



# 10 things schools should know about learning music

leaders of high quality music education for all



# Hearing the music

Music makes an important contribution to the life of every school and should be celebrated, promoted and encouraged. It helps build pupils' self-esteem and self-discipline and leads to higher standards across the curriculum. Today many more schools are benefiting from this transformational power that music brings to pupils, staff and parents alongside the wider whole school community.

This booklet summarises the 10 key benefits of music, from recognition within the 'National Plan for Music Education' that music is an educational building block through to the inclusive nature of music irrespective of abilities.

Music Mark and its members are committed to supporting and helping all schools provide the highest quality music education for their pupils and students. To learn more about how music can transform children and enhance your school's attainment levels and reputation visit [www.musicmark.org.uk](http://www.musicmark.org.uk).



## 1 Music *boosts* pupil and social development

“An outstanding, high-quality music curriculum provides well-taught, musical activities that include pupils of all backgrounds, interests and abilities. These experiences are not 'one-offs' – they are frequent and sustained. Good music education has a core classroom curriculum entitlement, complemented by additional instrumental and vocal activities, and enriched by the work of professional and community music groups. Where it is coordinated, planned and taught well, such a music curriculum helps pupils from all groups to make excellent progress in their musical understanding and in their social development, throughout their time at school.”

Mark Phillips HMI - National Adviser for Music, Ofsted



A well-taught musical school and a successful school often go hand-in-hand. Sometimes music can prove to be the catalyst that makes a good school exceptional. When the alchemy of music is allowed to permeate the

school curriculum it can have a positive affect on all aspects of the school's learning. Music can also enhance the creative reputation of the school and its pupils through performance in and out of the classroom.

“Research has shown that there are benefits of active engagement with music which go beyond the development of musical knowledge and skills and the enjoyment and appreciation of music. Making music can support the development of literacy, numeracy and listening skills.”

Professor Sue Hallam, Dean of the Faculty of Policy and Society,  
Institute of Education, University of London.



## 2 Music *improves* learning skills

Research undertaken by the University of London has clearly demonstrated the cognitive benefits that music gives young children particularly in the younger years of Key Stages 1 and 2.



## 3 Music *fosters* team working

Playing in small groups, in whole classes or in any ensemble or orchestra means you are part of an integrated team. Everyone has a

role however large or small and this inter-dependency on one another helps to build team working and a sense of ownership.

“Music engenders a sense of belonging, improves team work and encourages self discipline and a sense of achievement. It promotes co-operation, responsibility, commitment and mutual support. It provides an outlet for relaxation and a channel for emotional expression.”

Lord Winston, Chairman, Royal College of Music (RCM Sparks Learning and Participation Programme)





“What better way of teaching young people mutual respect for one another than playing together in an ensemble? Performance requires a deep understanding of your fellow players’ strengths and weaknesses and discipline to not let others down. It is a powerful way of strengthening emotional intelligence and developing the all important life and employability skills of empathy, problem solving and communication.”

Brian Lightman, General Secretary, ASCL (Association of School and College Leaders)



## 4 Music *builds* life skills

Playing an instrument or learning to sing requires real concentration. Quietness and calm whether on stage or in the classroom is essential. Working alongside other members of an instrumental or singing group helps children to recognise their own skills and appreciate those of others. This builds life skills and promotes the importance of working harmoniously with others towards a common goal.



## 5 Music *underpins* better behaviour

To learn music you need discipline. To play well requires regular practice and dedication. There are many occasions where music has had a transformational affect on children and helped turn their lives around. The former FMS has case histories of children where regular absenteeism has been replaced by improved attendance when music became part of their learning regime. Research\* has shown that success in the arts, including music, changed pupils’ behaviour, increasing concentration levels, developing team work and creating respect for the school environment.

\*QCA 2002 Investigation into Arts-Rich Schools

“When young people enjoy doing something it stands to reason that they often become accomplished in that pursuit. For some children music has proven to be the gateway for a more focused approach to all their studies – although music might be optional, for these children it is essential.”

