

Music in schools: sound partnerships

A short survey of music education partnership work in schools 2011–12

This report highlights the benefits and pitfalls of partnership working in music education. It is based on visits to 59 schools by specialist music inspectors between September 2011 and July 2012, together with six further visits to observe good practice.

Part A of the report identifies five key actions taken by schools that had developed effective music education partnerships. Part B draws on the good practice seen, by linking to eight good practice case studies on Ofsted's website. These highlight how the best partnerships have improved provision for music in primary and secondary schools and a special school.

The report includes guidance to help schools improve their partnership working in music education, including with the new music education hubs.

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Introduction

'Great music education is a partnership between classroom teachers, specialist teachers, professional performers and a host of other organisations, including those from the arts, charity and voluntary sectors.'¹

There is much to celebrate about music education in England. Supported by government and local funding, our county youth orchestras, bands and choirs, local Saturday morning music schools, classes at conservatoires, and holiday courses all provide valuable opportunities which complement what pupils have learnt through individual instrumental and vocal tuition, or through whole-class ensemble programmes. At their best, music partnerships (and local authority music services in particular) play a considerable part in providing these opportunities and setting high standards.

However, despite significant additional investment in music education by schools and parents, too many pupils do not receive a good enough music education. In our recent triennial report, *Music in schools – wider still, and wider*, Ofsted found that the standard of music teaching in schools was far too often inadequate, with too little musical content in music lessons.² Too often, musical partnerships have had insufficient impact in securing genuine and lasting improvements to schools' music provision.

Both the National Plan for Music Education and *Music in schools: wider still, and wider*, make clear the need for schools to monitor more closely the effectiveness of music provision. We know that the buying-in by schools of additional instrumental and/or vocal tuition – the most frequent form of partnership work – does not guarantee good-quality outcomes for pupils. Findings from this survey also revealed a very strong link between poor quality outcomes and poor arrangements for robust monitoring and evaluation.

Nevertheless, despite the poor picture presented by the overall evidence from the sample of 59 schools visited, we know there is some good and outstanding practice.

This report is intended to help improve schools' expertise in monitoring and evaluating and developing musical partnerships by highlighting some of the best practice seen. It is accompanied by a collection of resources to help strengthen the quality of partnership working nationally. These include:

- eight case studies highlighting good practice in partnership working in a range of settings and across a range of phases

¹ The importance of music – a national plan for music education, Department for Education, November 2011; www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/publicationDetail/Page1/DFE-00086-2011.

² *Music in schools – wider still, and wider* (110158), Ofsted, 2012; www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/music-schools-wider-still-and-wider.

- the evaluation criteria used by inspectors to judge the effectiveness of partnership working
- a checklist to support monitoring and evaluation of partnership projects by headteachers and music hub leaders
- guidance for headteachers and senior leaders to support observations of music lessons.

Background information

The National Plan for Music Education has directed funding to the new music education hubs, together with a responsibility to ensure that all pupils are able to enjoy a good music education; that this provision is coordinated and of high quality across their local areas; and that there is equality of provision and progression across their regions – including through partnership working with professional and community musicians. The National Plan also articulated the government’s commitment for every pupil to play a musical instrument and to sing, and the ambition that every child should receive a good, progressive music education throughout their time at school.

This report is not a commentary on the National Plan or the new music education hubs; at the time of publication, the hubs will have been operating for just one month. The prime purpose of this report is to consider in detail the benefits and pitfalls of partnership working for schools.³ It aims to support all who provide music education in schools.

While Ofsted does not inspect music services or hubs, judgements made during visits to schools may include evaluation of teaching provided by visiting music professionals and, in the future, by specialists provided through the hubs. The quality of bought-in provision will have real consequences for school inspection outcomes.

How inspectors evaluated the effectiveness of partnership working

In each of the 59 inspections, inspectors made a discrete evaluation of partnership working. All feedback letters to schools contained specific comments on the effectiveness of partnership working within the main inspection judgement areas.

In almost all cases, evidence included observation of individual, small-group or whole-class teaching by visiting instrumental/vocal teachers, and a meeting with the head of the local authority music service or other significant partnership organisation.

³ The National Plan for Music Education commissioned Ofsted to ‘produce a short report based on the 2011/12 subject survey programme to highlight good practice and pitfalls experienced by schools buying and/or receiving music education services from external providers’.

Evidence of other partnerships was offered to inspectors in video and audio recordings, or through interviews with staff and pupils.

Inspectors' judgements derived from the grade descriptors in the published criteria for music subject inspections. Specifically, they drew on references to the effectiveness of partnership working from the curriculum, and leadership and management criteria. The key sentences from these criteria are brought together as Annex B of this report. In addition, the quality of teaching by partnership professionals was judged using Ofsted's subject-specific criteria for teaching in music.⁴

Key findings

Most of the schools surveyed were using partnerships to offer a greater range of activities than the school could provide by itself. However, in too many cases these were not managed well enough by the schools. Too rarely did the partnerships result in significantly improved long-term outcomes for all groups of pupils, particularly the most disadvantaged. Only 10 of the 59 schools inspected were making good or outstanding use of partnerships to improve musical outcomes for all groups of pupils and achieve good value for money. The survey found that buying in additional instrumental and vocal teaching – the most frequent form of partnership work – is not a guarantee of sustained good-quality outcomes, however expert or reputable the partner organisation.

Inspectors identified five key actions taken by schools where music education partnerships were most successful.

- Significant, sustained levels of funding were matched by rigorous monitoring and evaluation. This enabled leaders and managers to take swift action where funding was not being used well. As a result, in these schools staff ensured that the music education partnerships provided good value for money.
- Schools ensured that all groups of pupils benefited from the partnership, particularly the most disadvantaged. Careful monitoring and tailoring of provision ensured that all groups achieved well.
- Provision was linked to individual pupils' needs, interests and abilities. Careful analysis of pupils' prior achievement and experiences – including in their feeder primary schools – secured high levels of engagement and good progress. As a result, projects complemented, augmented and supported other music work in the school.
- Partnerships were used to develop both school teachers' and visiting musicians' practice. Clear strategies were in place so they could learn from each other. This

⁴ The full criteria can be found at: www.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports/our-expert-knowledge/music.

led to sustained, high-quality musical experiences for pupils during and beyond the partnership.

