



A CPD PROGRAMME
LED BY MUSIC MARK

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A CPD programme for London's Key Stage 3 music teachers

If you talk to any Key Stage 3 music teacher, then it won't be long before the word 'isolated' enters the conversation. While secondary school music departments are often busy places, the music teachers in them often find themselves separated from the rest of the school. The 'noisiness' of music provides a degree of physical isolation (who wants a music room next to the history department?) and this is emphasised by a sense of 'otherness' when it comes to pedagogy. The approaches that work for English, mathematics or the humanities are rarely well-suited to teaching music. Physical and pedagogical isolation is then reinforced by the fact that it's not unusual for music teachers to be in a department of one. So, while the practice rooms are packed and lessons continue apace, music teachers can often find themselves feeling lonely in a crowded room.

This isolation throws up many challenges for music teachers' continuing professional development. Whole school training sessions are rarely as beneficial for the music department as they are for the science faculty. In a department of one, who can a music teacher 'bounce ideas off' for a new approach to teaching melody writing?

In 2013, the London Schools Excellence Fund (LSEF) was announced and Music Mark saw this as an opportunity to tackle this isolation. We conceived of a programme that would connect London's music teachers with each other in a way that transcended the barriers of their school gates. We wanted to devise a programme that allowed music teachers to develop their practice by learning from each other. We knew that there was excellent music teaching out there, we just needed to help teachers share their skills.

This 'connecting teachers' approach led to the title of Music Mark's programme - Peer to Peer.

We reached out to excellent music teachers from across London and asked them to lead a variety of CPD sessions that shared their best ideas with the rest of London's music education community. Inspiring music teachers led singing sessions, assessment workshops and all manner of music-specific training. To make it truly 'Peer to Peer', however, we needed to ensure that the learning wasn't a one-way street. The course delegates had to be as much a part of the solution as the course leaders.

The peer learning approach started with what seemed an obvious strategy. We built networking opportunities, peer discussion and collaboration into each of the training sessions. Music teachers would learn from each other through structured, constructive conversation. From here, the next step was to make sure that the Peer to Peer approach could extend beyond the training venue and reach right into participants' schools. To achieve this, we designed a mentoring programme.

When Music Mark envisioned a mentoring programme, we saw peers facilitating discussion

and independent learning. It was our intention that music teachers would volunteer to take responsibility for a group of teachers who would work together to continue the development-focused conversations that had permeated the training sessions. Perhaps inevitably, the pressures of working in a school made it difficult for teachers to engage with the group meetings that were organised. Additionally, many participants felt that mentoring was a hierarchical relationship, which hindered engagement with this part of the programme. This experience has formed a key part of our thinking for future CPD programmes.

In the pages that follow, you will find case studies that look at three music teachers who participated in the Peer to Peer programme. While each teacher will tell you about the specific improvements in their practice that occurred as a result of their participation in the programme, you will note that they all continue to gain value from Peer to Peer long after it ended. They continue to make use of the contacts that they made during the programme's lifespan. Even more, they continue to expand their professional learning networks through real-world and online networking.

As with any professional development programme, the training sessions were important and relevant to the participants. The real benefit of Peer to Peer, however, was in the professional connections that music teachers made with each other. Many of the relationships that were forged in our training sessions are still going strong. We wanted to tackle the isolation felt by music teachers and we wanted to achieve that by connecting them with each other. As our case studies show, the legacy of Peer to Peer is contained in the professional relationships that it helped to develop. ■



EMMA GODDARD



*Here we are, here's music,
we're making an impact.*

CONTEXT

When Emma Goddard arrived at Coopers Technology College in Chislehurst, she found herself entering a 'Good' school. Coopers is an averaged sized school where the majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds and an above-average number of pupils are eligible for the pupil premium.

At the time, however, it would have been a stretch to describe the music department as being good. Emma describes an isolated experience as a "loan wolf" in a music department that had "nothing in it and nothing going on." Her first priority was to ensure that GCSE pupils were able to meet the demands of the GCSE course and she set about the task of building a strong and effective music department.

