



Young People and Music Participation Project

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K E E L E
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PRACTITIONER REPORT AND SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Introduction

Music is one of the most important ways in which young people define and express their identity. Parents, policy-makers and providers of music services recognise that involving children and adolescents with music and music training has high value in terms of artistic experience, personal fulfilment, and educational development. It is, therefore, somewhat surprising to find that many young people who are offered opportunities to learn musical instruments either refuse them, or engage for a brief period before abandoning them. Few studies have examined the socio-cultural barriers to young people's engagement in music, and the present study was conducted in order to further our understanding of the reasons why so many young people are not participating in music, why those who begin so often give up, and how we can best support those who currently play to reach their full potential.

Unlike many academic activities, young people have considerable autonomy in the way they engage in musical activities. Therefore, an investigation of young people as active agents in the construction of their own musical lives can shed considerable light on how they make important decisions and the extent to which key social factors influence their decisions. The present study began in 1998 with the aim of investigating the complex processes and inter-relationships between many of the factors that are likely to impinge on young people's decisions to engage or disengage with musical activities. Our study focused on a key educational transition that most young people make between leaving primary school and starting at secondary school. We hope that the summary of findings presented here will provide information about how we might encourage young people to take up and persist with musical activities and offer them the best chance of success.

Aims of the Study

The overall aim of the study was to test a model that examines the relationships between young people's beliefs and values about music, social influences from parents, teachers and peers, and levels of musical engagement. This involves complex statistical modelling techniques and detailed qualitative analyses. A summary of these results is beyond the scope of this report, but will be reported in scientific journal articles. Information about how these articles can be obtained will be added to our web site as they become available. Other key project aims, which are summarised in this report, were as follows:

- To document the extent to which young people engage in a variety of musical activities both at school in formal educational settings, and outside school in more informal contexts.
- To examine any changes that take place in children's musical engagement following the transition to secondary school.
- To examine children's motivation for playing musical instruments, their perceptions of the school musical environment and the social support they receive from parents, peers and teachers for playing musical instruments.
- To report on a number of factors associated with those who play instruments, including frequency of practice, involvement in musical groups and music examinations.

Contents of the Report

- **Children's involvement in musical activities**
- **Frequently played musical instruments**
- **Children's motivation for playing musical instruments**
- **Music at school**
- **Support from parents, friends and teachers**
- **Characteristics of children who play musical instruments**
- **Reasons for playing musical instruments**
- **Reasons for giving up musical instruments**
- **Characteristics of children who gave up or continued to play instruments**
- **Practitioner and policy implications**

Research Methods

Survey of music participation

The children completed questionnaires at three time points: Year 6 (Spring 1999), Year 7 (Autumn, 1999), Year 7 (Spring 2000).

The questionnaire contained measures designed to examine children's responses to:

- Involvement in musical and other activities
- Beliefs about playing a musical instrument
- Support from parents, siblings, friends, teachers
- Musical opportunities at school

Those children who currently played an instrument completed an additional section of the questionnaire which asked about how long they had played, frequency of practice, involvement in musical groups, music examinations, the type and frequency of music lessons, and their perceptions of their instrumental music teacher.

Interviews with young people

Individual interviews were conducted with a sub-sample of children who represented the breadth of musical experience, at two time points: Year 6 (Spring 1999), Year 7 (Spring 2000).

The interviews were designed to enable the children to provide detailed, descriptive information about their musical experiences, and were based on the following areas:

- Past and current musical activities
- Beliefs about playing a musical instrument
- Reasons for playing or not playing instruments
- Musical role models
- Support from family, teachers and peers
- Future views of musical engagement

Questionnaires and interviews with parents

Questionnaires were sent to all parents of children participating in the project at the end of Year 6. In Year 7, only those parents who completed questionnaires in Year 6 were asked to complete a second questionnaire at the end of Year 7. The questionnaires asked about the following areas:

- Child's musical background
- Musical instruments in the home
- Child's use of time
- Parents' musical background
- Perception of change in child's musical activities following transition to secondary school
- Musical activities of others involved in child's life
- Parents' beliefs about music
- Parents' beliefs about child's activity involvement
- Types of parental support and involvement

A small number of parents were interviewed during family interviews, which took place in the homes of selected children at the end of Year 7.

Reports by teachers

At the end of Year 6 and Year 7, teachers who taught classroom music to children participating in the project were asked to complete reports which asked the following:

- Music teacher's job, experience, and average number of hours per week spent teaching music
- Music provision in the classroom, instrumental music provision, and other musical activities at the school
- Teacher's evaluations of each child's musical skills, interest in music and effort shown in music class

Case studies

Detailed case studies were documented for six children who ranged in their musical involvement from low to very high. In addition to examining across all of the above measures for each of these children, additional interviews were conducted with friends nominated by the children themselves.

Participants

We began by contacting secondary schools in North Staffordshire and asking them to participate. Of those who agreed, we selected nine secondary schools that covered a range of socio-economic backgrounds and quantity of music provision. This information was based on evaluations made by the Directors of the two Music Services in the area.

We then contacted the main feeder primary schools for each of the nine selected secondary schools and invited them to participate. This resulted in Year 6 children from a total of 36 primary schools participating in Wave 1 of the study in Spring 1999.

All of the children who completed questionnaires at Wave 1 and then transferred to one of the nine selected secondary schools for Year 7 were asked to complete questionnaires at Wave 2 and Wave 3. This sampling procedure meant that although more children participated in the study at Wave 1, the majority of children participated in all three Waves of data collection.