- Headteachers and senior leaders used the partnership to strengthen their own knowledge and understanding of the quality of music education. This enabled them to monitor and evaluate provision with increased rigour and resulted in improved outcomes for pupils, better quality of professional dialogue with music teachers, and better value for money.

In contrast, inspectors identified five pitfalls in schools where music education partnerships had limited effect.

- The effectiveness of the partnership was not monitored sufficiently well by school leaders. In these schools, the partnership was more likely to represent poor value for money because not enough pupils made good progress over a sustained period.
- Disadvantaged pupils such as those in receipt of free school meals or with special educational needs did not benefit from the partnerships as much as others. This often resulted in widening gaps in participation and achievement between different groups of pupils, including at GCSE.
- Partnership programmes were not sufficiently aligned with the school's day-to-day musical provision or well enough informed by analysis of pupils' starting points and capabilities. In these schools, the value of the partnership was diminished because provision did not capitalise and build on pupils' prior learning.
- School staff and visiting musicians did not work together. This represented missed opportunities to develop the teaching skills of all adults involved in the partnership.
- Senior leaders were not well enough informed to ask critical questions or make critical judgements about the quality of music education; too often, too much was based on trust rather than rigorous challenge. Consequently, weaknesses in provision were not addressed.

Recommendations

Schools and their music education partners (including music hubs) should, through good communication and dialogue, ensure that:

- music education partnerships are well resourced, planned thoroughly and monitored robustly to ensure good value for money
- there is equality of access to good-quality musical education and high achievement for all groups of pupils, including through judicious use of funding
- opportunities to promote teachers' and music professionals' continuing professional development are planned, monitored and evaluated

- partnership programmes and projects coordinate with, augment and support other music provision in the school, taking particular account of the specific needs, interests and abilities of pupils
- school leaders and music partnership leaders work alongside each other, to develop their understanding of good practice in music education and consequently bring about improvements in access and achievement for all groups of pupils.

Part A: The benefits and pitfalls of partnership working

Summary of inspection findings

1. Every school visited was engaging in some form of music education partnership activity, although in some cases these partnerships were of limited duration or underdeveloped. By some way, the most frequent and long-standing partnerships in the schools visited were with local authority music services through the provision of whole-class ensemble tuition (formerly known as 'Wider Opportunities') in primary schools and/or additional individual/small group tuition in all phases. For this reason, Part A of this report gives most focus to partnerships between schools and music services.
2. In all, 43 of the 59 schools engaged with local authority music services to provide whole-class or additional/small group tuition. In 30 of these schools, music tuition was provided exclusively by the music service, with a further 13 schools using a mixture of local authority and private tutors. Ten schools offered additional tuition exclusively through private teachers. The remaining six schools either provided additional tuition through the school's own staff – in one secondary school, for example, the curriculum music teacher also offered small-group woodwind and brass tuition – or simply did not offer any regular additional tuition at all.
3. Inspectors saw a wide range of other partnerships in these schools, including with local and national arts centres and performance spaces; professional musicians, orchestras, choirs and opera companies; jazz and rock ensembles; and privately funded music education trusts. Almost all the schools had engaged in at least one example of this type of partnership though sometimes these were limited to events such as a 'one-off' afternoon workshop by a visiting musician or participation by individual pupils in a local festival. Generally, teachers and pupils were very positive about these partnerships. Some of these are featured in Part B of this report. However, in all but a few cases, inspectors' judgements in individual schools gave greatest consideration to partnerships that provided regular instrumental and vocal tuition because these partnerships engaged more pupils for a greater period of time, and were also where the bulk of schools', parents' and government funding was spent.
4. The effectiveness of partnership work in music was outstanding in three and good in seven of the 59 schools visited; it was satisfactory in 32 schools and inadequate in 17 schools. These findings reflect the wide gulf between the

quality and the quantity of music partnership working in the majority of schools visited. While there was some exceptionally effective practice, including in the schools featured in Part B of this report, in too many schools the effectiveness of partnership working was not good enough.

5. In primary schools where partnership work was not good enough, inspectors most frequently reported the need for schools to:
 - increase and sustain the uptake of additional instrumental/vocal tuition and/or extra-curricular opportunities for all groups of pupils
 - improve teacher and headteacher subject knowledge, confidence, and understanding of progression through better access to and impact of subject-specific training
 - improve the coordination of partnership work with other provision, particularly integrating whole-class ensemble programmes within the school's overarching musical curriculum.

6. In secondary schools where partnership work required improvement, inspectors most often noted the need to:
 - increase and sustain the uptake of additional instrumental/vocal tuition and/or extra-curricular opportunities, including broadening the range of opportunities, for all groups of students
 - develop links with feeder primary schools to build more effectively on singing and instrumental whole-class strategies, and reflect what students already know and can do when they join in Year 7
 - increase senior leaders' understanding of issues in music education, particularly through better dialogue and sharing of expertise with partners
 - improve teachers' subject knowledge, confidence, and understanding of progression through better access to and impact of subject-specific training.

Five key actions for successful music education partnerships

7. Five key actions taken by the most successful schools emerged strongly during the survey. In these schools, music education partnerships were used well to:
 - ensure good value for money, through rigorous monitoring and evaluation
 - ensure equal access to, and achievement in, music for all groups of pupils
 - augment and support, rather than replace, the classroom music curriculum
 - improve the practice of teachers and music professionals
 - improve senior leaders' knowledge and understanding of music education.

8. In these schools, close attention had been paid to most, if not all of these five key actions. Where partnership working had not led to significantly improved outcomes for pupils, it was because schools had neglected at least one – and often more – of these key actions.
9. High quality, regular dialogue between school leaders and music partnership managers was crucial to ensuring effective partnership working. In the best schools, such as St Columb Minor Academy, headteachers monitored and evaluated the impact of the partnership thoroughly, ensuring that the partnership secured good value for money and worked closely with the partner to make changes where things needed to improve.

