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## Teaching Music in England Today

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Abstract:	<p>This research explores the issues and challenges facing music teachers in England today. It aims to understand these and provide a more detailed understanding of their views about the potential opportunities and limitations of music education. It does this through an analysis of new data drawn from an online question (n.621) and telephone interviews (n.38) with music teachers from across all regions of England. This data collection took place in early 2020 prior to the lockdown in England as a result of COVID-19. The analysis of this data took place during April and May 2020, whilst England was under lockdown. Key themes explored relate to funding, equal opportunities and access to music education, hidden personal costs, confidence in policy making, leadership and accountability. Due to the timing of the analysis of the data, the conclusions drawn from this study are reflected upon in light of the imposition of restrictions due to the COVID-19 global pandemic. By identifying the challenges faced by music teachers in England, and their pragmatic responses to these, it is hoped that those responsible for music education in other parts of the world can make wiser choices than those made by English policy-makers.</p>

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## Teaching Music in England Today

### Abstract

This research explores the issues and challenges facing music teachers in England today. It aims to understand these and provide a more detailed understanding of their views about the potential opportunities and limitations of music education. It does this through an analysis of new data drawn from an online question (n.621) and telephone interviews (n.38) with music teachers from across all regions of England. This data collection took place in early 2020 prior to the lockdown in England as a result of COVID-19. The analysis of this data took place during April and May 2020, whilst England was under lockdown. Key themes explored relate to funding, equal opportunities and access to music education, hidden personal costs, confidence in policy making, leadership and accountability. Due to the timing of the analysis of the data, the conclusions drawn from this study are reflected upon in light of the imposition of restrictions due to the COVID-19 global pandemic. By identifying the challenges faced by music teachers in England, and their pragmatic responses to these, it is hoped that those responsible for music education in other parts of the world can make wiser choices than those made by English policy-makers.

### Introduction

Music education in England today exists in multiple spaces. Whereas in previous generations music education might have been located solely within the preserve of schools and music

