

***Sound Tracks: supporting young people's  
musical progression from primary to  
secondary school***

Findings from a national survey commissioned by *Musical Bridges*

Written by:

David Ashworth, Mary Atherley and Adrian Chappell  
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[www.musicalbridges.org.uk](http://www.musicalbridges.org.uk)



## Foreword

In January 2010 the Paul Hamlyn Foundation, in partnership with the Music Manifesto Partnership and Advocacy Group, the DfE's National Music Participation Director and Youth Music, began a national three year programme called *Musical Bridges*. Its mission is *to provide a continuous and progressive musical experience for 9 – 13 year olds that supports their personal, social and educational development*.

*Sound Tracks* is a report that analyses some of the issues currently facing music education across the primary to secondary school transition period (Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3) in England. It is based on evidence gathered from music education providers through an online survey during the autumn 2010.

During the first year of Musical Bridges we established three complementary strands of activity which we hope will provide the foundations for lasting solutions that address the persistent problems of discontinuity in children's musical learning. These strands are:

- A 'pupil voice' strand, delivered through a longitudinal study which tracks pupil progress between Year 6 and Year 7 in three contrasting areas of England. The study is called *Changing Key: adolescents' views on how music shapes their development across school transition*. An interim report, marking the half-way point, is available to download from the *Musical Bridges* website
- A professional development programme for primary and secondary school music teachers which aims to develop a common understanding and application of musical teaching and learning between Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3. The programme began in the spring term 2011 in Cornwall, London and Oldham, and is supported by Trinity Guildhall and the Open University through live and online study modules. The impact of this activity will be evaluated during the autumn term 2011
- The third strand is *Sound Tracks* which reports on findings from a national survey undertaken during the first half of the autumn term 2010. Drawing on 250 responses from primary and secondary schools, local music services and music organisations, we posed a common set of questions relating to musical learning and how this is currently managed between Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3.

*Sound Tracks* is our first systematic attempt to identify the issues that influence effective transition. The evidence does not portray a wholly negative story; there are some fine examples of innovative and effective music transition practices in *Sound Tracks* which are presented as cameos. At best these examples comprise a loose patchwork, dependent on a range of usually local circumstances and relationships. Building on the report's evidence, *Musical Bridges'* aspiration is to develop a systematic and sustainable response to children's musical experiences and learning during transition and school transfer.

We welcome feedback on *Sound Tracks* and the broader Musical Bridges programme. Please contact us at [musicalbridges@phf.org.uk](mailto:musicalbridges@phf.org.uk) and [www.musicalbridges.org.uk](http://www.musicalbridges.org.uk)

## Acknowledgements

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Adrian Chappell  
Programme Convenor  
Musical Bridges  
Paul Hamlyn Foundation

## ***SOUND TRACKS***

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## Executive summary

### SOUND TRACKS:

#### supporting young people's musical progression from primary to secondary school

##### Introduction

In September 2010 we launched a national survey to capture and disseminate a picture of current support for transition in England, as perceived by individual professionals working in music education. The survey was conducted through an online questionnaire and invited responses from music organisations, local music services, primary and secondary schools.

##### Methodology

The questionnaire design focused on themes common to all respondents. In the subsequent analysis we were keen to see how and where respondents varied in their views of:

- the nature, extent and perceived effectiveness of current collaborations for supporting transition in music in local everyday practice
- any emerging 'cross-themes', common to some or all of the four respondent groups, and any differences in the way these 'cross-themes' were perceived

In order to look at the different types of transition support, we drew on 'Five Transition Bridges', a generic conceptual framework used in the *London Challenge* pilot study *Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3 Transition Project* (Mouchel Parkman 2005). The Five Bridges of transition support are as follows: Bridge One (administrative data); Bridge Two (social and pastoral); Bridge Three (curricular); Bridge Four (pedagogic); Bridge Five (self-managed, independent learning). During analysis we examined the way respondents prioritised the 'bridges' of support within their own practice and in collaboration with other partners to promote and ensure more effective musical transition. We also investigated examples of perceived good practice where the 'bridges' of support were blended, and customised according to local context.

##### **Sound Tracks: a summary of key findings:**

The survey drew over 250 replies, fairly evenly spread across the four respondent groups and embracing both urban and rural settings. This represents a tiny fraction of our potential audience. However what unites the responses is that the quality of the transfer experience, and the impact it has on children's musical progression, matters to all respondents. Everyone cares about transition, be that expressed through good practice examples or through perceptions of problems that obstruct children's musical progress.

- All survey groups agreed that children's personal and social experience of moving to a new learning environment was of paramount importance. Transition activities need to generate a *sense of belonging* (Bridge 2)
- Secondary teachers regarded administrative support (Bridge 1) as second in importance to social and pastoral support (Bridge 2). However, primary teachers, charged with responsibility for assembling and communicating pupil information, currently appear to regard this as a low priority
- Primary teachers were often enthusiastic about the benefits of *Wider Opportunities* and *Sing Up* but only in a minority of instances was there evidence of successful take-up by secondary schools. Secondary teachers wanted more information about pupils' involvement in these initiatives (Bridge 1 and Bridge 3)

- Our analysis suggests that teachers from both Key Stages would appreciate opportunities to learn and share their respective pedagogies (Bridge 4)
- The most successful transition support activities were believed to be those where pupils from KS2 and KS3/4 actively engaged in *making music together*, preferably over a period of time. This was felt to be very worthwhile in terms of social and curricular support (Bridges 2 and 3) and some examples suggested an implicit pedagogic benefit for participating teachers from both Key Stages (Bridge 4)
- The examples of 'blended' support demonstrate how interwoven complementary strands of support can build customised musical transition bridges. To succeed, these build first on shared understanding and a common purpose across all potential partners, then model effective learning strategies that accurately reflect local conditions
- A much repeated request from schools and music organisations was for local authority music services to develop their potential to improve networking and communications for transition support

A perceived breakdown in primary-secondary school transfer relationships in many locations was attributed to the unpredictability of pupils' progression routes. Many parents sought out the 'best' schools over local convenience. From schools' perspectives however, there is a compelling case to value transition, as a concept, irrespective of whether pupils eventually attend the same school.

### **Conclusion**

The notable examples of good practice in *Sound Tracks* show that there is clearly a strategic role for local music services to generate and coordinate links between schools, parents, young people and music organisations for sustained musical activity. This may go some way to addressing the underlying dilemma echoed throughout the survey; transition is a common problem but with no common ownership.

*Sound Tracks* concludes with examples of how combinations of the 'Five Bridges' are effectively woven together, reflecting local contexts and playing to local strengths. Overall, however, we need to instill a strategic approach to music transition that goes beyond 'organising around our enthusiasms'. This is *Musical Bridges'* objective, made more pertinent as we face the challenges for music education in 2011.

# SOUND TRACKS

## Introduction

In September 2010 *Musical Bridges* launched a national survey to capture and disseminate a picture of current music transition processes in England as perceived by individual professionals working in music education.

The survey was conducted through an online questionnaire and invited responses from four discrete groups during the first half of the autumn term:

- Music organisations and individual musicians
- Local authorities/ music services
- Primary schools
- Secondary schools

The *Musical Bridges* survey team used two approaches to contact respondents: one, through music education associations, websites, conferences and publications; and two, via schools, local authorities, music services and music organisations. The survey relied on a 'cascade' model, mostly achieved through networking. It does not represent, nor does it intend to represent a statistical sample.

*Sound Tracks* draws on approximately 250 replies to the questionnaire. These are fairly evenly drawn from the four respondent groups, and also represent an even spread across England to embrace rural and urban contexts.

Participation in the survey was voluntary. The introduction to the online questionnaire stated that all information received would be secure and confidential. Respondents were also asked if they were willing to share examples of their music transition activities, and be available for contact by the survey team to contribute to further research.

The survey will remain live throughout this academic year; it can be accessed at [www.musicalbridges.org.uk](http://www.musicalbridges.org.uk) and we welcome additional responses.

## Methodology

### ***The Five Transition Bridges: a conceptual framework***

Our analysis draws on *Five Transition Bridges*, a generic conceptual framework first developed by Galton and colleagues (Galton et al. 2003) and later refined in the *London Challenge* pilot study *Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3 Transition Project* (Mouchel Parkman 2005).

The authors of the *London Challenge* study developed a series of tables from the original Five Bridges framework, and identified characteristics of 'Good Practice in Transition'. They summarised the characteristics of the Five Bridges as follows:

**Bridge One: Administrative:** i.e. effective and robust administrative arrangements to support transition, e.g. pupil records transfer including performance data management, administrative meetings between key school staff, common procedures.

**Bridge Two: Social and personal** i.e. improving primary pupils' and their parents' familiarity with the school, layout and atmosphere. This bridge also ensures that effective pastoral support is in place.

**Bridge Three: Curriculum** i.e. improving the continuity in the curriculum between Y6 and Y7 to ensure that secondary school teachers build on the curriculum covered to date and seek to teach to pupils' strengths.

**Bridge Four: Pedagogy** i.e. improving the continuity in teaching and classroom practice between Y6 and Y7. It seeks to counter stereotypes held by teachers in each phase and to encourage cross-phase professional support and dialogue.

**Bridge Five: Autonomy and managing learning** i.e. ensuring that pupils are seen as active participants in the transition process and in their own learning.

(Mouchel Parkman 2005: 4 – 8)

The tables were later presented as a management tool intended for school review and evaluation (2005: 30 – 31). The tables can be found in the appendix to this report. The application of the *Five Transition Bridges* framework is developed in Part Two of our report.

### ***Data collection: the questionnaires***

The questionnaires were designed to elicit perceptions from all respondents, relating to:

- The nature, extent and perceived effectiveness of current collaborations for supporting transition in music in local everyday practice
- Any emerging 'cross-themes' common across some or all of the four respondent groups, and any differences and similarities in the way these 'cross-themes' were perceived

The questionnaires were broadly similar for each respondent group. This was an important consideration because we wanted to know how each group would respond to what is essentially a shared concern; we deliberately sought out then commented on four perspectives. As we shall see, some perspectives converged whilst others were divergent. Some were based on perceptions of other respondent groups; others were based on fact arising from direct experience, positive and less positive.

The questionnaires for each group consisted of a combination of multiple choice and open response questions relating to the key areas for investigation, with minor variations to account for differences in the professional contexts of the respondents. Multiple choice questions aimed to capture the range, frequency and perceived importance of different types of support. The open response questions aimed to capture additional themes and perspectives emerging within each survey group, individuals' own beliefs and practices and differences between local contexts.

The first section of the questionnaire sought specific information on contextual features of the organisation/ institution in relation to music education. In the questionnaires for primary and secondary schools and for local authorities / music services ( LAs/ music services), this was followed by questions relating to participation in selected national initiatives and the range of cross-phase collaborations in which both schools and LAs /music services were involved. School respondents were then asked to rank different forms of transition support in order of perceived importance. Schools were also asked to supply information on the range of different types of transition support which they initiated themselves. LAs/music services were asked to rank on a five point scale (from 'not important' to 'very important') the importance of the role they played in the five different types of transition support they currently provide to schools.

The music organisations' questionnaire focused on the degree to which they were involved in collaborations and partnerships for supporting transition, either with schools only, or with schools and

LAs/music services. They were also asked to express their views on constituents of good practice, current challenges and areas for improvement.

### ***Data analysis***

The quantitative data from the multiple response questions were imported into a spreadsheet and converted into a series of graphs and tables for interpretation. In order to trial the qualitative analysis, the open responses from a sample of randomly selected questionnaires were initially coded to examine their relation to the overarching themes of the questionnaires, and to identify any additional themes to build into the coding for the full set of responses. The full set of open responses were then imported into the thematic analysis programme Weft QDA. Data coded under the overarching categories were subsequently divided into sub-categories. Analytical comments and questions arising from or for interrogating the data were recorded in an ongoing research log.

### ***Sound Tracks: report structure***

The report is divided into two parts:

#### **Part 1: the surveys**

- Music organisations and individual musicians
- Local authorities/ music services
- Primary schools
- Secondary schools

The findings reveal current transition activities in music (with examples), priorities for support according to the four different professional perspectives, and specific themes emerging from each group of respondents.

#### **Part 2: the Five Bridges**

The second section of *Sound Tracks* presents an analytical assessment of the responses. We examine shared and dissonant perspectives, perceptions and priorities. We use the Five Bridges framework to consider emergent 'cross-themes', and suggest where and how 'bridges' of support can be combined for effective music transition practice. The concluding section reflects on the implications of the survey's findings so far, with a view to extending investigation into effective practice at a deeper level of analysis.

#### **A note on the text for readers:**

Italics are used for all quotations, and for single words from quotations, indented or within the text.

## **Part 1: the surveys**

### **1.1 Music organisations**

#### ***Introduction***

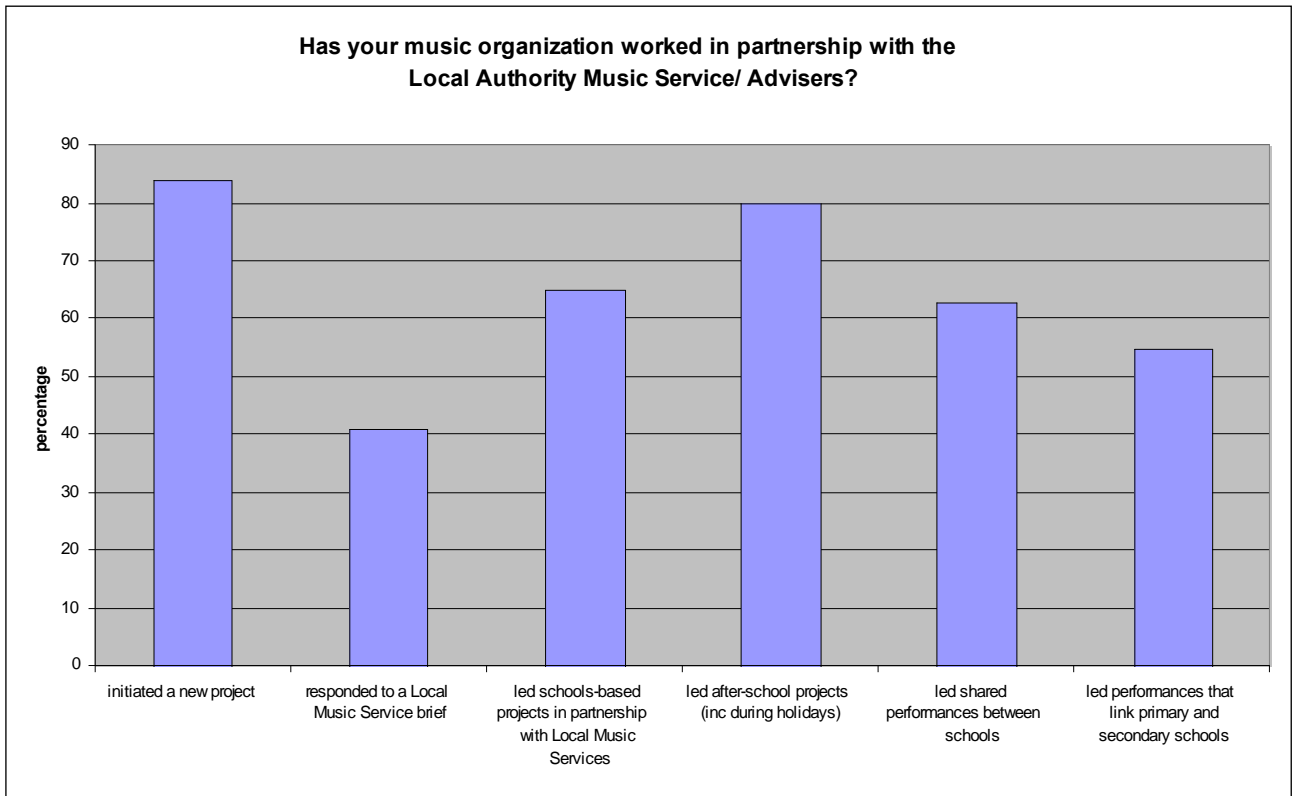
Respondents to the survey came from a wide range of music organisations (MOs), 57 in all. Just over half of them worked for medium or large organisations (employing up to or more than 20 people) and 11% of



them worked as sole traders (individual musicians). Respondents from large organisations were often education or arts development managers although a few of them were free-lance musicians. The respondent for small organisations was usually the director. Just over half received funding from the Arts Council and just over two thirds received LA funding. Lottery funding and business sponsorship contributed to resources in a minority of cases (39% and 24% respectively) but a substantial majority (83%) had to raise funds elsewhere.

The comments of individual musicians made interesting reading. They were notable for their expression of commitment to the quality of the musical experience and their willingness to be self-critical. As the people most closely involved in the activity, they are working directly with the children and concentrating on the music making, often at an individual level as well as in groups of various sizes. Project musicians are in a strong position to assess pupils’ responses and levels of engagement. They may also bring a fresh and alternative perspective to tacit assumptions underlying everyday classroom practices. The account of MO responses below outlines the range of partnerships undertaken by MOs with the emphasis on transfer collaboration and respondents’ views on the benefits of individual projects for the young people concerned. This is followed by a consideration of the challenges they encountered and their views on where collaborations for transition need to be improved.

**Partnerships with music services and schools**



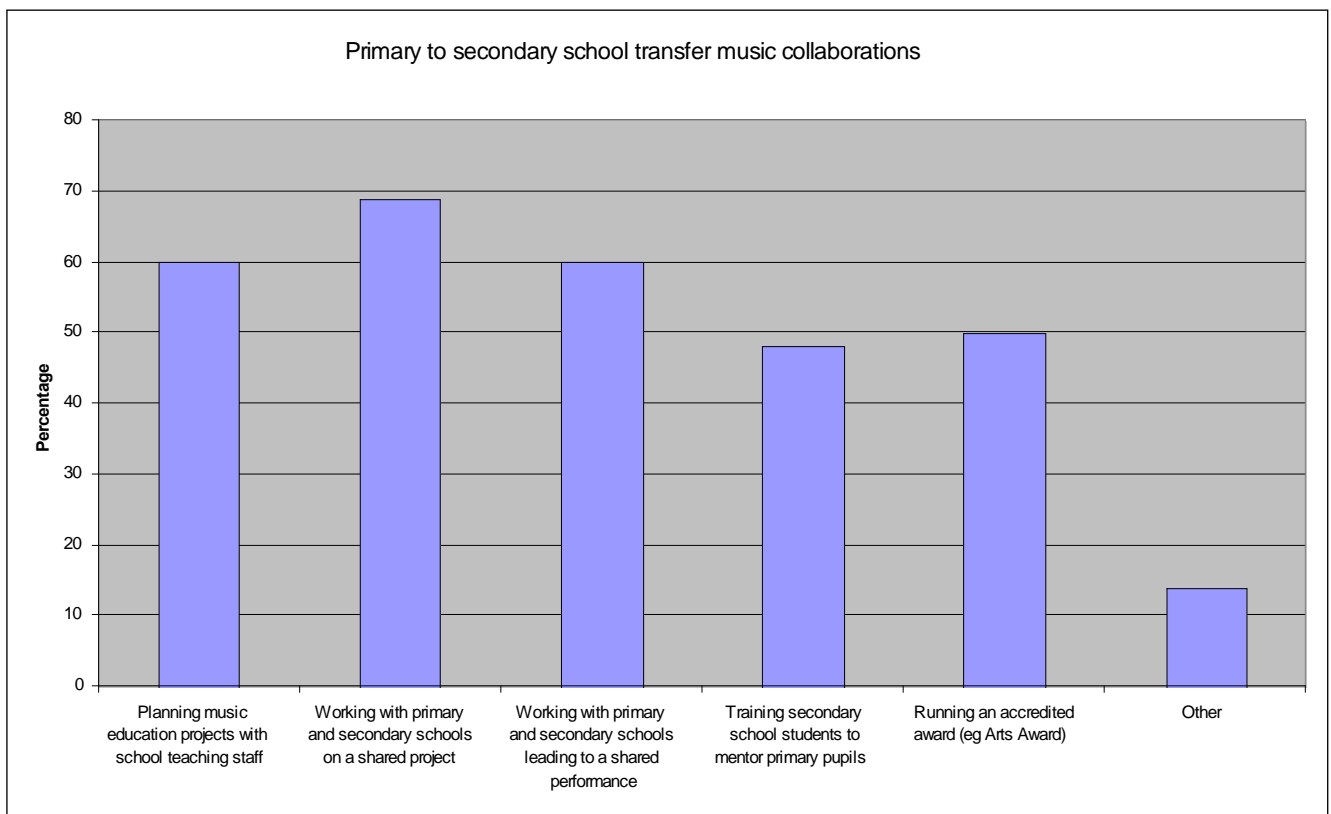
**Fig. 1**

Music organisations and individual practitioners reported working in ‘three-way’ partnerships with music services and schools. Some had also worked with schools on projects where the music service was not involved.

Experience of working with different age groups varied. Just over half (55%) had led performances that link primary and secondary schools and two thirds had worked on projects for young people in the 9-13 age range. Most MOs had led school-based projects in partnerships with the local music service. Three-way partnerships between MOs, music services and schools might operate in a single school, across one or

more clusters of primary and secondary schools, in formal classroom settings or informal after school clubs. Some projects combined school and community settings; one of these took instruments, musicians, composers, and songwriters, to school and community settings in six learning communities and was said to have *enabled thousands of young people direct access to music making and singing with professional leaders*.

## Transfer collaborations



**Fig.2**

The majority of MOs had been involved in collaborations specifically for transition and two thirds had been involved in planning projects with school teaching staff. Half of them had been involved in running an accredited arts award (such as the Arts Award). These projects often tracked pupils over their transition experience. One singing project, for example, had involved working with Y6 groups for initial song-writing and singing and had followed the same children into Y7 for a joint performance in the secondary schools. The experience had been very beneficial for pupils:

*The quality of singing and songwriting was very high ... the primary groups got a lot out of the project and were fully committed.*

## Social and personal development

A number of projects had an explicitly social dimension. One MO was running after school clubs with two clusters of primary and secondary schools. The specific long-term aim was to engage *disadvantaged young people*; it had *managed to operate consistently over quite a few years* and was said to have achieved *some good long term outcomes for individuals*.

