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A research project to evaluate whether music is being taught effectively and accessibly for all pupils in Key Stage 2.

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FRONTISPIECE

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CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

‘Music is a constant presence in our lives... Children already love music – our job in school is to nurture and help develop this love. It is no easy task though – music is highly personal, offering endless possibilities.’ (Daubney, 2017: 3.)

As stated above, music is a constant presence in our lives, and offers endless possibilities for children to explore the world around them, developing their self-esteem, confidence, resilience and well-being. (Welsh Government, 2008) The aim of this research project is to discover whether, particularly within Key Stage 2, children’s musical skills and development are nurtured and fostered effectively and accessibly, or whether music is currently a subject for which many recall ‘impoverished experiences’ or are left with the impression that they are not ‘musical’. (Daubney, 2017: 4.) The terms ‘effectively’ and ‘accessibly’ will be defined for the readers clarification further on within the research project, as well as an overall evaluation of current standards of teaching and learning of music within Wales.

Throughout this research project, a variety of resources and research will be analyzed, including current and relevant theory and curriculum documents, and research conducted by the author in a large urban school for the purpose of this project. This research project will focus on whether music is being taught accessibly and effectively in Key Stage 2 but will include elements of Foundation Phase to provide context and deepen understanding. This question was chosen for this research project as the author has always had a strong passion for music, after having many positive and exciting musical experiences personally throughout education. The author believes that music plays a vital role in children’s development, confidence and well-being and should have a major role and purpose within education.

‘Music is not an add-on, a “soft-subject” or a luxury – it is absolutely essential to our existence,’ and it is vital that music is taught effectively and accessibly for all pupils, as musical experiences and development can provide children with vital, life-long skills, confidence and a sense of identity. (The Guardian, 2019.) ‘Increasing the amount of

classroom music...can increase social cohesion, greater self-reliance, better social adjustment and more positive attitudes,' as well as making a 'major contribution to the development of self-identity.' (Hallam, 2015: 2-3.) The Children's Society (2018) discovered that, when measuring children's happiness in relation to life as a whole, there has been a significant decrease between 2009 and 2016, and 'it is estimated that three children in every average size classroom will have a mental health issue' and by the age of 14 'half of all mental health problems will have begun.' (National Assembly for Wales, 2018a: 5.) In a society in which it has been suggested children's happiness and well-being is on the decline, music can offer an outlet for children to express and explore their emotions whilst developing vital skills that can be applied to experiences throughout their lives.

CHAPTER 2 – LITERATURE REVIEW

What are the current standards of teaching and learning of music within the primary school?

Estyn reported in 2015 that it was rare for ‘standards to be high in all four creative arts: art and design, dance, drama and music, in any one school’ as ‘the quality of the curriculum for the creative arts relies too much on chance rather than on secure curriculum planning.’ (Estyn 2015: 3.) Within many schools, one creative art was seen to be taught exceptionally well due to one member of staff having a background in said creative art, suggesting that lower standards of teaching in the creative arts may be due to lack of teacher knowledge and skill. Despite the current report of low standards within the creative arts, when looking forward, within the new curriculum reform there is a focus on the expressive arts as an area of learning that can provide opportunities for children to ‘explore thinking, refine and communicate ideas, engaging thinking, imagination and senses creatively.’ The new curriculum aims to allow children to become ambitious, capable, enterprising and creative learners and contributors and through the exploration of the creative arts and, in particular, music, many skills can be developed to allow children to achieve these core purposes. (Donaldson, 2015: 43.) Nonetheless, the place and standing of the creative arts, but particularly music within the new curriculum will remain unknown until further outlines of the curriculum are published.

