



## Mapping the musical provision and needs of special schools in Essex, Thurrock & Southend

Final Report by Charly Richardson 12.02.14

### Background & objectives

#### Introduction

This project was commissioned by Essex Music Education Hub in partnership with the Royal Opera House Bridge, MusicNet East, Southend Music Education Hub and Thurrock Music Education Hub. Its goal is to establish a clearer picture of music provision throughout special schools in these areas; assess the relationship between these schools and their Music Service/Music Education Hub; and suggest ways in which the Hubs can improve engagement and support.

The initial idea for the project came as a result of work between Kelly Lean (Royal Opera House Bridge Programme Manager for Essex) and a special school in Essex. Initially working with them specifically on technology assisted music making, this quickly became a catalyst for a wider focus on how music could be ingrained across the school. The school was also interested in hosting an annual sharing of music making from the SEN schools across Essex, but were unsure if this would be of interest to other schools. After discussing these ideas with Andy Hill (Head of Essex Music Services) and Lyndall Rosewarne (MusicNet East), it was decided that an audit was needed to collate baseline data about what was happening musically in Essex's special schools and what additional support they might need. From this further conclusions and recommendations could be made and action taken. Charly Richardson, Project Co-ordinator for Essex Music Services, was then invited to carry out the work.

Initially just aimed at the 18 SEN schools in Essex, Richard Brittain (Head of Thurrock Music Services) and Ros Pitcher (Head of Southend Music Service) both expressed an interest in the project, and so it was agreed that this would be widened to include the 2 SEN schools in Thurrock and 5 in Southend. An online questionnaire was drawn up to be filled in by at least one staff member from each school, preferably a Head, Deputy or Music Coordinator. These questions were broad, covering the day-to-day musical activities of schools; Continuing Professional Development; equipment; and engagement with their Music Hub. A PDF copy of this questionnaire has been included with this report.

#### Responses

Currently I have received responses from 19/25 schools. This breaks down as 15/18 Essex schools, 2/5 Southend schools, and 2/2 Thurrock Schools.

Despite some schools replying immediately, others took much longer, and some have still not replied despite numerous polite requests by email and phone. Some possibilities why schools haven't responded:

- A lack of time.
- No staff member with responsibility for music.

## Mapping the musical provision and needs of special schools in Essex, Thurrock & Southend: Final Report

- Confusion about what exactly the Music Services/Music Hubs are and their position within the Local Authority.
- Possible embarrassment about a lack of provision.
- Despite conveying that the purpose of the questionnaire was to see how the Music Hubs might better be able to support the schools, unfortunately at least one school didn't see what was in it for them.

I hope that the remaining responses will be received in the coming weeks. Nevertheless I believe that the current response rate of **76%** is sufficient to justify the summaries, analysis and recommendations contained within this report. The responses which have come in so far have been detailed and honest, with many schools interested in seeing this report and discussing the issues it raises further. It must be noted that no schools or individuals will be identified individually within this report.

### Aims

The aims of this report are to:

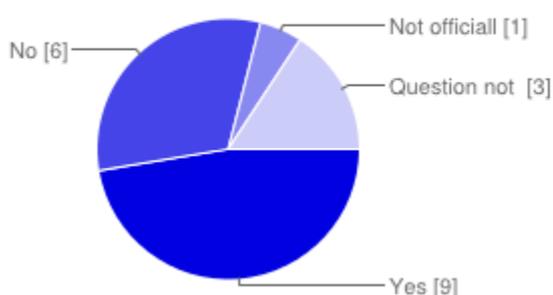
- a.) Present and analyse the baseline data.
- b.) Summarise any issues and trends suggested by the data.
- c.) Use these conclusions to make recommendations about how the Music Hubs can proceed in extending the support they give to special schools and improving overall engagement with them.

### Data summaries and analysis

The schools who participated vary in size and age range and the Special Educational Needs or Disabilities of their pupils is also diverse. As might be expected, the picture is quite varied from school to school. Here are some key summaries of what the data shows. Unless indicated, all figures cover the combined data for Essex, Thurrock and Southend schools. Some of the charts represent a summary of more detailed answers.