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2  
3 services (Cox 2002, 1996), over the last ten years within England reforms to education policy  
4  
5 have led to significant changes to the provision of music education. The establishment of  
6  
7 music education hubs has been central to this shift in provision (DFE & DCMS 2011, p.5).  
8  
9 These 120 ‘hubs’ were set up by the Government in 2011 in every local Government region  
10  
11 across England to be the key delivery mechanism for the provision of music education  
12  
13 opportunities to their local communities. Their work is principally centered on the provision  
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15 of instrumental or vocal teaching opportunities, be it individual or small group lessons, and  
16  
17 the provision of a range of musical ensemble activities (orchestras, choirs, wind bands, big  
18  
19 bands, etc). By their nature, hubs were charged with the job of creating networks of  
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21 opportunity in their regions, drawing in a whole plethora of institutions, some public and  
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23 some private, to support the provision of a rich and connected network of music education for  
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25 their young people (Fautley & Whittaker 2018, p.3; 2017, p.2).  
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33 Prior to the introduction of music education hubs, local authorities had responsibility for  
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35 music education in terms of instrumental lessons. Schools had responsibility for music  
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37 education in terms of the broader activities outlined with the National Curriculum  
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39 documentation (i.e. the opportunities for children to learn how to perform, compose, listen,  
40  
41 review and evaluate music) which was first published in 1992 (DES 1992). The codification  
42  
43 of music within the National Curriculum at this point built upon a long history of music being  
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45 taught in schools right back to the early 1920s (as evidenced by Cox in his chapter ‘Living  
46  
47 Music in Schools’ (Cox 2002, pp.6-11). The key ‘strands’ or ‘processes’ of musical  
48  
49 understanding, namely performing, composing, listening and appraising (now more routinely  
50  
51 referred to as reviewing and evaluating in the current National Curriculum), can also be  
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53 traced back to this time.  
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3 Whilst the precise aims for music education within schools have varied and developed over  
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5 the last 100 years in England, the work of music education hubs was clearly defined within  
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7 the National Plan for Music Education (DfE & DCMS 2011) and can be viewed as distinct  
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9 from the work of primary and secondary schools and the provision of music within their  
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11 curriculum. There is a danger of a disjunction here (Musicians' Union 2019, p.5). However,  
12  
13 in the best practice music education hubs and schools work in partnership to coordinate their  
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15 approach. However, in many schools music education has declined significantly (Musicians'  
16  
17 Union 2019; ISM 2017). Within the resulting vacuum, the newly established and  
18  
19 comparatively well-funded music education hubs and other private providers compete for  
20  
21 children's musical attentions. In many cases, music education becomes solely an 'extra-  
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23 curriculum' opportunity for some as opposed to a core National Curriculum entitlement for  
24  
25 all (Lepkowska 2018).  
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33 Educational policy decisions spanning back to 2010 are generally perceived to have not  
34  
35 helped the provision of music education (NASUWT 2017). The Government's commitment  
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37 to music education being principally about learning to play a musical instrument or sing has  
38  
39 resulted in the side-lining of a broader curriculum approach where performance is part of a  
40  
41 wider mixed of activities and conceptual knowledge (DfE & DCMS 2011). As Garnett  
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43 comments, there is an inherent ideological distinction here that results in two fundamentally  
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45 different paradigms of music education:  
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51 One is a paradigm based on behaviourist psychology, in which learning music  
52  
53 consists of becoming proficient in a range of musical behaviours or skills. The  
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55 other paradigm is based on constructivist psychology, and considers musical  
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57 learning to be essentially to do with cognitive development. (Garnett 2013, p.161)  
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6 The resulting decimation of the opportunities for the study of music (as opposed to only  
7 learning a musical instrument) have been reported by many commentators, writers and  
8 academics over the last ten years (OFSTED 2013; Santry 2018; Savage 2018; UK Music  
9 2018).  
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17 Alongside this decline of ‘formal’ music education, a broad range of ‘informal’  
18 opportunities linked to the development of online learning and social media have expanded to  
19 create a new online ecosystem of musical opportunities for young people (Small & Vorgan  
20 2008; Greenfield 2009; McGoun & Savage 2011; Savage 2011). There are millions of people  
21 around the globe who are learning to play a musical instrument in this way. Studies such as  
22 Cayari (2011) have explored the affordances of specific platforms such as You Tube, whilst  
23 Waldron’s work has documented the wider use of blogs, vlogs and other platforms that young  
24 people have utilised for their musical learning both individually (Waldron 2012) and through  
25 participation with others online (Waldron 2013).  
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41 In 2020, this story is perhaps unremarkable apart from the fact that until very recently  
42 most formal music education providers in England had not availed itself of these types of  
43 technologies and music teachers were generally not equipped for this type of approach  
44 (Savage 2015, p.487). Learning about music, developing one’s instrumental skills, or  
45 collaborating in bands that takes place outside of institutions, without teachers and  
46 timetables, and without the requirement to be physically present with others, has become  
47 normal (especially under the recent COVID-19 global pandemic).  
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3 This led to an obvious question that this research has explored: what are the issues and  
4 challenges facing music teachers in England today? This new piece of research aimed to  
5 understand these and give a more detailed understanding of their views about the potential  
6 opportunities and limitations of music education in England. Given the imposition of the  
7 lockdown and subsequent ongoing impact on the work of schools, music services and music  
8 education hubs, within its conclusions this paper will also consider what the consequences of  
9 these things might mean for the work of music teachers over the coming years.  
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## 24 **Methods**

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28 This study followed an interpretive-deductive paradigm. The data collection phase was  
29 conducted in the first three months of 2020. This was prior to the lockdown in England as a  
30 result of COVID-19. It was conducted under the ethical approval of the researcher's  
31 university in the north west of England. It utilised a pragmatic mixed-methods approach to  
32 inquiry. The research methods collected quantitative and qualitative data through a process of  
33 initial online questionnaires and follow-up telephone interviews with selected participants.  
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The self-completing questionnaire (n.621) consisted of closed and open questions. At the  
end of the questionnaire, participants were asked whether or not they would like to be  
contacted to participate in a follow-up telephone interview. Out of those who agreed to be  
contacted (n.426), 38 interviews were concluded by the end of the data collection stage  
(March 2020). Interviews took place online via Skype or by telephone and focused on key

issues that had been identified through a provisional analysis of the data from the online questionnaires. Interviews were transcribed by the researcher in real-time.