Music and its place within the primary school has been justified by many, as a platform to provide opportunities to develop children’s ‘creative thinking and practice, and as a unique form of personal expression,’ (Grigg, 2015: 249.) as well as there being a ‘plethora of research demonstrating how music positively contributes to our personal, psychological, social, educational and emotional development and well-being.’ (Daubney, 2017: 2.) Within the current curriculum for music at Key Stage 2 in Wales, it is stated that music in education should allow children to ‘engage with and enjoy making music,’ developing music skills relating to the ‘control, manipulation and presentation of sound.’ (Welsh Government, 2008: 10.) The areas of the curriculum for music include

the development of skills including ‘singing, playing instruments and practicing, improvising, composing and arranging music, and listening to and appraising music.’ (Welsh Government, 2008: 10.) The revised Foundation Phase Framework (Welsh Government, 2015: 47.) states that as a basis for the development of the particular skills stated above in Key Stage 2, children should be given the opportunity to have their ‘musical skills fostered and promoted through using their senses, imagination and experience.’ Therefore, within the current curriculum, Foundation Phase, children should be given opportunities to explore sound and the basis of music, and within Key Stage 2, children’s musical skills are developed further, focusing on making, appraising and composing music.

Despite the fact that the curriculum offers clear definitions for the experiences and skills that children must explore and develop whilst learning music throughout the primary school, there is evidence to suggest that music is not currently being taught to the best standards in many schools within Wales and England. OFSTED (2012: 4.) also reported that in England, the teaching of music is inadequate in one in five primary schools, and ‘While some exceptional work was seen and heard, far too much provision was inadequate or barely satisfactory,’ once again demonstrating the low standards of teaching and learning in music experienced by the majority of children within education in England and Wales.

What is ‘effective’ and ‘accessible’ teaching and learning?

When considering the current standards of teaching and learning in music, particularly at Key Stage 2, standards are not generally high enough in a vast majority of schools within both Wales and England, as discussed above. However, in order to evaluate whether it is being taught effectively and accessibly in an in-depth manner, first the term ‘effective’ in relation to the teaching of music must be defined, as well as a definition of ‘accessibility’ in relation to teaching music. The Australian Department of Education and Training (2009: 3.) defined ‘Effective teaching’ as having many characteristics: ‘effective teachers use techniques that best serve the learning needs of their students, effective teachers teach in a way that encourages students to take greater responsibility for their own learning,’ and most importantly in relation to teaching music: ‘effective teachers have a thorough knowledge of their subject content and skills.’

OFSTED (2013: 39.) produced a range of criteria to define outstanding or effective teaching, one of which states that: ‘much of the teaching in all key stages and most subjects is outstanding and never less than consistently good,’ which supports the Australian Department of Education and Training definition of effective teaching stating that effective teachers have a ‘thorough knowledge of their subject content.’ To ensure that the teaching of most subjects is never less than consistently good, practitioners must have good subject knowledge. Shulman (1986) introduced the concept of Pedagogical Content Knowledge, and argued that effective teachers had strong content, or subject knowledge, as well as a range of effective pedagogy, and effective teachers were able to use this knowledge to present and convert subject knowledge to make the knowledge accessible for learners.

Donaldson (2015, 65-68.) states that ‘Good teaching and learning ranges within and across Areas of Learning and Experience,’ suggesting that effective teaching and learning can also be achieved when a combination of the Areas of Learning are explored together, including the expressive arts. He also argues that ‘good teaching and learning means employing a blend of approaches, including those that promote problem solving, creative and critical thinking,’ and through the exploration and teaching of music, ‘learners self-esteem, confidence, resilience and perseverance, and self-discipline and commitment’ are developed, as well as contributing to ‘learners spiritual and emotional development. (Welsh Government, 2008: 8.) Overall, when considering effective teaching in relation to music, there are a large variety of criteria that must be met: effective teachers of music have a strong and transferrable subject knowledge of music and how it is outlined in the national curriculum. Effective teachers of music encourage children to take responsibility for their own learning, and explore what music means to them personally and effective teachers of music employ a range of pedagogical techniques to ensure the learning of music and musical skills are accessible to all learners.

