

# Music in schools: wider still, and wider

Quality and inequality in music education 2008–11

---

This report is based principally on evidence from 194 specialist music inspections and good practice visits in schools between 2008 and 2011, including provision in class lessons, additional instrumental and vocal tuition, and extra-curricular musical activities.

Part A of the report summarises the inspection judgements, including the context of government-funded initiatives for widening participation in instrumental learning and singing. Part B considers seven key reasons for differences in the quality of music education experienced by different groups of pupils in different schools.

Case studies of good and weaker practice, included throughout the written report, are complemented by six specially commissioned films that further exemplify good practice in a wide range of school settings.

**Age group:** 4–19

---

**Published:** March 2012

---

**Reference no:** 110158



Corporate member of  
Plain English Campaign  
Committed to clearer communication

**361**

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/), write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is available at [www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/110158](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/110158).

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M2 7LA

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

No. 110158

© Crown copyright 2012



# Contents

---

<b>Executive summary</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Key findings</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>The context of music education in schools, 2008–11</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Part A: Inspection judgements and findings 2008–11</b>	<b>10</b>
Primary schools	10
Secondary schools	29
Special schools	44
<b>Part B: Seven priorities for musical education in schools</b>	<b>44</b>
Priority: challenge inequalities among pupils and between schools	45
Priority: ensure that teachers use musical sound as the dominant language of musical teaching and learning	46
Priority: plan for pupils' musical progression through and across the curriculum, and provide sufficient curriculum time for music	48
Priority: improve pupils' internalisation of music through high-quality singing and listening	52
Priority: use technology to promote creativity, widen inclusion, and make assessment more musical	54
Priority: strengthen senior leadership of music in schools	56
Priority: sustain music-making opportunities for pupils in schools beyond national advocacy, structures and strategies	58
<b>Notes</b>	<b>60</b>
<b>Further information</b>	<b>61</b>
Publications by Ofsted	62
<b>Annex A: Schools visited for this survey</b>	<b>63</b>
Primary schools inspected in the stratified sample	63
Nominated 'good practice' primary schools visited	66
Secondary schools inspected in the stratified sample	66
Special schools inspected in the stratified sample	69
Nominated 'good practice' special school visited	69
<b>Annex B: Good practice films to accompany this report</b>	<b>70</b>
<b>Annex C: Analysis of participation</b>	<b>71</b>
<b>Annex D: Judging standards in music</b>	<b>73</b>
Key Stages 1 and 2	73
Key Stage 3	73
Key Stage 4	73

## Executive summary

This report is based primarily on evidence from inspections of music provision between September 2008 and July 2011 in 90 primary, 90 secondary and four special schools in England. A further nine primary schools and one special school were visited to observe examples of good practice.

Many of the concerns identified in Ofsted's last triennial report, *Making more of music*, remain.<sup>1</sup> Inspectors found wide differences in the quality and quantity of music education across the schools visited. While some exceptional work was seen and heard, far too much provision was inadequate or barely satisfactory. Nearly all schools recognised the importance of promoting a diverse range of musical styles but far fewer had a clear understanding about how all students should make good musical progress as they moved through the curriculum in Key Stages 1 to 3. The scarcity of good singing in secondary schools and the under use of music technology across all phases were also significant barriers to pupils' better musical progress.

The quality of teaching and assessment in music also varied considerably. Examples of memorable, inspiring and musical teaching were observed in all phases. However, in too many instances there was insufficient emphasis on active music-making or on the use of musical sound as the dominant language of learning. Too much use was made of verbal communication and non-musical activities. Put simply, in too many cases there was not enough music in music lessons. Assessment methods were often inaccurate, over-complex or unmusical, particularly in Key Stage 3. This also limited the time available for practical music-making, and detracted from pupils' musical improvement and enjoyment.

Across the primary schools visited, inspectors found considerable variation in the impact of the nationally funded whole-class instrumental and/or vocal tuition programmes, more commonly known as 'Wider Opportunities'. Survey evidence showed very clearly that some schools and groups of pupils were benefiting far more than others from these programmes. While most primary schools were involved with the national singing strategy, the quality of vocal work was good in only 30 of the 90 schools inspected.

Inspectors found wide differences in the continued participation and inclusion of pupils from different groups. Pupils with special educational needs, children who were looked after, and those known to be eligible for free school meals were considerably less likely to be involved in additional<sup>2</sup> musical activities than others, particularly in secondary schools. Across the primary and secondary schools visited, around twice as many girls as boys were involved in extra-curricular music activities.

---

<sup>1</sup> *Making more of music: an evaluation of music in schools 2005–08* (080235), Ofsted, 2009; [www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/080235](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/080235).

<sup>2</sup> 'Additional' musical activities include individual or small-group instrumental/vocal tuition, and extra-curricular music groups. In almost all schools, these were provided in addition to regular whole-class curriculum lessons.

Overall, a good or outstanding music education was being provided in 33 of the 90 primary schools and in 35 of the 90 secondary schools inspected. This is low in comparison with overall school performance: at 31 August 2011, 70% of all schools were good or outstanding for overall effectiveness at their most recent inspection.<sup>3</sup>

The good and outstanding schools ensured that pupils from all backgrounds enjoyed sustained opportunities through regular classroom work and music-making for all, complemented by additional tuition, partnerships and extra-curricular activities. The films that accompany this report exemplify aspects of good practice in music teaching and curriculum provision which meet the needs of all groups of learners. Examples are also included which highlight the impact that external providers can have on musical achievement and participation. Headteachers in these schools, and others where music was judged good or outstanding, were key to assuring the quality of teaching in music. They ensured that music had a prominent place in the curriculum and that partnership working provided good value for money. However, not enough senior leaders demonstrated sufficient understanding of what is needed to secure good music education for all their pupils.

The Henley Review's rationale for a new approach to organising aspects of music education through area music partnerships is well founded and welcomed by Ofsted, as is the government's commitment to continued funding for these hubs. However, this Ofsted report shows that national strategies for widening access to music education have not, by themselves, been enough to bring about sufficient improvements in the quality of provision over the past three years. Local decisions about music education funding and provision, including decisions made in individual schools and academies, proved to be crucially important. The National Plan for Music Education<sup>4</sup> also makes very clear the importance of schools in building the new music education hubs. To ensure better musical education in schools, significant improvement is needed in the quality of teaching and the quality of vocal work, and in better use of music technology. Central to these improvements will be more effective musical leadership and management by heads and other senior staff in schools, to challenge the quality of provision and to secure better musical teaching.

---

<sup>3</sup> *The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2010/11*, Ofsted, 2011; [www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/annualreport1011](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/annualreport1011).

<sup>4</sup> *The importance of music – a national plan for music education* was published in November 2011 (after this Ofsted survey was completed); [www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/AllPublications/Page1/DFE-00086-2011](http://www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/AllPublications/Page1/DFE-00086-2011).

## Key findings

- Good or outstanding musical education was seen in 68 of the 180 primary and secondary schools inspected. In 41 of the 180 schools, provision for music education was inadequate. These results compare poorly with overall school performance in inspections.
- There was considerable variation between the participation rates of different groups of pupils. In primary schools, one in every three girls was participating in extra-curricular music, compared with one in every seven boys. In secondary schools, only 6% of students with disabilities or special educational needs were involved in additional instrumental or vocal tuition, compared to 14% of students without these needs.
- The most effective schools recognised that regular, sustained experiences were essential to secure good musical progress. Schools where curriculum provision was weaker showed limited understanding about musical progression or did not give enough time for music.
- Too much music teaching continued to be dominated by the spoken or written word, rather than by musical sounds. Lessons were planned diligently, but not always prepared for musically.
- Assessment in secondary schools was frequently over-complicated and did not focus enough on the musical quality of students' work. In both primary and secondary schools, insufficient use was made of audio recording and teachers' listening skills to assess and improve pupils' work.
- Achievement in singing was good or outstanding in only a third of the primary schools visited. Not enough emphasis was placed on improving the quality of vocal work or developing other aspects of musical learning through singing. Singing was a major weakness in nearly half of the secondary schools visited.
- The use of music technology was inadequate or non-existent in three fifths of the primary schools and over a third of the secondary schools inspected.
- Local authority music services made good contributions to the musical and personal progress of particular groups of pupils. However, there were considerable inequalities in funding and provision between local authorities, and between schools within local authorities. Two thirds of the primary schools were participating in 'Wider Opportunities' programmes. However, the length and quality of these projects were variable, and continuation rates were too low.
- Not enough school leaders and managers were holding external partners to account, or robustly challenging the quality of classroom curriculum music provision in their own schools. There was limited take-up and impact of continuing professional development (CPD) in both primary and secondary schools. The professional isolation of music teachers was again apparent, as it was in the last Ofsted music survey.

- Continued government funding and support for music education is welcomed by Ofsted, as are the new music hubs from September 2012. However, inspection evidence suggests that these alone are not sufficient to provide a good musical education, and that the quality of schools' music provision and their coordination with external partnerships is of crucial importance.

## Recommendations

Schools, all other funded providers of music education, and providers of Continuing Professional Development should work together to:

- challenge inequalities in musical opportunities and participation among pupils and between schools by:
  - regularly monitoring the participation and retention of pupils from different groups in musical activities
  - developing strategies that lead to increased participation in musical activities by under-represented groups of pupils, particularly boys, pupils with special educational needs, pupils known to be in receipt of free school meals, and children who are looked after
  - ensuring that additional funding and opportunities reach the schools and pupils in most need.
- promote teachers' use of musical sound as the dominant language of musical teaching and learning by:
  - ensuring that lesson planning includes a strong focus on the teacher's musical preparation as well as defining lesson structures and procedures
  - establishing musical sound as the 'target language' of teaching and learning, with talking and writing about music supporting, rather than driving, the development of pupils' musical understanding
  - developing and refining teachers' listening and musical modelling skills, so that they can more accurately interpret and respond to pupils' music-making and show more effectively how to improve the musical quality of their work.
- plan for pupils' good musical progression through and across the curriculum by:
  - giving sufficient and regular curriculum time for the thorough and progressive development of pupils' aural awareness and musical understanding
  - providing robust curriculum plans that identify the landmarks of musical understanding pupils are expected to achieve, in addition to the range of musical styles and traditions that they are to experience
  - ensuring that different initiatives, including whole-class instrumental and vocal programmes, are planned as part of an overall curriculum vision for music for the school.

- improve pupils' internalisation of music through high-quality singing and listening by:
  - taking every opportunity to raise standards of singing work in primary schools, including in class lessons and in whole-school singing sessions, by more effectively challenging the musical quality of pupils' vocal responses
  - significantly improving the quantity, quality and diversity of singing work in secondary schools, particularly in curriculum lessons
  - making more effective use of vocal work in all aspects of music education, including to help pupils better listen to and analyse music.
- use technology to promote creativity, widen inclusion, and make assessment more musical by:
  - significantly improving the use of music technology to record, store, listen to and assess pupils' work
  - placing greater emphasis on pupils' *musical* development through the use of technology – with the acquisition of technical skills and knowledge supporting, rather than driving, musical learning
  - making more creative and effective use of music technology to support performing and listening work.
- strengthen senior leadership of music in schools by:
  - increasing headteachers' and senior leaders' knowledge and understanding about the key characteristics of effective music provision, including the appropriate use of musical assessment and the importance of teachers' musical preparation, so that they can more effectively observe and support music in their schools.

The Department for Education should:

- support sustained music-making opportunities for pupils in schools beyond national advocacy, structures and strategies by:
  - rigorously and independently holding all publicly funded music education initiatives, including music hubs, to account for the quality and effectiveness of their work
  - ensuring that headteachers are better informed about funding and organisational arrangements for the delivery of additional music education provision, particularly through local music hubs, and that they are encouraged play a full part in evaluating and challenging the quality of this provision.



## The context of music education in schools, 2008–11

1. Over the three years from 2008–11, in addition to classroom provision as part of the regular school curriculum, music education initiatives in England have continued to be funded directly by government through the Standards Funding and the Music Education Grant. Additional funding has been provided by local authorities, and private benefactors and organisations. Further details of these initiatives can be found in the further information section at the end of this report.
2. Local authority music services – funded through a combination of national and local grants, and parental contributions – continue to be the most significant external partners in schools' music. However, inspectors noted that some schools had also engaged self-employed instrumental and vocal teachers directly to provide class, individual and small-group music tuition.
3. A key recommendation from Ofsted's last triennial music report was that the then Department for Children, Schools and Families, and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, should increase the effectiveness and value for money of the various music education initiatives and the work of funded music bodies through linking funding to agreed shared priorities and to outcomes that demonstrated the longer-term impact on pupils. In September 2010, government ministers commissioned an independent review of music education in England. The Henley Review was published in February 2011. Its recommendations included establishing music hubs to coordinate the strategic operation of music education in local and regional areas. The National Plan for Music Education was published in November 2011, after the conclusion of this survey. The Plan set out proposals for these hubs to start in September 2012. Other recommendations included the development of strategies for training music education professionals and improving the use of technology in music education.

## Part A: Inspection judgements and findings 2008–11

### Primary schools

#### Overall effectiveness

4. The overall effectiveness of music was outstanding in five of the 90 primary schools visited. It was good in 28 and satisfactory in 36 schools. The overall effectiveness of music provision was judged to be inadequate in 21 of the 90 primary schools inspected. This is poor in comparison with overall school performance: at 31 August 2011, 69% of all primary schools were good or outstanding for overall effectiveness at their most recent inspection.

#### Achievement in music

5. Achievement was outstanding in four and good in 29 of the 90 primary schools inspected; it was satisfactory in 36 schools and inadequate in 21 schools. Inspectors made judgements on attainment in over 400 individual sessions. Around three quarters of these were whole-class curriculum or instrumental/vocal lessons; the remainder were ensemble rehearsals, individual or small-group instrumental lessons, or assemblies featuring music. Standards were high in around one fifth but below average in around one third of all sessions.<sup>5</sup> Generally, pupils' achievement was higher in the rehearsals and individual/small-group instrumental lessons than it was in the whole-class curriculum lessons. Proportionately, more good and less inadequate progress was made in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Year 1 lessons observed than in other primary year groups or key stages.

#### *Achievement in singing*

6. Achievement in singing was good or outstanding in 30 of the primary schools inspected. It was inadequate in 10 schools; two schools could show no evidence of singing work. The quality of singing was firmly in line with age-related expectations in the majority of the extra-curricular choir rehearsals observed. While almost all the primary schools visited held regular assemblies that included singing, standards of singing in the large majority of assemblies observed ranged from broadly in line with age-related expectations to below age-related expectations.
7. Where provision was most effective, schools ensured that good progress in singing was underpinned by regular, ongoing vocal work in the classroom as well as in assemblies. There was a constant emphasis on improving overall musical understanding through vocal work of increasing quality, from the Early Years Foundation Stage to Year 6. In the following example, a Year 6 class

---

<sup>5</sup> See Annex D for definitions of standards.

teacher gave excellent attention to helping pupils master the difficulties posed by the Jamaican folk song, 'Linstead Market':

The pupils were having particular difficulty with the arpeggiated, syncopated idea in the first bar:



Car-ry me ack - ee go - a - Lin - stead mar - ket, Not a qua - tee would sell.

Spotting this, the teacher first taught the pupils how to chant the words in rhythm, against a steady beat. This had the added advantage of helping to improve the pupils' diction and phrasing. She also demonstrated the difference between the rhythms of the first and second bars, deepening their understanding of syncopation.

With the rhythm secure, the teacher isolated the problematic intervals in the melody. She modelled the correct way to sing the phrase with accurate intonation, including use of the head voice to reach the top D. She then invited pupils to sing the phrase back to her, in groups and individually, until they had got it right. As a result, pupils' progress in improving the quality of their singing in this episode was rapid, and their musical understanding of the song was secure.

[The good practice film about John Scurr Primary School includes singing work in the Early Years Foundation Stage and can be found at this link: www.youtube.com/ofstednews.](http://www.youtube.com/ofstednews)

8. In the best practice seen, careful attention was paid to improving every aspect of vocal work. This approach was underpinned by excellent teaching, through clear vocal direction and strong musical accompaniment.

The whole-school assembly started with the deputy headteacher leading activities that challenged pupils' posture, diction, intonation and tone. These were much more than just 'warm-ups'; the deputy headteacher modelled exactly what she wanted the pupils to produce, listened carefully, and corrected and re-corrected until they had got it exactly right. This was excellent preparation for what followed: confident and musically assured performances of 'Amazing Grace' and 'Be still, for the presence of the Lord', with secure part-singing by older pupils. A superb accompaniment was provided by the music teacher, who added his own vocal descant for the final verse to give the performance a further lift.

The pupils' diction and phrasing throughout was good which was impressive, given that over two thirds spoke English as an additional language and a significant number joined the school with developmental levels well below age-related expectations. From these starting points, the quality of singing was thoroughly musical, with rapidly increasing

confidence and technical control. Participation and musical inclusion were both excellent with all pupils involved and older pupils taking more musically challenging roles. As a result, music was playing a central role in building pupils' general confidence and contribution to their community, and in promoting a positive school ethos.