	Girls	Boys	Total
Number of children in Year 6 (Y6) aged 10-11 years:	585	624	1209
Number of children in Year 7 (Y7) aged 11-12 years:	420	412	832
Number of children interviewed (Y6 and Y7):	44	44	88

Children’s Involvement in Musical Activities

Listening to Music

Children’s responses to the 10 items about listening to music (Table 1) shows that over 98% were engaging in moderate to high levels of this activity. There was a steady increase in music listening over the three time points. The increase in music listening was mainly due to more girls listening to music than boys. Girls indicated significantly higher amounts of music listening than boys on all 10 items with the exception of listening to music at school where no significant gender differences were found across the three time points. Perhaps not surprisingly, the most music listening occurs at home and when children are by themselves. Children are twice as likely to listen to tapes/CDs than the radio, suggesting that they have some control over the choice of music they listen to. The amount of music listening at school declined from Year 6 to Year 7. Half as many children reported high levels of music listening at secondary school compared to primary school. 74 of the 88 children interviewed during Year 6 (84%) reported that they listened to music at school, but only 17% said it was their favourite school musical activity. This is in comparison with 40% who said it was their favourite out-of-school musical activity. The number of children who reported listening to music at secondary school increased by 12% compared to primary school, but only 15% said it was their favourite school musical activity in Y7.

Table 1. Percentage of Children’s Responses for Listening to Music Y6 (Y7 end)

<i>How often do you...?</i>	Never %		Not very often %		Sometimes %		Very often %	
	Y6	Y7	Y6	Y7	Y6	Y7	Y6	Y7
Listen to music by yourself?	2.4	1.6	5.8	4.1	30.6	31.7	61.2	62.6
Listen to music with a friend?	10.9	6.5	21.7	17.6	46.7	47.9	20.5	27.9
Listen to music with someone in your family?	8.7	6.5	20.9	20.3	33.0	41.5	37.5	31.7
Go to a concert to listen to music?	47.2	35.6	31.9	37.2	15.4	22.2	5.0	4.9
Listen to music at school?	8.9	6.1	24.6	27.8	39.6	51.6	26.9	14.6
Listen to music at home?	0.8	0.5	4.1	2.7	16.4	15.9	78.7	80.8
Listen to music at a friend’s house?	16.1	8.4	24.4	19.0	35.1	41.0	24.3	31.6
Listen to music on the radio?	10.3	4.2	16.2	14.0	30.1	30.4	43.4	51.4
Listen to music on tapes or CDs?	1.4	0.1	2.3	2.8	10.2	13.9	85.7	83.1
Watch music videos?	24.7	19.5	24.2	25.2	29.2	28.4	21.9	26.9

Dancing to music

Table 2 shows the children’s responses to the 6 items about dancing to music. Dancing to music occurs most often at parties or discos (59%), followed by when children dance to music by themselves (26%). Two-thirds of the children rarely dance to music in a group, in front of people or with a family member. Girls report significantly higher amounts of dancing to music than boys across all items in both Y6 and Y7. In Y6, 47% of the children interviewed reported dancing to music at school, but only 10% said it was their favourite school musical activity compared with 22% who said it was their favourite out-of-school musical activity. There was a 17% decrease in the number of children who reported dancing to music at secondary school compared to primary school.

Table 2. Percentage of Children’s Responses for Dancing to Music Y6 (Y7 end)

<i>How often do you...?</i>	Never %		Not very often %		Sometimes %		Very often %	
	Y6	Y7	Y6	Y7	Y6	Y7	Y6	Y7
Dance to music by yourself?	28.6	28.7	18.2	23.8	26.5	25.7	26.3	21.0
Dance to music with a friend?	34.7	34.4	18.1	21.5	27.9	26.7	19.3	17.4
Dance to music with someone in family?	40.6	39.9	24.3	30.3	21.6	20.1	13.4	9.7
Dance to music at a party or disco?	6.3	5.4	9.0	12.0	25.7	34.6	59.1	47.9
Dance to music in a group (ballet, drama...)?	46.9	40.0	19.7	24.8	18.0	21.2	15.4	14.0
Dance in front of people in school show/dance group?	42.5	48.2	23.1	25.8	19.4	16.1	15.1	9.7

Singing

Children’s responses to the 8 items about singing (Table 3) show that the most frequent singing activity is done when children are alone, singing along to tapes or CDs. Approximately half the children are engaged in singing across the 8 items in both Y6 and Y7. Girls are far more likely to report higher levels of singing than boys for all 8 items in both Y6 and Y7. Singing shows a steady decline from the start of Y6 to the end of Y7, with the largest decline taking place in music class at school and singing in the school choir (13% less children report doing these activities in Y7 compared with Y6). It is interesting to note that fewer than 20% of children report never singing in music class at school, but nearly 60% in Y6 and 70% in Y7 report never singing in the school choir. In Y6, 84% of the children interviewed reported singing at school and this number increased by 6% in Y7. However, there was a 9% decline in the number of children who reported singing out-of-school in Y7 compared to Y6. Singing was rated as the favourite musical activity at school by 28% of children in Y6 and by 18% of children in Y7.