In order to ensure the teaching and learning of music is accessible for all learners, it must also be inclusive. Inclusion itself has a variety of definitions for a variety of contexts, but Corbett and Slee (2000) argue that inclusion can exist at a variety of levels: a simple surface level or all the way up to a level at which inclusion is embedded in the

core ethos, values and culture of a school or organisation. As teachers, it is the practitioner's responsibility to 'have a secure understanding of how a range of factors can inhibit pupils' ability to learn and how best to overcome these.' (DfE, 2013 as cited in Grigg 2015: 306.) When considering whether music is being taught accessibly, practitioners must consider both any special educational needs that may affect the pupils learning but also the accessibility of the learning or exploration of music. Inclusive education is 'the process of increasing the participation of learners within, and reducing their exclusion from the cultures, curricula and communities,' and so, to allow children to be taught music accessibly, practitioners must prevent any exclusion that may be caused by special educational needs, attitudes to learning, or practical exclusion such as a lack of funds to allow access to resources. (Booth, 2000:63 as cited in Glazzard et al, 2015:36.)

Daubney (2017) reported an example of a range of barriers to learning that can affect children when learning music, whether in the classroom or in extra-curricular activities. These examples include finance, children not being able to afford lessons, clubs or trips, emotional barriers such as having difficulty expressing emotions evoked by music and psychological barriers, such as a fear of failure and low self-esteem. (Daubney, 2017: 29.) OFSTED (2012:45.) found that in schools surveyed between 2008 and 2011, only '5% of the students who were known to be eligible for free school meals were involved in additional instrumental or vocal tuition, compared with 13% of the students not known to be eligible for free school meals' They also found that 'Not enough of the schools surveyed had acted to improve participation in musical activities by under-represented groups', and there was a variety of expectations for parental involvement amongst these schools, some schools paid for all musical tuition costs, whilst other schools moved the tuition costs entirely on to parents. Such facts suggest that an issue in how accessible the learning of music is for children lies in a lack of funding or support from school budgets to develop pupils' musical skills and experiences. Therefore, in summary, to ensure music is being taught accessibly for all pupils in Key Stage 2, there are a variety of factors that must be considered: the teaching of music must be inclusive, considering pupils special education needs and emotional needs, particularly their confidence. Practitioners must also ensure that they are applying

their pedagogical content knowledge to ensure the curriculum itself is accessible to pupils, as well as ensuring that there is funding in place for pupils to support their exploration of and development in music.

What are the benefits of teaching music effectively within Key Stage 2?

Upon reflection of the definition of how music can be taught effectively and accessibly, the question remains: what is the benefit, or purpose, of teaching music effectively to pupils? Daubney (2017:7.) argues that ‘musical learning has many purposes, but one thing is for sure: school is the place where all children *must* have access to music education.’ Children’s creative participation in music ‘helps children to learn more effectively, ...inspiring new ways of thinking,’ challenging them to explore and express their emotion in and through music. (Burnard and Murphy, 2017:10.) Daubney argues that there is a ‘plethora of research demonstrating how music contributes to our personal, psychological, social, educational and emotional development and well-being.’ (Burnard and Murphy, 2017, Daubney, 2017, Hallam, 2015.) Hallam (2015), in her research of the impact of making music on the intellectual, social and personal development of children and young people, found that in a small number of studies, an engagement with music was related to a positive attitude towards school attendance. ‘Music offers the potential for enhanced self-efficacy, self-esteem and self-concept, improvements in mood, reduced anger, increased motivation and improved behaviour,’ and if it was taught effectively in schools, music could have a major impact on the majority of pupils’ attitudes, motivations and esteem. (Hallam, 2015: 14.) Hallam’s (2015: 13.) research also found that ‘music intervention studies with young children have found enhanced creativity, the greater the engagement with music the stronger the relationship’ supporting the concept that exploration of music develops children’s creativity. Burnard and Murphy (2017: 6.) support the concept that music experiences develop creativity, as they argue that creativity emerges in children when they become actively engaged in ‘exploring ideas, initiating their own learning, making choices and controlling decisions about how to express themselves using different sounds and practices.’

