has been part of the statutory school curriculum until the end of Key Stage 3 (age 14) since the National Curriculum was published in 1988/9. The entitlement to school music education was recently reaffirmed by the Schools Minister, Nick Gibb:

*... high-quality arts education should not be the preserve of the elite, but the entitlement of every child. Music, art and design, drama and dance are included in the national curriculum and compulsory in all maintained schools from the age of 5 to 14<sup>21</sup>.*

**Nick Gibb**, April 2018

The National Curriculum Programme of Study for Music<sup>22</sup> (“the National Curriculum for Music”) has practical music making and diversity and inclusion at its heart. Children and young people’s understanding of music is about developing their knowledge of music and skills in music making through the core musical activities of making music (as performers, composers/producers and improvisers) and responding critically and in an informed way to music from a wide range of genres and traditions.

It has been long-recognised, however, that whereas curriculum music in school should form the foundation of children and young people’s music education, it is not enough on its own. Most schools, as a result, provide a range of extra-curricular opportunities for young people to develop their musical interest, such as school orchestras, choirs and other ensembles.

## Music education initiatives

Over the last 18 years, however, there has been a proliferation of music education initiatives instigated and funded both by the Government and also by non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and charitable and commercial bodies. These often have as their primary purpose increasing access to and diversity in

music education. Government initiatives include the funding of Whole Class Ensemble Teaching (WCET)/ First Access programmes which seek to ensure that all primary children receive tuition on an instrument for at least one term and ideally a year. Another Government supported initiative, *Sing Up*, led by The Sage, Gateshead received £10 million pounds in 2007 to revitalise singing in schools, reaching over 90% of schools. The Voices Foundation continues to develop “singing schools” in schools with high levels of deprivation, particularly in the primary sector with singing being integrated into all kinds of classroom activity. Musical Futures, supported initially by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation, continues to address issues of diversity, access and inclusion in music education through introducing informal learning approaches into the music classroom in order to address the alienation of some young people from formal music education and increasing the take-up of music at GCSE.

Organisations and charities such as Youth Music<sup>23</sup>, Music for Youth<sup>24</sup> and In Harmony<sup>25</sup> and also educational outreach projects by orchestras and opera companies address particular aspects of music education and do immensely valuable work in working with disadvantaged groups of children and young people and/or those whose music needs are not met by the more established music education structures. In addition, there is the directly funded Music and Dance Scheme<sup>26</sup>, which provides grants for specialist training for young dancers and musicians with exceptional talent to enable them to attend specialist independent schools or centres for advanced training.

Although the provision is welcomed, it has raised concerns that music education is fragmented as a result. In 2010, Ed Vaizey expressed a concern that ‘we are losing sight of the key aims of cultural education in a blizzard of initiatives’<sup>27</sup>.

## Music Manifesto

The *Music Manifesto*<sup>28</sup>, launched by the Department for Education and Skills and Department for Culture Media and Sport in 2004, attempted to address the



patchiness and postcode lottery nature of provision. This was a joint campaign between the Department for Education and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (now Digital, Culture, Media and Sport). Its aim was to improve young people's music education in England, promoting a 'music for all' agenda.

The purpose of the Music Manifesto was to:

- act as a statement of common intent that helped align currently disparate activity set out a shared agenda for planning across the sector
- make it easier for more organisations and individuals to devise ways to contribute to music education
- guide the Government's own commitment to music education
- call on the wider community, including the public, private and community sectors, to join in enriching the lives of schoolchildren.

The campaign's Five Key Aims were to:

- provide every young person with first access to a range of music experiences
- provide more opportunities for young people to deepen and broaden their musical interests and skills
- identify and nurture the most talented young musicians
- develop a world-class workforce in music education
- improve the support structures for young people's music making.

## Henley Review

The report *Music Education in England*<sup>29</sup>, otherwise known as the 'Henley Review', was published in 2011. Darren Henley, the then-Managing Director of Classic FM (and now Chief Executive of Arts Council England) undertook the review.

The parameters of the review, set out by the then-Secretary of State for Education, Michael Gove, once again highlighted that 'the Government priorities recognised music as an enriching and valuable subject...'<sup>30</sup> and also reaffirmed the commitment that 'public funding should be used primarily to meet the Government priorities of every child having the opportunity to learn a musical instrument and to sing.' The Government also recognised the 'secondary benefits of a quality music education are those of increased self-esteem and aspirations; improved behaviour and social skills; and improved academic attainment in areas such as numeracy, literacy and language.'

The Henley Review set out recommendations for the minimum expectations of what any child going through the English school system should receive in terms of an education in music. It highlighted high-quality and sustained music education in the school curriculum as the cornerstone of every child's music education, hailing the importance of music in the curriculum in the first recommendation:

*'Schools should provide children with a broad Music Education, which includes performing, composing, listening, reviewing and evaluating.'*

It also highlighted challenges and threats to music education, including:

- inappropriate accountability measures (EBacc) which worked against the Arts
- insecurity of funding
- patchy provision that led to inequality of access
- a lack of accountability for the quality of work delivered by Music Services and music education work funded by Arts Council England and Youth Music
- issues regarding training, recruiting and supporting the diverse workforce.

A particularly prescient observation was made in the Review at 4.2

*‘There is a strong sense that the statutory requirement of being included in the National Curriculum provides a basis for all other music provision in and out of school. Without the obligation for music lessons to be a part of the school curriculum, there is a very real concern that the subject might well wither away in many schools – and in the worst case scenario, could all but disappear in others.’*

## The National Plan for Music Education

The NPME<sup>31</sup> was born out of the review and is based on its recommendations. The NPME is an ambitious, aspirational document which sets out clear objectives with regards to delivery, access, progression and excellence in the music education sector. The NPME was launched in 2012 and continues to 2020.

The NPME’s main aim was to ensure that access to music education was not impacted by a postcode lottery. The vision was to ensure that opportunities were equal and available. Notably, the NPME recognised the first opportunity that many pupils will have to study music will be at school and that this foundation should be nurtured to provide broader opportunities and progression routes.

## Music Education Hubs

The NPME introduced the concept of Music Education Hubs (“Hubs”), which built on the work of local authority music services. The Hubs comprise groups of organisations – such as local authority music services, schools, other Hubs, Arts organisations, community or voluntary organisations. The Hubs were designed to augment and support music teaching in schools (a guaranteed statutory requirement to the end of Key Stage 3) so that more children could experience a combination of classroom teaching, instrumental and vocal tuition and input from professional musicians, as set out by

the NPME. The structure of the various organisations also meant that Hubs would be able to deliver a music offer that drew on a wide range of expertise. The NPME stated that the Hubs in ‘every area will help drive the quality of service locally, with scope for improved partnership working, better value for money, local innovation and greater accountability’.

The Hubs were also promoted as having an important role in ‘first access’ to music through continuing to develop the whole-class instrumental and vocal programme for a minimum of a term in primary schools, as well as providing broader opportunities and progression routes inside and outside the classroom. The idea was that class teachers and specialist instrumental teachers working together could maximise opportunities for musical progression and provide for different needs and aspirations of pupils beyond the music curriculum.

The NPME also promoted the benefits of music to the wider life of the school, stating that schools should have a choir and aspire to having an orchestra or other large-scale ensemble. The focus on singing built upon the very successful work of *Sing Up*, the National Singing Programme. This was funded by the Government between 2007 and 2012 and reached 98% of primary schools at its peak<sup>32</sup>.

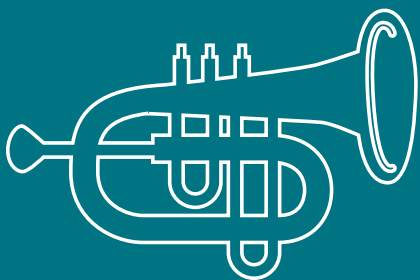
The NPME asked the Hubs to develop singing strategies, in and beyond schools, to ensure that every child sings regularly and that choirs are available for them to join – with the view of widening singing opportunities for all pupils, improve quality and give routes for progression such as county choirs, chorister programmes and the National Youth Choir.

Although promoting partnership working and local innovation, the NPME set out **core roles** and **extended roles** for the Hubs to ensure national consistency and equality of opportunity.

# The core and extension roles of Music Education Hubs

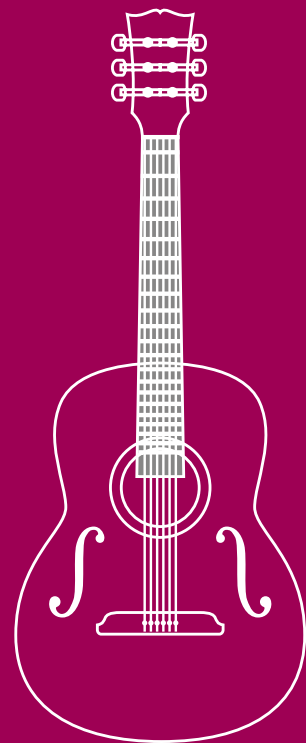
## CORE ROLES

- a) Ensure that every child aged 5-18 has the opportunity to learn a musical instrument (other than voice) through whole-class ensemble teaching programmes for ideally a year (but for a minimum of a term) of weekly tuition on the same instrument.
- b) Provide opportunities to play in ensembles and to perform from an early stage.
- c) Ensure that clear progression routes are available and affordable to all young people.
- d) Develop a singing strategy to ensure that every pupil sings regularly and that choirs and other vocal ensembles are available in the area.



