



# Exchanging Notes Interim Report: Year 3

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## Executive summary

Researchers at Birmingham City University have been appointed to evaluate the effectiveness and impact of Youth Music's four-year Exchanging Notes programme.

The research project has five intended outcomes. The findings at the end of Year Three are summarised below.

### **1) To improve the quality and standards of music delivery for children and young people**

- The development of communicative partnerships has been central to young people's musical and educational development. These communicative partnerships include music leaders, teachers, social workers, carers, designated behaviour teachers, school senior leadership teams, parents, music provider personnel, and local Music Education Hub leaders. These partnerships recognise the importance of exchange, and place value on musical learning for young people's progression.
- Effective Exchanging Notes sessions focus on learning, develop communication, and foster creativity.
- Information on young people's educational, social and emotional, attainment and assessment data alongside teacher, music leader, and pastoral information has informed music practice.
- Joined-up planning between teachers and music leaders, where the development of a shared ethos is created, is significant for learning and teaching.

**2) To embed learning and effective practice in host and partner organisations and share practice beyond the project**

- Regular meetings between music leaders and teachers have been successful for building trust, setting targets and planning learning. Within these planning discussions openness, constructive critique, and honesty have proven valuable for progression and shared practice.
- The engagement of senior leadership teams is critical to shared practice, visibility of projects in the wider school community, and value of music in the curriculum.
- A Continued Professional Development (CPD) model has been employed by a number of the projects. These projects engage the teaching community locally (in-school), and are now beginning to share practice within the region through Music Education Hubs and link schools.
- Co-delivery between teachers and music leaders is fundamental for developing pedagogical approaches that combine formal and non-formal approaches in the classroom.

**3) To develop the educational practice of schools, non-formal music organisations, teachers and practitioners through an action research model.**

- There is evidence that the educational practices of the range of stakeholders and organisations has developed, and that the action research model has been important in supporting organisations and individuals to critically reflect.
- Exchanging Notes projects have had to consider their pedagogical approaches to teaching and learning. For many of the music providers, both taking a long-term overview, and linking to the national curriculum, involve new processes and modes of working. Throughout Exchanging Notes, music providers and schools have considered new planning mechanisms where both formal and non-formal approaches are considered and implemented.

**4) To evidence the impact of the Exchanging Notes projects on educational and broader developmental outcomes for young people**

- The cultural experiences offered through Exchanging Notes have positively affected young people's educational progression, their social and emotional wellbeing and perceived value of school.
- The four-year timescale means that the project is not focused on building up to a single fixed end point (e.g. an end-of-term concert or other public-facing event). Relationships can develop, grow, be challenged and adapted where needed.
- This can also be said of the measures of success, which over the years have included developing musical proficiency as well as life-skills, social and emotional wellbeing.

**5) To test the validity of a Youth Music pedagogical Quality Framework as a tool for increasing educational engagement of young people**

- The Quality Framework is a catalyst to generate conversation and critical reflection on pedagogy and practice which is young people centred.
- The Quality Framework gives focus on the development of young people as musicians.
- The Quality Framework is a useful evaluation and planning tool.

## **Foreword from Matt Griffiths, CEO of Youth Music**

The projects Youth Music invest in help young people to develop musically, personally and socially. Since our charity was founded in 1999, we've been gathering evidence of the impact of our work – we know that it makes a powerful difference, particularly for young people experiencing challenging circumstances. Our projects take place in all kinds of places - youth centres, libraries, hospitals and housing estates – almost all of them outside school. But we don't see in-school and out-of-school music-making as fundamentally opposed. Our aim is to create inclusive music-making opportunities for all children and young people. Exchanging Notes was an opportunity for us to challenge ourselves, and to extend musically inclusive practice beyond our usual sphere.

When we launched Exchanging Notes in 2014, our intention was to test a hypothesis: that sustained involvement in music-making would have a positive impact on young people's attainment, engagement and wellbeing during their school life. While many short-term music and other cultural projects will be able to show examples of successes, we were really keen to understand what happens for young people over a longer period of time – in the case of Exchanging Notes over four academic years – to find out more about the outcomes of sustained involvement in music-making, and where the causes could genuinely be attributed. Exchanging Notes is an action research project, designed to evolve over time with significant learning along the way.

The important findings in this report - after three years of the four-year project - are relevant for everyone involved in making music with young people: including teachers, music leaders, headteachers, school governors, policy makers and those working in government.

For me, the report reveals the need for a new model for music education, built on effective partnership working between school teachers and music leaders. Instead of a narrative based on reinforcing differences between formal and non-formal music education, we need to articulate what high quality music education - putting young people's expectations, ideas and passion for music right at the centre - looks like now, and could look like in the future. The report reveals that the best outcomes for young people have been achieved when they can thrive as independent learners,

and are supported a professional workforce who have the time and space to reflect, be creative and respond flexibly.

The Exchanging Notes projects have produced some fantastic examples of this best practice way of working – the case studies in this report showcase some particular successes. Nevertheless, Exchanging Notes is taking place within an education policy environment at odds with the best practice highlighted in this report. We are facing an educational climate where tests, league tables, standardisation of assessments, and an ever-increasing focus on ‘core’ subjects at the expense of arts are all prevalent. Regular tales emerge in the press of music being either reduced or completely removed from school curriculums (including a recent well-publicised story of a secondary school in West Yorkshire charging students to study GCSE Music outside of school hours.)

This has been challenging for us all and will continue to be so. But we must not, and should not, just throw up our hands and declare these problems insurmountable. This report is honest about the difficulties Exchanging Notes projects have faced, but it is heartening that there are many opportunities too. A big thanks to all involved for their resilience and persistence. Just imagine how much greater the outcomes might be if they were taking place within an environment where young people are at the centre, where individual learning is encouraged and where the workforce are given the space to be creative and reflect on their own educational practice!

Exchanging Notes was genuinely testing a hypothesis – we didn’t know exactly what we would discover, and with another year yet to go, we still haven’t finished our exploration. This project represents Youth Music’s ambition to challenge the status quo, with a willingness to think differently, to innovate, and to embrace the powerful opportunities that successful and genuine partnership working can provide for everyone involved - especially, of course, for young people.

# Introduction

## About Youth Music

Youth Music is a national charity investing in music-making projects for children and young people experiencing challenging circumstances.

Everyone should have the chance to make music. And those facing difficulties - economic problems, lifelong conditions, tough circumstances or behavioural issues - are often the ones who get the most out of music-making.

Projects supported by Youth Music help young people develop musically, of course, but they have personal and social outcomes too.