Campayo–Muñoz and Cabedo–Mas (2017) stated that ‘Music is an excellent tool with which to express emotions’ and ‘for this reason music education should play a role

in individuals' emotional development'. The results from their studies demonstrated that music has multiple benefits for aspects of emotional development, as well as the results from MacDonald's (2013:10) research into music and well-being through music therapy and community music projects. MacDonald's (2013:10) research highlighted that the unique psychological and musical features of improvising music 'make it an important artistic, educational and therapeutic process,' allowing the improviser to be 'creative, collaborative and expressive, allowing positive developments' in the wellbeing of participants. This suggests that allowing individuals to be expressive and free in their exploration of music can promote higher levels of well-being. Estyn (2015:3.) found that 'pupils standards of well-being in nearly all of the best practice' in the creative arts schools visited 'are good or excellent.' They also reported that both the pupils and the staff within these schools said, 'that the creative arts have a very positive impact on improving pupils well-being.' Welsh Government (2008) stated that 'music brings many benefits to learners health and well-being, some of which come directly from the intrinsic pleasure of making music.' Making music, listening to music and exploring music can, as outlined above, have a positive impact on well-being, creativity, critical thinking and expressing and processing emotions. Therefore, it is vital that music is used effectively as a tool in schools across the nation to promote children's health and well-being and encourage creativity. As Einon (2002) states, 'a child who is encouraged to be creative is likely to remain so and adapt to a changing world,' and it is the practitioners responsibility within the classroom environment to encourage creativity, and music is an excellent tool to achieve and outline such encouragement.

What are the challenges of teaching music effectively and accessibly?

As outlined above, music can have a very positive impact on children's health and well-being, but there are many challenges to teaching and fostering music in the classroom, as Daubney (2017) states: it is no easy task. There are a variety of barriers in place for practitioners when considering the teaching of music in the primary school: the decline of teacher's musical skills, a lack of teacher confidence, linking to the lack of pedagogical content knowledge, and the barrier that affects not just music, but all areas of school life: a decline in funding. Estyn (2015:3.) found that in their review of best practice of the creative arts in schools, 'many teachers who are not specialists lack the

knowledge, skills and confidence’ to teach music and the creative arts to a high standard, and also argued that ‘there is too little training and support available to help teachers develop their teaching in the creative arts.’ Ofsted found in their review of music in schools in 2012, that the teaching of music was only satisfactory in 42 schools of 90 they visited, and worse still, inadequate in 17 schools. They found that many lessons by non-specialist teachers contained activities that were in ‘themselves unmusical – completing a worksheet, drawing a picture, and talking or writing about musicians.’ (Ofsted, 2012: 19.) Ofsted argued that teachers must provide musical lessons to children in which ‘musical sound is the dominant language.’ (Ofsted, 2012: 7.)

Edwards (2010: 2.) states that ‘the visual and performing arts provide concrete experiences in which children may encounter and interact with the world in ways that are unique and special to them’, but lack of practitioner confidence can effect these concrete experiences. Beauchamp (1997: 69 as cited by Baldwin and Beauchamp, 2014: 197.) found that some teachers have issues teaching music as ‘their training did not equip them with the relevant theoretical and pedagogical background,’ and this may still be true of teachers completing their training today, as Barnes (2015:192.) states that the words ‘creativity and arts’ do not appear in the QTS standards. Baldwin and Beauchamp (2014:198.) argue that if teachers want to or are going to even begin overcoming confidence issues when teaching music, they must begin by ‘becoming involved in the lessons themselves’ instead of simply reading documents and guidance without practical exploration. Teacher confidence and skill when considering the teaching and learning of music within the primary school are a massive factor in its effectiveness and accessibility, but as outlined above, research suggests that a vast number of teachers lack the confidence and/or the skills required to effectively teach music in school, partly due to a lack of training and support for the practitioners themselves. Smith (2013: 10) argued in his report on the arts in education in Wales ‘that all initial teacher training...should ensure that creative teaching methodology is ‘core’ to educational practice,’ and such an application could begin to improve teacher confidence and support newly qualified teachers in the teaching of the arts and music.