Despite the school offering a strong programme of INSET, Emma recalls her only experience of music-specific CPD as being through a personalised learning network that she was developing through social media. Starting with Facebook groups and then combining this with Twitter discussions, Emma was working to develop her approach to Key Stage 3 music teaching when she came across the Peer to Peer programme.



BENEFITS OF PEER TO PEER

ASSESSMENT AND RADAR DIAGRAMS

Having set out to drive improvement at KS3, Emma knew that she would need to track the progress of her pupils. 'Assessing Without Levels' had been announced and Emma wanted to make sure that she was using a system of assessment that met the needs of learners, teachers and leaders alike. Conversations on social media had not yielded a workable solution, so Emma was delighted when Jane Werry took to the stage at a Peer to Peer training session.

Jane's approach to assessment made use of radar diagrams and coloured pens to create an effective but low-workload solution to musical assessment. You can read about this system by reading Jane's blog post on the Peer to Peer Network.¹

Asked about the appeal of these radar diagrams, Emma said,

"We're all required to keep track of assessment and, as music teachers, we're all good at giving verbal feedback. But it's very different to write it down for SLT. One of the things that Jane Werry's radar diagrams gave me was the ability to record my verbal

feedback in a way that wasn't onerous to me and wasn't onerous to the students. But it satisfied the requirements for non-musician members of staff to actually see the progress on a piece of paper."

"Members of SLT have looked at these diagrams and said 'Absolutely fantastic, we love these.'"

Emma has now integrated this method of assessment into her work at KS3, which has allowed her to create an effective, criterion-based assessment system in her lessons. She has gone on to write a blog post on the Peer to Peer Network (Assessment - That Old Chestnut!²). In this blog post, she discusses the importance of finding a middle-ground between the demands of music teaching and the need for leadership teams to monitor learning - a balancing act that many music teachers will be familiar with!

Having had a confidence boost from this success, Emma went on to lead a MufuChat (a weekly Twitter chat hosted in a partnership between Musical Futures and Music Mark) titled 'What Can You Do With Assessment When Your SLT Won't Budge?'

WHOLE CLASS INSTRUMENTAL TEACHING

When Ian Rowe of Bromley Youth Music Trust introduced Peer to Peer participants to his Band on the Run system, Emma was intrigued.

"It really struck me that it wasn't that different to what I am already doing in the classroom."



*As a result of Peer to Peer,
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music education.*

As a classroom music teacher, Emma was very much accustomed to the demands of managing large classes. The whole class instrumental teaching of Band on the Run took that classroom-management skill and applied it to a different style of musical learning.

Emma introduced Band on the Run to several of her classes as a means of driving engagement with pupils who already had a degree of musical experience. "They're all still involved in the music department," she says, "and they all say 'we really enjoyed our time in Band on the Run!'"

PERSPECTIVES ON PEER TO PEER

"As a result of Peer to Peer, I feel more aware of things that are happening in music education," says Emma. The networking opportunities provided by the programme were a significant contribution to this. Emma was able to attend training days and networking events that allowed her to freely share her own ideas and, crucially, find out what was happening in other schools.

Emma highlights that there were two main benefits to this. First was the sense of reassurance that comes from learning that other, experienced music teachers were making decisions similar to her own. The second was that she was frequently exposed to new ideas that made her much more confident when innovating in the classroom. Importantly, this was supported by a new-found comfort with the risk of making decisions that don't pay off as expected -

"If they go well, great. If not, then what can I do to improve that?"

MENTORING

The confidence of sharing and exchanging ideas led to Emma taking advantage of the mentoring opportunities provided by the Peer to Peer programme. Describing her motivation to become a mentor, Emma explains that she sees mentoring as an invitation to share her work and that of colleagues:

“It wasn’t about teaching others that my way was right and the only way, it was about being able to share what we’re currently doing in our department.”

Of course, mentoring is not a hierarchical relationship and Emma was keen to highlight that one of the benefits of being a mentor was the opportunity to gain a detailed knowledge of other teachers’ work. The mentoring process allowed Emma to continue the networking and idea-exchange that she experienced during the core training days.

“I was able to see how different ideas worked in different schools,” says Emma, “and I realised that we all have good practice, just different areas of good practice.”

