Music in Schools for Children with Special Educational Needs: A Whole School Perspective

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Submitted in accordance with the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

The University of Leeds

School of Music

November 2018

The candidate confirms that the work submitted is her own and that appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to the work of others.

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Acknowledgements

I owe this thesis to so many people.

To my supervisors, Professor Karen Burland and Dr Alinka Greasley, whose continued support, wisdom, patience, kindness and unwavering reassurance guided this research project from the flicker of an idea to the flame of new knowledge.

To the Arts and Humanities Research Council and White Rose College of Arts and Humanities, whose generous funding made this research possible.

To Caryn, Clare and everyone at WRoCAH for making my three years as a member of this incredible doctoral training programme so inspiring and memorable.

To Linda, Paula, Mic, Mike, Freya and the rest of the AHC graduate school administrative team. I am deeply grateful for all the work you've done behind the scenes to help me get to this point in my academic career. Your support and expertise have been second to none.

To the participants. I wish I could name you all here. You gave up your time, your classrooms, your experiences and your knowledge so that others could learn from you. Thank you so much for welcoming me into your schools. This thesis is as much yours as it is mine.

To my family – especially my parents – for the countless reassuring phone calls and surprise PhD care-packages.

To my friends and colleagues, Kate, Claire, Sylvia, Albini, Annie, Diljeet, Alison, Gill, Alex, Jo, Gillian, Maya and Georgina. We have shared PhD highs and lows, rocked conference karaoke sessions, consumed after-work cocktails (professionally and responsibly, of course…), made PhD playlists, attended virtual writing retreats, and organised incredible, accessible conferences; you are all phenomenal scholars and friends and I am so thankful to have shared this journey with you.

And, of course, to Mark, for being the most selfless, supportive person I know.

Abstract

Music education and music therapy have long been shown to have benefits for children and young people labelled as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEN/D). However, until recently, very little has been known about the ways in which music education is approached in special education. Recent reviews of music education in England have drawn attention to the variability of current provision across the country. In special education, this research has largely centred upon exploring *what* is happening. Questions pertaining to *how* and *why* schools are choosing to incorporate music into their curricula have received little attention, making it difficult to ascertain exactly what is causing this 'patchy' provision. Moreover, there are currently voices missing from the research literature. Previous studies have explored the views and experiences of practitioners. However, the views of parents and teaching assistants have largely been ignored and those of disabled children and young people entirely excluded.

This thesis expands upon the findings of previous research by exploring what constitutes 'best practice' in music in special education from a whole school perspective. Longitudinal ethnographic fieldwork was carried out in three special schools in Yorkshire. Data were gathered via repeated, weekly observations of music lessons/activities across a term of fieldwork in each school. Semi-structured interviews with a variety of school stakeholders (n = 36 interviews) including practitioners, primary care-givers and pupils, document analysis (n = 71 documents), and an ethnographic diary also contributed to the data-set. Data were analysed in accordance with Grounded Theory Methods.

The findings show that participants agree upon 7 key elements of 'best practice' in music in special education and that there are 10 barriers/enablers to achieving this. A hierarchical model of the ways in which these barriers/enablers intersect demonstrates the process through which 'best practice' is currently achieved, forming a working theory of 'best practice' in SEN/D music education. The findings also highlight that a variety of socio-political-edu-cultural beliefs affect how participants describe and enact 'best practice'. The effect these beliefs have on participants' perceptions of 'best practice' are considered and recommendations for future research in this field are suggested.

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Abbreviations

AAC	Alternative and Augmentative Communication
ACE	Arts Council England
ADHD	Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
APS	Average Point Score
AQA	Assessment and Qualifications Alliance
ASDAN	Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network
BAMT	British Association for Music Therapy
CD	Compact Disc
CDS	Critical Disability Studies
CGT	Constructivist Grounded Theory
CME	Certificate for Music Educators
CMLN	Complex and Multiple Learning Needs
CoPE	Certificate of Personal Effectiveness
CPD	Continued Professional Development
DBS	Disclosure and Barring Service
DCMS	Department for Culture, Media and Sport
DfE	Department for Education
EBacc	English Baccalaureate
EHCP	Education Health and Care Plan
EYFS	Early Years Foundation Stage
FE	Further Education
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education
GT	Grounded Theory
GTM	Grounded Theory Method

GTP	Graduate Teacher Programme
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IEP	Individual Education Plan
IPA	Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis
ITE	Initial Teacher Education
ITT	Initial Teacher Training
JCQ	Joint Council for Qualifications
LA	Local Authority
MAPP	Mapping and Assessing Pupil Progress
MCA	Mental Capacity Act
MEH	Music Education Hub
MLD	Moderate Learning Difficulties
MU	Musicians' Union
NPD	National Pupil Database
NPME	National Plan for Music Education
NQT	Newly Qualified Teacher
NYMAZ	North Yorkshire Music Action Zone
Ofsted	The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills
OHMI	The One Handed Musical Instrument Trust
ONS	Office of National Statistics
PD	Physical Disabilities
PE	Physical Education
PECS	Picture Exchange Communication System
PGCE	Postgraduate Certificate in Education
PGCert	Postgraduate Certificate
PHSCE	Personal Health, Social and Citizenship Education
PLP	Personalised Learning Plan

PMLD   Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties

PROMISE   Provision of Music in Special Education

QCA   Qualifications and Curriculum Authority

SEN/D   Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities

SLD   Severe Learning Difficulties

SLT   Senior Leadership Team

SoI   Sounds of Intent

TA   Teaching Assistant

UK   United Kingdom

UPIAS   Union of the Physically Impaired Against Segregation

VOCA   Voice Output Communication Aid

WCET   Whole Class Ensemble Teaching

WJEC   Welsh Joint Education Committee

Introduction

Music education and music therapy have long been shown to have benefits for children and young people labelled as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEN/D). Early advocates of the benefits of music education for disabled children and young people described the positive role that music can play in assisting with a child's overall learning and development (e.g. Darrow & Heller, 1985; Dickinson, 1976; J. P. B. Dobbs, 1966; Graham, 1972; Vernazza, 1967). Furthermore, early pioneers of music therapy explained that the practice could be used as an educational support for children and young people labelled as having SEN/D (Alvin, 1965, 1975; Nordoff & Robbins, 1971a, 1971b, 1977). Early accounts of the use of music in special education, however, were mostly anecdotal. Furthermore, whilst case studies were often provided, these were usually written from the author's own perspective and failed to situate personal experiences amidst the wider body of research literature. This meant that, despite ample discourse on the subject, until recently, little was known about the ways in which music is taught in special education (Ockelford, 2000, 2008).

Since the turn of the century, empirical research has sought to address this gap in research knowledge. From a UK perspective, the PROMISE (Provision of Music in Special Education) research (Welch, Ockelford, & Zimmermann, 2001; Welch, Ockelford, Zimmermann, Himonides, & Wilde, 2016) has explored how English special schools are choosing to include music in their curricula. The findings of the first iteration of this research demonstrated that, whilst practitioners were positive about the potential benefits of pupils' engagement in music activities, music education in special schools lacked a common music curriculum that specifically accounted for the unique developmental pathways of children and young people labelled as having severe learning difficulties (SLD) and/or profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD). Ockelford concluded that this led to "an essentially pragmatic and eclectic approach" (Ockelford, 2008, p. 35) to music education in special schools.

Notable developments in SEN/D music education in England since the PROMISE research was first published include the introduction of the P Scales (progress levels for pupils labelled as having SEN/D) for music in 2001 (Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, 2001) and the development of the Sounds of Intent (SoI)

framework of musical development (Ockelford & Welch, 2012; Ockelford et al., 2011; Ockelford, Welch, Zimmermann, & Himonides, 2005; Welch, Ockelford, Carter, Zimmermann, & Himonides, 2009). Both have offered practitioners a means of measuring students' progress and attainment in music. However, the P Scales have been criticised by music education researchers for lacking a suitably robust empirical foundation. Ockelford (2008), for example, noted that it is not clear exactly how the P Scales were formed which means that it is reasonable to contend that they are rooted in anecdotal evidence. In contrast, the SoI framework stems from several years of empirical research. Despite this, recent research has suggested that few schools are choosing to use the SoI framework over the P Scales (Welch et al., 2016) and it is not clear why this is.

More generally, several education policy changes have had a significant impact on music education in England in recent years. A review of music education carried out by Darren Henley in 2011 (Department for Education, 2011c) found that music provision across the country was "distinctly patchy" (p. 5). To address this, the Government devised and implemented the National Plan for Music Education (NPME, Department for Education, 2011b). Central to this plan was the creation of local Music Education Hubs (MEHs). These hubs would replace local Music Services and were tasked with supporting music education in four areas: ensuring that every child aged 5-18 has the opportunity to learn a musical instrument through whole class ensemble teaching (WCET); providing children and young people with opportunities to play in ensembles and perform from an early age; ensuring that clear progression routes in music are available and affordable for all students; and developing a singing strategy to ensure that every child sings regularly and that choirs and other vocal ensembles are available for children and young people to participate in should they wish (Department for Education, 2011b, p. 11). Recent changes to the National Curriculum (Department for Education, 2010, 2011a, 2011f, 2012a, 2013a, 2013b, 2013c, 2013d, 2014) and the introduction of the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) have also had an impact on music education (Bate, 2018; Cultural Learning Alliance, 2016, 2018b; Daubney & Mackrill, 2017, 2018; Johnes, 2017). There is evidence to suggest that the EBacc in particular is having an adverse effect on music in mainstream education with several studies showing a decline in the uptake of Key Stage 4 music qualifications in recent years (Daubney & Mackrill, 2017, 2018; Johnes, 2017). It is not yet clear to what degree these changes have affected music in special schools.

In 2015, a second iteration of the PROMISE research was carried out (Welch et al., 2016). The findings of this study demonstrated that progress has been made since the late 1990s, with more schools employing musically qualified staff, experiencing better support from external organisations and including a broader range of resources within their music curricula. However, the survey concluded that, overall, the provision of music in special education varies from school to school. This finding is concurrent with broader music education research in England (Department for Education, 2011c; Zeserson, Welch, Burn, Saunders, & Himonides, 2014). For example, a 'rapid review' of schools-based music education (*Inspiring Music for All*) carried out by Zeserson et al. (2014) found that, despite a series of nation-wide initiatives to raise standards in music education (e.g. Department for Education, 2011b, 2014), "[t]he place and status of music in schools vary widely across the country" (p. 9). Findings from Zeserson et al's report suggested six unifying reasons for this variance: 1) Low teacher confidence due to lack of music-specific training opportunities in initial teacher training (ITT) and continued professional development (CPD); 2) Weaknesses in curriculum and pedagogy; 3) Poor tracking and understanding of retention and progress in music; 4) Insufficient support from senior leadership teams (SLTs); 5) Insufficient local and national support structures to allow schools and MEHs to consult on best practice in music education; and 6) Impact of recent education policy changes such as the introduction of the EBacc. It is unclear, however, to what degree these factors affect music education in special schools.

Research in the field of music therapy has also developed our understanding of the ways in which music is used/taught in special education. Schools have become a prominent locus of activity for music therapists who choose to work with disabled children and young people (Oldfield, 2012; Welch et al., 2001; Welch et al., 2016). However, several researchers have noted that there are a number of similarities between music education and music therapy when both are used in special schools (e.g. Bunt, 2003; Markou, 2010; Mawby, 2015; Ockelford, 2000; Robertson, 2000). This has led to a lack of conceptual clarity as to what can be classified as education and/or therapy in these settings. Models of music education have been developed which attempt to define each practice in relation to its use in special education (Ockelford, 2000; Robertson, 2000). These models generally assert that music therapy is child-led and focuses on developing non-musical skills, whereas music education is teacher-led and focuses on developing musical skills. Empirical research, however, has shown that, whilst these

models are theoretically sound in principle, in practice music education and music therapy cannot be packaged into such neat boxes (Markou, 2010; Mawby, 2011, 2014, 2015). For example, in a mixed-methods study exploring practitioners' views about the similarities and differences between music education and music therapy, Markou (2010) found that the participating practitioners tended to report more similarities than differences between the two practices. Markou concluded that there is considerable overlap between the two professions when both are used in special schools.

My own research (Mawby, 2011, 2014, 2015) has added further nuance to these findings. In 2011 and 2014 I carried out individual case studies of two special schools to explore the similarities, crossovers and distinctions between music education and music therapy in each setting. Three practitioners from each school were interviewed and observations of music lessons and music therapy sessions were carried out. The findings showed that, whilst practitioners agreed that there were some key differences between each practice (which aligned with the theories set forth in the theoretical models discussed above), the degree of similarity and/or difference between music education and music therapy in the participating schools shifted depending on the way in which each chose to incorporate music therapy into its overall curriculum. School culture therefore played an important role when it came to the way in which these practices were perceived.