## Mentoring

Almost half of the MOs said they had trained secondary school students to mentor primary pupils. The secondary students involved frequently came from Y7 and, or Y8. However one example demonstrated the potential for extending participation into KS4. Transition is currently a priority area for Youth Music 2005-2010 (see NAME bulletin no. 1/09 p.4). In one Youth Music funded project an individual music practitioner had worked with pupils across clusters of schools. This had enabled groups of students in the following year group pairings ... Y9 - Y5; Y10 -Y6; Y11 - Y7 ... to work together *for sharing music activity and dialogue*. Interestingly, another MO provided an alternative perspective. In a project where the mentors provided by the secondary school were all from Y10/11, the respondent in this case reflected that while the KS4 students were:

*... very engaging and supportive of participants, it may have been useful to have some Y7 students present so that the participants could talk to young people closer to their own age.*

### **Targeting children with transfer difficulties or special needs**

Transition is unsettling for all children. However there are some who find it acutely distressing and occasionally MOs were involved in projects for those who were felt to be struggling. One respondent described a Youth Music project in the form of eight-week courses in composition and performance for up to 12 children. The focus was children who were either already at secondary school or who were the subject of concern at primary school. The project had been a success in terms of *boosting confidence, developing friendships and settling children*. Unfortunately, the limited scope of the programme meant that it was impossible to continue to support all of the children into KS3 once they had left their primary schools. One small MO, a designated music therapy organisation, provided music therapy sessions to individual students *to bridge the emotional upheaval* involved in transition. The respondent noted that some students had *shown such interest in learning a musical instrument* that this in itself had boosted the student's motivation for attending secondary school. Another organisation supported pupils who were visually impaired. As this respondent explained:

*My role is not of a project, more of a "how does this pupil do what he/she does." ....  
So if a student has been learning an instrument at primary school using Braille music,  
continuity can be provided with the new secondary school and music service.*

The responses testified to the wide range of transition projects undertaken by MOs in partnership with schools and music services. Most of the projects were believed to have been worthwhile for the young people concerned but in many cases respondents had reservations. These could be seen to relate to planning, for example, or to respective roles and responsibilities and different working practices, or to poor communication and co-ordination.

### **Areas for improvement**

The MOs were more experienced in working in partnerships with music services than most of the schools (see 1.3 and 1.4) and appeared to have more experience than most music services in collaborations with schools for transition. Interestingly, the most reflective responses frequently came from workshop leaders or freelance musicians. The detailed and analytical nature of their comments afforded valuable insight into the processes involved in initiating, organising and mediating a wide range of projects. Perceptions of areas where transition activities needed to be improved fell into two broad categories: concerns related to collaborating with schools and those relating to music services. MOs also identified areas for improvement within their own practice. In the following account music services are considered first.

## **Perceptions of the role of Music Services**

### ***Music Services can be difficult to work with***

The difficulties of forging partnerships with music services recurred with striking frequency throughout the responses. While some MOs worked in harmonious and continuing relationships with music or education services, numerous responses suggested that music services could be insular in their thinking, and unwilling to commit themselves to collaborations with 'outside' organisations whose working practices were different from their own. Overall the MO data suggested that in cases where problems were encountered in communication, co-ordination, and continuity for example, these may stem from different priorities, and differences in ethos, inferred by respondents from a service's approach to collaborative projects.

***i) conflicting priorities: different ethos?***

The comments of a number of MOs suggested difficulties arising from a different ethos and different working practices. Music services are often committed to government priorities. For historical reasons, they may also prioritise classical and traditional music and more formal music making activities. This can be difficult for music organisations which work from a very different perspective and in a very different way. A community arts organisation which focused on social and personal development described their relationship with the music service as *generally very supportive of each other*. But at the same time there were:

*Issues with different ethos behind provision ... Everyone's budgets and availability is pressured.  
Difficult to get the LA in general to take notice.*

Elsewhere another MO reflected on a year-long collaboration between an MO, a county music service and county education service, which had involved *intensive work in six learning communities*. The experience had left them with the impression that the:

*Music Service can be very inward focussed and slow to acknowledge / credit / involve external providers, almost as if we are "the competition".*

The reference to 'competition' here is telling. Some musicians contested that years of experience as a music practitioner could be more important than professional or academic music qualifications for working on music projects with young people. Although it was generally acknowledged that some music services are *more enlightened than others*, the MO quoted above was not the only one to suggest that music services may perceive music organisations as a threat to their professional expertise.

***ii) communication / reaching consensus***

Communication problems appeared to be widespread and comments often related to 'three-handed' partnerships where both schools and music services were difficult to engage in a continuing dialogue. In one project there had been agreement on the project's aims and the recruitment of participants, but poor communication between respective partners during the planning stage. This resulted in no explicit agreement about roles and responsibilities for the work itself:

*the three-handed contract meant no consensus at the point of delivery re: purpose and pedagogy.*

Another organisation whose *raison d'être* was ensuring the *smoothest transition possible* for the children concerned was unequivocal in affirming that:

*Communication remains the major challenge in delivering the programme effectively between our organisation and school teachers, our organisation and music services, music services and schools, between teachers across primary and secondary schools.*

***iii) continuity and co-ordination***

MOs frequently referred to the detrimental effects on the continuity of a project caused by repeated changes in music service staff. In a three- pronged model deployed by a large music organisation a class teacher, music service staff and a community musician worked together with a school music class; the pupils had benefited from being able to work in small groups but it had been *hard ... to co-ordinate the involvement of the music services*. Another project had suffered from having to accommodate *four different [music service] people in three years*.

## **Perceptions of the role of schools**

According to MOs, schools varied in their enthusiasm for collaborating on transition projects. Their comments draw attention to a range of factors perceived to affect motivation in schools and the competing pressures which may influence their decision.

### ***i) the unpredictability of 'progression routes'***

Two respondents drew attention to what they saw as the collapse of primary and secondary school relationships which they attributed to the unpredictability of *progression routes*. One large inner-city MO had not run transition projects since 2008 because of a perceived disintegration of traditional relationships between feeder primaries and secondary schools:

*Many parents are choosing the best schools over local convenience.*

Elsewhere, a transition singing project had encountered a similar problem. An MO had worked with Y6 groups for initial song-writing and singing and involved the same children in a joint performance in the secondary schools. According to MO staff *the quality of singing and songwriting was very high and the primary groups got a lot out of the project and were fully committed*. However, the secondary school had *pulled out at the last minute* and this had caused some of the primary groups to abandon the project:

*It had been difficult to identify the right schools and young people when the progression route isn't as simple as from local primary to local secondary. Also following initial interest the secondary school cited 'pressure of time' and 'this not being a priority' for pulling out.*

### ***ii) schools prioritising school impact over benefits to individual children?***

Someone who worked for a large music organisation described a project looking at 'bridging' primary and secondary education through music workshops. One example was a samba group where Y6 pupils were taught by Y7 pupils; this approach was believed to have *worked really well*. But the workshop leader added that it had been:

*a challenge [sic] for the schools to see the impact being on the young people rather than the school itself. For example when Y6s are given skills and then leave to go to secondary school this was seen as a wasted experience as it had less impact on the primary school.*

### ***iii) lack of funding: a question of priorities?***

A medium-sized organisation had recently mounted a large-scale inner city *transitions focused* six month singing project with five secondary schools and the feeder primary schools; this had culminated in four learning community finale concerts and a grand finale concert in the cathedral for all participants. Secondary children were trained as music leaders to work with primary children on songwriting and composition, and all schools had created and, or, learned new songs. The participants' response to the finale setting, content and experience was said to have been *superb* and the project as a whole *well-received*. However, liaison with some schools had been better than others:

*Most schools bemoan lack of funding to invest in such projects - we brought in most of the funding from external sources.*

When schools cite lack of funding as a reason for non-participation in music transition projects, are they really saying they have other priorities for whatever funding they have available?

**iv) Dissonance in ethos/ pedagogies: 'forging confident and trusting professional relationships'**

The possibility that music services might perceive the contributions of MOs as a threat to their professional expertise was referred to in the previous section. According to a number of music practitioners this might also be the case with teachers. Apart from the fact that non-specialist teachers might lack confidence in their musical abilities, respondents who worked alongside teachers in the classroom also noted the importance of sensitivity to differing perceptions of respective roles and responsibilities. One individual who had worked with primary school teachers and pupils for a Sing Up project in a primary school explained:

*There was a small minority who I wondered why they had volunteered to have Sing Up sessions. It was difficult to work with them since I was determined not to undermine any sense of anyone's authority who was in the school more often than me - ie everyone!*

Some workshop leaders, as here, drew attention to classroom cultures where collaboration called for delicate negotiation if they were to offer a rewarding experience for pupils. There were some who believed teachers needed CPD to enable them to make the most of collaborations with professional musicians for everyone concerned. An individual who had many years' experience on Creative Partnerships (CP) projects contrasted the 'pupil voice' ethos of the CP approach with more formal classroom settings. Instead of *co-planning and co-delivering*, he was usually just *inserted* by the school into a formal classroom environment. In such circumstances a considered sharing of roles and responsibilities was *understandably* impossible:

*Over the years I have found the reality quite variable, it depends on the complexity of forging confident and trusting professional relationships and this process can be difficult when an artist is inserted into the classroom. In practice I have delivered my area of expertise, with the teacher in support. This has been completely understandable; I have always felt that the teachers need much more CPD training and support.*

**v) Need for sustainability**

Transition is a diachronic process; it happens over time and MOs referred repeatedly to the need for sustainability. A long-term strings project depended on commitment from schools and parents/carers:

*... the project is still in its early stages, but the biggest challenge is around the fact that long term investment (by the schools and by parents/carers) will be needed to fulfil the aim of creating an ongoing strings programme at the secondary school.*

In a large rural area a project across *disparate schools* had terminated in a *very positive and memorable culmination event*. But this would have been more beneficial in the long term *with greater continuity in the schools themselves and follow up projects perhaps on a smaller scale*. A singing project from 2009-10 had trained young singing leaders from secondary school in vocal leading; they had then led singing activities in feeder primary schools which culminated in shared performances. This was repeated the following year and perceived as *very effective for all students from both Key Stages*. However the ongoing programme needed continuity to *enable smoother progression and sustained activity*.

### **Self-evaluation: areas for MOs to improve**

The foregoing discussion explores MOs' perceptions of the challenges they negotiated in collaborating with schools and music services. Although they attributed some of the difficulties they experienced to factors in their respective partners, they also acknowledged their own working practices needed to improve. The value of more training, in working with teachers and in working within the classroom, and a heightened awareness of *classroom culture* emerged as priorities for training in a number of responses.

One MO had organised a summer holiday transition project and prized the energy and enthusiasm of *a great young staff team, a mixture of paid and volunteers* but reflected that they *needed more team training and development* which, however would need more resources. Another MO similarly noted that training and support was particularly needed for *inexperienced staff*. Experienced staff may also need access to training, and opportunities to reappraise and refresh their practice. Music organisations, particularly the smaller ones, are frequently chasing funding; this will inevitably impinge on their ability to employ qualified and experienced staff. Secondary teachers perceived a lack of classroom skills in music practitioners; the need for partners to share their respective expertise and learn rather than feel threatened by other learning cultures and pedagogies was a common theme across the surveys; it will be considered in Part 2.

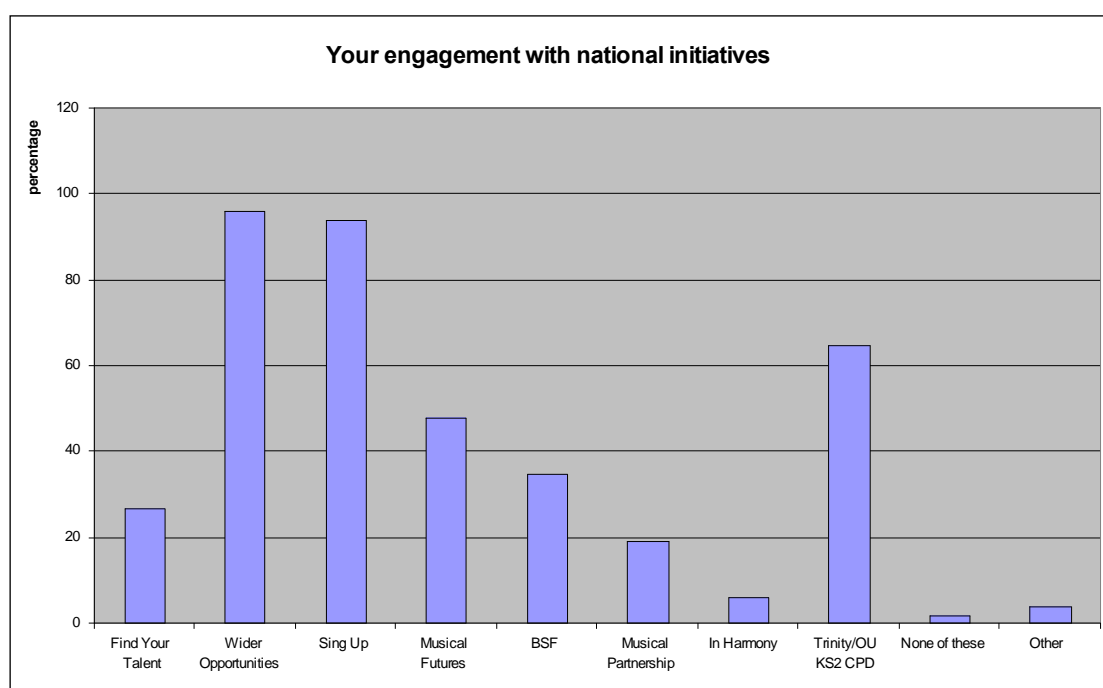
## 1.2 LAs/music services

### Introduction

The fifty one respondents from music services worked either for designated music services (48%) or from organisations which combined music services with local authorities (42%). Just eight per cent of them came from local authorities (LAs). Over half were heads or deputy heads of service, 40% were advisers, advanced skills teachers (ASTs) or curriculum support consultants, and eight per cent were instrumental teachers with additional responsibilities. This account of their responses gives a brief overview of the generic support provided to schools and young people by LAs and music services. This is followed by a consideration of respondents' perceptions of the role LAs/music services play, in providing the five different types of support (the Five Bridges) for musical progression in primary and secondary schools. The report contains a range of interesting examples of good practice from individual music services which are presented as cameos. Some respondents were keenly aware of areas where their service could be improved and the report concludes with their suggestions for new ways of working.

Throughout the report the statement above each graph refers to the corresponding question in the survey.

### Generic support



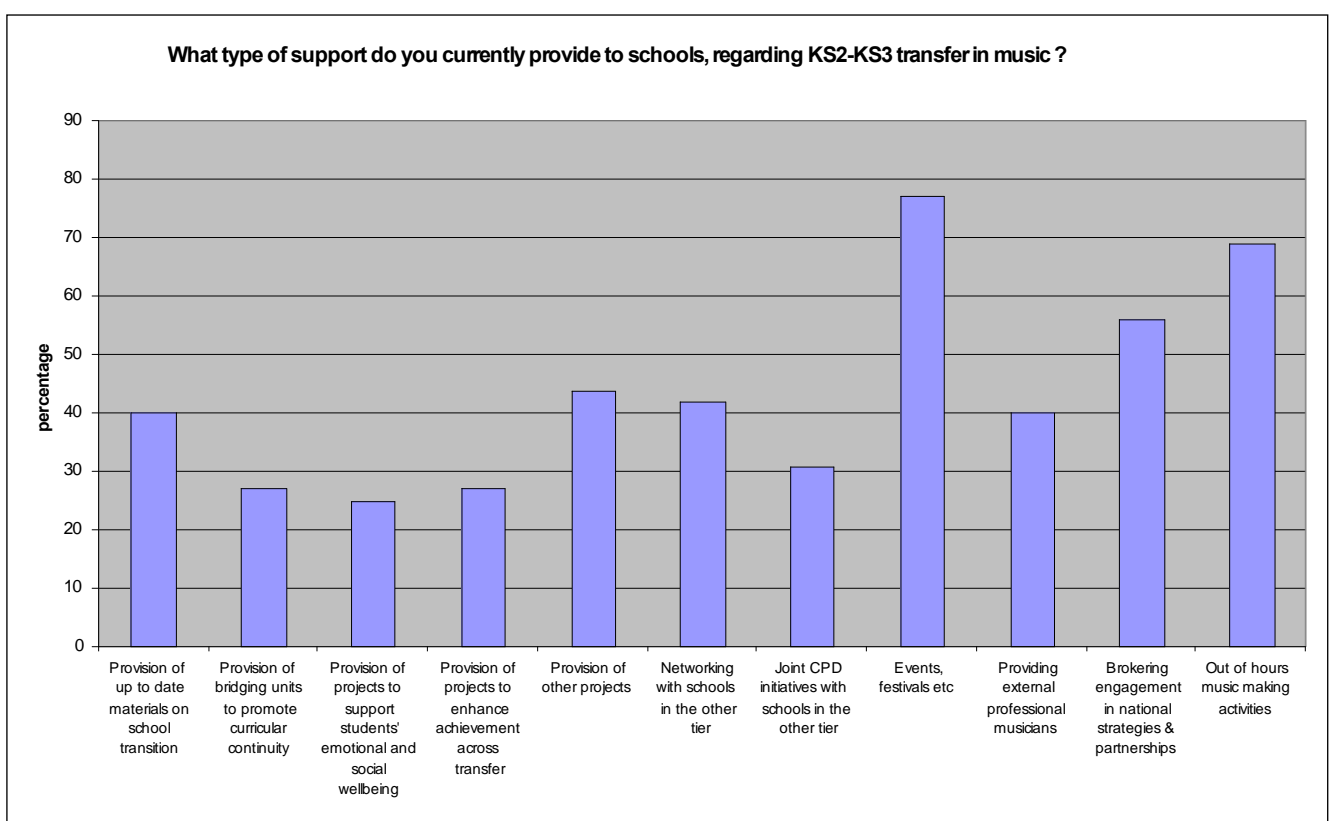
**Fig. 3**

As can be seen from Fig.3 above, a substantial majority of LAs/music services are involved to varying degrees in supporting national initiatives. While Wider Opportunities and Sing Up currently appear to attract the most support, over 60% of music services are also involved in Trinity/OU CPD provision which is designed to support Wider Opportunities delivery. Just under half are supporting the work of Musical Futures. A desire to sustain Wider Opportunities recurred in the comments elicited by open response questions throughout the data. By contrast, although Sing Up appears to be well supported according to responses recorded in Fig. 3, there was surprisingly very little reference to Sing Up in the comments



generated by open response questions. It might be interesting to learn how far LAs/music services are involved with this initiative. According to the information displayed above, most LAs/music services consider that they are providing a comprehensive range of services to schools, particularly in instrumental/vocal tuition, provision for special schools, CPD and events. However, in spite of the fact that the majority of services provide discrete networks for KS2 and for KS3/4, it is clear that much less work is being done to build cross-phase KS2/KS3 networks; less than half of music services currently undertake this form of support. As we shall see, a need for more music service support in building such networks is corroborated by the evidence from schools. Music services' perceptions of their contributions to transfer provision will be considered next.

### ***Types of support currently provided to schools for transition in music from KS2 to KS3.***



**Fig.4**

According to respondents, different LAs/music services are providing different types of support for transition to varying degrees. The most commonly provided forms of support were those which suggest a tendency towards less intensive or relatively short term levels of engagement with the pupil experience of transition. Many of them organise festivals or other one-off events and almost as many run out-of-hours activities; just under two thirds said they broker engagement in national strategies. Relatively few said they provide bridging units or projects which support social wellbeing or musical achievement across transfer. For the majority, their responses to the request for views on the *most important* types of support identified the priorities for transition support as follows:

- the provision of up to date materials on transition
- joint CPD with schools in the other tier

While primary and secondary teachers, working at the front-line of transition, place pupils' social and emotional wellbeing (Bridge Two) as their top priority, music services acknowledged their responsibility as explicitly one of co-ordination and teacher support; they were more concerned with the transfer of generic information and CPD. The minority of LAs/music services with higher levels of engagement in transition support were involved in various activities, which often included building and enhancing networks. Creating opportunities for primary and secondary teachers to collaborate could mean generating and sustaining a spirit of inquiry and reflection:

*We have started a research group of primary and secondary teachers to explore how we need to update our planned learning guidance and progression statements in the light of the new curricula (we did meet, despite the cancellation of the 'Rose' curriculum for primary). We intend to continue with the research this year.*

Many teacher respondents regarded the provision of opportunities for networking with colleagues as an area for improvement. Some of the music services with discrete existing networks for KS2 and KS3 teachers were already ensuring cross-phase opportunities for sharing and exploring new ideas for transition, and customising support to fit the local context:

*We have very effective networks for both secondary and primary music teachers. The exchange of views and opportunities to meet with colleagues across phase is valued by teachers from both settings. We have a transition group dedicated to working out how we can enable transition in a localised manner. They are currently trialling projects such as initial schemes for Y7 with shared themes from KS2; shared events (concerts etc.); student mentoring; developing song leaders etc.*

*Music transition days (pilot in summer term 2010). These pilots (at 30% of our secondary schools) have been a 3 way partnership between the host secondary school, its feeder primary schools and the local authority. The success has been partly due to the strength and enthusiasm of this partnership and also:*

- music coordinator attendance/support from primary schools*
- pro-active secondary head of music*
- secondary students joining in the activities (thereby raising the bar)*
- expert instrumental support from the LA*
- making a link between Wider Opportunities and Y7*

Just over half of the organisations surveyed said one member of their staff had special responsibility for supporting KS2/KS3 transition in music. Their responsibilities include data transfer for pupils receiving music service tuition and collating annual audits of musical engagement (beyond standard curriculum time) for Y6 pupils. Some respondents were developing and running cross-phase holiday provision or after school music clubs while others were organising and facilitating music transition days for clusters of feeder primaries and their local secondary school. A number of them had also established the practice of sharing the KS2 curriculum with secondary schools, especially the Wider Opportunities programme.