AFTER PEER TO PEER

When asked what colleagues would say about her professional growth, Emma didn’t hesitate.

“They would say that I’m more confident. I’m ready to share ideas and innovation across the school.”

That confidence and whole-school spirit wasn’t limited to just Emma, she’s quick to highlight that it’s the whole music department that has benefitted. She describes her team as constantly saying, *“here we are, here’s music, we’re making an impact.”*

Emma has clearly taken this message on board as she’s not only led a MufuChat and written personal blog posts on the Peer to Peer Network

but she was also one of the first teachers to submit a Peer to Peer Featured Discussion, entitled ‘Rags to Riches’³. This blog post chronicles the actions that Emma took in order to drive improvement in the music department at Coopers. At the end of the blog post, Emma concludes that her success at Coopers was founded on five key elements:

1. A clear vision
2. Funding
3. Ideas and resources
4. SLT
5. Local music departments and hubs

That last point really captures the spirit of the Peer to Peer CPD programme - learning from fellow music educators.

EMMA'S ADVICE TO MUSIC TEACHERS ON CPD PROGRAMMES

“Be forward, stamp, jump and let us know that you’re there. You only get out what you put in.”

¹ Assessment - That Old Chestnut!, by Emma Goddard
<http://musicmarkptp.com/blog/assessment-that-old-chestnut>

² Some more thoughts on using radar diagrams for KS3 assessment, by Jane Werry
<http://musicmarkptp.com/blog/some-more-thoughts-on-using-radar-diagrams-for-ks3-assessment-plu>

³ ‘From Rags to Riches’ - developing a music department from nothing to something, by Emma Goddard
<http://musicmarkptp.com/discussions/from-rags-to-riches-developing-a-music-department-from-nothing-to>

A Peer to Peer case study GARETH GAY

CONTEXT

Gareth Gay is a Lead Practitioner and music teacher at Glenthorne High School in Sutton and has taught there for thirteen years. The school is a larger than average mixed academy and features what Gareth describes as a ‘very varied’ intake. This context creates the need for teachers to ensure that music lessons are as inclusive as possible. At Key Stage 4, Glenthorne typically sees 40 pupils continuing to study music and Gareth attributes this to their approach at Key Stage 3:

“It can be quite difficult in a context where some pupils have had instrumental lessons for years and other pupils haven’t had that experience. As a result, we try to make sure that Key Stage 3 music is as inclusive and magical as possible.”



It’s not often that you hear teachers describing the work that they do as ‘magical’ and, as such a comment would suggest, it’s clear that Gareth’s enthusiasm for music teaching hasn’t diminished as a result of working in one school for thirteen years. He holds similar enthusiasm for the Peer to Peer programme:

“Peer to Peer has given me a wider base of experience. It’s given me the opportunity to work with different types of music educators at different stages of middle and senior leadership. Professionals in different contexts. It’s certainly made me more informed as a practitioner.”

BENEFITS OF PEER TO PEER

SINGING

When talking about the Peer to Peer CPD sessions, Gareth frequently uses the word 'inspiring'. The first person to whom he applies that label is Ian Rowe from Bromley Youth Music Trust:

"It was inspiring to see how confidently someone could strike up singing with a whole room full of people. Especially if you're not a first-study vocalist. Hearing him explain his process was really useful."

This got Gareth thinking about expectations. In particular, having high expectations of the music that pupils can create. *"During Peer to Peer, I found that my Year 8s could play a Grade 1 piano piece."* He goes on to describe the frustration of not being able to find suitably appropriate and challenging repertoire for a calypso unit that his department was trying to plan. *"We found a Grade 1 calypso piece in the piano syllabus,"* he says, *"so we used it and most of the pupils could play it. We took a risk and it allowed the pupils to make music that was as authentic as possible."*

Having seen a focus on high expectations and musical authenticity from Ian's singing session, Gareth thought about the role of musical technique in lessons.

"How much technique is there in Key Stage 3? If you don't build in technique, then you will be limited in what you can play. Technique is the vehicle that allows you to play expressively."



"Since Peer to Peer, I've joined the steering group of our music education hub, which gives me a more immediate sense of information about music education."

