Music Education Hubs: School Music Education Plans guidance

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Introduction
In November 2013, Ofsted published a report, *Music in schools: what hubs must do*, which outlined expectations that Music Hubs should be bold in implementing the National Plan for Music Education and support schools through challenging conversations. The key recommendation from this report was that all Hubs should develop a School Music Education Plan (SMEP) that articulates their milestones and outcomes in their work with schools. A SMEP forms a key part of the Hub’s wider needs analysis and business planning and demonstrates how each Hub plans to effectively engage with all schools within a Hub area. The format of the plan is at each Hub’s discretion, but we would expect plans to address the information within this guidance and the recommendations of Ofsted.

The Hub lead organisation is responsible for ensuring that mechanisms are in place for evaluating local needs and agreeing local delivery plans. Schools must be encouraged to adopt a strategic approach to music education where sustained activity is firmly established to enable continued progress. When a school and its leadership team engage with a Music Education Hub and delivery plans, pupils will benefit.

This guidance update considers the changes to Ofsted’s Education Inspection Framework (EIF) that came into force in September 2019. The renewed emphasis on a broad and balanced curriculum that meets or exceeds the expectations of the National Curriculum, including arts subjects, has led to many schools across the country looking for support to develop their music curriculum. Hubs are well placed to offer this support.

Ofsted’s new Education Inspection Framework (EIF)
The new EIF was rolled out universally in September 2019 and includes significant changes to how schools are assessed by Ofsted. Key changes include:

- 4 key judgement areas:
  - Quality of education;
  - Behaviour and attitudes;
  - Personal development;
  - Leadership and management.
• Good and Outstanding schools must demonstrate a curriculum that is ambitious and designed to give all pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils and including pupils with SEND, the knowledge and cultural capital they need to succeed in life. This is either the national curriculum or a curriculum of comparable breadth and ambition.
• The curriculum remains as broad as possible for as long as possible.
• Schools must evidence Intent, Implementation and Impact for their curriculum design.
• There is an emphasis on the sequencing of lessons, how lessons will progress pupils over time.
• Schools must evidence that over time, pupils know more, remember more, can do more.

**Inspection Deep Dives**
Ofsted will now inspect curriculum subject through deep dives. Primary schools will have deep dives in Literacy, one or more foundation subjects and potentially also maths. Secondary schools will have deep dives into 4-6 curriculum subjects.

The deep dive includes the following elements:
• evaluation of senior leaders’ intent for the curriculum in this subject or area, and their understanding of its implementation and impact
• evaluation of curriculum leaders’ long- and medium-term thinking and planning, including the rationale for content choices and curriculum sequencing
• visits to a deliberately and explicitly connected sample of lessons
• work scrutiny of books or other kinds of work produced by pupils who are part of classes that have also been (or will also be) observed by inspectors
• discussion with teachers to understand how the curriculum informs their choices about content and sequencing to support effective learning
• discussions with a group of pupils from the lessons observed

**What can Music Education Hubs do to support schools?**
As more schools look to develop their music curriculum, Hubs are well positioned to offer support and guidance. Arts Council England expects all Hubs to create or amend their existing offer to reflect this need.

There are some excellent examples and resources emerging from Hubs across the country, a few examples of what a Hub might offer are listed below:
• Collate and share as much local and national information and feedback with schools
• Offer twilight Deep Dive sessions for Headteachers, Governors and Music leads
• Promote (and amend where necessary) music self-evaluation toolkits to support the expectations of the new EIF

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• Update supporting documents and resources to reflect the changes to the EIF
• Support schools with lesson sequencing to evidence intention and implementation
• Support schools to develop evaluation frameworks to evidence the impact of their music curriculum
• Run your usual programme of training and CPD centrally and bespoke for schools
• Develop and/or promote Music Progression Frameworks that depict progression routes that integrate opportunities within and beyond the curriculum
• Raise awareness and understanding with all Music Service/Hub staff, how they fit in and how they can support schools
• Signpost to Artsmark Award as a school development tool to support embedding arts across the curriculum

Background

The National Plan for Music Education (NPME)
The NPME clearly sets out the wider partnership of a hub. Whilst fully recognising the wider purview of a hub, this guidance focusses on the relationship between the hub lead and all schools across a hub.

There are recurrent references to the vital role a hub should play in ensuring high quality music teaching in schools in the NPME.

- ‘Head teachers and governors, not hubs, are responsible for the quality of the music education in schools (including that delivered by non-school staff). However, schools are, or should be, key partners within hubs. As part of a hub’s role, hubs have a responsibility to challenge and support schools over quality. Schools do not always have sufficient expertise in music education to be sure what to do for the best. We are asking hubs to fill that expertise gap.’

- ‘…. new music education hubs covering every local authority area, helping improve the quality and consistency of music education across England, both in and out of school.’

- ‘…hubs and schools holding one another to account against locally developed standards for delivery of music education..’

- ‘All schools should provide high quality music education as part of a broad and balanced curriculum. Schools will want to review how they do this in light of this National Plan, and following proposals from the National Curriculum review early in 2012. Schools, however, will be expected to provide high quality music education.’