The findings of my previous research (Mawby, 2011, 2014, 2015) also brought to light an important concern. Practitioners at School 2 (Mawby, 2014) explained that, although they had firm ideas about what constitutes music education and music therapy, little is known about the ways in which the students see the two practices. The views of disabled children and young people are absent from a great deal of research in education, health and psychology (Crook, Tomlins, Bancroft, & Ogi, 2016; Feldman, Battin, Shaw, & Luckasson, 2013; Kelly, 2007; Kitchin, 2000). To date, it would seem that this is also the case for research in music education and music therapy (T. Dobbs, 2012; Jellison & Taylor, 2007; Lubet, 2009a; Norris, 2016). In order to fully understand the similarities and differences between these two practices, seeking the views of the pupils themselves is a matter of great importance.

Indeed, scholars and activists in the field of disability studies (which is closely aligned with the disability rights movement) have criticised music therapy and special education for being rooted in a medical model of disability (e.g. Cameron, 2014;

Honisch, 2014; Straus, 2011). This framework positions disability as an individual deficit that needs to be 'fixed' or 'cured' before a disabled person can fully participate in society (Mallett & Runswick Cole, 2014). Such scholars call for a reimagining of these practices to better align with the social model of disability. In contrast to the medical model, the social model draws a distinction between impairment and disability. Impairment is referred to as any neurological, sensory, intellectual, physical and/or psychological difference that deviates from a socially-constructed 'norm'. Within the social model, impairment is not seen as the cause of disability. Instead, disability is caused by environmental, attitudinal and/or organisational barriers that prevent people with impairments from participating in society (Mallett & Runswick Cole, 2014). Recently, a dialogue has begun between the fields of disability studies and music therapy (e.g. Hadley, 2014; Honisch, 2014; Tsiris, 2013) with a view to re-examine the epistemological roots of the field in relation to its work with disabled people. When taking these debates into consideration, the most pertinent question for researchers in music, disability and education is perhaps not 'where do the boundaries lie between education and therapy?' but rather, 'what is music *for* in special education?' and 'where does music therapy fit?'

In England, the research carried out to date in the field of music and special education has centred upon exploring *what* is happening in music in special education. Questions pertaining to *how* and *why* schools are choosing to incorporate music into their curricula have received little attention. This makes it difficult to ascertain exactly what is causing the continued 'patchy' provision of music in special education identified in previous research (Department for Education, 2011c; Welch et al., 2016; Zeserson et al., 2014). In the *Inspiring Music for All* report, Zeserson et al. (2014) frequently assert that developing and sharing best practice is an important element of improving this varied provision. Yet, when it comes to music in special education, it is not yet clear what constitutes 'best practice'. The research field is still very much in its infancy (Gall, Williams, Webb, & Dowling, 2018a, 2018b; Ockelford, 2000, 2008) and there is little empirical evidence from which to make recommendations for sector-wide improvement. Furthermore, there are currently voices missing from the research literature. Previous studies have explored the thoughts, experiences and opinions of music teachers, music therapists and members of senior leadership teams (Markou, 2010; Mawby, 2011, 2014, 2015). However, the views of parents and teaching

assistants have been largely ignored and those of disabled children and young people entirely excluded.

This thesis expands upon the findings of previous research by exploring what constitutes best practice in music in special education from a whole school perspective. The project has four primary aims:

- To explore the ways in which music education is currently approached in schools for children and young people who have been labelled as having SEN/D
- To explore what constitutes 'best practice' in music education in these settings
- To explore the various opportunities and barriers schools for children labelled with SEN/D face with regards to the implementation of 'best practice'
- To explore the interplay between music therapy and music education in these settings, with a view to establishing where music therapy might 'fit' within the school curriculum

Ethnography and grounded theory were chosen as the primary research methods. Ethnography allowed the researcher to immerse themselves in the unique culture of each school such that the context in which participants' thoughts, beliefs and actions were formed and enacted could be fully considered during data collection and analysis. Grounded theory then served to move the data beyond description towards a more theoretical understanding of the ways in which 'best practice' in music education is described and enacted by various stakeholders in English special schools.

Longitudinal ethnographic fieldwork was carried out in three special schools in Yorkshire during the 2015/2016 academic year. A term was spent in each school. Data were collected via the following methods:

- Observations of classroom activities, music lessons, music therapy sessions and extra-curricular music activities;
- Semi-structured interviews with multiple stakeholders at the school (specifically: practitioners, parents, members of senior leadership teams and pupils);
- An ethnographic diary (in which I recorded any pertinent reflections on the observation notes/interview responses generated); and

- Document analysis of relevant written materials such as each school's individual policies, teaching materials, lesson plans, Ofsted reports, curriculum documents and, in the case of one school, staff newsletters.

Data were analysed in accordance with the grounded theory methods outlined by Charmaz (2014). Data analysis followed an iterative process and, where possible, data were analysed, coded and revisited throughout the duration of fieldwork using the grounded theory principles of constant comparative analysis and theoretical sampling (Charmaz, 2014; Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Glaser, 1978, 1992; Glaser & Strauss, 1967/1999). The result is a grounded theory of 'best practice' in SEN/D music education that is rooted in the experiences of a variety of stakeholders in special education.

This thesis begins by acknowledging the way in which extant literature has been used throughout the research process. The literature review is a contested endeavour in grounded theory research (Dunne, 2011; El Hussein, Kennedy, & Oliver, 2017; Ramalho, Adams, Huggard, & Hoare, 2015; Thornberg, 2012). Researchers have therefore argued that it important for grounded theorists to be open about the way in which they have engaged with extant literature from the outset of their research (Dunne, 2011). Chapter 1 honours this principle.

Chapter 2 then acts in much the same way as a traditional literature review. In doing so, it provides a rationale for the necessity of a deeper exploration of the way in which music is used and taught in English special schools and demonstrates how this will complement and expand upon existing theories in the field of music and special education.

Chapter 3 outlines the methodological approach to this research project. The ontological and epistemological assumptions that underpin the research are acknowledged and the researcher's position in relation to the researched is clarified. Methods of data collection and analysis are outlined and the ethical implications of the research methods are considered.

Chapters 4, 5 and 6, present the results of the research. Chapter 4 provides an overview of the cultural context of each school and addresses the first aim of this research study (to explore the ways in which music education is currently approached in schools for children and young people who have been labelled as having SEN/D).

Chapter 5 then explores 'what constitutes 'best practice' in SEN/D music education' and Chapter 6 outlines 'what affects 'best practice''. A theoretical model of the 10 barriers/enablers of 'best practice' identified during data analysis is presented at the end of Chapter 6. This model constitutes a move towards a grounded theory of 'best practice' in music in special education.

Finally, Chapter 7 locates this grounded theory in a wider context by comparing the research findings to those of the broader field of music in special education. This comparison is international is scope. The strengths and limitations of the work are acknowledged and suggestions for future research, policy and practice are made.

Chapter 1 Grounded Theory and the Contested Literature Review

This thesis uses grounded theory as one of its central research methods. The literature review is a contested endeavour in grounded theory research. This "conundrum of the literature review" (El Hussein et al., 2017, p. 1199) places the novice grounded theorist in a complicated situation. How much information about the research field should a researcher know prior to carrying out data collection and analysis? When writing a doctoral thesis this question becomes even more convoluted (Dunne, 2011). How and where should a PhD student address extant knowledge in the final written research output in order to show that they have understood the tenets of this methodological approach as well as the academic requirements for a doctoral degree? Dunne (2011) suggests that researchers should "clearly articulate this issue from the outset and cogently outline and defend the preferred option in order to minimise the potential for misunderstanding between the author and the reader" (Dunne, 2011, p. 121). This thesis therefore requires a secondary introduction to clarify the ways in which extant literature have been used throughout this study. A brief summary of the differing viewpoints surrounding the use of extant literature in grounded theory research will be provided. This will be followed by an explanation of the ways in which I chose to engage with literature as part of this study.

In their seminal introduction to the method, Glaser and Strauss (1967/1999) proposed that grounded theory researchers should refrain from carrying out a literature review in their own substantive field before engaging in data collection and analysis. They believed that doing so would prevent data from becoming contaminated with prior theoretical assumptions thus ensuring that the resulting theory was fully grounded in data. They contended that the literature review should be delayed until such time as the analysis is almost complete. They advised researchers "literally to ignore the literature of theory and fact on the area under study, in order to assure that the emergence of categories will not be contaminated by concepts more suited to different areas" (Glaser & Strauss, 1967/1999, p. 37).

Many scholars have since rejected Glaser and Strauss' original dictum (Charmaz, 2014; Dunne, 2011; El Hussein et al., 2017; Ramalho et al., 2015;

Thornberg, 2012). Thornberg (2012) describes Glaser and Strauss' fear of contamination as "an extreme position" (Thornberg, 2012, p. 245). He contends that this view misjudges a researcher's ability to interact critically and reflexively with extant literature. Dunne (2011) echoes this sentiment explaining:

> Indeed, if the fundamental concern of Glaser is the threat of external ideas impinging upon the research and distracting focus away from the raw data, then perhaps there is a way to monitor and counteract this threat which is less extreme than the initial abstinence from literature which he prescribes. After all, it would be both unfortunate and unconstructive to sacrifice the numerous advantages derived from conducting an early literature review based on a concern about what impact extant ideas might have on the researcher (Dunne, 2011, p. 117, emphasis in original)

It is important to note Dunne's omission of Strauss in this quotation. Following their initial co-published summaries of the grounded theory approach, Glaser and Strauss each took the method in different directions (a matter which I discuss further in Chapter 3). Strauss' later work with Juliet Corbin is more accepting of the fact that pre-existing knowledge of a research field is usually unavoidable. Corbin and Strauss do however maintain that "too much knowledge about the subject under investigation can bias interpretations and block discovery of new concepts" (Corbin & Strauss, 2015, p. 55). And so a fear of contamination lingers.

Like Dunne (2011), other researchers have argued that there are indeed many advantages to carrying out a literature review prior to data collection and analysis. For example, El Hussein et al. (2017) suggest that doing so can assist a researcher to identify gaps in the literature that warrant further research (thus helping to shape grounded theory research questions); can offer "a substantial guide for interviewing in grounded theory research" (p.1200); and can support researchers to facilitate an awareness of "the meso and macro perspectives that potentially shaped the thinking of participants and the organization [*sic*] of their work" (p.1200). In short, El Hussein et al. contend that carrying out a literature review prior to data collection and analysis helps to provide context to both the research design and the participants' views. Many scholars have also contended that it is both impractical and often impossible in modern academic practice to avoid coming into contact with pre-existing literature in the substantive field under study (Bruce, 2007; Charmaz, 2014; Clarke, 2005; Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Dunne, 2011; Halberg, 2010; McCallin, 2006; Thornberg, 2012).

Academic processes such as applying for research funding and submitting a research proposal for ethical review often require that researchers demonstrate sufficient knowledge of the field under investigation. Indeed, engaging in a literature review prior to seeking research funding or ethical approval is often deemed necessary and important for many of the reasons listed by El Hussein et al. (2017) above.

Ramalho et al. (2015) contended that "[t]he notion that conducting a literature review prior to data collection hinders a grounded theory research denotes an epistemological stance" (Ramalho et al., 2015, p. 9). This research project takes a constructivist approach to grounded theory research and primarily follows the methodological recommendations of Charmaz (2000, 2014, 2016).[1] This stance incorporates the view that it is neither possible nor practical to approach grounded theory research without some knowledge of the research literature. Thornberg's (2012) notion of 'informed grounded theory' is useful here as it closely reflects the way that extant literature has been engaged with throughout this thesis. Thornberg explains:

> What I call informed grounded theory refers to a product of a research process as well as to the research process itself, in which both the process and the product have been thoroughly grounded in data by GT [grounded theory] methods while being informed by existing research literature and theoretical frameworks…In contrast to the classic GT tradition, but in accordance with the constructivist GT tradition, an informed grounded theorist sees the advantage of using pre-existing theories and research findings in the substantive field in a sensitive, creative and flexible way instead of seeing them as obstacles and threats (Thornberg, 2012, p. 249)

This approach remains true to two commonly agreed principles of grounded theory research: 1) that theory must be grounded in data (as opposed to extant literature or *a priori* assumptions); and 2) that theories grounded in data must take precedent over pre-existing theories derived by other means. However, it also acknowledges the utility of extant literature to the development and contextualisation of theory. Furthermore, it frames the fear of 'contamination' as an extreme epistemological stance and, instead, positions the researcher as a critical and reflexive agent, capable of being "open and sensitive to the data without rejecting pre-existing theoretical concepts and constructions" (Thornberg, 2012, p. 247).

