10 Things Schools Should Know About MUSIC

MUSIC MARK

SUPPORTING
CONNECTING
INFLUENCING

Hearing the Music

Music makes an important contribution to the life of every school and should be celebrated, promoted and encouraged. It helps build pupils' self-esteem and self-discipline and leads to higher standards across the curriculum. Today many more schools are benefitting from the transformational power that music brings to pupils, staff and parents alongside the wider school community.

This booklet summarises the 10 key benefits of music, from recognition within the government's 'National Plan for Music Education' that music is an educational building block through to the inclusive nature of music irrespective of abilities.

Music Mark is committed to supporting and helping all schools provide the highest quality music education for their pupils. Music can improve your school's reputation, attainment levels, and pupils' lives. To access free teaching resources visit: **www.musicmark.org.uk/resources**

1

Music boosts school improvement

A successful school is often a musical school. Music can be the catalyst that makes a good school exceptional. When the alchemy of music is allowed to permeate the whole curriculum it can have a positive impact on everything from academic attainment to student attendance.

At Dallow Primary in Luton the school has gone from Special Measures to Good according to Ofsted. 98% of students are EAL learners. To help students build confidence in their language and communication skills, music is now part of the school culture and has had numerous spill over effects, boosting maths and literacy attainment, as well as building staff moral and the school community.

2

Music improves learning skills

Research undertaken by the University of London has clearly demonstrated the cognitive benefits that music gives young children particularly in Key Stage 1, suggesting music can support the development of literacy, numeracy and listening skills.

Hallam (2015, p. 72) notes that 'overall, the evidence from correlation studies suggests that children who experience musical training have advantages across all school subjects except sport even after general intelligence is controlled for'. The weight of evidence suggests a positive relationship between overall attainment and active music making.

3

Music fosters team working

Playing in small groups, in whole classes or in any ensemble or orchestra means you are part of an integrated team. Everyone has a role however large or small and this helps to build co-operation and mutual support. It promotes the importance of working harmoniously with others towards a common goal.

These aspects of 'sociability' have emerged from a number of studies. In a recent study of Music Education Hubs, _Fautley et al. (2017)_ found that hub leaders identified team working as a key aspect of wider learning in Whole Class Ensemble Teaching, alongside a whole range of social skills developed through music making.

4

Music builds life skills

Playing an instrument or learning to sing requires real concentration. Quietness and calm whether on stage or in the classroom is essential. Working alongside other members of an instrumental or singing group helps children to recognise their own skills and appreciate those of others. This builds life skills such as empathy, problem solving and communication, and a sense of responsibility and commitment.

"In my experience when the children are singing in class, we do notice an increase in their concentration and listening skills. They're paying attention to what they've got to sing and when to join in. You also notice a real improvement in confidence: by the end of the year you'll see children standing up and volunteering to sing in front of the class which is a big deal for 4 to 5 year olds."

– HELEN DEAN, YEAR 1 TEACHER AT FOXHILL PRIMARY, BRADFORD

5

Music underpins better behaviour

To learn music you need discipline. To play well requires regular practice and dedication. And when young people enjoy doing something, they'll stick to it!

"When you get 20 children together with what could be very noisy instruments, we need certain disciplines and a level of behaviour, otherwise we'll be sat there for the next hour making a lot of racket without any purpose to it. As soon as the conductor comes to the front and raises his hand all the children are expected to have their instruments up and ready to play on the count of 4."

– GARRY WALLS, MUSIC TEACHER, BRADFORD

In Exchanging Notes *(Kinsella, Fautley and Whittaker 2019)* researchers found that music led to emotional, psychological and social wellbeing outcomes for young people at risk of educational exclusion. The social outcomes were particularly marked - joining in with peers, making friends, developing teamwork and empathy. This in turn helped to develop group identity, improving behaviour and motivation in the pursuit of high-quality musical outputs.

6

Music encourages creativity

Music enables young people to express themselves like no other medium. It empowers them to shape their world through sound and allows them to exercise their imaginations. Encouraging creativity also teaches them to think outside the box when problem solving. To succeed in the future, children will need to be inventive, resourceful and imaginative, and arts education will help.

Music is often referred to as inherently creative *(Webster, 1990)* with composing described as the highest form of musical creativity *(Rogers and Hallam, 2010)*. In the composing process, learners can create a piece by building on musical experiences, combining influences and experimenting.

***Woods (1995)* suggests that during creative learning pupils have control over their learning processes, and ownership of the knowledge produced, which is relevant to their concerns. This highlights the centrality of the learner in the development of creativity, where emphasis is on the process of learning rather than the creative output.**

Music is for life

An early start in music often results in music becoming a life-long passion. This gift is precious and whilst not all students go on to play in professional orchestras or famous rock bands, the seeds sown in the classroom continue to flourish for a lifetime. The skills acquired from learning music can feed into your everyday, whilst playing, listening and enjoying music never needs to end!

As *Lamont (2011, p. 377)* notes musically active adults 'are clear about the value of having had extended periods of musical engagement and training'. Childhood musical experiences of a sustained nature are more likely to have long-lasting impacts on involvement in musical activity, and enable adults to become 'joyful learners' *(Roulston, 2010)*. This highlights the complexities of developing musical identities that can form and change across a lifetime.