Find out more at [www.youthmusic.org.uk](http://www.youthmusic.org.uk)

Youth Music invests in around 350 music-making projects across England each year. These projects normally take place out of school and are led by young people's interests and goals. This pedagogy has been referred to as 'non-formal', in contrast with the 'formal' approach of traditional music education. Youth Music believes the non-formal approach is most effective for supporting young people in challenging circumstances to achieve positive outcomes. However, non-formal and formal music education pedagogies are not necessarily in opposition to each other.

In 2012, Youth Music commissioned the *Communities of Music Education* research. The researchers recommended that music education providers of all kinds should work together, to 'join up' and co-ordinate their services to ensure that all children and young people can have access to high quality educational experiences and progress in music according to their talent and potential. It is against this backdrop that Youth Music created a new programme, Exchanging Notes.



## About the Exchanging Notes programme

Exchanging Notes is a four-year action research programme pioneering new partnerships between schools and music education providers who normally work in out-of-school settings.

### Aim

- To ensure that young people at risk of low attainment, disengagement or educational exclusion achieve the best musical, educational and wider outcomes through participation in a pioneering music education project; and to develop new models of effective partnership-working between schools and out-of-school music providers

### Intended outcomes

- To improve the quality and standards of music delivery for children and young people.
- To embed learning and effective practice in host and partner organisations and share practice beyond the project.
- To improve young people's educational and wider developmental outcomes.
- To develop the creative, expressive and musical ability of young people.

Factors that place young people at risk of educational exclusion or disengagement might include (but are not limited to) ethnicity, gender, socio-economic background, having special educational needs, family difficulties, or living in care. The young people from each partnership are taking part in sustained project activity from September 2014 through to July 2018.

Delivery takes place in schools, or a combination of in-school and out-of-school. A key aspect of the project is the exploration of provision and the development of pedagogical approaches that complement existing school music provision.

Exchanging Notes began with 10 project partnerships. At the start of the final year of the programme there are now seven project partnerships remaining. This is a reflection of the not-insignificant challenges that the Exchanging Notes projects have faced – but it is also a benefit of the action research approach, meaning that projects and Youth Music have become aware of these challenges as they have arisen.

## About the Exchanging Notes projects

### **Kinetika Bloco**

Kinetika Bloco – a performance group with a unique British Carnival sound – leads a musical development programme for students at Saint Gabriel’s College in Lambeth, South London. Ensemble sessions are delivered in partnership with the school’s Music Department, and participants receive tuition on percussion, steel pan, woodwind and brass instruments. The students are supported to take an active role in selecting and arranging repertoire and regularly take part in performances at high-profile events and venues such as the Southbank Centre. There are also leadership opportunities delivering music-making sessions to students from local primary schools, and working as young leaders on Kinetika Bloco’s Junior Summer School.

### **The Barbican Centre Trust**

Drum Works (an independent Community Interest Company that was incubated at The Barbican) delivers a programme of fast-paced, high-energy drumming sessions with students from The Warren School in East London. Weekly sessions are led by professional musicians who use culturally-relevant music as the starting point for creating original beats. Regular performance opportunities allow participants to showcase their work. Students are encouraged to access progression routes through senior ensembles and take on leadership roles within sessions and through supporting other Drum Works sessions in local primary schools.

### **SoCo Music Project**

SoCo Music Project exchanges notes with two settings in Southampton. The team work closely with subject specialists and support workers to develop nurturing and creative environments, new resources and teaching models to support young people’s musical development. At Rosewood Free School, where students have profound and multiple learning difficulties, many sessions are one-to-one, tailored around individual needs. At the inclusion unit at Woodlands Community College, young people at risk of exclusion have worked towards individual learning plans, with activities including music technology, instrument tuition, composition and

songwriting.

### **Drake Music**

Drake Music delivers an inclusive music curriculum to students at Belvue School in Ealing. The school's vision is to be a centre of excellence for children with special educational needs. Sessions support students - individually and in groups - to use a range of music technology and conventional instruments to create, compose and perform music. The programme is co-delivered with teachers from Belvue School, and aims to leave a sustainable legacy in the school, trial a new model of peripatetic teaching, and upskill staff at Ealing's Music Education Hub.

### **Brighter Sound**

Brighter Sound, a creative music charity based in Manchester, delivers Exchanging Notes at two schools in the North West: Manchester Creative and Media Academy and Bolton St Catherine's Academy. Activities now run across full days in inspiring off-site professional venues, in response to young people's feedback. Activities include creating and rehearsing music in venues like Band on the Wall, studio recording, masterclasses with inspirational musicians, performing to peers in school, and creating radio programmes and a school radio station.

### **Accent Warrington & Halton Music Education Hub**

Working with musicians from Score Creative, Warrington's Exchanging Notes project takes place at University Academy (in music lessons and lunchtime) and Orford Youth Base. In-school sessions include ensemble development, music production, songwriting, DJ skills, music business, performance and event planning. Out-of-school sessions at Orford Youth Base involve songwriting, recording and the development of instrumental and vocal skills, providing opportunities for University Academy pupils to engage in musical activities with members of their friendship group who don't go to their school. Regular performances take place both at school and the prestigious Warrington Parr Hall.



## **Derbyshire Music Education Hub**

Working with partners at Derbyshire's Virtual School and music and arts development organisation Baby People, looked-after children in Derbyshire participate in an individualised musical development package. Activities include one-to-one music mentoring alongside group activities such as performing at festivals, making film soundtracks, collaborative composition, creating audio podcasts and flashmob musical performances! The final year of activity sees participants delivering music workshops and mentoring other young people at Baby People's studios.

## About this report

Birmingham City University has been commissioned by Youth Music to undertake an evaluation of the effectiveness and impact of the Exchanging Notes programme.

Researchers in the School of Education and Social Work are supporting the projects over this four-year period, through the exploration and evaluation of the educational and musical outcomes.

This Year Three interim report presents some of the qualitative findings from the evaluation to date, based on data collected from September 2014 to April 2017. The data is drawn from:

- perception surveys completed by the young people, their teachers and music leaders
- observations of sessions using Youth Music's Quality Framework
- post-session interviews with teachers, music leaders and participants
- focus group interviews with young people.

This interim report considers the extent to which the aims and aspirations of Exchanging Notes have been met at this stage in the programme. It will be of interest to teachers, music providers, policy-makers, academics, and all those working within the creative and cultural sector.

The research team are working towards five intended outcomes. These complement the intended outcomes of the Exchanging Notes projects, and also examine the pedagogical impact of the overall programme. This report is structured around the intended outcomes of the research:

- 1) To improve the quality and standards of music delivery for children and young people
- 2) To embed learning and effective practice in host and partner organisations and share practice beyond the project

- 3) To develop the educational practice of schools, non-formal music organisations, teachers and practitioners through an action research model.
- 4) To evidence the impact of the Exchanging Notes projects on educational and broader developmental outcomes for young people
- 5) To test the validity of a Youth Music pedagogical quality framework as a tool for increasing educational engagement of young people

The final evaluation report (due at the end of 2018) will focus on the overall outcomes of Exchanging Notes, drawing together findings from multiple qualitative and quantitative datasets.

