



A Job Half Done

When the London Schools Excellence Fund (LSEF) was announced in 2013, Music Mark saw an opportunity to address a longstanding conundrum in music education. The 2011 Ofsted subject report had stated, “By a considerable margin, the least effective teaching was seen in Key Stage 3... The most effective teaching was seen in Key Stage 4...” Why did Ofsted judge KS3 as being significantly weaker than KS4 when it is taught by the same teachers?

Our journey began with a pilot CPD session in South West London. In the feedback, teachers described a variety of further development needs but nearly all of them wanted Ofsted’s perspective of outstanding practice to feature in any further CPD.

For our main LSEF funded Peer to Peer programme, we first created a panel that included expert teachers who had been judged as outstanding by Ofsted. Through discussion and visits, we sought to distil the features of excellence. We cross-referenced this with the work of John Hattie, who had identified three main attributes that made the difference between experienced and expert teachers. These were challenge, deep representation of teaching and learning, and monitoring and feedback. From this, we constructed initial CPD sessions where teachers could learn about and discuss those attributes and how teachers from our ‘expert panel’ put those into practice. For the second part of the programme, we facilitated peer mentoring where groups of teachers could meet to discuss how they might interpret and incorporate the attributes of excellence in their own practice against their own identified needs.

With any programme, we would expect those who complete it to gain most from it, and so it proved. Teachers who engaged most with the programme stated that they had developed as a result. We heard from teachers about the impact across all the areas of teaching and learning we had hoped to influence. We were told of pupils having higher aspirations in music and increased participation in music beyond the classroom. The length of the programme was too short to enable us to judge another desired outcome, more pupils continuing to be engaged with music in KS4.

Our Theory of Change had identified a number of potential barriers, which might prevent teachers from achieving these outcomes. These barriers included a lack of support from the school to take part and / or to enable staff to reflect and engage fully

with the programme. Another barrier to engagement, which we hadn't foreseen, was the turnover of staff. Many heads of music at the time of the pilot had moved to different posts by the end of the programme.

We had significant challenges getting teachers to engage, which was disappointing considering the enthusiastic feedback from our initial pilot and first CPD course. For example, many teachers signed up to the programme but did not complete the registration process, which included getting a signed agreement from a member of their senior leadership team. As a result, they did not attend any of the CPD sessions. Teachers who attended only one CPD course indicated that there had been no impact. Those who chose not to participate in the mentoring phase cited lack of interest and lack of relevance.

Our learning from Peer to Peer suggests a number of challenges for those who teach music at KS3 and their SLTs:

- Will the development of teachers be limited without opportunities to engage with their peers and learn from the practice of others?
- How can teachers' high expectations of pupils be demonstrated without comparing their expectations with those of their peers?
- How can schools know pupils are achieving at or above expectations without peer validation of teacher judgements?
- Can conceptualising pupils' progress as a journey across KS3 into KS4, as described in the Music Mark Progression Framework, enable teaching at KS3 to match the quality of teaching at KS4?

We are very grateful to the Greater London Authority and LSEF for funding this important work. We are also grateful to all those who contributed to the programme, our expert panel and all the teachers and mentors who took part, our evaluators from the University of Sussex, our partners at ABRSM, and our wider partnerships including London's music education hubs and our sister programme Teach Through Music.

Since our initial pilot, we have engaged with teachers about music learning at KS3, including a small group of instrumental teachers to explore their contribution. But our work is half done, so we are not stopping there. We have published a collection of case studies looking at the experience of three participants. Reading these, you can find out about their specific experiences and the impact their learning has had in their schools. Our online network allows teachers across the country to connect with each other and share both ideas and resources.

We are now coming together with our sister programme, Teach Through Music, to develop Music Excellence London. This legacy project, again funded by LSEF, will build on learning from both programmes and allow us to continue working with teachers to support them in their KS3 music teaching. Music Excellence London will include online resources, an active social media community, webinars and face-to-face events. Sign up to learn more at <http://www.musicexcellence.org.uk/>

Music Mark remains committed to the development and improvement of teaching and learning and pupil outcomes in music at all key stages. In that spirit, we continue to

review the recommendations made by the University of Sussex and will implement them where appropriate as Music Excellence London evolves. A number of recommendations are for the wider sector and we are committed to developing partnerships and contributing our expertise to move forward with these as well. All such work supports Music Mark's ongoing advocacy to schools to value music and its potential impact on pupils.

Graeme Smith

Chair and on behalf of the Board of Trustees of Music Mark

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