Maureen Hanke,  
Head of Norfolk Music Service



# 6 Music *encourages* creativity

Music stimulates creativity in so many ways through playing and composition; it enables young people to express themselves like no other medium. It is a vital part of learning and a wonderful cultural introduction to life. To succeed today and in the future, children will need to be inventive, resourceful and imaginative. The best way to foster that creativity is through arts education.\*

Performance enhances freedom of expression and offers both pupils and schools the excitement and prestige of demonstrating their hard won skills whether in the classroom or in public. Music is often the demonstrable embodiment of both parental and school aspirations.

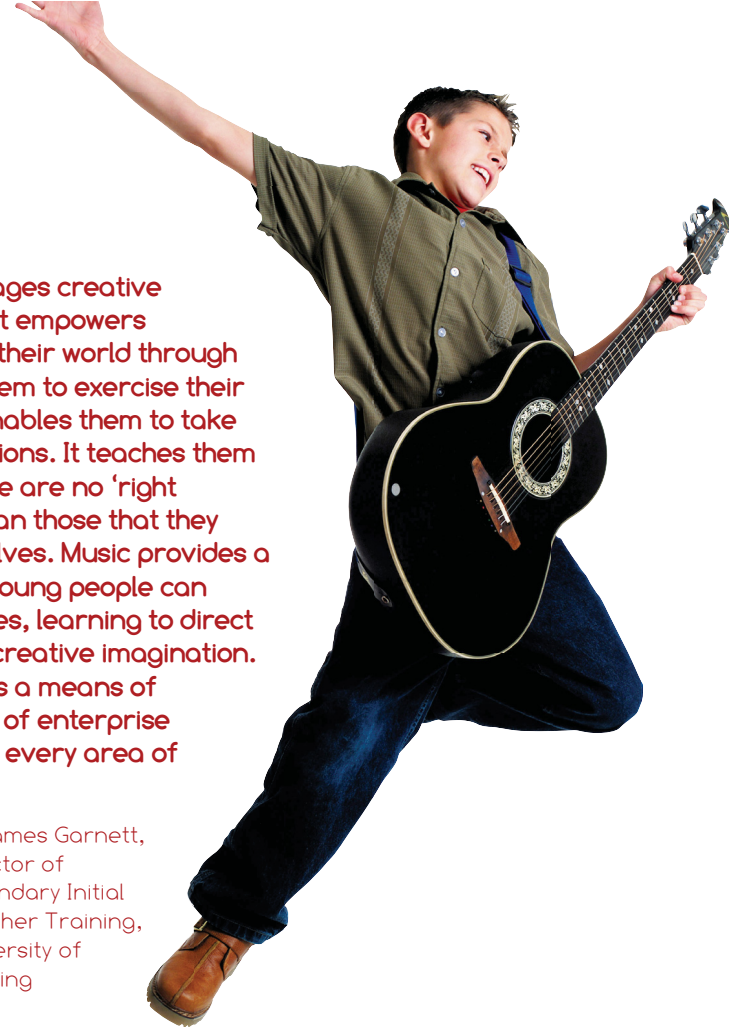
\*President's committee on the arts and humanities 2011.  
Reinvesting in arts education winning America's future through creative schools.



“Music encourages creative thinking because it empowers children to shape their world through sound. It allows them to exercise their imaginations. It enables them to take risks with conventions. It teaches them to cope when there are no ‘right answers’ other than those that they define for themselves. Music provides a medium in which young people can express themselves, learning to direct and control their creative imagination. More than this: it is a means of promoting a spirit of enterprise that can influence every area of their lives.”



Dr James Garnett,  
Director of  
Secondary Initial  
Teacher Training,  
University of  
Reading





# 7 Music is for *life*

The implications are fundamental. An early start in music often results in music becoming a life-long passion. This gift is precious and whilst not all students go on to play in concert orchestras or famous

rock bands (although the Music Service alumni reads like a who's who of musical greats!) the seeds sown in the classroom continue to flourish for a life time of musical enjoyment.

“Music has always played an important role in my work as a mathematician. I listen to a lot of music while trying to make the next mathematical breakthrough. The structures that fascinate the composer are surprisingly similar to the structures that I am drawn to as a mathematician. It's as if the same part of the brain is at play when you're doing maths and listening to music. An education bereft of either music or maths would rob children of a life-time of learning, cultural and creative opportunities!”