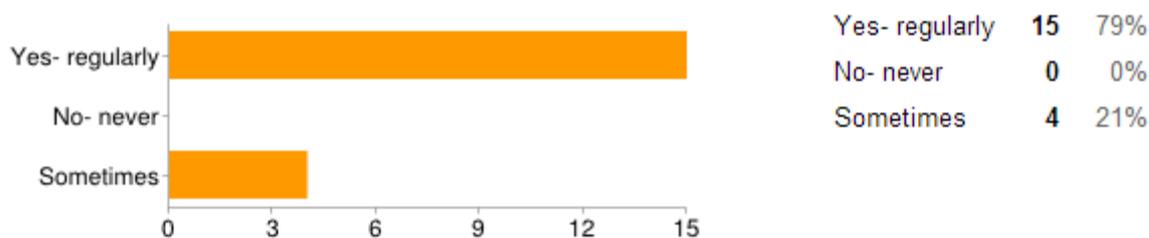
### Provision

#### Do you have a music coordinator?

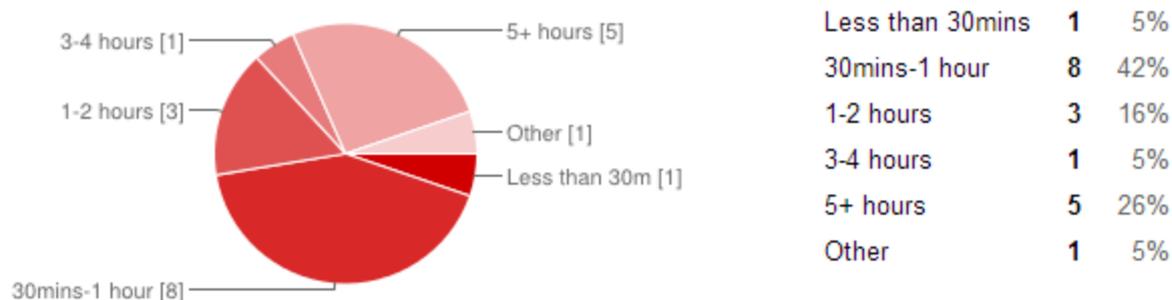


Yes	9	47%
No	6	32%
Not officially	1	5%
Question not answered	3	16%

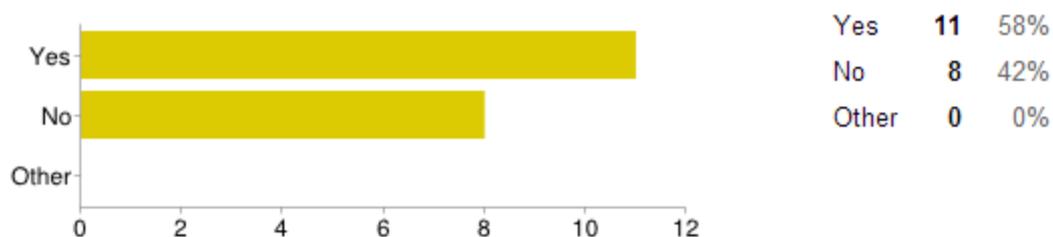
### Do you currently have any music delivery during school hours?



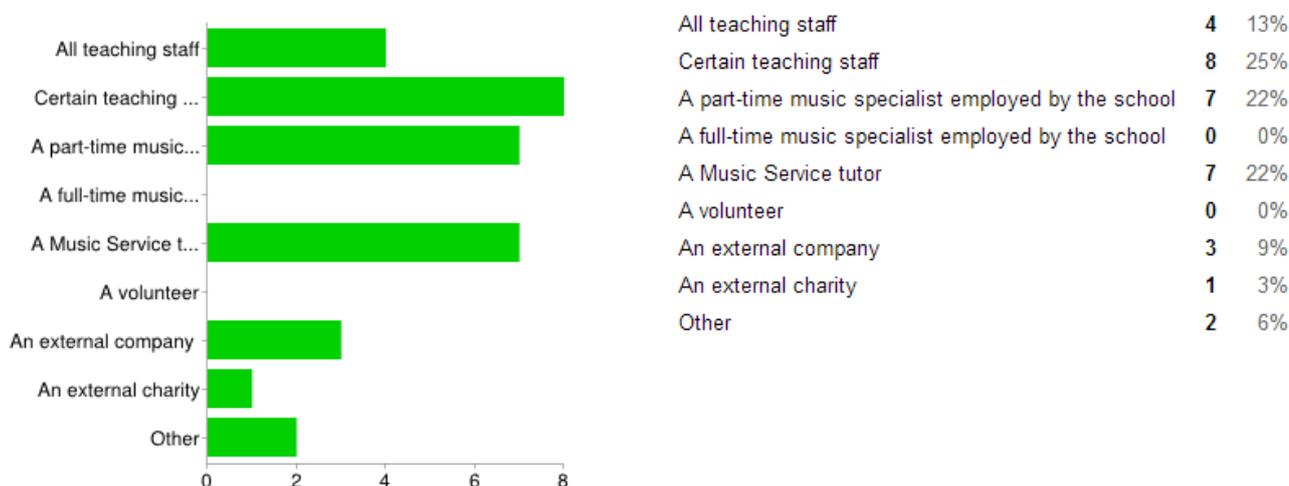
### How much time is dedicated to this per week?