9. However, examples such as these were the exception rather than the rule. Standards of singing were no better than satisfactory in two thirds of the primary schools inspected. Typically, these schools viewed singing more as a participatory activity rather than as a vehicle for promoting pupils' musical understanding. Consequently, the quality of singing did not always improve sufficiently, as in the following example.

In a Junior school choir rehearsal, pupils were performing 'Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious', using a backing track from the Sing Up song bank. They were enthusiastic, but because pupils were not listening carefully, they were not keeping in time and before long were noticeably ahead of the beat. Furthermore, vocal quality was insecure because some pupils were shouting rather than singing. The teacher correctly spotted these problems and commented, 'We must work on keeping in time' and 'Try to use your posh voices rather than your playground voices'. However, rather than rehearsing individual sections of the music, the whole song was simply sung through again with the backing track. At no stage was the expected vocal quality modelled to the pupils, nor were they engaged in exercises to help them listen and keep to the beat. While this was a positive experience in that it provided the pupils with an opportunity to perform in public and thus improve their confidence, significant opportunities were missed to help them become better musicians.

### *Achievement in playing instruments*

10. As with singing, children in the most effective schools were learning to explore and master instruments from an early age, as part of an all-embracing programme of musical education. In these schools, most Key Stage 1 pupils were learning to keep a steady beat and repeat simple rhythmic phrases. They were also starting to control and explore simple effects on classroom percussion instruments. However, there was much less evidence of pupils learning specific performance techniques, for example how to hold the instruments correctly.
11. The entitlement for all children to learn to play instruments has long been embedded in the National Curriculum throughout Key Stages 1 and 2. However, apart from in the whole-class instrumental programmes, examples of Key Stage 2 pupils developing specific instrumental performance skills through curriculum classroom work were limited. For example, where pupils were given classroom percussion instruments to play they were rarely shown how to use beaters correctly to achieve different effects.

12. Two thirds of the schools were benefiting from whole-class instrumental programmes at the time of the inspection – the same proportion as in the 2005–08 survey. Overall, the primary schools that were able to offer data reported that, on average, around a fifth of their pupil cohort were benefiting from some form of additional instrumental or vocal tuition at the time of the survey visit. The overwhelming majority of these pupils were in Key Stage 2.
13. A national survey of local authority music services in 2002 by the Department for Education and Skills<sup>6</sup> suggested that, on average, 8% of pupils in Key Stages 1 to 4 were receiving additional instrumental or vocal tuition. Against this figure, participation rates in the schools surveyed by Ofsted between 2008 and 2011 are encouraging. However, some Wider Opportunities programmes lasted for a term or less, so in these cases the proportions quoted by these schools were somewhat transitory. In some cases, the length of the initial opportunity was so short that it was of little benefit, either to pupils' long-term musical progress or to the overall music curriculum.
14. In one of the good practice schools visited, around a third of pupils continued with instrumental lessons after the initial Wider Opportunities programme. Two of the good practice schools continued providing free whole-class instrumental teaching to all pupils for a second year. However, there were more schools where very few or even no pupils continued. In explaining low continuation rates, schools frequently cited the cost to families as a significant factor. Inspection evidence showed that the quality of teaching and limited pupil enjoyment of the sessions were also key reasons for pupils not continuing.
15. Overall, inspection evidence from 2008–11 suggests that participation has fallen some way short of the stated government ambitions that there would be:

Free music tuition – by way of whole-class or large-group activity – for every primary school child for a year in the early years of primary school [with] at least half of primary school pupils continuing with further tuition thereafter.<sup>7</sup>

or that:

Nationally, by 2011, over two million pupils will have had the opportunity to learn a musical instrument for free, normally in a large group or whole-class setting, for at least one year... by 2011 programmes will be in place that will result in **every** child having this opportunity during their time at primary school.<sup>8</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup> [www.education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/RB478.pdf](http://www.education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/RB478.pdf).

<sup>7</sup> Press release: 'Unprecedented investment in music education has the power to change children's lives', Department for Children, Schools and Families, 20 June 2008.

<sup>8</sup> *Music education and the music grant (Standards Fund 1.11): aspirations, support and delivery*, [www.ks2music.org.uk/do\\_download.asp?did=29568](http://www.ks2music.org.uk/do_download.asp?did=29568).

16. The best whole-class, individual or small-group instrumental lessons seen combined secure learning of instrumental techniques with the development of wider musical understanding, as the following example illustrates.

Year 6 saxophonists were learning a piece of riff-based 'swing' music. The music was notated 'straight', with a written instruction indicating how the rhythms should be played. The teacher started by ensuring that the pupils could play the notes of the riff accurately with correct fingering, embouchure, and breathing. She then took them through a series of short exercises – all taught aurally, and without reference to the notation – that had them playing the riff in different rhythms and also improvising their own riff patterns over a swung beat. As a result of this skilful teaching, when pupils came to play the piece, they did so with appropriate rhythmic freedom and good phrasing.

The good practice video for Churchfields Junior School includes 'Wider Opportunities' work and can be found at this link: [www.youtube.com/ofstednews](http://www.youtube.com/ofstednews).

17. In the weakest whole-class instrumental programmes, the quality of learning was poor because not enough attention was given to learning instrumental techniques alongside developing pupils' general musicianship. Such practice was observed in a violin and cello class of 30 Year 4 pupils.

The pupils were sitting in rows in the school hall, with the teacher standing at the front. There was a diagram on the flip-chart at the front of the hall to remind the children of the string order – Greedy Dogs Always Eat for the violins, and All Dogs Gobble Cats for the cellos (the former going from the lowest to the highest string and the latter going from the highest to the lowest string). The pupils were learning to play a short piece, mostly on open strings and with a simple crotchet rhythm, first *pizzicato* and then *arco*. Copies of the stave-notated music were on their music stands. Although they also sang the piece, they did so while also attempting to play their violins or cellos. Learning was not secure because there was too much for pupils to learn at once – notation, violin hold, bowing, names of the strings, and singing. Most pupils appeared to enjoy the activity, but the sound was dreadful. Many were holding their violins incorrectly, either pointing the scrolls up to the ceiling or down to the floor. Others (including the cellists) were playing with their bows, grasped tightly in their fists, at 45° to the strings or halfway up the fingerboard. While some understood the simple rhythm, many were miming or were completely lost. The class teacher and teaching assistants were present, learning alongside the pupils – but they, too, had poor posture and were struggling to master the music. Because of the size of the group, the organisation of the room, and the teaching method, the pupils' bad habits and poor musical understanding were left unchallenged.

18. In too many schools, curriculum planning for the following years took little or no account of any learning that had taken place during the Wider Opportunities year. As a result, in these schools, pupils did not make good progress following the initial whole-class instrumental programmes.

*In Harmony*

19. The three In Harmony projects, in Lambeth, Liverpool and Norwich – based on the Venezuelan ‘El Sistema’ approach to music and social education – have been heavily funded by the Department for Education to provide pupils in the participating schools with daily instrumental tuition and ensemble work. Faith Primary School in Liverpool was visited as part of the good practice sample. Strong musical pedagogies were demonstrated by the In Harmony teachers, from the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra’s education department.
20. Pupils were developing secure string-playing technique while at the same time making good progress in their general musical understanding. These two aspects of achievement were interrelated and co-dependent. Even where children were at an early stage in their violin tuition, achievement was good because musical and technical skills were being learnt simultaneously, methodically and securely, as the following example shows:

A class of Year 4 pupils were learning to play a simple version of ‘The Grand Old Duke of York’. Before pupils played on their violins, there were several very appropriate singing and rhythm activities. These included learning the bowing rhythms, patterns and speeds (particularly for the dotted minim–crotchet motif) by moving their right hands up and down their outstretched left arms, in time to the song which they also sang, simultaneously, thus internalising the essential musical knowledge needed.

Care had been taken to establish the correct posture, with feet well placed and proper arm positions; the music had been internalised through singing and listening. Learning had been led firmly, by ear and through expert modelling, with graphic notation and rhythmic mnemonics on the whiteboard as an aide-memoire. Consequently, when the pupils eventually took up their violins they did so with understanding, confidence, and with a musical response. Bows were placed correctly on the strings, bow holds were good, and the sound produced had a full tone. Before playing the piece, the pupils practised playing the rhythms of the song on a single open string, to ensure that both the bowing and the rhythms were correct. Then, with this secure, they moved on to crossing strings.

Throughout all of this, the class were standing in a circle, with the lead teacher on the inside and the supporting teacher on the outside of the circle. This arrangement meant that teachers had close musical contact with every pupil, and that any difficulties or misconceptions were picked up quickly. Both teachers modelled and sang constantly, including routine

instructions ('Get ready to play' and 'Put your instruments down to rest'), which were always sung with vocal responses from the pupils.

### *Achievement in creating musical ideas*

21. Developing pupils' creative ideas in music lessons was identified as good or outstanding in 11 primary schools, but inadequate in 32 schools. Where it was most successful, composing work was framed by well-structured, musical teaching that secured pupils' understanding of the materials they were to work with. For example, in a Year 6 lesson, the teacher skilfully deconstructed Prokofiev's music for *Romeo and Juliet* to promote pupils' understanding of arpeggios and dotted rhythms which then helped them to produce high-quality composing work. Good, musical teaching enabled pupils to give considerable time and thought to how they could shape these ideas – for example by thinking about different textures, dynamics and tempi.

As pupils entered the classroom, 'Dance of the Knights' was playing. Instead of greeting the pupils verbally, the teacher quietly clapped the distinctive dotted rhythm along to the music. As they sat down, the pupils joined in clapping the rhythm, spontaneously. When the recording finished, the teacher explained that they would be using this rhythm as the basis for their composing work, and she showed them a simple notation for the rhythm as she talked. She then played the rhythm in improvised arpeggio patterns on chime bars, and only after this did she explain to the pupils that they too would be using arpeggios to create their work. Hence, before they started their group compositions, pupils already had a good aural understanding of the music ideas that they would be working with. Consequently, all pupils participated well. The resultant compositions were imaginative, varied, and performed confidently. At the same time, the compositions revealed that all had developed a good understanding about dotted rhythms and arpeggios.

22. Where formal composing tasks resulted in poor creative responses from pupils, it was often because the tasks themselves had been poorly framed or the expectations were not sufficiently precise, as the following example illustrates.

After listening to extracts from Holst's *Planets* suite, Year 5 pupils had been asked to create a short composition for untuned percussion instruments that reflected the characteristics of their chosen planet. In the lesson observed, pupils watched and assessed video performances of their group compositions. The pieces were of poor quality, little more than short sequences of percussion strikes and scrapes that had little variation in texture, dynamics or tempo.

The pupils were reminded of the learning objectives that had been set at the start of the task, and were asked to decide if those objectives had been met. Had they worked well together as a group? Did their piece have



a clear structure – a distinctive beginning, middle and end? Did their piece sound like the music that Holst had composed for their planet?

It was not surprising that the pupils' compositions were of poor quality. While each piece certainly had a beginning, middle and end, the way that the task had been set (as shown by the too generalised objectives) had not focused their understanding on the way that the timbres of their instruments could combine with tempo, dynamics, and textures to create an appropriate musical effect – let alone replicate the musical qualities of Holst's music.

### *Participation in extra-curricular musical activities*

23. In judging achievement, inspectors evaluated the extent to which all groups of pupils were benefiting from music education. Sixty-nine of the primary schools were able to offer data about the participation of different groups in additional tuition and extra-curricular musical activities, providing a sample base of almost 18,000 pupils.
24. Overall, 23% of all pupils were said by schools to be participating in extra-curricular musical activities. However, pupils with special educational needs, those known to be eligible for free school meals, children who were looked after, and those who spoke English as an additional language were noticeably less likely to be involved. The widest difference was between the participation of boys and girls. While 32% of the girls in the sample were participating in regular extra-curricular musical activities, only 14% of boys were involved.
25. On occasions, schools' self-evaluations suggested that other, non-musical outcomes for pupils had improved because of music provision. While it is difficult to draw an empirical connection between the two, the perceptibly positive ethos and high levels of motivation gained through music in some schools was clearly evident.
26. One of the good practice schools visited was in an area of considerable social and economic disadvantage. Nearly 70% of all pupils were known to be eligible for free school meals. Over 40% were identified as having special education needs, with the number of pupils with a statement being twice the national average. The school was one of the first to participate in the local authority's whole-class instrumental tuition programme and, through considerable additional funding by the school, the programme now runs throughout Key Stage 2 with all pupils learning to play brass instruments. Standards of playing instruments were above average and singing was strong, too, including a boys' choir. Pupils participated regularly in local and regional concerts, and some parents had started to learn to play brass instruments alongside their children. Music had clearly helped a great deal to boost the personal confidence of pupils, parents and the whole school community.

## The quality of teaching in music

27. Teaching in music was outstanding in three and good in 28 of the 90 primary schools inspected. It was satisfactory in 42 schools and inadequate in 17 schools. Inspectors considered all aspects of music teaching in the school, including regular classroom curriculum work, whole-class specialist instrumental and vocal teaching, leadership of extra-curricular activities and individual or small-group instrumental tuition. When making the overall judgement, inspectors gave more weight to the teaching of whole classes than to teaching in extra-curricular activities and additional tuition, because these lessons involved a much greater number of pupils.
28. Inspectors made judgements on the quality of teaching in nearly 500 individual sessions. The large majority of these were whole-class lessons (including Wider Opportunities sessions), with a much smaller proportion being ensemble rehearsals, individual or small-group lessons, or musical assemblies. Teaching was good or outstanding in just under a third of the class music lessons where a judgement was made, with around a fifth of these lessons inadequately taught. Proportionally, there were more Wider Opportunities lessons where teaching was judged good, but at the same time a similar proportion were taught inadequately. Teaching of extra-curricular choir and instrumental ensembles was better, being good or outstanding in around half of rehearsals observed.
29. Pupils' musical understanding was developed most effectively in lessons where musical sound was the dominant language for teaching and learning. Where words were used – whether in the spoken or written form – they were used to support learning and explain what the pupils had already experienced and understood musically. The best teaching also took a 'joined up' approach to musical learning – understanding that developing pupils' listening, performing and composing skills was best achieved through a complementary approach.
30. Around two thirds of whole-class lessons were taught by non-specialist class teachers or teaching assistants, with the remainder (including Wider Opportunities lessons) taught by staff described by the schools as music specialists.<sup>9</sup> Overall, a higher proportion of the specialist teaching was judged good or outstanding, compared with non-specialist teaching. However, a higher proportion of specialist teaching was also judged inadequate.
31. In the best examples, specialist teachers demonstrated excellent personal musical skills matched by equally strong pedagogical practice. This practice included sound classroom management skills but also included music-specific

---

<sup>9</sup> The terms 'specialist' and 'non-specialist' were applied by schools to their music teaching staff. Therefore, the proportions quoted are based on schools' designations of their teachers.

techniques such as Dalcroze eurhythmics<sup>10</sup> and the Curwen-Kodaly solfège hand sign system.<sup>11</sup>

The good practice film about Churchfields Junior School includes singing work in Key Stage 2, including use of the Curwen-Kodaly hand signs. The film can be found at this link: [www.youtube.com/ofstednews](http://www.youtube.com/ofstednews).

32. However, the musical skills of specialist staff were not always complemented by satisfactory classroom management or by teaching skills that engaged or challenged the pupils appropriately. The following example shows how pupils' progress was limited because a visiting specialist teacher did not employ an effective range of teaching strategies to deepen pupils' musical understanding.

The Upper Key Stage 2 lesson that followed started with pupils listening to a recording of Benjamin Britten's *Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra*. The teacher asked the pupils to name the families of instruments featured, in the order that they were heard in the theme. When they answered, the response was either 'correct' or 'incorrect'; if the latter, the pupil was simply asked for more suggestions until the correct answer was said. No attempt was made to explain the differences between instrumental families, to improve pupils' aural recognition of the different timbres, or to discuss why they had given the answer that they had. The teacher then asked the pupils to describe how the music made them feel. This they did willingly, but there was no further questioning to help the pupils deconstruct what it was about the music that led them to their response. When one boy said that the music made him feel 'wildly excited', the response was 'Hmmm, that's interesting', but no attempt was made to develop the answer further.

33. Characteristics of the teaching in the weaker whole-class instrumental and/or vocal lessons included insufficient account being taken of pupils' particular needs or prior musical experiences. In the weaker lessons observed, there was again too much teacher talk, insufficient use of ongoing musical assessment during lessons and lack of challenge for more able pupils. On a few occasions, visiting teachers were unable to manage large classes of children, almost always where the class teacher was not also present.
34. Nearly all non-specialist teachers demonstrated professional, efficient lesson organisation and effective class management strategies. However, in too many cases these strategies were not given sufficient musical dimensions. So, for example, while nearly all class teachers planned lessons with engaging starter activities and opportunities for pupils to work in groups and assess their own work, the activities themselves were often unmusical – for example, completing a worksheet, drawing pictures, and talking or writing about musicians.

<sup>10</sup> [www.dalcroze.org.uk](http://www.dalcroze.org.uk).

<sup>11</sup> [www.britishkodalyacademy.org](http://www.britishkodalyacademy.org).