Table 3. Percentage of Children's Responses for Singing Y6 (Y7 end)

<i>How often do you...?</i>	Never %		Not very often %		Sometimes %		Very often %	
	Y6	Y7	Y6	Y7	Y6	Y7	Y6	Y7
Sing by yourself when there isn't any music playing?	17.0	11.6	17.9	21.8	30.1	32.5	35.0	34.1
Sing by yourself to music on the radio, tape or CD?	6.0	5.4	8.7	12.1	23.4	23.6	61.9	58.9
Sing a song you have made up?	26.5	27.2	24.6	25.0	23.3	26.9	25.4	20.8
Sing with a friend?	27.1	25.4	20.6	25.8	28.3	26.8	23.8	22.0
Sing with someone in your family?	31.2	28.6	26.2	31.5	23.6	25.3	19.0	14.6
Sing in music class at school?	18.9	16.4	17.3	20.2	28.3	40.6	35.5	22.8
Sing in the school choir?	58.4	69.5	9.5	13.3	9.3	7.6	22.6	9.6
Sing in front of people (in a school concert, church choir, a band, etc.)?	32.4	52.4	19.7	20.9	25.3	16.6	22.5	10.1

Using a computer to make music

Nearly half the children reported never using a computer to make music in Y6 and Y7 (see Table 4). Of those children who did report using a computer for music, most are doing so at home. This was the only musical activity where no significant differences were found between girls and boys, with the exception of Y6 girls reporting higher levels of computer use for music at school than Y6 boys. Of the children interviewed in Y6, 22% said they used a computer to make music at school, but this figure declined by 11% in Y7. Using a computer to make music was rated as the favourite school musical activity by 6% of children in Y6 and by 1% of children in Y7.

Table 4. Percentage of Children's Responses for Using a Computer to Make Music Y6 (Y7 end)

<i>How often do you...?</i>	Never %		Not very often %		Sometimes %		Very often %	
	Y6	Y7	Y6	Y7	Y6	Y7	Y6	Y7
Use a computer at home to make music?	47.2	47.1	16.0	22.1	21.2	21.1	15.7	9.7
Use a computer with a friend to make music?	53.9	57.2	21.6	22.2	16.0	15.6	8.2	5.0
Use a computer at school to make music?	62.9	71.5	18.0	16.9	14.2	8.7	5.0	2.8

Playing musical instruments

Children's responses to the 10 items about playing musical instruments (Table 5) show that the majority of time spent on this activity takes place when children are playing on their own (60%) or in music class at school (55%). However, only about 30% report that they have instrumental music lessons. Very few children report playing instruments outside school in a group or with a family member. Over a third of the children report that they regularly teach themselves to play an instrument or make up their own music on an instrument.

Table 5. Percentage of Children's Responses for Playing a Musical Instrument Y6 (Y7 end)

<i>How often do you...?</i>	Never %		Not very often %		Sometimes %		Very often %	
	Y6	Y7	Y6	Y7	Y6	Y7	Y6	Y7
Play a musical instrument by yourself?	33.8	38.3	16.4	18.8	20.8	21.0	29.0	21.9
Play an instrument with a friend?	48.6	52.3	16.9	23.2	19.7	14.8	14.8	9.6
Play an instrument with someone in your family?	58.5	63.3	17.5	19.4	14.6	12.0	9.4	5.3
Play an instrument in music class at school?	30.9	21.9	14.0	20.8	25.8	34.4	29.4	23.8
Play an instrument in the school orchestra or band?	70.5	77.5	8.8	7.6	8.1	4.9	12.6	10.0
Play an instrument with a music group outside school?	74.9	79.3	10.9	9.5	6.5	3.6	7.7	7.4
Play an instrument in front of people?	47.8	53.9	20.1	22.0	20.1	17.0	12.1	7.1
Teach yourself to play an instrument?	35.6	42.2	26.5	27.8	23.7	19.9	14.1	10.0
Make up your own music to play on an instrument?	37.5	43.0	20.8	23.9	23.3	21.4	18.3	11.7
Have lessons with a teacher to learn to play an instrument?	45.3	53.6	10.9	9.4	12.9	9.9	30.8	26.9

All the playing instrument items show a decline from Y6 to Y7. This decline is related to the number of children who have given up playing an instrument following the transition to secondary school. Less than 35% of those children who played instruments in Y6 remained playing by the end of Y7. A higher proportion of girls reported more frequent playing of instruments across all 10 items in

both Y6 and Y7. In Y6, playing instruments was ranked as the ‘most liked’ musical activity by 26% of the children interviewed, and was ranked after listening to music as the activity they do most at school (15%). Among the interview sample, there was a 25% increase in the number of children who reported playing instruments at school in Y7 compared to Y6. However, there was an 18% decline in the number of children who reported playing instruments out-of-school in Y7 compared to Y6.

Players, Gave Ups, and Non-players

In addition to the above 10 items about playing musical instruments, the children were asked whether they currently played an instrument, whether they used to play an instrument but gave up playing it (and no longer play), or whether they never played an instrument. Table 6 shows the percentage of children who viewed themselves as players, gave ups or non-players in Year 6 and the change in their status by the end of Year 7. The figures indicate that if children have not started to play an instrument or have already given up playing by the end of primary school, they are unlikely to begin playing an instrument at secondary school.

Table 6. Percentage of Children Who Viewed Themselves as Players, Gave Ups or Non-players

Year 6	% of total N=1208*	Year 7 (end)	% of total N=722**
Players	705 (58.4%)	Continuous Players	240 (33.2%)
		Y6 Players who Gave Up	186 (25.8%)
Gave Ups	270 (22.3%)	Remained Gave Ups/Non-players	121 (16.8%)
		Y6 Gave Ups who Started to Play	37 (5.1%)
Non-players	233 (19.3%)	Continuous Non-players	120 (16.6%)
		Y6 Non-players who Started to Play	18 (2.5%)

* Figure is one less than total number of Year 6 participants (N=1209) due to missing information for one child.

** Figure is lower than total number of Year 7 participants (N=832) due to missing information at either Y7 start or end.

Frequently Played Musical Instruments

Children’s ‘Top Ten’ musical instruments

Table 6 shows the percentage of girls and boys who report most wanting to play specific instruments and the percentage of girls and boys who actually play specific instruments in Y6 and Y7. The instruments are ranked in order from most played to least played. The table shows a mismatch between the instruments children would like to play and the instruments they are actually playing in Y6 and Y7. This mismatch is more pronounced for boys who are provided with fewer opportunities than girls to play their first choice instruments. For example, boys in Y6 report most wanting to play the drums (25%) or electric guitar (24%), but of the boys in Y6 who actually play instruments only 9% play the drums and 3% play the electric guitar.