This report contains case studies from two Exchanging Notes projects. These were researched and written by Youth Music to illustrate the impact of the Exchanging Notes work. These are not an official part of BCU's research and evaluation, but they have been included to demonstrate practice in action. All permissions for these case studies have been granted by those featured in them.

## Music education context in England

We present these findings in the context of music education in England, including:

- The 2011 Henley Review which called for:

*“...the need for measures to be taken to increase the probability of children receiving an excellent Music Education and of decreasing the possibility of them receiving a poor one.” (DfE, 2011: 5)*

The review identified the need for the music education sector to work together in partnership to eradicate this “patchiness”. Joining up practice, where the exploration of formal and non-formal pedagogies could be undertaken, was highlighted as a key area needing development. Defining these terms is problematic, as Saunders and Welch (2012) observed:

*“...definition of what music is in the non-formal sector, or ‘community music’ is, by defining what it is not, is a persistent problem.” (p18)*

- The 2012 National Plan for Music Education, which set out the plan for Music Education Hubs; and the subsequent hub data returns which have identified a limited breadth and reach of provision.
- Changes in schools including budget cuts, changes to qualifications and the introduction of the [EBacc](#), which has marginalised arts subjects within the curriculum. Many schools have reduced or removed music from timetables (Daubney and Mackrill 2017). We know that teaching time for music in Key Stages 3 and 4 is reducing steadily year on year (Fautley 2016). The Cultural Learning Alliance (2017) reported a 9% drop in arts GCSE entries from 2016 to 2017, and a 28% drop from 2010 to 2017. Increasing emphasis on the EBacc, and the influence of [Progress 8](#), have reduced the importance of music due to their centralised performance measures which do not include any arts subjects. Schools tend to focus on the measures, and in some cases can become fixated on their position in published league tables. This means they are in danger of ignoring the arts, believing them to be peripheral. For some of the young people involved in Exchanging Notes, music was not previously a timetabled option offered in school.



Our research and evaluation of Exchanging Notes shows that there is great need for the exploration of partnership work currently in English schools: partnership working is important for supporting young people at risk of educational exclusion and there are musical, educational and social benefits. But likewise there is also a need for more value to be placed on music in schools, with greater exploration of its social impact and the measurements of success.

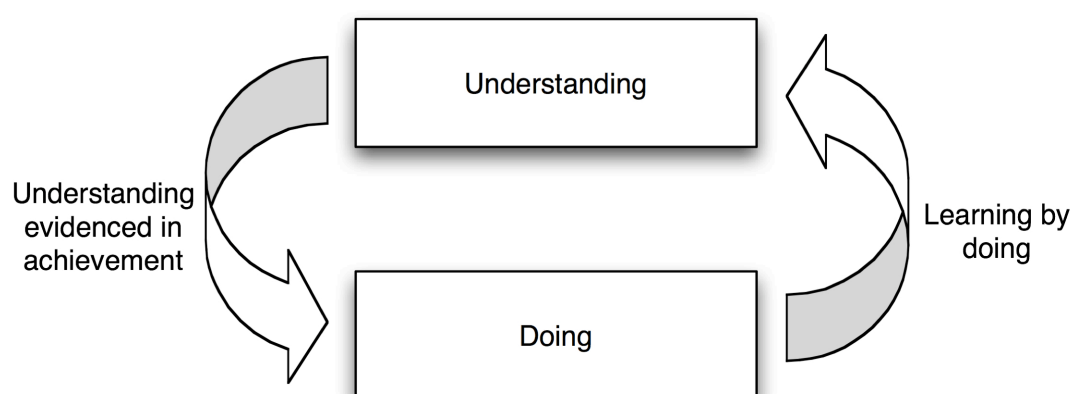
## Theoretical context

The notion of raising attainment for young people at risk of disengagement or educational exclusion via non-formal music education presents significant opportunities to understand *how* music can be a catalyst for success; and this is key to understanding the need for this research. We know:

*“the potential of informal<sup>1</sup> learning to facilitate openness and democracy in classrooms”* (Wright & Kanellopoulos, 2010 p.73)

The notion of democracy in music education (Woodford, 2005) opens up the real possibility of ownership, identity (Hargreaves & Marshall, 2003), and engaged participation for young people. The challenge is for non-formal and formal music education providers to form partnerships that enable young people to participate in music-making and bring about measureable social benefits, the implications of which have the potential to be significant in the current music education climate in England.

Music as a subject is complex, as learning is bound with doing (Fautley 2010:95). Learning outcomes are not the same as tasks (doing) and this difference is key. ‘Doing’ is important, but activity is not a substitute for learning. This is represented below:



Fautley (2010:95) Understanding and doing.

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<sup>1</sup> Youth Music uses the term ‘non-formal’ to describe the kind of work it funds, and ‘informal’ to describe self-guided music-making (for example young people forming a band themselves); this precision of use is not universal in the sector. In this report the term ‘non-formal’ will be used throughout, except, as in this instance, for in direct quotes.

## Action research

The Exchanging Notes projects are part of an ongoing action research cycle for the four years, whereby the findings from the research feed into the planning and delivery of the subsequent years' programmes. This feedback is disseminated via two events per year (held at Birmingham City University) for all Exchanging Notes partners, who are given the opportunity to share their experiences of the programme. This is often supported by external speakers who share their knowledge with the aim of encouraging projects to think beyond their practice, question approaches and consider the wider impacts of their work. This poses an interesting and worthwhile methodological variant of the classic action research spiral (Carr & Kemmis, 1986), in that we are not only working with a mixed methodological approach, but using the results from the evaluation to feed back into the action research spiral and into project practices.

## Outcomes

### 1) To improve the quality and standards of music delivery for children and young people.

Throughout the Exchanging Notes project it has become evident that successful pedagogies include each young person's acquisition and development of musical skills, knowledge and understanding. Alongside this, acknowledgement of the social impact of learning, cultural understanding and creative processes are important for teachers and music leaders. It is helpful for the young people to be aware of the thought processes involved in learning. The roles of teachers and music leaders include helping the young people become more metacognitive, and being aware of how the young people go about learning, doing, and thinking. A key part of this learning is effective partnership-working between music leaders and teachers. Developing a shared understanding and outlook has been crucial to improving the quality and standards of music delivery for the young people. Through a joined up approach, young people have developed more positive attitudes to education, improved attendance (in some cases), raised self-confidence, and increased engagement both in education and music.