35. Some of the best teaching seen was by music specialists who were also qualified classroom teachers and permanent members of the school's staff. Often, these teachers combined or shared responsibility for a class with specialist music teaching. These teachers had benefited from their school's generic CPD for improving the quality of teaching and learning, had good understanding of key issues in music education, and had applied this all thoughtfully and knowledgeably to the context of teaching music. As permanent members of the school's staff, they also knew every child well and were able to discuss children's musical progress and personal development with other class teachers on a daily basis. They also provided consistency and quality of musical leadership for assemblies and other whole-school musical activities, and were a resource for other staff to improve their own musical understanding.
36. Where partnerships were strong, the musical skills of the visiting specialist were used to complement the generic classroom management skills of the non-specialist in team teaching. These collaborations often provided excellent opportunities for colleagues to learn from one another, as ongoing CPD.
37. Where music was taught as part of a cross-curricular project approach, it was rare for teachers to plan in great detail for the development of pupils' musical understanding. Commonly, the main learning objectives were concerned with core skills of literacy and numeracy, with music provided as a complementary activity rather than as a vehicle for robustly developing aural understanding. Granted the importance of developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills, this approach was sometimes musically confusing, as in this example.

The teacher explained that the lesson would use mathematical graphs to develop pupils' music knowledge of graphic notation for pitch shapes. They would also be developing their art and design skills by making a graphic score using straws and pipe cleaners glued onto a cardboard sheet. Quite apart from the confusion that a graphic score was a 'pitch graph' (plotted against x and y axes, mathematically), most of the lesson was spent cutting and gluing with very little time spent working with musical sounds. Consequently, pupils made inadequate progress in developing their musical understanding.

### *The quality of assessment*

38. The quality of assessment in music was good in only 11 of the 90 primary schools inspected. No examples of outstanding assessment practice were seen, and assessment was inadequate in 26 schools. Inspectors reported the development of assessment as a key area for improvement in over half of the primary schools visited.
39. Many of the teachers observed – particularly class teachers – showed great diligence in setting learning objectives, sharing these with pupils at the start and referring to them at the end of the lesson. However, in too many instances, these objectives had little impact in ensuring sufficient depth in pupils' musical

learning. Often, learning objectives were focused on completion of the activity to be undertaken, without sufficient explanation or demonstration of the quality of musical response expected of pupils. Similarly, lengthy verbal explanations of the objectives meant that precious time at the start of the lesson was wasted.

40. In some cases, lesson objectives set teachers on a course that they did not change, regardless of pupils' creative responses. This approach precluded the possibility of the unexpected, as shown by one teacher's response to a pupil's musical idea.

A Year 2 class were learning to sing a simple, three-note version of 'Hot Cross Buns' with accompaniment played by more able pupils on tuned percussion. The teacher had some clear, highly planned objectives that, as she explained verbally to the children at the start of the lesson, she wanted them to have achieved as a class by the end of the session. After a while, one of the percussion players – identified as more able in the lesson plan but who had actually been playing little more than a single note pedal throughout the lesson – raised her hand, eagerly. When beckoned, she said, 'Miss, I've made up my own tune for the words of 'Hot Cross Buns'. Can I sing it to you?' The teacher replied, 'That's lovely, but I'm afraid we have to perform the *real* "Hot Cross Buns" today.'

The pupil retreated and showed minimum interest in the rest of the lesson, continuing to play her simple pedal note obediently but without much enthusiasm.

41. In contrast, the creative approach taken by another teacher – where learning objectives were initially concealed from the pupils, adding to sense of mystery and wonder – led to equally creative learning.

In this lesson, Year 3 pupils were continuing to rehearse a class performance of music inspired by their exploration of drones and pentatonic ragas in Indian music. Before they started, one pupil was asked to read out a message that had been left in the middle of the performance area. The message said that if they played their music particularly well today and created the right atmosphere something special would happen.

The class was completely captivated by the message, and there was a great sense of excitement and anticipation. The class then started to practise the raga starting with the drone and adding other parts. After the first run-through the teacher asked if it was good enough for the 'something special' to happen, asking, 'Did the music create a feeling of beauty and power?' The children agreed that it did not, and the teacher asked them to suggest what they could do, musically, to make it more special. The children offered suggestions freely, including making dynamic changes.

The piece was played several times again, with the children continuing to suggest ideas. All pupils gave of their best and were keen to improve their own contribution. After the final performance the children were asked to cover their eyes and wait to see what would happen. While all eyes were closed an older pupil crept into the centre of the circle dressed in traditional Indian costume and mask. When the class opened their eyes and saw this figure they were spellbound. On the teacher's bidding, and with some reverence, they played the piece again while the figure danced in the middle of their circle. The class had experienced music as it had been originally created – to evoke a spiritual and contemplative response. Learning was effective precisely because the pupils had not been told what to expect at the start of the lesson and therefore the experience was unexpected.

42. Many of the teachers observed were diligent in completing records of activities undertaken, often by individual children. However, far fewer demonstrated understanding that at the heart of good assessment practice is careful listening to pupil's responses, consideration of the musical qualities of the responses, and appropriate interventions to correct errors and misunderstanding (including through musical modelling). It was more common for teachers to enthuse about pupils' participation and completion of work than comment objectively on the quality of their efforts. For example, pupils were told that their singing or instrumental performance was 'beautiful' or 'excellent' when, in truth, it was neither. While recognising the importance of encouraging participation to develop confidence and enjoyment, over-praising pupils for poor work does not help them appraise their own work effectively or aim for the highest standards.
43. In over a third of all the primary schools inspected, a key area for improvement identified by inspectors was the need to challenge pupils with advanced abilities or experience more effectively – particularly those in receipt of additional instrumental and/or vocal tuition. It was rare to find appropriately demanding work being set from the outset of a lesson for those pupils with advanced musical skills and knowledge. Where extension work was provided, it was more often after the initial, simpler task had been completed. It was unusual for pupils receiving individual or small-group instrumental tuition to bring their instruments to class music lessons as a matter of course.

### **The quality of the curriculum in music**

44. The quality of the curriculum and extra-curricular activities was outstanding in six, good in 23 and satisfactory in 38 of the 90 primary schools inspected. It was inadequate in 23 schools. Commonly, schools' curriculum programmes had not given enough consideration to how pupils' musical understanding should develop over time across a range of musical experiences, as well as through an appropriate breadth of musical styles. Some schools were not accessing initiatives such as whole-class instrumental or singing programmes. However, in other schools these initiatives were run as separate and sometimes competing activities, divorced from each other and from any other work in music, without

thought given to how they could combine to provide a meaningful curriculum programme. This included schools that used Wider Opportunities programmes in lieu of their usual curriculum music programmes, rather than to complement them.

45. Inspectors reported variations in the amount of time allocated for music within and between the primary schools inspected. In too many of the schools visited, reduced time for music in Year 6 inhibited pupils' long-term musical achievement. Some schools placed music as part of a carousel with other arts subjects or modern languages, which meant that pupils often went for periods of up to a term without any musical education.
46. The schools with the most effective music provision secured good pupil achievement through regular and often daily involvement in music-making, with high expectations for the quality of pupils' musical responses and a clear vision of the musical progress that pupils should make as they progressed from the early years to Year 6. This vision was not simply a detailed catalogue of musical activities; the best examples demonstrated the 'big picture' of how regular classroom work, complemented by additional experiences, would progressively build the musical understanding of all pupils.
47. Musically effective schools recognised that 'one-off' events were complementary activities to extend, rather than replace, regular classroom musical activities. The less effective schools visited did not make such links between individual events and everyday music provision, such as a school that had bought in a demonstration workshop by a professional musician.

There was no doubt that the workshop had been a memorable event that had attracted a deal of local publicity. But after considering how many pupils were learning to play an instrument as a consequence of the workshop (there were none that the school could identify), and the financial cost of the workshop (it had cost the equivalent of around 25 hours' tuition from a music service peripatetic music teacher), it was clear that the workshop had not provided best value for money.

#### *The use of commercially published schemes of work and resources*

48. A common feature noted by inspectors was schools' use of printed or online schemes of work for their music curriculum structures and resources. Good published schemes can be particularly helpful in providing guidance and security for non-specialist teachers. In the most successful schools, these schemes were taken as a starting point for teaching, and adapted not only to suit and respond to the needs of pupils but also to promote good musical learning. Where they were less successful, resources were followed rigidly and literally, but without sufficient thought given to whether or not pupils were progressing musically, in practice. 'Following the book' did not necessarily guarantee pupils' good musical progress.

49. The contrast between these two approaches was seen in the way that two teachers in two different schools – both schools in challenging urban contexts and both teachers described by their schools as ‘specialists’ – made use of an activity from a commercially published recorder scheme. These examples illustrate that the way that published resources are adapted and used, by individual teachers and schools, is as important as the quality of the resources themselves.

During two different primary school music inspections, the same published resource – a simple song featuring the notes B, A and G – was seen being used for teaching the recorder. In the first school, the notated song was projected on to the whiteboard and pupils were asked to listen to a recording, with the notation traced on the screen as the music played. The children were reminded about the hand positions for the three notes and then asked to rehearse the fingering in time to the recording and following the score, but without blowing into the recorders. When this was completed, the pupils were told to play along with the backing track, again following the notation on the whiteboard. The task was not deconstructed any more than this. Consequently, many pupils struggled to keep up.

In contrast, the teacher in the second school started by playing the class the backing track and asking them to move and clap in time with the beat and rhythm. He then taught them the song, which they all sang along to the backing track. Then, the children were reminded of the fingerings for B, A and G, slowly and through good modelling and active participation. Next, the children learnt to play the final phrase of the song, first by playing the minim-minim-semibreve rhythm on a G monotone, and then by playing the correct notes B, A, G. Finally, the song was sung with the backing track, with the final phrase played on the recorders. This lesson took longer than the first but, because the children had learnt in small musical steps, their understanding was much more secure and their greater enjoyment of the lesson was clear to see.

50. Many schools visited had registered with Sing Up and had either downloaded material from the song bank, or were using songs from the termly magazines. These resources were, rightly, valued by schools – particularly by those that had not accessed the Sing Up training. As with other published resources, however, their effectiveness was entirely dependent on the quality of the teaching that accompanied them.

### *Music technology*

51. Although the use of music technology is an important aspect of the Key Stage 2 music curriculum, it was inadequate or non-existent in just over half of the primary schools inspected. It was good in just six schools, and outstanding in none. Where there was music technology provision, it was most usually in the form of interactive notation programmes or cut-and-paste pre-sequenced music



applications. While pupils enjoyed working with computers, the activities did not always help them develop their musical understanding.

As part of a topic about theme parks, Year 5 pupils were using computers to create a theme tune that would welcome visitors to their park. The pupils were given a 16-box grid, into each box of which they had to choose and drop one of a selection of musical ideas, each represented by a different picture of a musical instrument and each in a different musical style. The lesson plan explained that all children should 'be able to use their imagination to compose their own pieces of music' and that 'higher ability children... must use at least six different musical instruments/sounds'.

While the children were kept occupied and happy by the activity, most were simply dragging and dropping the ideas into the grid in no particular or logical order. The results were random, with little sense of rhythm or melody. It was very difficult to see how the pupils had been thinking about how the sounds chosen could combine expressively to reflect the intention of the composing task.

### *Planning for, before, and after Wider Opportunities*

52. Overall, the teaching, planning and management of the whole-class instrumental and/or vocal programmes were judged good or outstanding in 17 and inadequate in 20 of the 59 schools where these were taking place. Nearly all of these programmes observed were taught to a generic plan that was designed for use in any school. Some of these plans were commercial schemes; some were provided centrally by local authority music services to be used in all their schools; in other cases, individual teachers were charged with writing their own schemes of work that they then used in all of the schools that they visited. Few examples were seen of bespoke programmes planned in consultation with individual schools to tie in with other music curriculum provision or to meet the particular needs of pupils in that school.
53. An example of the problems caused by weak planning and lack of curriculum vision across different initiatives was shown sharply in a primary school that had bought in two whole-class instrumental teaching programmes from the local authority music service in lieu of class music lessons in Years 3 and 4. Poor communication between the visiting teachers, weak strategic oversight from the music service, and insufficient quality assurance by the school were compounded by the fact that the school's own music curriculum programmes in Years 5 and 6 made no reference at all to the work done in the previous two years. Consequently, pupils' musical achievement across the school was inadequate.

The school had bought in two Wider Opportunities programmes – whole-class recorder teaching for Year 3, and whole-class chalumeau teaching for Year 4. The teachers for these classes were 'brokered' by the music

service – that is, they were self-employed with quality assurance conducted by music service managers as part of the local service agreement with schools. Each teacher was responsible for developing their own scheme of work to use with their classes.

The Year 3 students were observed learning to play a simple melody using the notes B, A and G in crotchet and quaver rhythms. Although most were trying hard, there were still some who, after nearly a year of learning, still had difficulty placing their fingers in the correct places and others who were struggling to read the notation on the whiteboard. However, the real concern came in the Year 4 lesson. Here, the pupils (who had received the recorder lessons in Year 3) were also being taught to play the notes B, A and G using similarly simple rhythms – the chalumeau sharing identical fingerings with the recorder.

Technically and musically, these pupils were making slow progress over the two years. The two Wider Opportunities programmes were planned and taught independently of each other with unnecessary repetition and duplication, and with low expectations for pupils' musical progression.

54. One of the most positive aspects of the Wider Opportunities and Sing Up initiatives was the opportunity for pupils in the early stages of learning instruments or with limited experience of choral singing to prepare and come together for performance events. Some of these were provided locally or regionally. For example, during the inspection of one secondary specialist music college, a 'Big Sing!' event took place involving feeder primary schools and the local male voice choir, with the secondary students acting as role models and mentors.
55. Nationally, the 2010 'Perform!' project, under the umbrella of the Trinity/Guildhall/Open University KS2 Music CPD programme, provided teachers' workshops; KS2 Music tutors working alongside teachers in schools; opportunities for schools to work together in clusters; and a national performance event including a specially commissioned composition. This event involved professional musicians, class and instrumental teachers, and children. It was not possible, from this single occasion, to demonstrate how well the individual Wider Opportunities programmes had been planned and delivered in each of the 16 participating schools, or judge these pupils' longer-term musical progress. However, the 'Perform!' national event demonstrated how all pupils, whatever their stage of learning, can participate in a public performance ensemble in a musically meaningful manner and to a good standard.

### *Extending the curriculum*

56. Many of the schools visited offered a choir or other singing group, and most schools involved pupils in Christmas and end-of-year concerts or productions. However, far fewer primary schools provided regular extra-curricular instrumental ensembles such as bands or orchestras.

57. Many schools had organised their own competitions or showcases, based on popular television talent shows such as *The X Factor* and *Britain's Got Talent*. These were very popular with pupils and were valuable in helping to boost pupils' self-confidence or to raise funds for charities. However, inspection evidence suggested that they were less effective in improving pupils' musicianship. Typically, pupils told inspectors that they had not been given any specific musical coaching to improve their performances for these shows.

### **The quality of leadership and management in music**

58. Leadership and management of music were good or outstanding in 37 of the 90 primary schools inspected and inadequate in 17 schools.<sup>12</sup>
59. The quality of self-evaluation was good or outstanding in 42 of the primary schools. It was inadequate in 11 schools. Nearly all headteachers and senior leaders correctly identified generic strengths in teaching, such as behaviour management and lesson organisation, but they were less confident in evaluating the musical quality of teaching and learning. The majority of joint observations revealed that not enough senior leaders understood sufficiently well how and why children make musical progress.

#### *Continuing Professional Development (CPD)*

60. The quality of access to and impact of CPD for teachers was inadequate, or non-existent, in 33 of the 90 schools visited. The quality of access to and impact of CPD was judged to be good or outstanding in 24 schools.
61. The most frequent external CPD opportunities cited by the schools were local and regional training events provided through the Sing Up strategy. Schools reported that these had a good impact on improving non-specialist teachers' confidence and enthusiasm for leading singing activities. Where training programmes had the most impact, they brought about improved classroom practice. This was seen in the work of a teacher who had participated in a training programme from the Voices Foundation.<sup>13</sup>

Before the lesson observation, the teacher showed the inspector the 'Singing Steps' guidance that she had taken from the course. It was clear from her teaching that she had successfully assimilated this training programme and was helping her pupils to improve their singing by more accurately identifying where and how they needed to improve their intonation and articulation. The CPD had also given her the confidence to

<sup>12</sup> This judgement was made about the quality of leadership and management across and throughout the school's music provision. While the work of the music coordinator was obviously very important, consideration was also given to the role of the headteacher and other senior leaders; governors; pupils who took or who were given musical leadership roles; and the leadership of externally provided activities in partnership with local authority music services and other professional organisations.

<sup>13</sup> [www.voices.org.uk](http://www.voices.org.uk).

use her own voice in order to show the children the musical responses that she required.

62. While other courses helped to boost teachers' enthusiasm for leading singing, the impact of this training on improving the quality of pupils' singing provision was less evident. While training courses introduced teachers to useful teaching repertoire and techniques, such as the Curwen-Kodaly method of leading vocal work, successful application of these skills required much deeper subject understanding, including good listening skills, as this example from a nominated good practice school showed.