Table 6. Percentage of Girls and Boys Who Most Want to Play and Actually Play Specific Instruments

	Girls %			Boys %		
	Most want to play (Y6)...	Actually play Y6	Actually play Y7	Most want to play (Y6)...	Actually play Y6	Actually play Y7
1	Piano 17.7	Recorder 31.9	Recorder 24.6	Drums 25.1	Recorder 20.2	Recorder 23.1
2	Flute 16.9	Flute 13.2	Clarinet 13.9	Electric Guitar 23.9	Piano 13.5	Keyboard 17.6
3	Keyboard 11.3	Violin 11.7	Flute 13.4	Keyboard 11.0	Keyboard 12.9	Guitar 8.3
4	Saxophone 11.0	Clarinet 10.5	Keyboard 11.8	Saxophone 9.8	Guitar 12.9	Drums 6.5
5	Drums 8.6	Piano 9.7	Violin 9.6	Piano 5.5	Drums 9.2	Piano 6.5
6	Violin 8.6	Keyboard 9.7	Piano 8.6	Guitar 4.9	Clarinet 3.1	Clarinet 5.6
7	Clarinet 7.3	Cello 4.7	Cello 4.3	Electric Bass 4.0	Electric Guitar 3.1	Cornet 4.6
8	Electric Guitar 3.5	Guitar 2.3	Guitar 4.3	Bagpipes 2.0	Cello 3.1	Electric Guitar 4.6
9	Guitar 3.0	Cornet 0.8	Cornet 2.7	Trumpet 1.7	Violin 3.1	Violin 3.7
10	Harp 2.7	Organ 0.8	Viola 1.6	Flute 1.7	Trumpet 2.5	Trombone 2.8

Instruments and gender differences following transition to secondary school

Table 7 shows the number of children playing each musical instrument as their main instrument in Y6 and at the end of Y7. It also provides the percentage of Y6 male and female players who were still playing at the end of Y7. Overall, 42% of those originally playing instruments were still playing one year later. Girls have significantly more 'staying power' than boys (48% as opposed to 35%). The most dramatic gender differences appear for traditionally masculine instruments. The number of girls playing these instruments hardly drops from primary to secondary. There is a massive decline, however, in boys playing these instruments. The decline is most marked in trumpet, drums, and acoustic guitar. The curious and initially paradoxical finding is, therefore, that boys who start traditionally 'feminine' or 'neutral' instruments at primary school are more likely to continue with them than boys who start traditionally 'masculine' instruments. However, on reflection this makes sense. Boys taking up 'feminine' instruments at primary school have accumulated considerable motivation and support to challenge gender-stereotypes, leading to greater long-term commitment.

Table 7. Number of Girls and Boys Playing Specific Instruments as their Main Instrument in Y6 and Y7

	Year 6		Year 7		% Still Playing in Year 7		
	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	% Girls	% Boys	% All
Instruments played mainly by females							
Violin	45	7	18	4	40	57	42
Flute	52	2	25	1	48	50	48
Clarinet	42	11	26	6	62	54	60
Recorder	123	69	46	25	37	36	37
Cello	16	8	8	3	50	37	46
Total	278	97	123	39	44	40	43
Instruments played mainly by males							
Trumpet	1	10	1	2	100	20	27
Trombone	0	4	2	3	200	75	125
Electric guitar	1	13	0	5	0	38	36
Bass guitar	0	2	0	1	-	50	50
Guitar	10	40	8	9	80	23	34
Drums	3	27	2	7	66	26	30
Total	15	96	13	27	87	28	36
Instruments played equally by males and females							
Piano	35	38	16	7	46	18	32
Keyboard	46	40	22	19	48	47	48
Organ	4	4	0	0	-	-	-
Other*	12	27	12	15	100	55	69
Total	97	109	50	41	52	38	44
ALL	390	302	186	107	48	35	42

* This category includes slight increases in numbers playing saxophone, cornet, tuba, and viola

Children's Motivation for Playing Musical Instruments

Competence beliefs and values

The children were asked a number of questions about their motivation for playing a musical instrument. The questions examined the children's own beliefs and values about playing instruments since these are based on both their previous experience and the feedback they have received from others (i.e., family, friends, teachers). Competence beliefs were the children's self-evaluations of how good they are at playing an instrument and their expectations for the future (e.g., 'How good are you at playing a musical instrument?', 'How good would you be at playing a new musical instrument?'). These beliefs have been shown to predict achievement, goals and the amount of effort a child will put into an activity. Values are associated with the children's levels of interest, importance, and utility for playing an instrument (e.g., 'In general, I find playing a musical instrument...(very boring/very interesting)', 'For me, being good at playing an instrument is...(not at all important/very important)', 'When I get older, being able to play an instrument would be...(not very useful/very useful)'). Children's values tend to predict the choices and aspirations they have for participating in a given activity. Figures 1 and 2 below indicate that both girls' and boys' ratings of competence beliefs and values showed a marked decline following the transition to secondary school. Girls' ratings of competence beliefs and values for playing instruments were significantly higher than boys' ratings at all three time points. Further analysis indicates that competence beliefs and values are independent predictors of children's involvement in playing musical instruments. In other words, the higher children's competence beliefs and values, the more likely they are to play an instrument and continue playing following the transition to secondary school.