### Do all pupils benefit from these sessions?



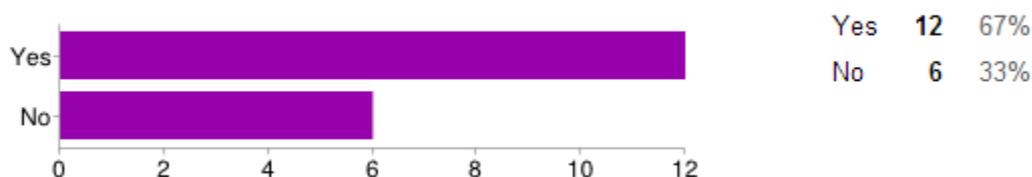
### Who leads your music sessions?



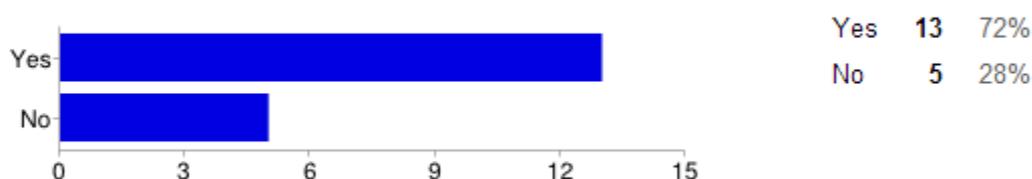
**Please note:** For this question each school could choose multiple options as the vast majority use a combination.

Activities

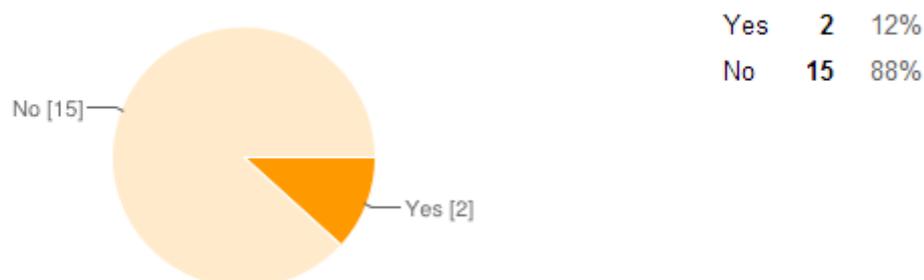
**Is there any additional music therapy work?**



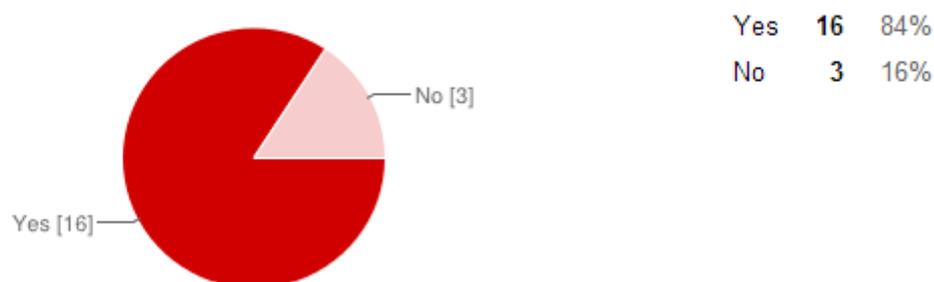
**Would you say music and/or singing is a part of daily school life?**