The data analysis phase took place during April and May 2020, whilst England was in lockdown following the spread of COVID-19. Data from the questionnaires and the online questionnaire were analysed using Denscombe's (2010) five stages of inductive analysis. Key data was copied from the online questionnaire and interview transcripts into an Excel document; second-stage reading and re-reading of data allowed for the identification of themes and sub-themes within the data and also the emerging of particular categories that seemed important; the third stage involved a comparison of data between themes, sub-themes and categories to determine any patterns or interesting relationships between ideas; the fourth stage involved noting isolated or alternative perspectives that seemed to be located outside the of the emerging consensus; the fifth, and final, stage resulted in a discussion document that identified the main themes that had emerged and positioned these alongside the existing research literature in this field.

## Results

The initial online questionnaire was completed by 621 participants with the following age profile.

*Table 1: Age profile of online questionnaire respondents*

Age	%
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21-30	16.4
31-40	21.4
41-50	31.1
51-60	24.6
60+	6.4

The geographical spread of the participants was as follows:

*Table 2: Geographic areas of online questionnaire respondents*

Area	%
North West	22.6
Greater London	15.2
South West	11.6
East Midlands	10.4
Yorkshire and the Humber	9.8
North West	8.8
East of England	7.9
North East	7.6
West Midlands	6.1

The significant number of responses from the north west of England and Greater London are accounted for by the fact that the researcher is located within a university with a large faculty of education in the north west of England, and also works extensively with a large charity supporting music education in London. Of the total participants, the vast majority of responses were from instrumental teachers working in various settings (principally including music services and music education hubs, but also a few private companies). Other respondents included classroom teachers of music and those with responsibility for managing organisations delivering music education (including music services and music education hubs). The following table outlines the key respondent groups.

*Table 3: Employment types in the online questionnaire and interview respondents*

<b>Employment Status</b>	<b>Online Questionnaire (%)</b>	<b>Interview (%)</b>
Self-employed instrument music teacher	56.8	60
Employed instrumental music teacher	20.4	20
School-based music teacher	10.6	15
Manager of music education provision	8.6	5
Other	3.6	0

The thematic analysis of the collected data revealed the following themes: issues related to funding, equal opportunities and access to music education, hidden costs, confidence in

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3 policy making, leadership and accountability. A selection of key data representing each of  
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5 these themes will be discussed before a broader discussion in light of the wider literature  
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7 presented above.  
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## 10 11 12 **1. Funding Issues** 13 14 15

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17 The paucity of funding for music education was one of the most frequently mentioned  
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19 topics in both sets of data. Respondents commented on the lack of Government funding, or at  
20  
21 least the allocation of this funding by headteachers and others, as well as the resulting  
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23 demands being made of others, notably parents:  
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28 The key challenges are falling school budgets and headteachers prioritising other  
29  
30 areas of the curriculum. In my experience this means that schools pass on the costs of  
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32 tuition on to parents. Many of these parents struggle financially and my students have  
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34 to stop their lessons. (Instrumental teacher, in interview)  
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41 Many instrumental teachers were able to identify those at risk with more detail, highlight  
42  
43 what have become known as the ‘working poor’ as being particularly susceptible to these  
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45 increased costs:  
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50 In our area the parents just above the threshold for free tuition are particularly at risk.  
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52 It is those parents and families who don’t qualify for free school meals but are still  
53  
54 struggling financially. I’ve noticed a considerable decrease in this ‘working poor’  
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56 demographic particularly those students who are wanting to learn a woodwind or  
57  
58 brass instrument. (Instrumental teacher, in interview)  
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Specifically, teachers reported that 85.4% of parents made a financial contribution of some sort to the cost of instrumental lessons within primary and secondary schools. 68.2% of primary schools made a financial contribution to these lessons compared to 22.3% of secondary schools. Whilst 76% reported that there was provision to support those families who were struggling financially to help access instrumental lessons, just over half of the interview respondents (53.2%) stated that they felt that this support was too limited. Around two-thirds (64.5%) of the interview respondents considered that the cost of instrumental music lessons within schools was fair and compared well to the costs associated with other activities (e.g. sports clubs).