## EXTENSION ROLES

- a) Offer CPD to school staff, particularly in supporting schools to deliver music in the curriculum.
- b) Provide an instrument loan service, with discounts or free provision for those on low incomes.
- c) Provide access to large scale and / or high-quality music experiences for pupils, working with professional musicians and / or venues. This may include undertaking work to publicise the opportunities available to schools, parents/carers and students.



# Music education in schools

Whilst the aspiration is for every child aged 5 to 14 to have regular access to music education through the school curriculum, evidence shows that the reality is somewhat different. A squeeze on funding and pressure on the curriculum due to accountability measures is the cause of this. These are the same challenges as noted by Darren Henley in the Henley Review, but they have become so serious that they now challenge the very existence of music education.

Additionally, the changes in school structures mean that the National Curriculum is not statutory in academies. They are not required to follow the national curriculum. The National Audit Office reported that in January 2018 72% of secondary schools and 27% of primary schools were academies or free schools<sup>33</sup> and thus not obliged to follow the national curriculum.

*‘Some schools perceive [that] they have permission to either ignore the curriculum or justify one-off end of year shows or projects as acceptable forms of music provision. Only weekly progressive music lessons can develop pupils effectively in musicianship skills.’*

**Inclusion manager** (*Consultation on the Future of Music Education, ISM, December 2018*<sup>37</sup>)

## Primary schools

In recent research by the ISM, the pressure of accountability measures for maths and English results (especially in Year 6) was noted to have a negative impact on curriculum music provision in primary schools, and in primary schools where music was part of the curriculum, more than 50% of the responding schools did not meet their curriculum obligations to Year 6, citing the pressure of statutory tests as a significant reason for this.<sup>34</sup> This is supported by observations from Ofsted.

Other research has cited the ‘lottery’ nature of music education: primary school children’s access to a sustained and high-quality music education are governed by chance.<sup>35 36 37</sup> This is a result of a combination of lack of teacher confidence, cuts

to funding which have forced some schools to no longer employ specialist music teachers and an unequal focus on core subjects, at the expense of the wider curriculum.

*We saw curriculum narrowing, especially in upper key stage 2, with lessons disproportionately focused on English and mathematics. Sometimes, this manifested as intensive, even obsessive, test preparation for key stage 2 SATs that in some cases started at Christmas in Year 6.*

**Amanda Spielman**, Chief HMI, Ofsted<sup>39</sup>

**Opportunities to sing are also diminishing.** The prevalence of singing in primary schools has also diminished since the central funding for the National Singing Programme *Sing Up* was cut. At its peak *Sing Up*<sup>39</sup> was used in 98% of state-funded primary schools in the UK and contributed significantly to teacher development as well as helping schools and students reap the benefits gained from regular singing<sup>40</sup>.

## Secondary schools

Significant research into secondary school music provision has highlighted the decline of music as a curriculum subject right across secondary and post-18 (tertiary) provision<sup>41 42 43 44</sup>.

- **Statutory provision is often curtailed:** music is no longer taught across Key Stage 3 in more than 50% of state-funded secondary schools, including some schools still under local authority control where it is supposed to be a statutory requirement until the end of Year 9<sup>45</sup>.
- **In some schools there is no music provision or it is only taught on one day per year:** recent findings from the University of Sussex highlight the marginalisation of music in the curriculum, highlighting that some pupils have little or no music education during their entire secondary school career; it therefore becomes the preserve only of those that can afford to access it outside of the classroom.

- **There is a lack of continuity:** in Key Stage 3, there is an increasing move towards music only being offered on a 'carousel', i.e. where music is only offered for part of the year on rotation with other (usually arts) subjects.
- **The time allocated to music in the Key Stage 3 curriculum is reducing:** curriculum time has been taken from music and given to EBacc subjects<sup>45</sup>. This reduction in the percentage of time allocated to music is highlighted by analysis of the figures in the DfE workforce survey, which clearly show that the percentage of time allocated to music in Key Stages 3 fell by 6.34% between 2010 and 2017; only 3.1%<sup>46</sup> of curriculum time is now allocated to Key Stage 3 music.

*'Music has taken a battering in schools. By reducing its importance, SMT are less likely to pay for CPD opportunities and career progression opportunities will be favoured for EBacc subject leads. If music teachers are not valued, schools working on performance-related pay will not reward music departments. [There's] reduced timetabling for students to develop music skills, however there's still the same expectations of school concerts etc.'*

**Secondary school music teacher** (Consultation on the Future of Music Education, ISM, December 2018<sup>37</sup>)

These factors work directly against the principles of a knowledge-rich curriculum advocated by the DfE and recently highlighted by Ofsted<sup>47</sup>, since there are extensive periods of time within each school year where students do not have regular and sustained music education.

Across many secondary schools, the time allocated to music has been eroded as more emphasis is placed on subjects included in the EBacc and Key Stage 3 is reduced to two years. The shortening of the Key Stage 3 curriculum has recently been cited by the Department of Education as being 'problematic'<sup>48</sup>.

The DfE teacher workforce data<sup>46</sup> shows that the time allocated to music has been cut by 13.5% since 2010. At Key Stage 5, this is a drop of 26.7%. To put these changes into context, the total number of teaching hours across all subjects dropped by an average of 7.8% between 2010 and 2017 whilst in EBacc subjects they rose – in geography the number of hours rose by nearly 25%.

**Table 1 – Music: Changes in curriculum hours allocated 2010–2017**

| Year                               | Total hours of Music taught in: |                  |                 |                 |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
|                                    | KS3-5                           | Years 7, 8 and 9 | Years 10 and 11 | Years 12 and 13 |
| 2010                               | 92700                           | 60300            | 18900           | 13500           |
| 2011                               | 93100                           | 59700            | 19400           | 14000           |
| 2012                               | 91700                           | 58100            | 19500           | 14100           |
| 2013                               | 90900                           | 57200            | 19700           | 14000           |
| 2014                               | 86600                           | 56000            | 19200           | 13500           |
| 2015                               | 85500                           | 54900            | 18300           | 12400           |
| 2016                               | 83600                           | 54700            | 17800           | 11100           |
| 2017                               | 80200                           | 53200            | 17100           | 9900            |
| <b>Percentage change 2010–2017</b> | <b>-13.5</b>                    | <b>-11.8</b>     | <b>-9.5</b>     | <b>-26.7</b>    |

## Secondary school accountability measures (the EBacc)

Darren Henley's (2011) Review of Music Education undertaken on behalf of the DfE and DCMS warned that music risked 'being devalued'<sup>49</sup> if not included in the English Baccalaureate. This has come to pass.

It is important to note that **English Baccalaureate (EBacc) is 'a performance measure for schools, not a qualification for pupils'**<sup>50</sup>. It is defined as obtaining GCSE passes in English Language, English Literature, mathematics, at least two sciences, geography or history and a modern or ancient language. The target for 90% of pupils attending state-funded schools to be taking the EBacc by 2020 was changed to 75% studying the EBacc by 2022 and 90% by 2025<sup>51</sup>. Evidence shows that from 2010 onwards schools were influenced by the EBacc announcement and shifted their curriculum to meet this accountability measure.

*'Secondary music has all but disappeared in this area thanks to the EBacc and Ofsted and academic league tables that don't value music or the arts. I have tried to make links with my main secondary without success to ensure the wealth of opportunities at primary school continue to be available to them at secondary. Sadly, they have gone through three music teachers in the year I have been at my primary. In one instance an SLT member of staff was acting as the Head of music.'*

*The job was advertised as a part time position and the person didn't have to be qualified. Who would take on music in a school of 1000 in a part time role. I can barely manage 420 in my 3 days. It is a scandal and it is very demoralising for people like me to think that our efforts are not going to be replicated at secondary. Children deserve better. Many secondary music teachers are also unaware of what primary schools do musically, so children start all over*

*again when they shouldn't. It is a sorry mess and needs a comprehensive overhaul.'*

**Specialist primary music educator employed by a school** (*Consultation on the Future of Music Education, ISM, December 2018*<sup>37</sup>)

**To date the target of 75% (90% by 2025) set by Government for EBacc take up has failed to be met by a very long way. Currently the number of students studying the EBacc has plateaued at around 38% in state-funded schools. Indeed the number of students achieving the EBacc is just 16.7%**<sup>52</sup>.