Another barrier restricting the effectiveness and accessibility of music teaching and learning in primary schools is a lack of, and depletion of funding to support music

and extra-curricular music activities, as ‘Music suffers relegation to the corner of the curriculum and is elevated to the top of the list of spending cuts.’ (Burnard and Murphy, 2017: 11.) It was found in research by the National Assembly for Wales (2018b: 33.) that ‘there is no level playing field across Wales: some local authorities have funding for music services and some do not,’ and that the lack of funding and cost to schools has meant in some instances peripatetic music lessons have been cut down to as little as ten minutes, or music lessons are taking place with multiple children playing different instruments with different skill levels: making skills progression and support highly difficult for peripatetic teachers. For example, the BBC (2018) reported that in January of 2018, Wrexham joined other councils across Wales in ‘cutting music services, as part of its effort to reduce spending by £13 million over two years.’ The National Assembly for Wales (2018b) calls for a new national body to be responsible for delivery of music services to ensure that ‘both pupil and staff working within the music education sector, regardless of their location or social background, are afforded equitable opportunities.’ In order to ensure music is being taught effectively and accessibly across Wales, it must be ensured that both pupils and staff are given equal, relevant and vast opportunities to extend and refine their musical skills, and sufficient funding is vital to achieve this.

Overall, there are numerous barriers to overcome in order to teach music effectively and accessibly, some starting with the pupils themselves, some barriers relate to the practitioner and their experience and confidence, and others lead back to the government and higher educational authorities. Nevertheless, all of these barriers must be overcome to ensure effective and accessible music teaching and learning.

CHAPTER 3 - METHODOLOGY

In order to collect primary research to assist in answering the question ‘Is music being taught effectively and accessibly in Key Stage 2?’ the author used a variety of research methods involving both pupils and staff within the electives school in which the research was conducted. The research methods used were staff questionnaires, an interview with the music coordinator, interviews with pupils and observations of lessons. Throughout the research project, the author has also used and made reference to secondary research. Whilst research was being conducted, the author ensured that the correct ethical practices were adhered to, to ensure all participants were aware, willing and consented to taking part in the research. As seen in Appendix 1, an application for ethical approval was completed by the researcher, to ensure that the research not only adhered to the BERA Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research, (2018), but also to the university’s research guidelines.

As a practitioner, engagement with secondary research and the conduction of primary research is vital, as BERA (2014) argue that ‘keeping up to date’ with the latest developments in education enables teachers to be at their most effective level as educators. Therefore, for this research project, a variety of research methods were used to ensure a well-informed response could be given to the project’s question. Firstly, interviews were used, and the author felt that the use of interviews were vital for this project, as interviews allow participants to ‘discuss their interpretations of the world in which they live, and to express how they regard situations from their own point of view.’ (Cohen et al, 2003: 267.) In order to gain a full understanding of whether music is being taught effectively and accessibly, the author had to firstly gain an understanding of staff and pupils’ opinions of music and its importance within education. Secondly, questionnaires were used, as this research method is ‘widely used and useful instrument for collecting survey information’ from a vast number of participants. (Cohen et al, 2003: 245.) Unfortunately, of the 9 questionnaires distributed, only 2 questionnaires were returned, decreasing the validity of the results. Finally, the author used observation, as observational data provides ‘the researcher the opportunity to gather ‘live’ data from ‘live’ situations,’ which, when in an educational setting with young children can prove

vital. (Cohen et al, 2003: 306.) Overall, the author felt that the research methods used provided a well-rounded and informed picture of music and its place and whether it was taught effectively and accessibly within the elective school.

CHAPTER 4 - RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The aim of this chapter is to review, analyse and reflect upon the results of research collected during an elective experience in a large, urban school. The research collected consisted of interviews with both staff and children, questionnaires given to Key Stage 2 class teachers, and observations of a range of music lessons that took place during the time the author was in the school. The research aim was to discover whether music was being taught both effectively and accessibly for all pupils, particularly in Key Stage 2.