## 2. Equal Opportunities and Access to Music Education

Another main theme drawn from the data related to the equal opportunities and access to music education. Respondents within London, for example were able to identify significant variations between London boroughs.

There is huge variation across London. But there is a particular lack of equity for those our most deprived communities and those who are not involved in the formal school system. Some of our music hubs are working really hard. But others are not functioning properly. There is a bit of a postcode lottery here that needs addressing urgently in my view. (Instrumental teacher, in interview)

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3 For many, this equality issue was burning strongly in their responses. Their passion was  
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5 obvious:

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10 Every child is inherently musical. Every adult also has that inbuilt musicality even  
11  
12 though many of them don't believe it! Everyone should have an equal opportunity,  
13  
14 including all those in the middle, to get a great music education in their local area.

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16  
17 It is such a shame that many of the youngsters I know are not able to get this  
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19 opportunity when others, even those on the other side of our borough, can.

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21 (Instrumental teacher, in interview)  
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### 29 **3. Hidden Costs**

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33 Within the questionnaire data, teachers were asked to summarise their main teaching  
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35 activities in a typical week and allocate a time percentage against these. Given that the  
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37 majority of responses came from instrumental teachers (77.2%), with a much smaller  
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39 response from classroom teachers (10.6%), it was not surprising that the main teaching  
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41 activities related to individual instrumental lessons (88.2% responded that this formed the  
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43 majority (56.6%) of their working week) and small group tuition (defined as less than four  
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45 students in a group, 76.7% responded that this activity formed 30.5% of their typical working  
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47 week). Alongside these two main teaching activities, a smaller amount of time whole class  
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49 teaching (10.5% of respondents and 11.4% of total allocated time) and ensemble coaching  
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51 (47.4% of respondents and 9.6% of allocated time) were two further key teaching activities  
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53 identified in the questionnaire responses.  
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The personal and hidden costs of these activities were also unveiled in this data. 82.5% of respondents stated that there was no time or pay associated with the planning time for any of these teaching activities. Unlike the vast majority of classroom teachers, who would routinely and as part of their employment contract, receive a time allocation for planning and preparation, these instrumental teachers had no such allocation. Additionally, at the time of the research (pre-COVID 19), 95.5% of the instrumental teachers who responded to the interview indicated that they had to travel to their places of work and that 90.2% of these received no pay for the time taken; 77.9% also stated that they received no travel subsidy or allowance for fuel.

These hidden costs to the individual instrumental teacher have changed significantly in the last few years due to a shift from employed to self-employed status in many music services and music education hubs across England. In interview, the consequences of this shift in employment practice were only too evident. For this individual, the imposition of a zero-hours contract has meant that her sense of loyalty to her former employer has been tested to the limit:

I have a zero hours contract. Sadly, there is a complete lack of commitment to me, from my music education hub, and vice-versa. I can just walk away from them whenever I want, and they can do the same to me. It is really sad. There used to be a clear career structure that we all knew about. Now, I don't know anybody that is a fully-employed peripatetic teacher. It is not a profession anymore. We are not professionals. It's not a career either. We are not tied to them and they are not tied to us. (Instrumental teacher, in interview)

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3 This instrument teacher had experienced working for an employer under a previous  
4 arrangement. The uncertainty of the contractual terms, as far as they extend, and the fragile  
5 nature of the ‘contract’ are only too evident. Younger instrumental teachers expressed similar  
6 views. This younger teacher seemed to have a clearer understanding about what a zero-hours  
7 contract meant in practice, but the stresses and strains associated with this were also clearly  
8 evident in her response to the same question.  
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19 As far as I understand it, in a zero hours contract services are retained by the  
20 employer without any obligation to provide me with any work in any given week.  
21 Other benefits such as pension and holiday pay are none existent. As a freelance  
22 teacher I invoice the parents directly and this has massively increased my admin (for  
23 which I’m not paid of course). My relationship with the schools is all a little bit odd.  
24 Although I provide a service on their behalf, there isn’t really any formal or  
25 contractual relationship there. It is strange and stressful. This stress comes from the  
26 lack of a formal relationship between the school and myself as a peripatetic teacher.  
27 Additionally, I work in six schools on a regular basis and the situation is the same in  
28 all of them. From school to school, their attitudes can be night and day apart in terms  
29 of the welcome I receive and the support that offer for instrumental teachers.  
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45 (Instrumental teacher, in interview)  
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49 This teacher’s story points to many hidden costs. There is the obvious stress associated  
50 with the fragility of the contractual terms, and the associated lack of provision in terms of  
51 sick and holiday pay. The wider issues around contracts with individual parents, invoicing  
52 and increased bureaucracy are replicated in each of the schools that she works within,  
53 creating compound stresses and strains that impact on her working life.  
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#### 4. Confidence in Policy Making