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[1] More information about constructivist grounded theory is provided in Chapter 3.

Extant literature has therefore been engaged with at a variety of stages and for a variety of purposes throughout my doctoral research. Firstly, I came to the study of music in special schools with a substantial amount of pre-existing knowledge of the field. Prior to embarking on this doctoral study, I had carried out two research projects which explored the similarities, crossovers and distinctions between music education and music therapy when both practices are used in schools for children labelled as having SEN/D. These projects used Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) as their primary methodological approach and so the tradition of carrying out a literature review prior to research was uncontested. Furthermore, in order to write a successful application for doctoral study, my initial PhD research proposal had to situate the proposed research project within the field's wider body of literature and a detailed bibliography demonstrating my knowledge of the key pieces of research in this area needed to be compiled. I therefore began this project with considerable knowledge of the research field.

Following the initial engagement with the literature, I let my exploration of pre-existing theories in music in special education lie fallow whilst I carried out my own research. This was not so much for fear of contaminating my data, rather it was a pragmatic decision so that I could focus on grounding my theory of music in special education in the data I was gathering. Extant literature was used, however, as a means of theoretical sampling to expand my knowledge of various pedagogical approaches that participating schools were using.[2] I spent a considerable amount of time reading about intensive interaction, for example, as this was a communication and pedagogical approach which was widely used in School 1. I also engaged widely with education policy documents as, as outlined in Chapter 2, education policy in England experienced some important changes during the years in which this study was conducted.

During this time, in accordance with the advice of Glaser (1978), I also continued to read literature from other fields. This literature was predominantly related to sociology, disability studies and disability arts. Glaser contended that expanding your knowledge of research in other substantive fields can be a useful means of enhancing theoretical sensitivity – a concept which he defines as "the researcher's knowledge, understanding, and skill, which foster his generation of categories and properties [from

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[2] The grounded theory principle of theoretical sampling is explained in Chapter 3 (section 3.8.5).

the data] and increase his ability to relate them into hypotheses" (Glaser, 1992, p. 27). Theoretical sensitivity supports theorising from data as it enables researchers to see data from multiple perspectives. However, engaging with literature from other research fields does bring with it some difficulties. For example, during the third year of my doctoral candidature – a time when I was heavily engaged in data analysis – I wrote in my research journal that I had experienced a paradigm shift in relation to my research. I explained:

> I've read so much about disability studies and have engaged so widely with people who identify as being disabled that I've encountered a major paradigm shift in the way I see my subject. I didn't feel this way when I first started my PhD. It's through engaging in my PhD, engaging with a variety of different stakeholders throughout my research and reading widely and avidly that this shift has occurred. And now it's causing problems with the way I'm analysing my data. The shift has happened too soon. My research questions no longer make sense in this new paradigm. It was never meant to be like this. It was meant to be a logical progression from fieldwork to analysis to write-up to dissemination to next project. But it hasn't worked like that. I've changed. The lens through which I see the world, the paradigm, is different; and I'm not too sure how to deal with it. (Extract from entry to personal research journal, 15.03.2017).

The conundrum of 'the paradigm shift' was a direct result of my engagement with a variety of literature in the field of disability studies. Through this engagement I was introduced to the social model of disability. I discuss the social model in more detail in Chapter 2 but, in essence, the social model argues that there is a distinction between impairment and disability. It contends that, although a disabled person may have an impairment which may mean that they experience difficulties such as pain, physical/mental differences, learning difficulties and/or chronic fatigue,[3] ultimately, it is not impairment that disables a person. Instead, it is the way in which society is structured (i.e. both by and for the needs and desires of non-disabled people) and the way in which society treats disabled people (i.e. as 'others' deviating from a non-disabled 'norm' who need to be 'fixed' or 'cured' in order to have the same opportunities and life chances as non-disabled people) that serves to exclude and disable people with impairments.

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[3] Note that this is not an exhaustive list of the difficulties which can be experienced in relation to an impairment, it is merely an illustrative example.

This is a somewhat reductionist description of what is, in fact, a nuanced and ongoing debate about the political and ontological foundations of disability (a debate that I am still in the early stages of engaging with as a scholar). Regardless, reading about the social model radically changed my perception of my field of inquiry. I started to question the ethics of the way in which music is sometimes used to 'treat', 'remediate' or 'improve the functioning of' disabled people. The current focus of music and disability research on 'health and wellbeing' and 'educational interventions' also began to seem potentially problematic (although I draw no conclusions here as to whether or not this is, in fact, the case). As may be evident to the reader from my bracketed reflections in this paragraph, as I write this thesis I know that I have still have a way to go through this epistemological quagmire. My journey into the subfield of music and disability studies is just beginning. However the infancy of the newly discovered transdisciplinarity of my research has caused difficulties with the analysis and write-up of this doctoral research project.

Openness and honesty about these shifts in perception are important. Furthermore, such shifts provide additional support to the widely acknowledged view that a researcher is never entirely objective (Birks & Mills, 2015; Chalmers, 1999; Charmaz, 2014; Clarke, 2005; Thornberg, 2012). A researcher's position in relation to their research will always affect the way that research questions are formed, data collection is carried out and analysis is constructed. Close engagement with my supervisors about these concerns led to practical and intellectually guided solutions to the issue of the paradigm shift. However, it is important to acknowledge that engaging with literature from other substantive fields in order to enhance theoretical sensitivity can lead to epistemological paradigm shifts that affect the research process. In my experience, these effects are mostly positive (I would argue that engaging with the ideas and research of scholars in disability studies, for example, has had a profoundly positive impact on my work). Nevertheless, engaging with literature outside of the substantive field under study can pose methodological issues for the researcher that require a high level of openness, reflexivity and pragmatism to surmount.

Thornberg's (2012) notion of informed grounded theory is, again, of use here. Thornberg recommends that grounded theorists adhere to principles of theoretical agnosticism (Henwood & Pidgeon, 2003), theoretical pluralism, theoretical playfulness, memoing and reflexivity in order to ensure that theory remains grounded in data. He

reminds grounded theorists that "[t]he researcher has to remember that the main focus is on data, not on literature, and that every code, concept or theoretical idea he or she constructs must be grounded in data by GT methods" (Thornberg, 2012, p. 252).

Finally – returning to the overview of the way in which I engaged with literature throughout this research process – once I felt that my analysis was reaching its final stages (i.e. the point at which I was constructing my final core concepts) I began to re-engage with the literature in my own substantive field in order to compare and contrast it with the theory constructed from my own data. Grounded theory principles of constant comparative analysis and theoretical sampling (definitions of which are provided in Chapter 3) were useful here as they offered a way to focus the literature search and constructively compare and contrast pre-existing theories to my own.

The way in which extant literature is reported upon in this thesis is therefore as follows:

1. Chapter 2 acts in much the same way as a traditional literature review. In doing so, it provides a rationale for the necessity of a deeper exploration of the ways in which music education is approached in English special schools and demonstrates how this will complement and expand upon existing theories in the field of music and special education.

2. Chapter 3 provides an overview of the literature consulted when deciding which research methods would best answer the research questions posed in this study.

3. Throughout chapters 4, 5 and 6, extant literature is occasionally referred to when reported research findings require additional context or clarification. For example, when referencing various pedagogical approaches or assessment systems used by each of the schools taking part in this study.

4. Chapter 7 places the grounded theory of SEN/D music education practice developed as part of this research in a broader context, comparing and contrasting the findings of this study with those that have preceded it.

Extant literature is therefore woven throughout this research project. The resulting theory is grounded in data. However, inferences drawn from this theory are engaged with in conversation. Previous ideas, theories and frameworks are not seen as agents of contamination but are instead viewed as potential sources of "inspiration, ideas, 'aha!'

experiences, creative associations, critical reflections, and multiple lenses" (Thornberg, 2012, p. 7). The result is an informed grounded theory that views critical engagement with extant ideas as neither avoidable nor inappropriate. Instead, such engagement is positioned as a natural part of the process of constructing theory from data.

Chapter 2 Background and Research Rationale

2.1   Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the literature which informed this study. In doing so, it presents a rationale for the necessity of a deeper exploration of music in special education and demonstrates how this will complement and expand upon existing theories in this field. The review focuses specifically on the English education context in order to contextualise the research findings presented in Chapters 4, 5 and 6. International research is, however, brought into the discussion section in Chapter 7.

2.2   The Current Climate of Music Education in England

In recent years there have been several notable developments in education policy – some directly related to music education and others more general – that have had an impact upon the music education landscape in England. I am choosing to focus on England specifically here as educational powers are devolved in other countries which form part of the UK and therefore are not entirely relevant to the context of this research project. Having said this, suggestions for additional UK-wide and international research will be discussed in Chapter 7. The primary purpose of presenting this information is to situate music in special education within a broader context. It is not clear exactly how recent policy changes and developments have affected music education in special schools. Such explorations are usually confined to mainstream education. As will be seen in later chapters, however, special schools are not exempt from the impact of these changes. The following review therefore sets the scene for what is to be discussed throughout this thesis by explaining the current climate of music education in England.

Perhaps the most notable development in English music education policy in recent years has been the introduction of the National Plan for Music Education (NPME). In 2011, the then coalition Government[1] commissioned a policy review which aimed to explore "how the funding available for music education can most effectively

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[1] Formed of a majority Conservative and minority Liberal Democrat coalition.

be used to secure the best music education for all children and young people" (Department for Education, 2011c, p. 41). Darren Henley, then managing director of Classic FM[2], was commissioned to lead the review. A call for evidence issued between the 24th September and 1st November 2010 received responses from 900 individuals.[3] Further evidence was gathered via interviews with 72 people representing 55 organisations. The subsequent review (which is often referred to as the 'Henley Review') consolidated this evidence into 36 recommendations for music education in England. These recommendations were then commented upon by representatives from the Department for Education (DfE) and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) in a report published in 2011 (Department for Education, 2011e). The initial recommendations put forward in the Henley Review were then consolidated and, later that same year, enshrined in policy with the publication of the NPME (Department for Education, 2011b).

The NPME aims to address a primary concern of the Henley Review – that music education across England was "patchy" in terms of both the quality and quantity of provision on offer – by building "a music infrastructure that transcends schools" (Department for Education, 2011b, p. 10). This infrastructure includes the creation of Music Education Hubs (MEHs) which replaced existing local authority music services. The Hubs have four core roles:

1. To ensure that every child aged 5-18 has the opportunity to learn a musical instrument (other than voice) through whole-class ensemble teaching programmes for ideally a year (but for a minimum of a term) of weekly tuition on the same instrument.

2. To provide opportunities to play in ensembles and to perform from an early stage.

3. To ensure that clear progression routes are available and affordable to all young people.

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[2] A UK-wide commercial radio station for classical music.
[3] Of these responses: 23.5% came from schools and teachers; 17.6% came from music services; 11.6% came from organisations/individuals involved in music education; 2.4% came from the music industry; 16.8% came from parents and carers; and 27.9% came from others with an interest in music education (Department for Education, 2011d, p. 1).

4. To develop a singing strategy to ensure that every pupil sings regularly and that choirs and other vocal ensembles are available in the area.

(Department for Education, 2011b, p. 11)

Partnership working between Hubs, schools, Local Authorities (LAs) and local and national music organisations is strongly encouraged. Funding for MEHs is issued by Arts Council England (ACE) who operate as a fund-holder for DfE funding. Hubs are also free to seek additional funding from their LAs, schools, parents and other interested parties. Additional initiatives outlined in the NPME include new training opportunities such as an Initial Teacher Training (ITT) add-on module and a commitment "to develop a suite of independently assessed and accredited qualifications" (Department for Education, 2011b, p. 12) for external music professionals (such as peripatetic voice and instrumental teachers) working with schools. The latter was launched in 2013 as the Certificate for Music Educators (CME). The overall aim of the NPME is therefore to ensure that all children and young people have access to a "broad and balanced" music curriculum that "provide[s] opportunities that reach beyond school boundaries and draw[s]-in the expertise of a range of education and arts partners." (Department for Education, 2011b, p. 3).