A teacher in this school told inspectors that, on a one-day training course, she had learnt that she could use her hands to help children understand the melodic shapes of songs. In the lesson that followed, she showed great confidence when teaching the children to sing 'You've got a friend in me' from the film *Toy Story*. However, while she used her hands boldly and clearly, the shapes that she showed were often the exact opposite of the song's melodic shape – for example, for the words 'in me' at the end of the first phrase, when the interval is a descending fifth, her hand indicated an ascending leap. Rhythmically, her hand movements were accurate and were very useful in giving her greater confidence when leading class music sessions, but melodically they were confusing and did not help the pupils to sing at pitch more accurately.

63. Similarly, while training courses had provided new vocal repertoire and teaching ideas, teachers did not always understand the importance of using these judiciously as part of a progressive programme of learning. This was seen in a school where the music coordinator had disseminated singing training through a staff training session.

After the music coordinator was observed starting her Year 3 lesson with the chant 'Boom-chicka-boom', three more lessons led by class teachers were observed in other year groups. Every lesson started with exactly the same chant, led and performed in the same way; there was no difference in expectation, despite the varying ages of the classes. It was clear that, while this training had made an initial impact, longer-term improvements in teachers' skills and repertoire had yet to be secured.

64. Few of the classroom teachers or headteachers who spoke with inspectors were aware of the KS2 Music CPD programme, and even fewer had participated in local or online training events. A much greater number of local authority music service instrumental and vocal teachers were able to detail the training that they had received through this programme.

## Secondary schools

### Overall effectiveness

65. The overall effectiveness of music was outstanding in six and good in 29 of the 90 secondary schools visited. It was satisfactory in 35 schools. The overall effectiveness of music provision was inadequate in 20 of the 90 schools inspected. Again, this is poor in comparison with overall school performance: at 31 August 2011, 66% of all secondary schools were good or outstanding for overall effectiveness at their most recent inspection.

### Achievement in music

66. Overall, achievement was outstanding in four and good in 33 of the 90 secondary schools visited; it was satisfactory in 33 schools and inadequate in 20 schools.

#### *Achievement in Key Stage 3*

67. By some way, secondary school students' musical achievement was weakest in Key Stage 3. This was a direct consequence of weak teaching and poor curriculum provision. Nearly 300 lessons were observed in Years 7 to 9. Standards<sup>14</sup> were above average or high in only around one in 10 of these lessons, and they were low in almost two fifths of the lessons inspected. In around a quarter of Key Stage 3 lessons observed, students made inadequate progress. There were very few Key Stage 3 lessons where students made outstanding progress.
68. Overall, schools' own assessment of attainment by the end of Year 9 was overgenerous. It did not reflect the lower standards seen by inspectors through lesson observations, scrutiny of completed work and discussions with students.
69. The National Curriculum sets out clear expectations for the end of Key Stage 3. Most students should be able to perform significant parts from memory (taking a solo part or providing rhythmic support), improvise melodic and rhythmic material within given structures, use a variety of notations, and compose music for different occasions using appropriate musical devices. These expectations were not met in around three fifths of the schools visited. While many students participated willingly and were interested in listening to or learning facts about different musical styles and traditions, the majority had a limited understanding about the essential musical features of these styles and how they related to each other. Similarly, while the majority were willing to participate in creative tasks set by teachers, the depth of their responses was limited because their understanding about the vocabulary and grammar of musical language was weak.

---

<sup>14</sup> See Annex D for definitions of standards.

### *Achievement in Key Stage 4*

70. In Key Stage 4, musical standards were highest in GCSE music lessons. Standards<sup>15</sup> of students' work were above average or high in 39% of the 72 lessons where a judgement about attainment was made. Nationally, pass rates from all schools in GCSE music examinations remained above the pass rates attained generally at GCSE. Data for 2011 showed that 77% of students entered for GCSE music in England earned a Grade C or higher, compared with an A\*–C pass rate of 72.6% across all subjects.<sup>16</sup> However, these candidates performed no better on average in GCSE music than they did in their other GCSE subjects.<sup>17</sup> Furthermore, the proportion of students taking GCSE music continues to be the lowest of all optional National Curriculum foundation subjects, by some way. In 2011, just 7% of students took GCSE music compared, for example, with art, craft and design (where 25% of students took a GCSE) and geography (with an uptake of 26%).<sup>18</sup>
71. Students were making good progress in just under half of the GCSE music lessons observed. Schools and students told inspectors that they found the GCSE listening paper much more challenging than the other elements of the course. It is perhaps not surprising that many students attain better in the performing paper, as they receive additional support through their individual instrumental or vocal lessons, including from local authority music services and from private instrumental tutors out of school. Inspection evidence suggests that not enough is being done to challenge students consistently in class GCSE music lessons, by capitalising on their performance skills and more effectively linking composing to the development of students' listening skills.
72. Although some aspects of the BTEC music specification are very different from the GCSE music courses, there are other elements where inspectors were able to make direct comparison across the Level 2 qualifications, such as in musical performance and creating musical ideas. Judgements about such musical standards were made in 72 GCSE music lessons and 21 BTEC lessons. Although the samples were small, standards demonstrated by BTEC students in these lessons and work scrutiny undertaken by inspectors were, overall, lower than those demonstrated by GCSE music students working at grades A\* to C. Standards of practical music-making were above average or high in 28 of the GCSE lessons, but were at this standard in only five of the BTEC lessons. Compared with work seen in GCSE lessons, lower standards were also observed in BTEC classes when students were required to show aural awareness and understanding of different styles of music.

---

<sup>15</sup> See Annex D for definitions of standards.

<sup>16</sup> [www.education.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s001056/index.shtml](http://www.education.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s001056/index.shtml).

<sup>17</sup> Unvalidated data from Raiseonline indicates that, in 2011, students achieved around a quarter of a grade lower in GCSE music than they did in their other GCSE subjects; [www.raiseonline.org](http://www.raiseonline.org).

<sup>18</sup> [www.education.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s001056/index.shtml](http://www.education.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s001056/index.shtml).

### *Achievement post-16*

73. The majority of observations were of traditional A-level music lessons, with a smaller number of music technology lessons. Students made good or outstanding progress in 24 of the 55 sixth form lessons where a judgement was possible. Progress was inadequate in only four of these lessons. Standards of work seen in sixth form curriculum lessons and work samples were, overall, the highest seen in any key stage, compared with age-related expectations. Standards were above average in 19 and below average in only around seven of the 55 lessons where a judgement was made.
74. The proportion of students taking an A level in music has decreased slightly since 2008. In 2011, just under 9,000 students in schools and colleges took music A level, accounting for 1% of the A-level entry in England. By comparison, art and design accounted for 5% of the 16–18-year-old A-level entry.<sup>19</sup> Around a third of the total entries were for music technology, with around two thirds opting for the traditional music course. Around six of every 10 music A-level entries in 2011 were by boys, with boys accounting for over 80% of entries in A-level music technology.
75. Overall, standards at A level have increased slightly since 2008. Data showed that, in 2011, 43% of students in England gained A\* to B grades in an A-level music examination, compared with 40% in 2008. However, standards remained below the national average compared with other A-level subjects overall, where 53% gained grades A\* to B in 2011.<sup>20</sup> Wide differences in standards remain between A-level music and A-level music technology. Only 31% of music technology students in schools and colleges gained grades A\* to B in 2011. Nine per cent of these students gained grades A\* to A in music technology, compared with 27% across all subjects nationally.
76. Sixth form students benefited greatly when they assumed leadership roles of extra-curricular ensembles. These included students taking the A-level music courses and others for whom future education and career plans had led to other A-level choices but who, nonetheless, wanted to continue participating in the musical life of their school.

### *Achievement in singing*

77. One of inspectors' biggest concerns over the three-year reporting period was about the paucity of singing observed in secondary schools. Singing was inadequate – or simply not happening at all – in 41 of the 90 schools inspected. Typically, the school might offer a choir or other extra-curricular vocal group, but singing work of note was rarely observed in curriculum lessons. Despite the keen interest of many young people in song (particularly in popular styles) and

---

<sup>19</sup> [www.education.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s001055/index.shtml](http://www.education.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s001055/index.shtml).

<sup>20</sup> [www.education.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s001055/index.shtml](http://www.education.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s001055/index.shtml).

the statutory National Curriculum requirement to teach vocal work as part of the Key Stage 3 curriculum, vocal work was good or outstanding in just 17 of the 90 schools.

78. An increasing number of the schools were capitalising on students' interest in singing stimulated by television shows such as *Glee*, by organising similar clubs in school. These activities were certainly engendering enthusiasm for singing and helping to build students' confidence for performing in public, but improving the musical quality was not always the prime consideration.

One school visited had an established 'show choir' of some 50 students, including nine boys. Visually, the choir was very impressive with slick moves and lots of energy. Vocally, there was promise; the students sang confidently, and occasionally in simple thirds-and-sixths harmonies, even though it was constantly at high volume against the backing track. As the rehearsal progressed, however, there was less attention paid to improving the quality of singing than to perfecting the 'moves' and, as the students were instructed, 'communicating the mood of the song through your facial expressions to the audience'.

This was a satisfactory musical experience – but it was not better because there was insufficient focus on improving the quality of their vocal work.

79. Even in schools where choirs were well established and performing to a good standard, equal participation from boys and girls in vocal ensembles was rare. One reason for this was choice of repertoire. Contrasting evidence from a choir rehearsal and classroom work in one school illustrates why boys may not choose to get involved.

The school choir rehearsal was, in many respects, being led well by the head of music. Preparing for the forthcoming Christmas concert, students were performing songs from notated scores with good attention being paid to improving diction and tone quality. Of the 25 students present, just two were boys and these were from Years 7 and 8. The girls were from all year groups, including the sixth form. In contrast to the other, more serious repertoire, the final song rehearsed was 'I'm a Little Christmas Cracker', performed with the students adding actions and choreographed hand movements. While the two boys joined in compliantly, it was clear that they were not as enthusiastic as the girls, who were enjoying the song and the choreography a great deal.

Later during this inspection, Year 11 students were observed working on group improvisations. One group featured two boys who were beat-boxing and rapping; another group featured a boy extemporising over the chord sequence of Leiber and Stoller's 'Stand by me'. In both cases, the quality of the vocal work and musicality was high, and the seriousness of the students' commitment was an extremely strong feature of their learning. When asked whether they had considered joining the choir, one said that



'We know that Miss does a good job with the choir, and it's a really good standard, but it's not for us – we're just not interested in that style of music or way of doing things.'

80. There were, however, some notable exceptions where vocal work was truly at the heart of school life. In one school visited, the importance of singing was evident in class lessons at all key stages, through extra-curricular activities and in the school's work with its local community.

Every one of the nine curriculum lessons observed, in all key stages, included vocal work of good quality. The quality of some singing heard during the inspection, such as in a rehearsal for a performance of Britten's *St Nicolas*, was breathtaking. In addition to the liturgical choirs, there were many other secular singing groups, and a thriving parents' and staff choir. Following cessation of external funding, the school was financing and leading an extensive programme of vocal work in feeder primary schools and had established a Saturday morning children's choir across a number of local authorities.

The good practice films for the London Oratory School and Cotham School include a range of curriculum and extra-curricular vocal work. They can be found at this link: [www.youtube.com/ofstednews](http://www.youtube.com/ofstednews).

#### *Participation in additional tuition and extra-curricular musical activities*

81. As with primary schools, inspectors considered the extent to which all groups of students benefited from music. Seventy-five of the secondary schools visited were able to offer participation data, providing a sample of almost 80,000 pupils. The data showed that, overall, 12% of students were benefiting from additional instrumental or vocal tuition, and 11% were participating in extra-curricular activities.
82. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities, those who were looked after, and those known to be eligible for free school meals were again less likely to be involved in additional musical activities than the general school population. For example, while 14% of students without special educational needs and/or disabilities were taking part in additional instrumental or vocal programmes, only 6% of those with special needs benefited from this tuition. The proportion of girls taking part in extra-curricular music was almost twice that of boys. Many schools were surprised and, quite rightly, concerned when faced with this information, particularly when it was discussed in the context of whole-school policies and strategies for promoting equalities.

#### **The quality of teaching in music**

83. The quality of teaching was outstanding in five, good in 34 and satisfactory in 37 of the 90 secondary schools. Teaching was inadequate in 14 schools. Overall, inspectors made over 500 formal inspection judgements on the quality of teaching in individual sessions. Just over four fifths of these judgements

were made in curriculum lessons, with the rest applying to instrumental/vocal tuition and ensemble rehearsals.

84. By a considerable margin, the least effective teaching was seen in Key Stage 3. Overall, much less inadequate teaching was observed in Key Stages 4 and 5. The most effective teaching was seen in Key Stage 4, where nearly half the lessons were judged good or outstanding.
85. Judgements about the quality of teaching were made in a small number of individual and group instrumental or vocal lessons. Teaching was at least satisfactory in almost all of these lessons; just under half were good or better.
86. As in primary schools, the quality of teaching in music was stronger in the much smaller number of extra-curricular instrumental ensemble and choir rehearsals observed than it was in classroom lessons. Teaching was good or better in the large majority of these rehearsals, and inadequate in only three sessions.

### *Starting musically*

87. Nearly all the curriculum lessons seen included a short 'starter' activity. In the best examples, these 'starters' were both musically engaging and entirely relevant to the main learning focus that followed. This was exemplified in a GCSE lesson about the first movement of Mozart's 40th Symphony.

The lesson started with the class learning to vocalise the first eight bars of the main theme, first accompanied by the teacher at the piano and then with the recording. Good attention was paid to intonation and phrasing; as they sang, the teacher skilfully pointed out the structure of antecedent and consequent phrases and explained how the melodic shape of each phrase helped to create such a structure. When the students came to prepare their own small-group interpretations of this extract, using keyboards and guitars as well as orchestral instruments, they had already internalised the melody and had a good understanding of how Mozart's melody writing worked.

88. Much more frequently, though, the starter activities chosen were of less use because they were either completely unrelated to the main learning focus of the lesson or were unmusical. A common occurrence at the start of the lesson was the protracted sharing of verbal learning objectives with the class, with students sometimes required to copy them down, thus further delaying the start of musical learning. For some students with learning difficulties, and particularly those with weak literacy skills, this provided an immediate barrier to their musical learning and enjoyment in the lesson.
89. Often, extended spoken introductions preceded lessons which were also predicated on non-musical activities. Here, the focus was more about participation and completion of tasks than on the musical quality of work produced. In these lessons, there was often little or no use by the teacher of explaining and modelling using the language of musical sound.

*Extra-musical influences on the quality of lesson planning and teaching*

90. Another factor that inhibited better music teaching was the greater focus on whole-school, cross-curricular themes and strategies than on musical learning. Clearly, it is important that opportunities to promote good literacy skills are exploited in all lessons. Learning to use appropriate vocabulary when analysing and appraising music is essential to success, especially at GCSE and A level. However, there were too many instances of a focus on literacy resulting in an insufficient focus on musical learning. This was the case in the following Year 9 lesson.

The lesson plan detailed carefully thought-out explanations of how the work would help develop students' literacy and numeracy. But the reality was that in practice the students' musical learning was poor – in fact, for the first 20 minutes of a one-hour music lesson, which was for most of these students the only music education of their week, there was no musical learning because they had to complete written tasks about the life and work of Eric Clapton and Johnny Cash, using printed 'factsheets' from which they had to extract and copy information.

91. Similarly, while there are many well-documented links between music and mathematics, 'musical maths' lessons were not effective when the result was unmusical learning. In this example, students were not appropriately challenged or motivated because insufficient regard had been given to their prior musical attainment or their musical experiences outside the classroom.

In a Year 7 class, 30 students were sitting at desks, in rows and in silence, completing a worksheet. The lesson plan explained that this activity was a contribution to the school's cross-curricular numeracy drive.

The students had 'sums' to do: on the premise (from key signatures) that a crotchet represents '4' and a minim represents '2', what is crotchet multiplied by minim?, what is quaver (8) plus crotchet?, and so on.

After a while, the students marked their answers, the marks were recorded and the teacher said, 'Since you all found that so easy, you can have a go at making up your own musical maths puzzle.' Going round the class a few minutes later, one boy offered, rather cheekily, 'How about demisemiquaver divided by breve?' Later discussions revealed that this student was about to take a graded piano examination.

While 'ticking the lesson plan box' for having a numeracy objective, the lesson itself was fundamentally unmusical. Worse, it was also musically confusing and, indeed, mathematically undemanding.

*Teaching in the sixth form*

92. Typically, the A-level music lessons observed were related exclusively to one of the specification papers. Schools did not always realise the opportunities to link

these areas of learning synoptically. One exception was seen in a Year 12 lesson, which focused on an analysis of the melodies and harmonies in Bruckner's motet 'Locus Iste'.

Before the lesson, the teacher explained to the inspector that while students found it easy to learn theoretical definitions of technical terms, they found it much harder to identify these devices aurally.