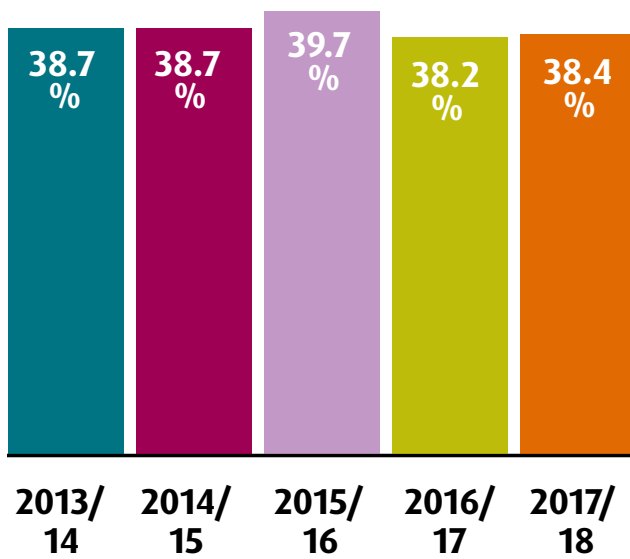
- **No growth in students entering the EBacc:** the number of students studying the EBacc has plateaued at around 38% in state-funded schools, and declined from its peak of 39.7% in 2016<sup>53</sup>. (See *Figure 1*). We also know that currently some headteachers have taken the view that the EBacc does not serve the best interests of their children. And in these schools take up can be as low as 5%.
- **Falling numbers of students achieving the EBacc:** the number of students in state-funded schools passing this suite of subjects with a Grade 5 in English and Maths fell in 2017/18 to 16.7% (down from 21.1% in the previous year). (See *Figure 2*).
- **Reformed qualifications are not responsible for the drop in passes:** whilst the newly reformed GCSE 9-1 Maths and English were designed to have 'more demanding subject content'<sup>54</sup> than the previous qualifications, the results are comparable; with 58.7% passing with a grade C or above in 2016 and 58.5% passing with a grade 4 or above in 2017<sup>55</sup>, so this alone does not account for the significant drop in the number achieving the EBacc in 2016.
- **Changing the goalposts:** in 2018 the measure changed to an 'average points score'<sup>56</sup>, therefore a year-on-year comparison is not possible. This new measurement undermines the intention of the EBacc as the 'threshold' of a grade 5 pass in all of these subjects has been removed.

- Penalising schools for not entering all students into the entire suite of EBacc subjects:** bringing in the new average points score means that the results of *all* eligible pupils in the cohort will be counted in the average points<sup>56</sup>, and if the student does not enter a 'pillar' (for example humanities), they will be awarded zero points in that pillar. This pushes schools to encourage teachers to enter students for GCSE qualifications in additional EBacc subjects as only the 'best' of a pillar are counted and a 'zero' score will reduce the average score.

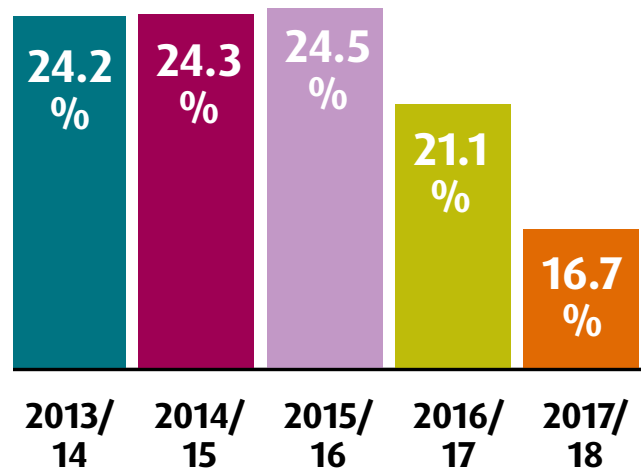
*The English Baccalaureate has reinforced a hierarchy of subjects in secondary schools, with English and maths at the top and the arts at the bottom... As long as the EBacc survives... the arts will not feature on the curriculum of the vast majority of 14- and 15-year-olds, and that is wrong for the pupils and wrong for society.*

**John Dunford**, Chair of Whole Education<sup>57</sup>

**Figure 1.** Percentage of Year 11 state school pupils entered for the EBacc



**Figure 2.** EBacc achievement 2013–2018 in state-funded schools



\*based on Grade C passes up to 2016 and Grade 5 in the reformed examinations

**Meanwhile, the devastating effect on music education within and beyond the secondary school curriculum continues. We need to ask the question whether an accountability framework which:**

- **is based on the 1904 Secondary Regulations**
- **cannot meet the needs of the 21st century in terms of cultural, commercial and educational objectives**
- **is generating a take up of 38% against a target of 75% while destroying music education in our schools**

... is worth it?

Nearly 60% of secondary music teachers in a large survey in summer 2018 stated that the EBacc is having a negative impact on music education in their schools (with only 5% stating that it has had a positive impact)<sup>44</sup>. More recently, Ofsted, the DfE and DCMS have made some criticisms.

*Yes it is concerning [that it is a stark reality that numbers are falling]... I think there has been a problem of enough time and resource in schools being committed to the performing arts.*

**Margot James**, Senior Minister, Department of Culture, Media and Sport (2018)<sup>58</sup>

*I appreciate that there is a lot of concern, and real concern and legitimate concern about the narrowing of the curriculum, especially for arts, but not only for arts, but especially for arts. What I'd say about it and I'm sure there will be lots of questions and concerns noted, is the Department [of Education] is really keen, really wants all pupils to experience a high-quality arts education, we can disagree about the impact of what we're doing, but that's absolutely our intention.*

**Josh Beattie**, Assistant Director, Curriculum Division, DfE (2018)<sup>48</sup>

*The take up [of music] is low and getting lower... school leaders, for all sorts of reasons, and it is not for me to make those judgements, but for a variety of reasons, some of which may well be measurement from DfE, means that somehow it is falling by the wayside.*

**Susan Aykin**, HMI, National Lead for Visual and Performing Arts, Ofsted (2018)<sup>59</sup>

## What happens at GCSE?

Significant research studies from the BBC<sup>51</sup>, the Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL)<sup>60</sup>, the University of Sussex<sup>41</sup> and Kings College/ National Union of Teachers<sup>42</sup> all clearly demonstrate the devastating impact of the EBacc and Progress 8 (in which the EBacc subjects fill the first seven of eight slots) on music education within and beyond the curriculum.

The University of Sussex has undertaken a longitudinal study of changes since 2012, reporting on changes within over 700 schools<sup>44</sup>. This includes mapping changes to curriculum time, curriculum models, staffing levels, uptake at Key Stages 4 and 5, and the impact across the wider life on the school. This research shows the extent of the crisis in music education across our state-funded secondary schools. It demonstrates:

- ineffective and perverse accountability measures,
- a funding squeeze, and
- the declining status of music education.

All combined push music education out of schools.

The focus on the narrow range of EBacc subjects has already reduced, and in some cases removed, the possibilities for students to study music as part of their secondary school curriculum. Without reform of the accountability measures and inspection protocols, the place of sustained music education in the school curriculum and as an option at Key Stages 4 and 5 will continue to decline.



**Fewer students take music GCSE:** figures from the Department for Education<sup>66</sup> show a significant fall in the number and proportion of pupils taking GCSE music. In 2014/15, prior to the re-introduction of the EBacc in 2015 there were 43,600 entries for GCSE music. In 2017/18 there were 34,708 entries. **This is a reduction in GCSE music entries of more than 20% since 2014/2015. When adjusted for cohort size, again using the DfE figures, the fall in GCSE entries since 2014/2015 is 16.66%.**

**The Government is therefore wrong to claim that music uptake at GCSE has remained broadly stable: in fact, using their own figures, the proportion of GCSE pupils taking music has fallen by almost a fifth since 2014/15.**

*Table 2 – Change in cohort size and change in music entries. Compiled from Department for Education data<sup>66</sup>.*

| All schools (England)                   | Cohort size | Yearly % change in cohort size | Total GCSE music entries (DfE data) | Yearly % change in entries | Music entries as a % of cohort | Yearly change in % of cohort |
|---|-------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 2014/15                                 | 611,024     | -1.20                          | 43,600                              | 4.06                       | 7.14                           | 0.36                         |
| 2015/16                                 | 600,425     | -1.73                          | 41,600                              | -4.59                      | 6.93                           | -0.21                        |
| 2016/17                                 | 587,640     | -2.13                          | 39,434                              | -5.21                      | 6.71                           | 0.22                         |
| 2017/18                                 | 583,617     | -0.68                          | 34,708                              | -11.98                     | 5.95                           | -0.76                        |
| <b>Fall in GCSE music since 2014/15</b> | -27,407     | -4.49                          | -8,892                              | -20.40                     | -16.66                         | N/A                          |

\*GCSE and equivalents

## Uptake at Key Stage 5

### **Music is the fastest disappearing A Level subject:**

research from ASCL<sup>60</sup> shows that the number of schools and colleges offering A Level music between September 2016 and September 2018 dropped by 38%. Their survey of 420 providers demonstrates that music is the A Level subject experiencing the most significant decline in this respect.

- **A large drop in A Level music entries:** A Level entries have dropped by over 38% since 2010. In 2018 there were just 5,440 entries in total.
- In 2017 A Levels were 'de-coupled' from AS levels, making them a stand-alone 2-year qualification. Edexcel (Pearson) have recently announced that they will be dropping AS level music from the suite of subjects they offer<sup>61</sup>.
- **Music Technology A Level entries are also falling:** research from the University of Sussex shows that the number of centres offering A Level music technology for students beginning courses in September 2018 fell by 31.7%, with a 10.6% drop in the number of students recruited.