Fig 1. Girls' and boys' competence beliefs for playing instruments

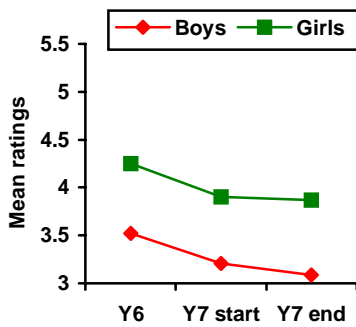
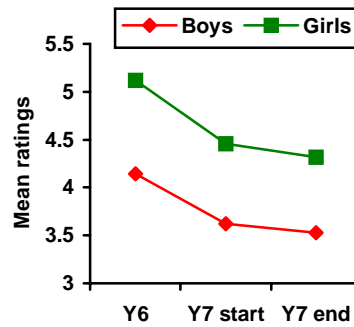


Fig 2. Girls' and boys' values for playing instruments



Music at School

Importance and opportunity for music at school

Girls' and boys' responses to how important they thought music was at their school and how much opportunity there was to do music at their school in Y6 and Y7 are shown in Figures 3 and 4. For both Y6 and Y7, girls thought music was more important and there was more opportunity to do music at school than boys did. The increased opportunities that girls' perceived at the start of Y7 declined by the end of their first year at secondary school. There was little change in boys' views about opportunities to do music across the three time points. Perhaps not surprisingly, children who played instruments in Y6 and Y7 thought music at their school was significantly more important than children who had given up or never played instruments. In Y6, both players and those who had previously given up playing instruments thought there was more opportunity to do music at their school than those who had never played instruments. In Y7, only players thought there were more opportunities to do music at their school compared to gave ups and non-players. Table 8 shows the percentage of change in children's views about the amount of music they actually do in Y7 compared to Y6. Overall, both boys and girls believe they are doing more music in Y7 compared to Y6, but this increase is attributed more to playing instruments than to singing. One explanation is that children may no longer have morning assembly in secondary school where singing is likely to take place.

Fig 3. Importance of music at school

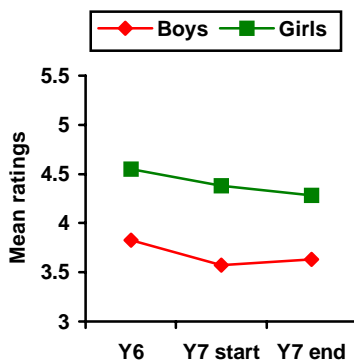
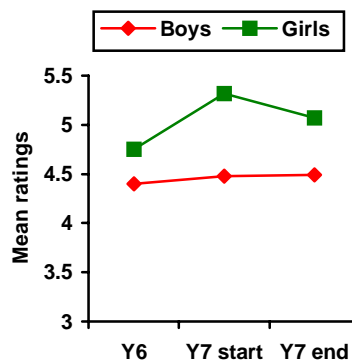


Fig 4. Opportunity to do music at school



Change in amount of music at school from Y6 to Y7

Table 8. Percentage of Change in Girls' and Boys' Views About Amount of Music at School in Y7 compared to Y6

	% Y7 Girls			% Y7 Boys		
	Less	Same	More	Less	Same	More
How much music do you do at your new school compared to primary school?	20.7	18.2	61.1	27.8	20.9	51.3
How much singing do you do at your new school compared to primary school?	43.5	17.7	38.1	43.7	25.0	31.3
How often do you play instruments at your new school compared to primary school?	31.9	19.8	48.3	37.1	20.1	42.8

Support from Parents, Friends and Teachers

The children were asked questions about the attitudes and amount of support they receive from parents, friends and teachers for playing instruments. Figures 5 and 6 show the average amounts of support children believe they receive for playing instruments in Y6 and Y7 (end). The highest ratings of support were from parents, followed by teachers and friends. Boys in particular reported receiving little support from friends. Girls' ratings of support were significantly higher than boys' ratings in both Y6 and Y7. Players in Y6 and Y7 believe they receive higher levels of support from parents, teachers and friends than non-players.

Fig 5. Support for playing instruments in Y6

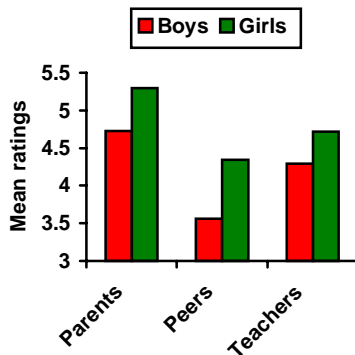
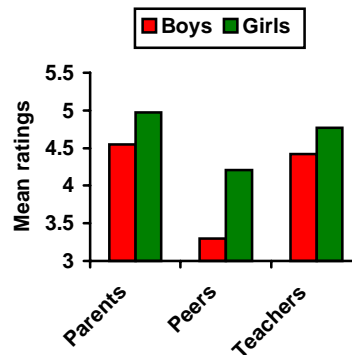


Fig 6. Support for playing instruments in Y7



Characteristics of Children who Play Musical Instruments

Length of time spent playing an instrument

Table 9 shows the length of time children in Y6 and Y7 reported playing an instrument. Those children who continue to play in Y7 tend to have played for longer. A higher proportion of Y7 players played for more than 3 years. An early start was one of the protective factors against drop-out among the children in the study.

Table 9. Percentage of Time Spent Playing an Instrument by Players in Y6 and Y7

<i>How long have you been playing your main instrument?</i>	Y6 Players %	Y7 Players %
Less than 6 months	16	15
6-12 months	14	15
1 year	14	8
2 years	21	16
3 years	16	15
More than 3 years	19	32

Table 10 shows how many hours a week on average children in Y6 and Y7 spent playing their instrument. Y7 players tend to put in a little more weekly playing than Y6 players. The proportion of players doing less than one hour per week dropped, and the proportion doing 4-6 hours increased, following the transition to secondary school.