Respondents were asked about their confidence in the Government's music education policy. They were presented with a six point scale within the questionnaire. This ranged from 'no confidence' to 'complete confidence'. 4.6% of questionnaire respondents expressed some degree of confidence in the Government's handling of music education. The remainder, 95.4%, expressed lack of confidence in varying degrees, with 67.1% expressing a complete lack of confidence in Government policy. These figures are in line with research conducted by 2019 (Musicians' Union 2019), which found that 64.8% teachers expressed a complete lack of confidence in the Government's management of music education.

One of the major contributory factors in this lack of confidence, cited time and time again in the questionnaire responses and the interview data was the English Baccalaureate (commonly referred to as the EBacc), and its impact in the creation of 'league table' of subjects in the secondary schools. The English Baccalaureate was introduced by the Government in 2010. It is a requirement on all secondary schools to publish the number of students that receive an A\* - C in five or more subject areas at GCSE. The subject areas designated within the EBacc include English, Mathematics, Sciences and Humanities. None of the arts subjects were included within the EBacc. This has led to many headteachers deliberately excluding or minimising the opportunities for their pupils to study these subjects at Key Stage 4 (for pupils aged between 14 – 16). Given that the data around the EBacc 'performance' of each school is publicly available, it is not difficult for any organisation to publish 'league tables' of results for schools, with those scoring highly on the EBacc



measures seen to be succeeding despite the narrowing of the curriculum and the prioritisation of certain subjects 'above' others.

In this survey, only 4.3% of respondents thought that the EBacc had a positive impact on music education in schools. This is down from the 8.4% in the Musicians' Union study from last year (ibid) and also in line with research conducted by the University of Sussex (University of Sussex 2018).

But despite the gloomy assessment of recent Government policy, the data did find some evidence of optimism for the future of music education in England. Teachers expressed a positive degree of optimism about music education in their local areas, with 65.8% being more optimistic than pessimistic. This optimism also spread into one key aspect of recent Government policy, the National Plan for Music Education. One interviewee put it like this:

The music education plan definitely is a right way forward. I deliver sessions in schools and make music that perhaps wouldn't take place unless the Hub hadn't sent me in in the first place. We still find some schools reluctant to take the opportunity (even though they are either free or heavily subsidised by my hub) because of timetabling, space etc. We are not allowed to teach in the morning due to the disruption of what the head-teachers perceive as 'key subjects'! I'm not sure that any music plan in the world, however good it is, could convince some Heads that doing a half an hour's singing session in the morning is just as beneficial to a young person's development as half an hour of literacy or numeracy!!! (Instrumental teacher, in interview)

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3 In interviews, there were numerous pleas to stake-holders and policy-makers to recognise  
4 the value of music education, not just in relation to the intrinsic benefits that a music  
5 education can bring but also to the wider economic benefits:  
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12 Music and the wider performing arts contribute a huge amount to our nation's  
13 GDP. They are one of our biggest exports. The UK is known for its great  
14 musicians. If music education declines, what can we give to the world that's  
15 unique? (Instrumental teacher, in interview)  
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24 ... the societal benefits:  
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28 Music education must be valued. If you want to keep children off the streets, a reason  
29 to live, improve their mental health, something to enjoy, it is hugely valuable. Music  
30 gives our young people confidence, strength a willingness to embrace life in its  
31 fulness. It brings them, and their communities, together. It can provide healing in  
32 troubled times. Music offers us so much. If you can't value it for that, at least value it  
33 for what it gives in terms of life-enhancing qualities. And it has to start in school.  
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42 (Classroom teacher, in interview)  
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47 and the personal benefits in terms of mental health and well-being:  
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51 Music enhances your self-worth and self-image. It gives you an inner-confidence and  
52 a voice. Much of the music education I've done over the years not been about the  
53 music but about life! I can light a spark in a child and fuel their passion for music  
54 which can last throughout their lives. (Instrumental teacher, in interview)  
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## 5. Leadership and Accountability