## The negative impact of the Russell Group list of 'Facilitating Subjects'

The Department for Education state that the 'EBacc' is made up of the subjects which the Russell Group says, at A Level, open more doors to more degrees.<sup>62</sup> Yet this list, which was originally introduced in 2007, has been called into question by the Education Select Committee for its lack of evidence-base<sup>63</sup>.

Giving evidence to the House of Lords Communications Committee at a meeting on the balance between STEM subjects and the Arts in schools, Dr Hilary Leever, Head of Education at the Wellcome Trust, surmised that the list of subjects was out of date, particularly in light of the new qualification reforms. She went on to question their validity: *'If the facilitating subjects no longer function in the way we thought they did, then why do we need this EBacc categorisation?'*<sup>64</sup>

## Wider implications of current accountability measures

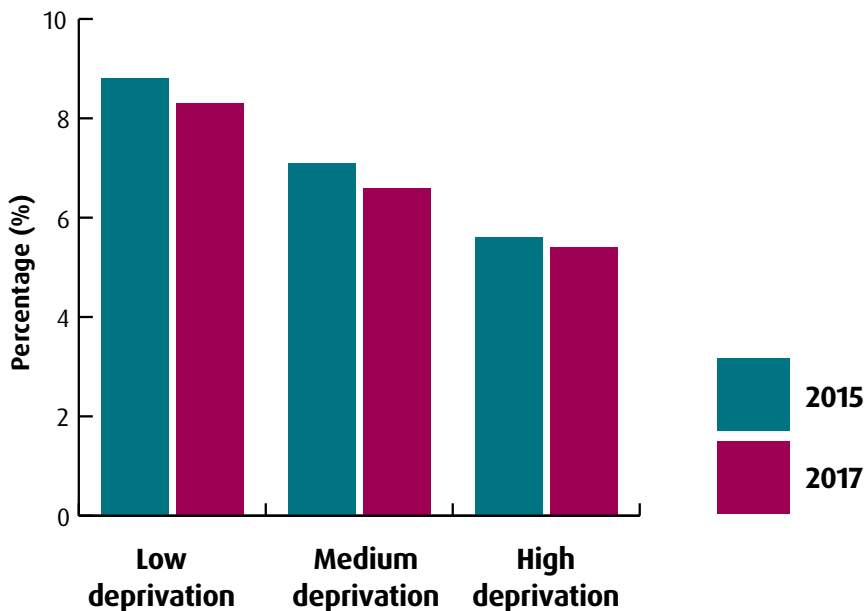
The wider impact of these accountability measures is felt across all key stages as schools seek to fulfil accountability requirements and focus primarily on what success is to be measured on. They not only create a negative impact on children and young people's entitlement to a broad and high-quality music education but also put in place significant barriers to children and young people's access to higher-level study or performing opportunities. The outcome undermines one of the key tenets of the NPME – that music education should provide all children and young people with 'the opportunity to progress to the next level of excellence.'<sup>31</sup>

One of the Government's stated reasons behind the creation of the EBacc was to ensure children and young people from disadvantaged backgrounds had access to 'core subjects' included within the EBacc framework. The Cambridge Assessment report 'Uptake of GCSE subjects 2015'<sup>65</sup> showed that young people from a highly deprived background (as defined by DACI index) took 7.9 GCSEs on average, (dropping to 7.8 in 2018<sup>66</sup>), whereas those from backgrounds of medium and low deprivation took 8.5 and 8.1 GCSEs respectively<sup>67</sup>. Pupils with lower prior attainment took only an average of 5.8 GCSE's in 2018, a fall from 6.7 in 2017. Teach First reported in August 2018 that a higher percentage of secondary students eligible for free school meals (FSM) were temporarily or permanently excluded from school last year than achieved the EBacc<sup>68</sup>. Analysis by the BBC of the Department for Education's Key Stage 4 data (showing performance at GCSE level for 2017/18)<sup>66</sup> revealed that it will take over 70 years for poorer pupils to catch up with their peers at GCSE (BBC website, January 2019).

**In the context of the EBacc it is likely that young people from groups experiencing high levels of social deprivation, and those with lower prior attainment are discouraged from taking arts subjects in order to focus on subjects that form part of the EBacc<sup>69</sup>.**

Data from Cambridge Assessment also supports the view that pupils from a highly deprived background are less likely to take GCSE music<sup>70</sup>. Whereas 8.3% of pupils from low deprivation groups elected to take GCSE music in 2017, only 5.4% of young people from groups that experience high social deprivation took the qualification. As well as having their opportunities for music in the curriculum narrowed, pupils who are perceived as lower attaining may be required to attend 'booster classes' for core subjects, meaning they are also unable to take up opportunities to participate in extra-curricular musical activities<sup>44</sup>.

**Figure 3.** Percentage of pupils taking GCSE music (based on deprivation levels)



In 2017, only 3.5% (15 students from a cohort of 430) of entrants to UK music conservatoires were from a highly deprived background (a drop of 1.7% from the previous year) compared to 39.5% from the least deprived background.<sup>71</sup>

The barriers to progression and progression routes resulting from accountability measures exacerbate existing inequalities between those attending state schools and those attending independent schools. For example, a report by UK Music (a campaigning group representing the music industry) notes that:

*...17 per cent of music creators were educated at fee-paying schools – compared with seven per cent across the population as a whole. This matters because 50 per cent of children at independent schools receive sustained music tuition, while the figure for state schools is only 15 per cent<sup>72</sup>*

Similarly, Oliver Morris, in a submission to the Performer’s Alliance All-Party Parliamentary Group notes that:

*We can see the knock-on effect of losing music GCSE and music teachers in schools – also echoed by the decline of music BTEC Music Level 2 at Key Stage 4 that has dropped by 70%. All but 1 of the 5 UK acts that featured in the top 10 worldwide tours last year, released their debut single in the last century<sup>73</sup>*

These factors negatively impact both on the chances for young people to pursue a career in music or the music industry and to have a high-quality life-long engagement with music; advantages which their peers in independent schools have in abundance.

# Impact on the broader music education landscape

As the number of music teachers declines and curriculum breadth narrows, so does the school's extra-curricular programme. Research from Musical Futures International<sup>74</sup> highlights the relationship between music in and out of the classroom, showing that music grows in schools where the curriculum offer is strong.

The diminishing opportunities for extra-curricular involvement in music are noted in the University of Sussex data and are related to a number of different factors.

*Booster classes (2014 onwards), revision classes (2014 onwards), period 6 lessons running after school so no upper school can attend extra-curricular (2012 onwards), AS and A2 music tech run in the same lesson (2013 onwards). A Level music discontinued from 2015 onward. Not enough timetable hours for head of music so [the] Head of music resigned due to this.*

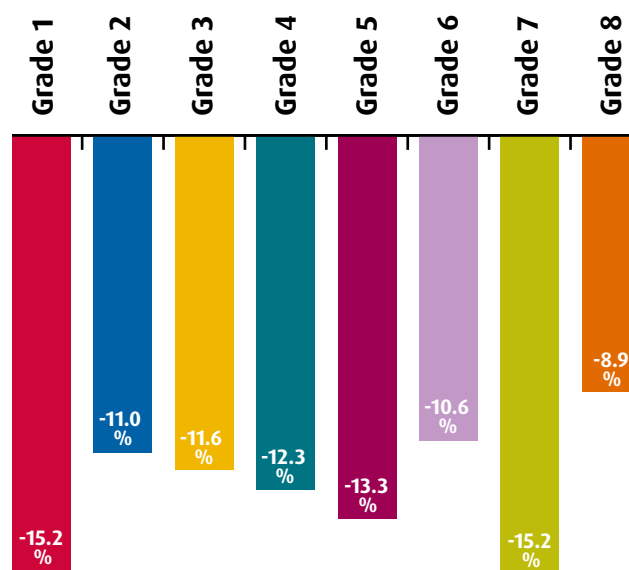
**Teacher employed by a MAT** (from University of Sussex study)<sup>69</sup>

The reduction of students studying curriculum music has been mirrored by a fall in alternative qualifications in music.

- **ABRSM graded music exam entries have significantly fallen:** according to figures supplied by Ofqual<sup>75</sup>, entries to ABRSM graded music examinations (grades 1 to 8) in England in 2017 were almost 42,000 lower than in 2012. This is a fall of 18.6%.
- **Qualifications from the other boards do not make up for the difference<sup>75</sup>:** when also including grade 1 to 8 music exam certificates awarded by Trinity London, Trinity London Rock and Pop, Rock School and London College of Music (University of West London) the difference falls to just over 39,000 fewer entries in 2017 compared to 2012. The growth of other providers and new qualifications have had very little impact on halting or reversing the decline in the number of students taking ABRSM graded music exams.

- **Rock and Pop exams are not growing in popularity<sup>75</sup>:** having grown steadily from 2012, the Trinity London Rock and Pop Graded Music Examination entries peaked at nearly 6,000 across grades 1 to 8 in 2016, before declining slightly in 2017. Rock School graded music qualifications were already established in 2012, when the Ofqual data starts from, and entries every year since 2012 have been lower than at this time. In 2017 the total number of entries were around 9% lower than in 2012.

