



The Department for Education's Call for Evidence on Music Education

ISM and MTA joint statement

The Incorporated Society of Musicians (ISM) and the Music Teachers' Association (MTA) have come together to write an additional document as a joint submission to the Department for Education's (DfE) Call for Evidence on the National Plan for Music Education (March 2020).

About the ISM and MTA

The ISM is the UK's professional body for musicians and a nationally recognised subject association for music. Since 1882, we have been dedicated to promoting the importance of music and protecting the rights of those working in the music profession. Our 10,000-strong membership (which includes 180 corporate members) comes from all areas of the music profession, including classroom teachers, peripatetic teachers and those working in higher education including in music colleges. The ISM has doubled in size over the past 10 years. We work tirelessly to support music teachers and musicians through professional development and a broad range of services which includes employment advice and help with mental health. The ISM has recently co-authored the APPG for Music Education's report, *Music Education: State of the Nation* (2019).

The MTA is the largest and longest established association of music teachers in the UK, supporting all those connected with a school music department. It is the mission of the Music Teachers' Association to provide first-class training, support and networking opportunities to all those who work in music education. Through our outstanding publications and our exceptional Annual Conference and CPD programme, we inspire a membership which passionately believes that schools and their students' lives are deeply enriched by a high quality music provision.

Both organisations are totally committed to the quality of great music education in the classroom for all.

The importance of music education

All children should have access to a high-quality music education. Studying music builds cultural knowledge and skills. It improves children's physical and mental health, wellbeing and wider educational attainment. Participation in music, coupled with a coherent and sustained music education, delivers positive benefits to wider cognitive development (e.g. improved literacy and numeracy skills). Music education also plays an important role in social mobility, contributing to improved life outcomes. The benefits of music education are widely accepted and this is reflected by the renewed investment in music education overseas, particularly in Asia.

In the UK, the creative industries, worth more than £111 billion to the UK economy, rely heavily on the pipeline of creative talent from schools which has been essential in creating the UK's world-renowned music industry (worth £5.2 billion).

Curriculum music

In the context of a persistent decline in music education in England, the ISM and MTA are pleased to note the DfE's position in the introduction to the Call for Evidence that the "opportunity to study and understand music isn't a privilege, but a vital part of a broad and balanced curriculum". We also note the statement that it is "the responsibility of schools to deliver the music curriculum". Curriculum music is the foundation of an effective music education. Access for all is fundamental to the ISM and MTA's approach: high quality music education must take place in the classroom, in all schools irrespective of status, across Key Stages 1, 2, and 3. A culture of singing should be embedded in all schools via classroom teaching, supported by music education hubs as necessary.

High-quality curriculum music education includes performance, composition and listening as key aspects of musical knowledge, skills and understanding. Musical learning is about thinking and acting musically. This means that music lessons should be about learning in and through music, not solely about music (ISM Trust 2019). Music lessons in school should be focussed on building up pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding.

In order for this to happen, music education must form a core component of a broad and balanced curriculum in academies as well as maintained schools. Academies are not obliged to follow the National Curriculum (of which music is a statutory component); given that 72% of secondary schools and 27% of primary schools are academies, according to the National Audit Office, this is problematic in ensuring that all children receive curriculum music in schools. Music must also be taught across Key Stage 3 and not prematurely curtailed in order to prepare for GCSEs or KS4 equivalents. Schools need to receive clear guidance from the DfE that headline accountability measures must not erode the delivery of a broad and balanced curriculum at Key Stage 3.

The ISM and MTA welcome the statement in the Foreword to this Call for Evidence that the £100 million Arts Premium "will mean the arts and music will become an increasingly important part of the secondary school curriculum". The Arts Premium must be invested in schools and implemented properly with appropriate mechanisms in place to support its delivery. This is particularly important given the decline in uptake of music at GCSE (-16.7% between 2014 and 2018) and at A Level (-38% between 2010 and 2018) (APPG for Music Education 2019). The ISM reiterates its call to reform the EBacc and create a sixth pillar for creative subjects.

Inclusion

The revised National Plan for Music Education (NPME) should address the quality, provision and access to music for all students. In particular this means addressing music education for Early Years, students with SEND, and children from deprived areas. In addition, the NPME should improve signposting of music education opportunities for 18 to 25-year-olds.