The NPME was initially positively received by the music education sector (Spruce, 2013; Stephens, 2013). Spruce (2013) contends that this was primarily because the plan confirmed the continuation of ring-fenced central Government funding for music education in England and also promoted the importance of music in the curriculum. Zeserson et al. (2014) also championed the NPME as "a vehicle through which all children and young people can engage in inspiring, enriching and empowering musical learning" (p. 3). However, a number of subsequent reports and critiques have noted that the NPME has had several negative consequences for the music education workforce and may have contributed to a narrowing of the music curriculum, thus alienating many students from wanting to participate in music education. The Musicians' Union (MU)[4], for example, have outlined a number of concerns about the policy's impact on the music education workforce (Musicians' Union, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017). Results from the MU's annual workforce surveys conducted between 2014 and 2017 demonstrate that, whilst ring-fenced funding has

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[4] A UK-wide trade union for those working in the music business (which includes the music education sector).

been maintained, hubs have lost additional funding from LAs which has had a damaging effect on the music education workforce. In their 2015 report, for example, the MU explain:

> Where once Local Authorities funded their Music Services and Government funding (Music Standards Fund) was regarded as a top up in areas where, for political reasons, local funding was absent or low, the situation is now almost entirely reversed. Heads of Music Services (de facto Hub Leaders) have widely reported that with the advent of the National Plan and the confirmation of three year Government funding, their Local Authorities increasingly see no need to provide Music Services with continued local funding. So a stream of central funding, which originally began as a stop gap, has now become the main source of public funding resulting in Music Services being more vulnerable than ever to policy change. (Musicians' Union, 2015, p. 3)

The MU claim that this rebalancing of funding has led to cuts of up to 70% for Music Services that were previously reliant upon LA investment (Musicians' Union, 2015).[5] Indeed, independent annual reports published by ACE show that LA funding has been decreasing year-on-year since 2013 with the most recent data showing an overall decrease in LA income of -33.71% for all Music Education Hubs (combined) between 2014/2015 and 2015/2016 (Fautley & Whittaker, 2017; Sharp, 2015; Sharp & Rabiasz, 2016; Sharp & Sims, 2014). The MU assert that this loss of funding has led to a reorganisation of the workforce, with redundancies and casual, zero-hour contracts on the increase. These changes mean that many peripatetic teachers are finding that a career in instrumental music teaching is unsustainable (Musicians' Union, 2017). Experienced, highly skilled teachers are therefore having to leave the workforce "to work privately or outside of the Hub only to be replaced by a less skilled workforce" (Musicians' Union, 2015, pp. 3-4). The MU contend that the effect of these changes undermines the core aims of the NPME to upskill the workforce and increase partnership working.

The MU also notes that the NPME's goal of ending the "patchy" postcode lottery of provision identified in the Henley Review is prohibited by the fact that Hubs

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[5] ACE's Music Education Hub annual survey results for 2015/2016 show that the range of reduction in LA grants and contributions across all regions in England was between 19.75% and 65.36% (Fautley & Whittaker, 2017), with the exception of the North West who saw LA funding increase by 39.24% in comparison to the previous financial year.

operate in a variety of different ways with no universal business model linking the sector. The inevitability of this is perhaps evident in the NPME's commitment to enable music services to flexibly adapt their ways of working to the needs of the local areas they serve. However, the MU report that the lack of a standardised approach to employment practices and workforce training and development means that the quality and quantity of music provision in schools is still significantly varied across the country (Musicians' Union, 2016). Furthermore, the MU highlight concerns regarding equal access to music learning opportunities for all students, explaining that first-access schemes such as whole-class ensemble teaching (WCET) are often offered on a short-term basis (usually a year or less) and that funding limitations mean that schools and parents are often required to make a financial contribution should they wish the service to continue (for concurring numerical data, see Fautley & Whittaker, 2017). This inevitably leads to inequality when the additional top-up funding cannot be found (Musicians' Union, 2017). Despite these concerns, the MU does emphasise that MEHs across the country are working hard to deliver the commitments of the NPME in "increasingly challenging circumstances" (Musicians' Union, 2016, p. 7).

Spruce (2013) has also criticised the NPME by arguing that it attempts to impose a "conservative, neoliberal agenda" (p. 117) upon music education in England. Spruce argues that the NPME does this by: 1) promoting a "common national consciousness" (p. 115) that prioritises music which supports "a grand historical narrative of Englishness" (p. 116); 2) enforcing homogeneity by focusing on large-group singing and orchestral playing in which "the aim appears to be to make the learner anonymous within a collective homogenous whole" (p. 116); and 3) degrading pedagogies which seek to work against homogeneity such as the informal learning models pioneered by Green (2002, 2008). Spruce concludes that the NPME thus serves to position students as passive recipients of a prescribed music education rather than active agents of their own musical discovery:

> The [NPME]'s focus on the construction of homogeneity and the limited
> opportunities it provides for creativity and pupil agency mark it as the articulation
> of a political ideology that sees the child not as an individual "subject" within
> education whose voice and agency is valued but rather as the object of an
> educational process whose aim is the furtherance of a particular political and
> ideological agenda. (Spruce, 2013, p. 117)

Furthermore, Spruce raises concerns that, despite using language that champions inclusion and equality of access, the NPME will, in reality, serve to exclude many children and young people from taking part in musical activities because their inclusion is contingent upon:

- Children complying with a particular and culturally exclusive set of musical practices and values—primarily those that have their roots in the Western art music paradigm and large-scale homogenous groups

- Pedagogies that are teacher-led and in which the voice of the pupil is muted

- The relegation of ideals of musical diversity, including the diversity of musical practices in which children engage outside of school, to the periphery

(Spruce, 2013, p. 117)

Inclusion is therefore dependent upon students fitting a prescriptive system that has been designed without their input. Finney positions this as the predilection of the Government to meet students' 'inferred needs' rather than their 'expressed needs' (Finney, 2011, p. 140) and, in a similar vein to Spruce, notes that this locates the student as "a recipient of a top-down managed curriculum" (Finney, 2011, p. 131).

It is worth remembering that one of the original aims of the Henley Review was to explore "how the funding available for music education can most effectively be used to secure the *best* music education for all children and young people." (Department for Education, 2011c, p. 41, emphasis added). What Spruce highlights in his critique of the NPME is that what is deemed to be 'best' in the eyes of the Government might not be what is 'best' in practice. 'Best practice' in music education is therefore a social construct that remains open to multiple interpretations.

Spruce (2013) also draws attention to the fact that the NPME was published "against a background of a series of radical policy statements and initiatives regarding education" (p. 114). These included a review of the National Curriculum (Department for Education, 2010, 2011a, 2011f, 2012a, 2013a, 2013b, 2013c, 2013d, 2014) and the introduction of the English Baccalaureate (EBacc).[6] Both initiatives were introduced by the 2010-2015 coalition Government and aimed to increase the rigour and international

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[6] The EBacc is a performance measure for schools which takes account of students' achievements in a combination of subjects. Specifically, students must achieve grades that are higher than a grade 5 in GCSE English and Maths and higher than a grade C in science, geography or history and a language, in order to be awarded the EBacc.

competitiveness of the English education system. A primary aim of the National Curriculum review was also to grant teachers more professional autonomy in deciding how the curriculum should be taught (Department for Education, 2011f).

When the review of the National Curriculum was announced, it was unclear whether music would continue to be included as a statutory subject. Following an initial consultation (Department for Education, 2011f) and an expert panel review (Department for Education, 2011a), it was decided that music would remain a foundation subject (meaning that it would continue to be a compulsory element of the curriculum for all children aged 5-14 years attending LA maintained schools in England). However, the Programmes of Study for each Key Stage would be "slimmed down" to represent only the "essential knowledge" the Government felt students needed to learn (Department for Education, 2011a, p. 23). This was the case for all subjects and reflected the Government's aim to grant teachers more autonomy when it came to deciding how the National Curriculum should be taught. The new Programmes of Study for Music were introduced into schools from September 2014 (Department for Education, 2013a, 2013b, 2014).

Currently, little empirical evidence exists that explores the effect of these changes on music teaching and learning at each Key Stage. An exception is a recently published study by Bate (2018) which aimed to critically evaluate the National Curriculum for Music reforms by carrying out a qualitative comparative analysis of the pre-2014 and post-2014 Programmes of Study. For Bate, these changes constitute a narrowing of the music curriculum that restricts students' engagement with different ways of musical knowing:

> In attempting to increase academic rigour, the emphases on talent and musicality, greatness and the canon, compulsory performance training, and reading staff notation all reinforce limited ways of musical knowing, presenting abstract knowledge to be passed from teacher to pupil in an action of preservation, and stressing the existence of rigid divisions and inequalities within sociocultural hierarchy (Bate, 2018, p. 8)

Like Spruce (2013), Bate calls for greater inclusion of critical pedagogies and emancipatory knowledge in the curriculum. She argues that the increased flexibility of the way in which the curriculum is taught offers music teachers an opportunity to engage students in these critical discourses without undermining the statutory

requirements of the National Curriculum. She encourages schools to "establish their own local curricula" that "highlight how musical meaning is socially, politically, and historically constructed" (Bate, 2018, p. 12). As mentioned above, to date, it appears that there have been no studies which explore whether changes in the National Curriculum for Music have affected day-to-day teaching practices across each of the three compulsory Key Stages (Key Stages 1-3). It is therefore unclear whether such changes have resulted in a positive, negative or neutral effect on music teaching and learning in maintained schools in England.

In contrast, a small number of recent studies have demonstrated that the EBacc may be having an adverse effect on music in secondary education (Daubney & Mackrill, 2017, 2018; Fellows, 2017; Greevy, Knox, Nunney, & Pye, 2012; Johnes, 2017). The EBacc is an achievement measure introduced by the coalition Government in 2010. It aims to encourage more students to enter GCSE (General Certificate of Secondary Education) examinations in a 'core' group of subjects; specifically, English, Mathematics, the Sciences, the Humanities, and Foreign Languages (referred to as the 'five subject pillars'). The philosophy behind the implementation of the EBacc is that it ensures that a broad range of options for career and further study remain available to students after Key Stage 4 (Department for Education, 2017a). The Government has expressed that it "want[s] to see more children benefitting from an academic curriculum that keeps their options open for future study" (Department for Education, 2017a, p. 8). It has therefore voiced an expectation that "75% of year 10 pupils [age 14 years] in state-funded mainstream schools should be starting to study EBacc GCSE courses nationally by 2022 (taking their exams in 2024), rising to 90% by 2025 (taking their exams in 2027)" (Department for Education, 2017a, pp. 8-9). To encourage schools to meet these goals, from 2016, the proportion of students entering EBacc subjects was included in a revised set of accountability measures for schools which also introduced new measures known as Progress 8 and Attainment 8 (Department for Education, 2018b). The latter measures are described by Fellows (2017) thus:

> Attainment 8 measures how well children do in the eight GCSEs they did best in; Progress 8 measures the academic progress of pupils in those same subjects from the end of primary school to the end of Key Stage 4, using their Key Stage 2 results as a baseline. These eight subjects must fall into specific baskets, with five of them coming from the EBacc basket, and the other three from a second basket

that contains EBacc subjects, other GCSEs, recognised technical qualifications and a graded musical examination at level six or above. It is important to note that while pupils do have to take at least five subjects from the EBacc pot to satisfy the Progress 8 and Attainment 8 metrics, they do not have to be entered for the EBacc. (That requires students to do a particular configuration of at least seven EBacc GCSEs, not simply five subjects from the EBacc pot.) What these new accountability measures mean for arts GCSEs is that pupils can do three or more arts subjects and still meet the criterion for Progress 8 and Attainment 8, provided the other five subjects are from the EBacc pot. (Fellows, 2017, p. 9)[7]

In 2018, following a consultation on the implementation of the EBacc (Department for Education, 2017a), the accountability measures for schools were further revised to include the following:

- Progress across 8 qualifications (Progress 8)

- Percentage of pupils entering the English Baccalaureate (EBacc entry)

- Percentage of students staying in education or going into employment after key stage 4 (pupil destinations)

- Percentage of pupils achieving a grade 5 or above in English and maths (Attainment in English and maths)

- Attainment across the same 8 qualifications (Attainment 8)

- English Baccalaureate Average Point Score (EBacc APS)

    (Department for Education, 2018b, p. 6)

A school's performance in the above measures affects where they appear in national league tables. The omission of the arts as a 'subject pillar' within the EBacc has caused many arts education advocates to raise concerns. These advocates believe that the new accountability measures will mean that arts subjects are relegated to the margins of the secondary curriculum as schools focus on steering students towards EBacc subject qualifications that raise their standing in national league tables (J. Adams, 2013; Bacc for the Future, Incorporated Society of Musicians, Cultural Learning Alliance, & What Next, 2018; Cultural Learning Alliance, 2016, 2018a, 2018b; House of Lords, 2018; Savage, 2018; Welch, 2012). The Bacc for the Future campaign has been particularly

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[7] More information about how Attainment 8 and Progress 8 are calculated can be found in Department for Education (2016a).

vocal about this risk, arguing that many schools have made cuts to arts subjects since the introduction of the EBacc and its associated accountability measures (Bacc for the Future et al., 2018). But has this been the case?