7

8

Music is an educational building block

The Department for Education has stated that a high-quality music education can improve self-confidence, behaviour and social skills as well as improve academic achievement across the curriculum. And while music touches the lives of all young people, the disadvantaged can benefit most. This is why it is so important to ensure all children and young people have access to learning and making music as part of their broad and balanced curriculum.

"Offering music at school means that all children start from a level playing field. They can progress together and there are clear outcomes which helps them along, improving their performance in other subjects. It gives disadvantaged children an opportunity that they might not get at home or for lack of access to private or extra-curricular tuition. And because music brings everyone together, children with disabilities can take part too, thanks to adapted instruments or alternative approaches to music making."

– BEN LINSEL, YEAR 4 TEACHER, FOXHILL PRIMARY, BRADFORD

Music is fun

Music making is not only good for the brain but also the heart! Young people enjoy the pleasure of mastering a tune or a song. The prestige and stimulation of a first performance in front of an audience is an adrenalin rush that is never forgotten.

9

"[Music is] a creative outlet and exercises my mind in a totally different way."

– STUDENT AT HUNTINGTON SCHOOL, YORKSHIRE

10

Music is for everyone

Music is inclusive irrespective of abilities. It can be of particular benefit to children and young people with Special Educational Needs and disabilities but also those who are marginalised, vulnerable and often hard to reach. Music gives children a unique motivation to participate and communicate and advances in technology mean more children than ever can take part in and reap the many benefits of a music education.

"Music is totally inclusive for all our children. I've had 2 children who sang before they spoke and I think that says it in a nutshell. One little boy sang an entire song and he had never spoken in school, that's the power of music there for those children. It's repetitive and every day you build on something you've already learned."

– SALLY HEY, HEAD TEACHER, FOXHILL PRIMARY, BRADFORD

"I was rubbish at school but learning an instrument and seeing the process of being professional helped me sort things out and all my other grades started to improve. It's not just the playing of an instrument, it's the skills you learn for the rest of your life that makes music so important and why we make such a fuss about it."

– SHAUN DA SILVA LONGUEIRA (PERIPATETIC MUSIC TEACHER)

References

- Music Mark (2019) A place with no borders – the power of singing in Luton Schools https://www.musicmark.org.uk/news/a-place-with-no-borders-the-power-of-singing-in-luton-schools
- Valentine, E. & Evans, C. (2001) The effects of solo singing, choral singing and swimming on mood and physiological indices. British Journal of Medical Psychology, 74, 115–120.
- Clift, S., Hancox, G., Morrison, I., Hess, B., Kreutz, G. & Stewart, D. (2010) Choral singing and psychological wellbeing: Quantitative and qualitative findings from English choirs in a cross-national survey. Journal of Applied Arts and Health, 1(1), 19–34.
- Davidson, J. W. (2011) Musical participation: Expectations, experiences, and outcomes. In I. Deliege & J. W. Davidson (Eds.), Music and the mind: Essays in honour of John Sloboda (pp. 65–87). Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Lamont, A. (2011a) The beat goes on: Music education, identity and lifelong learning. Music Education Research, 13(4), 369–388.
- Pitts, S. (2005). Valuing musical participation. Aldershot, UK: Ashgate.
- Webster, P. (1990) 'Creative thinking in Music: Introduction', Music Educators Journal 76(9), pp. 21.
- Rogers, L., Hallam, S. (2010) Music services. In Hallam, S., Creech, A. (Eds.), Music Education in the 21st Century in the United Kingdom – Achievements, analysis and aspirations (pp. 279–294). London, UK: Institute of Education, University of London.
- Kinsella, V., Fautley, M. and Gray, S. (2018) Musical Inclusion. Service for Education Music Service. Birmingham.
- Kinsella, V., Fautley, M. and Whittaker, A. (2019) Exchanging Notes Final Report. Youth Music, London.
- Woods, P. (1995) Creative teachers in primary schools. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Fautley, M., Kinsella, V., and Whittaker, A. (2017) Whole Class Ensemble Teaching Research Report, Music Mark.
- Hallam, S. (2015), The Power of Music, London, UK: International Music Education Research Centre.
- Roulston, K. (2010) '"There is no end to learning": Lifelong education and the joyful learner', International Journal of Music Education, 28(4), pp. 341-52.

With thanks to BBC Bring the Noise for stills and quotes from the 10 things film. References and Bibliography, with thanks to Birmingham City University.

Where Next?

Membership:

Join Music Mark!
Music Mark's vision is excellent musical learning in and out of school for all children and young people in the UK, which inspires and enriches their lives. We do this by supporting, connecting and influencing Music Mark members in pursuit of a high quality, diverse and inclusive music education for all.

Our membership consists of Music Education Services and Hubs, their teaching and support teams; schools; individuals; NYMOS; HE/FE bodies; Hub and Corporate Partners.

Resources:

Resources for music teachers including the 10 Things Schools Should Know About Music poster and videos relating to the project are available at:

https://www.musicmark.org.uk/resources
https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/bring-the-noise

Keep in Touch:

@musicmarkuk
020 7939 6049
info@musicmark.org.uk

Share your favourite things about music in schools on Twitter using **#10Things**

MUSIC MARK
SUPPORTING
CONNECTING
INFLUENCING

Find your local music education hub on Music Mark's member directory at https://www.musicmark.org.uk/members/

Watch our 10 Things video

With generous support from ABRSM, part of the Music Mark partnership with the BBC Bring the Noise campaign

MUSIC MARK

ABRSM

BBC Bring the Noise

www.musicmark.org.uk