PEER LEARNING

Of course, before the Peer to Peer programme started, Gareth was already an experienced music teacher (even leading some of the CPD sessions himself). He was, however, still very keen to learn from others and explains that he found genuine value in talking to other teachers. Gareth's music department has a large number of teachers and is a long established, well supported music department, so he was able to gain a lot of insight from discussions with teachers in what could be described as 'more challenging' circumstances.

"In my mind, it cemented how different one school can be to another in terms of the emphasis that they put on music. It made me appreciate some of the struggles that other teachers battle with and, importantly, I heard their solutions."



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This exposure to a wider range of musical circumstances has encouraged Gareth to contribute more to the work of his local music education hub.

"Since Peer to Peer, I've joined the steering group of our music education hub, which gives me a more immediate sense of information about music education. Information that comes to schools can go to the wrong person. By being involved with the hub, I feel that I know what's going on locally and nationally."

AFTER PEER TO PEER

When asked how his colleagues would describe the impact of Peer to Peer, Gareth had no problem articulating the change:

"They would say that I am a lot more connected to some of the bigger issues and that I can talk about them much more confidently. Peer to Peer has given me a broader understanding of the bigger issues that we face."

He goes on to explain how it's had a positive impact on his role as a Lead Practitioner. He describes that the contact with music teachers in different schools has helped him to understand the challenges facing teachers in different departments.

GARETH'S ADVICE TO MUSIC TEACHERS ON CPD PROGRAMMES

When giving his advice to any music teacher starting a new CPD programme, Gareth is keen to emphasise the value of the relationships that he made and the various perspectives that he uncovered.

"I would tell people to go in and be very open minded. You can't get out of school very often, so it can be easy to get cocooned in your own frustrations in terms of 'why do I always get these grades?' or 'why do I have to do these things that senior leadership is asking for?'. If someone is showing you a new approach, then take what you can learn from it."

He also has some very practical advice for experienced music teachers when attending a CPD session that covers a topic they're already comfortable with. *"If you think you can already do something, then explore how you can make it even better. Do whatever you can do to raise the expectations you have of your pupils."*

KATY AMBROSE

CONTEXT

Katy Ambrose is Head of Music at The Sydney Russell School in Dagenham. It's a larger than average secondary school with an above-average proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language, as is the number of pupils on pupil premium. The school has a large number of pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs.

In 2013, Ofsted noted that "students enter the school with literacy and numeracy levels which are below average" and one of the reasons that it attained 'Outstanding' was that it successfully raises these standards through a broad and balanced curriculum.

Arriving in the music department, it's a pleasure to see pupils in a brand new, specially designed building. The music department has clearly benefitted from these excellent facilities. Speaking to Katy, however, it soon becomes clear that a great deal of thought has gone into getting the most from the space. At break time, the practice rooms are packed with pupils keen to experiment with the instruments and lessons take place in an environment that is clearly focused on practical music making. When asked about her practice before the Peer to Peer programme, Katy highlights that she was pleased with how she was teaching in the face of a difficult timetabling situation and a two-year Key Stage 3:



"I was comfortable with where we were. There were various challenges in our school with having music lessons just once a fortnight, so I'd had to think very carefully about what we would teach at KS3."

Reflecting on her learning journey, Katy is aware of the fact that she experienced the all-too-common isolation of being a music teacher. The Peer to Peer sessions gave her the opportunity to consider what was happening elsewhere, which allowed her to think critically about her own practice:

"At the first Peer to Peer session, I really questioned what I was doing in my school. In the first session, I came away quite dejected. Not because I felt that I'd been told I was doing it wrong but because I'd heard all these other ideas and suddenly thought 'I haven't thought of any of these, there must be so much lacking in my practice.'"

Being part of the programme gave Katy a sense of being part of a wider community of music teachers, which helped her to reflect on her own work.



One of the biggest differences in me as a teacher pre-Peer to Peer and after is technology. Using Twitter and making classroom recordings has made a huge difference.