Action: Fund, monitor and evaluate partnerships to ensure good value for money

10. To be effective, music education partnerships have to be properly funded. Welcome and important as it is, central funding for music services (and, from September 2012, music hubs) is not sufficient to provide all the additional tuition and support required by pupils and schools. The survey found that funding from, for example, government, Arts Council England, or private and charitable organisations, was rarely enough to cover all the costs of projects. In nearly all the schools visited, additional funding was required from schools' own budgets and/or parental contributions.
11. A minority of schools did not make any contribution to the cost of partnership work; the cost of tuition was passed directly from the music service or private teachers to parents. This did not necessarily lead to worse outcomes for those participating. However, pupils whose parents could not afford to contribute or, indeed, chose not to, were often less likely to participate, even where remissions policies were in place. Good practice case studies of schools that have sustained long-term financial commitment to music partnership working and have achieved good value for money, such as Emmanuel College in Gateshead or Crich School in Derbyshire, are featured in Part B of this report.
12. Where schools did not make a significant and sustained financial commitment to additional music work year-on-year, overall achievement in music was much less likely to be effective or sustained. In one primary school visited, the whole class ensemble programme was proudly marketed by the local authority music service as 'free to schools and pupils' and schools were not required to make additional contributions to the cost. However, this meant that the music service could only afford to run the programme for 10 weeks in each school; in the school visited, the project had made little impact, and had subsequently been dropped by the school. Although around a fifth of the pupils in this school were learning instruments with private tutors who invoiced parents directly, none of those known to be eligible for free school meals continued to play an instrument as a result of the whole class ensemble programme. Even though the school had not contributed funding to the project, it had still invested

pupils' curriculum time in the partnership, so the value earned had remained poor.

13. In one secondary school, where governors committed around £15,000 each year to additional instrumental tuition and parents contributed a further £9,000 in subsidised lesson fees, musical outcomes were only satisfactory. Here, the school had placed too much emphasis on the quantity, rather than quality of provision. Not enough attention was given to ensuring that all pupils benefited from this significant investment. In some ways the music department was effective – with high profile public performances highly regarded in the community; but self-evaluation had not taken enough account of low uptake and below-average standards at GCSE, or the fact that girls were three times more likely to be involved in extra-curricular musical activities than boys, and that only two of over 200 students known to be in receipt of free school meals were taking a qualification in music.
14. Schools and music hubs are reminded that there are regulations regarding charging for instrumental and vocal tuition, particularly concerning the rights of children in care to access free music tuition and musical activities that take place after school and during the school holidays.⁵
15. Schools that chose to employ private music teachers, rather than those offered through the local authority music service, most frequently cited lower costs and equal or better quality of teaching than that provided by the local authority music service, as the main reasons for this choice. In nearly all cases, the hourly cost charged by private teachers was lower than the hourly cost charged by the music service. It is true that higher hourly costs did not always result in better quality teaching – outstanding and inadequate lessons were observed taught by private and local authority teachers. However, schools did not always give full consideration to, or did not take full advantage of, the fact that the hourly cost charged by music services often included free instrument hire, free or reduced-rate access to area activities, and teacher involvement in continuing professional development. Hence, schools' assessment of the value for money of this provision was sometimes overly simplistic.

Action: Ensure equal access to, and achievement in, music for all pupils

16. In judging achievement in music, inspectors evaluate the extent to which all groups of pupils are able to access provision and achieve musically. Typically, the schools visited valued the access provided through partnerships to a greater range of musical styles, traditions and genres than the school could otherwise offer. They also welcomed the whole-class ensemble programmes because they frequently provided first access to instrumental tuition for all pupils, regardless

⁵ The Charges for Music Tuition (England) Regulations 2007, The Stationery Office, 2007; www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2007/2239/note/made.

of their circumstances. However, there were very few primary schools where, after the initial whole-class instrumental experience, the continued participation rates of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs matched those of the cohort as a whole; this was often simply because schools and music education partners had not developed specific long-term strategies to involve these pupils.

17. An exception was seen by inspectors where the music coordinator worked closely with the special education needs coordinator and a visiting music teacher to ensure that a Year 6 pupil's music tuition took full account of his particular needs. Careful liaison between the school, the specialist teacher, the parents and, indeed, the pupil secured very tangible gains.

David (the pupil's name has been changed) had a statement of educational need to support his Autism Spectrum Disorder. He was described by the school as a very demanding child who had difficulties in concentrating, understanding tasks, and understanding others' and his own emotions. He could be very disruptive in a classroom environment. As part of the school's support for David, he was provided with additional one-to-one tuition on guitar. This tuition had supported David in many areas of his development and, although not the only reason for his good progress, it had played a key role in improving his emotional and social well-being. Key to this had been the opportunity that music tuition gave for David to build a working relationship with someone he trusted and who told him that he was doing well, but who was also able to challenge without David losing control.

The school's special educational needs coordinator recalled that an emotional moment came at the end of a recent 'team around the child' meeting to review David's progress. Out of the blue, David had asked if he could play a piece of music that he had composed. Not only was the moment important for David; his Mum was incredibly proud at seeing her son succeed through music.

18. Every school visited had clear remissions policies and procedures in place to offer subsidised tuition fees to, for example, pupils known to be in receipt of free school meals. In some cases, these remissions were funded from the schools' own budgets; in other instances, often where government funding for music education had been retained centrally by the music service, remissions were funded centrally.
19. A small number of schools were making good use of wider funding to support individual pupils facing challenging circumstances. In one primary school, a child who was looked after had her instrumental lessons paid for by a Personal Education Allowance. Another primary school made good use of a discretionary general education fund to send disadvantaged pupils on holiday music courses. However, while it is quite acceptable to do so, too few of the schools visited

reported specific use of the Pupil Premium to target and involve disadvantaged pupils in music education activities.