Table 10. Percentage of Hours a Week Spent Playing an Instrument by Players in Y6 and Y7

<i>How many hours a week do you spend playing your main instrument?</i>	Y6 Players %	Y7 Players %
Less than 1 hour	42	36
2-3 hours (30 minutes per day)	27	28
4-6 hours	14	22
7-10 hours (60 minutes per day)	10	7
More than 10 hours	8	7

Involvement in musical groups

The percentage of children playing instruments in musical groups both at or outside school is shown in Table 11. In Y6, 22% of players play in groups, and 32% of Y7 players play in groups. Those who continue playing are slightly more likely to play in groups. The biggest proportional increase is in orchestral playing. The few home-based bands evident in primary school seem to all have collapsed in the first year of secondary school.

Table 11. Percentage of Involvement in Musical Groups by Players in Y6 and Y7

Do you play in any musical groups at school or outside school?	Y6 Players %	Y7 Players %
School orchestra	10	9
School recorder group	6	4
Band/group at home	3	-
Orchestra (outside school)	2	5
Orchestra (location not clear from response)	-	13
Wind or brass band	-	4
With friends (in school)	-	1
With friends (outside school)	2	3

Instrumental music lessons

Table 12 shows the proportion of Y6 and Y7 players having lessons and the type, location, frequency, and length of instrumental music lessons. Y7 players show a slight increase in the proportion having lessons, and the proportion of those having individual lessons. The school is still the predominant location for lessons, and the vast majority received 20-30 minutes of teaching per week. There was a small decline in the numbers who received lessons of 15 minutes or less.

Table 12. Percentage of Time Players Spent Playing an Instrument in Y6 and Y7

Characteristics of Instrumental Music Lessons	Y6 Players %	Y7 Players %
Proportion having lessons	69	75
Proportion having lessons in groups	72	64
Location of instrumental lessons		
School	74	81
Teacher's home	8	8
Child's home	10	7
Music Centre	9	4
Frequency of instrumental lessons		
Daily	4	1
Twice weekly	13	11
Weekly	78	85
Every 2 weeks	2	3
Length of instrumental lessons		
15 minutes or less	13	7
15-30 minutes	65	71
40-60 minutes	19	16
Over 60 minutes	4	7

Instrumental music teachers

75% of instrumental music teachers in Y6 were female compared to 46% in Y7. Overall, the children were very positive about their instrumental music teachers. Table 13 shows the percentage of players in Y6 and Y7 who rated their instrumental music teachers above average on a variety of questions. Although there was an overall slight decline in ratings in Y7 compared to Y6, there were no large differences. In general, children thought their teachers wanted them to pass music examinations, and also thought their teachers valued effort highly. The lowest ratings were for letting children choose their own music to play and for having teachers who conveyed a sense that children could have a future career in music.

Table 13. Percentage of Children Who Rated Their Instrumental Music Teacher 'Above Average' on Specific Characteristics in Y6 and Y7

How much is your instrumental teacher...	% Y6	% Y7		% Y6	% Y7
Is pleased with the work you do in your lessons?	64.1	56.6	Wants you to try your best and not worry if you make mistakes?	77.4	76.3
Thinks you are good at playing an instrument?	60.7	51.7	Makes music lessons interesting?	64.5	60.8
Wants you to pass music exams?	75.3	80.1	Teaches music you like?	58.1	53.3
Thinks you could have a job in music when you get older?	34.0	27.7	Often praises you (tells you 'well done') during your lessons?	63.3	61.4
Shows you how to practice?	64.0	59.2	Often gives you a chance to choose what music you play?	43.4	39.6

Music examinations

Table 14 shows the characteristics of children who play instruments in terms of music examinations. Y7 players were twice as likely to have taken an exam as Y6 players. Y7 players show a small increase in the numbers who had taken Grades 3 and 4 as compared to Y6. There were no differences between Y6 and Y7 in exam outcome. It appears that being on an 'exam track' is an important correlate of persistence, although the level or grade achieved is not important.

Table 14. Percentage of Time Players Spent Playing an Instrument in Y6 and Y7

Characteristics of Music Examinations	Y6 Players %	Y7 Players %
Proportion who have taken a music exam	16	35
Highest grade taken?		
Grade 1	42	18
Grade 2	27	29
Grade 3	6	13
Grade 4	7	14
Grade 5 or more	6	2
Mark received on highest grade taken		
Pass	40	43
Merit	23	25
Distinction	13	8
Exam type*		
Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music	-	39
Trinity College of Music	-	4
School exam	-	20
Can't remember	-	36

* The question about exam type was only asked in Year 7.

Players in Y7 were asked how they would describe their feelings about their performance on the last examination they had taken. The responses are presented in Table 15. Half of the girls and boys thought they did as well as expected on the exam.

Table 15. Percentage Girls' and Boys' Views About their Music Examination Performance

	% Y7 Girls			% Y7 Boys		
	I did worse than expected	I did as well as I expected	I did better than I expected	I did worse than I expected	I did as well as I expected	I did better than I expected
How would you describe your feelings about your performance in the exam?	19.7	50.0	30.3	19.4	54.8	25.8