*... linking with primary and secondary schools to provide a Wider Opportunities programme to Y7 which follows the Wider Opps format.*

Some individuals who co-ordinated a range of transition support activities testified to the positive results of cross-phase practice for sustaining pupil motivation:

*Where possible music service teachers cover a high school and at least some of its feeders. Where pupils have been involved in area music centres there is almost no drop-out at transfer; this is due at least in part to music centre groups working cross-phase.*

Elsewhere individual staff organised events involving cross-phase 'buddying' activities:

*I organise Musician's Transfer Days. Area based music-making where Y6 musicians join with KS3 musicians to make music together for a day. During the day the high school musicians are encouraged to 'buddy' Y6 musicians coming to their school. In addition to music service staff running the event it has worked best where high school music department staff have got involved in helping to run the bands or composing activities that take place.*

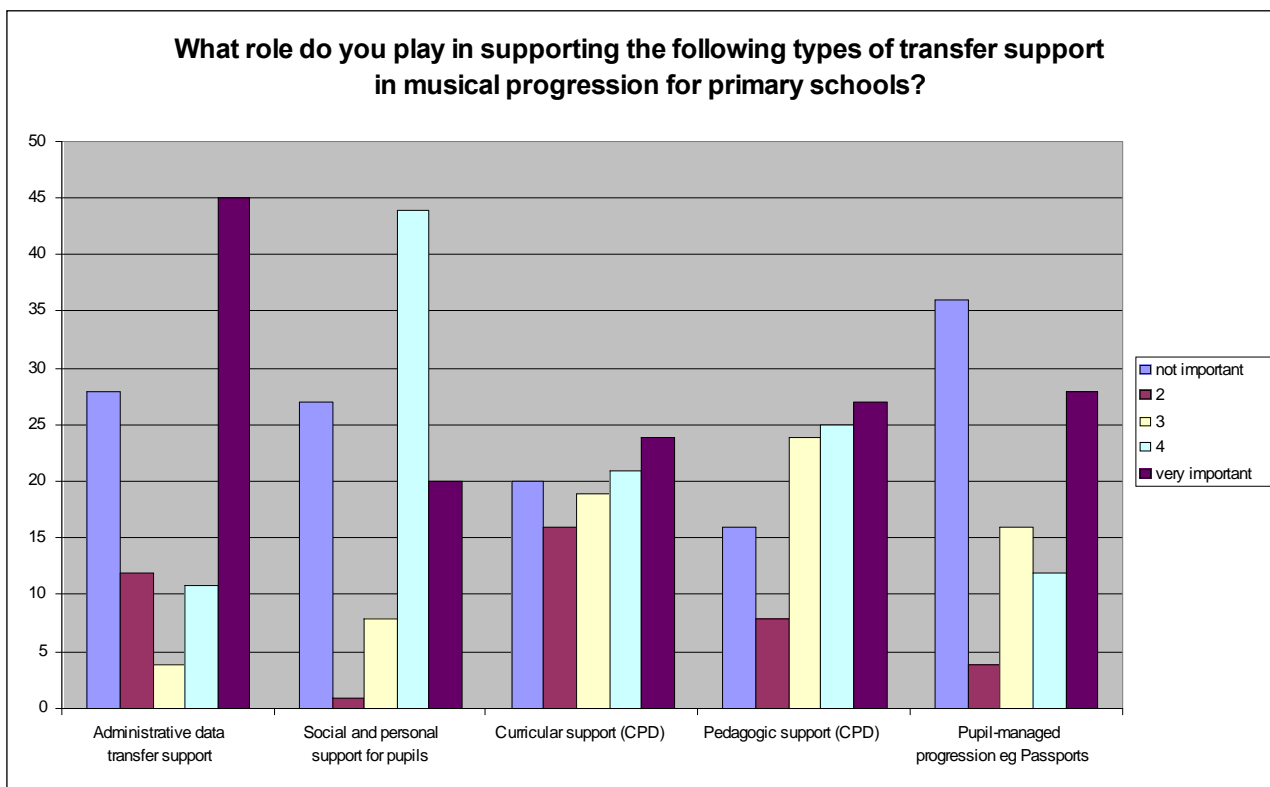
This last cameo, on the engagement of KS2 / KS3 teachers, draws attention to one music service's recognition of the importance for pupils of collaborations between music services and schools. LAs/music services' perceptions of the relative importance of different kinds of transition support will be investigated in the following section.

### ***The importance of roles played by music services in different types of transition support (the Five Bridges)***

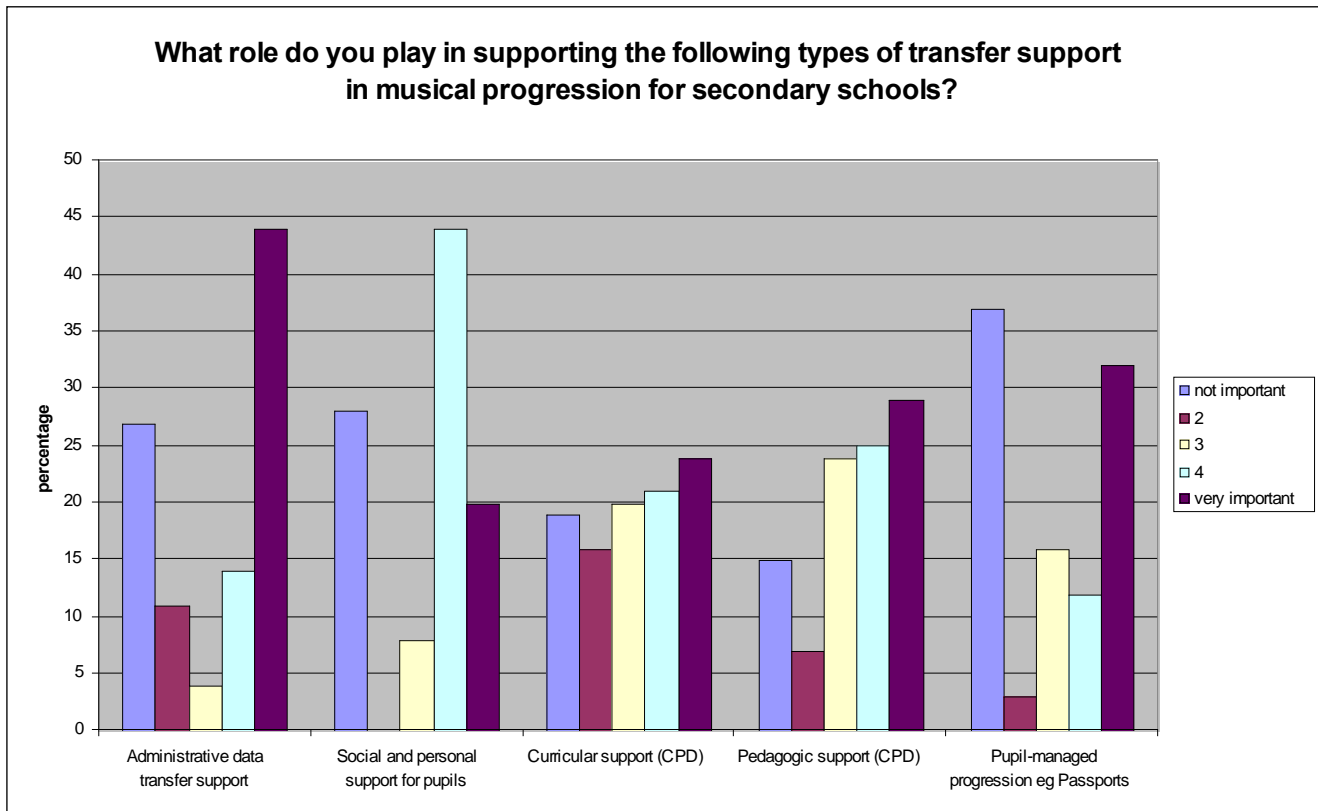
Having investigated the range of transition support activities undertaken by music services, we move now to music service provision in primary schools and secondary schools, according to the types of support identified in the five Musical Bridges:

- administrative data transfer support
- social and personal support for pupils
- curricular support
- pedagogic support
- pupil-managed progression

LAs/music services were asked to rank on a five point scale (from 'not important' to 'very important') the importance of the role they played in the five different types of transition support they currently provide to schools:



**Fig.5**



**Fig.6**

Administrative support (Bridge One) was most frequently perceived as the top priority for KS2 and KS3; social and personal support (Bridge Two) was seen to be next in importance by the majority at both Key Stages. The perceived importance of their role varies widely from one LA/music service to another and there is no consistency of provision. Music service staff who believed social and personal support for pupils was an important part of their role reflected the priorities declared by primary and secondary teachers as we shall see later. A large number of music services said they currently provide transfer support in the form of events and festivals and out of hours activities. These social activities may account for perceptions of the importance of their support for social development for pupils in many cases, as only a very small minority of respondents referred to pupils' social development specifically.

The relative importance of curricular or pedagogic support (Bridges Three and Four) shows less variation; it may be worth noting that according to respondents here, many music services see themselves playing a less important role in curricular and pedagogic support, areas where many teachers express awareness of music services' potential to make a valuable contribution. The pattern for pupil-managed progression (Bridge Five) again shows considerable variation. While this does not appear to be a priority for the majority, the responses suggest that in some areas music services already play a role in encouraging pupils to record and reflect on their learning, and are involved in this additional dimension to support pupils' personal development.

Comments from some individuals demonstrated a recognition of the benefits of particular types of transition support. Some services were devising strategies for sustaining Wider Opportunities and Sing Up into KS3. Others made observations frequently echoed by teachers; cross-phase activity was considered to be particularly beneficial for pupil motivation, for example, when it involved primary and secondary students working together:

*... projects where KS3/4 students work with Y6 pupils which encourages pupils to continue*

In a few areas music services were already in the process of developing resources for curricular and pedagogic support. This might involve CPD specifically intended to stimulate *thinking* and debate:

*When the development project is completed ... providing new resources and appropriate training opportunities to implement the thinking*

Those who already co-ordinated cross-phase networks attested to their value in enabling KS2/KS3 teachers to share information and understanding of the specific content and learning experience that Y6 pupils bring with them to secondary school:

*More cross-phase networks and support, more involvement by secondary music teachers ... to gain a better understanding of what their pupils will have experienced in their primary phase*

Pertinently, at least one music service supporting transition included customising resource materials to cater for differences between local contexts across the borough:

*... resource materials which are appropriate to the schools within different localities in the borough rather than a 'one-size-fits-all' model.*

This comment defines the unique contribution music services can make to cross-phase partnerships and collaborations. Working across an authority, they enjoy a 'borough-wide' perspective inaccessible to the majority of teachers. Their position enables them to tailor their support for transition to cater for differences between local contexts:

*The service has set up a primary music centre in one of the new secondary centres for learning. This has been supported by the secondary principal who has funded transport. The result has been a steady stream of primary aged pupils (and their parents) coming into the centre on a weekly basis. This is now going to be rolled out to 2 other centres across the borough.*

The responses suggest that in some areas music services are already committed to developing support for transition. Local variations in the emphasis they place on different kinds of support may relate partly to views of the relative importance of different kinds of support within an individual service; it may also relate to what is seen to be possible in practice within a particular local authority. Most respondents acknowledged that transition support was a dimension of their work requiring more intensive engagement and development. The final section of this report considers their suggestions for improving practice.

## ***Areas for improvement***

LA/music services were asked to suggest strategies for improving their contribution to KS2/3 transition. In spite of the evidence for commitment from a minority of services, taken as a whole, the responses leave an inescapable impression that many LAs/music services have so far given less thought to support for transition than to other aspects of their work. Many comments relating to improvements were vague, and budgetary constraints were frequently stated and unaccompanied by evidence of the will to surmount them. *With more staff and money we would invest in this area* was a typical response. Logistical problems associated with arranging cross-phase network meetings were also identified. Some found it hard to persuade secondary school colleagues to attend these meetings, acknowledging that time constraints were a justifiable deterrent. Others said they would do more but *it would depend on schools funding these initiatives*.

Respondents cited the challenges of providing different types of transition support. Sustaining the momentum of national initiatives had been difficult in some cases. A service which was said to have *created many successful shorter term singing initiatives*, had been unable to sustain them beyond the duration of the project (usually half a term).

Problems associated with data transfer were also identified. These included partial information transfer, and time delays:

*We provide details of pupils who are having instrumental lessons and on what, but not all schools provide details to high schools of pupils who have engaged with Wider Opportunities.*

LA/music services respondents agreed with teachers and music organisations on the difficulties for continuity arising from the unpredictability of progression routes for Y6 pupils, whose parent/carers were selecting a wider range of secondary schools:

*We are limited because many young people move in or out of the borough for their secondary education. There would need to be a network including all London boroughs and both state and private schools to track individual children through the transition.*

A minority of respondents offered a range of constructive suggestions:

- providing opportunities for MATs (more able and talented) to perform in KS3 ensemble activities
- involving secondary music teachers in projects / Wider Opportunities work
- partnership music festivals for Year 6 and Year 7 pupils (schools + feeder primaries)

- identifying and increasing contact with primary liaison officers in secondary schools
- encouraging more mentoring/coaching/young leader interaction both within and beyond the school day

Both teachers and music organisations referred to the importance for pupils of consistency in music service staff. One music service respondent also recognised the importance of consistency in this respect:

*Have Wider Opportunities peripatetics working in feeder schools and secondary schools. Music service teachers working with after school groups, eg. singing/orchestra/band in Year 5 and 6 and then same teachers work in secondary school Y7 to provide link.*

When asked to suggest any *additional* strategies, other than those already identified, for improving LA/music service support, some interesting possibilities emerged:

<b>Data transfer</b>	<i>The data transfer is about instrumental learning. We are about to implement a system by which all schools log on their SIMs data which pupils are learning an instrument / the voice with the music service. We are looking at how additional data (which instrument, standard, progress) can then be added to this, and used to help the transfer of budding musicians!</i>
<b>Mentoring/buddies</b>	<p><i>Musical buddies where a transferring pupil who already plays or sings or has expressed an interest in doing so is buddied up with a secondary school pupil who is already playing or singing and exchanging experiences.</i></p> <p><i>Developing more opportunities for pupils from secondary to mentor in KS2 either through singing and instrumental work or through personal support in the primary school setting as well as in secondary schools.</i></p>
<b>Extra curricular solutions</b>	<i>After school music clubs, to link between Wider Opportunities and KS3 Supporting / facilitating more extra-curricular music activities based in secondary schools for local primary schools with cross-phase attendance</i>
<b>Cross phase resource support</b>	<i>In terms of music transition, we are creating a system whereby all primary pupils that currently play an instrument can continue to have access to the instrument through the key transition period at end of July (currently all instruments are assigned to primary schools and pupils at the end of year 6 have to return their instrument!)</i>
<b>CPD</b>	<i>Training staff (class and peri) to manage whole class year 7 instrumental work which has been a surprise request from KS3 teachers and does help with drop out</i>
<b>Bigger picture thinking</b>	<p><i>I would like to expand the concept of school - it should be possible to support transfer through activities that are vertically grouped and not just by year groups. In this scenario every activity was a curriculum activity - everyone would be aware of progression points along the pathway (currently levels of achievement and confined to NC and school work)</i></p> <p><i>I would like to see transfer almost as something that didn't exist as we are all on a learning path ...</i></p>

Overall the LAs/music services responses indicate the wide range of support and services they currently provide for schools; but at the same time they suggest that many have engaged to only a limited extent

with strategies for supporting KS2/KS3 transition. There appears to be little consistency across LAs/music services as a whole in the different types and levels of support they provide. According to respondents, the main challenges for them are associated with capacity, funding and the logistical problems associated with bringing teachers and pupils together for networking and collaboration. While there are numerous valuable examples of best practice, strategic initiatives and no shortage of ideas, they are scattered across the country and tend to be concentrated within a minority of organisations. Among the suggestions for improvement the recurring themes relate to:

- KS2/KS3 students working together: peer teaching and buddying
- joint planning for primary and secondary staff
- taking Wider Opportunities into Y7

Music services work across local authorities with access to a borough-wide perspective. Their position constitutes considerable potential for expanding and applying their knowledge and experience of individual schools and local resources to contribute to a comprehensive and co-ordinated strategy for developing all Five Bridges of transition support. The comments and suggestions contributed for this survey affirm that a small minority of services are already mobilising this potential to play a dynamic role in improving collective and individual transition experience for pupils, and also for teachers.



## 1.3 Primary schools

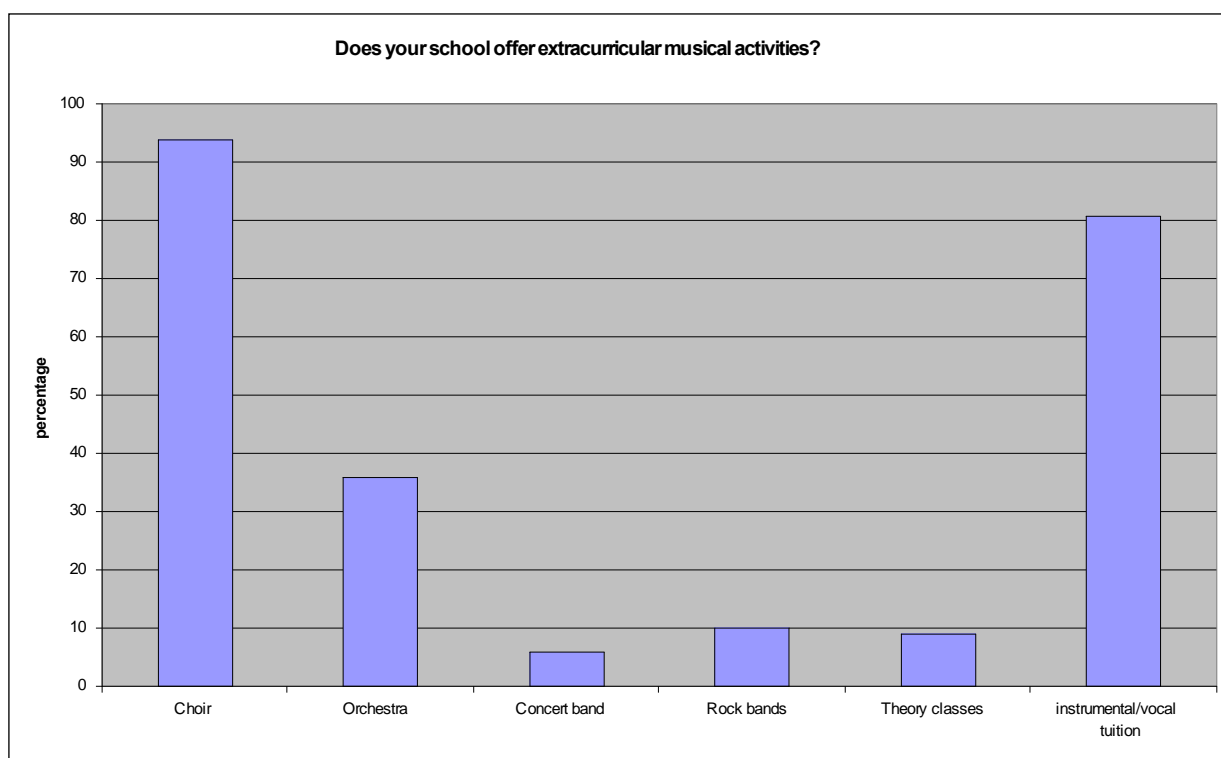
### *Introduction*

The majority (87%) of the 83 responding primary schools participating in the survey were state maintained. A further 10% were faith schools and the remaining 3% independent schools. Many of the responses came from music coordinators (61%), others were provided by classroom teachers (20%) or senior management staff (14%). A few responses were received from advanced skills teachers, special needs co-ordinators and teaching assistants. Half of the schools stated that their school was recognised for achievement in music and, or, the performing arts, and a substantial majority (70%) maintained that music played an active or very active role in the life of their school.

The following account considers the survey findings in relation to emerging themes associated with transition. To place transition activities in context, we look first at current support for music education in general; this includes extra-curricular activities and external support, with particular reference to the extent to which schools are building on national initiatives. The report moves on to investigate the support for transition activities which primary schools receive from LAs/music services, and teachers' views on where LAs/music services could improve their contribution. Primary teachers' priorities, according to perceived importance of the five types of transition support in the Five Bridges model, are examined in relation to examples of transition activities initiated by the schools themselves. A concluding section presents primary schools' own suggestions for improving the current transition experience for pupils and also for teachers.

### *Primary music education: current sources of support*

#### **Support from within the school : extra-curricular activities**



**Fig. 7**

Respondents were asked to indicate their school's participation in a range of extra-curricular activities. As can be seen from Fig. 7, most primary schools offered extra singing opportunities in school choirs but fewer appeared to be organising any instrumental ensemble work. Given the widespread enthusiasm for Sing Up attested in the following pages, this situation is unsurprising. As both primary and secondary teachers observed, *singing is free!*; it does not involve schools or parents/carers in acquiring frequently expensive musical instruments or the need for somewhere to store them. Although 70% of primary school said that they used external musicians for workshops and performances, only 10% made use of parents/carers in this capacity. According to respondents, much of the current external provision is coming through Wider Opportunities and Sing Up work.

## Building on Wider Opportunities

Just over half of primary schools surveyed said they have 'a lot' or 'quite a lot' of involvement with the Wider Opportunities project, and a third of them believed that Wider Opportunities has a significant impact on the way they teach the music curriculum in KS2. Primary schools build on Wider Opportunities work in various ways. In spite of the apparent infrequency of ensemble playing presented in Fig.7, many schools used the open responses to indicate they do provide opportunities for their pupils to play in ensembles. These include 'orchestras', brass bands, and *a strings fun club*. Others referred to opportunities in the wider community such as Saturday morning music centres. A minority of schools also involve more experienced pupils in peer teaching and band leading; such student-led activities were recommended by secondary school and music organisation respondents for their beneficial effects not only on music learning but also for social and personal development.

In a few schools, the strategic support is well developed:

*Y3 pupils play the violin in their class music lesson. They are offered the opportunity to continue and take their instruments home if the parents allow. After one year, they pay a donation of £10 each to continue. By this time it is usually clear who is keen and who is not! The children are then encouraged to join the orchestra which is held between 5pm and 7pm and this encourages commitment and gives them a sense of belonging.*

But only a few appeared to be using Wider Opportunities skills in classroom curriculum lessons, and some schools seemed to regard Wider Opportunities sessions *as a substitute* for curriculum music sessions.