Teacher workforce

The high-quality delivery of music education in the classroom depends on a workforce that is sufficient both in number and quality. The number of classroom music teachers at both primary and secondary level has declined significantly (a 13% drop in the number of music teachers between 2010 and 2017), and many work in single-person departments without time to access professional development. Music should be taught by a subject specialist teacher as part of the curriculum in all state schools for all pupils for at least one hour every week across all of a three-year Key Stage 3, so that all pupils receive a sustained high quality music education. All secondary schools should have at least one full time music teacher who exclusively teaches music. It is crucial that the role of classroom music teachers is re-prioritised by the DfE, focusing on recruitment, retention, and professional development so that all schools are equipped to provide a high-quality music education to all students.

The National Plan for Music Education and music education hubs

Building on the foundations of curriculum music, a broad music education includes instrumental learning and ensemble membership, as well as attending musical events and participating in other extra-curricular activities. The NPME and music education have played an important role in these aspects of music education. The main objective of the NPME when it was launched in 2011 was to ensure that access to music education was not impacted by a postcode lottery. The vision was to ensure that opportunities were equal and available. The music education hubs have provided instrumental tuition but due to underfunding, there is a continuing challenge around delivering against the extension roles. For example, membership of ensembles falls considerably at KS4 and KS5 and is falling year-on-year (Fautley and Whittaker 2018). This is concerning in terms of progression as students are ceasing to play their instruments for a variety of reasons when they should be becoming more advanced.

To achieve the Government's policy of levelling up access to music education, the refresh of the NPME is a great opportunity to improve access to and quality of music education, particularly in areas of deprivation. This needs to be supported in messages from the Department for Education and also Ofsted. The DfE should take steps to speak directly to school governing bodies to communicate the value of music education in schools and music education hubs.

Funding of music education hubs

The refresh of the NPME cannot succeed if music education hubs are not funded properly. It is to be welcomed that there has been a slight increase this year from £75.84 million in 2019/2020 to £76,105,440 in 2020/2021 (Arts Council England). However, the current figure of £76.1m is not enough to deliver quality music education provision to a growing school population, retain a quality workforce and combat reductions in funding from local authorities. The per-pupil per year amount has dropped from £8.93 in the 2015/16 financial year to £8.63 for the 2020/21 allocation. In total, this amounts to over £2.6m less funding across the country for Music Education Hubs by comparison to 2015/16. Given all the above, Hub funding needs to be at £100 million per annum on a sustained three year basis.

Music education hubs cannot deliver their core and extended roles effectively without sufficient and sustained funding. Many peripatetic music teachers suffer job insecurity because of the current funding regime. This needs to be addressed in the refreshed NPME. Teachers benefit greatly from relevant professional development (some of which is supplied by the ISM and the MTA). There must also be a sufficient number of properly qualified teachers coming through to support the delivery of music education in schools and music education hubs.

Hub roles and KPIs

In order to ensure the effective delivery of music education for all pupils in schools and music education hubs, the NPME refresh must provide clarity as to the roles and responsibilities of schools and music education hubs. The metrics for measuring the work delivered in response to the NPME need to be revised to go beyond 'levels of activity' reported through the current narrow set of metrics. The quality of the work being delivered needs to be part of this evaluation work. Rather than quality of experience and a longitudinal and diverse view of progression and continuation, the DfE/ACE data does not necessarily provide an accurate picture of the lived reality of many who work in schools and music education hubs. One approach might be to revise KPIs for core roles to better measure progression; for example, instead of only measuring the number of students receiving WCET, DfE could also measure the number and percentage of pupils learning an instrument who had previously engaged in WCET, to see if they were progressing in instrumental tuition.

Conclusion

The ISM and MTA are firmly committed to the delivery of quality music education in all our schools for all school age children regardless of background. We are grateful to the DfE for all it has done to support music education through its commitment to the music education. But this by itself is not enough. The refreshed NPME is a vital opportunity for government to send a clear message to all schools that music is part of a broad and balanced curriculum and that a quality music education, delivered in the classroom, accessible to all, and supported by vocal and instrumental tuition and ensembles, is fundamental to a good education.

We submit this additional document to the Department for Education in response to the Call for Evidence and hope it will be of interest. If you have any queries please contact Deborah Annetts at the ISM – deborah.annetts@ism.org – or Simon Toyne at the MTA – president@musicteachers.org.