Rather than teaching through words and recorded extracts, the teacher led a series of practical tasks where students performed the pieces, deconstructed (through rehearsal) the musical features that created the musical style, and then put the piece back together in performance. In this way, performing skills were used to help develop listening skills *and* strengthen students' theoretical understanding. Only at the end of the lesson were the students asked to record their understanding and learning by annotating their printed scores. As a result of musical teaching, they were able to do this with ease.

93. The most effective A-level music technology teaching ensured that there was a good balance between activities that developed students' musical understanding and activities that built the technical and theoretical knowledge needed for success in examinations. These teachers recognised that high-quality musical responses were fundamental to successful achievement.

[The good practice film about Cotham School includes consideration of teaching and learning using music technology. It can be found at this link: www.youtube.com/ofstednews.](http://www.youtube.com/ofstednews)

94. In contrast, students in less effective schools performed poorly because the main focus of teaching was on mastering the functional aspects of the technology, rather than seeking a musical response through the technology.

The main learning objective for a Year 12 music technology lesson was for students to 'demonstrate their understanding of the sequencing and production software by creating their own harmonised melody and then producing different versions using a variety of MIDI effects'. Scrutiny of students' work revealed a poor understanding of melodic structures and devices; the tunes that they had composed had little sense of shape or phrasing, and it was clear that their grasp of harmony and tonality was also weak. They did have a secure understanding of how the controllers could be used to change the timbre, tempo, articulation and dynamics of their work; but without a firm musical foundation to enable them to know which changes to make, and why, this knowledge was of much less use.

### *The quality of assessment*

95. Assessment was outstanding in just three and good in only 22 of the 90 secondary schools visited; it was satisfactory in 45 and inadequate in 20 schools. For many of the music teachers seen, assessment continued to be an

area of great difficulty. Inspection observations revealed two main reasons for this difficulty.

96. The first reason was linked to schools' requirement for teachers to provide half-termly numerical levels and sub-levels of attainment for every student. While it is important to demonstrate, measure, track and challenge students' progress through comparison of their work and achievement over time, this led to frequent instances of teachers artificially and inaccurately dividing the levels into sub-grades or assessing isolated areas of musical activity, rather than considering students' musical responses holistically.
97. Where music departments had constructed their own sub-divided National Curriculum levels, nominally derived from the eight published level statements, considerable amounts of teaching time were spent on the mechanics of assessment procedures. This often had a negative impact on students' engagement, enjoyment and achievement, as it did in this Year 8 lesson.

After a short listening activity, the students were told in detail how they could achieve the various 'levels' available for their composing work. The level descriptors projected on the whiteboard were:

Level 3.6	I can decide how I am going to use the elements of music in my composition
Level 4.0	I can compose appropriate music that accompanies my story
Level 4.2	I can use the elements of music when composing to create an effect
Level 4.4	I can compose short ideas to represent different parts
Level 5.0	I can use more than one element at the same time to create an effect

Learning was hindered because of the over-complex way that these levels had been constructed by the school and explained by the teacher. Insufficient emphasis was on the musical depth of the students' responses.

Having become frustrated at sitting passively for almost a third of their weekly one-hour music lesson, the students did not settle to work once they were sent into their groups, spending most of the remaining time engaged in social talk or playing 'party pieces' on the keyboards, rather than completing the composing task set.

98. Such approaches to assessment missed the very essence of the National Curriculum levels in music: that the levels represent a broad consideration of a student's musical response and understanding across all areas of musical experience; that the levels should be awarded using a range of musical activities over an extended period of time rather than for shorter tasks; and that the first sentence of each level captures the 'big picture' about a student's musical responses and progress.

99. This mechanical method of assessment masked the second major reason why assessment was judged no better than satisfactory in so many schools. As in primary schools, there was insufficient use of the most musical method of assessment – listening accurately to students’ work, challenging them robustly when it does not meet expectations, and helping them to improve through modelling what is expected or possible.
100. The most effective assessment practice observed helped students to listen more accurately to their own work, helped them identify for themselves where improvements were needed, and showed them how to improve through expert musical modelling by the teacher. However, too many schools did not assess in this way, or exploit the use of audio and video recordings in the classroom to listen to and assess students’ work more accurately. A well-ordered catalogue of recordings over time, supported by commentaries and scores, provides a very effective and compelling way to demonstrate students’ musical progress. Where there was good practice, teachers capitalised on students’ interest in and facility with internet and mobile technology. In one school, students used their mobile telephones in lessons to record and appraise their work (subject to a clear code of conduct, which students respected), and used email to share and assess MP3 sound files of their compositions and performances. All this was central to the good inclusion and engagement of students in music education, and led to well above average numbers continuing with examination courses, where they made good progress to achieve above-average standards.

The good practice film about Cotham School includes the use of video and audio recording for assessing students’ work. The film can be found at this link: [www.youtube.com/ofstednews](http://www.youtube.com/ofstednews).

### **The quality of the curriculum in music**

101. The quality of the curriculum was satisfactory in 40 and inadequate in 22 of the secondary schools visited. It was outstanding in only seven and good in just 21 of the schools. Common reasons for inadequate judgements included: insufficient time allocated by schools for music in Key Stage 3; absence of key aspects of musical experience such as singing and music technology; lack of progression into Key Stage 4; and paucity of planning in all key stages.
102. Most commonly, the time allocation for music in Key Stage 3 was a weekly lesson of between 50 and 75 minutes. Used well, this time proved sufficient to provide students with an appropriate range of musical experiences across a suitably broad range of musical styles, traditions and genres. This was by no means always the case, though. In too many instances, decisions taken by a school to reduce time for music adversely affected the breadth and depth of curriculum coverage and, consequently, caused a decline in students’ musical achievement and enjoyment.
103. One change was a reduction in some schools of the Key Stage 3 music programme from three years to two years. This did not just involve music; in

nearly all cases, it was to provide students with a three-year Key Stage 4 in which to complete their GCSE or BTEC courses across all subjects. However, in a small number of schools, different groups of students were allocated different amounts or different organisation of music curriculum time at Key Stage 3, dependent on their progress in other areas of the curriculum and the priorities given by the school to their particular needs. For example, in one school, students with literacy difficulties were withdrawn completely from music education in Year 7.

104. In another school, a carousel arrangement with art, drama and dance meant that students received only one 10-week block of music lessons in each of Years 7, 8 and 9. While recognising the need for the school to provide a broad and balanced curriculum that embraced a range of subject areas within a busy timetable, this approach did not allow an appropriate range of music to be covered in sufficient depth over the key stage. It also led to sporadic musical development. It was difficult to build and sustain progress in musical understanding when there were such long gaps between musical experiences. This was also shown in a school that taught music as part of a carousel in Years 7 and 8, with no music in Year 9 except for students in the top sets for English and mathematics. In this school, less than half the average number of students opted for GCSE music in Key Stage 4, and those that did told inspectors that they felt inadequately prepared for the course. Less than one in every 50 students was taking additional instrumental or vocal tuition, and very few students participated in extra-curricular musical activities.
105. Two secondary schools had taken the decision to drop regular class music lessons from the Key Stage 3 curriculum completely. In both cases, this was because of difficulties recruiting and retaining staff.
106. In almost all cases, the consequence of reduced or poorly organised time for music, combined with weaknesses in teaching and the planning of learning, was that all students or groups of students did not achieve the progression in musical skills, knowledge and understanding that should be reasonably expected between the ages of 11 and 14.

#### *Starting from scratch in Year 7*

107. Many of the planned programmes of study for Year 7 observed in the survey started with a project on 'The Elements of Music'. Notwithstanding inspectors' concerns with the quality of music education in some primary schools, the picture observed during the survey was not as bleak as that proposed by many secondary schools. Yet frequently heads of music explained that the reason for 'going back to basics' with the elements of music – teaching students about the fundamentals of pitch, dynamics, texture, rhythm, timbre and structure – was that students came from primary schools where 'they have had no or very little experience of music'. When asked about their knowledge of the whole-class instrumental programmes and primary singing initiatives, few secondary school music teachers had detailed understanding of this work or, more significantly,

how these initiatives had impacted on their students. Similarly, few had discussed curriculum planning with their feeder primary schools or developed cross-key stage music curriculum strategies.

The good practice film about Cotham School includes illustration of how specialist arts status has been used to build musical links with feeder primary schools. The film can be found at this link: [www.youtube.com/ofstednews](http://www.youtube.com/ofstednews).

108. Where the secondary schools visited had made baseline assessments in music, these were most usually in the form of written tests and/or questionnaires of students' factual knowledge about music, rather than assessments of their musical understanding through practical performance and creative tasks. Where there was an aural element, responses were gathered through written questions and answers. Again, these strategies provided an immediate barrier to musical participation for students with literacy difficulties. Very few schools used curriculum work from primary schools to assess levels of musical understanding.
109. This inspection evidence supports the welcome focus on transition between primary and secondary school being made by the Musical Bridges initiative funded by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation. However, as survey evidence also shows, there are equally important concerns about musical transition within and across each of the key stages.

### *Musical Futures*

110. An increasing number of the schools described their teaching and curriculum approach in Key Stage 3 as a 'Musical Futures' model, referring to another initiative promoted and funded by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation. In a few instances, staff at these schools had been involved formally in the Musical Futures project, through training and the sharing of practice by networking with Musical Futures 'Champion Schools'.
111. As reported in the 2006 Ofsted evaluation of the Musical Futures project, some of the Musical Futures work seen was having a considerable and beneficial effect, both on the engagement of young people in music education and on their musical development.<sup>21</sup> For example, the approach taken in one school allowed students to take a lead in their learning and choice of repertoire, but also had a strong focus on the development of students' aural awareness to improve the quality of their musical responses.

The good practice film for Flegg High School includes Musical Futures work and can be found at this link: [www.youtube.com/ofstednews](http://www.youtube.com/ofstednews).

---

<sup>21</sup> *An evaluation of the Paul Hamlyn Foundations' Musical Futures Project (2682)*, Ofsted, 2006; [www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/2682](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/2682).



112. There were, however, schools where a Musical Futures approach – as defined by the school, and not through endorsement by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation – resulted in poor progress because teachers did not demonstrate that they still had a key role to play and that the principles of good musical teaching and learning still applied.<sup>22</sup> This was shown in a school where Year 9 students were about to start on what the head of department described as a ‘Musical Futures-style band project’.

At the start of the lesson, the teacher explained that students had to choose a band name and ‘image’. They could then come forward and choose one of eight ‘song packs’ and listen to the CD recording of the song to decide who was going to take which part in the band. Thirty minutes into the lesson, the students started listening. Some enjoyed singing along to songs that they knew well, such as the Kaiser Chiefs’ ‘I Predict a Riot’, but that apart, there was little musical participation. Although instruments were available, the packs contained stave and tab-notated scores that the students could not interpret because their previous learning had been poor. At no stage did the teacher promote good musical learning, or support and challenge the students sufficiently. Significantly, she did not play or sing a single note herself during the entire lesson.

113. The approach taken by the most effective Musical Futures programmes, capitalising on students’ interest in music but also providing them with clear musical guidance and good resources, captures many of the benefits also enjoyed by young people through projects led by community musicians out of school hours. This work can be particularly helpful in re-engaging the most vulnerable with education and society. In the best of these projects, a robust focus on the development of students’ musical skills in popular styles was complemented by strong development of their social and personal skills, in the same way that other young people’s development was enhanced through participation in community orchestras and choirs. Managed well, such projects provide good training and professional development for the community musicians, providing them with opportunities to develop their own teaching practice which they can then apply in other educational environments.<sup>23</sup>

---

<sup>22</sup> The Paul Hamlyn Foundation makes it very clear, in its guidance and resources, that Musical Futures does not constitute a set way of teaching, or of planning curriculum content; rather, it promotes a repertoire of alternative approaches to learning across the whole range of musical styles, capitalising on non-formal organisation of lessons and designed to engage students by personalising their learning. Survey evidence suggested that the impact of the Musical Futures approach varies widely.

<sup>23</sup> An example of such a project can be found at: [www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/motivating-young-people-through-music-sound-it-out-community-music](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/motivating-young-people-through-music-sound-it-out-community-music).

*Planning beyond specifications in Key Stages 4 and 5*

114. There was limited evidence of schools providing good curriculum planning for Key Stages 4 and 5. Typically, in most of the schools visited, the examination specification served as a scheme of work with a single A4 overview of the topics to be covered, term by term. Only a minority of schools had adapted the specification to provide a bespoke scheme of work for their own particular students' and staff needs. Even less common were planned links between the key stages – for example, showing how a Key Stage 3 project on the 12-bar blues would be developed in the GCSE Popular Music areas of study, and again in the Jazz and Popular Music areas of study at A level.

*Using music technology*

115. Despite the huge potential for using technology in music as a tool for inclusion and for developing musical understanding, especially given the increasing availability of and young people's great facility with mobile technology, the use of music technology was inadequate in just over a third of the secondary schools visited. In three of the schools, there was no provision for computer technology in music at all.
116. In exceptional instances, the skilful use of music technology did much to overcome barriers to inclusion or, as importantly, to musical achievement. In this example from an outstanding lesson, excellent teaching enabled students with special education needs to benefit from musical experiences that would otherwise have been difficult for them to access.

The school included an enhanced resource base for students with high levels of autism and other significant learning difficulties. In a Year 7 lesson, 12 students from the base were being taught to sing the 'Breakfast Calypso' quodlibet. They were making good progress in learning each of the parts, with particularly good rhythmic understanding. Melodically, there were some insecurities but the teacher helped them, patiently and musically, to improve the tone of their singing. However, it was clear that, as a group, they would find it difficult to put all three parts together in a live performance. Using headphones for every student and taking turns to be the 'recording engineer', the class recorded each part separately, against a pre-recorded backing track. Using a commercial sequencing programme and the interactive whiteboard, the teacher then showed the class how the three recorded lines could be played together. Consequently the students heard themselves singing in three parts, to their enormous delight.

The lesson did not end there. The teacher loaded the completed performance on to the network, and students were asked to go to individual computers, load up the track, listen again to the performance and create their own rhythmic accompaniments to be played with the recording. The teaching assistants and the teacher circulated, joined in

themselves by inventing rhythmic patterns, and ensured that all students made a purposeful and musical response.

### The quality of leadership and management in music

117. Leadership and management were outstanding in six and good in 35 of the 90 secondary schools; they were satisfactory in 30 and inadequate in 19 schools.
118. The accuracy of self-evaluation was good or outstanding in 43 of the 90 schools, and inadequate in 20 schools. Most schools offered a formal, written self-evaluation document at the start of the survey visit. In the final year of the survey, it was encouraging to find schools making use of the Ofsted subject-specific inspection criteria that were published in September 2010.<sup>24</sup> However, the limited access to and take-up of quality CPD training and/or local networking meant that, in too many schools, self-evaluation lacked perspective. Where self-evaluation was weak, schools did not relate provision and outcomes sufficiently to the national picture or current professional expectations and practice.

#### *Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and networking*

119. The access to and impact of CPD was outstanding in three schools; it was good in 28, satisfactory in 31 and inadequate in 28 of the schools inspected. In many cases, secondary music teachers' formal CPD was restricted to attendance at moderation or administration events organised by the examination boards, or commercial conferences led by examiners to help improve outcomes in Key Stages 4 and 5. Those teachers who had attended local or national training for Key Stage 3 music, or who had attended vocal courses as part of the national singing strategy, said that they had found these events useful.
120. Professional isolation continues to be a major issue for secondary school music teachers, as reported in *Making more of music*. The 'Teaching Music' online blogs, forum and resource-sharing platform provide opportunities for practitioners across the country to share ideas and practice. The Teaching Music forum is moderated well, and encourages healthy, professional dialogue and debate between colleagues. However, only a minority of teachers reported using this site and few participated in regular area or regional meetings of music teachers to form professional partnerships with colleagues in other schools. Most commonly, teachers said that they simply did not have the time to attend these meetings because of the pressures of planning, assessment and public performances in their own schools. This was particularly apparent where the music department was staffed by a single teacher. In most of these cases, the professional isolation was compounded by the fact that the teacher had no

---

<sup>24</sup> *Generic grade descriptors and supplementary subject-specific guidance for inspectors on making judgements during subject survey visits to schools* (20100015), Ofsted, 2012; [www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/20100015](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/20100015). These criteria were revised in January 2012, to align with the new Section 5 inspection framework.

one with appropriate subject expertise to share ideas with or to turn to within the school.

121. Few schools were utilising 'NuMu', an innovative, free online platform to share, celebrate and appraise students' composing and performing work. In addition, few teachers were using NuMu to communicate and network with other schools and colleagues. This represented a missed opportunity for effective partnership working, particularly given the professional isolation of so many secondary music teachers.

The good practice film about Flegg High School includes consideration of how a rural school has overcome geographical isolation by building networks within the local authority and through the use of technology. The film can be found at this link: [www.youtube.com/ofstednews](http://www.youtube.com/ofstednews).

## Special schools

122. The overall effectiveness of music in one of the four special schools inspected was outstanding. This school had provision for students aged 3 to 19 covering a wide range of physical, behavioural and learning needs. The provision included music therapy, regular classroom curriculum provision for all pupils regardless of age or special educational need or disability, and sustained partnerships with professional music groups. The school was also a centre for CPD and worked closely with other music education organisations.
123. Of the remaining special schools the overall effectiveness of one was good, and two were satisfactory overall. A further special school was visited as part of the nominated good practice sample.