20. Parents of children participating in music know that the true cost of this involvement goes far beyond simply paying for instrumental or vocal lessons. Instrument purchase or hire; ongoing maintenance, such as the cost of strings or valve oil; graded examination entries; transport to rehearsals and the cost of holiday ensemble courses can all add up to more than the cost of lessons. Some music services had schemes to support pupils with, for example, county youth orchestra fees through grants from the 'Friends and parents' supporters' group'; others had bursary schemes that granted an annual sum to the most talented pupils from low-income families to cover the cost of tuition and other sundries. However, examples were rare of local strategic partnerships between music services and schools to identify and then target the initial and continued participation of pupils from minority groups, involving and considering music in the school and beyond. Poor communication between schools and their music education partners often meant that disadvantaged pupils 'slipped through the net', as at this secondary school:

Just 3% of students known to be eligible for free school meals received additional instrumental tuition, compared with 10% of other students. The figure for disabled students and those with special educational needs was 2%.

From discussions with the headteacher and the head of music, it was clear that this was something that had never been considered. Although there was a remissions policy, increasing the involvement of these disadvantaged students had not been identified or prioritised for improvement by the school. In fact, the school's initial self-evaluation and department development plan indicated that the most important priorities were to attract more high ability students to music courses, and to provide more challenge for gifted and talented students. But the fact was that these able students were already doing relatively well and were much more likely to be involved than those with lower ability.

The head of music service was equally unaware of these inequities in participation. He explained that, while the music service had good data about the participation of boys and girls, it was difficult to measure the involvement of other groups, because schools held this information and were often reluctant to share it because of concerns about data protection. For this reason, any remissions arrangements were considered to be the school's responsibility. Whatever the reasons, and whoever was responsible, it was clear to inspectors that poor communication and leadership between the school and the music service had resulted in poor access and achievement for the most disadvantaged students.

21. In contrast, at Newlyn School in Penzance, it was difficult to imagine what more the school could have done to encourage the participation of disadvantaged pupils in musical learning. The music coordinator explained that an important part of her role was to link with partners, parents and pupils so that everyone worked together effectively:

'My job – persistently – is to encourage low income families to engage in and commit to musical activities, source and raise funds to support these activities. I also have to make sure that our visiting teachers – from the music service and those that we employ privately – are aware of individual pupils' circumstances. A lot of my time is taken with telephoning parents – and them telephoning me – to reassure them, advise about practice, and to check that the children are able to take part in rehearsals and events.'

22. As a result of this strategy, 59% of the Key Stage 2 pupils in receipt of free school meals were members of the school choir, compared with 49% of the school overall; 50% of the Key Stage 2 pupils in receipt of free school meals were learning to play an instrument through individual tuition, compared with 58% of the whole school population.
23. This success highlights the importance of effective strategies to build partnerships with parents, particularly in schools serving areas of disadvantage. Gaining parents' commitment and securing their appreciation of the benefits of music education is important, particularly when it helps them to give their children the encouragement to keep practising and to attend rehearsals.

Action: Use partnerships to augment and support the music curriculum, including across phases

24. The National Plan for Music Education, and the Wider Opportunities initiative before it, set out clear expectations that partnership work in music education should enhance, augment and support core classroom provision, rather than replace it. Nevertheless, a recurring theme in the primary schools visited continued to be that whole-class ensemble programmes were not coordinated with other curriculum provision. It was most usually the case that these simply took the place of regular curriculum music lessons. In such cases, this sometimes meant a weakening in the breadth or depth of curriculum coverage.
25. The failure to meet the ambitions of previous initiatives to secure first access to instrumental tuition and continued learning thereafter were detailed in *Wider still, and wider*.⁶ Despite an increase in the amount of singing activity in primary schools and particularly the proliferation of 'one-off' singing events, the quality of singing remained no better than satisfactory in the large majority of the schools visited. This is a result of some schools – and indeed some music

⁶ *Music in schools: wider still, and wider* (110158), Ofsted, 2012; www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/110158.

services – failing to look beyond the initial or one-off experience in planning for pupils’ further musical development, including for those who choose not to continue learning the instrument. Inspectors saw no examples of the general classroom music curriculum being planned or adapted to take account of the musical progress made by pupils through whole-class ensemble programmes. In many cases, it was as if these experiences had not happened. This lack of curriculum coordination was a key reason for pupils’ progress in many primary schools being no better than satisfactory.

26. As with all other aspects of music partnership working, the key to ensuring effectiveness was continuous monitoring and evaluation by the school. A small number of primary schools had withdrawn from the whole-class ensemble programmes because the teaching and/or planning had not met their requirements or expectations. One school was concerned that the lesson planning had been ‘off the shelf’ (a pre-planned format to be used in any school, that did not take account of the differing needs, abilities, or prior learning of the pupils in question); another was concerned that very few pupils had continued with tuition after the initial programme.
27. It was to the credit of the leaders in these schools that the programmes had been monitored, evaluated and decisive action taken. In one case the overall quality of music provision remained no better than satisfactory because no better alternative arrangements had been made. However, in another school, a specialist teacher had been engaged by the school directly to offer small-group instrumental tuition. Although not every pupil received instrumental tuition, the total proportions learning were above those typically seen by inspectors and – crucially – an equal or greater proportion of disadvantaged children were involved.
28. In contrast, in schools where provision was not monitored or evaluated with rigour, senior leaders often overestimated the quality of teaching. One headteacher was, initially, effusive about the whole-class ensemble programme – citing the great enthusiasm of the visiting teacher, and saying how much the pupils enjoyed his lessons and were proud of their cornets. When inspectors visited a whole-class ensemble lesson, while they agreed that the visiting teacher was very entertaining and pupils were engaged by his jovial approach, some serious concerns were apparent. It was clear that the teacher had weak understanding of how to develop children’s aural understanding and musical response. Furthermore, some technical aspects were not attended to properly, with pupils’ poor posture and poor embouchure habits left unchallenged. On reflection, the headteacher agreed that the school had been wrong in its assumption that ‘buying in from the experts’ meant that this provision should be left unmonitored.
29. One local authority music service used its central music funding to grant every school a pro-rata amount of ‘free’ time each week. The primary school visited in

this authority received 50 minutes each week, which the school had chosen to spend by engaging a music service teacher to lead weekly sessions in the Early Years Foundation Stage. While the quality of this work was outstanding, it was not built upon in other parts of the school and, consequently, value for money over the long-term was not good. To get good value for money from government funding, further investment was required from the school.

