

All-Party Parliamentary Group for Music Education

Minutes

When: 17:00, Wednesday 19 June 2019

Where: Committee Room 11, Palace of Westminster

Chair: Diana Johnson MP/Baroness Ros Altmann CBE

1. Welcome: Diana Johnson MP, MP for Kingston upon Hull North, and Co-chair & Registered Contact of the APPG for Music Education.

Diana Johnson MP welcomed attendees to the Music Education APPG and introduced Ian C. Lucas, MP for Wrexham and a member of the DCMS Select Committee to talk about the Committee's recent reports on live music and the social impact of participation in culture and sport.

2. Ian C. Lucas MP (Labour) – Member of the DCMS Select Committee

Mr Lucas spoke briefly about his experience with music in school and how he has come to understand the value of music.

As a member of the DCMS Select Committee, he discussed the thought processes behind the Committee's two latest reports, titled *Live Music* (March 2019) and *The Social Impact of Participation in Culture and Sport* (May 2019).

Mr Lucas said that throughout both the inquiries, it was clear how music benefited both individuals and communities.

Speaking about his local constituency, Wrexham, Mr Lucas described the town's strong musical tradition, noting how the peripatetic music service benefitted the local community. However, due to funding cuts, the music service was closed down last year. Mr Lucas set out the damage the closure has had on the Wrexham community.

Mr Lucas stated that education inspection regimes across the UK do not place importance on music and performing arts. He said that schools should be given credit for putting on

performances and that these should be included in inspections. He stated that there were numerous calls for this in the two DCMS Select Committee inquiries.

Mr Lucas stated that the DCMS Select Committee wanted to demonstrate the importance of music to individuals and communities in the two reports.

Mr Lucas ended his speech calling for the APPG to get evidence based messages across to the government.

3. Zena Creed, Director of Communications and External Relations, The Russell Group

Zena Creed explained the thinking behind the concept of facilitating subjects which had been put forward by the Russell Group to enable students to make informed choices for university.

Ms. Creed explained the recent changes to their subject choice guidance including the decision to drop the concept of facilitating subjects. Ms. Creed stated that the concept of facilitating subjects had been misinterpreted by some and this had caused unintended consequences.

Their new policy position aimed to address these unintended consequences.

Ms. Creed stated that the Russell Group's new website aims to provide young people with balanced advice about the subjects they can study at Russell Group universities.

Ms. Creed noted that the new website is in beta stage and asked attendees to provide feedback. She noted how rigorous music was as a subject and she hoped that the new website made clear that music was valuable.

Ms. Creed stated that Russell Group has not taken a position on the EBacc.

4. Dr Alison Daubney, Senior Teaching Fellow at the University of Sussex

Dr Alison Daubney opened her presentation by setting out the headline findings from the APPG's State of the Nation report.

Dr Daubney also discussed Ofqual's provisional figures, and how they show that entries for EBacc subjects have increased by 4% since 2018, whilst non-EBacc subjects have fallen by a further 9%.

Dr Daubney stated that music is the fastest disappearing A-Level subject, citing the recent research commissioned by the Royal College of Music and the Royal Academy of Music. The research revealed that A-Level music uptake was most common amongst those who live in economically advantaged communities.

Dr Daubney said that the research found how over 20% of A-Level music entries are clustered around fewer than 50 schools. She also noted that there had been a drop in ABRSM graded exam entries between 2012 and 2017.

Dr Daubney explained that Ofsted's new education inspection framework will be introduced in September 2019. Dr Daubney stated that Ofsted want a high-quality, broad and rich curriculum at the heart of the framework. Dr Daubney stated that this should include a high quality and sustained music curriculum for all pupils.

Dr Daubney identified that less than 4% of 3,280 Ofsted reports in secondary schools mentioned music in the main conclusions, and in primary schools it was mentioned in just over 6%.

Dr Daubney also noted that in Ofsted's parent survey (published in April 2019) 68% of parents felt that music is not sufficiently covered in their child's education. Dr Daubney suggested that the 'carousel' model of teaching, where pupils only study a subject for a short period of time each year, makes it difficult for students to progress.

Dr Daubney expressed disappointment regarding how the EBacc is embedded in the Ofsted inspection framework, despite the fact that the EBacc was noted as a 'commonly raised concern' in the consultation responses to the draft inspection framework.

5. Questions

There were questions related to funding for music hubs and the comprehensive spending review. Concerns were also raised about music disappearing from schools and the adverse impact of the EBacc on music in secondary schools.

Several attendees raised their concerns in relation to academy chains and head teachers losing their role as to what gets taught in schools. Academies are also focusing on driving down costs and are looking for cheap options for the delivery of music education.

Tracey Brabin MP stated that she had met with Damien Hinds alongside Mark Prisk MP, Ian Mearns MP, Lord Watson and Deborah Annetts. At that meeting they had stated that music should be on offer in all schools and it should not be an extracurricular add on. They had also proposed adding a sixth pillar to the EBacc for creative subjects. Deborah Annetts thanked all the Parliamentarians providing support at the meeting with Damien Hinds. The meeting had gone well and as well as explaining concerns on the EBacc, the ISM had argued strongly for sustained funding for music education hubs at a higher level than the current one, and had asked about progress on the National Plan. The ISM is very concerned about the threat to teacher's jobs if the funding for the National Plan for Music Education is not sorted out soon.

Deborah Annetts said how important it is for the Government to make clear they support music education in our schools and that it must be accessible to all. This means that music has to be delivered in the classroom. This point had been made strongly at the meeting with Damien Hinds along with the importance of singing.

Lord Black addressed the issue that the government does not see the causal link between the EBacc and the decline in music GCSE and asked what more we can do to explain the causal link. In answer to the EBacc and causality, the Department for Education had argued

that music GCSE was also falling in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland so this shows that the fall is not EBacc-related. The ISM will be doing more work on addressing this point.

6. Deborah Annetts – Concluding remarks

Ms. Annetts thanked the speakers and attendees for coming to the APPG for Music Education and closed the session by encouraging all stakeholders to work together to protect music education in schools.