The good practice film about Whitefield Schools and Centre considers how classroom teaching, music therapy, partnerships with professional musicians and innovative assessment methods can be used to support the musical achievement of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The film can be found at this link: [www.youtube.com/ofstednews](http://www.youtube.com/ofstednews).

## Part B: Seven priorities for musical education in schools

124. Part B of this report highlights seven priorities for all schools, other funded providers of music education and CPD, and national bodies, necessary to improve the effectiveness of music education. The priorities, rooted in inspection evidence, consider the key causes of the variations observed in the quality and equality of music provision, and in pupils' achievement. Additional examples are given of how the most effective schools ensured that their musical provision was of high quality and benefited all pupils equally.

## Priority: challenge inequalities among pupils and between schools

125. As well as wide differences in the quality of teaching and curriculum provision, survey evidence revealed considerable inequities in the way in which different groups of pupils, different schools and different local authorities were benefiting from additional provision in music.<sup>25</sup>
126. Not enough of the schools surveyed had acted to improve participation in musical activities by under-represented groups. While most were aware, for example, that many more girls than boys participated in choirs, far fewer could provide evidence of concerted action that they had taken to overcome these differences.
127. While most of the schools had policies in place to support pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds who wished to take up additional individual or small-group instrumental or vocal learning, there were wide differences in the expected level of parental contributions. In some schools, there was no charge for tuition whatsoever; in other schools, the full cost was passed to parents. In some cases, this was because of the way that local authorities spent and distributed local and national funding for music education.
128. The government's ambition to target the participation of less privileged groups, through a weighted funding structure for the new music hubs, reflects welcome recognition that funding has not always reached schools and pupils where the need is greatest. However, senior managers in schools and in music services also have a vital part to play in ensuring that programmes and funding reach these pupils. In the secondary schools surveyed between 2008 and 2011, only 5% of the students who were known to be eligible for free school meals were involved in additional instrumental or vocal tuition, compared with 13% of the students not known to be eligible for free school meals – and yet very few of the schools had considered evaluating the impact of their fee remission policies in increasing the inclusion of these pupils.
129. There was a wide variation in the use and distribution to schools of the Music Education Grant by local authority music services. For example, in some local authorities the Music Education Grant was delegated, pro rata, to all schools; in other authorities, the funds were kept centrally and schools were either identified as priorities or were invited to bid for the money. While not the only reason why music provision was good or inadequate, the extent to which schools were able to access this funding had an important bearing on pupils' musical achievement and sustained participation.

---

<sup>25</sup> The 'analysis of participation' pro-forma offered by inspectors provides a clear starting point for such discussions about inclusion in music. To help start these discussions in all schools, the current (September 2011) version of the participation pro-forma is included in this report as Annex C.

130. The extent to which local authority music services charged primary schools for whole-class instrumental and/or vocal programmes also varied widely. In some cases this reflected variations in the funding by individual local authorities for music education. In the final year of the survey it was reported that some local authorities were reducing or even stopping subsidies for their music services. However, comparison of delegated funding showed that, pro rata, some local authorities were benefiting considerably more than others from the national funding.
131. Some music services provided the Wider Opportunities tuition and instrument loan free of charge for the first year, with the programmes available to every school; others asked the school for a matched contribution, where it was thought that the Music Education Grant would not enable coverage in all schools. However, in some cases it was clear that the full cost of this programme was being passed on to schools, with the music service retaining the Music Education Grant to cover central costs such as buying instruments, CPD and other activities. This was one of the reasons given by schools for not participating in the whole-class instrumental programme.
132. One local music partnership offered a 'Further Opportunities' scheme, where pupils were charged £1 per lesson if they wished to continue learning to play an instrument after the first free year of Wider Opportunities. In one school, located in an area of social and economic advantage, a third of pupils had continued with tuition. However, in another school served by the same partnership, in a much less advantaged area, the initial whole-class instrumental programme had not been successful. Only two out of 110 students had chosen to continue. With the cost of the Further Opportunities lessons being relatively modest, the reasons for poor retention rates in the second school were not solely about cost; the quality of the initial Wider Opportunities experience and the way that the parents were educated about the benefits of instrumental tuition, were also key factors.

### **Priority: ensure that teachers use musical sound as the dominant language of musical teaching and learning**

133. Using musical sound as the 'target language' is at the heart of understanding the distinctive nature of good teaching and learning in music. Survey evidence showed, very clearly, that pupils made the most musical progress when they were taught *in* music, rather than *about* music.
134. It is very important that, when appropriate, pupils learn how to articulate their thoughts and understanding about music using words, both orally and in writing. Confident and accurate use of music terminology and theoretical concepts is essential for good progression through GCSE, A-level music and other graded music examinations. Using appropriate language about music, and developing understanding of notations, should feature in teaching and learning from an early age. However, in too many of the lessons observed, teachers spent significant amounts of time talking pupils through lengthy learning

objectives that were not related to the language of musical sound, or assessment criteria linked to contrived, subdivided levels that themselves constricted students' musical responses. This problem was not confined to classroom music. In a number of individual and small-group instrumental lessons inspected, peripatetic teachers also spent too much time talking and explaining verbally, rather than demonstrating and modelling.

135. One of the most memorable and effective lessons seen in the entire three-year survey showed how this 'teaching in music' approach leads to outstanding achievement and enjoyment because it has a relentless focus on musical participation and the quality of musical responses. Good musical modelling and good musical behaviour helped to ensure that a class of Year 9 boys understood exactly the teacher's musical intentions throughout the lesson. The music teacher's confidence and ability to communicate through music was vital, and every minute of the music lesson featured musical activity.

The whole lesson was conducted in musical sound. After increasingly complex call-and-response and polyrhythmic games using djembe drums, the teacher added vocal chants. To ensure that everyone was included, the call-and-response was at first between the teacher and the whole class. The pitch of the vocal chants was exactly right to make it comfortable for all to sing, an important consideration as most of the boys' voices were changing. When the responses weren't good enough, the teacher simply repeated the phrase, rather than stopping the musical flow by telling the class verbally. He did this repeatedly until they produced the response that he required.

The students clearly understood, from previous lessons, that in order to get it right they had to listen carefully to and then copy the teacher's musical model. From this, the teacher moved on to demonstrate a variety of riffs on tuned percussion, which again he asked the boys to sing back to him. Only after all this did he explain the learning objective, which was to create a group composition for voices, djembe and tuned percussion that used polyrhythmic patterns, call-and-response vocals, and melodic riffs like those found in the African music that they had listened to at the start of the lesson.

There had been no notation and minimum talking so far in the lesson, but students had developed a deep aural understanding of these musical devices through the superbly led practical activities. There had been no formal sharing of verbal objectives, but the students knew absolutely what the teachers' musical intentions were. The teacher had assessed students' responses constantly throughout the lesson and had corrected them when necessary, although in this session he did not award any formal grades or sub-levels. But importantly, this lesson was characterised by good-natured laughter, exemplary working relationships between students and the teacher, much enjoyment and much musical learning. It was simply outstanding.

136. This example demonstrates how important it is to use musical sound as the dominant language of musical teaching and learning. Good music lessons require clear musical learning intentions that should be shared with and understood by pupils. This is not to say, however, that these musical learning intentions are best communicated verbally, or always and/or only at the start of a lesson. What is much more important is that, through good musical modelling and good musical behaviour, pupils understand the teacher's *musical* intentions *throughout* the lesson. Teachers' confidence and ability to communicate through music is vital. As importantly, they need the recognition, support and permission of senior managers to take this approach to teaching. Teachers also require assessment methods that not only acknowledge the unique nature of musical learning but which are also practically realistic, allowing teachers and students to make the very best of whatever curriculum time is made available for music.
137. It is important to emphasise that, throughout the survey, there was rarely concern about the diligence and professionalism with which teachers prepared lesson plans and resources. What was also very clear, from inspection evidence, was that teachers' personal *musical* preparation for lessons is just as important. This is not only about preparing to give a confident musical performance to pupils, it is also about the teacher listening to and understanding the music, and considering how the music might best be presented to and used by pupils to improve *their* musical understanding. These aspects of lesson preparation are important whether the teacher is a specialist or a non-specialist. Good leadership, whether it is in the school or from an outside partner such as a music hub, can also help by giving teachers the confidence, permission and support to take this musical approach to planning lessons.

**Priority: plan for pupils' musical progression through and across the curriculum, and provide sufficient curriculum time for music**

138. Between 2008 and 2011, inspectors noted that schools were taking increasingly diverse approaches to music curriculum timetabling and provision. In primary schools, provision was weakened when the funded instrumental and vocal programmes were not well integrated with other class music provision; or when cross-curricular projects involved music, but did not plan for or promote the quality of pupils' musical responses. In secondary schools, music provision was weakened by whole-school decisions to reduce time for the Key Stage 3 programme so that it was not possible to cover sufficient breadth or depth of music across the key stage.
139. The National Curriculum orders define musical progression as 'progression in demand, progression in range, and progression in quality'. Planning for such progression was identified as a key area for improvement in nearly half of all the schools visited. Most schools were able to show the different activities or topics that would be covered in each year and key stage, but far fewer were



able to articulate a clear rationale for the overall organisation or order of those projects to show how pupils should progress musically.

140. This primary school scheme of work overview is typical of those seen during the three-year survey:

	Autumn 1	Spring 1	Summer 1
1	Exploring Pulse and Texture/ Christmas	Exploring Timbre	Exploring Pitch
2	Exploring Tempo/Christmas	Exploring Texture	End of KS1 Production
3	Graphic Notation/Christmas	Recorders and Basics of Stave Notation	China Project (cross curricular)
4	Wider Opportunities – Violins or Brass (Music Service to teach)		
5	African Project (cross-curricular)/ Christmas	Song writing project (Literacy link)	Sing Up – Town Hall Concert (Music Service)
6	WWII Project (cross-curricular)/ Christmas	Pop Music project	Leavers' Production

141. This secondary school scheme of work overview is also typical of those seen:










	Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1	Summer 2
7	The Elements of Music		Instruments of the Orchestra	Programme Music	Themes & Variations	Stomp!
8	African Music		Hooks and Riffs		Folk Music	Reggae
9	Musical Theatre (Singing unit)		Music and Media (music technology unit)		The Blues	Popular Song (Singing/music technology)
					'Musical Futures' approach	

142. These overviews give an indication of the knowledge about music, and the musical styles, traditions and genres to be covered over time, but do not indicate how musical quality and understanding should develop.

143. Few primary school music coordinators or headteachers had considered in sufficient detail how children's singing might develop and improve from Year 1 to Year 6, or how children's control and understanding of melody and rhythm would deepen in Years 5 and 6 following the Wider Opportunities work in Year 4. Similarly, few secondary school music coordinators had considered how their curriculum plans promoted students' musical progression from Years 7 to 9. Most could point to their increased knowledge of a greater range of musical styles, traditions and genres, and could identify that those receiving additional music lessons should be expected to have successfully taken higher grades in the Associated Board or Guildhall/Trinity examinations or gained membership of the area youth orchestra. Far fewer could explain in great detail how the quality and depth of vocal work should improve progressively from Years 7 to 9, or

how students' understanding of melodic and rhythmic textures, harmony, structure, and overall musicality should be developed progressively through aural training, composing work, playing instruments, and the use of music technology.

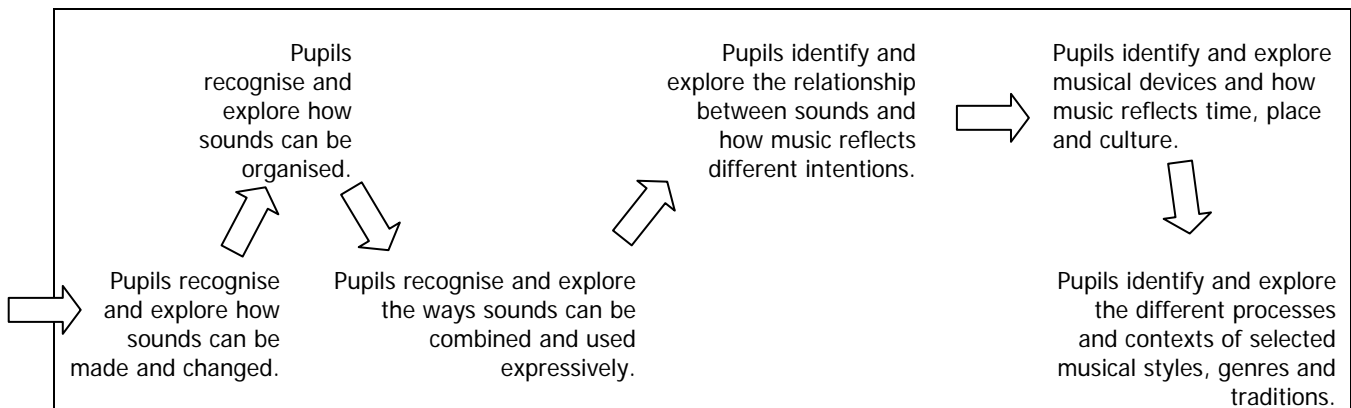
144. An alternative approach was shown by one primary school where, instead of a term-by-term curriculum project plan, the music coordinator presented a simple overview of the musical concepts that children were expected to understand as they progressed through the school. This was the plan that drove the music curriculum. Unlike the curriculum model shown in paragraph 140, this model did not consider the musical 'elements' separately, to be taught in isolated blocks in Key Stage 1. Rather, these aspects of pitch, duration, dynamics and so on were seen as musical 'dimensions' which were all developed simultaneously and progressively as broad ongoing skills throughout the key stages.

	Key Stage 1 → → → → → → →		Lower Key Stage 2 → → → → → → →		Upper Key Stage 2 → → → → →	
Pitch	High/low		Steps Leaps	Pentatonic Patterns		Major & minor
Duration	Long/short Steady beat	Rhythmic patterns	Strong beats Weak beats	Metre Crotchets Quavers	2, 3, 4	5, 6, 9 Dotted and swung rhythms
Dynamics	Loud/quiet	Graduation		Strong contrasts		Accents & articulation
Tempo	Fast/slow	Graduation		Comparing tempi		Tempo for mood effects
Timbre	Exploring	Wood, metal, strings		Orchestral family timbres		Electronic sounds
Texture	One sound Several sounds	Layers	Melody Accompaniment		Weaving Parts	Chords
Structure	Beginnings Endings	Simple repeated patterns	Question & answer	Ostinato	Rounds	Ternary Forms

145. A strength in this model of curriculum planning was that it was determined by progression in musical syntax and understanding, giving the music coordinator and other teachers of music a 'big picture' of musical progression through the curriculum. It was effective because the teaching approach that accompanied the curriculum planning was not predicated on teaching pupils the theoretical knowledge of these concepts – it was founded on practical, creative activities where pupils explored and created music using these ideas.

146. Another, simpler, model of effective planning for musical progression across phases started with the 'big idea' in each National Curriculum attainment level statement. This approach enabled teachers to understand very clearly how pupils' musical understanding might develop over time.

Key Stage 1 → → → → → → → Lower Key Stage 2 → → → → → → → Upper Key Stage 2 → → → → → → → Key Stage 3 → → → → → → →



147. Combined together, the two bases for curriculum planning shown in paragraphs 144 and 146 promote a clear expectation for pupils' increasingly complex musical syntax and their increasingly sophisticated musical responses. They also allow the teacher to vary the repertoire used, year on year, with the expectations for musical progression remaining the constant. As one music coordinator said, 'We have a regular menu of musical ideas and skills across the school (the landmarks of musical understanding) that stays the same every year, but the choice of music to develop those ideas is a moveable feast.' In this way, the evolving enthusiasms and varying specialist skills or interests of teachers, students and the community can be emphasised alongside a broader range of content, including recognised art-music 'classics', popular music, and world music traditions. These approaches maintain a rigorous focus on increasingly high standards of musical understanding, while giving the teacher the opportunity to plan and teach flexibly to his or her strengths, and the interests and needs of the students.

148. These approaches also provide simple opportunities for good partnership working between primary schools, secondary schools and partner organisations such as music hubs, to build a shared understanding of musical progression. Having a clear vision of these fundamental principles of progression through the music curriculum is essential for good management of music in school.

149. Finally, it is important to remember that any curriculum plan only serves as a guide to musical progression. Good teaching adapts a good curriculum plan to meet the needs of all pupils, including those with greater experience or higher attainment because of the additional musical learning they receive outside the classroom and independently of the school. Schools with generally very able pupils, such as grammar schools, or schools where pupils have severe learning difficulties, such as some special schools, should also reflect different expectations for their 'landmarks of musical learning'. A good example of this was seen in a special school, where the Institute of Education and the University of Roehampton's 'Sounds of Intent' framework for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties was providing a clear set of

landmarks of musical understanding, around which the curriculum was structured and students' progress assessed.<sup>26</sup>

The good practice film about Whitefield Schools and Centre includes consideration of the 'Sounds of Intent' framework. The film can be found at this link: [www.youtube.com/ofstednews](http://www.youtube.com/ofstednews).