Professor Marcus du Sautoy, Charles Simonyi Chair in the Public Understanding of Science, Professor of Mathematics at the University of Oxford and Fellow of New College



Marcus du Sautoy





The Government said in their response to the Henley Review of Music Education: 'Music is an enriching and valuable academic subject. Research evidence shows that a quality music education can

improve self confidence, behaviour and social skills as well as improve academic achievement in areas such as numeracy, literacy and language.'

# 8 Music is an educational *building block*

In the foreword to the 'The Importance of Music' a National Plan for Music Education, Michael Gove, Secretary of State for Education, and Ed Vaizey, Minister for Culture, Communications and Creative Industries, stated:

“Most children will have their first experience of music at school. It's important that music education of high quality is available to as many of them as possible: it must not become the preserve of those children whose families can afford to pay for music tuition. While music touches the lives of all young people, the disadvantaged can benefit most...

“When young people make music together, they work toward a common goal that has the potential to change lives profoundly for the better....

“This National Plan is clear about the importance of music: it will ensure not just that more children have access to the greatest of art forms, but that they do better as a result in every other subject.”

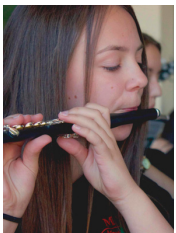


Michael Gove



Ed Vaizey

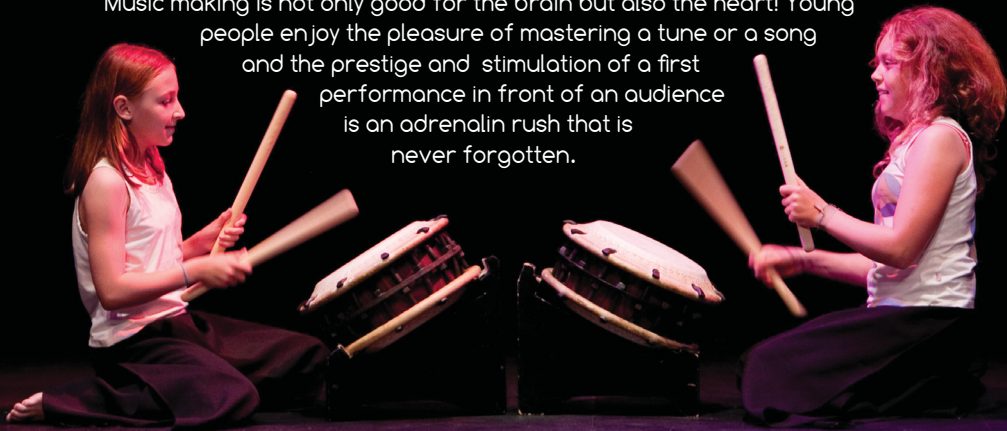




“ Music has given me the chance to experience wonderful tours like, travelling to Germany to play in fantastic venues and make new friends along the way. Furthermore I have been lucky enough to participate in many exciting events such as playing at Wimbledon Tennis with the Merton Youth Jazz Orchestra and Concert Band which was great fun and something I will always remember. Merton music has given me an incredible amount of opportunities and has inspired me, along with many others, to play an instrument and take part in a musical community.” Clara, Age 13

# 9 Music is *fun*

Music making is not only good for the brain but also the heart! Young people enjoy the pleasure of mastering a tune or a song and the prestige and stimulation of a first performance in front of an audience is an adrenalin rush that is never forgotten.



“ Music inspired me in the belief that I could achieve anything. I became more enthusiastic, had much more drive and wanted to break the barriers and do the same things as everyone else rather than just being bracketed as a disabled person.”

Charlotte White, who worked with Drake Music as a pupil at St Rose's Special School, Stroud.



# 10 Music is for *everyone*

Music is inclusive irrespective of abilities. Studies have shown that music can be of particular benefit to children and young people in challenging circumstances – not only those with Special Educational Needs (SEN) and disabilities but also those who are marginalised, vulnerable and often hard to reach.

Music gives SEN/Disabled children a unique motivation to participate and communicate. Advances in technology enable more disabled children than ever to take part in music education. The channels of touch, sight and sound that music offers can also have a profound impact on children who benefit from a therapeutic approach.



# Make music part of your school!

To find out more how music  
transforms children's lives and  
schools, talk to the leaders in music  
education.

Visit [www.musicmark.org.uk](http://www.musicmark.org.uk)



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