Observations

During the authors time at the electives school, there were a variety of opportunities provided to observe music across both the Foundation Phase and Key Stage 2. Throughout these observations the author was able to gain a good understanding of children's attitudes and responses to a variety of different music lessons. During one observation the children were given the opportunity to take part in a scheme funded by the local council called PlayAlong, and all children in Key Stage 2 took part in a Jamboree session. (See Appendix 3 and 4) During this session, the children played plastic instruments that were designed to be mimics of real instruments. Originally, the children did not have much knowledge of the groups of instruments in an orchestra or of musical notation, suggesting that they had not had the opportunity to learn about musical notation and orchestra structure. The children were very excited during the session, and they simply wanted to make noise on their instruments, also suggesting that they may not have had the opportunity to play many instruments before, as the children saw the playing of instruments as a novelty. When the session was completed, some of the

children were asked their opinions on the jamboree session and the children used words such as fun, good, happy and noisy to describe the session. As previously cited, the Welsh Government (2008) stated that music improves children's well-being, particularly due to the 'intrinsic pleasure of making music,' and the children's immediate response to the Jamboree session supported this concept. Many of the children also stated that they would like to take part in the Jamboree sessions regularly, but unfortunately, the school, at the time of the research being completed, were not looking to enroll the scheme for any further sessions due to a lack of funding. This suggests that, as previously explored in the literature review, one of the biggest barriers to teaching music accessibly and effectively is a decline in funding for music and the creative arts as a whole.

Another observation opportunity was the observation of a Year 5 music session focusing on Welsh Music, Composers and Culture. During this session, the children were listening to, and appraising a piece of music by the Welsh Composer Karl Jenkins. However, the author considered that perhaps a more contemporary artist could have been considered for the appraisal, as many children became disengaged with the video, due to a lack of interest in the musical style. As stated in the Curriculum Cymreig (Welsh Government, 2003), it is important that children explore both traditional and contemporary arts, and during this session the author felt that there was an opportunity to introduce a modern Welsh artist, to perhaps have more relevance for the children. The children were also introduced to definitions of musical elements during this session, which was effective in assisting children to appraise the music effectively. After the appraisal of the musical elements within the piece, the pupils were asked to write a short paragraph about their opinions on the music and how it made them feel. Many children could effectively discuss their emotions in relation to the music, and children used words such as relaxing, happy, and calming to describe how the music made them feel. (See Appendix 5) One pupil also stated that if they felt angry, they would like to listen to this style of music to help calm them down, and as Campayo–Muñoz and Cabedo–Mas (2017) research suggested, during this session it was observed that music helped a number of children explore and express their emotions.

Overall, during observations within the elective schools, the music sessions witnessed were effective, engaging and accessible for learners within Key Stage 2.

However, the number of music sessions that take place within classes are limited, meaning that children are not experiencing or exploring music regularly enough, which could depreciate the effectiveness and accessibility of music teaching as a whole within the school.

Interview with Music Co-Ordinator

The interview with the current Music Co-Ordinator provided an interesting insight into how music is monitored, planned for and assessed within the school, and provided very valuable information for this research project. During the interview, a variety of questions were asked considering funding for music provisions, tracking, planning and assessing music, teacher confidence and children's opportunities to experience music. (See Appendix 6.) The music coordinator shared that funding for music provisions currently come from the school budget, and the children's peripatetic lessons are currently funded by the school, meaning that parents are not requested to pay tuition for pupils' instrument lessons. As the school currently fund the peripatetic lessons, music lessons are arguably more accessible for pupils. However, she also stated that due to budget cuts, children are only put forward for music lessons if the class teacher has seen potential in the child, and children are only given one trial session before the peripatetic teacher chooses a few children to have lessons. Due to a lack of funding, children's opportunities are limited, and as many researchers have found, music is often the first subject to receive budget cuts. (Burnard and Murphy, 2017, National Assembly for Wales, 2018b, Barnes, 2015, BBC 2018.)