**Figure 4.** Percentage drop in graded music exam certificates awarded 2012 to 2017 (ABRSM, TCL, RSL, UWL)



\*data compiled from figures supplied by Ofqual<sup>75</sup>

Considered alongside the significant fall in the number of pupils passing music qualifications in school at Key Stages 4 and 5, these graded music examination figures clearly demonstrate that, as music is being removed from the school curriculum and KS4 and 5 study, it is also simultaneously falling away in wider musical culture.

## Graded music examinations

A pass at the ABRSM Grade 5 theory examination is a prerequisite for entry to their Grade 6 and above practical qualifications. In 2012 there were 15,425 certificates awarded to students in England. According to the figures supplied by Ofqual, no year since has exceeded this number of entries. In 2017 there were 13,300 certificates awarded. This represents a drop of just under 14%.

## Recommendations

### Recommendation 1

Schools should receive clear guidance that headline accountability measures must not erode the delivery of a broad and balanced curriculum at Key Stage 3, and that a broad and balanced curriculum must be delivered across all schools at all Key Stages. Music and the arts are at the heart of a broad and balanced curriculum.

### Recommendation 2

Music should be taught by a subject specialist teacher as part of the curriculum in all state schools for all pupils for at least one hour every week across all of a three-year Key Stage 3. All secondary schools have at least one full time music teacher who exclusively teaches music.

### Recommendation 3

The English Baccalaureate and Progress 8 accountability measures should be reviewed and reformed to provide a better education for our children. At the very least a sixth pillar should be added to the EBacc for the creative subjects including music.

### Recommendation 4

The Government should scrap the 2018 introduction of the 'average points score' measure for the EBacc.

### Recommendation 5

The Government should broaden the National Curriculum by making individual creative subjects including music entitlement areas at Key Stage 4, replacing the broader entitlement area of "the arts".

### Recommendation 6

The Government should encourage all schools to embed a culture of singing via classroom teaching.

### Recommendation 7

Ofsted and the Government should make it clear that delivering only the narrow curriculum prescribed by the EBacc will have an adverse impact on inspections and grading awarded.

# Music Education Hubs and the National Plan for Music Education

The NPME<sup>76</sup> is a well-conceived, non-statutory document laying out the expectations that all young people should access music education in the curriculum as part of their statutory entitlement in schools, supported by a rich and diverse musical education within and beyond school. This is partly funded by the £75 million (plus a further £1.33 million recently announced by the DfE up to 2020<sup>108</sup>) annual grant awarded to Hubs from DfE funding via Arts Council England (ACE), accounting for an average of 36.8% of Hub's funding<sup>77</sup>.

The Incorporated Society of Musicians (ISM) recently consulted with over 700 teachers and music education professionals in relation to their experiences of music education and the NPME. In line with findings from other surveys, the results demonstrate that although there are pockets of excellence, the 'postcode lottery' across music education<sup>37</sup>, highlighted by Darren Henley in his 2011 review<sup>31</sup>, is a serious and increasing concern.

## These are just some of the comments from the 746 responses:

*'Secondary teachers are striving to do more with less funding. And the number of staff in school music departments is shrinking. This is having a detrimental effect on the quality and reach of provision and the mental health of music teachers.'*

**Initial Teacher Education lecturer**  
(Consultation on the Future of Music Education, ISM, December 2018<sup>37</sup>)

*'Reduced or no funding would mean the hub would be unable to provide all pupils the opportunity to learn through a first access programme. This would mean much greater levels of disparity within the sector. It would also mean that we wouldn't be able to subsidise the cost of lessons making it unaffordable to many families.'*

**Music hub leader** (Consultation on the Future of Music Education, ISM, December 2018<sup>37</sup>)

*'Only more consistent funding will end the postcode lottery that is music education.'*

**Peripatetic music teacher employed by a hub**  
(Consultation on the Future of Music Education, ISM, December 2018<sup>37</sup>)

*'Singing is a very accessible way for pupils to make music with little cost for the parents. Singing develops a number of musical skills and concepts which makes learning an instrument easier.'*

**Music hub leader** (Consultation on the Future of Music Education, ISM, December 2018<sup>37</sup>)

Whilst the recent ISM report noted that, 'there is absolutely no question that music teachers in and out of schools are going above and beyond the call of duty to deliver music education in spite of the significant challenges they currently face'<sup>78</sup>, it also outlined significant issues facing music education hubs. When considered alongside the annual data returns from Hubs<sup>79</sup>, there are a number of points that need to be highlighted.

- **The current data collection framework has significant flaws:** respondents to the ISM survey felt the focus on the activity metrics by the Department for Education/Arts Council England in the data returns completed by Hubs, rather than quality of experience and a longitudinal and diverse view of progression and continuation, does not provide an accurate picture of the lived reality of many of the respondents working in schools and Hubs.
- **There are concerns around progression:** the NPME states within its core roles that the Hubs must ensure that clear progression routes are available and affordable to all young people.
- **Issues with equality, access and inclusion:** concerns were raised by respondents to the ISM survey about the affordability of instrumental lessons with many respondents stated that the cost of lessons was prohibitive, and this impacts who learns. Considerable concern was also raised

by respondents about initial and ongoing access to appropriate instrumental/musical learning for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), stating that SEND needs a higher priority in the next iteration of the NPME.

- **Teachers are not always valued or properly rewarded for their work:** Hubs are increasingly moving teachers onto insecure, flat-rate, hourly paid roles. This affects their access to professional development and has had the unintended consequence of fragmenting instrumental teaching as teachers form their own cooperatives often in direct competition to Hubs. Case law is still developing in this area, but the direction of travel is towards the protection of the rights of the casual worker<sup>37</sup>.
- **Mental health is increasingly becoming an issue:** Employment insecurity negatively impacts teachers' mental health<sup>37 80</sup>.

*'There is no inspection of services, so no priority given to maintaining standards, setting targets, monitoring progress. Good musicians do not have enough financial stability or contractual security to continue making this a viable career.'*

**Music teacher and professional performing musician** (*Consultation on the Future of Music Education*, ISM, December 2018<sup>37</sup>)

The inequality of provision in Hubs has been noted by DCMS.

*There is a job to be done, which is being done, to improving the consistency of the music hubs around the country.*

**Margot James**, MP and Minister of State for the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport<sup>58</sup>

The NPME plays a critical role in supporting the complex music education ecosystem. Hubs are relatively new and still bedding down, but the picture of music education currently is that provision

both in and out of school remains somewhat of a postcode lottery, favouring those living in circumstances where families will financially support musical learning and who are fortunate enough to receive a sustained music education in school. For most, this is out of reach and limits their options and engagement from a very young age.

## Recommendations

### Recommendation 8

The new National Plan for Music Education must provide clarity as to the roles and responsibilities of schools and Hubs relating to the delivery of a music education for all pupils.

### Recommendation 9

The revised National Plan for Music Education should address the quality, provision and access to music education for Early Years and SEND, and improve signposting of music education opportunities for 18 to 25-year-olds.

### Recommendation 10

The metrics for measuring the work delivered in response to the NPME need to be revised to go beyond 'levels of activity' reported through the current narrow set of metrics. The quality of the work being delivered needs to be part of this evaluation work.

### Recommendation 11

Ring-fenced funding for Hubs must be continued beyond 2020 at current levels or increased levels.

# The role of Ofsted

All schools, colleges and teacher training providers in England are periodically inspected by Ofsted. A key focus of the current Ofsted framework for schools<sup>81</sup> is the analysis of the attainment and progress data. Until 2012, Ofsted also carried out a series of subject survey visits, and music reports were published every three years<sup>82</sup>. Ofsted has not had a music subject lead since 2015, which has further diminished the status of the subject. Since 2018, a National Lead for Visual and Performing Arts has been appointed.

*'Ofsted need to ensure that music is being delivered in schools. It's a struggle for many music teachers these days to keep music on the curriculum in spite of all the research available to argue for inclusion and the benefits to everyone. Unless schools are deemed to be failing by Ofsted by not meeting National plans and curriculum targets, I fear that music in schools will disappear and become the preserve of those who can pay or have musical interests.'*

*(Consultation on the Future of Music Education, ISM, December 2018<sup>37</sup>)*

There is currently a disparity between Ofsted inspections in state-funded schools and those carried out on their behalf in independent schools by the Independent School Inspectorate<sup>83</sup>, where music is considered as part of the inspection process in every school.

More recently, multiple positive messages have been communicated by Ofsted, demonstrating their recognition of benefits, challenges and issues:

- **Music in the curriculum is important<sup>59</sup>:** Ofsted have noted the vital contribution of the arts as subjects in their own right and also for their contribution to a wide range of skills required and desirable in education and life.
- **Ofsted's focus on the accountability measures has promoted a hierarchy of subjects:** Ofsted has recently highlighted that its lack of attention to the presence of arts in the curriculum, instead

focussing heavily on accountability measures imposed by the Government, has led to a position where some schools have marginalised or removed the arts.