BENEFITS OF PEER TO PEER

SINGING

At one training session, Jane Werry introduced delegates to her approach to singing in the classroom. This resonated with Katy and, in particular, she thought much more about the importance of repertoire:

"The pupils might enjoy singing a certain piece by a certain artist, but we have a responsibility to make sure that it's physically and musically appropriate for them. That's a useful lesson that has really impacted on my day-to-day teaching."

Katy went on to explain that she now spends much more time on two particular parts of teaching singing - repertoire and accuracy. She ensures that the repertoire is suited to both the age of the pupils and their learning needs but spends much more time on mastering and refining performances. Katy now believes that focusing on the quality of a performance is the best way to ensure that pupils become familiar with a piece of music that they are analysing.

"If we are learning about Baroque counterpoint, then we will play some Baroque counterpoint. We will play it for its own sake and the rest will follow. As a result of Peer to Peer, we do more playing in our analysis lessons. We did it before but we now focus on getting it right."

It wasn't just Jane's training session that led to this change. Katy is keen to point out that one of the most significant benefits of the Peer to Peer programme was the opportunity to talk to fellow music teachers and explore what's working in their schools. **"Through meeting lots of people and having discussions, I have made it more explicit that our music department believes in singing for singing's sake and playing for playing's sake."** This shift of focus, Katy believes, has had a positive impact on lessons as a whole.

TECHNOLOGY

Combined with the new building, The Sydney Russell School is fortunate to be well-resourced with music technology. An impressive recording studio is attached to one of the teaching rooms, which includes a large number of computers running Propellerhead's Reason. This setup allows pupils to draft musical ideas in the classroom before refining the performance in the studio. During the Peer to Peer programme, however, Katy gained a new perspective on the use of technology.

"One of the biggest differences in me as a teacher pre-Peer to Peer and after is technology. Using Twitter and making classroom recordings has made a huge difference."

This is something that Katy highlights has impacted on both her day-to-day teaching and her continuing professional development. Technology is no longer a distinct and separate part of music lessons, it's an expectation that recordings will be made and shared. The reflection and progression benefits of this are clear. Beyond this, however, Katy is now much more active in the wider music education community through her use of social media and contributions to online debates. This includes a Featured Discussion that she wrote for the Peer to Peer Network looking at the meaning of 'musical music lessons'.

The benefits of technology have led to Katy feeling more valued as a teacher:

"I have felt that people freely invested in me and my school. As a result, I have come across people and it's been beneficial to chat to them."

MENTORING

Having previously led a number of whole-school training sessions, Katy was keen to develop this experience and further expand her contact with other teachers by becoming a Peer to Peer mentor. Keen to highlight that this wasn't a top-down process, Katy acknowledges the significant impact the relationship had on her own teaching:

"I really enjoy the challenge of explaining, demonstrating and modelling what I think works. It really helps my practice. You have to do a bit of soul-searching to be a mentor."

Mentoring requires taking a step back from your own work and being open to new ideas. Talking to her mentoring group, Katy came across ideas that she will keep to one side for now but expects to use in the future, either in a different school or in the context of The Sydney Russell School changes over time.

"It can be easy to think 'that wouldn't work in my school' or 'my SLT wouldn't let me do that'. The reason it's important to leave those pre-conceptions to one side is that you might not teach in the same school forever."

As with technology, it wasn't the mentoring itself that Katy valued. It was the relationships that it allowed her to develop.

KATY'S ADVICE TO MUSIC TEACHERS ON CPD PROGRAMMES

When asked about the advice she would give to music teachers participating in continuing professional development, Katy took a moment to think before saying,

"I know exactly what I would say. Leave the nitty-gritty of what you think will work and what won't at the door. It can be easy to think 'that wouldn't work in my school' or 'my SLT wouldn't allow that'. There were ideas in Peer to Peer that I thought I couldn't use but I've made them work for my school."

Watching Katy with her colleagues, it was clear that this was her approach as a middle leader. She listened to what they had to say, considered it and sought to make it work in The Sydney Russell School's own, specific context. She works with her peers to deliver the best music education she can. ■

AFTER PEER TO PEER

Katy's initial concern about her own practice soon subsided, *"I came to terms with the fact that I was doing things how I wanted to do them."* The Peer to Peer programme provided her with challenge to her thinking and a reassurance that she had been developing music in her school appropriately. She does, however, note that lessons themselves have an even greater focus on music making.