**Do you have any one-on-one peripatetic teaching?**

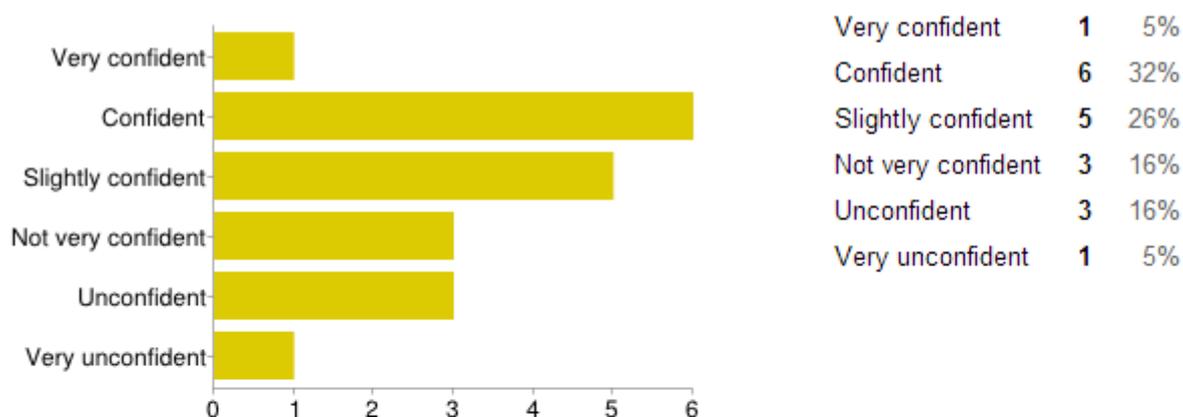


**Do you have any music-related lunchtime or after-school clubs/groups?**

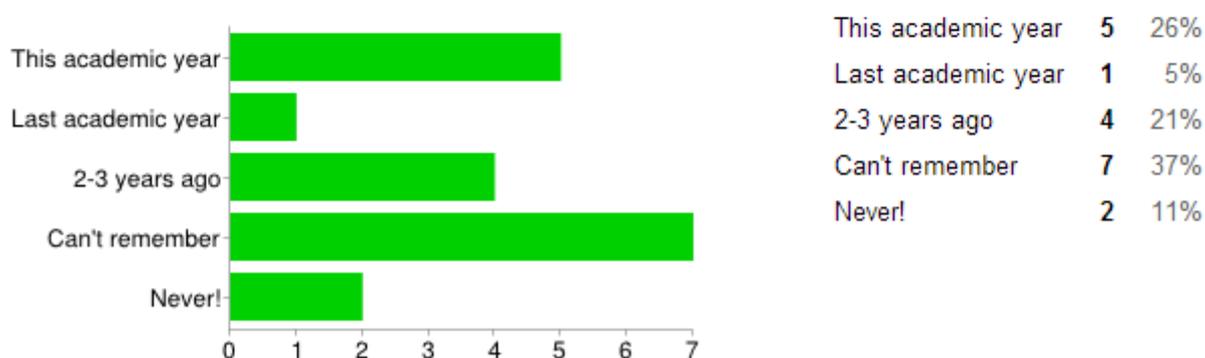


## Training and CPD

### How confident would you say your staff in general are at delivering music?



### When was the last time your staff did music-related training or CPD?



**Please note:** All Thurrock and Southend schools said their staff were 'confident' at delivering music. Thurrock and Southend schools also seem to have had more recent access to music-related CPD/training.

All schools had different ideas about what **additional training/CPD they would find useful**, but suggestions include:

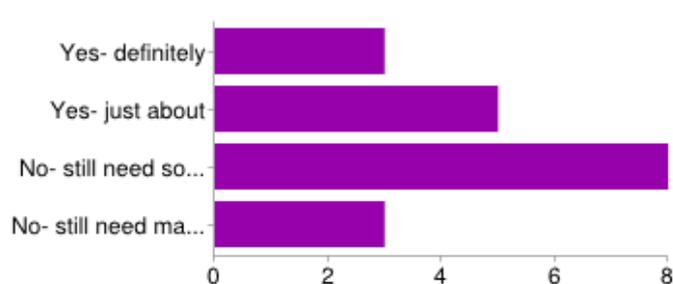
- Knowing how music supports other areas of the curriculum
- Utilising technology
- Music therapy
- Singing and percussion workshops
- Training in African and Samba drumming
- Specific modelling of lessons appropriate to their pupils and centred around their own curriculum.

## Equipment and resources

- There is a huge variation in the amount of equipment and resources available for each school. Some have just a percussion trolley, others have an array of instruments, Skoogs, iPads, and even their own music studio.

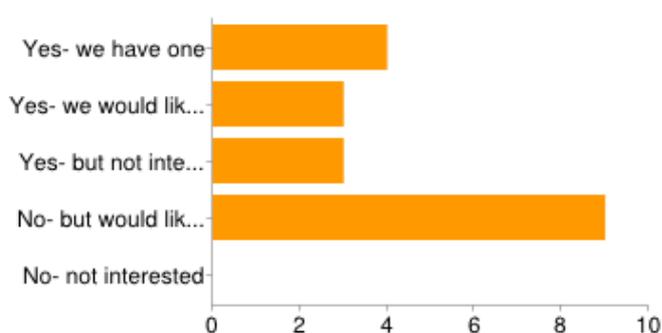
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### Would you say that you have adequate equipment and resources to suit your musical needs?



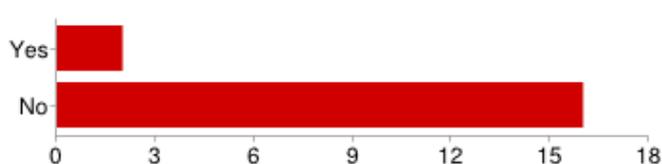
Yes- definitely	3	16%
Yes- just about	5	26%
No- still need some more	8	42%
No- still need many more	3	16%

### Have you heard of an instrument called The Skoog?



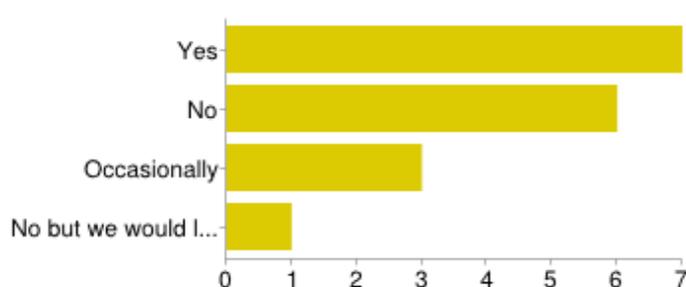
Yes- we have one	4	21%
Yes- we would like one	3	16%
Yes- but not interested	3	16%
No- but would like to find out more	9	47%
No- not interested	0	0%