The Reception class lesson was outstanding. Exemplary musical modelling, excellent use of movement, and high expectations for the quality of children's responses resulted in outstanding progress and much enjoyment. The teacher had outstanding professional expertise and a very accurate understanding of how children learn musically. Other Early Years staff also attended the lessons and had improved their own practice as a result.

Unfortunately though, this good progress was not continued into Key Stages 1 and 2, where progress was just satisfactory. Apart from occasional one-off workshops and demonstration concerts, there were no sustained partnerships to provide additional tuition, and no whole-class ensemble programmes. Curriculum lessons were organised well by class teachers but showed limited understanding of how pupils make progress. Some teachers had taken part in 'Sing Up' training events, but both the headteacher and the head of the local authority music service agreed that the impetus of the Early Years work had not been maintained and the value of this work was therefore limited.

30. In recent years, increasing interest and attention has been given to transition arrangements in music from Year 6 to Year 7. Initiatives such as 'Musical Bridges' have helped to share practice and understanding between primary and secondary teachers, as well as ensure continuity of learning for pupils. This work is exemplified in the case study of Newlyn and Humphry Davy Schools in Part B. Involvement of younger pupils in transition activities enabled secondary school staff to have good knowledge of their prior musical skills, knowledge and understanding and therefore tailor curriculum work in Year 7 accordingly.
31. In too many instances, however, partnerships between secondary schools and their feeder primary schools were underdeveloped. At best, most schools collected data about those who had taken additional instrumental lessons or been involved in extra-curricular ensembles. The methodology used by some teachers for assessing students' musical abilities and potential – including written tests of musical theory and knowledge of facts about music – was of limited value. It was common for secondary school teachers to claim the need to 'start from scratch' or 'go back to basics'; somewhat surprising, given the focus and funding that has been given to primary school music in recent years and notwithstanding the variability of practice in Key Stages 1 and 2. Clearly, the failure to consider pupils' prior achievement and experience does not make for a good start in secondary school. It is not surprising, therefore, that in so many instances the proportion of pupils learning an instrument in primary

school and then continuing to learn at secondary school is so small.⁷ Similarly, it is not a coincidence that at Humphry Davy School – where musical links with feeder primary schools have been strong for some years and there have been considerable improvements over the past two years in Key Stage 3 provision – the proportion of students continuing with music to GCSE is now over three times the national average.

32. Although the curriculum and regular additional tuition are at the heart of music provision in schools, partnerships can provide special events and experiences that are simply not possible any other way. 'One-off' projects and events can be extremely valuable. Special events, such as a concert trip to the Royal Albert Hall, a gamelan workshop or a jazz improvisation session, clearly inspired pupils who spoke to inspectors and provided memorable experiences. However, it is essential that these events are not seen as an alternative to regular provision. It is also vital that the school and partners are able to follow up immediately on the enthusiasm which results.

One school had booked a one-off afternoon percussion workshop. The workshop brochure promised that the pupils would learn about and explore call and response exercises, polyrhythms, and musical improvisation; they would also be introduced to different drumming techniques. All this seemed impressive, and pupils reported that it was entertaining and enjoyable. However, it was clear from scrutiny of the school's curriculum planning that there was limited consideration of how pupils' rhythmic understanding should develop over time. The workshop was, by itself, effective, but it had had limited impact on planning for pupils' musical development and progression.

33. Successful management of these one-off events and partnerships in general requires good management skills from the music coordinator, particularly in secondary schools. Some heads of music found it difficult to step back from activities that could be better led by partners – for example, regular extra-curricular groups. Conversely, stepping back from the front-line leadership and participating in a partnership project as a student helped to refresh one teacher's personal performing, improvising, and composing skills and confidence. Good management of visiting instrumental teachers that empowers them to lead regular extra-curricular ensembles benefits the school by offering students a much more diverse range of activities than the class music teacher can offer. It also allows the class teacher to give more time to the essential planning and preparation needed for good classroom curriculum provision.

⁷ In *Music in schools: wider still, and wider*, Ofsted reported that in primary schools the overall proportion of pupils learning to play a musical instrument through additional tuition was 22%, compared with 11% in secondary schools. *Music in schools: wider still, and wider* (110158), Ofsted, 2012; www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/110158.

Action: Use partnerships to improve the practice of teachers and music professionals

34. The most effective partnerships were informed by the clear understanding of partners that they could all learn from each other. The headteacher of one very effective partnership commented:

‘The Wider Opportunities sessions are not just for the pupils. They are in-service training for my classroom teachers and for the instrumental teachers as well. My teachers may not have the musical expertise, but they know how to manage a mixed-ability class of 30 children, and that’s an expertise too. We can all learn from each other. That’s why I’m happy to invest in the programme.’

35. At one primary school, the local authority music service taught every class for half-an-hour each week, with the non-music specialist class teacher also present. Each session was followed up by a further half-hour lesson, taught by each class’s teacher. Not only was this methodology helping to improve the musical confidence and knowledge of the class teacher, the music service teachers also developed their skills in learning to manage large classes of primary school pupils. The whole organisation of this programme really was a ‘partnership of expertise’.
36. However, this practice was not seen consistently enough. For example, in one school, while the teaching by music service staff was good, the lessons taught by class teachers were weak. The partnership was helping to provide an immediate solution in some classes, but was doing nothing to improve the wider effectiveness of music in the school because, after a year of the whole-class ensemble lessons, pupils would be moving back to music lessons with their class teacher.
37. Not all music service leaders made sufficient use of specialist teaching to strengthen the skills of class teachers and develop sustainable capacity in music. One music service manager said, ‘We see ourselves as providers of good-quality teaching for pupils, teaching pupils in an area where we know most class teachers struggle.’ In the same way that some schools did not see the wider value for money of buying in specialist staff from music services, not all music services took advantage of their staff working alongside good, experienced classroom practitioners.

Action: Use partnerships to improve senior leadership knowledge and understanding about good music education

38. Most of the primary school senior leaders were aware of the national singing initiative, ‘Sing Up’, and some had even taken part in local training events. Far fewer were aware of other training opportunities, such as those linked to the former Wider Opportunities initiative. But the biggest concern was primary and

secondary school headteachers' lack of knowledge and understanding of the National Plan for Music Education and the new hubs.