## Priority: improve pupils' internalisation of music through high-quality singing and listening

150. The national singing strategy, Sing Up, has been successful in raising awareness of how singing can be used to support learning across the whole curriculum and improve the positive ethos of pupils and the school as a whole. The Sing Up resources, both printed and online, have rightly been welcomed by schools.<sup>27</sup> However, the survey evidence revealed limited improvement in the quality of vocal work in the primary schools visited over the past three years, and serious concerns about the absence of singing in secondary schools. There remains insufficient understanding about the importance of quality singing work in raising standards of students' musical understanding.

151. The most effective music teaching recognised a key requirement of the National Curriculum programmes of study, that pupils should be taught:

To listen with concentration, and to internalise and recall sounds with increasing aural memory.

Developing pupils' intrinsic musical understanding – an understanding that goes beyond words and which is expressed through the quality of their musical responses – has at its heart the development of listening skills. These skills do not develop primarily on paper or in words – they develop in musical sounds, inside the head. In turn, the development of another internal musical process – singing, where the sound comes from within the body – links inextricably to the development of listening with musical understanding. Singing and listening are natural partners in musical learning, in the same way that speaking and listening underpin verbal language learning. This was shown very well when Year 9 students were helped to understand how ground basses are used in Baroque music.

The lesson started with a simple counting game. Without explaining why, the teacher asked the students to chant out loud:

'1-and-2-and-3-and-4-and-5-and-6-and-7-and-8-and  
2-and-2-and-3-and-4-and-5-and-6-and-7-and-8-and  
3-and-2-and-3-and-4-and-5-and-6-and-7-and-8-and  
4-and-2-and-3-and-4-and-5-and-6-and-7-and-8-and' etc

<sup>26</sup> [www.soundsofintent.org](http://www.soundsofintent.org).

<sup>27</sup> [www.singup.org/songbank](http://www.singup.org/songbank).

The learning intentions had not been shared verbally, but the students trusted their teacher and all joined in. In fact, the mystery added to the fun.

The teacher then asked them to repeat the exercise, this time counting along while he played this music repeatedly on the keyboard:



Some of the students picked up the melodic shape of the bass line and started singing the numbers at pitch spontaneously, after the initial two strains of the ground bass. In due course, with encouragement from the teacher, the whole class was singing and counting. Although the purpose of the lesson had not been explained verbally, there was absolutely no doubt about the musical intentions of the teaching and learning. The students were already developing a good understanding of the music.

The class then listened to a recording of 'Sound the Trumpet' by Henry Purcell, which uses the same ground bass that they had learnt. More advanced students were given copies of the full score to follow, with other students following the ground bass in a single-stave score. They could all follow their scores and they all understood how the ground bass worked as part of the overall musical texture, because by now the music had been internalised through a rapid and relentless focus on vocalising and listening. Quite literally, the students left the lesson knowing this music 'inside out'.

152. Singing is the most inclusive form of music making because the musical resources are the pupils themselves. No other equipment is required. However, this also provides a challenge for teachers. With every child owning a voice, there is no reason why every single child should not have his or her singing voice used and developed. The most effective schools knew that to make use of every pupil's voice and to develop good-quality singing for all, due respect was needed for their starting points and musical interests.

A secondary school vocal group was observed at the National Festival of Music for Youth. As well as singing, seven boys aged from 13 to 17 played ukuleles with two further students on string bass and percussion. Musical leadership was provided by a senior student. They performed an excellent arrangement of the Kings of Leon song 'The Bucket', a choice that was clearly very well suited to their voice ranges, interests and ages. The musical quality of their singing and playing was excellent; the close harmony arrangement and instrumental accompaniment provided a good level of challenge and took the boys beyond merely imitating the original recording. It was very clear from these performances that the boys were well-disciplined, committed musicians, but they were also having great fun into the bargain.

153. This example shows the importance of choosing appropriate singing repertoire. Common reasons given for lack of vocal work in secondary schools continue to be that students 'won't sing' or 'don't sing', or that 'boys are embarrassed to sing when their voices are changing'. Discussions during inspection showed that, in too many schools, not enough thought had been given to how repertoire could be chosen and organised to overcome these perceived problems.
154. In conclusion, the central role that vocal work plays in widening musical inclusion and in developing pupils' musical understanding goes far beyond simply providing opportunities for children to sing, or promoting singing as a vehicle for boosting self-confidence or supporting other types of learning in the curriculum. It goes to the heart of good teaching and learning in music, demanding much more than just adding occasional or even weekly singing activities to the primary school timetable, or building an annual singing module into the Key Stage 3 curriculum. Managed creatively and taught well, singing is the most effective way to give every pupil a chance for their voice to be heard. Combined with the development of good listening, it can be the most effective way for students to develop their musical understanding.

**Priority: use technology to promote creativity, widen inclusion, and make assessment more musical**

155. The survey also identified very strongly that the past three years have brought insufficient improvements in the quality of musical learning through the use of technology. As with singing, a key reason for this was insufficient consideration by schools of the way that music technology can be used synoptically, across a range of activities, to engage all groups of students and develop their intrinsic musical understanding.
156. By far the most common use of computers by pupils in the music lessons observed was to sequence musical ideas to create compositions or arrangements. This was either through the use of software that required pupils to input ideas in real time via a MIDI keyboard, through step-time input using the mouse or computer keyboard, or through cutting and pasting pre-composed ideas. While they were kept engaged by the tasks and enjoyed working with the sounds, most found it difficult to explain the reasoning behind their choices. Opportunities were missed to develop understanding of the musical syntax, form or the sampling processes that underlay the creation of the pre-composed loops and riffs that the students were using. Even where pupils were creating their own musical ideas in step-time or in real-time, limited evidence was seen of them going beyond the initial inputting of notes to shape the dynamics, articulation or subtleties of tempo for their ideas.
157. The use of music technology for creative work was almost exclusively restricted to popular music styles, or to arranging or making compositions in Western art-music styles. Some use was seen of technology used to explore minimalist music, but no examples were seen of students similarly exploring other

electronic or electro-acoustic art-music styles of the 20th century, for example, even at Key Stage 4 and A level.

158. The use of music technology was varied in the five special schools visited. Staff were aware of the specialist technology resources developed to make music more accessible to students with moderate and profound learning difficulties, but not all had considered how this might be used most effectively in their schools and for the particular needs of their pupils.

The good practice film about Whitefield Schools and Centre includes an example of a student using Soundbeam<sup>28</sup> technology to create a musical composition during a music therapy session. The film can be found at this link: [www.youtube.com/ofstednews](http://www.youtube.com/ofstednews).

159. A common use of music technology in performance was through commercial backing tracks to accompany singing. However, in most cases, this was for convenience rather than for creativity. For example, although technology allows the tempo of backing tracks to be varied without altering pitch and while sequences can be transposed as appropriate to suit the voice ranges of the singers, in nearly all cases the tracks were used unaltered. Although providing professional-sounding support for performances and offering accompaniment when no pianist or guitarist was available, the use of a backing track in rehearsal was sometimes a hindrance rather than a help because it could not react to the conductor's direction or the singers' responses. As one experienced music coordinator commented, 'It's so much better to use live accompaniment – backing tracks don't have ears.'
160. Although almost every teacher observed had a laptop or classroom computer, opportunities were being missed to use technology to record, store and assess recordings of pupils' work. Free, open source software is easily available to download and, with the addition of one or two quality microphones, is more than adequate for teachers and pupils to use in Key Stages 1 to 3 for multi-track recording and sound processing.
161. However, the use of such software was rare. While students were quite clearly very comfortable with using mobile technology to communicate with each other and organise their lives, not enough teachers capitalised on this technology or interest in the music classroom. Quite simply, using music technology more frequently and more effectively to create, perform, record, appraise and improve pupils' work is central to improving inclusion and the quality of assessment of music in schools.

---

<sup>28</sup> [www.soundbeam.co.uk](http://www.soundbeam.co.uk).

## Priority: strengthen senior leadership of music in schools

162. Two key principles were understood by leaders and managers in schools where provision and outcomes in music were good or outstanding. First, they knew that the entitlement of every child to learn to play musical instruments and to sing was not restricted to special projects or additional activities – it was at the heart of a regular, ongoing music curriculum for all groups of pupils. Second, they knew that effective leadership required them to take full responsibility for assuring the quality of all music provision in their school – including that provided by outside agencies and visiting professionals.

In all of the six good practice films, the headteachers talk about how they support and assure the quality of music provision in their schools. The good practice film about Flegg High School includes consideration of how one headteacher has worked with a specialist adviser to develop his own understanding of key issues in music education. The film can be found at this link: [www.youtube.com/ofstednews](http://www.youtube.com/ofstednews).

163. Almost all schools paid good attention to ensuring that visiting instrumental and vocal teachers had undergone the necessary safeguarding and identity checks. In most cases, this was through the local authority music service but where staff were employed directly by the school, appropriate processes were being followed.

164. Less consistent were other safeguarding matters. Concerns noted by inspectors included poor management by schools of electrical equipment, particularly trailing power and amplification leads, windowless doors of rooms used for one-to-one teaching, and excessive noise levels in lessons and rehearsals. These issues were raised with schools because they are important for the safety, well-being and confidence of both pupils and teachers, particularly in one-to-one instrumental and vocal teaching.

165. Where schools delegated responsibility for music education to external providers, including local authority music services, systems of monitoring and evaluation were not always sufficient to guarantee good or even satisfactory provision and outcomes.

166. Too many external providers of whole-class teaching or extra-curricular projects presented schools with a ready-made 'solution' – a fixed scheme of work and way of working – without taking sufficient account of the particular needs, interests and abilities of pupils in that particular school. Insufficient dialogue about the school's particular contexts, between the school's leadership and management and the visiting musicians, resulted in diminished outcomes for pupils. In contrast, the headteacher of a special school took a strong lead to ensure that an additional music project gave good value for money.

The school had secured funding for a project led by community gospel singers. Because of students' profound learning difficulties, it was agreed



that the singers would spend time in the school, observing the students and school staff at work so that they would understand their particular needs and working practices. In this way, the experience would be tailored and bespoke to the school and would therefore be much more effective than an 'off-the-shelf' project.

167. However, it was unusual for a primary school headteacher or music coordinator to be so actively involved in the quality assurance of teaching in their schools by external providers. Most commonly, discussions between headteachers and heads of music service concerned financial and contractual arrangements, leaving music coordinators to manage the day-to-day organisation of lessons. Even in secondary schools, few heads of music played an active role in rigorously monitoring the quality of instrumental or vocal tuition. In all phases, the view was taken that, as the 'experts', music services or external partners would provide sufficient quality assurance. As a consequence, any weaknesses in the quality of teaching and planning by these providers, or poor integration of external programmes with other classroom provision, were not confronted robustly enough by schools.
168. Where headteachers and senior leaders did have a better understanding about the key characteristics of effective musical teaching they were also able to identify teachers' CPD needs more accurately. However, lesson observations conducted jointly between inspectors and school leaders revealed that, while always supportive and appreciative about the importance of music, too many senior staff were not well enough informed about the key features of effective learning in music to make accurate judgements about the quality of teaching. Too often, their observations gave more importance to generic teaching strategies than to the musical qualities of teaching and learning. Views about assessment were too often predicated on whole-school strategies, and did not take enough account of the practicalities involved or, indeed, the need to consider National Curriculum levels synoptically, across the breadth of musical experience.
169. Ofsted's subject-specific criteria provide clear guidance on the characteristics of good and outstanding provision in music. These have been promoted widely by Ofsted and by the Department for Education, through the National Plan for Music Education. In secondary schools, and in primary schools with a specialist teacher, talking through these criteria before a lesson observation or inspection could help to develop a shared understanding and help to make the observation more incisive and effective. When judging the quality of lesson planning, consideration should be given to the teacher's *musical* preparation, as well as the preparation shown through any written lesson plan. This, too, could usefully involve discussion before the lesson. The new music hubs have an important part to play, too, by promoting shared understanding of good musical teaching and learning to headteachers and senior leaders, and then involving headteachers actively as co-observers and evaluators of music provision in their schools.

## **Priority: sustain music-making opportunities for pupils in schools beyond national advocacy, structures and strategies**

170. Standards of music-making seen in the annual National Festival of Music for Youth and the Schools Prom, including by local and regional music centres and ensembles such as county youth orchestras and choirs, remain consistently high. It is absolutely right that these elite groups and showcase events should be supported to celebrate and promote high standards in music. However, the quality achieved by these groups in both primary and secondary phases, when viewed alongside the wholly inadequate provision seen in too many of the schools visited, only serves to accentuate further the wide gulfs that exist in music education.
171. Survey findings suggest that the most recent strategies for promoting good practice in teaching and curriculum planning – the Key Stage 3 music strategy and the Key Stage 2 professional development programme – have had limited effect on classroom practice. In both key stages, teachers diligently applied generic expectations for lesson organisation and assessment practice to music lessons without sufficient thought being given to the impact of these actions on the quality of musical learning. In Key Stage 2, too much attention was given to the operation of the instrumental and singing strategies without similar attention being given to the educational quality of these programmes, the quality of everyday music curriculum work for all pupils, or how these strategies can be sustained and built upon, including in Key Stage 3.
172. During 2008–11 there has been powerful, well-argued and very effective advocacy for the importance of music education from professional associations such as the National Association of Music Educators, the Incorporated Society of Musicians, and the Federation of Music Services. Sustained funding from 2008–11, the Henley Review and the National Plan for Music Education have all shown the importance and value placed on music education by successive ministers and governments. Ofsted continues to recognise the important part that music services and other community or professional music groups play in supporting schools' music. The proposals for music hubs to strengthen that role are welcomed by Ofsted, as is the continued and essential central funding by government to support the core operation of these hubs. However, it is clear from inspection evidence that this funding and the work of music services through instrumental tuition and area ensembles are not sufficient, by themselves, to guarantee good music education in every school, for every pupil. This is also recognised in the National Plan for Music Education. The part played by the schools, including quality assurance of teaching, and funding and coordinating curriculum activities to ensure musical progression, is of crucial importance if the national strategies and advocacies are to translate into sustained musical achievement for all groups of pupils.
173. Inspection evidence suggests very strongly that improvements in the teaching and assessment of music, the use of singing and music technology, curriculum planning and continuing professional development are required in a significant

proportion of schools. This evidence resonates strongly with other recommendations from the Henley Review and other proposals made in the National Plan for Music Education, particularly regarding music technology and training for music education professionals.

174. These improvements are required to ensure that sustained musical achievement is enjoyed equally by all groups of pupils. It should not be forgotten that, in terms of pupil learning hours, time allocated by schools for class curriculum music education represents a far greater number of pupil learning hours than that given to additional instrumental/vocal tuition and extra-curricular ensemble activities. This is why it is so important for the new music hubs to engage fully with schools in partnership. School-based music teachers have an important part to play in achieving these priorities but, as importantly, clear direction is required from national associations, the Department for Education and Ofsted to ensure that school leaders are well informed about good practice in music education. It is also important that all funded providers are robustly held to account for the quality as well as the strategic operation of their work, not only by Ofsted and the Department for Education, but also by the individual schools that are served by the funded music hubs.

175. The Henley Review recommended:

Ofsted's remit should be expanded to include the reviewing of standards in music education provided in schools by local authority music services, Arts Council England client organisations or other recognised music delivery organisations. The focus for Ofsted's work in this area should be on the quality of teaching, leadership and management, with the aim of raising standards and increasing levels of achievement among pupils.

In response, the Department for Education said:

We will work with Ofsted to consider an appropriate system for assessing the quality of music education which is bought in by schools.

In an immediate response, Ofsted announced that, as an initial measure, survey inspections of music in schools from September 2011 would include a sharpened focus on the contribution that music services make to the pupils in that school, with reference made to the quality and quantity of this provision in the feedback letter to the school. Inspection evidence from the 2011–12 Ofsted music subject survey, which will include 30 primary schools, 30 secondary schools, four special schools and visits to other music education providers and professional music organisations, will form the basis of a short report to be published in autumn 2012, in response to the Secretary of State's request in the National Plan for Music Education.

## Notes

This report is based on evidence from inspections of music between September 2008 and July 2011 in 90 primary schools and 90 secondary schools. The schools were selected to provide a sample of those in differing contexts and geographical locations across England. However, the schools selected for the survey did not include schools that were in special measures or had been given a notice to improve. A further nine primary schools and one special school were visited to observe examples of good practice that were nominated, through the Department for Education, by local authority music services, and by national music initiatives.

Inspectors observed classroom curriculum lessons, assemblies, extra-curricular activities and instrumental lessons; held discussions with headteachers, teachers, students, pupils, parents and others involved in partnerships; and scrutinised documentation, as well as pupils' and students' work.

Observations were also drawn from visits by inspectors to performance events including the annual National Festival of Music for Youth in Birmingham and the Schools Proms at the Royal Albert Hall.

## Further information

The Secondary National Strategy first published its music resource *KS3 music: a professional development programme* in 2006. Although no longer available through the Department for Education, the materials may still be found at: [www3.hants.gov.uk/music/aboutks3music.htm](http://www3.hants.gov.uk/music/aboutks3music.htm).