### Have you ever received Skoog training?



Yes	2	11%
No	16	89%

### Do you ever make use of Music Technology?

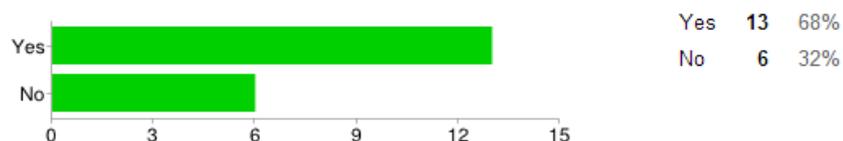


Yes	7	41%
No	6	35%
Occasionally	3	18%
No but we would like to develop this	1	6%

Suggestions of what each school would ideally need varied greatly.

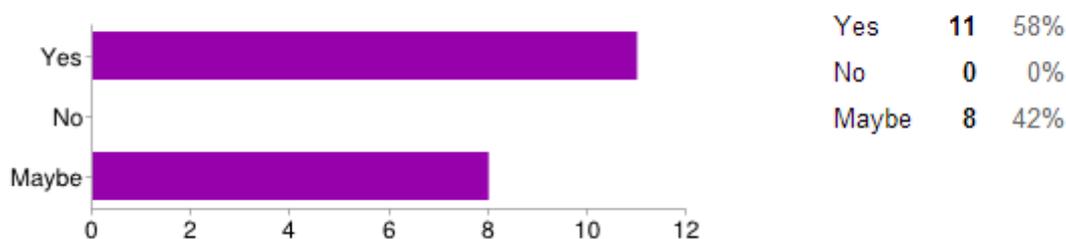
**Performance opportunities/sharing**

Do you ever participate in any music-related sharing or performance opportunities with parents, the wider community, or other schools?



- These performances range from Mencap concerts to school proms, carols concerts, Glee performances and even the Shakespeare Schools Festival.

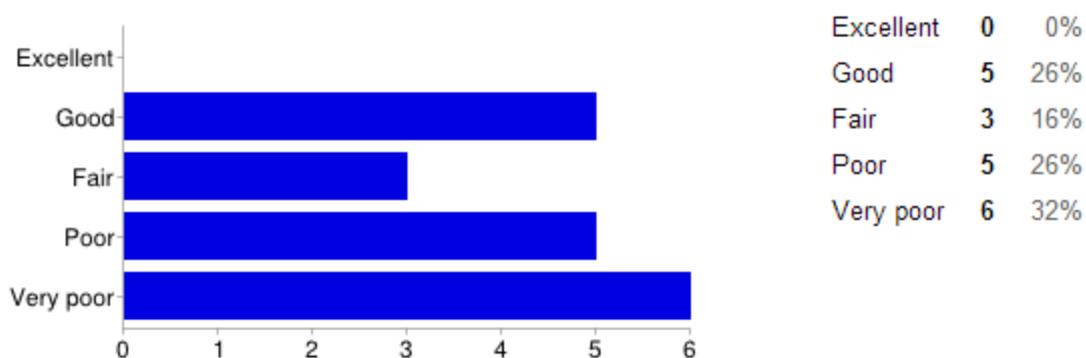
Would you be interested in participating in a sharing event with other SEN schools?



**Relationship with Music Services/Music Education Hubs**

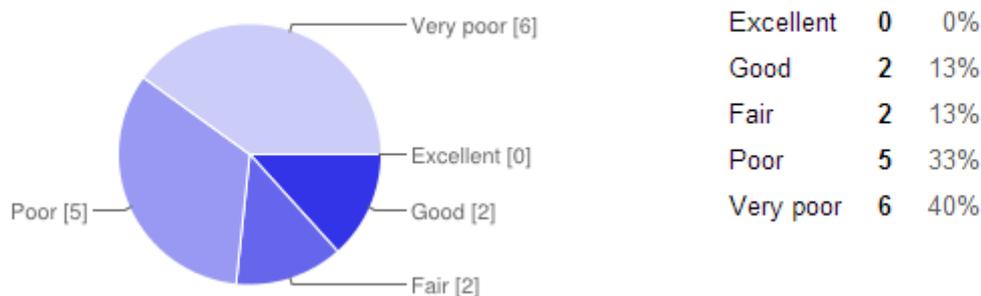
***ESSEX, THURROCK & SOUTHEND***

How good would you say your engagement with your Music Service/Music Education Hub is?