39. Many of the headteachers and senior leaders in the schools inspected recognised the importance of music and were keen to raise standards in music in their schools. However, their understanding of the characteristics of effective musical teaching and learning was extremely inconsistent. While many had made commendable efforts to support and raise the profile of music through partnership work, and were keen to improve music further, far fewer had been effective in evaluating the quality of musical provision, either in the classroom or in additional provision. It is understandable that those who are not music subject specialists might find this difficult. However, in too many cases, headteachers and senior leaders had not taken the time to discuss the principles of good music education, engaged sufficiently with their professional partners in discussing such principles, or received professional support. Schools are reminded that headteachers and governors retain responsibility for the quality of all teaching in their school whether it is delivered by full-time qualified teachers, teaching assistants, or agency staff.
40. Very few examples were seen of senior leaders and music partners working together to evaluate and improve the quality of music provision. Frequently, the heads of music services reported that it was difficult to get beyond financial and administrative matters in discussions with headteachers. One music service manager said to an inspector, rather wearily, 'My job is much more about financial and contractual management than it is with improving the musical quality of our work – I think we probably take that too much for granted.' The following example demonstrates the impact that insufficient dialogue regarding the quality of provision can have on outcomes for pupils.

The head of music service told the inspector that he had been unhappy for some time about the fact that a secondary school only allowed 15 minutes for each individual instrumental lesson. The music service teachers were trained to teach in small groups, thus enabling a longer lesson, but the school had decided to persist with the individual lesson organisation. Observation of three instrumental lessons showed very clearly that 15 minutes was too short a period for good teaching and learning to take place. It was perhaps not surprising that the numbers learning instruments more than halved between Years 7 and 8, and halved again between Years 8 and 9.

The headteacher explained that because the cost charged to the school was over £35 an hour he wanted to ensure that as many students as possible benefited. When faced with inspection evidence, he agreed that this did not necessarily guarantee good value for money in terms of outcomes.

It would be easy to blame the school exclusively for this situation. However, better quality assurance by the music service and the school together in partnership – in the form of lesson observations and analysis of data – might have identified these issues earlier and sparked an open dialogue about how to ensure best value for the school and best outcomes for the students.

41. Where provision for joint observations was in place, the sharing of expertise was extremely beneficial, and consequently headteachers were much better able to support music teachers in improving the quality of provision and outcomes for pupils; a good example of this is seen in the Ofsted good practice film about Flegg High School.⁸ However, these joint observations were most often of whole-class music teaching. Very few examples were reported of school leaders co-observing individual or small group instrumental or vocal lessons with music service managers. The variability of this tuition seen during the survey suggests very strongly that such joint observations would be helpful.
42. In September 2012, Ofsted published *Music in schools: promoting good practice*.⁹ The purpose of this guidance is to support dialogue between senior leaders in schools and music partnership leaders, and to support the sixth priority from the *Music in schools: wider still, and wider* report, which was to:

‘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.’

Conclusion: Leadership dialogue and challenge are at the heart of good music education partnerships

43. Dialogue and challenge between schools and their music education partners are crucially important. The eight good practice exemplars referenced in Part B of this report are characterised by robustness of communication and expectation, and good and outstanding headteacher and subject leadership of music, resulting in good and outstanding outcomes for pupils, teachers, and music professionals.
44. If the new music hubs are, in the words of the National Plan, to ‘help drive the quality of service locally, with scope for improved partnership working, better

⁸ *Music in schools: wider still, and wider. Good practice case study Flegg High School*, Ofsted, 2012; www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/music-schools-wider-still-and-wider-good-practice-case-study-flegg-high-school.

⁹ *Music in schools – promoting good practice*, Ofsted, 2012; www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/subject-professional-development-materials-music-schools-promoting-good-practice.

value for money, local innovation and greater accountability', it is important that schools and hubs work collaboratively. It is particularly vital that good communication and good dialogue are established with those schools that have little or no knowledge of the new music hubs, or who choose to build their own partnerships independently of other provision without appropriate quality assurance and evaluation. As the National Plan correctly suggests, 'Schools will want to hold hubs to account for the services they arrange, and at the same time hubs will be able to challenge and support schools to improve their music curriculum.'

Part B: Eight effective music education partnerships

45. In this part of the report, eight case studies are offered to exemplify how the five actions detailed in Part A have helped schools to build effective partnerships to improve access and raise achievement in music for all groups of pupils. Five visits were made to schools on the recommendation of national associations or funded music education partnerships, and three of the case studies are based on good practice observed during music subject inspections. The schools featured include primary, secondary (comprehensive, secondary modern and selective), and special schools; they are located across the country, with some in close proximity to major music organisations and venues but others in areas where it is more difficult to access professional music-makers. The music education partners featured include local authority music services; a professional ensemble; an arts centre; a conservatoire; a charitable organisation; a privately funded music education initiative; feeder schools; local community musicians; and self-employed musicians.
46. The full case studies, which include links to sound files, video files and external websites and resources, are published as a separate online booklet, *Music in schools: sound partnerships – eight effective music education partnerships*, on Ofsted's website at: www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/120282.
47. The six good practice films, published in March 2012, also contain examples of good partnership working with local authority music services; professional music groups; academic researchers; national music initiatives; self-employed musicians; and feeder schools. The films can be found at: www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/our-expert-knowledge/music.

Case study 1: Crich Junior School with Derby City and County Music Partnership

Crich Junior is a small school in the heart of the Peak District, with only 51 pupils on roll at the time of Ofsted's good practice visit. This case study shows how, through working with Derby City and County Music Partnership and through engagement with local musicians and parent volunteers, music has become central to the life of the school and wider community. Because of high expectations from the headteacher and regular quality assurance by the City and County Music Partnership through the local authorities' Quality Mark scheme, standards are high with every single pupil involved in classroom and ensemble work, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs.