In their most recent publication exploring changes in secondary music education since 2012, Daubney and Mackrill (2018) report a decline in music education in secondary schools. Of the 464 schools[8] responding to their 2018 survey, 59% stated that the EBacc had had "a negative impact on the provision and uptake of Music in their school" (p. 2). Specifically, survey respondents reported falling staff levels in music departments in 35.8% of responding schools[9], no option to study GCSE music in 18% of responding schools, and 8% of schools delivering music education outside of core curriculum time (e.g. after school). Music at Key Stage 3 was also adversely affected, with the researchers finding that, for the 2018/2019 academic year, music was only compulsory as a year 9 subject in 47.5% of the responding schools. Daubney and Mackrill purport that the study's findings demonstrate "widespread evidence of change" (p. 1) to the secondary music curriculum in England and that this change is mostly negative (i.e. music in secondary education is in decline).

However, Daubney and Mackrill's findings are at odds with data published in an independent study by the New Schools Network[10] (Fellows, 2017) which shows that, overall, entries to GCSE arts examinations[11] have increased since the introduction of the EBacc. Specifically, the report demonstrates that there was a 2% increase in the uptake of GCSE arts subjects in English state-funded mainstream schools between 2011/2012 and 2015/2016. The report's findings also show, however, that "arts GCSEs face a growing threat from schools which mistakenly believe that to achieve good Progress 8 and Attainment 8 scores they have to discourage students from taking arts GCSEs" (Fellows, 2017, p. 6). Schools were also making funding decisions based on these new accountability measures which meant that the number of teachers and taught hours for the arts had decreased by -13.4% and -16.4%, respectively, between 2011/2012 and 2015/2016. In contrast, the number of teachers and taught hours for

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[8] Comprising 423 State schools and 41 Independent schools.

[9] Although it is important to note that 14.6% of responding schools reported increases in staff levels.

[10] Commissioned by the Department for Education.

[11] Which are defined as entries to GCSE examinations in Art & Design, Dance, Drama, Expressive & Performing Arts, Media and Music. These findings are therefore inclusive of several arts subjects, not just music.

Geography and History (both EBacc subjects which fall under the Humanities pillar) increased by +8.5% and +22.9%, respectively, in the same time period.

However, a recent report from the Cultural Learning Alliance[12] (Cultural Learning Alliance, 2018b) calls the New Schools Network data into question with their claim that, between 2010 and 2018 "there was a decline of -35% in the number of arts GCSE entries from 673,739 in 2010 to 435,784 in 2018" (Cultural Learning Alliance, 2018b, p. 1). Specific figures for music also show that GCSE exam entries fell between 2010 and 2018 by -23%. In a similar vein to the New Schools Network report (Fellows, 2017), the Cultural Learning Alliance also found that this decrease was in direct contrast to the increase in entries to History and Geography exams which experienced a rise of +22% and +38%, respectively, between 2010 and 2018.

Why is this data at odds? The answer may lie in the fact that the analysed data sets were taken from different sources. Data in the Cultural Learning Alliance's (2018b) study were taken from the Joint Council for Qualifications' (JCQ) annual results tables (Joint Council for Qualifications, 2018). Whereas the New Schools Network analysed data from the Department for Education's Key Stage 4 Qualification and Subject Data.[13] The New Schools Network also filtered out results from independent and non-maintained schools to leave just the GCSE exam entry data for maintained mainstream schools. It is not clear from their reporting whether the Cultural Learning Alliance data included all school types. However, when cross-referencing their data reporting with that of the original JCQ results tables, it appears that the JCQ tables account for all examination entries in England and, since the reported examination entry figures match across both reports, it seems reasonable to assume that the Cultural Learning Alliance data accounts for all schools instead of just maintained mainstream settings. Furthermore, the New Schools Network report only includes data up to 2015/2016 (which is understandable given that the report's publication date is 2017), whereas the Cultural Learning Alliance's study includes data from the

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[12] A prominent supporter of the Bacc to the Future Campaign.

[13] The New Schools Network report that the datasets used to calculate the total number of GCSE entries in arts subjects between each of the academic years from 2011/12 and 2015/16 is available at: https://www.compare-school-performance.service.gov.uk/download-data under 'Key Stage 4 qualification and subject data'.

2017/2018 academic year. It is likely that these differences account for some of the disparity between the two reports.

An additional independent study[14] by the Education Policy Institute (Johnes, 2017) aimed to address these discrepancies and provide clarity to the debate by providing new analysis of the trends in entries to arts examinations between 2007 and 2016. This analysis is more comprehensive than the studies cited above as it provides information about the way in which certain student or school characteristics may correlate with trends in Key Stage 4 arts examination entries. It also includes exam entry data for all arts examinations (not just GCSEs) and reports statistics which explore trends in arts examination uptake when accounting for the variance in annual pupil cohort size. Quantitative data were taken from the Department for Education's "National Pupil Database (NPD) and exam entry files for each cohort of pupils reaching the end of Key Stage 4 over the decade between 2007 and 2016" (Johnes, 2017, p. 17). Only data for mainstream schools were included in the dataset. Supplementary qualitative data was also gathered from teachers and senior school leaders' responses to an online survey (n = 51) and follow-up telephone interviews (n = 11). This evidence was collected in order to explore possible causes of the patterns identified in the quantitative data analysis.

The report concludes that "entries to arts subjects by Key Stage 4 cohorts have declined over the past couple of years [2013-2016], following several years of gradual increases" (p. 7). Furthermore:

> Evidence from teachers and school leaders indicates that various factors are placing pressure on arts subjects, including the EBacc, Progress 8, and financial issues. However, the extent to which this pressure impacts on a school's arts provision depends on the precise combination of these factors within the school's specific context, and the extent to which school leaders are able or willing to prioritise arts subjects under these circumstances. (Johnes, 2017, p. 8)

The Progress 8 accountability measure is seen to be the most likely reason for the recent decline in uptake of arts subjects at Key Stage 4. Progress 8 does not require students to be entered for the full EBacc which makes it academically more accessible for a greater number of students. The study concludes that the increase in the number of

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[14] Funded by the Arts Council England and the City of London Corporation.

students entering four of the EBacc components (a rise in +10.8% between 2015 and 2016 when Progress 8 was introduced) "seems to be in response to improving Progress 8 outcomes rather than improving the EBacc measure itself" (p.9).

The Education Policy Institute's report, whilst focusing on entry to arts subject examinations as a whole, does include some data relating to the uptake of Key Stage 4 music qualifications. In contrast to the New Schools Network and Cultural Learning Alliance studies, this data accounts for all Key Stage 4 qualifications (i.e. not just GCSEs). As such, it paints a much broader picture of the recent trends in uptake of specific music exam/qualification types between 2007 and 2016 (see Figure 2.1).

Figure 2.1: Key Stage 4 Entries to Music Qualifications 2007-2016 (Johnes, 2017, p. 24)

In addition, the data also show the change in percentage uptake of Key Stage 4 music examinations over time when accounting for the variance in overall cohort size between each year. When taking this variance into account, data show that music consistently accounted for 0.9% of all exam entries at Key Stage 4 between 2011 and 2016. It is clear, however, that the overall ratio of GCSE to non-GCSE entries has changed considerably over the same time period. Individual, specific figures for this breakdown are not reported. However it is evident that the percentage of GCSE entries,

despite increasing between 2012 and 2015, declined in 2016. It would be useful to have more specific data about the trends in the uptake of music qualifications at Key Stage 4 reported alongside this graph. It would also be useful to see how the data from 2017 and 2018 plot onto it and whether the percentage of overall exam entries for music at Key Stage 4 (when accounting for variance in annual cohort size) remains at 0.9% for these two years.

It is difficult to accurately compare and contrast data from these four reports (Cultural Learning Alliance, 2018b; Daubney & Mackrill, 2018; Fellows, 2017; Johnes, 2017) due to differences in reporting styles. However, it seems clear that, overall, entries to arts examinations at Key Stage 4 have declined in recent years and that teachers and senior leaders are reporting that the EBacc, Progress 8 and Attainment 8 have all affected this. When taken in combination with concerns raised by Spruce (2013) and the MU (Musicians' Union, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017) about MEHs, and those raised by Bate (2018) in relation to the recent changes to the National Curriculum, it is clear that, despite music teachers' and advocates' best efforts, these policy changes have the potential to negatively affect music education in England in the coming years. As Stephens (2013) contends:

> Future generations of music educators may well look back at the first decade of the millennium and see a shift of emphasis from curriculum matters – teaching and learning, repertoire and technique – to a preoccupation with systems and structures; from developing imagination and creativity to meeting prescribed targets. In other words, moving further away from the music itself. If a lesson is to be learnt from the last decade it surely must be: to stay close to the music" (p. 126)

2.3   Music & Special Education in England

Music education and music therapy have long been shown to have benefits for children and young people labelled as having SEN/D. Early advocates of music in special education described the positive role that music can play in assisting a child's overall learning and development (Darrow & Heller, 1985; Dickinson, 1976; J. P. B. Dobbs, 1966; Graham, 1972; Johnson, 1981; Levin & Levin, 1972; Solomon, 1980; Vernazza, 1967; Wood, 1983). Furthermore, early pioneers of music therapy such as Alvin (1965, 1975) and Nordoff and Robbins (1971a, 1971b, 1977) claimed that music therapy was a valuable intervention for disabled children and young people which could help them to

develop skills that would assist them to access education. This, they believed, made music therapy a welcome addition to the special school curriculum. Initial commentary on the use of music in special education was primarily anecdotal and, whilst examples and case studies were provided, these were usually from the author's own perspective. Moreover, authors regularly failed to cite wider research in their writing, meaning that much of this early information was rooted in singular opinion. As such, despite ample discourse on the subject, until recently, little was known about the ways in which music education is approached in special schools in England.

> In an opinion paper on the subject published in 2000, Ockelford acknowledged:

> Little is currently known about the provision of music in the education of children who have severe learning difficulties (SLD) or profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD) in the UK, and virtually nothing about the broader place of music in their lives. The inadequacy of this position is compounded by the fact that there is a lack of conceptual clarity as to what constitutes music education for this group as opposed to music therapy (Ockelford, 2000, p. 197)

Ockelford's paper brought to light an important concern; without a clear understanding of how music education is approached in special schools it was reasonable to believe that there may be considerable variance in the music provision available to disabled children and young people. Furthermore, this lack of understanding made it difficult to ascertain what constitutes both music therapy and music education in these settings (a matter which will be discussed further in section 2.4.1 below).

Since Ockelford's (2000) statement, a small body of research has been carried out which attempts to bridge this gap in the literature. Shortly after the publication of Ockelford's opinion paper, the first iteration of the Provision of Music in Special Education (PROMISE) research was carried out (Ockelford, 2008; Ockelford, Welch, & Zimmermann, 2002; Welch et al., 2001). This research aimed to provide an initial exploration of the ways in which music is used in schools for pupils labelled as having SEN/D. Questionnaire and observational data were gathered in 52 special schools across England. The results found that most schools (94%) employed a designated member of staff with overall responsibility for music (known as a Music Coordinator). However, more than half of these staff members had no musical qualifications and little to no experience in music teaching. Furthermore, the majority of music teaching was carried out by class teachers, most of whom classified themselves as 'non specialists' in

music. In contrast, 36% of schools employed a music therapist and all except one of these practitioners were fully trained. The majority of schools centred their music curriculum on the framework provided by the National Curriculum. However, lessons were primarily tailored to the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)[15]. It was hypothesised that this reflected pupils' "limited levels of functional development" (Ockelford, 2008, p. 15) and the potential lack of confidence general class teachers had in their own ability to teach music. The musical resources used in lessons were primarily un-tuned percussion instruments and domestic music technology (such as CD players). This was also felt to reflect EYFS teaching. The majority of participating schools did not differentiate between attainment and progress in music education (although this may be expected as it is not clear how the researchers distinguished between these two terms themselves) and, when discussing musical development, most practitioners tended to focus on non-musical aims such as social and emotional development, motor-skills, and language and communication skills rather than musical aims. Ockelford, Welch and Zimmerman felt that this was arguably inevitable as, at the time of their research, little was known about the musical development of children who were labelled as having SLD or PMLD. Furthermore, a tailored curriculum that met the specific needs of these pupils was not available. Hence practitioners' reliance on the EYFS of the National Curriculum. All 52 schools used music to support pupils in other curriculum areas and links to community music activities were widespread. However, it seemed that these additional musical activities were not connected to the formal music curriculum. Similarly, there appeared to be little collaboration between Music Coordinators and music therapists in schools with music therapy provision. Overall, practitioners were immensely positive about the potential benefits of pupils' engagement in music activities. However, it seemed that the lack of a clear framework of musical development for pupils with complex developmental disabilities had led to "an essentially pragmatic and eclectic approach" (Ockelford, 2008, p. 35) to music education in special schools.