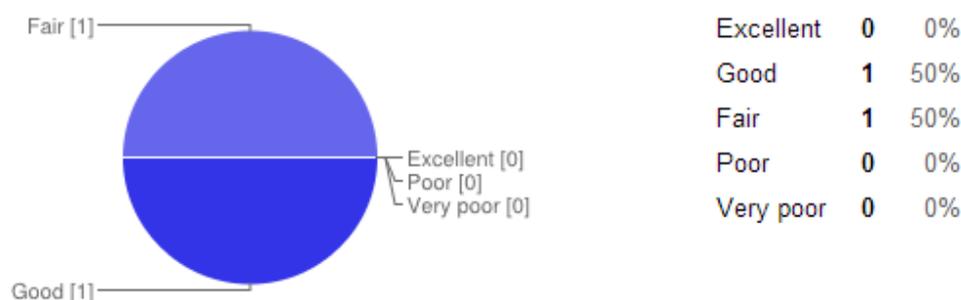
***ESSEX***

**How good would you say your engagement with Essex Music Services/Music Education Hub is?**



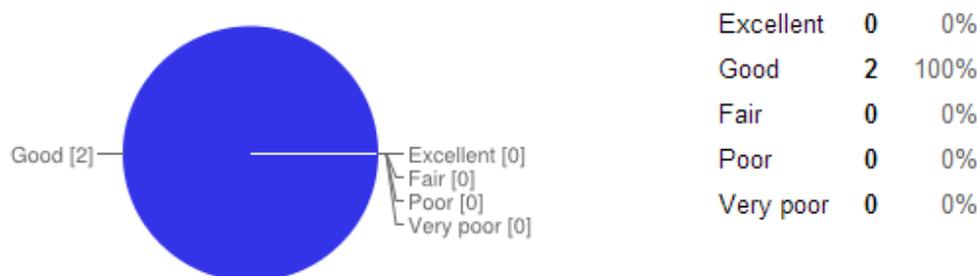
**THURROCK**

**How good would you say your engagement with Thurrock Music Services/Music Education Hub is?**



**SOUTHEND**

**How good would you say your engagement with Southend Music Services/Music Education Hub is?**



When asked “how might this relationship be improved? What else would you like to see provided or happening?”, somewhat predictably the suggestions varied and included:

- A termly get together of the Music Services and SEN schools
- Samba or African drumming Wider Opportunities lessons
- Schools concerts by professional music groups
- CPD/training
- Curriculum support especially around music therapy
- Delivery of model lessons to give new ideas or demonstrate how to use new resources
- Regular updates, communication meetings and opportunities to work together to share knowledge with other schools
- General phone call/email communications
- One school simply said that *any* additional input from the Music Services/Music Hubs would be gratefully received. Another said that they would like to be acknowledge as a primary school *as well as* a special school because they feel left out. And another schools said they feel left out because they cater for all ages.

## Mapping the musical provision and needs of special schools in Essex, Thurrock & Southend: Final Report

- Two participants (including one Essex Music Services tutor) admitted to not really knowing what the Music Education Hub was.

### Visits

As part of this the project, two schools kindly invited me to visit them to see a music session in progress and discuss their questionnaire answers in more detail with the music coordinators and senior management team. Some further points which were raised during these meetings were:

- Maybe there could be CPD/training specifically on how to use technology?
- Could there be a forum for special schools to get together and share ideas about music provision?
- Some parents have asked about after-school and Saturday provision which is very sparse. This is made particularly difficult because of transport issues.
- One school was buying in sessions from music therapy charity Sing & Grow UK. They have also been working with Music For Youth ([www.mfy.org.uk](http://www.mfy.org.uk)). A group of students went to the Albert Hall to play, and they have had 3 legacy workshop sessions for staff.
- One SEN music specialist expressed concern about a lack of consistency in SEN-music and a lack of SEN-specific skills amongst Music Service tutors.
- A number of SEN schools in Southend and a couple in Essex have been working with The Music Man Project ([www.themusicmanproject.co.uk](http://www.themusicmanproject.co.uk)) which specialises in SEN music provision for all ages. The Music Man Project works closely with Southend Mencap ([www.southendmencap.org.uk](http://www.southendmencap.org.uk)) and the Southend Music Education Hub.

### Discussions and recommendations

Discussion of all the main trends and issues raised by the questionnaire results will follow. I have also made recommendations under each category, the implications and implementation of which will be discussed further under **Conclusions and plan of action**. Unless otherwise indicated, recommendations are relevant for Essex, Thurrock and Southend Music Education Hubs.

#### Provision

The fact that only **47%** of schools have a designated music coordinator or Head of Music means that any relationship between the Music Services/Music Hubs is bound to be made more difficult as there is no one directly responsible for any such communications.