Case study 2: Emmanuel College with The Sage Gateshead

This case study is about the three-year partnership between Emmanuel College, a large city technology college, and The Sage Gateshead to promote and improve the quality of singing. The impact of this work, which involves weekly singing sessions for all Year 7 students, whole-school choral ensembles and informal singing activities around the school, is shown not only through increased participation in vocal work but also through improved achievement in other areas of the music curriculum. The important role played by sponsors and senior leadership in initiating, funding, and evaluating the project is considered, as are the benefits that the project has brought to the professional development of teachers at Emmanuel and the lead professional from The Sage Gateshead.

Case study 3: Humphry Davy School, Newlyn School, and 'Musical Bridges'

In March 2010, HMI carried out a music subject inspection of Humphry Davy, an 11 to 16 secondary school in Penzance. Two years later, a music inspection was made at Newlyn, one of Humphry Davy's feeder primary schools, where the quality of partnership work in music was judged outstanding by HMI. This case study examines the involvement and impact of the two schools in 'Musical Bridges', a national initiative funded by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation focusing on easing the transition from primary to secondary school through music. The case study also considers other partnership work undertaken by Humphry Davy and describes how strong leadership at all levels has helped the school make outstanding progress in music since the subject inspection in March 2010.

Case study 4: King Edward VI Handsworth School with Birmingham Contemporary Music Group

King Edward VI Handsworth School is a selective girls' school in Birmingham. Over the course of a seven year partnership with Birmingham Contemporary Music Group (BCMG), significant improvements have been made to the quality of students' composing work through engagement with players from BCMG and professional composers. This case study considers the wide impact of this work, not least in improving students' confidence and their willingness to take creative risks, but also in the professional development of classroom teachers and the music professionals. The involvement of other partners, including peripatetic instrumental teachers and academic researchers, is also considered.

Case study 5: Morpeth School with the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, 'Serious', and the Tower Hamlets Arts and Music Education Service (THAMES)

Morpeth School is located in an area of considerable economic and social disadvantage but is also close to the Guildhall School of Music and Drama. This case study examines the long tradition of partnership working that Morpeth School has developed with a variety of music partners to provide a rich, diverse music offer for students from all backgrounds. One of the partners featured is 'Serious', which produces the London Jazz Festival; the case study also shows how providing discrete management of partnership work has generated additional funding. One third of students, representing all groups, are involved in additional music tuition at Morpeth, which is provided free of charge to parents.

Morpeth School receives many Year 7 pupils from John Scurr Primary School, one of the featured schools in the Ofsted music good practice videos: www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/music-schools-wider-still-and-wider-good-practice-case-study-john-scurr-primary-school.

Case study 6: St Columb Minor Academy with the Newquay local community

Two partnership arrangements are examined in this case study about St Columb Minor Academy, which is a large primary school in Newquay. The first describes the strong partnership working between the headteacher, the music coordinator, a governor, and even Year 6 students to secure strong musical outcomes. The second examination explores the strong links that the school has built with the secondary school which most Year 6 pupils transfer to, together with partnerships with local community music groups such as the Newquay Male Voice Choir.

Case study 7: St Rose's Special School, Stroud, with Drake Music

This case study examines the partnership between St Rose's School and Drake Music – a national organisation dedicated to breaking down barriers to disabled pupils' participation through innovative approaches to teaching, learning and making music. In particular, the case study highlights the use of technology to improve access for disabled pupils. Careful curriculum choices are at the heart of the partnership, including ensuring that lesson content is age-appropriate as well as being appropriate to individual students' needs. Examples of individual students' musical achievements are provided, including those gained through the accredited 'Introduction to Music' course, which was piloted by one student at St Rose's and is now being rolled out nationally.¹⁰

Case study 8: Uxendon Manor Primary School with Brent Music Service

This case study examines the way that Uxendon Manor – a large primary school serving a wide range of minority ethnic groups – has engaged with Brent Music Service to provide whole-class instrumental teaching throughout the school, for all pupils in all year groups. The case study describes how the expertise of specialist music teachers has been used to improve the subject knowledge and confidence of class teachers. The case study also examines how music has strengthened partnerships with the school's local community.

Notes

This report is based primarily on evidence from specialist inspections of music between September 2011 and July 2012 in 28 primary schools and 31 secondary schools, including two special schools. The schools were selected to provide a sample of those in differing contexts, geographical locations and local authorities 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 four secondary schools, one primary school and one special school were visited to observe examples of good practice.

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. In all inspections, headteachers were asked to invite a representative from the local authority music service or other partnership organisation for a meeting with the inspector. In all,

¹⁰ Introduction to Music course – accessible accreditation from Drake Music; www.drakemusic.org/dm-education/resources-courses/introduction-music-course-accessible-accreditation-drake-music-ocnswr.

representatives from 49 different local authority music services met with inspectors across the 59 schools inspected.

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.

Annex A: Providers visited

Primary schools

School

Charles Darwin Community Primary School
 Clements Community Primary School
 Dawley Brook Primary School
 Flixton Junior School
 Harold Court Primary School
 Hollington Primary School
 Knutsford School
 Larchwood Primary School
 Lydbury North CofE (A) Primary School
 Marshchapel Primary School
 Milefield Primary School
 Mitton Manor Primary School
 Newlyn School
 Offley Primary School
 Parkhead Community Primary School
 Putteridge Infant School
 Redgate Primary School
 Reepham Primary School
 Robin Hood Primary School
 Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School, Sowerby Bridge
 Short Heath Junior School
 St Columb Minor School
 St Day and Carharrack Community School
 St Maxentius CofE Primary School
 St Thomas of Canterbury Primary School
 Stanley St Peters Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School
 Uxendon Manor Primary School

Local authority

Cheshire West and Chester
 Suffolk
 Dudley
 Trafford
 Havering
 East Sussex
 Hertfordshire
 Essex
 Shropshire
 Lincolnshire
 Barnsley
 Gloucestershire
 Cornwall
 Cheshire East
 Gateshead
 Luton
 Sefton
 Norfolk
 Leeds
 Calderdale
 Walsall
 Cornwall
 Cornwall
 Bolton
 Salford
 Wakefield
 Brent