- Some Exchanging Notes projects have formed partnerships with all those involved in each participant's education, with meetings and conversations to join up provision. As the young people have a range of risk factors, these have included music leaders, teachers, social workers, carers, designated behaviour teachers, school senior leadership teams, parents, music provider personnel, and local Music Education Hub leaders. These communicative partnerships have extended knowledge of participants' learning and wellbeing, enabling projects to provide specialised support offered in the most effective way for each young person. These relationships have enabled early identification of issues which need intervention and addressed the needs of the young people more appropriately.



- The most effective Exchanging Notes sessions focus on learning, developing communication, and fostering creativity. These sessions put interests of the young people at the centre of the activity (often they are young person-led), they are based on individual learning plans, and they have a range of differentiated activities.

*“I would like to think that the young people in our project are at the centre of what we do. They take a lead on what they’re going to do, not just that day but over the whole year. This has informed how we’ve adapted the project over the three years. ‘What do you want to do?’ ‘How are we going to do it and how can we support you in doing what you want to do?’”(Music Leader)*

- Over time there has been an increase in the sharing of young people’s educational, social, emotional and wellbeing information. Projects now gather information from a variety of sources to best inform practice. These include school data, wider educational information, teacher perceptions, parental views, and pastoral information. Part of the planning process includes more informed knowledge of young people’s educational needs gained through sustained engagement. The longitudinal nature of this project has meant that time has been afforded to build trust not only with the young people, but also with schools and the wider community. This has been noted by one teacher who said:

*“Collaboration is the hardest thing, especially when the young people have a complex network of various educational, social and health professionals around them. But I think that it provides an opportunity. We are opening up conversations where joint planning doesn’t exist normally. We realised that where Exchanging Notes music leaders attended educational meetings, the project started to grow some roots. With one young person for example, the collaborative planning around their education and the bringing together of all the different agencies involved in their education enabled us all to recognise the importance of music in their life.”*

- The connection between the school and music provider is crucial to planning for learning and doing. A joined-up approach is important, so that the ethos of the school combines with the ethos of the music provider. Many of the music leaders have not previously worked in a longitudinal fashion. Instead they have tended to have been funded to work in a school for a specified amount of time, working to short-term goals, with an object-orientated outcome (e.g. a performance). As Exchanging Notes is a four-year project, the music leaders and teachers have had to consider their pedagogical approaches to teaching and learning - as well as their task-focused delivery - in addition to considering what it means to combine formal and non-formal approaches over a much longer term. They have therefore, in some cases, had to explore new pedagogical approaches that disrupt their usual teaching and learning practices. Key to this is offering teachers, music leaders and young people a high degree of agency and autonomy, making less use of prescriptive external resources, and relying instead on teachers' and music leaders' professional expertise and abilities to develop their own creative and risk-taking approaches.
- A key part of developing pedagogies is reaching a shared agreement about the purpose of the provision (which can be a source of tension). Engagement with both in-school and wider music education policy develops a shared discourse and understanding of music's value and place within the curriculum, as well as the contextual and institutional constraints under which it operates. This requires the revision and development of shared curricula which work to mutual benefit for both the school and the non-formal practitioners. In Exchanging Notes, a curriculum that is relevant to young people's lives is a precursor to their engagement, facilitated by material that engages and motivates them. For many young people the priority of exam outcomes is removed in their Exchanging Notes sessions, and they can instead focus on performing and composing. However, this can often pose challenges for schools which are driven by performance (in the non-musical sense) and assessment outcomes. One teacher notes:

*"Giving them something...that they can feel proud of and feel ownership of and is contributing to the school life... I think that [has]*

*really changed a lot of them in terms of their relationship with their environment. I think that is the key thing. I actually think that sometimes [pressure] can be threatening within an educational environment but this is a safe place to be and also a safe place within school. They try really hard and they work really hard. And I think that has a profound effect on the traditional environment.”*

- The Exchanging Notes gatherings have been valuable to projects in helping them to develop long-term plans. The BCU team has posed important questions for each partnership to consider:
  1. What do you want the pupils to learn? (and why?)
  2. What do you want the pupils to do? (e.g. in this lesson, this half-term, this term, this year, by the end of Exchanging Notes)
  3. Will all the pupils learn the same thing(s)?
  4. Where do you want pupils to be over a longer timescale?
  5. What is the evidence of learning?

## **2) To embed learning and effective practice in host and partner organisations and share practice beyond the project.**

Learning and effective practice has been embedded in schools and their music partner organisations to varying extents across the Exchanging Notes projects. Regular meetings between music leaders and teachers have been successful for building trust, setting targets and planning learning. Within these discussions, openness, constructive critique, and honesty have proven valuable for progression and shared practice. Combined with this, projects which have the support of senior leadership teams have increased visibility within the school and awareness of the importance of music within the broader curriculum. Having said this, many projects are still grappling with forming partnerships where both the music provider and school collaborate, plan and teach. The interplay of formal and non-formal expectations, outcomes, and measurements of success are still being negotiated in some contexts. Differing ethos and pressures sometimes contribute to a mismatch of outlooks on the value and impact of the project.

- The engagement of senior leadership teams is critical for creating a culture of shared practice, for the visibility of projects in the wider school community, and gaining support for music's value in the curriculum. Exchanging Notes projects have planned in-school and out-of-school events and meetings to engage senior leadership teams and to share practice. This helps with the visibility of learning, with identifying and labelling benefits, and with demonstrating example practices (which can often go hidden). Performances, events, and meetings bring learning to light and engage the wider school community.
- Online forums, video examples, blogs, staff bands and staff-specific CPD have all proven to be successful ways for music teachers and leaders to share practice with the wider staff community. This has enabled staff to observe practices and engage in discussions with teachers and music leaders about young people and their progression across the curriculum. Establishing



this type of professional communication develops understanding and shared pedagogies.

- Co-delivery is central for developing pedagogical approaches that combine formal and non-formal approaches in the classroom. Mutual agreement beforehand of the roles in the session between the teacher and music leader are an important part of delivery; power relations can often be difficult within partnerships so defining roles in advance is important for collaboration. The benefits of co-delivery include communication, time for reflection, CPD for both parties, increased learning for young people and project cohesiveness and continuity. Projects that do not have a team-teaching aspect tend to have more difficulty in sharing practice, and lack shared understandings concerning relationships between practices, curricula, and pedagogies. To ensure longevity of projects within schools, reflective co-delivery is important.
- A Continued Professional Development (CPD) model has been employed by a few of the projects. These projects initially engaged the in-school teaching community locally and are now beginning to share practice within the region through Music Education Hubs. CPD has included in-school taster workshops for staff demonstrating session practices, group discussions with music leaders and music teachers regarding pedagogy, and training for Music Education Hub teachers on planning for sessions.