Efforts have been made to rectify this since the PROMISE research was first conducted. Firstly, in 2001 the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA)

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[15] Educational provision and standards for the learning, development and care of children from birth to 5 years old.

published a set of guidelines for music in special education (Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, 2001, 2007, 2009a, 2009b). These guidelines included specific assessment criteria for pupils who were deemed to be functioning below level one (the lowest level) of the National Curriculum, known as P Levels or P Scales.[16] Whilst this was a welcome development in the field of SEN/D music education, some researchers felt that the criteria did not adequately reflect SEN/D pupils' potential for musical development (Ockelford, 2008; Welch et al., 2009). For example, Ockelford (2008) drew attention to the "absence of a demonstrable, systematically derived, empirical foundation" (p.48) for the assessment levels, arguing that, without such a foundation, their formation could have relied too heavily upon inadequate, anecdotal evidence. He further argued that the P Scales were not realistic in the way in which they assessed how children with SEN/D experience music, thus limiting their potential to support meaningful musical learning and development.[17]

To address these concerns, the Sounds of Intent (SoI) Framework of Musical Development was devised (Ockelford & Markou, 2012; Ockelford & Welch, 2012; Ockelford et al., 2011; Ockelford et al., 2005; Welch et al., 2009). SoI is an on-going project which aims to "critique, refine and extend an original framework of musical development for children with complex needs" (Welch et al., 2009, p. 352). Research commenced in 2002 with a two-year study which was led by the primary researchers from the PROMISE research (Ockelford, Welch and Zimmermann) and additional practitioners and researchers from music education and music therapy backgrounds. The team began by analysing recorded video footage of children and young people with complex needs engaging in music activities. The purpose of this was to develop precise descriptions and common interpretations of each child's musical behaviour in order to

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[16] Policy documents and research literature use these two terms interchangeably. For clarity, P Scales will be used throughout this thesis to refer to these assessment criteria. The only exception being when the term P Levels is used by a particular participant or in a particular quotation from the wider literature.

[17] It is important to note that since 2015 the P Scales have undergone a significant review. The Rochford Review (Department for Education, 2015, 2016b, 2017b) – carried out in two parts between 2015-2016 and then commented upon by Government in 2017 – recommended that P Scales be scrapped in favour of a new system. At the time of my research, P Scales were still in place for special schools (academic year 2015/2016). However, in 2017 the Government announced that from the academic year 2018/2019 P Scales 4-8 would be scrapped and replaced with the new system set forth in the Rochford Review (Department for Education, 2016b). At the time this thesis was written, the section of this new system that applies to students with complex needs (i.e. those working between P Scales 1-3) was still under review.

begin to conceptualise a developmental framework. Following this, the research was expanded to include observational data of a further 68 pupils gathered in five schools from September 2005 to August 2007 by Fern-Chantele Carter[18] (Welch et al., 2009). In addition, observations of six young people labelled as having PMLD were carried out over a period of six months by Evangeline Cheng[19] (discussed in Ockelford & Welch, 2012). Following this, observations of 20 young people with PMLD were carried out over a six-month period in 2009 (discussed in Ockelford & Welch, 2012). The research team then launched the SoI website in 2012 which enabled practitioners to upload additional video evidence to the site. The SoI framework is therefore built upon several years of empirical research. During this time, the framework has been tested and revised to ensure that it effectively maps the musical development of children and young people with complex needs. Three primary dimensions of musical behaviour are outlined in this framework: reactive behaviour i.e. listening and responding to musical stimuli; proactive behaviour i.e. causing, creating and controlling musical stimuli; and interactive behaviour i.e. engaging with musical stimuli with other people. These three domains derive from the findings of an extensive body of observational data gathered by the research team as part of their study (a breakdown of which can be found above and in more detail in Ockelford & Welch, 2012) as well as research into the musical development of neurotypical children (examples of such research mentioned in SoI publications include: Hargreaves, 1986; Moog, 1968/1976; Papoušek, 1996; Trehub, 1990, 2003; Trevarthen, 2002; Welch, 2006) and Zygonic theory (Ockelford, 2013a). The circular framework depicts primary musical actions and responses at its core and gradually works outwards towards more developed musical responses and behaviours. In this way, it can also act as an assessment tool for practitioners working with pupils who have been labelled as having SLD and PMLD in replacement of the P Scales for music described above.[20]

In 2012, the SoI research team launched a web-based interactive version of the developmental framework and have recently reported that this has been accessed by "over 6.2 million unique visitors from all over the world" (Welch et al., 2016, p. 246).

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[18] Research Officer on Phase 1 of the SoI project (see Ockelford & Welch, 2012, p.20 for additional information).

[19] A doctoral student at the Institute of Education who subsequently joined the SoI research team (see Ockelford & Welch, 2012, p.20-22).

[20] A full version of the framework can be found at http://soundsofintent.org/

In addition, "the site had 630 registered practitioners, of whom 250+ [were] actively using the assessment tool" (Welch et al., 2016, p. 246). Whilst these are excellent statistics and it is clear that the SoI framework is making waves as an exemplar of 'good practice' in assessment and monitoring in SEN/D music education (Ofsted, 2012) it is unclear why more practitioners are not using it as an assessment tool. The figure of 250+ practitioners is promising and it is likely that, since these figures were reported in 2016, this number will have increased. However, at the time these figures were reported, there were 1039 special schools in England (Department for Education, 2016c) which means that, if the figure of 250+ practitioners is representative of just practitioners based in England and all of these were working in different schools (which is perhaps unlikely as the framework can be used by anyone across the world and is not exclusive to practitioners working in schools), at least ¾ of schools in England are not using the framework to assess their students' progress in music education. Research which examines why this might be the case would be of use if we are to better understand how special schools are approaching the monitoring and assessment of their students' musical progress such that pragmatic steps can be taken to improve practice in this area.

Additional research which supports the need for more substantial knowledge about the ways in which music is used and included in special school curricula include research carried out as part of the *Inspire Music* project. In 2014, a 'rapid review' of schools-based music education (*Inspiring Music for All*) was carried out by Zeserson and colleagues (Zeserson et al., 2014). This review found that, despite a series of nation-wide initiatives to raise standards in music education (e.g. Department for Education, 2011b, 2014), "[t]he place and status of music in schools vary widely across the country" (p. 9). Zeserson et al summarised the variation in provision as follows:

> In some schools – often those that are judged good or outstanding [by Ofsted] – music is woven throughout school life and is core to building school communities as well as helping children to develop their potential in all areas of learning. In others, there is a gulf between the 'showcase' culture of school musicals, choirs and bands offered outside of both curriculum and timetable, and a perfunctory delivery of the core curriculum in classrooms. In a third group of schools music is simply invisible and inaudible, with music lessons hardly involving any music-making and little or no energy invested in music outside of the timetable.
> (Zeserson et al., 2014, p. 15)

As such, the 'patchy provision' identified in the Henley Review (Department for Education, 2011c) and the PROMISE research (Welch et al., 2001) remains. Findings from Zeserson et al's report suggested six unifying reasons for this variance: 1) Low teacher confidence due to lack of music-specific training opportunities in ITT and CPD; 2) Weaknesses in curriculum and pedagogy; 3) Poor tracking and understanding of retention and progress in music; 4) Insufficient support from senior leadership teams (SLTs); 5) Insufficient local and national support structures to allow schools and MEHs to consult on best practice in music education; and 6) Impact of recent education policy changes such as the introduction of the EBacc. It is unclear, however, to what degree these factors affect music education in special schools.

Similarly, a second iteration of the PROMISE research carried out in 2015 (Welch et al., 2016) showed that, despite "a clear positive shift since the later 1990s" (p. 253), the way in which special schools are approaching music education continues to vary. In comparison to Zeserson's report (Zeserson et al., 2014), the PROMISE research does not explore the reasons for this variation. As such, since the start of the century we have improved our knowledge of *what* is happening with regards to music education in special schools. What we lack is information about *why* and *how* these things are happening. Greater attention to these two areas of inquiry is required if we are to fully address the 'patchy' provision in music in special education.

2.4   Music Therapy

Schools have become a prominent locus of activity for music therapists who choose to work with disabled children and young people (Oldfield, 2012). Findings from the most recent PROMISE research (Welch et al., 2016) show that, of the 57 special schools responding to the survey, one in three (1:3, n = 19) offered music therapy provision, with sessions reaching, on average, 11% of the school population. The primary reason for music therapy's prominence in special education is that it is seen to support the overall physical, educational, social, emotional and cognitive development of children and young people labelled as having SEN/D. Research studies have shown, for example, that music therapy can assist students with learning disabilities to develop communication skills, social interaction, speech and language, gross and fine motor skills, and confidence and self-esteem (Hooper, Wigram, Carson, & Lindsay, 2008a, 2008b). These skills are seen to help prepare students to engage in classroom learning

activities. The British Association for Music Therapy (BAMT) therefore outlines the purpose of music therapy in schools as follows:

> Music Therapists can support teachers and parents by providing music therapy in small groups or 1:1, with the aim of developing the skills which will help children participate more positively in school life. Music therapy can also create the conditions whereby a child is ready to learn to play an instrument. In short, it can help the children who struggle most at school to come closer to achieving their potential. (British Association for Music Therapy, n.d., p. 1)

For disabled students, music therapy has also historically been positioned as something positively remediative and is therefore seen as a complementary practice to special education (Schalkwijk, 1994).

The place and purpose of music therapy in special education has been a topic of increasing discussion in recent years. Two debates concerning the place of music therapy in special education are of considerable relevance to this study. The first concerns the many similarities between music education and music therapy when both are used in special education. The second relates to the recent attention music therapy has received from interdisciplinary scholars in the field of disability studies. These scholars have called into question the value of music therapy for disabled people and have challenged practitioners and researchers in music and special education to re-evaluate the epistemological assumptions that underpin the field. Each of these areas of debate are discussed in turn below.

2.4.1 Education or Therapy?

Several researchers have drawn attention to the fact that there are many similarities and crossovers between music education and music therapy when both are used in special education (Bruhn, 2000; Bunt, 2003; Hall, 2012; Markou, 2010; Mawby, 2011, 2014, 2015; Ockelford, 2000; Ockelford & Markou, 2012; Patterson, 2003; Robertson, 2000; Woodward, 2000). The findings of the PROMISE research demonstrate that, when discussing musical development in the context of special education, most music teachers list non-musical skills such as social and emotional development, motor-skills, and language and communication skills as the primary outcomes of music education (Welch et al., 2001; Welch et al., 2016). These aims are similar to the areas of

development targeted by music therapists (Hooper et al., 2008a, 2008b). Ockelford (2000) explains that this has led to "a general lack of clarity as to what can reasonably be considered to constitute music therapy, as opposed to music education, for pupils with severe, or profound and multiple learning difficulties" (p. 199).

Ockelford (2008) notes that there are also historical reasons for the interconnectivity of these two practices within the context of special and inclusive education. Crucially, he positions music education for disabled children and young people as a "pedagogical infant" noting that "the role of the music teacher, as it is generally understood, has not evolved to include the expertise necessary to work in this highly specialised area" (Ockelford, 2008, p. 3). Ockelford notes that there is distinct lack of research and writing around music education and disability (although, as has been noted above, this is changing). Furthermore, there are limited opportunities for teachers to train and gain experience in teaching music to children and young people with complex needs. Conversely, music therapy has gained recognition as a profession whose knowledge, experience and expertise are well positioned to support the musical and non-musical development of disabled children and young people. The profession boasts a rich evidence base with which to inform its practice in educational settings. Moreover, there are many nationally recognised training courses available that offer training and CPD opportunities to those who wish to work in this field. Ockelford contends that this stratification of skills and knowledge has led to music therapy being viewed as "the appropriate term to use for formal music activities undertaken with children and young people with disabilities" (Ockelford, 2008, p. 37). Thus, music therapy becomes music education. This, in addition to the shared aims and objectives mentioned above, further blurs the conceptual boundaries of the two practices.