***Recommendation 1. All schools are encouraged to choose a music coordinator or at least a designated point of contact for Music Services/Music Hubs, with the possibility of additional support and training opportunities for this individual.***

In many schools there is an impressive amount of music taking place. These schools should be supported to continue and extend their provision. However other schools are struggling to deliver music and are desperate for any support the Music Services/Music Hubs might be able to give. Therefore:

***Recommendation 2: Schools with low levels of musical engagement should be particularly encouraged to engage with any follow-up activities.***

In most cases schools use a combination of their own staff and part-time music specialists. A respectable percentage of schools utilise Music Service Tutors, yet this doesn't necessarily mean that they feel engaged with their Music Education Hub. I believe that some schools are not fully aware of the potential services or support currently on offer.

***Recommendation 3: Raise awareness of the Music Services/Music Education Hub structure and services amongst special schools and Music Service tutors through training, improved communications and promotional literature.***

### **Activities**

Most schools offer an impressive range of musical activities, however relatively few offer individual instrumental lessons. For some this is because traditional instrumental lessons are not viable given their pupils Special Educational Needs or Disabilities. Funding could also be an issue, but in at least one case the school enquired about instrumental lessons, but when the Music Services couldn't recommend anyone, they found someone privately instead.

***Recommendation 4: Where it is appropriate, a push to get one-on-one instrumental sessions and Whole Class Ensemble (Wider Opportunities) lessons into more special schools, with additional subsidy of such activities if possible.***

67% of schools offer some kind of music therapy, however if this is something the Music Services/Music Hubs wanted to extend, there is the potential for engagement and possible partnerships with charities like MENCAP, Nordoff Robins, Sing & Grow and Suffolk Music Therapy Services who provide music therapy to special schools in North Essex and Suffolk ([www.suffolkmusictherapyservices.co.uk](http://www.suffolkmusictherapyservices.co.uk)).

### **Training and CPD**

In **Essex** schools, confidence in teaching music is fairly low, as is their access to CPD & training opportunities. As previously shown, the training they are interested in is diverse.

In **Southend**, both the schools who responded to the questionnaire believe their teachers to be **confident** at delivering music. One school has accessed music-related training this academic year, the other can't remember the last time they did. Their existing relationship with the Music Man Project has great potential, and could be fostered and extended to ensure training opportunities for all schools.

In **Thurrock**, both schools also believe their teachers to be **confident** at delivering music. Both have accessed music-related CPD & training this year and have been engaged in this by organisations like Sing & Grow and The Royal Opera House Voices of the Future project. Although they don't seem to have any particular CPD/training needs, I think any such opportunities in Thurrock would still be well received. However I don't believe that the need is quite as great as that of the schools in Essex and Southend.

***Recommendation 5: All schools to be invited to existing Charanga twilight training sessions. They could also be offered the opportunity to host their own sessions specifically for themselves and other SEN schools.***

***Recommendation 6a (Essex): Music Hub to partner with a specialist SEN-music education individual or organisation who can plan and deliver musical cluster training sessions for special schools.***

***Recommendation 6b (Thurrock & Southend): Music Hubs to build-on existing relationships between music organisations and special schools and potentially extend any training opportunities.***

Any such partnerships/links could potentially be facilitated by the Royal Opera House Bridge.

***Recommendation 7: Where appropriate and viable, further training in music technology, percussion techniques, samba/African drumming or curriculum support to be offered.***

### **Equipment and resources**

## **Mapping the musical provision and needs of special schools in Essex, Thurrock & Southend: Final Report**

Clearly the range of resources is hugely varied and the schools with poor resources will obviously struggle to implement more music. A push to engage more schools with individual and whole class (Wider Opportunities) instrumental lessons will hopefully result in more instrumental hire, however this is not appropriate for all schools or pupils. The diverse needs of their children and young people also means that specialist equipment is often required in addition to general music resources.

**Recommendation 8: *An extension of Skoog training to which all special schools will be invited.***

Currently all primaries in Essex, Thurrock and Southend have 100% subsidised access to Charanga resources. Therefore all schools mentioned in this report should be able to access Charanga Musical School (primary programme) and Charanga Music Coach (secondary programme).

**Recommendation 9: *All schools to be signed up to Charanga Musical School and Charanga Music Coach and offered support in exploring the programmes and their resources.***

### **Performance opportunities/sharing**

The range of performance opportunities for each school is generally good, however all schools were potentially interested in a sharing event specifically for SEN schools. One school has already offered to host this.

**Recommendation 10: *An annual, Music Services/Music Education Hub-sponsored special schools music sharing event.***

**Recommendation 11: *Discussions with Music Service staff about how schools with choirs or ensembles might be engaged with wider activities and performances opportunities.***

### **Relationship with Music Services/Music Education Hubs**

Particularly in Essex, schools feel poorly engaged with the Music Services/Music Education Hub. This may well be because the sheer number of special schools within Essex makes it harder to engage them individually, something which appears to be more common in Thurrock and Southend. Southend Music Hub's support of the Music Man Project appears to have been mutually beneficial for the Hub, the schools and the Music Man Project itself. It is probably no coincidence that Southend Hub's engagement levels are highest (although not all Southend schools have submitted questionnaire responses yet).