### **3) To develop the educational practice of schools, non-formal music organisations, teachers and practitioners through an action research model.**

There is evidence that the educational practices of stakeholders and organisations have developed, and that the action research model has been important in supporting organisations and individuals to reflect critically. Building in time for reflection-in-action (during the session) and on reflection-on-action (after the session) (Schon 1983) has proven to be constructive for many projects. This extends beyond national meetings, reaching into the project-specific classroom settings. These conversations and reflections help adapt planning and inform a critical awareness of teaching approaches. These reflections have enabled both music leaders and teachers to develop practice, explore teaching approaches, and develop learning.

- As noted under Outcome 2, many of the music leaders have not previously worked in a longitudinal fashion. In their previous work with children in challenging circumstances, many are more used to holding drop-in sessions to accommodate participants with disruptive or transient lives. For Exchanging Notes projects, music leaders have had to consider their long-term approaches to teaching, learning and musical activity. Addressing this has led to development of new planning structures, designed jointly between school and external partners, which include (for example) how to go about short, mid and long-term planning. For community-based providers this is an important step for supporting the exchange of knowledge between formal and non-formal sectors, as well as giving an enhanced understanding of policy measures impacting schools and the music curriculum they deliver. Hopefully this will enable music providers to work to timescales of different lengths in their other work in various community settings.
- Music leaders and teachers are increasingly aware of the need to step back, look at the activity and build new understandings. Within school cultures, planning is the foundation of a teacher's work, and they regularly submit

planning documentation for external scrutiny. Professional knowledge and judgement about routines, skills and strategies to support effective teaching and learning are evidenced in lesson planning and schemes of work.

Throughout the projects many of the Exchanging Notes music providers and schools have considered and implemented new planning mechanisms.

- A wider debate about the purpose and value of assessment has been explored, which has led to many projects developing new assessment processes and mechanisms. Collaborative, formative assessments (based on reflections from teachers, music leaders and young people) have helped young people to progress. These reflections can also help demonstrate evidence of young people's learning, and support curriculum and session development where new ideas and methods can be explored. In an action research model, knowledge needs to be shared, and all professionals need to understand each other's perspectives and practices. This is a more holistic method, not affected by regulatory pressures or performance requirements, but more in line with a 'communities of practice' approach (Lave and Wenger 1991) to professional development. Joining-up practice is therefore not just about structural arrangements and partnership working. This is about shared planning and increased visibility of activities, giving agency to all parties, along with a shared appreciation of the professional expertise that both the music teacher and the music leader bring to the learning space.

*"It is extremely important to talk. It is crucial. I have been very much taking the stance of asking [the teachers] what they think. Are we doing anything worthwhile? I'm really trying to get feedback. I cannot always see what everybody else is doing. That is an issue in a way but through discussion you can get that bigger picture. Discussion is so important."*  
(Music Leader)

- The action research model has been important to help projects identify and respond to challenges - or to realise when things were not working. The evaluation enabled one organisation to conclude that their project would be unlikely to meet the intended outcomes of the programme, and that it was not fully meeting the needs of the young people it intended to support. Another

project identified that their music provider organisation was unable to provide the level of support required by the students, and the music provider who withdrew from the project felt they were unable to work effectively with their partner school.

### Case study 1 - SoCo Music Project and Rosewood Free School

SoCo Music Project is a community music organisation based in Southampton. As part of Youth Music's Exchanging Notes programme, they're running a project which has seen specialist music leaders pair up with two local schools.

Rosewood Free School has now been working with SoCo for three years. The project has had a hugely positive impact on teaching and learning for the school's staff and the SoCo music leaders – and of course for the students.

#### Rethinking music-making

Rosewood is one of only a few schools in the country which caters specifically for children with profound and multiple learning disabilities (PMLD). Many of Rosewood's students have complex additional needs – including physical, visual or hearing impairments – and may only communicate non-verbally, using sounds, signs and gestures rather than words.

As a result, these young people face a lot of barriers to 'traditional' forms of music-making.

Georgie is one of the teachers at Rosewood who's been involved with the project. She says Exchanging Notes has transformed her practice and changed her whole outlook on music.

*"That's been a real turning point for me," says Georgie, "[rethinking] the preconceived idea of what music needs to sound like – and it's been wonderful."*

#### Putting students' needs first

The project has used a mix of one-to-one music-making sessions (led by SoCo's specialist music leader Ignacio and supported by Rosewood's teaching staff) and group sessions with the whole class (led by Rosewood's teachers using the new skills and knowledge they've learned).

The one-to-one sessions have given students the chance to explore different sounds and instruments. Over time, Ignacio and the teachers have learned more about how each young person responds to sound, how they make their own sounds and how they prefer to interact with others – things which can vary greatly from one student to the next in a PMLD setting like Rosewood.

Ignacio has been able to draw on the teachers' knowledge of the individual young people, and their expertise in recognising body language and behavioural patterns in students who are non-verbal. This has helped to build up a picture of each young person's needs so that the music-making sessions can be tailored accordingly.

### **Music-making in practice**

In the one-to-one sessions each student is encouraged to explore and improvise, using their device of choice to make music in whatever way works for them, which may be quite different from the traditional way of playing.

This might involve experimenting with acoustic instruments – tambourine, guitar, wind chimes and washboard among others. SoCo have also brought a wide range of music technology in to the sessions, including sensors that trigger sounds based on the young person's movements, and iPad apps that can sample and sequence different sounds.

The young people may choose to join in with the music-making by responding to sounds that Ignacio makes – making a vocal sound of their own, or a movement like hand-tapping or finger-clicking. They can also use their movements to 'conduct' Ignacio's playing, for example nodding their head up and down to signal a higher or lower note.

Rosewood's students have had the chance to demonstrate their music-making skills beyond the one-to-one sessions – both during group sessions in class, and at special events including a memorable end-of-year performance at Winchester Cathedral.

There, a group of young people from Rosewood rehearsed and performed a piece in collaboration with the Southern Sinfonia chamber orchestra, plus performers from local choirs and other schools.

Zoe, headteacher at Rosewood, recalls: *"There were so many special and very moving moments throughout the performance. For me the moment when two conductors, batons poised, watched and waited for our students to finish will be a lifelong image of respect."*

In the project's final year the school will partner with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment and work towards further recordings and performances.

### **Transferring music-making to the classroom**

As well as working with an exciting range of partner organisations, Rosewood's staff have also enjoyed several training sessions with external music-leading specialists.

