

SoundStorm
SEN School Music consultation
March – May 2018



Executive Summary

... “The hub should be the glue...facilitating opportunities... introductions and networking...skills sharing and building a co-operative between other SEN schools” ... (Bournemouth SEN School, 2018)

SoundStorm, lead partner for the Bournemouth and Poole Music Education Hub, commissioned a consultation in February 2018, to map and profile the music education provision across 7 SEN and 1 EBD school in the region.

Schools were invited to meet with consultant and Music Hub Partner, Jane Lindenberg; using a short questionnaire to structure the conversation the discussion included a review of previous Hub led initiatives alongside existing timetabled and curricular learning.

The Music Education Hub has been delivering across the conurbation since 2012, accessing DfE funding to support, enrich and supplement the music curriculum across all key stages. Since 2015, the service has been accessed via a Membership scheme (with associated annual fee); the Hub is expected to deliver the offer via four 'Core Roles'¹.

Uptake of the offer amongst the areas 7 SEN schools has been mixed, with a number electing not to take up Membership. Inputs were by and large project based, discrete and usually delivered by Music Hub partners, Coda Music Trust. The Hub has however continued to develop relationships across the area and has been funding several pilot schemes including the **Open-Up Orchestra** at Victoria Education Centre and co-funding the annual SEN Schools concert with the **Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra** alongside a number of other discrete

The schools interviewed as part of this consultation were: **Linwood School, Victoria Education Centre, Winchelsea School, Langside School and Tregonwell School**. It was concluded after the interview that the EBD offer looked different to the SEN offer. It was recommended that a pilot programme be developed in close partnership with Tregonwell and which included frequent reviews, due to the transient nature of children and young people accessing the school. Therefore, this report focuses on developing a strategy and programme of work for the 7 SEN schools with the proposed EBD programme offer to be issued separately.

¹ <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/music-education/music-education-hubs>

Findings

The findings from the initial consultation are encouraging and show that most of the children and young people attending SEN schools in the area are receiving weekly music lessons for 30 minutes or more (there are some exceptions). There is also a variety of in-school singing clubs/activities that pupils can access too. Schools really value external music projects but feel that some of the more traditional instrumental learning opportunities (such as the First Access offer in mainstream) are not appropriate for their learners and the wide range of needs within a class.

All schools felt that whole-class music making opportunities should be 'bespoke' and include suitable lead-in and planning time (alongside a teacher) and offer a range of accessible instruments and technology. Whilst most schools do have a range of accessible technology available, it often isn't being fully utilised. This was the exception in one school where there is a dedicated music technician.

There are some common development needs identified by most schools such as an ongoing music technology, appropriate assessment frameworks and group music-making with children and young people with PMLD. Most specialist staff had not undertaken any regular CPD and the one school that had, travelled to Bristol to access this. Bespoke music projects could offer a training element as part of their delivery but there needs to be a wider more relevant training offer for specialist and non-specialist staff within the area. This is particularly pertinent as some schools spoke of budgets cuts which could mean non-specialist staff teaching music and a loss of specialism.

Historically there has been some contact between the different special schools in the area, mostly informal training between staff. However, there is no dedicated structure in place to support this and most schools felt like they were working in isolation. Opportunities for practice sharing inside and outside of school are minimal and time dependent. All schools identified a *desire to collaborate and share practice* given the wealth of experience and expertise.

The development of a **dedicated SEN music network** for specialist and engaged non-specialist staff would help shape a rich community of learning, build a bank of accessible resources that can be accessed at any time and create valuable skills-sharing opportunities. It would also create a direct line of communication between the Music Hub and schools allowing for greater collaboration and a shared strategic vision.

Greater collaboration between schools could also be realised through joint performance opportunities. All schools expressed a desire for more cross-school projects and performances to showcase and share work. A longer-term aspiration for schools is for special schools to be better represented at the Hub's major event programme alongside mainstream schools. Inclusion was also mentioned by schools when talking about potential progression opportunities.

An inclusive music making ensemble could be an aspiration that is taken forward through the network. Immense value is also placed on the in-school **Live Music Now performances**. Experiential music performances are immersive and for some children and young people, this is their only experience of a live music performance. The recommendations split these different types of performances into two distinct categories.

Four out of the five schools identified that there was a lack of appropriate progression opportunities for students who excel in music, particularly instrumental lessons and ensembles. Presently only two schools offer instrumental lessons and one of which signposts young people to the **South West Open Youth Orchestra**,

a regional ensemble based in Bristol for musicians with additional needs. These progression routes require experienced practitioners to deliver these activities.

Whilst external practitioners/organisation's can deliver specific specialist training, to sustain the work, there needs to be a pool of musicians in the area who have the expertise. Therefore, training overall should focus on two strands i.e. CPD for specialist and non-specialist staff and capacity building alongside workforce development for practitioners and emerging practitioners in the area.

The Music Hub's ongoing regional strategy should identify how it will support practitioners who want to work in special schools and how they can develop their practice in this area.

Summary Recommendations

Participating in music can be a life-changing opportunity for all children and young people. For children and young people with additional needs, opportunities to make and participate in music can be more limited but often the most impactful. To deliver an exciting, responsive and collaborative SEN programme of work the Hub should focus their strategy and subsequent programme delivery on five key areas.

- 1) Participatory Music Projects and Performance Opportunities**
- 2) Progression Opportunities**
- 3) Experiential Music Performances**
- 4) Network and Training**
- 5) Online Resources**

The full report is available on request. Please email michael.armstrong@bournemouth.gov.uk