Primary teachers identified challenges for continuity. Some respondents suggested that the Wider Opportunities experience begins too early in pupils' school career. Budgetary constraints were a recurring theme and several individuals made the point that if continuity is to happen, it is important that the quality of Wider Opportunities sessions justifies such an investment. Many schools provide opportunities for their pupils to continue with their instrumental tuition or to transfer their skills to new instruments:

*We provide peripatetic teaching to small groups or individuals at as reasonable cost as possible for those wishing to continue. Our private tuition in areas covered by Wider Opportunities so far has at least doubled (violin and flute tuition has quadrupled) in every instrument.*

Perceptions of the benefits of Wider Opportunities experience sometimes extended to teachers' practice. Some classroom teachers reported that their Wider Opportunities sessions offer possibilities for improving their music teaching skills, which they can then pass on to others, enhancing prospects for continuity:

*As music teacher in the school, I teach alongside the Wider Opportunities teacher. I am then able to use the skills in teaching other classes. I am also setting up a teachers' flute tuition session as a result. This will hopefully aid sustainability.*

In summary, where Wider Opportunities has been successfully implemented as a true partnership between school and music service, and deployed to ensure integration with curriculum music, ensemble opportunities and sustainability, KS2 pupils have the chance to explore a rich music learning environment:

*Because historically so many children learn instruments such as flute, clarinet, trumpet, recorder, guitar, violin, cello etc... in small groups of 2/3s, Wider Opportunities works perhaps differently for us. In class groups, children have the opportunity to learn to play the gamelan, steel pans, keyboards and African Drums which is integrated into our schemes of work. Excellent communication between music co-ordinator and the peripatetic music team means that progress of pupils is closely monitored and pupils are invited to join one of our many ensembles when they are ready. Regular performance opportunities give pupils something exciting to work towards. Our system of Y6 Music Mentors provides support and encouragement for our younger/less experienced players by their peers, and indeed Music Mentors are rewarded with extra musical opportunities such as attending professional concerts.*

## **Building on Sing Up**

About half of the primary schools surveyed said they have 'a lot' or 'quite a lot' of involvement with the Sing Up project and just over half believed it has a significant impact on the way they teach the music curriculum in KS2. Many comments expressed appreciation of the website resources, which they encourage their pupils to access independently in school and at home:

*We use lots of material from the website. The pupils are getting used to warm ups and enjoy the songs a lot. We watch other pupils on You Tube!*

Sing Up is valued as a source of new repertoire for use in curriculum lessons by specialist and non-specialist teachers:

*The Sing Up materials are essential to our classroom music. Non specialist teachers have access to support materials and suitable song choices. Without this resource, the quality of lessons would be greatly reduced.*

Many teachers agreed that being able to use the resources in other curriculum work is *a bonus*. In some cases, being able to draw on a wide range of repertoire materials, magazines, and advice and ideas from the website can be useful for cross-curricular projects:

*We learn seasonal and topical songs together from Sing Up as well as finding songs which link to our creativity topic subjects.*

The Sing Up Awards were said to be an incentive for some schools to develop and improve the quality of singing in their school: *we have pledged for a Gold Award after recently achieving Silver*. As with Wider Opportunities, peer teaching featured frequently in singing activities. This is something specifically encouraged and supported by the Sing Up scheme; pupils will often teach younger children, or work more informally as singing leaders in the playground and lead lessons in their own classes:

*The Singing Leaders teach new songs to nursery/reception and KS1 children. Support and lead warm up activities in KS2 choir.*

Again in common with the Wider Opportunities sessions, teachers reported that they were using Sing Up to improve their own practice and many of them access the Sing Up range of training opportunities:

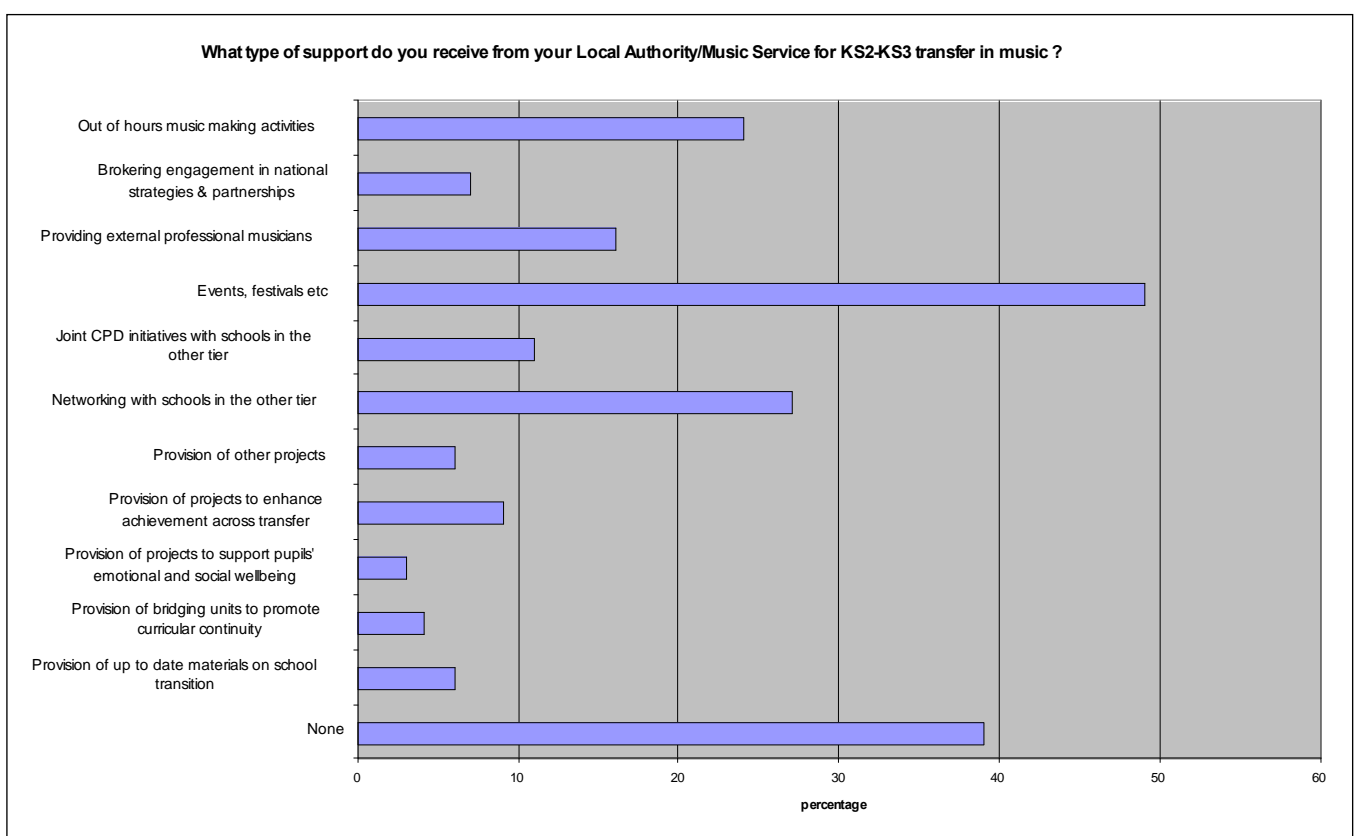
*We are members of our local Sing Up cluster group. Information gained from attending Sing Up workshops and courses have been disseminated to other non-specialist members of staff.*

Sing Up offers a range of effective strategies for encouraging continuity and development of singing in schools. The website gives teachers and students access to a range of multimedia resources and the Sing Up Awards scheme provides a whole school incentive for ensuring the momentum is maintained up to the end of Y6. However, no one suggested how this work can effectively continue into KS3.

Perceptions of the impact of Wider Opportunities and Sing Up here suggest that these initiatives can inspire primary teachers to experiment and engage pupils in activities which have considerable potential for their musical and social development. The following section turns to the contribution of LAs/music services.

## Support for transition from LAs/music services

Sixty five percent of primary school respondents said they receive little or no support from their LAs/music services for KS2/KS3 transfer in music. Where LAs/music services were involved, the type of support received is shown on Fig. 8 below:



**Fig.8**

According to the information presented in Fig. 8, LA/music services support appears to be most frequently contributed through events and festivals, a trend which concurs with the responses from LAs/music services themselves. There appears to be a conspicuous shortfall between this kind of short-term commitment, and other forms of transition support which require a more sustained approach.

When asked what types of LA/music service support they would value most, respondents identified the following in order of priority:

- staff networking
- joint projects
- events, festivals where KS2/KS3 students can work together
- bridging units

Their views suggest they envisage the role of LAs/music services as one of effective and continuing co-ordination, creating links and supporting KS2/KS3 staff in sharing ideas and information, and collaborating on transition activities. Events and festivals are included in their priorities above, but it is worth noting that they defined the specific value of these activities in the opportunities they provide for KS2/KS3 students to work together.

Some schools suggested the music service could be *more proactive*:

*A more proactive music service ... I think the music service should sell itself a bit more and make use of the local area ensemble to show children what they can aspire to.*

Many KS2 teachers called for opportunities for primary and secondary students to engage with one another *to exchange information and personal experiences* rather than merely work alongside:

*It would be beneficial for Upper KS2 particularly to spend time with secondary music learners, to exchange information and personal experiences. To explore musical options with children who have just completed their first few years of secondary school, to make constructive relationships in KS3 and to observe music in action (concerts / concert dress rehearsals). Over time perhaps this could lead to a collaborative music venture.*

One respondent suggested it would be *appropriate to extend ... to music* the LA/music service transition strategies provided for other subject areas, such as *Literacy, Numeracy, and RE*.

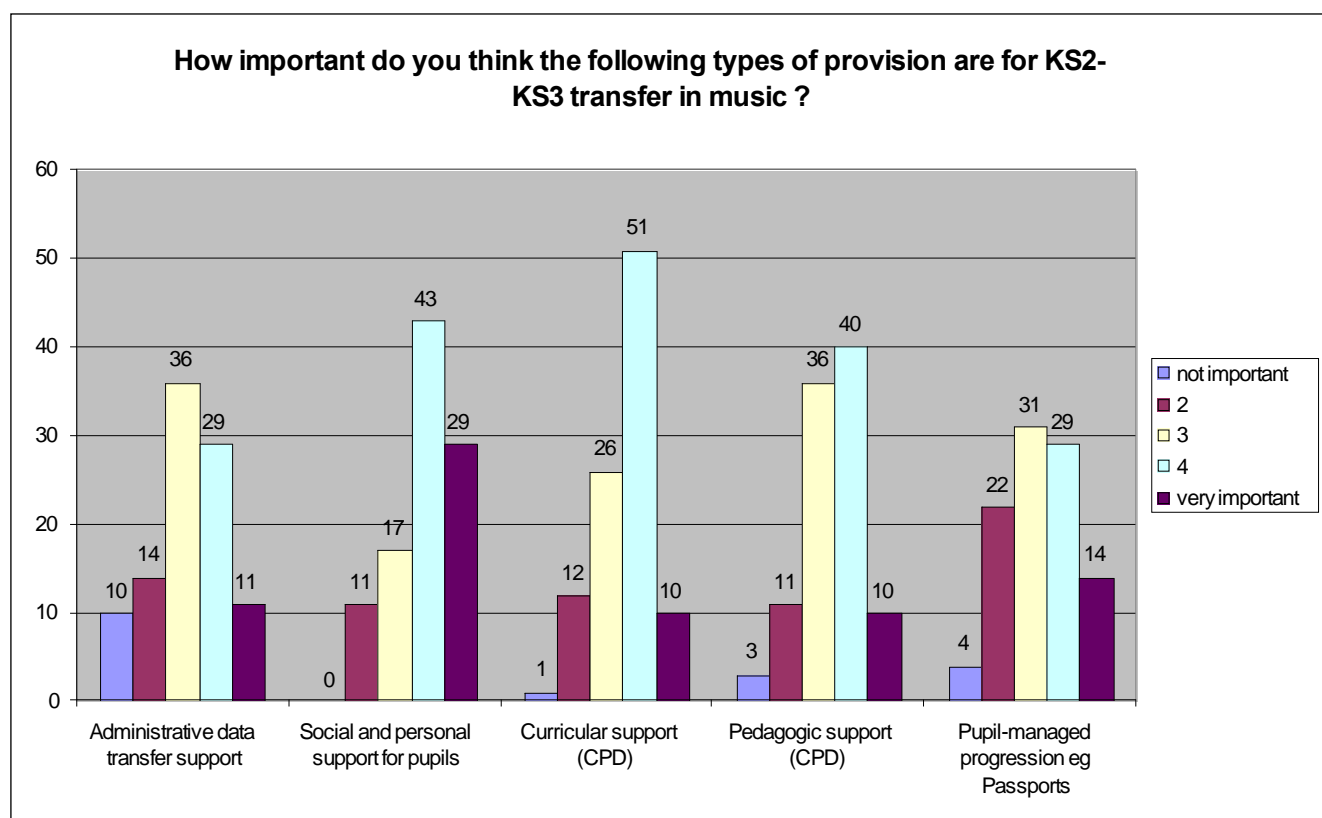
There were numerous requests for more networking opportunities. The suggestions of some respondents, as here, indicated there was no shortage of ideas on what they would find useful:

*Invitations for 2-3 feeder schools to work with the secondary, at least one rep from each school. An initial brainstorming meeting between these staff, two kids from each school, and a music service rep. Music service provides examples of projects but no detailed brief - it would be up to participants to devise their own. If an outcome had to be specified, this could be very broad in scope, e.g. an original work which must be realised through live and/or recorded performance. A nominal fund pot (e.g. £200) could be provided.*

Only one person said they would appreciate LAs/music services' support for projects to promote pupils' emotional and social wellbeing. Social and emotional support emerged as the most important of the Five Bridges when primary teachers were asked to rank them in order of priority, and this view recurred in the secondary teachers' responses. Teachers from both Key Stages appear to regard pupils' social and emotional wellbeing as a responsibility for schools (and parents/carers?); as in the cameo below, they would like music services to work much harder on supporting transition through co-ordinating activities between schools, and constructing networks for sharing practice and pedagogy:

*The local music consultant in conjunction with our local secondary school organised a music transition day run by a range of music teachers, involving most of the feeder primary schools. The pupils worked in different groups through the day - orchestra, choir, rock band, string group ;working with older pupils from the secondary school. They performed to parents and each other at the end of the day. It was valuable musically and socially, and served to encourage potential musicians and hopefully ensure that they saw music as an enjoyable, sociable activity they would look forward to doing both within and outside lesson time when starting their new school. I have found these transition days helpful as they have given me an opportunity to work with students of a range of ages in different styles, almost a taster of being a full-time music teacher for the day!*

## Primary schools' priorities for transition support: the Five Bridges



**Fig.9**

Fig.9 shows the relative importance of different types of support according to primary schools. Respondents ranked the five kinds of support 'important' or 'very important' as follows:

Social and personal support for pupils (Bridge Two)	72%
Curricular support (CPD) (Bridge Three)	61%
Pedagogic support (CPD) (Bridge Four)	50%
Pupil-managed progression (such as passports) (Bridge Five)	43%
Administrative data transfer support (Bridge One)	40%

Primary teachers believed the personal and social experience of moving to a new learning environment was of paramount importance. A respondent referred to earlier advocated transition activities which instil *a sense of belonging*. Comments relating to the importance of social integration on arrival at secondary school accord with the guidelines for Bridge Two, which recommend *using information on social groupings within primary schools to create class groups*. The responses referred to earlier testify to the value attached by primary teachers to active engagement between KS2 and KS3 pupils, and also to peer teaching and encouraging young singing leaders. Their observations relate directly to the Bridge Two suggestions for *pupil peer mentoring – pre and post transition*. Curricular support was also thought to be important, albeit to a lesser extent. Bridge Three specifically identifies *joint projects, cross-phase activities* and *summer schools*; some respondents imagined intensive and *extended* activities where new social and curricular experiences for pupils could be enjoyably combined:

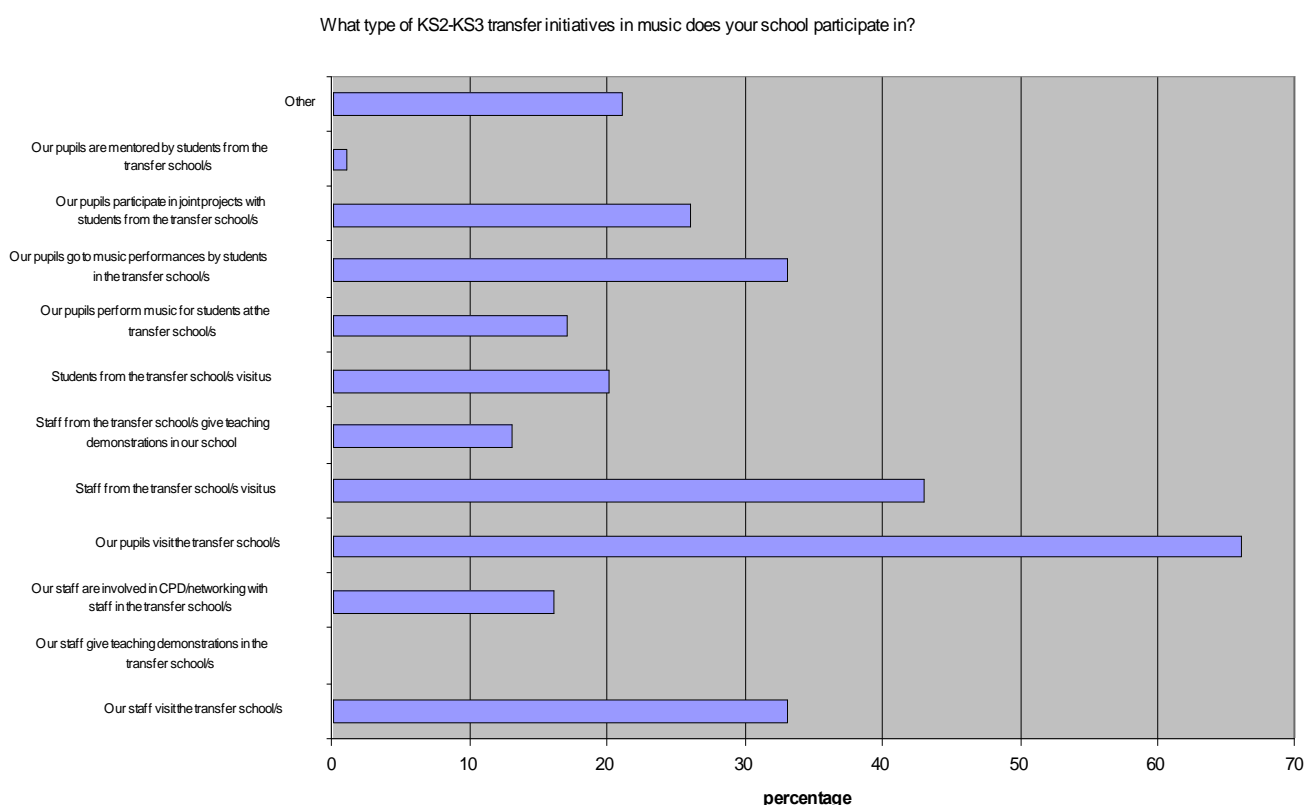
*Activities where Y6 and Y7 can work together for extended periods of time on practical music-making, e.g. a summer school for a week, which would include choir, rock band from scratch,*

*ensembles for the more experienced, composition/songwriting and music technology. It would be easy to see how this could be extended to include dance, drama, art, circus skills, etc. and there could be a final outcome, e.g. a series of live performances or a DVD at the end of the week - or even an event in which all activities are combined, such as a show.*

A small but clearly defined distinction emerged between the relative importance of curricular and pedagogic support, a trend which was reflected in the secondary school responses; support for Bridge Four yielded less comment and what there was often seemed rather vague. Primary teachers deemed pupil-managed progression as less important and support for administrative data transfer as the least important.

Having considered perceptions of relative importance for the five types of transition support in the Five Bridges, the final section investigates the nature of support primary schools currently provide, and presents their ideas on how this could be improved.

## Transition activities



**Fig.10**

Fig.10 displays the range of activities that schools currently engage in to support transition. Primary pupils visiting transfer schools (including attendance at performances) and two-way staff visits emerge as the most popular types of activity. In spite of the importance attached to activities where pupils *work together* and *exchange personal experiences*, as depicted in the previous section, very few schools appear to include pupil mentoring. At the same time the evidence here of the infrequency of teaching demonstrations by primary staff in the transfer schools does correspond with evidence in Fig. 9 of the relatively lower importance attached to pedagogic activity.

Although not referred to in the chart above, a small minority of schools were encouraging pupils to keep personal records of their musical progress, such as passports, to *empower* them to be *active participants* in

*the transition process* as in the guidelines for Bridge Five relating to 'Managing Learning'. Most respondents seemed to think this was a good idea but had no immediate plans for adopting this approach: *Not at present but it could be something to develop* was a typical response. The potential was evident in the few schools which appear to be making effective use of Arts Award, NUMU and Passports, in some cases in conjunction with the LA/music service:

*LA/music service has developed a new awards scheme to encourage children pre- grade 1. This has led to children being better aware of their own progress. Each child is given a copy of this to motivate them.*

### **Areas for improvement**

At the end of the survey respondents were asked to suggest any additional strategies for improving musical progression for pupils through and beyond KS2/KS3. A few teachers thought that children perceived as musically able should be singled out:

*The music teacher of the new school should be scouting for talent in the year 6 children. He/she should be liaising with schools to find out who these kids are and meet them BEFORE they attend secondary school.*

Reiterating the importance of interaction between pupils across the two Key Stages, one respondent argued that *it should be made statutory that Y6 children must engage with Y7 in one joint music making project*. There were also suggestions that some secondary schools need to work at improving the image of music, particularly where extra curricular provision competed for timetabling with the various sports clubs on offer. A number of secondary respondents also referred to the unfavourable image of music prevailing in their school: *it's not cool!*.

Respondents varied in awareness of the need to take any initiative themselves for improving support for transition. One believed it was a KS2 teacher's responsibility to *know the KS3 Year 7 curriculum*. Another appeared to be shifting responsibility onto the child, suggesting improvements through *pupils providing evidence of their abilities for their new teacher*. A third conceded they could make a contribution by communicating with secondary teachers:

*... not being a trained music teacher, I could benefit from checking with secondaries about what I am doing and what is of most value to teach them in preparation for secondary.*

The view that secondary teachers could or should do more, recurred frequently:

*Staff in KS3 need to acknowledge the achievements in KS2; however they also need to make further links by working alongside KS2 colleagues.*

One individual acknowledged, however, that teacher workload for those in both tiers is currently so large that any form of KS2/KS3 information exchange is unlikely to happen unless teachers are given release time to do the liaison. Elsewhere, in spite of a supportive LA and good networks between primary schools, valuable links with music specialists in secondary schools had not materialised:

*The support and provision is great from the LA; unfortunately there doesn't seem to be many secondary schools that feel they need to get involved, therefore the networking is all too often primary biased. Perhaps some system where all primaries are linked/networked with a secondary for all things 'music'! Don't know what this would look like or how it would work, but could be a real asset, particularly for those primaries that don't have a music specialist or limited resources etc.*



The comments above reflect a theme which permeated all four strands of the survey; respondents frequently portrayed potential transition partners as unwilling to make a commitment to transition initiatives and share the responsibilities commitment implies.

Primary teachers' responses describe a wide range of activities currently being undertaken in primary schools, with appreciable local variation in awareness of and enthusiasm for improving transition. The gathering impact of Wider Opportunities is overshadowed by budgetary constraints. Sing Up however appears to have made its mark, through the innovative use of web technology, peer teaching, cross curricular links and awards incentives:

A well planned project:

*A couple of years ago all feeder schools to a local secondary school took part in a collaborative project working with staff and music lead learners from the secondary school to write and perform songs. Some schools made use of video conferencing to help this. The final rehearsal and performance to parents was at the local secondary school.*

*Successful because:*

*Used expertise*

*Collaborative*

*Planned together with primary and secondary teachers who knew the children well*

*Thematic link between schools gave sense of whole to the project but allowed diversity as each school took a different aspect*

*Capitalised on pupils creativity*

*Used ICT in composition and in collaboration and providing feedback*

*Parents included*

*Another opportunity to work with local secondary school*

*Unique composition and creation*

Social and personal support for transition was considered by most primary teachers to be crucial for improving transition for pupils; they also attached importance to their own professional development, particularly in terms of curricular support. Their responses conveyed recognition that they cannot achieve improvements on their own. Perceived lack of support from their LAs/music services for KS2/KS3 transfer in music was a concern shared by many. Although there were opportunities to bring students from both tiers together for one-off events, there seemed in many areas to be little scope for them to work together on music making activities over time. Secondary schools also came in for criticism for perceived reluctance to share expertise with KS2 colleagues; however, it was conceded that time is an undeniable constraint. As we shall see, secondary teachers voiced concerns on similar themes, but frequently offered an alternative perspective.