- ‘Schools cannot be expected to do all that is required of music education alone: a music infrastructure that transcends schools is necessary. Building on the work of local authority music services, this will be provided by music education hubs...’
In the context of a needs audit, **hubs and schools (or clusters of schools) will work together to determine what high quality music education looks like in a local context, and who will be responsible for the delivery of each aspect.**

‘...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.’

Through consultation and discussion, the hub will need to build its shared local vision and ‘offer’ to schools based around each school’s needs and ethos. This may include helping schools with broader school improvement through music.’

Through their School Music Education Plan, a hub will [Ofsted ‘Music in schools: what hubs must do’ survey report, recommendations 2012]:

- promote themselves with schools as confident, expert leaders of music education in their areas, not simply as providers of services;
- expect and secure that all schools engage with them and the National Plan for Music Education;
- have regular supportive, challenging conversations with each of their schools about the quality of music education for all pupils in that school;
- support all schools in improving the music education they provide, especially in class lessons, and support them in evaluating it robustly;
- offer expert training and consultancy to schools, which supports school leaders and staff in understanding what musical learning, and good progress by pupils in music, are like;
- ensure that their own staff and partners are well trained and ready to do this work;
- spend a suitable proportion of their staff’s time on working with school leaders strategically, alongside their work in teaching pupils directly;
- publicise their work effectively to schools and explain how it can contribute to school improvement;
- facilitate school-to-school support as appropriate;
- promote high-quality curriculum progression in schools and ensure that hubs’ work in schools is integral to this;
- robustly evaluate the impact of their own work on pupils’ music education.
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Suggested content of a School Music Education Engagement Plan:

- Identify a team of Specialist having a named person from the hub as a contact person for each school.
- Keep notes of visits of conversations with all schools, and action points, which go alongside the tracking records of hub engagement with schools.
- Ensure action points are followed up, as appropriate.
- Undertake annual conversations with each school about the quality of their music curriculum / offer and provide guidance and support where improvement is needed. Do this within a realistic timescale. You may not be able to do this with every school in the first, or even second, year. But plan for this over a reasonable timescale.
- A good starting point for this is to work with the school to ensure that direct hub inputs: First Access teaching, the singing strategy, and any other hub programmes the school, are part of a coherent, progressive and challenging music offer in the school. There is little point in hub engagement which stands alone.
- Provide the challenging conversations free. But further support and advice may need to be charged, depending on the circumstances. It may be helpful to build up the costs to schools slowly, over a few years, as they realise increasingly the benefits coming to them.
- In addition, maybe simply ask each school when music is scheduled to appear on their own school development plan – for some this will not have been decided, but it may make them think about it; the hub can then offer to be part of that process and it could also help the hub with its planning of when to target particular schools.
- Remember that, under the NPME, CPD work by hubs counts as front-line delivery. Don’t hesitate, therefore, to include as part of your work in any school, time to work alongside the school’s leaders and staff on management / development issues. This may reduce the direct teaching the hub provides to pupils but that is fine as it is likely to have a wider impact on the school and keeps costs within existing budgets.
- Ensure that, within the hub or its partner organisations, you have the expertise to challenge and support schools to bring improvement at each key stage.
- You may already have staff / partners able to do this; but it may also involve the training of existing staff / partners, or it may involve the recruitment, or engagement, of new staff / consultants / partners. This may take some time but build it into your plan.
- Schools, as key partners, may be able to release periodically a particular music teacher or there may be a group of music teachers with particular skills who can be called upon as needed to support particular areas or work in other schools. – e.g. the hub may have one teacher who is brilliant at ICT; another who is great at 20th Century music; another who is strong on assessment.
- Use other hubs, or external advice / support, to help you build up expertise within the hub, if needed.
- Keep building the relationship with each school and its leaders. Keep knocking on the door when it is difficult. Where needed, change the
perception schools have of what hubs / music services can do. Show schools your value. Build up positive 'word of mouth'.

- Expect to reach every school. Advertise / market the hub persuasively. Any reluctance from schools to engage is likely to be as a result of busyness, nervousness, or uncertainty of what is involved (just another thing) more than any actual hostility.

- Keep pointing out what the hub brings and the advantages to schools of having a strong local music service. The hub / music service should be a 'one stop shop' for all musical queries from schools.

- Try to get opportunities to speak at head-teacher and governor meetings within the LA, or elsewhere. Support LA or other training, if possible.

- Consider offering packages of work and support to schools, which include advisory support, First Access and singing (as appropriate), instrumental work and other support / services as appropriate. Basic packages could be offered free – try to get every school signed in. More advanced packages may require payment.

- Where possible, consult with head-teachers and governors groups on the drafting of the plan - and involve one or two key headteachers in its writing.

- Include senior students if possible to provide an authentic pupil voice to the writing of the plan.

- Consult the local authority and partner organisations and the advisory group of the hub on the plan and its contents to gain their support and maximise its potential impact.

- Try to identify a "champion" for the plan - perhaps a head-teacher or a parent governor - who could give extra voice to the marketing of the plan's aims and content.