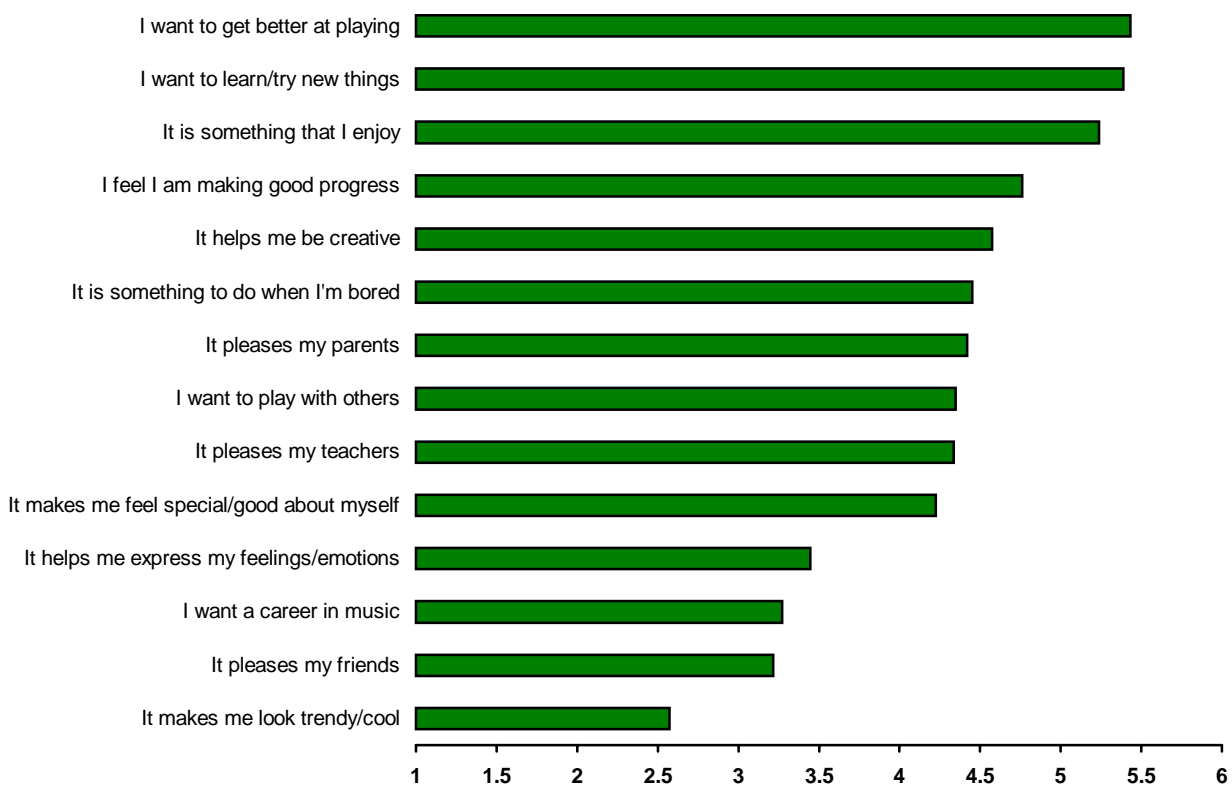
Expectations for future involvement in playing instruments

Players in Y6 and Y7 were also asked 'Will you continue to play an instrument next year?'. In Y6, 83% said yes, but in Y7 this figure rose to 97%. Y7 players were more likely to think they would continue than Y6 players.

Reasons for Playing Musical Instruments

Figure 7 shows the ratings that 316 Y7 players gave for each of the 16 reasons below associated with why they played an instrument. Many previous studies only ask children to specify their own reasons for playing an instrument, which are then categorised according to frequency of response. However, it is likely that many children have multiple reasons for playing instruments, but some reasons may be more important than others. Therefore, we asked the children to rate all of the most common reasons for playing instrument on a 7-point scale from (1) not at all to (7) a lot. The results show that the main reasons children give for playing instruments are that they enjoy the challenge and opportunity to learn something new. Children also rated being creative, relieving boredom, playing with others, and pleasing parents and teachers as strong reasons for playing instruments. Having an image as trendy/cool and pleasing friends were the least likely reasons for playing an instrument. This suggests that the social pressures children might expect from peers are not yet an important influence on children in this age group in terms of their involvement in playing an instrument.

Fig 7. Reasons for playing instruments



Reasons for Giving up Musical Instruments

Figure 8 shows the ratings that 200 Y7 children gave for each of the reasons associated with giving up playing an instrument. All children who had given up an instrument were asked to rate each of the 16 reasons below on a 7-point scale from (1) not at all to (7) a lot. The main reasons for giving up were that it became boring, and priorities moved elsewhere. Children also rated practising and lessons which were not enjoyable as strong reasons for giving up. Teasing/bullying by friends or family members and financial costs were rated as the least likely reasons for giving up.

Fig 8. Reasons for giving up playing instruments



Characteristics of Children who Gave Up or Continued to Play Instruments

What are the key factors that protect children from giving up playing instruments?

In order to examine some of the factors which differentiate those children who continued playing instruments following the transition to secondary school from those who gave up, we examined the main Y6 responses of 426 children who played instruments during the last year of primary school (Y6) and divided them according to whether they continued to play in Y7 (Continuers) or whether they had given up playing by the end of Y7 (Gave ups). A summary of the results according to the significant differences we found between groups are shown in Table 16. Overall, Continuers were more self-directed and autonomous than Gave ups, but they were not social isolates. Continuers had more close associates who played instruments, they played more instruments and for longer, had been involved in more performance groups and taken more music examinations than Gave ups. Continuers had greater confidence in their own ability, and found playing an instrument more motivating and enjoyable than Gave ups. Continuers liked a challenge and believed that hard work would yield improvements more than Gave ups. The most differential source of support came from parents. Continuers were far more likely to view their parents as more supportive than Gave ups. Siblings' and friends' direct support showed little difference between groups, although it helped if friends believed in music as an activity for all. The support received from teachers made less difference than the support received from parents, although it helped if teachers were able to communicate a belief in the child's ability and chose music that the child liked.