*'Those of us who work in education should be clear that these practices do not represent a substantial education...We all have to ask ourselves how we have created a situation where second-guessing the test can trump the pursuit of real, deep knowledge and understanding of subjects. For our part, it is clear that as an inspectorate we have not placed enough emphasis on the curriculum. For a long time, our inspections have looked hardest at outcomes, placing too much weight on test and exam results when we consider the overall effectiveness of schools. This has increased the pressure on school leaders, teachers and pupils alike to deliver test scores above all else. Through our recent inspections and research, we have found that focusing on test and exam results can often leave little time or energy to think hard about the curriculum and how pupils should progress through it.'*

**Amanda Spielman**, Chief Inspector of Ofsted, September 2018<sup>84</sup>

- **Carousels do not lead to sustained and well thought out educational offers:** Ofsted recognise that blocking subjects in this way, where students take a subject (e.g. for a term) and then drop it until the next academic year 'make it difficult for students to make progress' through a 'lack of coherence' and leading to 'underdeveloped content where important concepts were under-developed'<sup>47</sup>.
- **Ofsted has highlighted the problems related to a three-year GCSE programme:** this promotes 'teaching to the test' and undermines social mobility, as well as taking away the opportunities to study a full range of subjects to age 14.



*'The GCSE tests are designed to cover 2 years' worth of content. It is hard to see how taking longer than 2 years could expose pupils to more knowledge and not more test preparation...In a few of the schools visited, lower-attaining pupils did not have any opportunity to study a language or some arts subjects, as the school directed them on to a pathway that excluded the subject as an option, in some cases from the age of 12.'*

**Amanda Spielman**, Ofsted Chief Inspector (2018)<sup>85</sup>

- **A change of focus is coming in the new inspection framework<sup>86</sup>:** the promised change of focus on the breadth and richness of a school's curriculum offer is welcomed. It is good to see that schools will not be able to be awarded 'good' or 'outstanding' if they narrow the curriculum. Currently there are examples of schools who are rated 'outstanding' across the board by Ofsted despite not offering subjects such as music<sup>87</sup>.

*'It is welcome that the Chief Inspector plans to end Ofsted's obsession with data and instead focus inspectors on what is taught and why. But as so much of what is proposed is open to interpretation, schools may be left second guessing what they are supposed to do to be seen as successful.'*

**Nick Brook**, Deputy General Secretary, National Association of Headteachers (NAHT), January 2019

- **A broad and rich curriculum should be for all pupils:** it is extremely concerning that Ofsted's proposed new framework<sup>86</sup> for state-funded schools does not expect schools to deliver a broad curriculum in Key Stage 1, instead encouraging schools to follow a narrow and constricted curriculum that focuses on reading, writing and mathematics at the exclusion of

the arts. This is at odds with the legislation laid out in the Education Act 2002 for maintained schools and section 1A of the Academies Act 2010 for academies.

- **Irreconcilable tensions between a rich and broad curriculum, and implementation of the EBacc:** It is extremely worrying to see Government education policy failings being translated into the proposed new Ofsted framework. As has already been highlighted in this report, only 38% of students are entering the EBacc against a target of 75% rising to a target of 90% by 2025. Ofsted propose that schools must 'demonstrate what they are doing' to prepare for 90% of their students to be entered for the EBacc, and that 'inspectors should take those preparations into consideration when evaluating the intent of the school's curriculum'. This is at odds with encouraging schools to focus on the breadth of their educational offer. And we have already seen in this report the damage the EBacc is doing to music in our secondary schools. With Ofsted making the EBacc central to their inspections, this is only going to make the damage worse, with schools, which up until this time have chosen a different path because they believe this is right for their children, being forced to comply with this "one size fits all" approach to education.

*'Unfortunately, the inspectorate's plan to judge a school's curriculum partly on how well it is preparing to achieve the government's 'ambition' of 90% of pupils taking GCSEs in the EBacc suite of subjects is misconceived. ... It is nonsensical to judge schools on factors which are clearly outside their control and we will be pressing Ofsted to amend this section.'*

**Geoff Barton**, General Secretary, Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL), January 2019

- **Tensions between the EBacc and having ‘high academic/vocational/technical ambition for all pupils’:** The pursuit of 90% of students studying the EBacc is at odds with the curriculum providing flexibility to offer appropriate routes, challenge and ambition for each individual student.
- **‘Gaming’ the system:** Ofsted recognise that schools are trying to do what they think Ofsted want to see. They have made it clear that they are not looking for one ‘model’ curriculum.

## Recommendations

### Recommendation 12

Ofsted must look for evidence of sustained and high-quality musical learning across the curriculum at all key stages, instead of focusing heavily on accountability measures imposed by the Government that have shown to be failing. They must be responsible for ensuring that a full and balanced curriculum is being delivered regularly in all schools.

### Recommendation 13

Ofsted should reconsider their proposal contained in Education inspection framework 2019: inspecting the substance of education in connection with their approach to the EBacc. We urge them to drop their proposal that inspectors understand what schools are doing to prepare for the EBacc to be achieved, and they should take those preparations into consideration when evaluating the intent of the school’s curriculum.

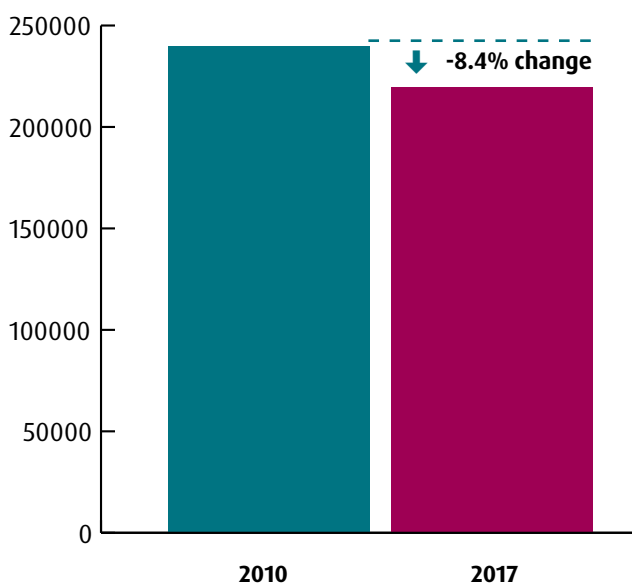
# The workforce

Successive Governments have recognised the importance of a highly skilled workforce, citing *'strong evidence that links teacher quality above all other factors to pupils' attainment'*<sup>88</sup>. Recruiting and continually developing a well-qualified workforce is vital to maintaining and growing a strong music education provision in schools. Independent schools value music within and beyond the curriculum, investing in the workforce required to do this.

**Figure 5.** Changes in in-service teacher numbers 2010–2017

|  | 2010   | 2017   | % change |
|--|--------|--------|----------|
| Music  | 7500   | 6500   | -13.3    |
| Maths  | 33000  | 34600  | 4.8      |
| English  | 36600  | 37500  | 2.5      |
| Geography                                      | 13500  | 15600  | 15.6     |
| History  | 15000  | 16700  | 11.3     |
| <b>Total number of teachers (all subjects)</b> | 239800 | 219700 | -8.4     |

Compiled from DfE workforce data<sup>89</sup>



According to the DfE workforce data<sup>89</sup>, secondary school music teacher numbers dropped by 1,000 between 2010 and 2017. For comparison, across the same period there was an increase of 1,600 maths teachers and 900 English teachers. The number of history teachers rose by 11.3% and geography teachers rose by 15.6%. The overall percentage of music teachers within the workforce declined at a greater rate than across the total workforce, whilst the overall percentage of those teaching EBacc subjects rose. This compounds the hierarchy of subjects favouring EBacc subjects against non-EBacc subjects.

## Reductions in secondary music teacher numbers 2010 to 2017:

- Down 12.7% at Key Stage 3
- Down 11.3% at Key Stage 4
- Down 22.6% at Key Stage 5

Compiled from DfE workforce data<sup>89</sup>

The following are significant factors in the challenges to developing an effective music workforce in schools:

- Lack of professional development<sup>90 91</sup>:** secondary teachers, many of whom already suffer from professional isolation from working in single-person departments, lack access to appropriate and subject-specific professional development. Most primary teachers do not access music CPD<sup>36</sup>.
- Cuts in teacher numbers:** there has been a dramatic reduction in the number of music teachers being sought and recruited to routes leading to Qualified Teacher Status (QTS)<sup>92</sup>.

*The driving motive behind the reforms the Government has embarked upon since 2010..... [is] ...the desire for every child in this country to receive a world-class education that equips them with the knowledge they need, taught to them by expert teachers...*

**Nick Gibb, 2017<sup>93</sup>**

Data from University of Sussex shows that **70% of responding secondary music teachers reported teaching outside of their subject area at some point since 2016**<sup>44</sup>, including filling gaps to ensure that ‘core subjects’ could be delivered. This threatens the Government’s vision of ‘expert teachers’ in all subjects; music teachers are effectively propping up core subject teaching to fill gaps caused through teachers leaving the profession and continual under-recruitment.