## 1.4 Secondary schools

### *Introduction*

A total of 85 secondary schools participated in the survey; the majority of which (62 schools, or 73%) were state maintained. These were supplemented by academies and faith schools (ten per cent each), one independent school and one special school. Five of the schools were music colleges, another specialised in music and foreign languages and twelve were arts colleges.

The secondary school responses conveyed a piecemeal approach to transition across the sector as a whole. While a small minority appeared to have made a holistic and sustainable commitment to the process, the engagement of the rest ranged along a spectrum from minimal activity, as in primary pupil visits to the secondary school, through a patchwork of disparate activities which did not cohere into a systematic approach.

The following account considers the survey findings in relation to emerging themes associated with transition. We look at external sources of support for music education, the extent to which schools are building on national initiatives, and the way the schools view the role of parent/carers at KS3. This is followed by investigation of the range of transition activities in which they participate, views on support from music services and examples of transition activities initiated by the schools themselves. We consider respondents' perceptions of the relative importance of the Five Bridges of support and how far their stated priorities are currently put into practice for the pupil experience of transition.

## External sources of support for transition in music

### i) National initiatives

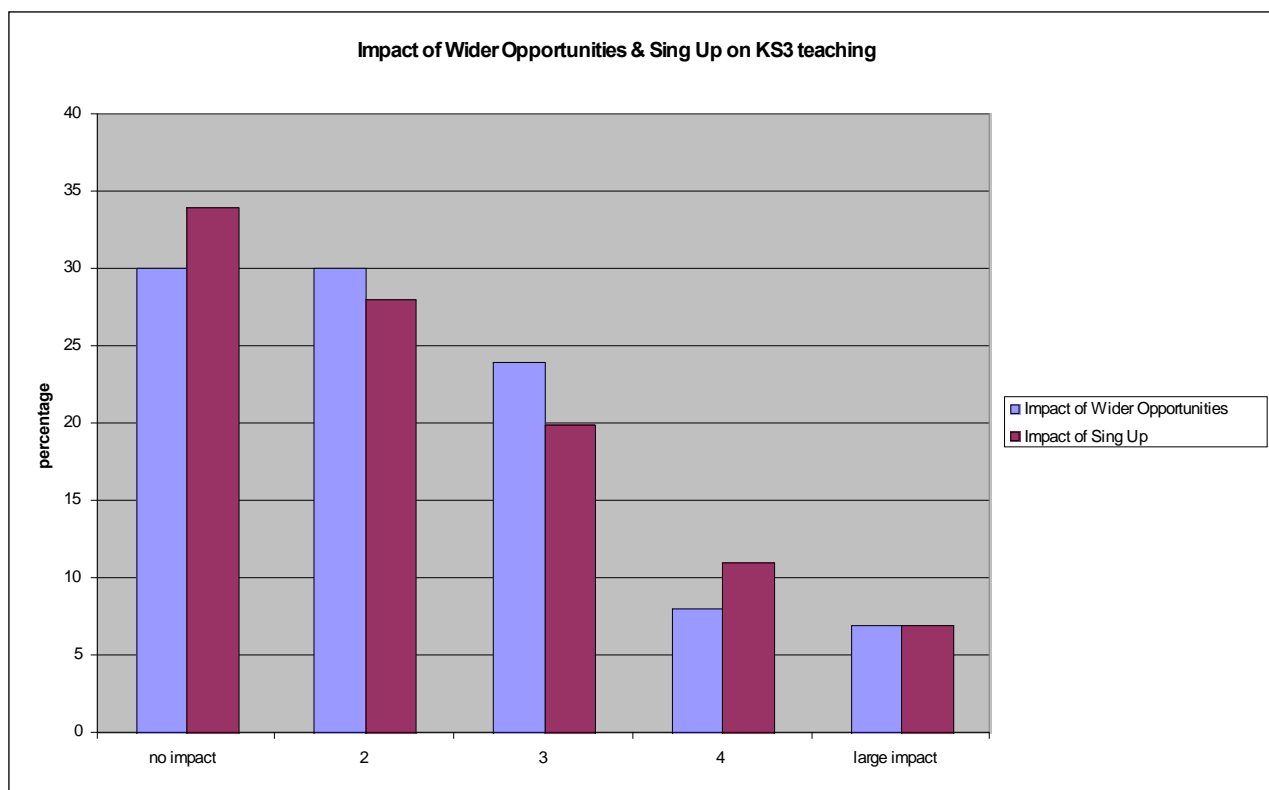


Fig.11

### **Wider Opportunities (WO)**

Although the majority of schools were aware of Wider Opportunities, it was perceived to have had very little impact on KS3 teaching. In some areas, it was felt to be still too early to tell; Wider Opportunities only became implemented on a national scale in September 2008. Pupils starting then would be only in Year 5 by September 2010. Elsewhere the perceived lack of impact was often attributed to a lack of information, from primary schools or music services or both:

*I know of one feeder school involved in Wider Opps, but have not received any formal information about what was covered.*

Some teachers explained that their Y7 pupils' experience of WO was extremely variable which made building on KS2 learning very difficult. The problem was seen to escalate with the number of primary schools; one school claimed to have 40 and another 50 feeder schools. However, a minority of respondents (15%) thought the impact had been considerable. One referred to the cumulative impact of WO, year on year, and the need for careful planning and deployment of resources:

*I have to be aware that the need for time for lessons increases yearly for instrumental lessons. I have keyboards/percussion and other instruments available for use in class lessons practical.*

While perceived inconsistencies at KS2 appeared to act as a deterrent in many cases, some individuals

had acted constructively and adapted the Y7 curriculum. Such changes might comprise adjustments to continuing schemes of work, in order to promote continuity as here:

*Varied experience of students in Y7. However, we've adapted SoW [schemes of work] in order to teach music skills (reading notation; using correct vocabulary etc) alongside current topics and not spend lots of time on those out of context.*

but could involve designing the Y7 curriculum as a whole to ensure a hands-on experience for every child:

*Wider Opps is a fantastic idea but doesn't seem to be taught in the majority of our primary schools. We have, therefore, designed our entire Y7 as one big 'Wider Opps' year, where every student has the chance to learn a 'real' instrument. In order to make this possible, we have three different teachers in every Y7 music lesson. Each teacher takes a third of the class and teaches one instrument to this group.*

## **Sing Up**

Although almost all schools had heard of Sing Up, over two thirds (68%) had no or very little involvement in it. In 34% it was seen to have had no impact at all. Some respondents had a specialism or particular interest in singing and there were numerous cases where singing was said to be *integral* to the curriculum, with the implication there was no need to make any changes to improve transition:

*Singing however has always been a big feature of our KS3 lessons, and this has just continued.*

Sustaining the distinctive *ethos* of Sing Up was often down to the determination of enthusiastic individuals. One class teacher had registered the school with Sing Up but had no support or interest from other music teachers and the suggestion had consequently *fallen by the wayside*. However, a teacher whose local Sing Up leader had ignored requests for guidance was working on singing for transition singlehanded:

*I'm working with local primary schools to promote Sing Up and would like to carry through the ethos into the once weekly singing lesson Y7 receive.*

One school drew attention to the importance of senior management support; the main benefit of Sing Up had been improving attitudes to singing among senior management and parents/carers:

*Its usefulness for us has been more in increasing the awareness and positive reception of singing within senior management, parents and the wider community.*

Positive responses frequently referred to the resources on the Sing Up website. These were valued for the stimulating effect of a new repertoire; several respondents reported that using the materials had resulted in a surge of self-confidence and this had sometimes extended to professional development: *Both teachers are aware ... one member of the department has received some training.*

Nine comments attributed improvements in pupil attitudes to singing to Sing Up experiences at primary school: one school's Y7s were *desperate to sing*. Several respondents referred to the importance of being sensitive to personal and social vulnerability in teaching singing to pupils at KS3:

*Every lesson at KS3 includes an element of vocal work, usually a 10 minute starter activity. We aim to keep students singing through the period of adolescence when they often become most self conscious and through effective modelling, to make singing seem like the most natural musical activity in which all can participate.*

However, in spite of their Sing Up experience, many students are *still not keen to sing*. Some responses described successful projects designed to engage boys in singing. The lack of specific references to girls suggests that at KS3 they are more willing to sing than boys (hardly surprising, at this audible stage of their adolescence). Comments such as the one below indicated the need for sensitivity in the way well-meaning transition activities are handled; pupils and teachers need to be tuned-in in advance in order to appreciate a different wavelength:

*We took the choir to a Sing Up workshop day last year, with mixed success - they felt somewhat patronised by the material and delivery.*

At least one AST was alert to differences in KS3 pedagogy which might quench initial enthusiasm in Y7 :

*I didn't have a Y7 group at all this year, but am slightly concerned about how formal the singing in class has become. Singing is in all schemes of work in Y8, but tails off in Y9.*

The ‘formality’ here is in implied contrast to the spontaneity and accessible enjoyment at the heart of the Sing Up programme. It may serve as an interesting example of a dissonance in pedagogies between KS2 and KS3, which we return to in the discussion of generic themes later in this report. Although there were isolated examples of a committed approach to singing by staff and pupils to the end of KS4, the AST above was by no means the only person to report a ‘tailing off’ in pupils’ singing by the end of KS3. The waning of interest from pupils appears to be mirrored by a corresponding decline of singing in the curriculum priorities of teachers.

### Musical Futures (MF)

Musical Futures featured in the provision of over half of the schools, playing a major role in 45% of them. With fifty per cent of respondents attesting to a considerable impact, MF emerges as a powerful tool for professional development.

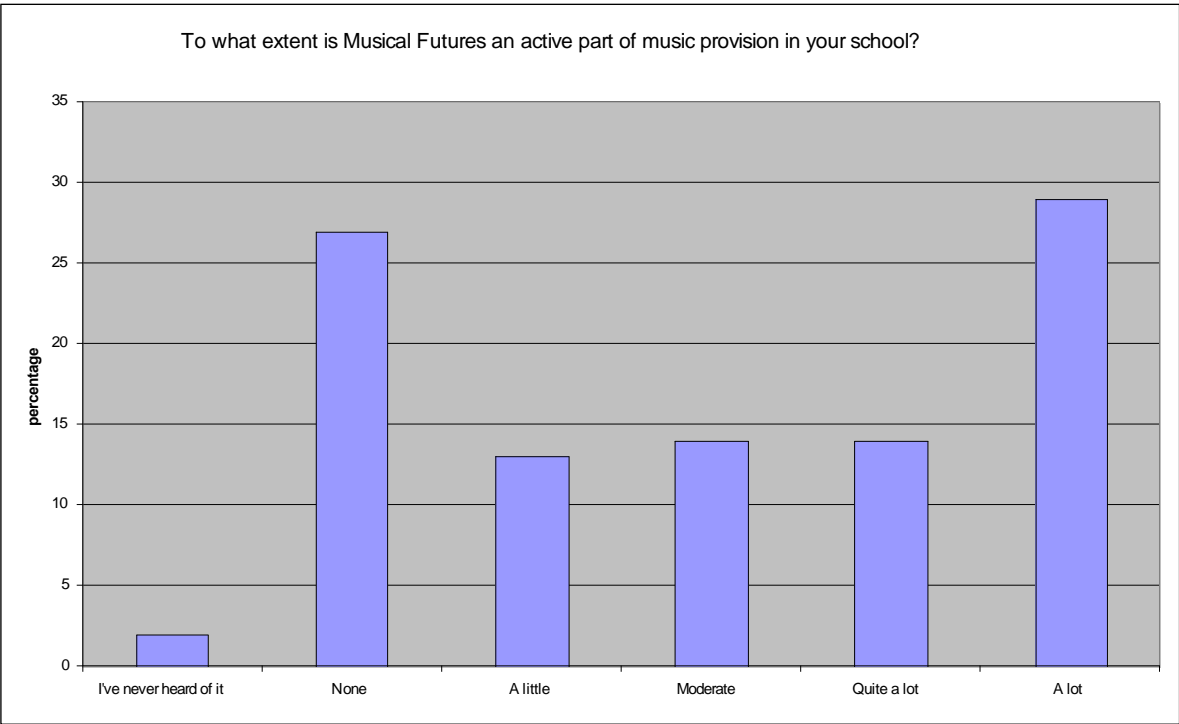
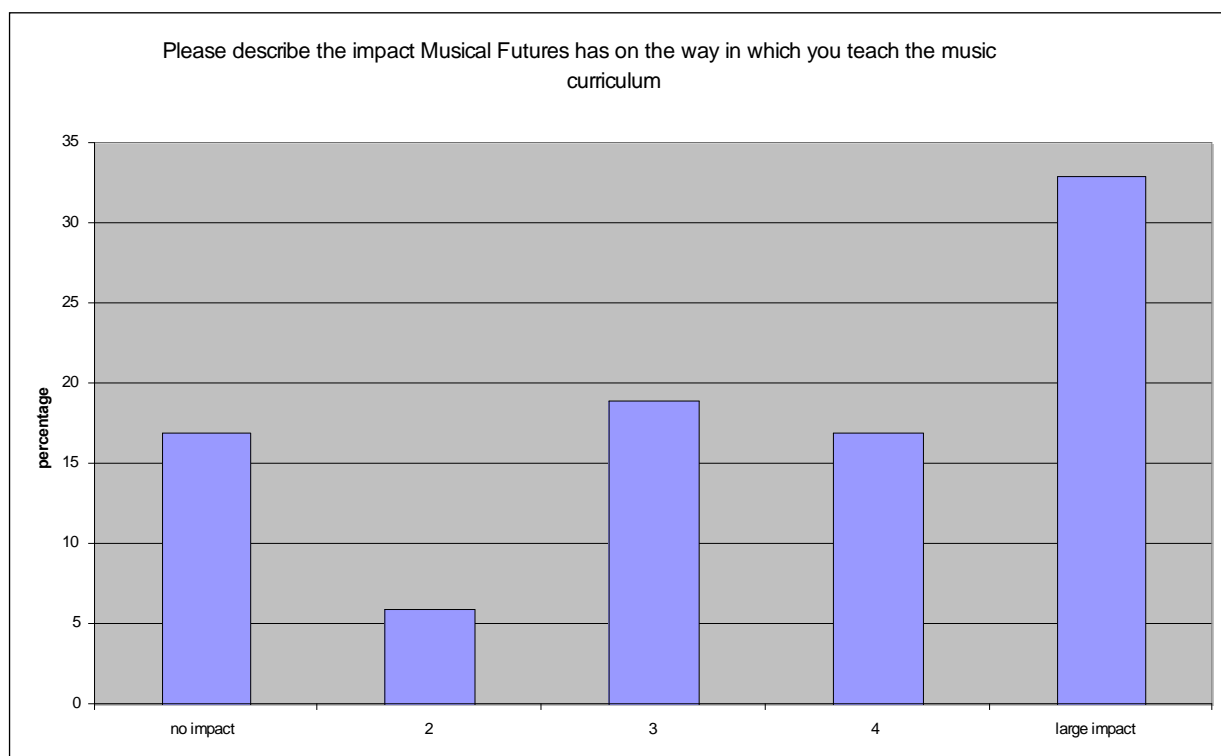


Fig.12



**Fig.13**

Occasionally misconceptions of the nature of MF were expressed:

*Musical Futures is a fusion of Wider Opportunities and Sing Up which allows me to use my teaching skills gained from the two projects, at a secondary level.*

However the illustrations of MF in practice suggest that the majority of teachers in our survey recognise and are assimilating the fundamental innovations of the MF approach. There were numerous examples of teachers introducing informal independent learning, *diverse cultures, styles and traditions*, and opportunities for individual and collective creativity across the KS3 curriculum:

*I have introduced it in Y9 and Y8 where they have a basic intro to band instruments and work in bands to perform a given piece. I then develop this into other topics such as Blues and Indian music. And pupils are now much better working in groups and are able to be more creative with their own ideas for composition work.*

In some schools teachers were extending the MF approach into KS4, and integrating a *workshopping* approach into everyday practice:

*Fully developed band workshop series in Y8 and Y9, developing workshopping throughout KS3/ KS4. I have taken many of the elements and ideas from MF and adapted them to KS3 teaching.*

The effect of pupil motivation was well-testified. The 'relevance' at the heart of the MF approach led to higher engagement and spurred students on to *faster progress* and higher achievement. The impact on *harder to reach* pupils could be significant; one person contrasted their enthusiasm with the destabilising effects on *more able* students who became insecure on being released from *a clear framework*:

*The independent learning style is very effective with motivating some of the harder to reach students. In some cases the more able students find it the most challenging initially; they prefer to have a clear framework for success and need a lot of support.*

MF was seen to have given a welcome boost to the numbers of students taking a range of formal qualifications. In addition to GCSE and BTEC the model was frequently used in preparation for a range of awards including Arts Award, Rock School exams, Access to Music, and Music Practitioner. One school involved Y8s in working as an ensemble as a taster for BTEC which they could opt for in Y9. Elsewhere the pedagogy followed KS3 students into KS4:

*Beyond Y9, students follow the Rockschoool course which allows them to build qualifications based on their strengths, maintaining the informal method of learning.*

But serious limitations emerged. Pupils' lack of musical experience demanded extra teaching time:

*I have tried to use Musical Futures but the vast majority of my students have no musical skills apart from what they gain in school, and they only get on average 18 lessons a year of music in KS3. I have found it impossible.*

Others cited practical barriers. Lack of accommodation, resources and, or, staffing made it difficult for students to work in groups or experiment with instruments of their own:

*Poor music accommodation means that all pupils are taught in one classroom. Limited capiton means that school has very limited music equipment such as guitars and drums to enable pupils to work in band groups.*

In spite of the varying degrees of experimentation described above, MF was occasionally seen as a high risk strategy, especially where schools were already feeling vulnerable:

*I have never gone the whole hog with Musical Futures, much as I'd like to, mainly because I'm quite risk-averse, and being in special measures, the structure of lessons etc is very prescribed across the school.*

Some felt it was inappropriate to cover every component of the curriculum using the MF model. One teacher made the point that *... composing has proved more of a challenge within the MF framework*. At the same time, a sense of complacency was sometimes discernible. While schools may be engaging in similar activities to those advocated by MF, they may not have embraced the underlying pedagogy:

*The curriculum in the department already allows for students to take a lead on their own*

*learning by choosing a style/piece they would like to learn.*

Several respondents avowed they had been using the MF approach since the mid 1980s. While some conceded that MF had *refined our thinking*, others were convinced that:

*Musical Futures is the style that the department has taught in for the last 25 years!*

The question arises as to whether, like the *more able pupils* referred to above, some teachers, while not explicitly *risk-averse*, may feel distinctly uneasy; they may be unwilling to remove familiar frameworks and hand responsibility for learning to pupils, together with *carte blanche* for the musical ideas they choose to explore.

## **ii) Support from parents/carers**

Although just over half of the schools said parents/carers were involved in musical activities, this was mainly in the role of ‘helpers’, or ‘technical support’, rather than as music leaders. When children move to secondary school, apart from the occasional parents’ evening, many are literally distanced from their children’s education. Unless parents/carers themselves are interested in music, or value learning music for its perceived benefits on other curriculum learning, it can be hard for pupils to sustain the momentum generated in KS2. Teachers frequently referred to concerts and out of school clubs: *I hold an orchestra workshop day ... for primary pupils moving up where they work with one of the music groups. It culminates in a concert to parents.*

But there is an unspoken assumption that parents/carers will be available to give these activities their support. Children often depend on them for transport; for families in difficult circumstances music may not be a high priority and even attending a concert may appear of peripheral importance. This applies particularly in cases of socio-economic deprivation. Where such pupils form a high proportion of the school population and the school is already struggling, the outlook for music can be bleak:

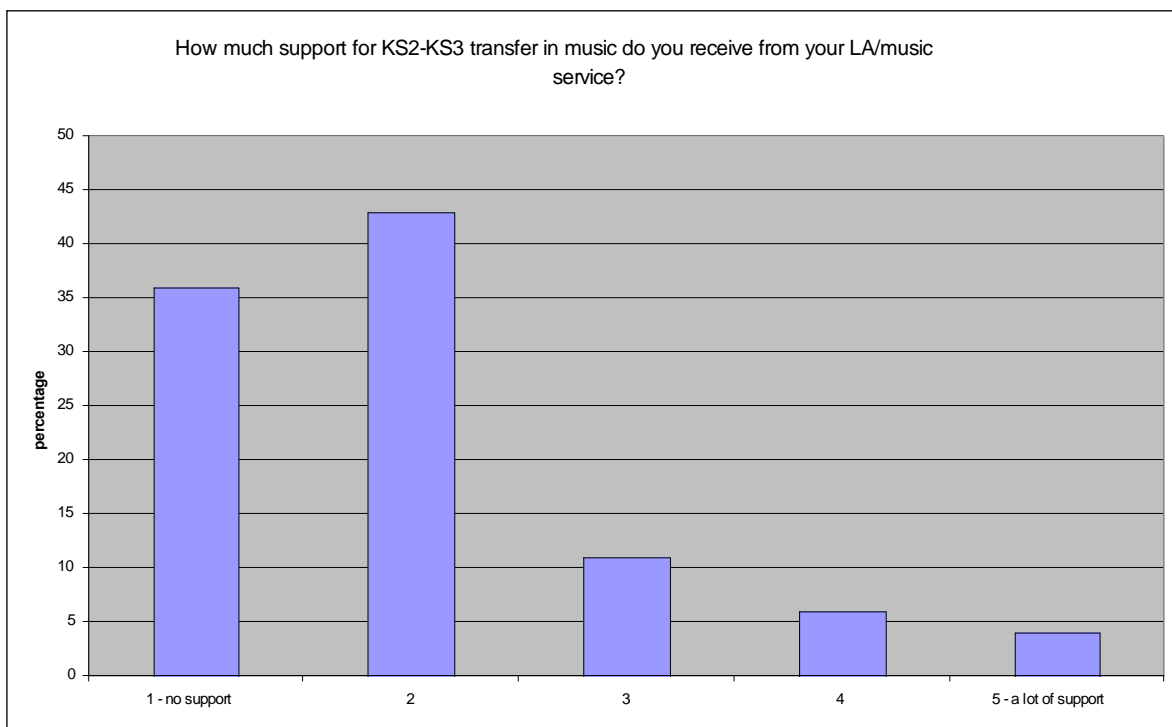
*The only way ... to improve the provision of music is to encourage the adult members of the students’ families to become actively involved in music making. This requires a huge amount of resources and manpower to achieve, as the first thing that has to be overcome is prejudice and a hate of the education system for perceived poor education in the past.*

How can schools in this position persuade parents/carers to help pupils take part in musical activities? How far can they go, and what would it take to involve them in music-making themselves?