Practitioner and Policy Implications

User Feedback Group (Advisory Committee)

A User Feedback Group (Advisory Committee) was established in 1998 with the aim of bringing together representatives from key UK organisations involved with music and young people. Annual meetings were used to address the following aims:

- To ensure the research project examines areas which are of direct relevance to music educators
- To take into account specific questions, interests and concerns of committee members when designing, conducting and reporting the research
- To keep committee members updated on research progress and outcomes
- To facilitate access by the research team to any relevant sources of data held or known about by committee members' organisations
- To discuss the interpretation of research findings from the project, and their possible implications for practitioners and policymakers
- To co-ordinate and facilitate dissemination of research findings within the constituencies which member organisations represent or communicate with

Members of the User Feedback Group 2001:

Richard Morris, Michelle James (Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music); Heli Ignatius-Fleet (European Piano Teachers Association); Richard Hickman (Federation of Music Services); Alison Pickard (Incorporated Society of Musicians); Richard Morris (Music Education Council); Bob Kelley (Music Industries Association); Leonora Davies (National Association of Music Educators); Fiona Penny (National Music Council); Dr Janet Mills (Royal Collage of Music); Alistair Jones (Yamaha-Kemble Music (UK) Ltd).

Past members of the User Feedback Group 1998 and 1999:

Richard Morris (1998/99), Richard Crozier (1998/99), Suzannah Power (1998) (Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music); Heli Ignatius-Fleet (1998), Patricia Powell (1999) (European Piano Teachers Association); Roger Durston (1998/99) (European String Teachers Association); Richard Hickman (1998/99) (Federation of Music Services); Dr Janet Mills (Observer 1998/99) (HM Inspector of Schools/OFSTED); Elizabeth Poulsen (1998/99) (Incorporated Society of Musicians); Leonora Davies (1998) (National Association of Music Educators); Jennifer Goodwin (1999) (National Music Council); Roger Durston (1998/99) (Music Education Council); Bob Kelley (1998/99) (Music Industries Association); Hilary Brooks (1998) (Music Masters' and Mistresses' Association); Tony Knight (Observer 1998), Anna Watkins (Observer 1999) (Qualifications and Curriculum Authority); David Saville (1998/99) (Yamaha-Kemble Music (UK) Ltd).

Implications of the Study

Based on the results contained in the full report, the Research Team and members of the User Feedback Group 2001 propose the following implications for the consideration of practitioners and policymakers:

1 Provide structured opportunities for young people which give them increasing choice, control and responsibility for organising and developing their own musical involvement.

Findings from numerous parts of the study point to the importance young people place on choosing their own musical instruments, music, and musical activities. This is particularly important following the transition to secondary school where many young people feel that compared to primary school, they are given less opportunity to take responsibility for various aspects of musical involvement and decision-making. One can sense the frustration that this might cause as young people reach a point in their development where they seek to establish a greater sense of independence and control over the choices they make. Young people who continue to play instruments following the transition to secondary school are more self-directed and autonomous in the musical activities they are involved in compared to those who give up. They are also more likely to report having a classroom music teacher or instrumental music teacher who communicates a belief in their potential to do well and enables them to choose music they like and want to learn to play.

2 Provide young people with instruments that they associate with valued role models.

There is a mismatch between the instruments children want to learn to play and the instruments they actually play, particularly at school. This mismatch is especially prominent among boys. The majority of children in both Year 6 and Year 7 reported playing the recorder. This certainly affords opportunities since it is a small, light, inexpensive and relatively durable instrument that most children can learn to play and therefore gain experience of active music-making. However, children do not associate playing the recorder with their musical role models in the adult world. As such, they view the recorder as 'not a real instrument' or a 'child's instrument' which is limited in its ability to express the music young people are most interested in playing. Those who are most likely to continue learning to play an instrument report valuing the instrument they play and identifying positively with adult role models who play a similar instrument.

3 Start learning to play an instrument younger, and at least one year before making the transition to secondary school.

The findings indicate that those children who are more likely to continue playing after making the transition to secondary school had already been playing an instrument for at least a year while they were at primary school. Starting an instrument younger, and

having played an instrument for longer, appears to act as a protective factor in terms of continued interest and commitment toward the instrument at secondary school.

4 Provide opportunities and encourage young people to play in musical groups outside of school hours.

Young people who have more close associates who play instruments in terms of family members and friends, and who engage in group musical activities outside school hours, are more likely to continue playing instruments following the transition to secondary school.

5 Help to establish within young people positive beliefs and values about musical involvement.

Young people who continue playing instruments following the transition to secondary school have greater confidence in their own ability, and find playing more important and enjoyable than those who give up. They also don't mind a challenge and believe hard work will lead to improvements compared to those who give up.

6 Provide young people with structured goals and appropriate challenges.

Children who have been involved in performance groups and have taken a music examination are more likely to continue playing instruments after making the transition to secondary school. However, there was no difference between those who continue and those who give up in terms of the highest grade achieved or the mark awarded on exams. What appears to be important is not so much that children attain the highest levels on music exams, but rather that they gain a sense of having a structured goal to work towards that is viewed as a challenge or opportunity to improve their skills and not just as an opportunity to display their competence. In other words, many teachers involve their students in music examinations, but what appears to be important is that these examinations are not viewed as merely opportunities to display competence (i.e., achieve high grades). Rather, it appears more important for music examinations to be viewed by children as a challenge that will motivate them to learn more and make more progress.

7 Young people are helped if they believe their parents are supportive of their involvement in musical activities.

The most important differential source of support comes from parents. Children who stay involved in learning to play an instrument believe that their parents are supportive of this activity far more than children who give up. Siblings' and friends' direct support is far less important, although it helps if friends believe in music as an activity for all. The support offered by teachers appears to make less of an impact, although it helps if the child feels that music is valued at the school, that the music teacher and instrumental music teacher are able to communicate a belief in the child's potential to do well at music and teach music the child values and wants to learn to play.

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A list of further project publications will be posted on the web site as they become available in 2002.

www.keele.ac.uk/depts/ps/ESRC.htm