*"Our headteacher's always tried to bring music in," says Georgie, "but with Exchanging Notes, it's grown and grown. It's given us ideas, because it's all well and good us teachers saying 'we'd like this to work', but you need professionals to come in and say 'this is what can happen'. We couldn't have done that on our own."*

Zoe agrees: *"I've seen the whole staff team grow and develop, using music outside of the Exchanging Notes sessions with our students."*

Throughout the project, Rosewood's teachers have been able to observe and adopt techniques from Ignacio's music-leading style. They've also learned new practical skills, such as how to use various music tech resources to help students make and record their own music.

And the project has helped teachers become more confident in their ability to interact musically with students, and more willing to 'have a go' even if they don't consider themselves very musical.

*"I'm not the greatest singer!" says Georgie. "We can all be a bit inhibited, but if I can model to my staff by just making a sound or using my voice in different ways, it actually makes everyone else feel more comfortable."*

### **Beyond music teaching**

The new ideas and expertise the staff have gained through the project have in fact made a difference across the whole of Rosewood's curriculum, which is specially geared towards young people with PMLD.

*"There's a buzz around using music, and the profile of using music to extend learning has developed across the whole school," says Zoe.*



Outside of the dedicated music-making sessions, the staff at Rosewood use music in various other ways at different points in the day – for example to signal the start or end of a lesson, to energise students or to help them calm down.

### **Overlapping skills**

The Rosewood staff have also discovered that Ignacio's music-leading approach has some similarities with the specialist skills they're used to using while teaching young people with PMLD.

For example, the school team are all trained in the use of 'intensive interaction' techniques, where they change their style of interaction to match the learner's needs, and give the young person the opportunity to lead activities as much as possible. This closely matches the way Ignacio reads and adapts to each young person's emotional state, and uses techniques like 'mirroring' the sounds a child makes.

Making this connection has helped the teachers feel more confident leading music sessions, and has helped both parties – SoCo and Rosewood staff – to learn from each other.

Ignacio has been able to meet regularly with the teachers and learning assistants during the school day to share reflections and experiences of what's worked well in the music-making sessions. As a result, SoCo have been able to develop and share a whole new range of music-leading techniques and resources.

### **Sharing among staff**

Each member of Rosewood's teaching staff will be involved with Exchanging Notes sessions at different times throughout the week, term or year, so it's important to them to keep each other posted on young people's progress as a group.

*"We discuss as a collective: 'we tried this musical instrument' and 'what did you do?' and 'how did you facilitate that?'"* says Georgie. *"We're sharing what we're finding is working."*

Knowing what's working can be a particular challenge, because some of the students at Rosewood are 'pre-intentional', meaning they may not have control over how they communicate in response to stimuli such as music.

*“We’re interpreting everything,” says Georgie. “We just want to make sure that we’re doing the right thing. If you get some confirmation from that young person, however small, then you can really celebrate it. Young people’s responses to music have boosted morale among staff.”*

The high level of staff engagement helps ensure that the project has a long-term impact. The more music-leading knowledge and expertise the staff develop, the less reliant they become on external specialists, and the more they can pass on to the students who come into their classes in future years.

*“We’ve had such a wonderful opportunity with Exchanging Notes,” says Georgie, “seeing the progress in the students, having other musicians and professionals come in. It’s shown us what else is out there. We’ve seen the impact, we’ve got the evidence and we can show everyone the progress.”*

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### **Ashley’s story**

Ashley, 17, is one of the students who’s taken part in one-to-one music-making sessions as part of the Exchanging Notes project at Rosewood. Georgie tells the story of how she’s seen him develop his ability to express himself.

*“Ashley came into my class last year,” she recalls. “He’s pre-verbal, he’s on the autism spectrum, and he also has no functioning vision, so there are a lot of challenges in his life.*

Georgie was able to watch video footage of Ashley in an earlier music-making session to see where he’d started out from. This year she’s sat in with Ignacio on some of the one-to-one sessions with Ashley.

*“The progress he’s made is phenomenal, especially with communication. He’s been able to express himself emotionally in such a way, it’s been really empowering for him.*

*“The music has really moved him forward to thinking ‘there’s a world out there, and it’s not just that insular world that I’m in, it’s out there and it’s a safe world’.*

*“As soon as he hears Ignacio, he knows what’s coming next. He really values Ignacio.”*

Ashley has a form of echolalia, meaning he tends to repeat noises and words he hears. But Georgie has seen him begin to develop beyond this and articulate himself more expressively, both within and beyond the music-making sessions.

*“He’s now able to bring two instruments together. He’s really exploring, trying to figure out how to make sounds. His vocalising has changed as well; his range of tone has increased.*

*“I strongly believe it’s because he built up that confidence to explore with a really safe session. He’s been able to experiment in his own way. It’s been very gradual, through that repetition. It’s about making him feel comfortable and confident.*

*“It’s empowering him to say ‘this is who I am, I can make this music my way, I can show you my emotions’. It’s absolutely lovely.”*

#### 4) To evidence the impact of the Exchanging Notes projects on educational and broader developmental outcomes for young people.

For many of the young people, the cultural experiences offered through Exchanging Notes have positively affected their educational progression in music, their social and emotional wellbeing, and their perceived value of school. The young people have developed their knowledge and understanding of composing, performing, listening skills, and communication through music-making. For some this has led to the uptake of instrumental music lessons outside of the Exchanging Notes project. Both teachers and music leaders have noted enjoyment and engagement as being good within the sessions, with an increase in social development and emotional wellbeing.

- Focus groups and interviews have demonstrated that the commitment to a longitudinal project has proven to be a successful approach to engaging many young people in education. One young person noted:

*I know it will happen every Wednesday, it gives me a reason to get up. I'd be like 'I've got in today I've got Exchanging Notes'. It's something to look forward to and it's something I love to do. Say if I've had a bad Monday and Tuesday, on Wednesday I'll say I'll come in because I have Exchanging Notes.*

Exchanging Notes is not compulsory for these young people, but the project has continued despite other complications in their lives. This pledge to offering them music activities has encouraged more positive outlooks on the purpose of education. Some of the music leaders noted these changed outlooks:

*I think their relationship with the school has progressed a lot. I mean for example, the fact that some people have even bothered to come in and do a school concert was progress for them. They would never have considered being part of a school opportunity.*  
(Music Leader.)