## **iii) LA/music services support received by secondary schools for transition**

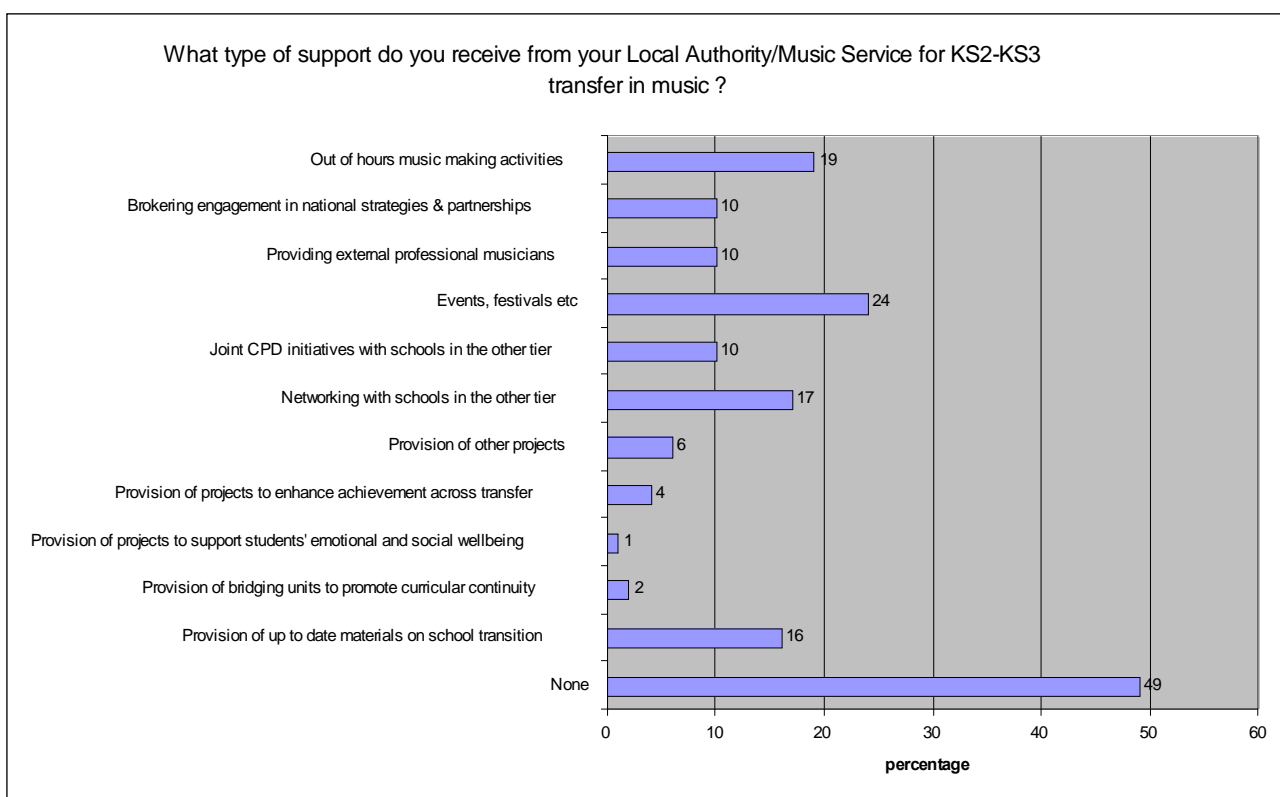
Secondary schools were asked first to indicate the amount of support they received. Those that did receive support were asked to indicate the specific nature of this support.





**Fig.14**

Seventy nine per cent of schools received very little or no support for transition activities from local music services; very few (4%) said they received a lot of support.



**Fig.15**

The most common forms of support were for music events and festivals (24%) and out of hours music making (19%). References to networking with other schools in the tier (17%) and the provision of up to date materials on school transfer (16%) were also noted. Only 2% received bridging units to promote

curricular continuity although, in terms of priorities for music service support, bridging units, together with networking and up to date materials on transition, were rated as most important by most schools.

### ***Suggestions from secondary schools for improving music service support***

Suggestions from secondary teachers conveyed understanding of the need for various activities recommended by the Five Bridges; given the undeniably remote relationship with LAs/music services which emerges from the data they appear as aspirations only. Because so many schools had little involvement with music services, they lacked experience to draw on in order to engage with music services' potential. For transition the most useful role they envisaged frequently related to Bridge One, as a source of information on pupil data. Teachers repeatedly asked for *lists* and *databases*:

*Secondary schools should be sent a list of primary students who take extra-curricular music so they do not slip through the net. They can be invited to join groups, some too shy to volunteer.*

A senior manager spoke for numerous dissatisfied recipients of music services who wanted more information for assessment purposes:

*Clear leadership and management roles within ... music service; the need for an assessment and reporting policy which reflects the level of learning and teaching that is delivered by 'qualified' peripatetic staff ... there are so many ways that support between [music service] and the head of music could be improved.*

There were also requests for more detailed information on *more able* pupils from some schools. In one of the few references to partnerships and active collaboration, the emphasis was placed on standards rather than on the quality of the transition experience for pupils:

*Working more closely in partnership with specialist arts colleges, music ASTs and lead practitioners to improve the standard of music in schools in a borough. Every borough should have a big music festival that every primary and secondary school participate in.*

The quality of instrumental teaching was also subject to criticism. One school bluntly asked for *good quality peris*; disruption to pupil progress caused by frequent changes in peripatetic staff was a recurring theme. As with the music organisations' responses, there were telling references to poor communication. Some teachers were clearly frustrated by a perceived lack of understanding of their professional expertise:

*I would prefer direct information from primary schools about pupils' musical experiences and abilities. The information from music services is usually sparse or incorrect when I do get it. This year I had none. I think this could be improved if the local authority music services started to treat music teachers in school as important in what they are trying to achieve and had some sort of forum to listen to our views instead of thinking they know best. After all it is the music teachers in schools who have the widest contact with Y7 pupils.*

Others believed LAs/music services should have a *higher profile* across the LA, *especially at secondary level*, improving their own communication with individual schools and co-ordinating wider channels. LAs/music services could link feeder primary music co-ordinators with KS3 music staff to discuss what each child has learnt:

*then we can build a picture of how we need to differentiate for pupils from different schools.*

A number of teachers wanted music services to provide more networking opportunities and joint training for KS2 and KS3 teachers in order to promote the *shared understanding of the quality of work expected*

of pupils over Y6 and Y7. One respondent suggested such activities could be *fronted by LEA team leaders*.

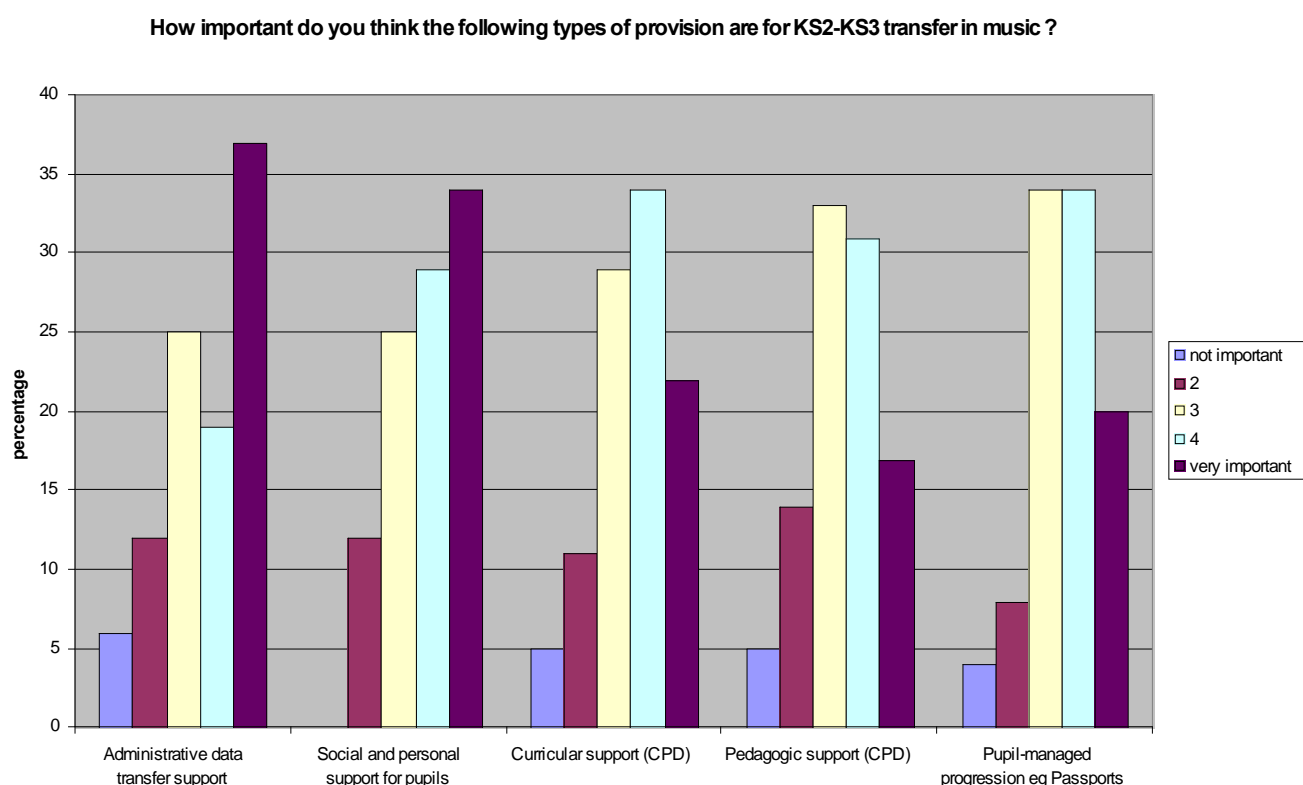
At least one person felt that music services should also provide training for MO staff in teaching strategies and classroom management:

*Providing professional musicians with much more training in how to use a variety of teaching strategies and some guidance on which age groups each approach is most suited to.*

Musicians may vary in their confidence and experience in education work. At the same time, some musicians reported the possible friction that can occur in working in a classroom environment; they drew attention to the difficulties inherent in situations where a musician is required to *lead* a project while allowing the teacher to retain *authority*. We return to collaboration between transition partners in Part 2.

### ***Transition priorities / perceived importance of different types of support for transition***

Respondents were asked to rate each of the five different types of support (the Five Bridges) for KS2/KS3 transfer in music in order of importance on a five point scale. The results are presented in Fig. 16.



**Fig.16**

If the respective percentages for the categories of 'important and 'very important' are added together for each type of provision they can be arranged in order of priority as follows:

social and personal support for pupils (Bridge Two):	63%
administrative data transfer support (Bridge One)	56%
curricular support (CPD) (Bridge Three)	56%

pupil managed progression (Bridge Five)	54%
pedagogic support (Bridge Four)	48%

Like their primary colleagues, the majority of secondary teachers rated social and personal support as the highest priority. Numerous responses expressed a holistic approach to musical activities intended to promote social and personal collective and individual wellbeing:

*Transitions Choir. Students in Y4 - Y7 met weekly from different schools. Joined in secondary school concert. They got to know each other socially and mixed well. They rehearsed weekly in the secondary school and were less intimidated when they arrived in Y7 having already known pupils from their year group and the year above.*

More informal extra-curricular activities were often said to play a role in this respect as they enabled pupils to make *social links with other students* before the start of secondary school. The personal impact of transition also needed to be borne in mind in planning instrumental tuition:

*I think bridging the gap is important. We need to make sure that when pupils come to secondary school it isn't an alien environment for them as at times pupils can decide they don't want to continue as they find the whole experience a bit daunting. They also find the lack of consistency with teachers off-putting*

Secondary teachers differed from their primary colleagues in the much higher value they attached to administrative data transfer. There were numerous requests for *information on students and their music ... a formal list of who played what*. Target-conscious teachers expressed exasperation with methods which resulted in *wildly inaccurate* levels of achievement:

*Unfortunately, KS2 levels are often wildly inaccurate in our eyes - if a pupil has instrumental lessons, they are automatically given a level 5 in some schools. This means we end up with impossible FFTD targets to reach in Y9.*

Curricular support was equally important. Teachers wanted more detailed information on curriculum content ... *song repertoire, composition skills, WOs, knowledge and understanding ...* Others stressed the importance of minimising repetition so that KS3 teachers can avoid having to *go back to scratch*:

*Knowing what pupils have done in KS2, building on that rather than going over it all again ... Y7 pupils often do graphic scores despite doing these on numerous occasions at KS2.*

The preceding examples demonstrate many secondary teachers' apparent belief that primary schools should be responsible for the presentation and transfer of curricular support. The perception that transition arrangements are the responsibility of others pervaded all four surveys.

The relatively low priority given to pedagogic support is interesting. Secondary teachers' desire for more information, in terms of curriculum content, and pupil data, is stronger than their interest in 'how to teach' pupils during the transition experience. Teaching is what teachers do, and in some cases take for granted they can do, as some of the earlier comments on Musical Futures suggest.

However, pupils become more self-conscious as they move into adolescence; this affects individuals in different ways. Sensitivity is required to encourage them to express themselves, particularly in the presence of their peers. This can be done; one head of music noted that thanks to *a mindful pedagogy* (Bridge Two and Bridge Four?) *students further up the school are now not embarrassed to sing in front of others.*

Some KS3 teachers may feel uncomfortable with less formal approaches. This emerged in comments on Musical Futures, and was also discernible in testimonies to a surge of new confidence derived from working with the Sing Up resources. The evidence earlier for the initial enthusiasm for singing in Y7, and for its gradual decline over KS3, seems pertinent. It may be indicative of a wider pedagogical dissonance in music teaching in some schools between KS2 and KS3, which primary and secondary teachers need to investigate together in order to resolve.

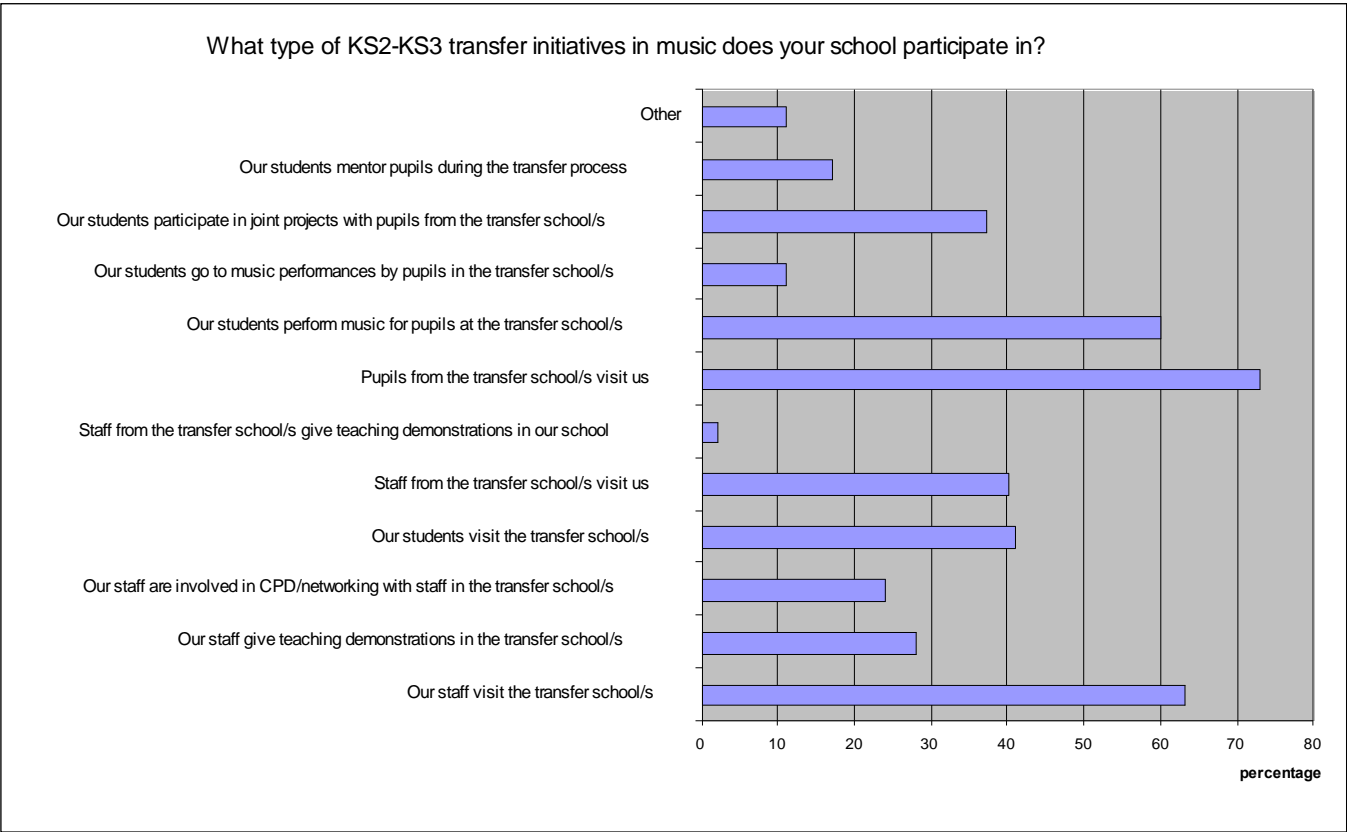
*A recognition and celebration of differences in teaching and learning, adopting a common language for discussing teaching and learning, joint training programmes and shared teaching and learning policies* (Bridge Four, ‘establish and ‘extend’) require a systematic and structured approach. As we have seen, some of the secondary teachers here believe primary schools and music services should play a significant role in generating and sustaining momentum. The next section investigates the extent to which different schools are building bridges for themselves.

### Support for transition provided by the secondary school

Responses on school-initiated transition support cited specific initiatives and pupil-managed learning.

#### i) Participation in transfer initiatives

Fig. 17 displays the schools’ actual participation as opposed to respondents’ stated priorities.



**Fig.17**

Most schools were participating in activities to support transition but with varying degrees of engagement. The most common form of support, a formal visit to the secondary school (73% of schools), is the minimum level of direct activity involving Y6 pupils. Secondary teachers’ visits to primary schools, and performances by secondary pupils in the feeder primaries, are also common (63% and 60% respectively). There is a

revealing gap between the number of schools participating in these three forms of support, and the numbers which take part in the next most common activities, which occur in less than half of the schools. To gain an insight into degrees of commitment to transition support across the Key Stages, it is instructive to consider the varying degrees of pupil and teacher engagement.

The level of active engagement and collaboration between primary and secondary pupils, explicitly recommended for Bridge Two, is limited; in spite of the pre-eminence of social and personal support in individual respondents' priorities, only 41% of respondents said secondary students visited the primary schools; only 17% arrange for KS3 students to mentor primary pupils. Although secondary pupils frequently give performances in primary schools (60%) it seems that in only 11% of cases KS2 pupils perform for their older peers. In terms of curricular support (Bridge Three), only 37% of schools take part in cross-phase collaborations, as below, between secondary and primary pupils on joint musical projects:

*Year 10 students in groups of 3 went into year 5 classes to teach them songs (with teacher support) over a few weeks. The culmination was a joint concert ... KS2 performed these songs accompanied by a secondary band and also heard the secondary students (Y7-13) perform. Our primary school visits are very successful. We take our choirs and orchestra and allow the KS2 pupils to take part and have a go. We have some young vocal leaders in our school who lead activities so the pupils can see how to get involved. This gives us a very good reputation in the primary schools and local community and we have schools ringing us to ask when we are visiting them again!*

Levels of teacher engagement, as opposed to visits, are similarly limited. The guidelines for Bridge Four (pedagogic support) place emphasis on sharing and exchanging approaches to teaching and learning. Given the reference to possible dissonance in pedagogies referred to above it is worth noting that only 28% of schools here give teaching demonstrations in primary schools; at the same time under half of the schools (40%) receive visits from KS2 teachers, and only 2% arrange for KS2 staff to give teaching demonstrations in secondary schools. Some respondents were certainly aware of the need for change; although only 24% were involved in CPD or networking with primary schools, this was frequently requested as a suggestion for improvement. One teacher expressed exasperation with time-consuming paperwork; teachers could achieve more by:

*... focussing on doing and being together and not abstract data. How detailed is a report on a student likely to be? Do we have time to write them? - we will learn much more from meeting them with their teacher and making music together.*

In spite of the unpromising overall situation depicted in the graphs above, there were interesting examples of support for transition from individual schools which had taken the initiative. This might relate to sustaining the impetus of Wider Opportunities:

*We maintain Wider Opportunities throughout Key Stage 3. We offer two classes the chance to take part in Wider Opportunities lessons during their entire Key Stage 3 lessons. Currently we have a Y8 class continuing with their second year of Wider Opportunities as well as a Y7 group who have just started their Wider Opps journey in Key Stage 3.*

Others described more generic links which included active participation for primary pupils:

*I'm not sure that the LA has offered any of these to us ... though we do have good links with our junior feeder schools and go into them for their arts weeks and support them, as well as some students coming to us for bespoke sessions.*

And some schools were already committed to sharing and improving curricular and pedagogic support:

*Working on a scheme of work with feeder schools with students from our school over 4/5 lessons, letting primary staff watch, to help to build our skills and theirs. Over the past two years this event has been very successful, increasing first lesson enjoyment when students arrive in secondary school. They know the staff, the rooms and facilities, and feel at ease.*

## **ii) Pupil-managed learning**

The foregoing discussion relates to schools' support for pupils. The fifth Bridge of transition support engages pupils in improving their transition experience for themselves by managing their own learning. They are viewed as active participants, keeping a record of their learning and reflecting *on what and how they learn* (Bridge Five). They are invited to suggest improvements and identify any barriers to successful transition. The responses indicated that, as with primary schools, the majority of secondary schools have some way to go before a coherent system of pupil-managed learning will be established. Lack of time, lack of funding or technical problems were invoked to account for the lack of involvement. Where work is being done the current picture is one of considerable local variation. Just over a quarter of the schools were using NUMU, and respondents' comments were frequently enthusiastic:

*NUMU is increasingly popular, and this year, Y9s will have to use it rather than exercise books. Access to Music students will keep a record in a format they choose – blog, video diary, notebook etc.*

Others eagerly anticipated the creative opportunities it would offer to pupils once it was installed:

*NUMU is a perfect tool for this. Wouldn't that be great - an online passport complete with all their achievements, thoughts and experiences within music (could add a collection of photos of their musical activities, their achievements and their thoughts. That's what I plan to do with their exercise books).*

Just under a quarter of the schools referred to the Arts Award; in some cases NUMU and the Arts Award were both in operation ... *the students use NUMU to keep a record of work and their own composition and performance diaries.*

Fifteen per cent used folders, journals, learning logs or notebooks. Ten per cent referred to the school VLE and five per cent to BTEC courses. In a science college students recorded their learning on CDs. One academy had adopted the policy of publicly rewarding students' recordkeeping in assemblies; elsewhere the students' own records of *assessments and target booklets* were developing from an existing school system to track their progress throughout a year group. There were cases of schools using alternative software such as Moodle and Wordpress. One respondent highlighted the importance of encouraging open-ended exploration as a contrast to the structured support of *educationally organised systems*:

*Not sure in what context you are asking this question. We certainly do that in relation to their work within school, but we also encourage students to break out of the structure of educationally organised systems like Arts Award or NUMU outside school. I think we strike a healthy balance between structured support and encouraging exploration.*

Analysis of secondary school respondents' priorities for transition support, and their accounts of what happens in practice, suggests that while the majority of schools are aware of the need for some kind of support for pupils over transition, relatively few are undertaking a systematic approach. Examples of good practice, relating to one or more of the Five Bridges of support, recurred throughout the data. But at the same time activities, perceived as 'good practice' might have only a limited effect. The final question in the

survey asked respondents to suggest one additional strategy to improve students' musical progression through and beyond KS2 and KS3.