The KS2 Music CPD Programme website contains information on CPD for instrumental teachers, classroom teachers and community musicians providing whole-class instrumental and/or vocal tuition (Wider Opportunities); [www.ks2music.org.uk](http://www.ks2music.org.uk).

The Teaching Music website aims to help all those involved in music education to reflect on and improve their knowledge, understanding and skills in music education; [www.teachingmusic.org.uk](http://www.teachingmusic.org.uk).

Sing Up is the national singing programme for primary-aged children in England; [www.singup.org](http://www.singup.org).

The Federation of Music Services represents 98% of all music services across England, Wales, Northern Ireland and the Channel Isles, with 157 members; [www.thefms.org](http://www.thefms.org).

Musical Futures, funded by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation, is an approach to music education that 'brings non-formal teaching and informal learning approaches into the more formal contexts of schools'; [www.musicalfutures.org.uk](http://www.musicalfutures.org.uk).

Musical Bridges, also funded by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation, is a national intervention programme designed to improve the primary to secondary school transfer process for young people; [www.phf.org.uk](http://www.phf.org.uk).

NUMU is an online community for young people to showcase, collaborate, compete, and develop their own music; [www.numu.org.uk](http://www.numu.org.uk).

In Harmony is a community development programme aimed at using music to bring positive change to the lives of very young children in some of the most deprived areas of England, delivering benefits across the wider community; [www.inharmonyengland.org.uk](http://www.inharmonyengland.org.uk).

The National Association of Music Educators is a professional network that advocates on behalf of all music educationalists, and supports their CPD with advice, access to resources, skills and up-to-date information; [www.name.org.uk](http://www.name.org.uk).

The Incorporated Society of Musicians is a professional organisation for performers and composers, private, peripatetic and classroom music teachers, students, academics, advisers, music managers and music technology professionals; [www.ism.org](http://www.ism.org).

*The Henley review of music education* was published in February 2011. The review was carried out at the request of the Secretary of State for Education, and made 36 recommendations which helped to scope the *National plan for music education*, published in November 2011 (after this Ofsted survey was completed); [www.education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/Music%20Education%20in%20England%20-%20Review.pdf](http://www.education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/Music%20Education%20in%20England%20-%20Review.pdf) and <https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/AllPublications/Page1/DFE-00086-2011>.

One of the Henley Review's recommendations was the creation of music education hubs; to bring together schools, local authority music services, Arts Council England client organisations and other recognised delivery organisations to work together to create hubs in each local authority area, each hub receiving ring-fenced central government funding to deliver music education in each area. It is proposed that these hubs start operating from September 2012.

## **Publications by Ofsted**

*Making more of music*, Ofsted's triennial subject survey report covering specialist music inspections in schools between 2005 and 2008, was published in February 2009; [www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/080235](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/080235).

Two teaching leaflets were published in September 2009, building on key recommendations from *Making more of music*: *Making more of music – improving the quality of music teaching (primary)*; [www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/090084](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/090084) and *Making more of music – improving the quality of music teaching (secondary)* [www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/090085](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/090085).

Ofsted's specialist criteria for use in music subject inspections were published in September 2010, following a period of consultation with the music education community. A revised version was published in January 2012; [www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/20100015](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/20100015).

## Annex A: Schools visited for this survey

### Primary schools inspected in the stratified sample

Primary school	Local authority
All Saints Benhilton CofE Primary School	Sutton
Bampton CofE Primary School	Oxfordshire
Bassingham Primary School	Lincolnshire
Beckford Primary School	Camden
Blaby Stokes Church of England Primary School	Leicestershire
Blacklow Brow Primary School	Knowsley
Brackensdale Junior School	Derby
Brindle Gregson Lane Primary School	Lancashire
Burnt Yates Church of England Voluntary Aided (Endowed) Primary School	North Yorkshire
Burrowmoor Primary School	Cambridgeshire
Canon Burrows CofE Primary School	Tameside
Cherry Tree Primary School	Hertfordshire
Churchfields Junior School	Redbridge
Colney Heath Junior Mixed Infant and Nursery School	Hertfordshire
Curry Rivel Church of England VC Primary School	Somerset
Davies Lane Primary School	Waltham Forest
Devonshire Hill Primary School	Haringey
Donnington Wood CofE Voluntary Controlled Junior School	Telford and Wrekin
Dormers Wells Junior School	Ealing
East Ardsley Primary School	Leeds
Edward Bryant Primary School	West Sussex
Elmbridge Junior School	Gloucestershire
Escrick Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School	North Yorkshire
Farringdon Primary School	Sunderland
Fingringhoe Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School	Essex

Glenbrook Primary School	Lambeth
Goldsborough Church of England Primary School	North Yorkshire
Greenways Primary School	Stoke-on-Trent
Hallwood Park Primary School and Nursery	Halton
Herne Junior School	Hampshire
High Hurstwood Church of England Primary School	East Sussex
Hob Green Primary School	Dudley
Holbrook Primary School	Wiltshire
Huntington Primary School	York
John F Kennedy Primary School	Sunderland
Kibblesworth Primary School	Gateshead
Kings Hedges Primary School	Cambridgeshire
Knaphill School	Surrey
Lawford Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School	Essex
Manaccan Primary School	Cornwall
Moorcroft Wood Primary School	Walsall
Nelson Primary School	Newham
New Road Primary School	Calderdale
Normanby Primary School	Redcar and Cleveland
Northwood Primary School	Darlington
Oakwood Junior School	Southampton
Oatlands Community Junior School	North Yorkshire
Oldfleet Primary School	Kingston Upon Hull, City of
Parks Primary School	Leicester
Purford Green Primary School	Essex
Skirlaugh Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School	East Riding of Yorkshire
Speenhamland Primary School	West Berkshire
St Ambrose Catholic Primary	Worcestershire
St Augustine's Catholic Primary and Nursery School	Nottingham



St Basil's Catholic Primary School	Halton
St Bernadette's Catholic Primary School	North Lincolnshire
St Bernadette's Catholic Primary School	Birmingham
St Cuthbert with St Matthias CofE Primary School	Kensington and Chelsea
St Hugh's Catholic Primary School	Liverpool
St John Fisher Roman Catholic Primary School	Rochdale
St John's Church of England Primary School	Sefton
St Joseph's Catholic Primary School	Warrington
St Joseph's RC Primary School	Dudley
St Mark's Church of England Primary School	Stockport
St Mary and St John CofE VA Primary School	Rutland
St Mary's and St Joseph's Roman Catholic Primary School Blackburn	Blackburn with Darwen
St Mary's RC Junior School	Croydon
St Matthew's School, Westminster	Westminster
St Patrick's Catholic Primary School	Lancashire
St Philip's Catholic Primary School, Arundel	West Sussex
St Pius X Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School	Durham
St Stephen's Church of England Primary School	Bury
St Winefride's RC Primary School	Newham
Stifford Primary School	Thurrock
Strand-on-the-Green Junior School	Hounslow
Swillington Primary School	Leeds
The Potterhanworth Church of England Primary School	Lincolnshire
Tilney St Lawrence Community Primary School	Norfolk
Tudor Primary School	Ealing
Uphall Primary School	Redbridge
Upton-upon-Severn CofE Primary School	Worcestershire
Waddington All Saints Primary School	Lincolnshire
Wardley CofE Primary School	Salford

Wednesbury Oak Primary School	Sandwell
Weeton St Michael's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School	Lancashire
Westvale Primary School	Knowsley
Whitgreave Primary School	Staffordshire
Wickham Market Community Primary School	Suffolk
Wigmore Primary School	Luton
William Ford CofE Junior School	Barking and Dagenham

### **Nominated 'good practice' primary schools visited**

Arthur Bugler Junior School	Thurrock
Christ Church CofE Primary School, Pennington	Wigan
Christ Church New Malden CofE Primary School	Kingston upon Thames
Dulwich Hamlet Junior School	Southwark
Faith Primary School	Liverpool
John Scurr Primary School	Tower Hamlets
St Hugh's CofE Primary School	Oldham
St Margaret's Church of England Primary School	Durham
Walton Holymoorside Primary School	Derbyshire

### **Secondary schools inspected in the stratified sample**

Acland Burghley School	Camden
Albany Science College	Lancashire
Alleyne's High School	Staffordshire
Ashby School	Leicestershire
Barlby High School	North Yorkshire
Bartholomew School	Oxfordshire
Belle Vue Boys' School	Bradford
Belvidere School	Shropshire
Bishop Challoner Catholic College	Birmingham
Brentwood County High School	Essex
Bushfield Community College*	Peterborough

Cams Hill School*	Hampshire
Canon Lee School	York
Chorlton High School	Manchester
City of London Academy (Southwark)	Southwark
Clifton: A Community Arts School	Rotherham
Cockermouth School	Cumbria
Costello Technology College	Hampshire
Cotham School*	City of Bristol
Dame Elizabeth Cadbury Technology College	Birmingham
Dorothy Stringer High School	Brighton and Hove
Eckington School	Derbyshire
Fakenham High School and College	Norfolk
Fernhill School	Hampshire
Flegg High School	Norfolk
Frankley Community High School	Birmingham
Friesland School	Derbyshire
Hainault Forest High School	Redbridge
Halton High School*	Halton
Hassenbrook School Specialist Technology College*	Thurrock
Heathfield Community College	East Sussex
Henry Compton Secondary School	Hammersmith and Fulham
High Storrs School	Sheffield
Highbury Fields School	Islington
Humphry Davy School	Cornwall
John Smeaton Community College	Leeds
King Arthur's Community School	Somerset
King Egbert School	Sheffield
Kings Norton Girls' School and Language College*	Birmingham
Kingsmeadow Community Comprehensive School	Gateshead
Kirk Balk Community College	Barnsley

Lawnswood School	Leeds
Madeley Academy	Telford and Wrekin
Marple Hall School - A Specialist Language College	Stockport
Mayfield School	Redbridge
Minster School	Nottinghamshire
Nether Hall Learning Campus High School	Kirklees
Noel-Baker Community School and Language College	Derby
Norden High School and Sports College	Lancashire
Northampton School for Girls	Northamptonshire
Northfleet School for Girls	Kent
Pewsey Vale School*	Wiltshire
Plume School	Essex
Poltair School	Cornwall
Prendergast - Ladywell Fields College	Lewisham
Queens' School*	Hertfordshire
Smith's Wood Sports College	Solihull
South Dartmoor Community College*	Devon
St Bede's Catholic Comprehensive School and Sixth Form College, Lancaster	Durham
St Edmund's Catholic School	Portsmouth
St George's RC High School	Salford
St Gregory the Great VA Catholic Secondary School	Oxfordshire
St Gregory's Catholic Comprehensive School	Kent
St John's Catholic Comprehensive	Kent
St John's RCVA Technology School and Sixth Form Centre*	Durham
St Joseph's College	Croydon
St Laurence School*	Wiltshire
St Mary's Catholic School*	North East Lincolnshire
Stainburn School and Science College	Cumbria
The Bishop of Hereford's Bluecoat School	Herefordshire

The Camden School for Girls	Camden
The Castle School*	Somerset
The Dukeries College	Nottinghamshire
The Emmbrook School	Wokingham
The Grange School	Shropshire
The Grange School and Sports College	South Gloucestershire
The Gryphon School	Dorset
The Hewett School	Norfolk
The Honeywood Community Science School*	Essex
The Kingswood School	Northamptonshire
The Lakes School	Cumbria
The London Oratory School*	Hammersmith and Fulham
The Minster College*	Herefordshire
The Trinity Catholic School	Nottingham
Thornleigh Salesian College	Bolton
Uckfield Community Technology College	East Sussex
Uxbridge High School*	Hillingdon
Weobley High School	Herefordshire
Woodford County High School	Redbridge
Woodkirk High School*	Leeds

\* The provider has closed or converted to an academy since the time of the visit.

### **Special schools inspected in the stratified sample**

Bamburgh School	South Tyneside
Hillside Special School	Suffolk
Mandeville School	Ealing
Whitefield Schools and Centre	Waltham Forest

### **Nominated 'good practice' special school visited**

Parkwood Hall School	Kensington and Chelsea
----------------------	------------------------

## Annex B: Good practice films to accompany this report

To complement this report, Ofsted revisited six schools from the 2008–11 music survey. The six schools represent a range of contexts; five were graded good or outstanding in their music survey inspection and the sixth school was visited as part of the 'good practice' sample. Each film lasts for about 15 minutes. Discussions with the headteacher (including consideration of how he or she manages and supports music in the school), teachers, and external partners are included, as well as showing a range of classroom and extra-curricular practice. The films also explore the further improvements that the schools have made since they were visited by Ofsted. Each film focuses a number of different aspects and priorities highlighted in this report.

School	Aspects and priorities included in each film
John Scurr Primary School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The inclusion of pupils from different groups</li> <li>■ Responding to contextual challenge and capitalising on contextual opportunities, including local partnerships</li> <li>■ Teaching and singing in the Early Years Foundation Stage</li> </ul>
Churchfields Junior School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Leading assembled singing in Key Stage 2</li> <li>■ Wider Opportunities in Key Stage 2</li> <li>■ Partnership with the local authority music service</li> </ul>
Flegg High School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The Musical Futures approach in Key Stage 3</li> <li>■ Overcoming geographical isolation</li> <li>■ Developing senior leadership of music education</li> </ul>
The London Oratory School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Teaching in music at Key Stages 3, GCSE and A-level music</li> <li>■ Excellence in singing</li> <li>■ Putting music at the heart of an outstanding school</li> </ul>
Cotham School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Building a diverse and inclusive curriculum</li> <li>■ A-level music technology and using technology for assessment in Key Stage 3</li> <li>■ Building bridges with feeder primary schools</li> </ul>
Whitefield Schools and Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Providing music education, music therapy, and challenge for students with cognitive, physical and emotional difficulties</li> <li>■ Assessment and progression in music for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities</li> <li>■ Using external partnerships to benefit students and teachers</li> </ul>

## Annex C: Analysis of participation

The charts below are those offered to schools from September 2011. Previous versions were offered to schools to help them prepare for inspection discussions about the participation of different groups in musical activities.

**Table 1: Analysis of participation\* – by year group**

Year Group	EY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12 13
Numbers in the school													
Numbers involved in:													
Extra-curricular activities													
Specialist whole class instrumental tuition - ('Wider Opportunities')													
Specialist whole class singing tuition													
Additional instrumental and vocal lessons – individual or small group (post 'Wider Opportunities' or over and above whole class singing)													
Additional instrumental and vocal lessons – individual or small group													
Students studying a curriculum course in music – GCSE, BTEC, A Level													
Students not receiving additional instrumental and vocal tuition in school but receiving such tuition outside school (ie, private lessons)													

**Table 2: Analysis of participation\* – by gender, ability, need and ethnicity**

		Boys	Girls	G&T	SEN	LAC	FSM	EAL	WBR	All other ethnic groups
Numbers in the school										
Numbers involved in:										
Extra-curricular activities	<b>ALL</b>									
Specialist whole class instrumental tuition - ('Wider Opportunities')	<b>PRI</b>									
Specialist whole class singing tuition	<b>PRI</b>									
Instrumental lessons – individual or small group (post 'Wider Opportunities' or over and above whole class singing)	<b>PRI</b>									
Instrumental and vocal lessons – individual or small group	<b>SEC</b>									
Students studying a curriculum course in music – GCSE, BTEC, A Level	<b>SEC</b>									
Students not receiving additional instrumental and vocal tuition in school but receiving such tuition outside school (i.e. private lessons)	<b>ALL</b>									

Please give whole numbers involved – not percentages.

\*Please do not 'double-count'; for example, students who attend more than one extra-curricular musical activity, or receive more than one instrumental and vocal lesson should only be recorded once.



## **Annex D: Judging standards in music**

### **Key Stages 1 and 2**

Inspectors consider attainment to be 'generally above average' where pupils' responses are at least in line with national expectations, securely and consistently across all areas of musical achievement: that is, at Level 2 for the end of Key Stage 1 and at Level 4 for the end of Key Stage 2. Inspectors judge attainment to be 'generally in line to below average' where some of pupils' responses are in line with expectations but where consistency across the group and the range of activities was less consistent.

### **Key Stage 3**

Inspectors consider attainment to be 'generally above average' where pupils' responses are at least in line with national expectations, securely and consistently across all areas of musical achievement: that is, at Level 5/6 for the end of Key Stage 3. Inspectors judge attainment to be 'generally in line to below average' where some of pupils' responses were in line with expectations but where consistency across the group and the range of activities are less consistent.

### **Key Stage 4**

In Key Stage 4, inspectors judge attainment against the expectations set by the qualifications framework and the results achieved in public examinations. At GCSE, 'above average' attainment is shown by the overall A\*– C pass rate and the Average Point Score both being consistently above the national average. In addition, standards of work seen by inspectors are at least in line with national expectations for Level 2 qualifications in music, across all three areas of composing, listening and performing, with no area below average. At BTEC, above-average attainment is shown by pass rates being consistently above national expectations as shown by the overall proportion of passes, merits, distinctions or distinctions\*. In addition, standards of work seen by inspectors are at least in line with national expectations for Level 2 qualifications in music, for all of the core and specialist components such as solo performance and musical composition, with no area below.