*There are young people whose support staff have also attended sessions, they know the young people and say that (the young person) is always out of lessons, and then they're gob-smacked they are here. One participant in particular, sitting and writing, which is unusual for them, staying in one place on one chair in one room, not causing problems, writing and absolutely focused on the rap that they were doing, for a whole afternoon. (Music Leader)*

- For many of the young people, participating in Exchanging Notes has given them heightened feelings of personal value and self-worth. In order for music education outcomes to be achieved successfully it is crucial that young people's voices are present in both a musical and advisory role. For many this encompasses an active role in the pedagogical and planning processes. One key aspect here is that unlike in many music projects, the four-year timescale means that the project isn't focused on building up to a fixed end point (e.g. an end-of-term concert). Relationships can develop, grow, be challenged and adapted where needed. This can also be said of the measures of success, which over the years have included developing musical proficiency as well as life skills, social and emotional wellbeing. The extension of learning outside of school is important. This includes one to one lessons at home, youth clubs, visits to professional studios and extra-curricular music activities. Along with these activities, many of the young people from Exchanging Notes have performed for wider community audiences in festivals and larger scale performances with other ensembles and groups.

*I didn't think we would be performing outside of school and at weekends. It's a good experience and means it's more than just for this project. We actually get the experience of playing in front of people. It gives you confidence as well. (Young Person)*

- There is evidence that several participants have become more engaged in education over the lifespan of the project. Prior to Exchanging Notes some of the young people were not engaged with formal education due to a variety of social, emotional and health factors. There is evidence that sustained

engagement in music activities over the three years of the project thus far has given the young people a sense of purpose. Many of the projects are structured around the young people's needs, providing both in school and out of school sessions. These structures enable and encourage sustained engagement leading to young people seeing value in educational endeavours and what can be achieved through engagement.

One music leader notes:

*So many of the people are fractured from school, so they haven't necessarily got a good relationship with the school that they're in, with many of them not engaging with the school. We've succeeded in some cases by being a bridge between working with the young person and getting them back into school. In one case we have focused on lyrics. The young person felt that they could express themselves in the sessions, they would often say that it wasn't just about words but that it was from the heart. I think this broke down a barrier within them. By talking about these things in their music, they were processing things in their mind, all these memories and experiences that they had previously not been able to process. Alongside this they were progressing musically and found they were good at something.*

Another music leader and teacher discuss the progression of one of the young people from their project, whose progression through to formal education has been a significant success:

*They had been at risk of all forms of exclusion. Nor had they been in education for about seven or eight years. They were just not engaged. What we did have at the very start of the project was a very healthy interest in grime music. That was all they would listen to. So that was our starting point. (Music Leader)*

*Through the music engagement they are now almost on the full timetable and in other forms of education. When we knew that they were attending something, that was massive, they were getting out of bed and actually going to the music sessions. That was about a year*

*ago and now. Their engagement has grown out of the music. This is major progress. (Teacher)*



## Case study 2 – Drumworks and The Warren School

When Tommy, now 15, was younger, he had issues controlling his temper and was excluded from school several times. The Drum Works project has given him a creative outlet and helped him stay out of trouble.

Tommy attends The Warren School in East London, where Drum Works has been running fast-paced, high-energy drumming sessions for the past three years. He's been involved in the project since he was 12.

*"I was a bit of a troublemaker," says Tommy. "But then I got invited to Drum Works, and it really helped me. It was like all my behaviour got hit into the drums. I expressed myself on the drums instead of taking my anger out on other people."*

### Developing as a musician

In the sessions, students drum together in groups of up to 25. The lineup of instruments is similar to a samba band, with each person playing a *surdo*, *repinique* or *caixa* (three different types of Brazilian drum).

But instead of playing a pre-arranged repertoire, the young people get the chance to create their own beats collaboratively, based on the styles of music they enjoy. *"You can express your ideas,"* says Tommy. *"You get to make your own stuff, and you can spread it around the room."*

Tommy's now a keen drummer outside the sessions too. *"I used to play trumpet and trombone, but I got bored of it, and me and my friends started playing the drum kit,"* he recalls. *"But we didn't know anything at all – we literally knew how to hit a drum."*

*"The Drum Works music leaders are really helpful – if you can't play a beat, they're not gonna judge you for it, they'll teach you till you know how to do it."*

*"I picked Music for GCSE, and I've been doing compositions on the drums, writing my own beats. Drum Works has helped me get more ideas. In the group I play the snare, so I can adapt from that and turn what we play on separate drums into a beat on the drum kit."*

## **Gaining focus and confidence**

The sessions are built into the school timetable, and Tommy's certain that drumming has a positive impact on the rest of his day. *"Coming here's like a break," he says. "It wakes you up, you're ready for another lesson."*

Susie, a music teacher at the school, recalls the change she saw in Tommy after he found drumming. *"His behaviour didn't change overnight, but slowly Tommy's confidence improved as he realised he was good at something."*

*"His patience and concentration span improved too as he spent the time trying to perfect patterns. He spent his lunchtimes in the music department practising and avoided the conflicts he'd previously been involved with. He enjoyed coming to school as that's where the drum rooms were."*

*"He enjoyed making progress and getting better at something. He'd learnt that the only way to improve is to make mistakes and that it's ok to make them."*

Tommy's now in top sets for English and Maths and hasn't been excluded in well over a year. His mum sums it up: *"Drumming has transformed Tommy – without it I'm not sure if he'd even still be in school."*

## **Teamwork and group performance**

The partnership between The Warren School and Drum Works has grown stronger over the course of the project, as more and more teaching staff have observed the sessions' all-round positive impact on students.

There are now 70-80 students from across years 7-11 now regularly involved in the sessions, split across three groups based on their drumming skill levels.

*"Although we only have one session a week, you get to know everyone in that session," says Tommy. "You always work together no matter what. I've made good friends with the rest of the group."*

The groups have also combined with students from other East London schools where Drum Works sessions take place, and have given end-of-term performances in venues such as the Barbican Centre and the Broadway Theatre in Barking.

*“There’s about 150 of us in one big group,” says Tommy. “Managing to go out and play in front of so many people – I would say that’s been my proudest moment.*

*“When I first started drumming I had to play in front of the class, and I was so scared, I started sweating! I’m confident with it now though.*

*“If it wasn’t for Drum Works, I would have missed out on a lot of things. This is like a once in a lifetime opportunity. Even when I finish school, I can use the skills I’ve learned.”*

**5) To test the validity of a Youth Music pedagogical quality framework as a tool for increasing educational engagement of young people.**

The Exchanging Notes projects have been using the Youth Music Quality Framework as a way to explore session content, teaching and learning methods, and the musical and social environment. The Quality Framework is most effective when it is used to help teachers and music leaders reflect on their work and on young people's progress in order to move forward. It becomes a shared dialogue that focuses planning and considers aspects of the music sessions both in-school and more widely.