### ***Areas for improvement***

In a minority of schools the prospect for any improvement in musical experience in Y7 seemed bleak, because of the status of music in the cluster schools:

*None of the main feeder schools place music on their curriculum [while in the secondary school] ... music is considered uncool and students deliberately disrupt lessons and break equipment to avoid attending music lessons. Most pupils will skive music lessons.*

or because of depleted resources:

*This last year the school went through redundancies which left the music department with only one full time specialist music teacher, myself. There are three other non-specialists teaching music, this leaves a lot of running around and planning for myself with little time to plan concerts or other music-related activities throughout the school.*

Elsewhere, however, teachers less hard-pressed had clear views on what could be done. It is interesting that although social and personal support for pupils emerged as the highest of respondents' averred priorities when asked to choose the most important of the five types of support, this was not the most conspicuous among their suggestions for improvement. In terms of immediate everyday practice, curricular and administrative support were much more prominent.

As we have already seen, many respondents wanted more detailed and more accurate information: more information on individual children from primary schools, in order to differentiate accordingly and to ensure that the *more able* did not *slip through the net*; and more information from music services on instrumental tuition, on Wider Opportunities and on resources available across the local authority.

More consistency between primary schools in the music curriculum was requested by many respondents in order to minimise repetition. A few individuals specifically suggested *shared units of work over KS2/KS3*. Some asked for more consistent Wider Opportunities provision. Echoing the unfortunate teacher quoted above, others referred to the inferior status of music in the curriculum: *Specialist music teaching at KS2 and not cutting music lessons in Y6 to concentrate on SATS!* remained an ideal in many areas:

Relatively smaller numbers of respondents referred to other concerns, including funding for staffing and resources, improvements in *in-class support*, CPD and networking.

It goes without saying that all respondents would appreciate more funding for music. Those who made specific reference to funding in the context of transition tended to be those recommending improvements involving staffing costs or musical instruments:

*Visits to feeder primaries would be great. School will not fund cover.  
Funding for free taster sessions. Funding for extra instruments and teaching staff*

One respondent highlighted the role of *in-class support throughout transition years (6 and 7)*. The guidelines for Bridge One (administrative support) specifically refer to non-teaching staff, foreseeing a role for *support staff from primary schools* at the 'extend' stage, in working with *known pupils during the first few days in secondary school*. This is followed by a reference in Bridge Two (social and personal support) to *specific arrangements in place to support pupils for first half-term following transition*. It is



interesting that just one secondary teacher draws attention to the potential role for support staff in this respect.

There were not many suggestions for improvement relating directly to CPD. One respondent felt it was *primary teachers and primary schools* who needed specific training. In alluding to CPD for themselves, secondary respondents tended to be much more interested in networking, where they felt music services were neglecting an important dimension of their role. One individual envisaged regional transition support conferences where pupils and teachers could learn together:

*Regional conferences that don't cost a fortune and that are supported widely by both primary and secondary teachers, LEA, management... - maybe at a regional teacher training institution (like our PGCE mentor days). Where we can learn together - maybe even with students too (we could learn a lot from them - I know I do).*

The suggestion above stands out for recognition of the contribution that pupils could make to professional development for transition. However the majority of respondents' perceptions of networking, as opportunities for sharing ideas with colleagues, were much less clearly defined. The term itself may have different connotations for different teachers. Teachers' professional development, together with other generic themes, are considered in Part 2.

# Part 2: the Five Bridges

## Introduction to Part 2

Part 1 investigated current transition activities in music, priorities for support according to the four different professional perspectives and specific themes which emerged within each survey. Part 2 begins with a summary of generic themes, 'cross-themes', which recurred across all four datasets, and their significance in alerting schools and LAs/music services to key areas for improvement. We then return to the Five Bridges framework to compare each group's priorities in relation to different types of transition support. We consider examples of a composite approach where bridges are 'blended' in different permutations according to local context. The final section reflects on the implications of the survey's findings so far, with a view to extending investigation into effective practice at a deeper level of analysis.

## 2.1 Themes for improvement: differences and dissonance

Themes common to all four surveys fell into two broad categories:

- challenges in providing continuity for pupils through transition
- a perceived reluctance from potential partners to make a commitment to sustained transition support

### 2.1.1 Challenges for continuity

#### *i) curricular differences at KS2: the need for curricular and administrative information*

Respondents across all four surveys expressed concerns relating to continuity. There were numerous references to differences in the music curriculum between primary schools, and where a secondary school admitted children from a large number of feeder primaries (50 in one case) any hope of offering curricular continuity for all pupils at KS3 was seen as *impossible*. A secondary teacher's request for *consistent provision of music learning* within the primary sector conveyed the sense of frustration permeating many of the responses. At the same time, while primary teachers were often enthusiastic about the beneficial effects of *Wider Opportunities* and *Sing Up*, differences in what was taught were frequently a cause of anxiety at KS3. Secondary teachers lamented the paucity of information on pupil involvement in such initiatives, as groups and individuals.

Many secondary teachers wanted more generic information and administrative support from both primary schools and LAs/ music services. Information relating to the extent of pupil involvement in musical activities and the achievements of individual pupils was said to be scarce or inconsistent; this, too, made it difficult to provide continuity at KS3.

Primary teachers repeatedly referred to the importance of networking and CPD to enable teachers from both Key Stages to share and improve curricular knowledge and practice. Curricular support could play a role in emotional support for some pupils, as we see in the discussion below.

#### *ii) Dissonance between ethos and pedagogies*

Comments from music organisations suggested that different priorities, different working practices and a different *ethos* could lead to difficulties for collaborative projects in communication and co-ordination as well as in the provision of continuity. Several professional musicians referred to the importance of building trust in professional relationships with schools and LAs/music services. Some respondents suggested that

LAs/music services might perceive music organisations as a threat to their professional expertise; they could be *slow* to acknowledge external providers, *almost as if we are 'the competition'*.

A number of music practitioners, felt this might also be the case with teachers. Non-specialist teachers in primary schools might lack confidence in their musical abilities. Musicians who worked alongside teachers in both sectors in the classroom noted the importance of sensitivity to differing perceptions of respective roles and responsibilities in relation to *authority*.

At the same time teachers in secondary schools particularly could be critical of musicians' perceived inexperience and lack of classroom expertise. More training was recommended in *how to use a variety of teaching strategies* together with *guidance as to which age groups each approach is most suited to*. The need for this was openly acknowledged by a small minority of music organisations dependent on young and relatively inexperienced staff. Overall, the evidence suggested classroom culture could be *a delicate area to negotiate*.

In a substantial report on *Youth Voice in the Work of Creative Partnerships* (Bragg et al. 2009), the authors consider the tensions which may arise between teachers and creative practitioners in arts collaborations. Project partners need to engage in a 'meeting of minds', a considered negotiation of project ethos and responsibilities, which recognises and respects professional identities. Bragg points out how unresolved tensions may be detrimental: *invidious comparisons with artists are out of step with teachers' own (desired) self-image and identity* (2009:69). Teachers' own accounts in Bragg's research suggest that *the blurring of sharp distinctions between teachers and creative practitioners seemed to be one of the characteristics of successful work* (2009:71).

A minority of teachers in both KS2 and KS3 expressed concerns about differences in pedagogy across the Key Stages. Primary teachers' comments tended to refer in general terms to the need for more joint CPD and networking to overcome perceived dissonance. Secondary teachers could be more specific. While some Y7 teachers, for example, enthused about the perceived impact of the Sing Up initiative on pupil attitudes to singing, (in some cases continuing into KS4), one individual had reservations about less spontaneous approaches Y7 pupils encountered on their arrival in secondary school.

A number of secondary teachers commented on increasingly negative images of music discernible in pupils' disaffection with the subject as they moved through KS3. Schools where the pedagogies of *Musical Futures* had been embraced and adopted reported considerable success. One exponent noted that pupils become more self-conscious with the onset of adolescence; sensitivity, in the form of *mindful pedagogy*, is paramount. Dissonance in pedagogies, as a minority of respondents acknowledged, is something primary and secondary teachers could overcome if they were allocated designated time and opportunities to share practice.

### **iii) The role of music services: communication and co-ordination**

The authors of the *London Challenge Study* (Mouchel Parkman 2005) depicted the importance of developing collaboration and the sharing of information between schools. Local authorities were uniquely placed to:

*encourage common processes, encourage consistency with regard to language of learning*  
(2005: 15)

According to respondents in our survey, a minority of LAs/music services were keenly aware of their potential for transition support and were already working hard to pursue it. Some were developing resources for curricular and pedagogic support *to implement the thinking*. Others recognised the importance of customising materials to cater for schools *in different localities across the borough*. A small

minority of respondents in schools and music organisations expressed appreciation for their local service's commitment and effectiveness in building and sustaining partnerships between schools and across local authorities.

However, their comments were considerably outnumbered by references to perceived inadequacies. Many primary and secondary teachers, and music organisations, testified to shortcomings in LAs/music services' provision for transition support. Commitment from LA/music services at senior management level was frequently perceived to be lacking, and there was general agreement on specific areas that required improvement.

### **Inadequate and inconsistent communication and co-ordination**

Widespread concern emerged regarding the absence or inconsistency of communication between individual schools and the local music services and, or, across and between clusters within an authority. This was seen to have a damaging effect on provision for continuity. Secondary teachers reiterated the need for information on the progress and achievement of pupils receiving tuition from peripatetic staff, and on involvement in national initiatives. Teachers at both Key Stages repeatedly asked for an ongoing programme of networking opportunities where they could meet and learn from colleagues in the other tier.

In some areas, teachers and music organisations criticised LAs/music services for inadequacies in co-ordination which undermined the benefits of collaborative projects. Projects involving pupils working together from both Key Stages at regular intervals might have been socially very worthwhile for the pupils concerned; however, inadequate attention to planning, and to communication and co-ordination between respective partners, often resulted in uncertainties about roles and responsibilities *at the point of delivery* and this affected the quality of the musical experience.

### **The quality of instrumental tuition /tutors**

Some respondents referred to variability in the quality of instrumental tuition pupils received from peripatetic teachers. Many of them drew attention to the undesirable effects of inconsistency and in LAs/music service staff. Teachers stressed the importance of avoiding disruption for pupils in both musical progress and social support in their new surroundings; for those with transition-related difficulties this could be crucial. A respondent from one service said s/he made special arrangements for the same tutor to follow pupils from KS2 into KS3. However this seemed to be the exception rather than the rule.

### **2.1.2 Sustainability and the need for commitment**

Transition is a diachronic process; it happens over time and references to sustainability recurred throughout the data. There were numerous examples of short-term, one-off projects and others where plans for future development remained uncertain. The pattern for the majority of music transition projects in the data reflects the findings of the *London Challenge* project relating to generic transition activities:

*A relatively high proportion of transition practice is one-off events or focused only on the immediate period of transition, e.g. induction visits, summer schools, workshops for specific subjects (Mouchel Parkman 2005:13)*

A small minority of respondents within all four survey groups confirmed that, in their localities, co-ordinated and sustainable processes for transition support in music were either well-established or being systematically developed through the commitment of individual schools and, or, LAs/music services. But

the overall impression is less encouraging; the evidence suggests that in many areas transition partners are reluctant to commit themselves to making fundamental long-term changes for improvement.

There was a marked tendency to shift responsibility onto others involved. Secondary teachers, as above, perceived provision for curricular continuity at KS3 to depend on more accurate and detailed information from primary schools and music services. Primary schools felt the pedagogic and curricular support they could offer would be limited until LAs/music services provided networking and CPD opportunities, and until secondary teachers were more forthcoming with feedback on information received from KS2, and with sharing expertise.

According to music organisations, a range of competing pressures could affect motivation in schools and influence decisions to develop support. One organisation felt it was difficult for some schools to support projects which benefited individual pupils rather than the school itself; this could be seen as *a wasted experience* for those with limited resources.

A perceived *breakdown in primary/secondary school relationships* in various locations was attributed to the *unpredictability of progression routes*. But relationships between primary and secondary schools do not have to disintegrate. The *London Challenge* authors encountered instances of passivity similar to those emerging from our research; the progress and wellbeing of pupils is at stake, and as they pointed out, parental choice in response to turbulence in admissions procedures cannot be accepted *as an excuse for lack of engagement in transition*. Accordingly, they advocated:

*consistency in practice within each cluster (irrespective of eventual destination for individual pupils). The value is in introducing primary pupils to secondary school as a concept, irrespective of whether they eventually attend the same school.*

(Mouchel Parkman 2005: 15 )

Time, was *a genuine constraint*, for both primary and secondary teachers and until this was recognised through the allocation of planning time within the timetable, the prospects for developing support could seem negligible. Again little change appears to have occurred since the *London Challenge* study reported the importance of *dedicated and protected time for teachers and other professionals* to engage with, and develop good practice (2005: 14).

The need for more funding was implicit, if not explicit, in many responses across all surveys. The suggestions for improvement demonstrated that individual professionals were often very clear about what needed to be done *in an ideal world* but they were unable to envisage how it could be achieved. Over the following two sections we return to the Five Bridges framework to consider respondents' current priorities and how the Five Bridges might be developed and deployed for transition in music.

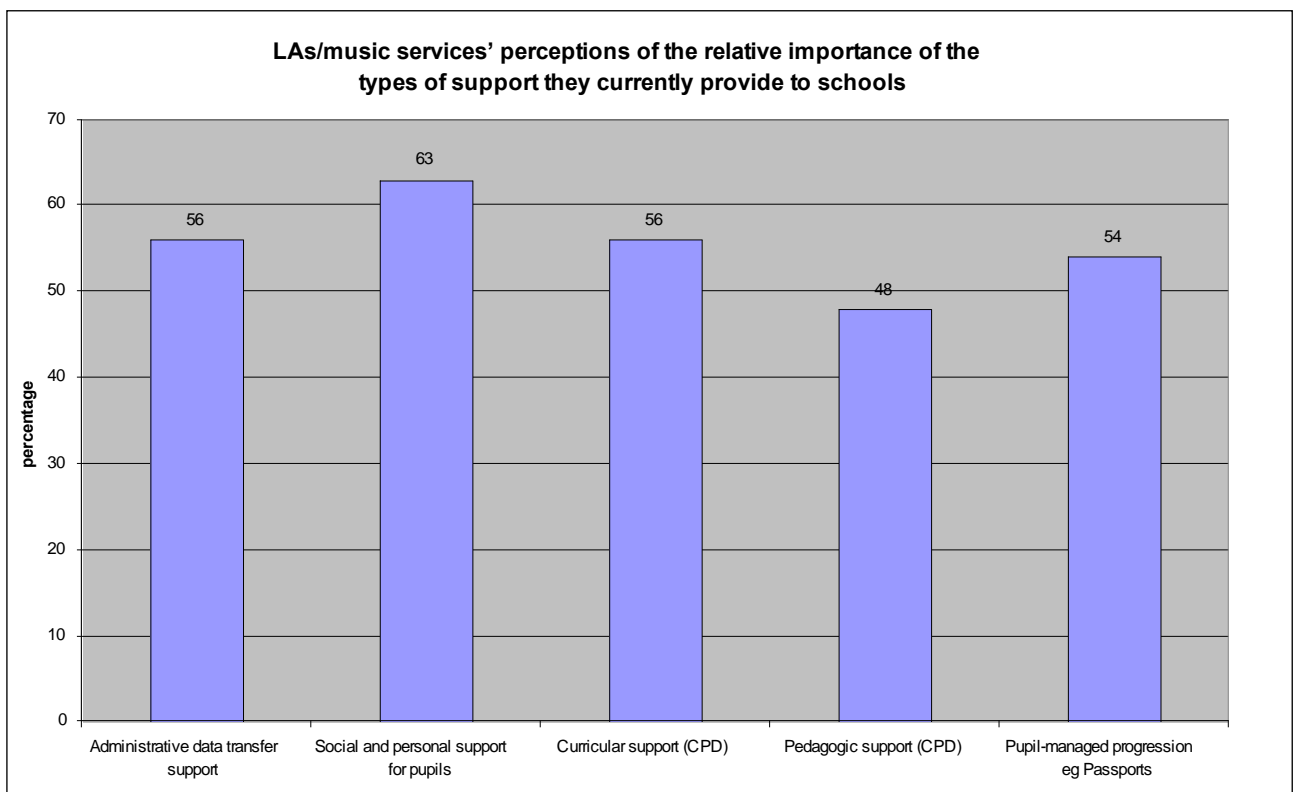
## 2.2 The Five Bridges framework: priorities for transition support

The 'Five Transition Bridges' template identifies the following categories of transition support:

Bridge One:	administrative
Bridge Two:	social and personal
Bridge Three:	curricular
Bridge Four:	pedagogic
Bridge Five:	managing learning

We now reconsider the relative importance of these different types of support according to the responses from each group of constituents.

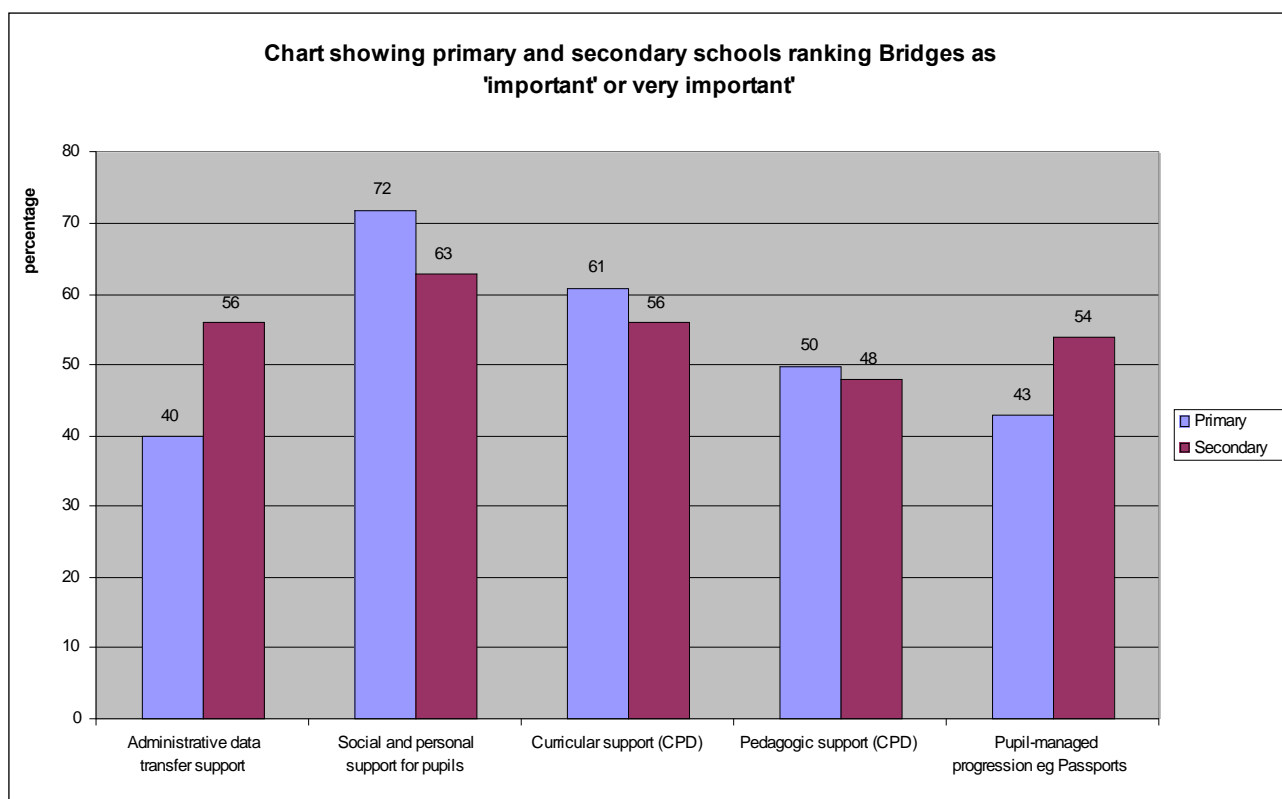
Music organisations and practitioners were not asked to rank the different types of transition support, but differences in priorities can to some extent be gleaned from variations in specific target participant groups. Some organisations worked with minorities such as visually impaired children, or gifted and talented pupils. Others were dedicated to engaging disaffected students or those who were *hard to reach*. A number of organisations aimed for a stimulating musical experience for as many young people as possible; elsewhere the focus was on small-scale projects, including in one case, music therapy for pupils struggling with transition. Comments from professional musicians unsurprisingly tended to concentrate on the quality of the musical experience, but it is worth noting that this was frequently expressed with a more holistic concern for social and personal well-being.



**Fig.18**

In terms of the Five Bridges, LAs/music services prioritised Bridge Two (social and personal support) and considered Bridge Four (pedagogic support) to be the least important. According to LA/music services respondents, different LAs/music services provide different types of support for transition to varying

degrees. The most commonly provided activities were those which suggest less intensive or relatively short term levels of engagement.



**Fig.19**

Primary teachers' responses affirmed their belief that the personal and social experience of moving to a new learning environment was of paramount importance. Comments relating to the importance of social integration accord with the guidelines for Bridge Two, which recommend using information on social groupings within primary schools to create class groups. Primary teachers valued active engagement between KS2 and KS3 pupils such as peer teaching and encouraging young singing leaders. Their observations in this respect related directly to the Bridge Two suggestions for pupil peer mentoring, before and after transition. Curricular support was also thought to be important, but to a lesser extent.

A small but clearly defined distinction emerged in the primary schools survey between the relative importance of curricular and pedagogic support; this distinction re-appeared in the secondary school responses. Support for Bridge Four yielded less comment and observations seemed unfocused. In spite of the contribution of information for social groupings (Bridge One) towards social and personal support, primary teachers deemed administrative data transfer as the least important type of support. Could this be an indication perhaps, that they feel currently unable to take on what they perceive as extra 'paperwork'; or, a reluctance to prioritise work which will not directly benefit their school?