New theoretical models of music education have been developed in an attempt to clarify the relationship between music therapy and music education in special school settings (Ockelford, 2000; Robertson, 2000). For example, Ockelford (2000) argued that there are two strands of music education for pupils labelled as having SEN/D: "activities that are undertaken primarily for their intrinsic musical value and those which are intended principally to promote wider learning and development" (p.197). He defined these two strands as education *in* music and education *through* music. Using these two strands as a starting point, Ockelford proposed a new model of music education for pupils with complex needs. The model depicts Ockelford's belief that,

although the musical activities undertaken with pupils labelled as having SEN/D may be similar, the underlying aims and approaches to such activities will vary depending on whether they are used in therapy or education. He proposed that therapy has a stronger focus on wellbeing with largely internally determined goals (i.e. those determined by the child), whereas music education places more emphasis on the development of skills, knowledge and understanding with largely externally determined goals (i.e. those determined by a teacher). Ockelford also included 'Training' as part of his model of music education. This branch of music teaching includes peripatetic vocal and instrumental tuition and highlights the fact that, although some pupils labelled as having SEN/D may struggle with academic learning, this may have no bearing on their musical ability.

In a similar vein to Ockelford, Robertson (2000) acknowledged that "the therapeutic potential of music is not exclusive to the profession after which it is named" (p.41) and suggested that music teachers will often be required to meet the therapeutic as well as educational needs of pupils labelled as having SEN/D. To account for the close relationship between education and therapy in these instances, Robertson developed a continuum model which redefined the practices of music therapy and music education into four key strands: clinical music therapy, educational music therapy, music education and the music profession. The continuum was not meant to be seen as progressive. Rather, the boundaries between each practice are flexible. Robertson contended that the inclusion of educational music therapy within the continuum "represents the overlap between clinical music therapy and what might be considered as conventional music teaching" (p.45) and argued that "music education here relates to the mainstream sector" (p.45). This implies that, in Robertson's view, educational music therapy is therefore the most appropriate approach to music in special education. Robertson closed his thesis by arguing that, should the model be adopted in policy, additional training modules would be needed in ITT courses to help practitioners prepare for the dual role of educational music therapist.

Whilst Ockelford and Robertson made some valuable observations about the similarities, crossovers and distinctions between music education and music therapy, at the time of their writing very little empirical evidence existed to support their claims. Suggestions for a change in approach to the SEN/D music education system were therefore somewhat premature. It was unclear whether other practitioners felt that these

models were effective ways of conceptualising the various crossovers between music education and music therapy in special school settings and therefore whether the theories accurately reflected practice. A small body of empirical research has since sought to rectify this (Markou, 2010; Mawby, 2011, 2014, 2015).

For example, Markou (2010) explored practitioners' views about the relationship between music education and music therapy when either practice is used in schools for children with complex needs. Her research was carried out in three phases: a questionnaire, semi-structured interviews, and highly-structured observations. In the first phase of the research, Markou developed a questionnaire which aimed to explore practitioners' views regarding the overall aims, approaches and outcomes of music therapy and music education. The questionnaire was split into two sections. The first employed mostly open-ended questions which sought to gain an understanding of how each practitioner approached their own lessons/sessions. Questions were primarily aimed at getting each practitioner to describe the content and structure of a 'typical' music lesson or music therapy session from their own experience. In the second section, practitioners were asked to rate the relevance of a number of pre-specified aims, objectives and outcomes on a scale of 1 to 10 to determine whether they were more relevant to music education, therapy or both. The rating scales listed various aims, objectives and outcomes "which would typically be associated with either music education or music therapy sessions" (Markou, 2010, p. 105). These included: to promote the ability to vocalise; to promote the ability to play an instrument; to promote the ability to create a simple sequence of musical sounds; to promote the ability to improvise on a simple tune; to promote musical learning; to promote social-cultural development; to promote emotional development; and to promote communication (pp. 231-234). Analysis of questionnaire results was carried out using both qualitative and quantitative methods. The survey received 106 responses (51 music teachers, 48 music therapists and seven practitioners who were both music teachers and therapists). The findings showed that there was a significant relationship between the two practices with more similarities being identified during data analysis than differences.

The second phase of data collection involved "standardised open-ended interviews" (p. 138) with six practitioners. All participants were either teachers or therapists who worked in special schools in the Greater London area. Three were music teachers, two were music therapists and one was a music teacher who had trained as a

music therapist. The aims of this stage of the research were the same as the questionnaire study. Markou found that the "structure and content of the sessions of the interviewees differed depending on whether the session was music therapy or music education" (p. 168). A number of similarities existed between the aims and objectives of music lessons and music therapy sessions. Specifically, shared aims included music enjoyment, communication and emotional development. However, it was also mentioned that musical learning and social/cultural development were additional aims of music education which were not shared with music therapy. Practitioners also noted that both practices had a number of shared outcomes. These included communication, concentration and emotional development. In a similar vein to the questionnaire results, Markou concluded that the interviews showed that there were more similarities between the two practices than there were differences.

During the final phase of data collection (structured observations), Markou asked five practitioners (two music therapists and three music teachers) to observe video footage of three pre-recorded music lessons and two music therapy sessions. Participants were asked to note on a structured observation schedule whether they felt the activities carried out in each session were therapeutic, educational or both. Participants were not aware of whether they were watching a music therapy session or a music lesson prior to the observation. The completed observation schedules were then compared with similar information gathered from the music teachers and therapists who led the original videoed sessions. When reporting her findings Markou states:

> There were mixed responses in some cases as to whether specific activities were deemed to be music therapy, music education or both. There is therefore confusion in the minds of the practitioners themselves as to whether certain activities are deemed to be therapeutic or educational. (Markou, 2010, pp. 210-211)

Markou presents some interesting findings and her research is of value as it is the first of its kind to address the questions that researchers such as Ockelford (2000) and Robertson (2000) were debating at the turn of the century. However, the study does have some limitations. Firstly, the questionnaire and interview schedule employed mainly closed questions which may not have provided sufficient context for participants' responses. In addition, when drawing conclusions about whether there are more similarities or differences between the two practices (as determined by participant responses to questionnaire, interview or observation questions), Markou bases her

conclusions on an overly simplistic calculation. To arrive at her conclusions she lists the number of similarities and differences identified by practitioners as a percentage of her overall findings in a certain area. For example, when presenting findings from her interview study relating to shared aims and objectives, Markou notes that three objectives were shared by all participants. These three findings are therefore represented numerically as 6/6 (or 100%) for each individual shared aim. Where differences are found, Markou rates these according to how many practitioners named them as an aim of their specific educational or therapeutic practice. Again, when discussing findings from her interview study relating to aims and objectives, she explains:

> Only two music teachers (score: two out of six) referred to social/cultural development as an aim and objective, three music teachers (score: three out of six) referred to musical learning as an aim and objective of their sessions. (Markou, 2010, p. 170)

In order to calculate the overall similarity/difference between the two practices she then adds each of these scores together and presents this as a percentage:

> The overall score for the aims and objectives is therefore twenty three out of thirty six or 64% similar. (Markou, 2010, p. 170)

There are a number of limitations to this reductive method of reportage. Firstly, it assumes that each similarity and difference mentioned by practitioners holds equal weight. Therefore, if one practitioner deemed 'emotional development' to be an important aim of both music education and music therapy and another participant shared this view, it was automatically assumed that each participant judged the strength of this similarity at an equal level. Treating data in such a way does not take into account the fact that some practitioners may have stronger opinions than others surrounding certain similarities and differences between each practice. It also does not account for why practitioners held these views or how they developed. In addition, this approach does not recognise that practitioners may interpret the meaning of questions in different ways. For example, Sanders (1995, p. 87) comments that:

> It might be thought that, as members of the same profession, teachers would have a shared epistemology. Not only is this not the case but even more simply, teachers do not necessarily mean the same thing when they use the same word or phrase.

Therefore, what constitutes 'emotional development' for one practitioner may not be the case for another. Despite these limitations, Markou's research is of value as it is the first to explore the views and experiences of practitioners working in the field. It provides a useful insight into the perceived similarities and differences between the overall aims, objectives and outcomes of music education and music therapy when both are provided in a special school setting. Greater depth of exploration is needed however, as simply providing an overview of the similarities and differences between each practice does not account for the complex interactions practitioners may encounter when both practices are used within a SEN/D school's curriculum.

Such complexities have been uncovered in my own work (Mawby, 2011, 2014, 2015). In 2011 and 2014 I carried out two individual case studies which sought to establish where the boundaries might lie between music education and music therapy when both are present in special schools. The primary aim was to explore practitioners' views of what constitutes music education and what constitutes music therapy within the schools in which they worked. Semi-structured interviews were carried out with three practitioners at each school. In School 1 (Mawby, 2011) this included the deputy head teacher, the school's music coordinator and the music therapist. In School 2 (Mawby, 2014) the head teacher, specialist music teacher and music therapist were interviewed. Observations of music lessons and music therapy sessions were also conducted at each school. Both participating schools were maintained special schools operating in the east of England. Interview data were analysed in accordance with the principles of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis, as presented by Smith, Flowers, and Larkin (2009) and observational data were analysed in accordance with the methods of Charmaz (2006).

One of the most notable findings of the research was that the relationship between music education and music therapy in the participating schools shifted depending on the way in which the school chose to incorporate music therapy into its overall curriculum. For example, School 1's approach to the inclusion of music therapy in their curriculum resembled that of an extra-curricular activity. More emphasis was placed upon the short-term inclusion of all pupils rather than the benefits that long-term, more individualised therapy sessions might have provided. This approach to music therapy inclusion meant that the therapist had to substantially alter her overall aims and objectives to meet the needs of the school. There was also very

little collaboration between the music therapist and the teaching staff at School 1 which led to the music therapist feeling isolated from her colleagues. The practice of music therapy and the practice of music education therefore had far more distinctions at this school than they did similarities.

In contrast, School 2's approach to the inclusion of music within their overall school timetable was much more holistic. Music therapy was viewed as a complementary component of the school's overall curriculum. The therapist was employed directly by the school and felt as though she was an appreciated and integrated member of the school's staff team. Although practitioners felt that there were some key distinctions between music education and music therapy, there were many crossovers between each practice at School 2. These crossovers appeared to stem from the fact that music education and music therapy shared a number of similar aims. Shared aims discussed by participants during their interviews were primarily non-musical. They included improving pupils' communication, concentration, engagement, verbal development, self-confidence, self-esteem and turn-taking. These shared aims could have stemmed from the close collaboration of the music therapist with her colleagues. They may also have been linked to the fact that the music teacher at School 2 was a qualified music therapist and not, at the time of interviewing, a qualified music teacher.

The findings of my research provide additional context to those of Markou (2010). Similarities and differences exist between music education and music therapy when both are included in a special school's curriculum. However, the degree of similarity and difference between each practice is not static; it fluctuates depending on the way in which a school incorporates music therapy into its overall curriculum. Of course, this work is also not without its limitations. Each case study explored the views of just three practitioners. Two of these practitioners had responsibility for music (i.e. the music therapist and the music coordinator in School 1 and the music therapist and the music teacher in School 2). However, having responsibility for music did not always mean that the participant actively led music sessions with pupils. For example, the music coordinator at School 1 had overall responsibility for the music curriculum but music lessons were led by general classroom teachers at the school – none of whom were interviewed. Including just three practitioners in the research design provides a mere cross-section of the views of practitioners leading musical activities with pupils

within each school. As such, the results of these two studies would benefit from further interviews with additional staff members (including peripatetic music teachers, teaching assistants (TAs) and visiting music workshop leaders) to develop a broader picture of the relationship between music education and music therapy at each school.

Research findings from School 2 (Mawby, 2014) also brought to light an important concern. Practitioners in this setting noted that, although they had firm ideas about what constitutes music education and music therapy, little is known about the ways in which the students see the two practices. The views of disabled children and young people are absent from a great deal of research in education, health and psychology (Crook et al., 2016; Feldman et al., 2013; Kelly, 2007; Kitchin, 2000). To date, it would seem that this is also the case for research in music education and music therapy (T. Dobbs, 2012; Jellison & Taylor, 2007; Lubet, 2009a; Norris, 2016). In order to fully understand the similarities and differences between these two practices in both theory and practice, seeking the views of the pupils themselves is a matter of great importance.

The research studies presented above have made notable contributions to the field by providing empirical evidence which explores the interplay between music education and music therapy in special education. The findings show that frameworks such as those devised by Ockelford (2000) and Robertson (2000) offer an accurate theoretical conceptualisation of the epistemological assumptions of practitioners working in music education and music therapy. Ockelford's framework, in particular, aligns well with the views of practitioners in both Markou (2010) and Mawby's (2011, 2014, 2015) studies. However, observation and interview data from my own studies show that, in practice, the day-to-day praxis of music education and music therapy cannot be packaged into such neat boxes. In short, the theory does not hold in practice. The degree of similarity/difference between the overall aims and objectives of, and outcomes and approaches to, music education and music therapy differ depending on the individual approaches to teaching and learning assumed by each school. The degree to which school culture influences practice is, as yet, an un-researched topic in the field of music and special education. This is an important area for future research if we are to fully understand the ways in which schools are choosing to incorporate music therapy into their curricula.