When the music coordinator was asked what she believed were the challenges of teaching music, her first response was time. In her opinion, there are 'pressures from other subjects: literacy, numeracy and science,' that results in a lack of time for a focus on music. This results in music being a subject that is simply 'fitted-in' when time allows. Estyn (2015:4.) also found that within schools visited during the evaluation of the creative arts standards, 'leaders have reduced the time assigned to the creative arts...as they believe devoting resources to the arts detracts from improving measurable outcomes in literacy and numeracy,' which is what the elective school seems to be currently experiencing, and this can have a detrimental impact on whether music is being

taught effectively and accessibly. In relation to the Jamboree that was observed during the author time at the school, the music coordinator stated that such a scheme was a one off, but personally she felt that such a scheme should happen regularly, as she ‘saw children taking part, thriving, and enjoying themselves in a way that might not necessarily happen in numeracy or language.’ However, she felt that the sheer volume of the curriculum simply stops that from happening. Overall, the interview provided the author with an insight into the place of music, realistically, in a large urban school. The music coordinator felt that music was currently being taught effectively, but not often enough and not with much freedom for staff or pupils, and she felt there were two major constraints on the effective and accessible teaching of music that were mentioned many times throughout the interview: funding and time constraints.

Interviews with Pupils

An interview with pupils was vital, as Grigg (2015:21.) states: ‘the most important stakeholders are the children themselves!’ During the interview, the author focused on questions relating to how music made the pupils feel, what they enjoy and dislike about music currently, and how they would organize and plan music and peripatetic lessons if they were given the opportunity. (See Appendix 7) The pupils were from a Year 5 class, and, as stated within the ethics form, the purpose of the interview was explained to the pupils, and they were informed they could ask to leave the interview at any time, or not give an answer. (See Appendix 1) All children interviewed stated that they enjoyed music lessons and that it gave them the chance to do something different. When the children were asked how often they would like to have music lessons, the minimum amount stated by a child was once a week, and the maximum was one music lesson every day, highlighting the children’s enjoyment of and eagerness to play and explore music. They also stated that during some lessons, their class teacher plays instrumental music whilst they are working. The group stated that having music played whilst working helped them to relax and focus, and as research by Godkin (2017) states ‘music activates both the left and right brain, and the activation of both hemispheres can maximize learning and improve memory,’ demonstrating yet another positive impact music can have within the classroom environment.

During the interview, the pupils expressed that they ‘don’t have many opportunities’ in music in school, particularly when it comes to musical instruments and peripatetic sessions. The pupils spoke of wanting to learn instruments such as the drums, guitar and piano, and felt that the selection process for the current peripatetic lessons is unfair and too short-term – the pupils felt they should be able to trial an instrument for a few weeks before the peripatetic teachers selects pupils, rather than just one session. Within the authors presentation to the school’s senior staff at the end of the electives experience, I shared the children’s wishes to have a wider variety of peripatetic lessons to choose from. (See Appendix 8) The author felt that this was an important aspect to be included within the presentation to the school’s senior staff, as pupils voice and choice within education is vital as it causes pupils to be ‘better prepared to become ethical, informed and active citizens of Wales and of the world.’ (Estyn, 2016: 4.) Overall, during the interview, the children showed a positive and engaged attitude towards participating in music lessons and activities within school, suggesting their experiences of teaching and learning have been effective and accessible. The pupils wished for further opportunities to engage with music of their choice and preference, suggesting that their experiences with music are sometimes limited.

Staff Questionnaire

The questionnaire created was aimed specifically at Key Stage 2 teachers, to discover their opinions on teaching music, the benefits and challenges, and whether they felt confident and comfortable providing children with a variety of musical experiences in their classroom. (See Appendix 9) Unfortunately, of the 9 questionnaires handed out to the Key Stage 2 teachers, only 2 were returned, limiting the results in relation to comparison and evaluation. Nonetheless, when asked what they believed were the challenges of teaching music, both responses focused on time constraints, attempting to fit music into a ‘packed curriculum’ when most schools prioritize literacy and numeracy. (See Appendix 10) Both responses also mentioned another challenge to teaching music in the primary classroom – a lack of resources, particularly in terms of musical instruments. One respondent stated that ‘I try where I can to teach music...but in my experience music is normally the first to go’, which Burnard and Murphy (2017) found

in their research: music is often pushed to the ‘corner’ of the curriculum, and often neglected.