## The workforce in secondary schools

Attracting high-quality music teachers is challenging as the status of the subject is undermined and the funding for music teacher trainees has been eroded. In state schools, music teachers are not always replaced as they retire or leave, diminishing or removing the music expertise in schools and colleges.

**The impact of these accountability policies, such as the EBacc, on the workforce can be clearly seen in the number of secondary music teachers sought and recruited**<sup>3</sup>.

- **Reducing targets:** in 2010-11 the target was 690; this fell to 390 in 2011-12.
- **Falling recruitment:** the number of trainees starting secondary music ITE /ITT courses fell from 808 in 2008/2009 to 295 in 2018/19<sup>92</sup>.
- **Significant under-recruitment:** music has under-recruited every year since 2012/13; the under-recruitment against an already reducing target has left the workforce 495 trainee secondary teachers short across this period, on already significantly reduced targets. This impacts schools’ ability to recruit music teachers as existing staff leave, retire or take sick leave<sup>44</sup>.
- **Cuts to financial incentives:** the recent decision to offer £9k per year bursary to music graduates with a 2:2 degree instead of a 2:1 degree or above from 2019<sup>94</sup>, is a welcome start, but unlikely to attract the numbers required in order to reverse the significant under-recruitment seen in previous

years. Trainees in other subjects receive up to £32k in bursaries, scholarships and golden hello payments. £9k does not cover course fees for a full-time PGCE / school direct place.

- **A lack of subject-specific pedagogy:** new routes into teacher training do not always promote subject-specific pedagogy and leave new teachers without the skills to critically engage with subject pedagogy.

Yet, those recruited to secondary music teacher training are very highly qualified. **88% of trainee music teachers in 2017 held at least an upper second-class degree**, second only to drama and leaving new teachers in all core subjects trailing behind in terms of prior academic attainment<sup>95</sup>.

Between 2011 and the current recruitment cycle, **ten universities have closed their PGCE secondary music programmes. This includes Russell Group universities** such as Durham and Southampton. At a time when the importance of having research-active teachers is being recognised and promoted through the efforts of bodies as the Chartered College of Teaching and the Prince’s Teaching Institute, this is undermined by the closure of university-based courses, meaning that the vital subject-specific pedagogic expertise and research provided by those leading these courses is also being lost.

## The workforce in primary schools

Children spend seven years in primary school, yet their engagement with sustained music education is known to be patchy, in spite of its place in the statutory curriculum.

There has long been a skills and confidence gap identified in relation to primary music teaching<sup>35 96</sup>. *‘Only 8% of primary teachers in the online survey reported feeling confident about teaching music, 16% were engaged in a professional network for music and 15% had regular opportunities for professional development’*<sup>36</sup>. This mirrored the concern that Darren Henley raised in his 2011 review<sup>31</sup>. There are multiple issues:

- **No models:** many teachers see no music taught during their training year as it is not regularly taught in all primary schools<sup>97</sup>.
- **Lack of input:** trainee teachers linked to a higher education provider usually have music as part of their course, but this time is extremely limited<sup>36</sup>. For those on a general postgraduate primary course, this will be between two and eight hours in total<sup>98</sup>. This is insufficient to prepare them to plan, teach and assess music.
- **One-off funding:** as recommended in the NPME, the DfE funded 21 modules during the 2012-13 academic year in order to 'boost new teachers' confidence and skill in teaching music'<sup>99</sup>, developing teachers and helping to create new subject leaders. Despite positive evaluations, the funding and therefore the input was not sustained beyond the initial year.
- **Closure of courses:** there are now only three undergraduate courses offering a primary music specialism, with one of these due to close its subject specialist route for new entrants in 2019. All of these are in the South and South West of England<sup>100</sup>, causing a large skills deficit and geographic inequality.
- **Lack of specialism:** at postgraduate level there are no primary courses listed as specifically offering music in the 2019 recruitment cycle; the only specialisms advertised are for primary with all EBacc subjects or with PE<sup>101</sup>. This serves to perpetuate the status of music as 'unimportant'. EBacc subjects are the central focus even in primary schools thereby diminishing the potential for music subject knowledge to be developed and threatening the vision of a highly qualified and expert workforce to teach music across the primary curriculum.
- **No subject knowledge courses:** there are no music funded subject knowledge enhancement courses available, despite Sir Andrew Carter's recommendation as part of the ITT review.
- **Negative self-perceptions:** there is a known skills and confidence deficit in the way primary school teachers perceive themselves in relation to teaching music<sup>102</sup>.

*DfE should make funded in-service subject knowledge enhancement courses available for primary teachers to access as professional development – particularly in subjects such as... music<sup>103</sup>.*

**Sir Andrew Carter**, Review of ITT (2015)

## The workforce in music education hubs

There are 123 Hubs and there are many different workforce models across the Hubs. Many Hubs are looking after their workforce well both in terms of pay and conditions and professional development. However, this is not always the case.

An unintended consequence of Hubs cutting costs and dealing with the consequences of cuts to their income has been the changing status of the teacher workforce, namely peripatetic teachers. A growing number of teachers are delivering the work of the Hubs on hourly-paid self-employed contracts or working in schools under the same arrangement, sometimes paid directly by parents who can afford it. This 'Uber' model of music education works at odds with a drive for professionalism and high-quality music education, undermining the push for sustainable and high-quality provision as determined by the NPME.

The workforce often has no job security or access to holiday, a pension scheme, sick pay or maternity cover; a position which has significantly worsened since 2012. Overall, 48% of teachers reported that their employment terms and conditions were 'worse or much worse' than in 2012 compared to only 7% stating their terms and conditions were better or much better<sup>37</sup>. Many peripatetic teachers believe that

the use of such things as zero hour contracts has led to the de-professionalisation of music teaching and a dropping of standards of music education.

This decline in fair terms and conditions has also led to changing models for the delivery of music education. Ultimately, this means further potential fragmentation of music education as Hubs and private providers compete for the same work – in a framework where quality assurance is not currently a statutory consideration.

*‘We need a level playing field. Instrumental teaching is employment and music services are constantly being undercut by private providers who treat teachers as freelancers in order to avoid paying on costs. I think there needs to be some sort of required standard of employment conditions across the sector.’*

#### **Head of a music education hub**

*(Consultation on the Future of Music Education, ISM, December 2018<sup>37</sup>)*

*‘Many teachers have been made to become self-employed. Those of us left that still have a contract have been taken off QTS pay. Schools respect us much less than they used to with primaries refusing to let us teach in the mornings.’*

**Peripatetic music teacher** *(Consultation on the Future of Music Education, ISM, December 2018<sup>37</sup>)*

## Recommendations

### **Recommendation 14**

Ensure that as per the Government policy directive in 2016, classroom teachers teach within their area of specialism and that this is respected.

### **Recommendation 15**

Ensure that all teachers are supported to access regular and relevant high-quality subject-specific continuing professional development, and improve the working conditions of the workforce.

### **Recommendation 16**

Ensure that there is a sufficient number of properly qualified teachers coming through to support the delivery of music education in our schools and Hubs.

### **Recommendation 17**

Secondary music should be treated as a shortage subject, and greater efforts and financial incentives applied to attract high-quality candidates onto ITE/ITT programmes.

### **Recommendation 18**

The Government must ensure that primary teachers have access to high-quality, relevant and practical subject-specific learning opportunities relating to teaching the music curriculum through their training, NQT period and beyond. In line with other subjects, funded subject-knowledge enhancement courses should be developed and offered through partnerships with ITE providers in higher education.

# Conclusion

Music education in England is in crisis. The Government must act quickly to ensure music does not become the preserve of a privileged few. The recommendations in this report serve as an action plan for Government.

Despite the best intentions and efforts of schools and Hubs, there are systemic challenges across music education which negatively impact the aspirations of both the National Curriculum and the NPME.

*Without the obligation for music lessons to be a part of the school curriculum, there is a very real concern that the subject might well wither away in many schools – and in the worst-case scenario, could all but disappear in others.*

**Darren Henley, 2012<sup>29</sup>:**

The issues and challenges reported throughout this report have been on the radar for some time; indeed, in December 2011 a report by the Expert Panel<sup>104</sup> for the National Curriculum review noted:

*Bearing in mind the influence that the EBacc is having on the provision of academic courses in Key Stage 4 for a larger proportion of pupils, we are concerned, as in primary education, that the role of art and music in a broad, balanced and effective education should not be lost<sup>105</sup>.*

These concerns are now very pressing, with both Ofsted and the Department for Education expressing their disquiet at the unintended consequences of current educational policy, which threatens to undermine their often-quoted aspiration to place equity and quality at the heart of music education within and beyond the curriculum<sup>106</sup>.

*...funding should support all pupils, whatever their background, whatever their family's income, and whatever particular special needs or disabilities they may have. No child should be excluded from music because their parents cannot afford to pay*

*for lessons or an instrument, or because they have physical disabilities or other special needs<sup>107</sup>.*

Music is central to our culture and to developing us as people. It is something we all cherish, which everyone should have an opportunity to study regardless of background. One of the reasons the UK has such a rich and influential musical culture that is its music education system, while never perfect, has historically helped every child access the opportunities they deserve. Those opportunities are now under threat. We call on the Government and Ofsted to take on board the recommendations of this report before it is too late. In particular as a matter of urgency the EBacc must be reviewed and reformed, and creative subjects, including music, must regain their central role in a broad and balanced curriculum for all of our children.