Respondents were quick to point out challenges arising from changes to the school curriculum. This took place at a number of levels. Firstly, within primary school, respondents pointed to an increasing neuroticism amongst parents about their children learning musical instruments in school:

Parents are very neurotic about their children missing curriculum time (even at Key Stage 1) to learn to play an instrument. They often complain to me and, despite my arguments that this is a core part of the curriculum, they just don't get it! (Classroom teacher, in interview)

This negative attitude was also a view held by headteachers and school governors from around half of the telephone interview respondents. This comment was typical:

There has been an Increase in the underlying attitude in governing bodies and senior leadership teams that small group and individual instrumental lessons are 'elitist' or worse, not necessary. I have noted an increase in some schools not meeting any of the aims of the National Plan for Music Education, and this includes not giving children any opportunities to learn to play a musical instrument. (Music Service manager, in interview)

In addition to the widely understood contraction in music education in the Key Stage 3 and 4 curriculum, those leading music services and music education hubs were in ready agreement that the negative implications of Government policies such as the EBacc are still biting hard in leading to discriminatory decisions by headteachers who see easy cuts in one area of the curriculum whilst favouring others:

There is a continued lack of enthusiasm in mainstream secondary education to allow time for music education in schools. The Government have pushed music education to the side-lines in favour of EBacc subjects. But in many of the schools that I work in, there is also a strong bias in favour of sports provision, both in terms of time and funds - regardless of the desires or abilities of the learners or their families - to a huge degree. (Instrumental teacher, in interview)

These examples of perceived poor leadership led many of the respondents to consider the role and function of Government agencies. One such agency is the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (OFSTED). OFSTED is the Government's inspectorate for schools and other organisations that provide education for pupils of all ages. Additionally, they inspect and regulate services that care for children and young people more broadly (e.g. nurseries and care homes). Respondents felt that OFSTED could be more forceful in challenging headteachers and forcing a change of direction. This classroom teacher was distraught at recent events and really could not see any other alternative:

My headteacher wrote to parents at the start of this academic year. He said, "Music is a hobby, it is not a career. It will not be supported by the school. I will not allow children to leave curriculum lessons for instrumental tuition or leave school to take

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3 graded exams. We are only supporting children's learning". Could OFSTED help  
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5 challenge his philistine views? I know that music is being cut in many schools in my  
6  
7 local area. Head-teachers are under pressure to get results in core subjects. But they  
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9 will listen to and react to OFSTED. It can sway them. (Classroom teacher, in  
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11 interview)  
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17 However, other respondents were more cautious and worried about the negative impact of  
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19 OFSTED getting involved in enforcing a 'prescriptive' approach to music education. This  
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21 primary school teacher who was a specialist in music education wondered whether it would  
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23 lead to a knee-jerk reaction from headteachers that would not improve the current situation at  
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25 all:  
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31 Music in primary schools is disappearing. Having worked in several primary schools,  
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33 as soon as I leave a school music seems to disappear. Teachers are supposed to do it  
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35 but they don't. Even confident teachers seem to find other priorities rather than look  
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37 at including Music. Many lack confidence. How can music get back on a primary  
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39 school's agenda? OFSTED might have a role to play here but the danger is that it  
40  
41 could just become a tick-boxing exercise. Children need a broad and balanced  
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43 curriculum and OFSTED might have a role in enforcing this. It could be a quick,  
44  
45 knee-jerk reaction. Head-teachers might see this as just another thing to do and look  
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47 for simple solutions without giving it a decent amount of thought. We need to  
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49 encourage heads to see music as a curriculum subject rather than just something to  
50  
51 do with performing an instrument at a harvest festival service! (Classroom teacher, in  
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53 interview)  
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As with many of the issues raised by this data, respondents ultimately returned to the issue of funding of music education. Around 64.3% felt that were OFSTED to implement a strong reporting element in respect of music and arts education, head-teachers and governors would be forced to reconsider their decisions regarding the paltry levels of funding allocated to curriculum music:

If OFSTED highlight and celebrate a good music education provision in a school then the ripples will be felt throughout the local community and by other schools too. OFSTED reports should also talk about the provision of arts and music in the curriculum. It will provide a major trigger for funding by head-teachers and school governors. It would also put pressure on schools that don't have music specialists to correct that and have some decent input there too. (Classroom teacher, in interview)

Finally, a significant number of respondents (52.6%) agreed with the proposition that a school's designation as outstanding should not be awarded if music did not feature in their curriculum offer to students. However, this respondent was articulate in his belief that we also had a responsibility towards OFSTED to engage with, and educate, them about the principles of a good quality music education programme:

The Director of OFSTED is strong and made some helpful comments around the arts recently. Like many, I think, I would agree that unless a school has a good arts provision shouldn't get an outstanding designation is probably a good thing. We should keep them informed so that they can make their judgements appropriately. We need to make them feel like they can do some good. (Music education hub manager, in interview)

## Discussion

In the best practice, schools and local authorities liaised together to offer children within their area a united approach. However, there was always the chance that provision could become disjointed.

Within the wider set of educational reforms that the coalition Government initiated in 2011, the role of local authorities diminished in terms of the management of schools. The vast majority of secondary schools, and a good number of primary schools, are now independent academies and not under the control of their local authorities. This has created a patchwork of provision in terms of music education within schools not having to justify their curriculum choices or offer in any meaningful way to their local authorities.

Local authorities have also sought to discard aspects of their work because of stringent cuts to their budgets. In many instances, music education hubs have actually replaced the services offered by local authorities. One such example is in Cheshire East, where the Love Music Trust replaced the Cheshire East Music Service (Savage, 2014). In this specific case, the Love Music Trust is a charitable trust but, in many others, for-profit companies have sought to exploit the vacuum created by this instability. The consequences for high quality music education has been seriously threatened. The detrimental effect on music teacher's pay, terms, and conditions have been documented in reports by the Musicians' Union (Musicians' Union, 2016 & 2019).

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3 The recognition of the multiple sites where music education is found marks a significant  
4 change in the education policy for music education within the United Kingdom. No other  
5 school curriculum subject has been treated in this way, with its own national plan (DfE,  
6 2010) or received a dedicated funding stream delivered by an agency external to the  
7 Department for Education. Whilst some would argue that has weakened the position of  
8 music education within schools (Gill, 2017), there has been no doubt that it has unveiled  
9 the plethora of opportunities for, and locations of, music education across the country and  
10 given these alternative sites of music education a boost in status and funding (Arts Council  
11 England 2017).  
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26 However, the wider impacts on the lives of music teachers, both instrumental teachers  
27 and classroom teachers, has been significant, as evidenced by the data and accompanying  
28 analysis here. It presents a worrying picture of a de-professionalised workforce with little  
29 security in terms of pay, terms and conditions of employment. The hidden costs associated  
30 with working as an instrumental teacher in the current context are significant and perhaps  
31 unsustainable for many. For classroom teachers, the impact of policy decisions made by  
32 the Government and the interpretations of these locally by headteachers have caused  
33 significant worry and concern about the nature, breadth and depth of the music education  
34 curriculum in primary and secondary schools.  
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49 Teachers in both settings raised concerns about equal opportunities. Sadly, the  
50 ‘postcode lottery of music education’ (Instrumental teacher, in interview) is too apparent in  
51 many parts of England. As we have discussed, even within one London borough the  
52 differences in terms of what can and cannot be accessed by families is acute and stark.  
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58 These inequalities are driven by significant cuts in funding to music education in three  
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3 main forms over the past ten years; firstly, in terms of central Government funding for  
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5 music education via the grants made to music education hubs, academies and free schools;  
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7 secondly, reductions in local Government funding for maintained schools; and finally, as a  
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9 result of headteachers' decisions to allocate funding in what they see as more important  
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11 areas of the curriculum. These issues have led to a music teachers reporting a crisis in  
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13 confidence in Government policy both in this and previous data sets (Musicians' Union  
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15 2019). Despite these concerns, it was encouraging to note the determined enthusiasm and  
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17 passion for music education by many respondents. Even in the pieces of data shared above,  
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19 this undercurrent regarding the joy of music and its importance in our lives together are  
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21 easily noticed and should be celebrated.  
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### 31 **Conclusion**