However, both respondents could clearly state the benefits of teaching music within the Key Stage 2 classroom, arguing that children were more engaged in music sessions, children, in their experience, always enjoy the sessions and find them exciting, and that music provides children with opportunities that they might not otherwise have in school. ‘Music education is more than learning to sing or play an instrument,’ and as acknowledged by the respondents to the authors questionnaire, music provides children with a vast number of opportunities, exciting learning experiences and a chance to engage with a subject in a way in which they might not engage with literacy or numeracy. (Minto, 2009: 9.)

CHAPTER 5 - CONCLUSION

‘Music is a science, a mental discipline, and an art. It has a mathematical foundation; it is a language and physical activity. Any subject that combines science, discipline, language, math’s, physical activity and art must not only be worthwhile but absolutely essential to the education of our children. Music incorporates every other area of study in some way.’ (Minto, 2009: 9.)

As stated above, music is absolutely essential within children’s education, providing children with opportunities to explore and incorporate all areas of the curriculum through the medium of music. Through participation in music, children’s confidence, resilience, well-being and critical thinking skills can be deepened and enhanced, and ‘high quality music education can start children on a journey that lasts a lifetime.’ (Daubney, 2017: 1.) A vast amount of research suggests that music can have a positive impact on children’s skills development, mental health, well-being, focus and attitude to education, which proves the importance of teaching music both effectively and accessibly within education. (Baldwin and Beauchamp, 2014, Campayo–Muñoz and Cabedo–Mas, 2017, Einon, 2002, Hallam, 2015, Welsh Government, 2008.) Through research and analysis, it has been discovered that there are currently a number of barriers that are restricting the

effective and accessible teaching of music: funding, teacher confidence and knowledge, pressures of the ‘core’ subjects and time constraints. (Barnes, 2015, BBC, 2018, Estyn, 2015, OFSTED, 2012.)

The author found that during the conduction of research within the elective school, whenever music sessions were taught, they were effective, accessible, engaging but most importantly enjoyable for pupils. The children stated that they wanted more opportunities to play and experience music within their school and always felt ‘happy’ or ‘calm’ after participating in a music session. Nonetheless, the author found through this research, that staff felt there are still a number of factors that restrict and minimize the staff and children’s musical learning experiences: time constraints, school priorities and funding. Children’s involvement in music can have an ‘enormous effect’ on children’s ability to learn, but as seen from both primary and secondary research throughout this project, in order for music to thrive in schools and inspire children, it must be given a greater standing in terms of the priorities of the curriculum and curriculum subjects by schools, the local councils, and the Welsh Government itself.

Throughout this research project, a variety of research, theory and statistics were analysed and evaluated to discover whether music is currently being taught effectively and accessibly for all pupils within Key Stage 2. Overall, the author has come to the conclusion that in a number of schools, music is not being taught accessibly or effectively for pupils, as OFSTED (2012) and Estyn (2015) reported. However, it must also be acknowledged that in a number of schools, such as the elective school visited, when music is taught, it is being taught effectively and accessibly, but ‘pupils’ standards are best when their teachers are knowledgeable and confident creative artists, as well as good classroom practitioners.’ (Estyn, 2015: 3.). In order to ensure music is always being taught effectively and accessibly for all pupils, there are a number of prerequisites that must occur consecutively. Practitioners must be knowledgeable and confident in delivering music lessons that offer children a variety of experiences to explore what music means to them. Music, and the arts, must be given a higher standing in terms of priorities within schools, local councils and the Welsh Government, in order to alleviate the time constraints due to the pressures of ‘core’ subjects. Within the new curriculum, the expressive arts should be considered to have an equal weighting with all other Areas

of Learning, in order to ensure it is taught regularly and through engaging, cross-curricular pedagogy. Finally, funding for music, and again, the arts in general, must be provided to schools, to ensure children are given the resources, experiences and vast opportunities that can deepen their appreciation for music and its place in their lives.

‘Music is a moral law. It gives soul to the universe, wings to the mind, and life to everything...Without music, life would be an error.’ (Plato, date unknown, as cited in Department for Education, 2011: 3.)

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