Like their primary colleagues, the majority of secondary teachers rated social and personal support as the highest priority (Bridge Two). Numerous responses expressed a holistic approach to musical activities intended to promote social and personal, collective and individual wellbeing. The personal impact of transition also needed to be borne in mind in planning instrumental tuition: unfamiliar surroundings can be daunting. Secondary teachers attached much higher value to administrative data transfer (Bridge One) than their primary colleagues. Curricular support was seen as equally important, but the current situation appeared to be far from ideal. Repetition was perceived as undesirable; they wanted detailed information on curriculum content in order to avoid it.

Teachers from both sectors valued curricular continuity; the findings of earlier researchers in this context are worth noting. Marshall and Hargreaves' study (2007) explored pupil attitudes to the experience of transition in music throughout the process. Drawing on Measor and Woods (1984), they underlined the importance of matching curricula to *the expectations* of pupils in their first year at secondary school. At the same time they referred to the work of Hargreaves and Galton (2002) who considered the differences between pupils in the way they respond to moving to a new learning environment. Their research suggested that this can be an exciting experience for those who relish the prospect of new teaching styles and curricula, but that for other pupils the experience of transition can be de-motivating, for a variety of reasons.

Secondary teachers in our survey emphasised the importance of minimising repetition in the Y7 curriculum while promoting continuity. Repetition however, did not emerge in the comments from pupils in Marshall and Hargreaves' research. According to their findings, secondary teachers aiming to encourage intellectual and musical development need to temper new learning with an element of familiarity; they need to ensure that pupils who find the experience of transition disorienting rather than exciting, can make and keep a hold on connections between what they have already learnt and what is new:

*There is a difficult balance to be struck between improving curriculum continuity from the teachers' perspective, and maintaining the level of challenge [and ] appropriate levels of change ... required to meet the needs of individual pupils. (Marshall and Hargreaves 2007: 68)*

The pupils in their sample appeared to benefit when unfamiliar, challenging activities were interspersed with more relaxing *primary activities and teaching styles, in a more primary environment.* (Marshall and Hargreaves 2007: 77)

Secondary teachers' relatively low rating for pedagogic support corresponds with its ranking by primary teachers. In both cases the desire for more information and discussion about the curriculum appeared to be stronger than their interest in 'how to teach'. While pupils expect, and often look forward to working differently in KS3, if secondary teachers are to embrace the supportive ethos of Musical Bridges, they may need to reappraise familiar practice and confer with primary colleagues. Evidence for pedagogical dissonance between KS2 and KS3, was considered in the previous section. Bearing in mind Marshall and Hargreaves' findings on the beneficial effects of a combination of primary and secondary teaching styles as above, pedagogic support for transition emerges as a challenge for teachers from both Key Stages. According to all four respondent groups, it is the role of LAs/music services to create the opportunities for sharing their practice.

In 2002, Marshall and Hargreaves carried out a follow up study to research conducted 20 years earlier (Galton et al. 1980) to investigate whether the process of transfer and transition had changed as a result of the National Curriculum and other educational initiatives. Their findings suggested that pupils were experiencing less anxiety associated with the experience than at the time of the earlier research, largely because of the widespread practice of induction days, open evenings and secondary teachers' visits to primary schools. The pre-eminence of Bridge Two, social and emotional support, in the priorities of teachers from both sectors in our survey, indicates that pupils' potential anxieties continue to be at the forefront of their minds.

While pupils' social and emotional wellbeing (Bridge Two) emerged as the top priority for schools, a minority of LAs/music services acknowledged their particular responsibility for co-ordination and teacher support. Many teachers regarded the provision of networking opportunities as the most urgent requirement in this respect. The small number of LAs/music services fully committed to transition support were already ensuring cross-phase opportunities for sharing and exploring new ideas for transition. In some areas work was already in progress to investigate new ways for teacher and pupils to work through transition together:



... *The exchange of views and opportunities to meet with colleagues across phase is valued by teachers from both settings ... We have a transition group ... currently trialling projects such as initial schemes for Y7 with shared themes from KS2; shared events (concerts etc.); student mentoring; developing song leaders etc.*

The discussion has already revealed examples of activities demonstrating a more holistic approach to transition support, where two or more of the Five Bridges appeared to be working together. There were individuals from all four surveys who believed that personal and social support should be combined with curriculum continuity. The following section will look more closely at instances of ‘composite’ support.

## 2.3 A composite approach to transition support

Moving on to examine composite or ‘blended’ support in action, we return to the value placed on social and personal support in respondents’ stated priorities in the previous section. It is worth clarifying here the distinction between ‘transition’ and ‘transfer’; they tended to be used interchangeably in survey responses.

‘Transition’ denotes a process of change which children experience over time. ‘Transfer’ signifies a move, at a single point in time, from one location to another. Children start adapting to the idea of leaving primary school before the move actually happens, and continue re-orienting themselves into secondary school at their own pace for an indeterminate period of time. Meanwhile, they enter adolescence and experience unsettling physical, psychological and emotional change. The approach and event of transfer imposes additional intellectual and social challenges, together with competing demands to conform, to a new learning environment and to accelerating peer pressures. We have used the term ‘transition’ in this report to highlight the diachronic dimension of individual and collective trajectories before, within and beyond the event of transfer itself.

The *London Challenge* authors recorded evidence from interviews of successful *blending* of the different types of transition support. *A Common approach to pedagogy*, for example, was combined with *rigorous administrative procedures* (Bridges One and Four Mouchel Parkman 2005: 26 – 27).

The notion of ‘blending’ different types of support surfaced in good practice examples cited by our respondents. In some cases these had been co-ordinated by LAs/music services and in others initiated by the schools themselves. In the cameo below, a member of LA/music service staff outlined a *transition playing day* as a strategy for sustaining pupils’ instrumental progress in KS2. In the sharing of data *between schools, pupils and the music service*, the experience incorporated elements of administrative data transfer (Bridge One), in addition to curricular continuity (Bridge Three). An element of Bridge Two, social and personal support, is also evident in the opportunities KS2 pupils had for talking to the head of the music department and for performing in the secondary school, events which would help them to become familiar with their new learning environment.

*To tackle the issue of instrumental transition (as mentioned above) we piloted a combined KS2/3/4 transition playing day hosted by a local secondary school. All primary instrumental pupils transferring to secondary school would be issued with a replacement instrument to allow them to continue playing through the summer period and into Y7.*

*Primary pupils had the opportunity to meet with their future secondary school HoD where pupils were encouraged to ask questions about the school, ensembles, lessons, curriculum etc.*

- Data was collected and shared between schools, pupils and the Music Service.*
- Pupils received a playing pack with backing CD's to encourage playing/practice over the summer period.*
- Professional musicians were invited to rehearse and perform alongside primary and secondary pupils .*
- Secondary pupils modelled their playing to primary pupils.*
- Primary pupils got to perform in a secondary school.*

Most of the examples from music organisations included a social dimension (Bridge Two) in addition to promoting curricular continuity (Bridge Three). One freelance musician described a county-wide *Sing Up* project in which half a dozen secondary students attended after-school music leadership workshops which s/he co-led with the KS3 music teacher. Following sessions with KS2 pupils, the project culminated in a performance in the main town venue with 180 participants. The experience was valued for benefits both to pupils and to teacher morale:

*- very inspiring for the KS2 children - knowing a few people who you have done an activity with and shared an emotional occasion with - great morale boost to the primary teachers who saw ex-pupils coming back in significant musical roles - there was an implicit social transition element.*

An LA/music service respondent noted an important distinction between the different levels of engagement implicit in examples of current activities. The most successful transition support activities were seen as those where pupils from KS2 and KS3/4 actively engaged to *make music together* preferably over a period of time. This was felt to be much more worthwhile in terms of curricular and social support than projects where pupils were merely working in parallel in separate locations for a final joint performance, or events which positioned one group as spectators for the other.

Among examples of collaborations from music organisations were projects which drew attention to the cross-curricular potential for transition support in music. In the following example from a cross-arts organisation, pupils from KS2 can be seen to *take responsibility* for the project, by actively engaging with their KS3 peers. The respondent does not refer to the social benefits which might accrue in this case, but it appears that the emphasis on sharing ownership for the project positioned the KS2 pupils as 'responsible' agents in their own learning, thus fulfilling requirements for Bridge Five in developing their capacity as independent learners. At the same time the project also conferred insights into the secondary arts curriculum (Bridge Three). If KS2 and KS3 teachers were also involved, perhaps behind the scene, this could also have been an opportunity for pedagogic development (Bridge Four).

*Working with Year 6 pupils from 5 local schools, and with Year 7, and Year 10/11 Creative and Media Diploma Students as co-participants and mentors. For four days a cross-section of the above (35-40) meet to work on a 'chapter' of a pre-determined theme. They create drama, dance, and song on the day as well as rehearse pre-written 'theme song' for project that has been composed with Year 10s who take responsibility for teaching thereof prior to the project as well as admin, hospitality, liaison etc. All come together on Day 5 to finish rehearsals, share work, and perform to public audience.*

Another example where KS2/KS3 pupils actively engaged with one another came from a primary school involved in a secondary school BTEC project. This was seen as socially worthwhile on both sides (Bridge Two). It also involved the KS2 children in reflecting on their learning through taking responsibility for part of their older peers' assessment (Bridge Five). Again, it would seem the potential for pedagogical development was also present in the primary teacher's opportunity to gain insight into secondary approaches to assessment. This opportunity is not identified by the respondent, and thus perhaps reflects the lack of emphasis on pedagogy in teachers' priorities for support which was discussed earlier.

*We did work collaboratively with a local secondary, which happens to not be our main school for Y6 transfer on a BTEC music project. They needed a group of younger children to teach a lesson they had organised and planned as part of an assessment. This was particularly successful because the children enjoyed learning from each other and the younger children were inspired by the musical talents of the older pupils. It was also good PR for the secondary school as the younger children got to experience the fabulous facilities which they communicated to their parents and carers.*

A secondary school contributed another interesting example of direct social and personal support (Bridge Two) integrated within the active engagement between Y6 and Y9 pupils (Bridge Five).

*We run a 'Transition Project' alongside the Dance and Drama department. Our Y9 pupils write a short musical play that discusses the fears regarding transition that they had when in Y6. This play then goes 'on tour' to the primary schools and our students then lead workshops using the performing arts to help the primary school pupils to express their fears and come up with ideas of how they could overcome them.*

The Y6 pupils were spectators first, but then worked as active participants to explore imagined experiences of transition with their older peers. The process thus included intrinsically relevant curricular support (Bridge Three). The Y9 students brought what they learned through writing the play, expressing personal feelings through the performing arts, and communicated it to the Y6 pupils, enabling the younger pupils to learn how to learn, and to confront anxieties at the same time. In the performing arts, the concept of active and reflective learning gains an explicitly creative dimension through the opportunities afforded for expression and exploration of ideas and feelings. The Y6 pupils in this project were, literally, *active participants* in their own transition experience ... *identifying barriers to successful transition* (Bridge Five), and examining their own individual responses through music and drama.

Finally, an LA /music service respondent described a well-established cross-phase network. It enables secondary and primary teachers to communicate and learn from one another in order to sustain and develop the instrumental progress children achieve in KS2. The network ensures administrative support (Bridge One) is carried out through the transfer of pupil data and this in turn *enhances* the musical experience for pupils (Bridge Three). The LAs/ music service role, in recognising the importance of generating and sustaining *dialogue* is seen as *key*.

*Secondary head of music attends Wider Opportunities planning meetings, listens to and informs primary schools about choice of instruments knowledge and skills.*

*Communication is the key. If colleagues within the profession have a professional dialogue this will enhance the offer for the young people. The resulting, more holistic, approach will give them a seamless musical experience and signpost where they could go next.*

The reference to a *holistic approach* here suggests that administrative and curricular support, if effectively pursued, will *per se* help ease the social and emotional disruption of transition. The authors of the *London Challenge* were more emphatic. Their *Common characteristics of identified good practice* across the entire curriculum included the observation that *high quality social and pastoral activity presupposes sound administrative procedures* (Mouchel Parkman 2005: 33).

In our survey, secondary teachers regard administrative support as second in importance to social and pastoral support. Their primary colleagues, charged with responsibility for assembling and communicating pupil information, currently appear to value this type of transition support least. The views of LAs/music services' on the value of their role in this respect showed wide variation from one local authority to another.

LAs/music services work across local authorities; they have unique access to a borough-wide perspective. As we saw earlier, many of the current transition activities LAs/music services are involved in tend to be one-off or short-term. However, the examples of blended support from LA/music service staff here suggest that a small minority envisage and in some cases have already set in motion a co-ordinated and sustainable approach.

## Conclusions and next steps

The cameos above demonstrate how interwoven complementary strands of support can build customized musical transition bridges. To succeed, these build first on common understandings about musical learning between partners, leading then to the design and implementation of effective transition strategies. Some examples ‘blend’ activities across several bridges; all reflect a keen awareness of local conditions.

However, to reflect on this process and help us design ways to promote a ‘blended musical transition strategy’, we need to return to the caveats outlined at the beginning of *Sound Tracks*.

Our survey drew upon music educators’ evidence, provided voluntarily, from 250 organisations and institutions. This represents a tiny fraction of our potential audience; we are open about the survey’s lack of statistical robustness. However, based on the evidence submitted, what unites the responses is that the *quality* of transition experience and the impact this has on children’s musical progression *matters* to all respondents. Everyone cares about the issue whether expressed as a problem or as a solution.

A second caveat is the education reform agenda that is being unveiled as we write. Secondary school league tables have, for the first time, indicated schools’ potential scores against the English Baccalaureate (where, currently, the arts and music are not recognised).

The third caveat acknowledges the limited reach of *Sound Tracks* with respect to missing ‘stakeholders’. *Sound Tracks* concentrated only on music education providers. Although the survey has presented a unique opportunity to cross-reference providers’ responses to music transition, the picture, and future progress, is incomplete without the involvement of schools’ leadership teams, parents, and children themselves.

### Five Musical Transition Bridges: engaging senior leadership, parents and young people

The application required to ensure a smooth passage from primary to secondary school, exemplified in *Five Bridges*, puts the child at the centre of the transition process. We have adopted *Five Bridges* because it speaks generically across the whole school, from data transfer (Bridge 1) to ‘pupil voice’ (Bridge 5). To this end *Five Bridges* is a useful tool for engaging schools’ senior leadership teams (SLTs). There are many shades of SLT engagement, some of which have been highlighted in our survey. However, to properly sustain effective transition we need to develop stronger ways to engage SLTs where they can champion the intrinsic and extrinsic value of musical learning for every child’s progress as well as for the well-being of the school itself.

Parents are currently absent in *Sound Tracks*. We intend to address this because it is parents who exercise choice in the child’s future school. As stated earlier, we need to be realistic about what parents are looking for in their future secondary school and the reasons they prioritise one school over another. Unless their child is going to an independent specialist music school, most parents will choose the certainty of academic success over all other considerations (apart from a choice based on faith). In the new English Baccalaureate climate the academic argument may increasingly harden.

Last but not least are young people themselves. They are not simply consumers, but agents of their own learning. A respondent from Northern Ireland (outside our survey catchment area but moved to comment) reminded us that every child leaving primary school is a *developing musician*.

We have reported on examples in Bridge 5 where children are encouraged to make more demands on what they require, and what steps they can take with school and other kinds of support to consciously carry forward their musical journey into secondary education.

In the foreword to *Sound Tracks* we referenced *Musical Bridges* longitudinal pupil tracking programme *Changing Key: adolescents' views on how music shapes their development across school transition*. Another illustration is a project called *6 into 7* which we will embed into *Musical Bridges* three CPD initiatives later this year. In this project small groups of Year 6 pupils will take on the role of 'reporters' and track their own and their peers' musical journeys into their new secondary schools next autumn. A video record of their progress will be posted on *Musical Bridges* website later in the year.

We are also exploring personalised learning possibilities through *Arts Awards*. Although developed for secondary students (11+), there is growing evidence of engagement in the primary sector where Year 6 pupils are taking Bronze (level 1) *Arts Awards*. Furthermore, some of these examples carry over into Year 7 to become 'transition' initiatives. There is scope to develop *Arts Awards* accreditation for young people's musical progression.

## **Next Steps: Phase Two**

*Sound Tracks* has revealed some excellent examples of good musical transition practice taking place in a variety of rural and urban settings and with a range of partners in and out of schools. *Sound Tracks* has provided a window into what effective practice can look like, and its underlying characteristics. As we have shown, many respondents have implicitly embraced a 'composite' or 'blended' approach akin to *Five Bridges*. This process leads directly to Phase Two in which we plan to apply and test *Five Bridges* more explicitly in a music education context across Key Stages 2 and 3.

Over the coming months we will develop a *Five Musical Bridges* self-evaluation template. This will be an online diagnostic tool to strengthen musical transition activities. To begin this process we are seeking 20 exemplar case studies. These will typically represent a wide range of locations, institutions and demographics from across the country. We will work with partners to assess the characteristics of these case studies, the factors which made them successful, by filtering them through a new *Five Musical Bridges* template, adapted from the original *Five Bridges* descriptor. The outcomes will be piloted, and will then be made widely available through the *Musical Bridges* website later this academic year.

The successful application of the *Five Musical Bridges* template will mark a step-change in our long-term aim to raise the quality of music transition practices to a standard that meets the expectations of young people, parents and schools. A case could be made for 'kite-marking' successful music transition practice; this might become a shared award linking participating primary and secondary schools and other external partners to publicly validate effective music transition.

For further information go to [www.musicalbridges.org.uk](http://www.musicalbridges.org.uk) or email us at [musicalbridges@phf.org.uk](mailto:musicalbridges@phf.org.uk)

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**Appendix 1 – The Five Bridges framework** (from *Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3 Transition Project London Challenge: Mouchel Parkman DfES 2005*)

	Transition Bridge One Administrative	Transition Bridge Two Social and Personal	Transition Bridge Three Curricular	Transition Bridge Four Pedagogic	Transition Bridge Five Managing Learning
Introducing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Quality information provided to parents on administrative arrangements</li> <li>- Pupil transfer is handled to the satisfaction of all parents</li> <li>- Common data transfer sheet exists</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Induction days with clear purpose and outcomes</li> <li>- Open evenings for pupils and parents</li> <li>- Parents have an early opportunity to discuss progress and transition with secondary school staff</li> <li>- Special arrangements at start of school year</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Cross-phase events which are part of a planned programme</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- An understanding of primary and secondary schools' approach to teaching and learning</li> <li>- Advanced skills teachers provide outreach support to primary schools</li> </ul>	
Establishing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Making effective use of common data transfer form to capture pupil level information</li> <li>- Ensuring effective and full use of individual pupil data received from primary schools, including Key Stage 2 results and CATS</li> <li>- Effective pupil-tracking to monitor progress</li> <li>- Transition policy is in place and has been agreed in partnership with primary schools. It covers the process for collecting and transferring information and sets an expectation for active work with feeder/receiver schools. It outlines the role of staff parents and pupils in the transitions process. This policy is regularly reviewed and amended accordingly. All staff parents and pupils are aware of the policy</li> <li>- Setting of attainment grades and procedures to monitor progress towards these targets</li> <li>- Regular meetings and good working relations between primary and secondary school staff including senior staff, heads of year, subject heads, SENCOS and subject teachers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Parent and pupil guides for new entrants</li> <li>- Identifying, in partnership with primary schools, and responding to pupils with particular difficulties, needs or strengths</li> <li>- Using information on social groupings within primary schools to create class groups</li> <li>- Quality information to parents about pastoral support and differences in the school</li> <li>- Robust anti-bullying policy that is made explicit to pupils and parents and implemented effectively</li> <li>- Specific arrangements in place to support pupils for first half-term following transition</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Two-way dialogue and discussion between primary and secondary schools on Year 7 and Year 7 curricula</li> <li>- Joint projects and cross-phase activities. Other joint provision may also include bridging units</li> <li>- Summer Schools</li> <li>- Quality information to parents about the curriculum. This shows what will be taught and how continuity with primary school curriculum is ensured</li> <li>- Specialist visits eg ICT, drama, sports science</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Recognition and celebration of differences in teaching and learning e.g. access to specialist teaching and resources</li> <li>- Quality information to parents about teaching and classroom practice</li> <li>- A common language for discussing teaching and learning e.g. use of terms such as 'learning objectives' 'plenary' 'response partner' etc</li> <li>- Active preparation of pupils to meet new ways of working</li> <li>- Joint training programmes and professional development on teaching skills</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Common language is used across phases to talk about teaching and learning</li> </ul>

Extending	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Transition processes are broadened to include pupils in year groups other than Year 7</li> <li>- Feedback provided to primary schools on effectiveness of transitions arrangements and early progress of pupils</li> <li>- Non-teaching staff are fully involved in the transition process e.g. support staff from primary schools work with known pupils during first few days in secondary school</li> <li>- Data is used effectively at whole-school, department and classroom levels</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Parents and pupils are effectively 'briefed' about transition, with opportunities to feed back on the reality for them</li> <li>- Pupil peer mentoring – pre and post transition and social support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Cross phase teaching ie common curriculum topics that span Year 6 and Year 7</li> <li>- Common understanding of progress expected of pupils during transition years</li> <li>- Shared understanding on the quality of work expected of Year 6 and Year 7 pupils across at least core subjects</li> <li>- Joint master classes for gifted and talented pupils</li> <li>- Catch-up programmes in Year 7 especially for literacy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Policies on teaching and learning shared across phases</li> <li>- Shared lesson observations</li> <li>- Team teaching</li> <li>- Common approach to learning environments e.g. accessibility of resources, use of display to promote learning, arrangement of classroom furniture etc</li> <li>- Joint teacher training days and professional development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Pupils develop a learning portfolio which describes them as learners and gives examples of achievement. This is shaped with the secondary school and extended during Year 7</li> <li>- Pupils are empowered to proactively contribute to the transition process and are viewed as active participants e.g. suggesting improvements and identifying barriers to successful transition</li> </ul>
Enhancing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Clear roles and responsibilities within primary and secondary schools that span transition. Job descriptions make these explicit</li> <li>- A 'transition champion' is identified within the school i.e. a named individual with responsibility for effective transition</li> <li>- Staff, parents and pupils are involved in evaluating transition arrangements to secure continuous improvement</li> <li>- Non-teaching staff play a significant role in the management of the transition process</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Joint social events between current Year 7 and Year 6 pupils</li> <li>- Year 7 pupils visiting Year 6 pupils/primary schools, speaking formally about transition</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Secondary schools receive and build on 'curriculum maps' for Key Stage 2 from feeder primary schools and adapt Year 7 curriculum accordingly</li> <li>- Teachers in each phase have detailed knowledge of respective assessment, tracking and target-setting processes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Teacher exchange and secondment between primary and secondary schools</li> <li>- Schools in both phases evaluate and adapt their joint approach to transition taking account of the views of the pupils teachers and parents</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Pupils understand their preferred learning styles and can talk confidently about this to their new teachers</li> <li>- Pupils are actively encouraged to become 'professional learners' reflecting on what and how they are learning</li> <li>- Quality information is given to parents about their contribution to managing learning and encouraging their children to become 'professional learners'</li> </ul>