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35 Whilst the data collection for this research took place in early 2020, the thematic  
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37 analysis of it took place around the time that the lockdown in England as a result of the  
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39 COVID-19 pandemic was imposed (early April 2020). At a stroke, many of the  
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41 conventional forms of face-to-face music education provision in schools that have been  
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43 discussed above had to stop with immediate effect. The consequent impact on the lives of  
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45 musicians, instrumental teachers and others in the performing arts has been profoundly  
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47 negative and many are predicting will that these will extend for a significant period of  
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49 time.  
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56 The COVID-19 global pandemic has had a dramatic impact on the sector and forced it  
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58 to re-imagine new approaches to music education. Music teachers in schools and  
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3 instrumental teachers in music services and music education hubs have moved their  
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5 provision online at considerable speed, harnessing the potential of video technologies,  
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7 streaming media and other tools to maintain a music education offer to their students at this  
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9 difficult time. It is notable that such approaches were mentioned within the National Plan  
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11 for Music Education (DfE 2010), albeit something of a side-note:  
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17 Video links through desk top video/audio conferencing technology may be a solution  
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19 for many. Video conferencing facilities and software applications that allow users to  
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21 make voice and video calls over the internet can provide face-to-face access with  
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23 tutors, other schools and wider music education providers. This can reduce the cost  
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25 and necessity for travel and can enable more children to access diverse music  
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27 teaching opportunities. (DfE 2010, p. 39)  
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33 This recommendation was not acted upon by many, with a few notable exceptions.  
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35 NYMAZ's Connect:Resound project, an action research project exploring how digital  
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37 technologies could be used to deliver music education and enrichment activities to children  
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39 living in rurally isolated areas (NYMAZ 2015), is a leading example. Schools and other  
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41 music organizations worked alongside NYMAZ and its partners to develop new teaching  
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43 and business models for delivering music education online. Following a successful pilot  
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45 project in North Yorkshire, Connect: Resound expanded its work with music organizations  
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47 across the country to deliver and further develop this unique approach to online music  
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49 education, including North Yorkshire, Durham and Darlington, East Riding of Yorkshire,  
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51 Cumbria, and Cornwall Music Education Hubs.  
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3 Under the global pandemic, these types of approaches are now common place as  
4 schools, music services and music education hubs rapidly implement new approaches to  
5 the provision of music education. This technologically-mediated solution has made new  
6 demands on classroom and instrumental teachers but they have risen to the challenge  
7 admirably. Across England, young people are benefiting from these skilful and reflective  
8 teachers within an online space. As restrictions are lifted and things return to normal, there  
9 is a strong expectation in the sector that the lessons learned during this period will result in  
10 longer lasting changes in the delivery models.  
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24 How this will impact on the lived experiences of music teachers in the longer term is  
25 open to question. The issues identified in this research mark a significant shift over the last  
26 few years regarding what it means to be a music teacher in England today. The current  
27 crisis is marking further changes. Despite the negativity expressed around funding, equal  
28 opportunities, policy formation, leadership, accountability and the wider hidden costs that  
29 many teachers have had to face, this research has revealed the tenacity, commitment and  
30 innovative spirit of many music teachers. For them, the power of an authentic music  
31 education offer for their students is too important to let carelessly formed educational  
32 policies, a global pandemic or significant personal costs get in the way. In the words of one  
33 of the instrumental teachers in interview, “Take music seriously. The benefits for everyone  
34 are huge. Enshrine its place in the curriculum and make sure it is properly delivered”.  
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