Projects have reported the Quality Framework to be:

- A useful evaluation and planning tool
- A helpful guide which focuses music leaders and teachers on pedagogy and practices which are young people-centred
- Useful as a guide to focus on the development of young people as musicians, with less focus on prescribed outcomes and more on the processes involved in making music
- A catalyst to generate conversation and critical understanding of teaching and learning in music education.

There is no set guidance on how the Quality Framework should be used, leading to a variety of different bespoke approaches being taken by the projects. Some use it termly for specific observations aimed at improving the overall effectiveness of sessions. (This is much like what occurs in a typical school classroom observation, where an observer offers constructive reflections aimed at improving teaching and learning.) Some focus on a small number of specific criteria per session.

Others use it not only as a reflective device, but also as a planning tool, where they consider all the criteria across the short, mid and long-term. This helps to develop session activities and pedagogical approaches that are young people-centred, and to ensure that sessions take place in environments which are best suited for young people's progression. Throughout the process of designing lesson plans, the music leaders and teachers have been critically reflecting, renegotiating their

understandings and beliefs about teaching and learning through evaluation. A key part of this reflecting and learning process can be seen from the dialogic approach which according to Alexander (2005:2):

‘... seeks radically to shift classroom talk away from the familiar ‘recitation’ routines of closed question - recall answer - minimal feedback towards a more comprehensive repertoire of interaction in which dialogue releases the potential of talk to engage children’s attention and thinking’.

These discussions have enabled the generation of new perspectives. Discursive communication has involved resolving complex teaching and learning challenges through shared discourse and reasoning. One of the projects displays the Quality Framework in the classroom as a reflective tool. This helps the teacher and music leader continually reflect on teaching and learning during and after the sessions.

*“Actually having the framework to work with, I can say that it has really changed things and made sure that things are relevant and everybody is getting an equal opportunity to engage with the music. We are quite limited with time for [the teacher] and I to talk. But the response from school is that the Quality Framework fits with what they're expecting.” (Music Leader)*

## Conclusion

The findings highlight some significant learning over the course of the three years of this evaluation. Exchanging Notes is making significant inroads into improving the quality and standards of music education for the young people engaged in the project.

Negotiating the differences in belief systems and measures of success between formal and non-formal music education has proved challenging for the majority of projects.

However, partnership-working through a collegial and collaborative relationship, where ideologies are shared and respected, can develop successful learning situations for young people's musical and social development.

A response and exploration of these findings is needed from those in both the formal and non-formal sectors, through open and honest dialogue that challenges the current climate of music education.

## Key findings

1. It is essential to develop a shared curriculum which works with the agendas of both the formal and non-formal providers. We have found that a curriculum that is relevant to young people's lives is a precursor to their engagement.
2. Social benefits for young people stem from strong and collegial working relations between schools and out-of-school music providers, where socially engaged pedagogies are respected and encouraged.
3. The Youth Music Quality Framework has been important for developing a shared understanding and meaning-making across the partnerships.
4. There is a need for new pedagogical approaches which disrupt traditional methods of teaching and learning. Key to this is offering teachers, music leaders, and young people a high degree of agency and autonomy, making

less use of prescriptive external resources; relying instead on teachers' and music leaders' professional expertise and abilities to develop their own creative and risk-taking approaches.

5. Projects need to have an open-minded reappraisal of the specific dilemmas they face in their context. They then need to be open minded to critique and reflection on new practices and processes. Through this project we want to dig beneath the veneer of 'victory narratives' (Lather 2017) and explore knowledge and understanding.
6. Projects need to engage in open thinking and challenge existing orthodoxies. Focused reflection and proper critique are important in this process. Critical reflection is difficult and needs to be focused. The Youth Music Quality Framework helps with this, as there is a clear focus on content, context, and pedagogy. It is important that music leaders and teachers set aside time for constructive yet critical reflection to inform planning.
7. The fewer opportunities for young people to be independent and have their voices heard, the more disengaged they become with learning effectively at school, and with taking up learning opportunities within and beyond compulsory education. Successful projects listen to - and, importantly, react to - what the young people have to contribute, and develop projects centred on their interests, using this as a focal point to broaden their musical horizons.

## Key challenges

1. Schools tend to approach 'doing' as a means to learning, whereas music organisations sometimes think of the 'doing' first and then extrapolate retrospectively what the learning has been, rather than planning for it in advance.
2. As the Exchanging Notes sessions take place in school, there is often a tension between the schools' need to follow the curriculum and the non-formal

desire for young person-led sessions. The school curriculum does not always fit with young people's interests, so activities need to be carefully planned to keep the sessions engaging while balancing the work the school needs to achieve.

3. School performance and accountability measures create tensions when time and/or space is not made for the Exchanging Notes sessions. This has a knock-on effect to the types of environment created (e.g. being given an unsuitable classroom) and the division of labour within the classroom between teachers, music leaders and young people (e.g. when teachers miss sessions because they are required elsewhere in the school).
4. The organisational policies in many schools seek to hold teachers accountable, for example by focusing on the outputs (or lack of) in Exchanging Notes sessions. This can cause issues for partnerships when this form of accountability is not properly understood.
5. Secondary school teachers have to predict grades for all their pupils over a five-year timescale. Non-formal music-making organisations seldom have to work to this long-term timeframe, instead thinking more in the short-term and in an outcomes-focused manner. These differences, if not accounted for, can create misunderstandings.
6. Young people have been shown to benefit most from, and respond best to, practices and pedagogies that are the least 'school-like'. This is a fundamental challenge for the Exchanging Notes programme, which seeks to bring non-formal approaches into schools, rather than Youth Music's usual focus on out-of-school work.



## Reflective questions for Exchanging Notes projects

In order to continue to explore practice and challenge policy, further questions need to be addressed in Year Four of this evaluation. These will feed into the planning and delivery of the final year of the Exchanging Notes projects:

- How can formal and non-formal approaches be successfully combined? (This includes attributing skills, knowledge, understanding, social and emotional wellbeing.) What is effective pedagogy?
- What options for accreditation are offered to the young people? Is this supported by the school? How will this be planned for and timetabled? What is the purpose of accreditation? Why is it needed? What does a supportive assessment for music-making look like? How does this help young people progress?
- What were the gaps in team knowledge regarding planning and pedagogy before Exchanging Notes began? How have the projects narrowed those gaps? How have they overcome them?
- How will the projects plan for organisational and workforce development in Year Four? What will this look like once the programme comes to an end? How will projects fund and sustain practice beyond Exchanging Notes?
- What personalised interventions are needed in Year Four to help young people develop their musical identity after Exchanging Notes?
- How can the successes of Exchanging Notes be built upon and shared with others? How best to support others to learn from the challenges?
- What are the legacies of these projects, for the participants, project teams, Youth Music, and the wider music education sector nationally and internationally?

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