## Recommendations summary

### Recommendation 1

Schools should receive clear guidance that headline accountability measures must not erode the delivery of a broad and balanced curriculum at Key Stage 3, and that a broad and balanced curriculum must be delivered across all schools at all Key Stages. Music and the arts are at the heart of a broad and balanced curriculum.

### Recommendation 2

Music should be taught by a subject specialist teacher as part of the curriculum in all state schools for all pupils for at least one hour every week across all of a three-year Key Stage 3. All secondary schools should have at least one full time music teacher who exclusively teaches music.

### **Recommendation 3**

The English Baccalaureate and Progress 8 accountability measures should be reviewed and reformed to provide a better education for our children. At the very least a sixth pillar should be added to the EBacc for the creative subjects, including music.

### **Recommendation 4**

The Government should scrap the 2018 introduction of the 'average points score' measure for the EBacc.

### **Recommendation 5**

The Government should broaden the National Curriculum by making individual creative subjects including music entitlement areas at Key Stage 4, replacing the broader entitlement area of 'the arts'.

### **Recommendation 6**

The Government should encourage all schools to embed a culture of singing via classroom teaching.

### **Recommendation 7**

Ofsted and the Government should make it clear that delivering only the narrow curriculum prescribed by the EBacc will have an adverse impact on inspections and evaluations.

### **Recommendation 8**

The new National Plan for Music Education must provide clarity as to the roles and responsibilities of schools and Hubs relating to the delivery of a music education for all pupils.

### **Recommendation 9**

The revised National Plan for Music Education should address the quality, provision and access to music education for Early Years and SEND, and improve signposting of music education opportunities for 18 to 25-year-olds.

### **Recommendation 10**

The metrics for measuring the work delivered in response to the NPME need to be revised to go beyond 'levels of activity' reported through the current narrow set of metrics. The quality of the work being delivered needs to be part of this evaluation work.

### **Recommendation 11**

Ring-fenced funding for Hubs must be continued beyond 2020 at current levels or increased levels.

### **Recommendation 12**

Ofsted must look for evidence of sustained and high-quality musical learning across the curriculum at all key stages, instead of focusing heavily on accountability measures imposed by the Government that have shown to be failing. They must be responsible for ensuring that a full and balanced curriculum is being delivered regularly in all schools.



**Recommendation 13**

Ofsted should reconsider their proposal contained in Education inspection framework 2019: inspecting the substance of education in connection with their approach to the EBacc. We urge them to drop their proposal that inspectors understand what schools are doing to prepare for the EBacc to be achieved, and they should take those preparations into consideration when evaluating the intent of the school's curriculum.

**Recommendation 14**

Ensure that as per the Government policy directive in 2016, classroom teachers teach within their area of specialism and that this is respected.

**Recommendation 15**

Ensure that all teachers are supported to access regular and relevant high-quality subject-specific CPD, and improve the working conditions of the workforce.

**Recommendation 16**

Ensure that there is a sufficient number of properly qualified teachers coming through to support the delivery of music education in our schools and Hubs.

**Recommendation 17**

Secondary music should be treated as a shortage subject, and greater efforts and financial incentives applied to attract high-quality candidates onto ITE/ITT programmes.

**Recommendation 18**

The Government must ensure that primary teachers have access to high-quality, relevant and practical subject-specific learning opportunities relating to teaching the music curriculum through their training, NQT period and beyond. In line with other subjects, funded subject-knowledge enhancement courses should be developed and offered through partnerships with ITE providers in higher education.

# About

The Incorporated Society of Musicians (ISM) acts as the secretariat to the Music Education APPG. This is not an official publication of the House of Commons or the House of Lords. It has not been approved by either House or its committees. All-Party Parliamentary Groups are informal groups of Members of both Houses with a common interest in particular issues. The views expressed in this report are those of the group, the ISM and the University of Sussex.

## About the authors

This report was written by Dr Alison Daubney (University of Sussex), Gary Spruce (Visiting Lecturer in Music Education, Birmingham City University) and Deborah Annetts (Chief Executive of the Incorporated Society of Musicians).

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### **Dr Alison Daubney, PhD, Senior Teaching Fellow, University of Sussex**

Dr Ally Daubney is a qualified and experienced music teacher, trainer and researcher and has taught all stages from pre-school to postgraduate. She has carried out research funded by many organisations including Youth Music, Sing Up, The Teacher Development Agency, Paul Hamlyn Foundation, Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, Socrates Comenius (EU), QCA, Arts Council England, and the University of Cambridge.

Ally has worked on international arts curriculum and assessment development with the University of Cambridge International Examinations since 2009. She has presented her work and research extensively in the UK and internationally and is in demand as a workshop leader and speaker.

Her book *Teaching Primary Music* was published by Sage in 2017 and she is currently co-editor of the *British Journal of Music Education*. Along with Professor Martin Fautley, Ally has co-developed well-respected resources to help teachers make sense of the National Curriculum for Music, produced by the Incorporated Society of Musicians.

Ally was appointed to the Department for Education Expert Subject Advisory Groups for Music Education and for Assessment when these groups were set up in 2014. She is also a board member of her local music education hub, Soundcity: Brighton and Hove.

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### **Gary Spruce BMus, MA; MEd; PGCE; HontTCL; FRSA, Visiting Lecturer in Music Education, Birmingham City University**

Gary Spruce was a secondary school Head of Music in Birmingham for over fifteen years before joining The Open University as subject leader for their secondary music PGCE. The course was awarded an 'Outstanding' grade on three separate occasions. He is now visiting lecturer in education at Birmingham City University and an academic consultant for Trinity College, London. He has worked as an Ofsted inspector and GCSE and A Level examiner and is currently working with the European Schools organisation (part of the European Commission) as an examiner and curriculum consultant. Gary has published widely on music teacher education, curriculum music and music education and social justice. As a practising musician he is particularly involved in music for the theatre as performer, composer and arranger.

He has a degree in music from London University and Masters degrees in both music and education from the University of Birmingham.

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### **Deborah Annetts, Chief Executive of the Incorporated Society of Musicians**

Following a degree in PPE from Oxford University, Deborah Annetts trained as an employment lawyer and was a partner at both Stephens Innocent and Tarlo Lyons where she took some of the seminal cases in the field of industrial relations and discrimination.

Since 2008 Deborah has been Chief Executive at the Incorporated Society of Musicians (ISM), the

professional association for musicians and subject association for music, growing its membership to over 9,000. Deborah launched the Bacc for the Future campaign in 2012 ([baccforthefuture.com](http://baccforthefuture.com)) and has campaigned throughout her time at the ISM for a broad and balanced curriculum which includes music in all our maintained schools. She has held the position of Chair of the Music Education Council and she is currently Chair of the Educational Recording Agency.

In 2018, BBC Radio 4 Woman's Hour selected her as one of the most influential women in the music industry in their Power List 2018.

## About the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Music Education

The All-Party Parliamentary Group for Music Education is a cross-party body of MPs and peers with a shared interest in music education.

The APPG exists to support parliamentarians engaging in discussions relating to music education through early years, primary, secondary, SEND, further and higher education, and lifelong learning. It has a particular focus on Curriculum, the National Plan for Music Education, challenges facing higher education and progression into the creative and cultural sector.

The Chair and Registered Contact of the APPG is Diana Johnson MP.

[musiceducationappg.org](http://musiceducationappg.org)

## About the Incorporated Society of Musicians (ISM)

The Incorporated Society of Musicians (ISM) is the UK's professional body for musicians and a nationally recognised subject association for music.

Since 1882, we have been dedicated to promoting the importance of music and protecting the rights of those working in the music profession. We support

more than 9,000 members across the UK and Ireland with our unrivalled legal advice and representation, comprehensive insurance and specialist services.

Our members come from all areas of the music profession and from a wide variety of genres and musical backgrounds. As well as working musicians, our membership also includes recent graduates, part-time and full-time music students, and retired musicians.

We campaign tirelessly in support of musicians' rights, music education and the profession as a whole. We are a financially independent not-for-profit organisation with no political affiliation. This independence allows us the freedom to campaign on any issue affecting musicians.

[ism.org](http://ism.org)

## About the University of Sussex

The University of Sussex has challenged convention since its foundation in 1961. From the campus' modernist architecture on the edge of a rural national park, to our progressive academics and creative professional services staff, to the inspiring students who choose to learn and live here, to the very tone of the institution and the nature of its conversations, through to the expressions of radicalism, critical thinking and, at times, dissent.

The University of Sussex has a long tradition of experimentation and innovation that has made a real difference to the lives of many students, and those who benefit from our research and wider endeavours.

Our research creates new agendas, contributes new knowledge and provides new ideas and solutions that are helping to shape the world. We challenge conventional thinking and discourses, offering inspiring and creative ways to understand and solve global issues.

[www.sussex.ac.uk](http://www.sussex.ac.uk)

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