This focus on musical lessons was developed when Katy wrote a Featured Discussion for the Peer to Peer Network called "What do we mean when we say 'music lessons should be musical'?" In this article, Katy describes how she performed a 'mini-recital' to her class that prompted her to think even more about practical music making.

"When teaching rhythmic notation, for example, I didn't need to create a musical activity to teach it, the music was already there. We learnt Reich's 'Clapping Music' and learnt to perform it thoroughly, for its own sake. We rehearsed it as an ensemble until we really got it. We didn't just use the piece as a learning tool, we learnt it as a piece of music in its own right; we worked on it as an ensemble of musicians."

RECOMMENDATIONS

Peer to Peer was evaluated by Dr Alison Daubney and Duncan Mackrill from the University of Sussex.

As part of this evaluation, a series of recommendations was made to Music Mark and the wider music education sector. Music Mark has carefully reviewed these recommendations and will be implementing many of them in our work with Music Excellence London.

You can download the Executive Summary of this evaluation from the Music Mark website.

www.musicmark.org.uk



Some of the recommendations that Music Mark considers most important include:

01

Recommendation

"Future programmes should be designed and led with significant input from teachers and other professionals with high levels of experience of leading high quality CPD for specific communities in order that they are worthwhile, authentic and genuine."

+ What we're doing:

Ensuring that Music Excellence London connects teachers with each other so that they can take charge of their own professional learning.

02

Recommendation

"Professional development should offer a range of appropriate choices and challenges. It should allow for personal choice, joint practice development and sufficiently challenging professional learning underpinned by teacher inquiry."

+ What we're doing:

Ensuring that Music Excellence London puts teacher-choice at the heart of the offer.

RECOMMENDATIONS

04

Recommendation

"The design of the programme should avoid an over-reliance on top-down delivery and include more participant engagement, drawing upon expertise and good practice across a range of contexts."

+ What we're doing:

Developing Music Excellence London as a network of teachers and organisations, with our Teacher Advocates giving classroom teachers a clear voice.

06

Recommendation

"Professional learning should be an aspiration throughout a music educator's career."

+ What we're doing:

Music Excellence London is a series of music-specific CPD and networking events.

03

Recommendation

"Music organisations need to work together to make the case for music-specific, rather than generic, professional learning opportunities."

+ What we're doing:

Music Excellence London is a dynamic network of classroom music teachers, music education hubs, cultural organisations and others.

05

Recommendation

"There should be an expectation that teachers continue to engage in subject-specific professional learning throughout their career."

+ What we're doing:

Ensuring that Music Excellence London is focused on subject-specific opportunities and provides a sustainable model of professional development.

music excellence london.

Transforming Key Stage 3 music in London's schools

Music Excellence London is a dynamic network of classroom music teachers, music education hubs, cultural organisations and others that aims to support excellent musical teaching and learning at Key Stage 3 in London schools. It brings together the *Peer to Peer* and *Teach Through Music* LSEF programmes, creating a single London-wide offer that will include an open-access online resource, active social media community, webinars, peer to peer support, face to face meetings and events.

By tackling isolation amongst KS3 music specialist teachers, *Music Excellence London* will support the development of subject-specific pedagogies and improve subject knowledge. Providing vital infrastructure to improve communication between schools and the wider music sector, the network will pool information about CPD and cultural learning opportunities offered by Associate Partners, including workshops, concerts and artist visits. An annual events programme will address burning issues for KS3 music, as identified by teachers.

"I now feel much more confident when encouraging students to participate in whole class music making as well as working with ensemble groups."

KS3 music teacher

MEL will build on the key learning from *Peer to Peer* and *Teach Through Music* by:

- ✔ tackling the isolation that music teachers experience in schools
- ✔ helping teachers to improve pupils' confidence, engagement and outcomes in music
- ✔ working with teachers to help them find their own solutions
- ✔ providing music-specific CPD and networking events



You can join the conversation about Music Excellence London through our website, Twitter or Facebook.

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We're looking forward to hearing your views about the future of music education in London.

music excellence london.