Many schools simply feel like they get left out, especially because their age ranges are vast and therefore they don't necessarily get copied into communications which go out to all primary or secondary schools. Others simply don't know enough about the Music Services/Music Education Hubs. Of course improving these relationships and engagement levels is crucial and is the reason why this audit was commissioned in the first place. Implementation of all or any of the above points will help this engagement, indeed any extra input would be well received. However in addition:

**Recommendation 12: *A forum is to be established and held at least once a year with the specific purpose of supporting special schools in their musical development and promoting the work of the Music Services/Music Education Hubs. This could also double as an informal musical education sharing/training opportunity between schools and their staff (something a number of schools expressed an interest in).***

**Recommendation 13 (for Essex): *A designated point of contact for special schools within Essex Music Services, and a general increase in communications between the schools and Music Services management.***

## Mapping the musical provision and needs of special schools in Essex, Thurrock & Southend: Final Report

MusicNet East are an active partner in the Essex Music Education Hub and were involved in the commission of this report. They have already offered a free session on inclusive music making at Zinc Arts in Ongar, and I think such sessions could be repeated and developed across the region:

**Recommendation 14: *In collaboration with Music Hubs, MusicNet East to offer CPD sessions to Music Service tutors and other workshop practitioners which are specifically focused on inclusive music making for people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.***

This could potentially be run by the same individual or organisations who has been engaged for **Recommendation 6**.

Any such training (as well as increased provision in SEN schools) will be more effective if the Music Services have a good idea about which of their tutors have SEN experience:

**Recommendation 15: *Music Services should ensure that they aware of which of their tutors have SEN experience.***

### **Conclusions and plan of action**

To conclude, this report has offered the results of a baseline audit of musical activity in special schools throughout Essex, Thurrock and Southend. After analysing and discussing this data I have made 15 recommendations with the aim of improving musical provision, resources and training for special schools in these areas, as well as an improved relationship between the schools and their Music Service/Music Education Hub.

This report will be sent to the Heads of Essex, Thurrock and Southend Music Services as well to MusicNet East and the Royal Opera House Bridge. All participating schools will also be sent the report. A meeting of all interested parties should take place at which recommendations will be discussed alongside funding possibilities and other logistical issues, with the hope that an implementation action plan and timetable can be set. The implementation of any such recommendations is of course dependent on the outcome of any such discussions and agreements, however below is a collated summary of my recommendations.

### **Summary of recommendations**

- 1.) All schools are encouraged to choose a music coordinator or at least a designated point of contact for Music Services/Music Hubs, with the possibility of additional support and training opportunities for this individual.
- 2.) Schools with low levels of musical engagement should be particularly encouraged to engage with any follow-up activities.
- 3.) Raise awareness of the Music Services/Music Education Hub structure and services amongst special schools and Music Service tutors through training, improved communications and promotional literature.
- 4.) Where it is appropriate, a push to get one-on-one instrumental sessions and Whole Class Ensemble (Wider Opportunities) lessons into more special schools, with additional subsidy of such activities if possible.
- 5.) All schools to be invited to existing Charanga twilight training sessions. They could also be offered the opportunity to host their own sessions specifically for themselves and other SEN schools.
- 6.) *6a (Essex):* Music Hub to partner with a specialist SEN-music education individual or organisation who can plan and deliver musical cluster training sessions for special schools.  
*6b (Thurrock & Southend):* Music Hubs to build-on existing relationships between music organisations and special schools and potentially extend any training opportunities.
- 7.) Where appropriate and viable, further training in music technology, percussion techniques, samba/African drumming or curriculum support to be offered.
- 8.) An extension of Skoog training to which all special schools will be invited.
- 9.) All schools to be signed up to Charanga Musical School and Charanga Music Coach and offered support in exploring the programmes and their resources.

## Mapping the musical provision and needs of special schools in Essex, Thurrock & Southend: Final Report

- 10.) An annual, Music Services/Music Education Hub-sponsored special schools music sharing event.
- 11.) Discussions with Music Service staff about how schools with choirs or ensembles might be engaged with wider activities and performances opportunities.
- 12.) A forum is to be established and held at least once a year with the specific purpose of supporting special schools in their musical development and promoting the work of the Music Services/Music Education Hubs. This could also double as an informal musical education sharing/training opportunity between schools and their staff.
- 13.) *Essex*: A designated point of contact for special schools within Essex Music Services, and a general increase in communications between the schools and Music Services management.
- 14.) In collaboration with Music Hubs, MusicNet East to offer CPD sessions to Music Service tutors and other workshop practitioners which are specifically focused on inclusive music making for people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.
- 15.) Music Services should ensure that they are aware of which of their tutors have SEN experience.