Secondary schools

School

Ashton Community Science College
 Bishop Challoner Catholic Secondary School
 Blackheath Bluecoat Church of England School
 Bourne Academy
 Buttershaw Business and Enterprise College
 Campsmount Technology College
 Colyton Grammar School
 Cox Green School
 Darwen Vale High School
 Eton College
 Featherstone High School
 Filey School
 Frederick Gough School - A Specialist Language College
 Kenilworth School and Sports College
 King Solomon High School
 Littleover Community School
 Madeley High School
 Morecambe Community High School
 Northampton Academy
 Nova Hreod
 Overton Grange School
 Prudhoe Community High School
 Sheffield Springs Academy
 St Bede's School
 St Edmunds Catholic School, A Specialist Mathematics & Computing College
 St George's Church of England Foundation School
 St Mary's CofE High School
 Testwood Sports College
 The Boswells School
 Tunbridge Wells Grammar School for Boys

Local authority

Lancashire
 Hampshire
 Greenwich
 Lincolnshire
 Bradford
 Doncaster
 Devon
 Windsor and Maidenhead
 Blackburn with Darwen
 Warwickshire
 Ealing
 North Yorkshire
 North Lincolnshire
 Warwickshire
 Redbridge
 Derby
 Staffordshire
 Lancashire
 Northamptonshire
 Swindon
 Sutton
 Northumberland
 Sheffield
 Surrey
 Wolverhampton
 Kent
 Barnet
 Hampshire
 Essex
 Kent

Special schools

School

Charlton School
Springwood Primary School

Local authority

Greenwich
Salford

Good practice case study primary schools

School

Crich Junior School

Local authority

Derbyshire

Good practice case study secondary schools

School

Emmanuel College
Humphry Davy School
King Edward VI Handsworth School
Morpeth School

Local authority

Gateshead
Cornwall
Birmingham
Tower Hamlets

Good practice case study special schools

School

St Rose's Special School

Local authority

Gloucestershire

Annex B: Criteria used by inspectors for judging the effectiveness of schools' music education partnership work

<p>Outstanding</p>	<p>Excellent, sustained partnerships with professional musicians and community groups complement consistently outstanding classroom provision to cover all curriculum requirements in good depth and breadth, at all key stages. There is a wide and diverse range of high-quality extra-curricular activities that meets the needs and interests of all groups of pupils, as shown by their excellent participation rates and great enjoyment in memorable, high-quality musical experiences. Music permeates many aspects of school life.</p> <p>Subject leaders and senior managers build sustained, high-quality partnerships with outside organisations and individuals that bring long-term benefits to all groups of pupils. High-quality music is at the heart of school life, both in the curriculum and in extra-curricular activities; furthermore, the school plays a significant role in helping to develop and exemplify good and innovative practice on a local and national level.</p>
<p>Good</p>	<p>Music plays an important role in the school community; there are good opportunities for school groups to perform in the wider community and with community music groups. There are appropriate links and references to the wider world of music, including professional performers and the wider music industries, and learners who aspire to careers in music are given appropriate preparation and support.</p> <p>Resources are used well, including any extended services, to improve outcomes and to secure good value for money. There is good awareness of national music initiatives.</p>
<p>Satisfactory</p>	<p>Partnerships contribute to satisfactory and improving outcomes in music for pupils which the school alone could not provide. These may include appropriate use of outside agencies, professional musicians and community groups. There is a reasonable range of regular, additional opportunities including instrumental and vocal tuition and musical ensembles.</p> <p>Additional support from outside agencies and other partnerships is managed adequately to provide additional opportunities and challenge. Teachers have a broad awareness of current issues and developments in music education and have benefited from involvement in local training courses, including opportunities to network with colleagues in other schools.</p>
<p>Inadequate</p>	<p>The curriculum does not meet statutory requirements – often in respect of the breadth of experiences required. There are few extra-curricular activities and participation is poor because those provided do not meet the needs and interests of all pupils. There are very few opportunities for learners to sing, play instruments together and to perform to others.</p> <p>There may be an over-reliance on extra-curricular activities as a 'shop window' without comparable attention given to music in the curriculum. Partnerships are underdeveloped. Learners have limited opportunities to attend regional and community musical activities, to work with different practising musicians or to experience live music.</p>

Annex C: A checklist for effective partnership projects

This guidance can be used to guide regular discussions between school leaders and music partnership leaders, particularly music hubs.

Value for money

- Do not simply take on trust that specialist provision by music education partners will lead to good outcomes.
- Agree a strategy for monitoring and evaluating the success of the project – including measuring musical outcomes for all groups of pupils and evaluating value for money.
- Strengthen monitoring and self-evaluation by consulting your financial and educational stakeholders – including parents, pupils, governors, and external funding organisations – before reaching judgements and taking decisions.

Access and achievement

- Agree how you will encourage and promote the sustained participation of different groups of pupils, including those in receipt of free school meals, boys and girls, and those who are disabled or have special educational needs.
- It may be appropriate and necessary to ask parents to contribute, but make sure that you agree and share remissions policies and that these are well publicised and easy to access.
- Make sure that teaching meets the needs and interests of all groups of pupils, including those with different levels of attainment, through robust monitoring of pupils' progress.

Improving professionals' confidence and knowledge

- Analyse the learning needs of the participating teachers and music professionals. Make time throughout the project for them to plan together, share expertise, and monitor pupils' progress; build in opportunities for continuing professional development and reflection.

Augmenting and supporting core music curriculum provision

- Before starting partnership programmes, make sure that the visiting teachers know and understand pupils' previous musical learning and experiences. At the end of the project, take time to amend your curriculum plans to reflect pupils' learning in the whole-class tuition sessions.
- Before embarking on short-term or 'one-off' partnership projects, make sure that they are appropriate to the needs, interests, abilities and aspirations of your pupils.

Improving senior leadership knowledge and understanding

- Agree how the school's senior leaders will be involved in observing and evaluating the musical teaching and learning. Often, the headteacher or senior manager will not be a subject specialist; in this case discuss ways in which the music partnership leaders can share expertise to support the school's leadership.

Annex D: Further reading and resources

Music in schools: wider still, and wider (110158), Ofsted, 2012;
www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/110158.

Music in schools: promoting good practice, Ofsted, 2012;
www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/subject-professional-development-materials-music-schools-promoting-good-practice.