2.4.2   Music Therapy from a Disability Studies Perspective

In 2014, the music therapy journal *Voices: A World Forum for Music Therapy* published a special issue which focused on establishing a dialogue between music therapy and disability studies. This seminal publication brought together scholars and practitioners from a variety of different fields to debate "the role of a disability studies perspective within music therapy" and "the role of music therapy from a disability studies perspective" (Honisch, 2014, para. 1). Prior to this, the fields of disability studies and music therapy had taken up residence in largely separate camps. Straus (2011, pp. 157-158) perhaps best outlines the reasons for this when he explains:

> Until the present moment, the music-making of people with disabilities (including people with physical, cognitive, or intellectual impairments or psychological disorders) has been largely confined to two intellectual ghettos. The first ghetto is that of "abnormal psychology" […]. Within musical scholarship, disabled listeners are relegated to a second intellectual ghetto: music therapy. According to the goal statement of the American Music Therapy Association, music therapy "is an established healthcare profession that uses music to address physical, emotional, cognitive, and social needs of children and adults with disabilities or illness". In other words, music therapy is a normalizing [*sic*] enterprise, bound up with the medicalization [*sic*] and attempted remediation of disability. Of course, there is a long history stretching back to classical antiquity of accounts of the power of music to cure or disable. What's new in the field of music therapy is the full impact of the medical model of disability: its practitioners are medical professionals who offer therapy to patients and write up their findings in the form of case studies. They seek to cure, remediate, or normalize [*sic*] their patients, and music is their therapeutic tool.

For the non-disabled reader interested in music, education and disability but unfamiliar with disability studies, the positioning of music therapy and music psychology as "intellectual ghettos" may seem a little extreme. However, when viewing these research fields from a critical disability studies perspective, the meaning of Straus' words becomes clear.

The academic field of disability studies emerged in the latter decades of the twentieth century and is rooted in the activism of the disability rights movement (Barnes, 2008). A significant product of this movement in the UK was the reframing of

disability as a social issue rather than simply a medical issue. As Mallett and Runswick Cole (2014) explain:

> What unites most approaches within contemporary Disability Studies is the rejection of any model of disability that locates (the *problem* of) disability *within the person* […] Disability is instead seen as a social issue: (the *problem* of) disability is firmly positioned in terms of barriers in the social world, not '*problems*' within the individual. The idea that disability should be understood as a sociological concept, rather than as a biological difficulty for tragic, isolated individuals, is key to understanding the discipline of Disability Studies in the United Kingdom. (p. 5, emphasis in original)

There are many models of disability that are used as heuristic devices to facilitate an alternative understanding of disability, most of which stem from the lived experiences of disabled people themselves. The two most commonly juxtaposed models when introducing newcomers to disability studies are the medical/individual models of disability and the social model of disability.

Mallett and Runswick Cole (2014) describe the medical model of disability as follows:

> The medical model deems disability to be a functional limitation that is biologically or physiologically determined. The medical model emphasises individual pathology, individual (personal) deficit and individual medical treatment. (pp. 3-4)

Morris (1991) further explains that:

> Within this model, disabled people are reduced to the medical condition which accounts for their physical and/or intellectual characteristics and there is little or no account taken of the social and economic context in which people experience such medical conditions (pp. 9-10).

The medical model is closely aligned with the individual model of disability (Oliver, 1990) which views disability as "a tragic problem for isolated, unfortunate individuals" (Mallett & Runswick Cole, 2014, p. 3). The individual model therefore sees disability primarily through the lens of what a person "cannot do or what is wrong with them" (Mallett & Runswick Cole, 2014, p. 3).

In contrast, the social model – developed by the Union of the Physically Impaired Against Segregation (UPIAS) in 1975 (Oliver, 1996) – draws a distinction

between impairment and disability. Impairment is referred to as any neurological, sensory, intellectual, physical and/or psychological difference that deviates from a socially-constructed 'norm'. Within the social model, impairment is not seen as the cause of disability. Instead, disability is caused by environmental, attitudinal and/or organisational barriers that prevent people with impairments from participating in society. A common illustration of this viewpoint is that "it is not the inability walk which disables someone but the steps into the building" (Morris, 1991, p. 10). L. Davis (2002, p. 41) further explains:

> An impairment involves a loss or diminution of sight, hearing, mobility, mental
> ability, and so on. But an impairment only becomes a disability when the ambient
> society creates environments with barriers.

As such, whilst those approaching disability from a medical/individual model perspective seek to change the individual to fit societal 'norms' – often referred to as a process of 'remediation' (Schalkwijk, 1994) or 'normalisation' (Straus, 2006) – those approaching disability from a social model perspective accept and value difference and seek instead to remove the social barriers that serve to disable people.

It is therefore unsurprising that, when viewed through a social model lens, music therapy becomes a problematic area of practice. Liz Crow (1992) illustrates the reasons for this in her acknowledgement that:

> There is a joke amongst Disabled people that non-Disabled people listen to music,
> do the gardening, hold down jobs, but Disabled people do music therapy,
> horticultural therapy, occupational therapy. Where Disabled people are involved,
> almost every activity of life seems to have to be justified in terms of its medical
> and therapeutic benefits. (p. 1)

The aim of the *Voices* special issue on music therapy and disability studies was therefore to begin to openly and honestly discuss how music therapy might be reframed and reimagined through constructive dialogue with scholars from disability studies.

In her editorial introduction to the issue, Hadley (2014) explains that, as a non-disabled music therapist, the more she read and engaged with the ideas and activism of disabled scholars, activists and self-advocates, the more her identity as a therapist was called into question. She was forced to consider how her practice, however well-intentioned, may reinforce the stigmatised view that disabled people are best served via the framing of disability as an individual deficit that is best overcome by bringing the

person "closer to the 'ruling norms'" (para. 9). Indeed, in his contribution to the same volume, Cameron (2014) cautions that music therapists may be doing more harm than good for disabled people. He outlines the history of 'the disability business' – which he describes as "a vast army of workers employed in rehabilitation industries to manage the lives of disabled people" (para. 17) – and argues that "[f]rom a disability studies perspective, the keenness of music therapists for acceptance, recognition and respect from the medical profession and its spin offs is intensely problematic" (para. 22). For Cameron, the alignment of music therapy with the medical profession perpetuates the stigmatised view that disabled people need to be fixed or cured in order to meet the 'normal' standards of living that enable their full participation in society. The impetus to change lies with the disabled person, not the therapist. Therefore, traditionally oppressive power-imbalances between "the therapist as an expert with power, and the client as weak and pathological" (Rolvsjord, 2014, para. 4) are reconstructed within the therapeutic relationship.

Many critiques of music therapy from a disability studies perspective begin from the assumption that music therapy is inextricably linked to problematic pathological paradigms of disability (Tsiris, 2013). However, as Rickson (2014) notes, not all approaches to music therapy are aligned with a medical model. Culture-Centred Music Therapy (Stige, 2002), Community Music Therapy (Ansdell, 2002, 2014; Pavlicevic & Ansdell, 2004; Stige & Aaro, 2012), Resource Oriented Music Therapy (Rolvsjord, 2010) and anti-oppressive music therapy (Baines, 2013) are all approaches that align with an affirmative model of disability which Rickson describes as follows:

> [T]he affirmative model is about validating the lives and experiences of people with impairments and enabling them to make sense of themselves as actors in their own cultural worlds. (Rickson, 2014, para. 8)

In this way, there is potential to reimagine and redefine the practice of music therapy (as it relates to disability) in ways that cease to reinforce oppressive social and medical practices. This reimagining, however, comes with the difficult task of un-picking some of the fundamental assumptions inherent in medicalised music therapy practice. As Honisch (2014, para. 7) contends:

> What if music therapists were to align with disability studies in receiving disabled people differently? Such a move requires engaging a different set of critical concerns, beginning not with medical or clinical diagnosis, but rather with

reflexivity, digging at the methodological foundations of both scholarly research, and the philosophical assumptions of therapeutic practice.

These emerging conversations in music therapy and disability studies are important considerations when examining the place of music therapy in special education. When taking into account the cautions and criticisms of those writing from a disability studies perspective, the most pertinent questions for researchers in music, disability and education is perhaps not 'where do the boundaries lie between education and therapy?' but rather, 'what is music *for* in special education?' and 'where does music therapy fit?'

2.5   Summary

This chapter provides context for the empirical research carried out as part of this thesis. A number of areas of enquiry have been addressed. First, the current climate of music education in England has been acknowledged, noting three recent developments in education policy: 1) the introduction of the NPME; 2) the most recent revisions to the National Curriculum and 3) the introduction of the EBacc. Whilst some researchers have acknowledged the positive aspects of these changes (Zeserson et al., 2014), others have cautioned that music education faces significant threats from a revised education system which increasingly limits pupils' engagement with multiple ways of knowing (Bate, 2018; Spruce, 2013; Stephens, 2013; Welch, 2012). It is not yet known to what degree these changes have impacted music in special education.

Second, research exploring the ways in which music is used and taught in special education has been presented. This exploration has focused on the use of music in English special schools. The section outlines important advances in SEN/D music education research including the PROMISE research (Welch et al., 2001; Welch et al., 2016) and the SoI framework of musical development (Ockelford & Welch, 2012; Ockelford et al., 2011; Ockelford et al., 2005; Welch et al., 2009). It concludes that, whilst recent research in the field of music and special education has enhanced our understanding of *what* is happening with regards to music education in these settings, very little is known about *why* and *how* these things are happening. Research which addresses these questions would be a welcome contribution to the field.

Finally, the place and purpose of music therapy in special education has been considered. The various similarities, crossovers and distinctions between music education and music therapy when both are used in schools for children labelled as having SEN/D have been explored. This section acknowledges that, whilst educational models such as those developed by Ockelford (2000) and Robertson (2000) give a good indication of the way in which practitioners theorise the purpose of music education and music therapy in special education, recent empirical research has shown that they do not accurately account for the degree to which school culture influences practice. Furthermore, the empirical research carried out to date provides a mere snapshot of practitioners' views and neglects to include those of non-specialist music and/or general classroom teachers, TAs, parents and disabled children and young people.

In addition, this section outlines an emerging dialogue between music therapy and disability studies. The fundamental differences between the medical/individual model and the social model of disability have been presented. It was argued that disability studies perspectives challenge practitioners and researchers in music and special education to interrogate the epistemological assumptions that underpin their practice. In this way, questions surrounding the similarities and differences between music education and music therapy in special education are placed in a critical light. The question of where the boundaries lie between these two practices becomes problematic when seen through this new lens. Instead, as Honisch (2014, para. 7) contends, we (i.e. researchers and practitioners) should be focusing our attention upon "digging at the methodological foundations" of each practice to determine where they fit in special education.

2.6   Research Rationale

The review of the literature provided above identifies several areas that require additional research. These can be broadly summarised as follows:

- It is unclear how recent changes in English education policy have affected music education in special schools (if at all).
- Whilst it is known that music provision in special education remains 'patchy' (Welch et al., 2016; Zeserson et al., 2014), it is unclear why this is.

- It not yet known why so many schools are still not choosing to use the SoI framework of musical development.
- The degree to which school culture affects practice in SEN/D music education is unclear.
- When seen from a critical disability studies perspective, are current approaches to music in special education appropriate and where (if at all) does music therapy fit?
- What do the students think?

This thesis makes an original contribution to the field of music in special education by addressing these questions. As mentioned above, currently very little is known about how and why English special schools are choosing to incorporate music in their curricula in the ways outlined in the PROMISE research (Welch et al., 2001; Welch et al., 2016). This makes it difficult to ascertain exactly what is causing the continued 'patchy' provision of music in special education. In the *Inspiring Music for All* report, Zeserson et al. (2014) frequently make reference to fact that developing and sharing 'best practice' is an important element of improving this varied provision. Yet, when it comes to music in special education, it is not yet clear what constitutes 'best practice'. The research field is still very much in its infancy (Gall et al., 2018a, 2018b; Ockelford, 2000, 2008) and we have very little empirical evidence from which to make recommendations for sector-wide improvement. Furthermore, there are currently voices that are missing from the research literature. Previous studies have explored the thoughts, experiences and opinions of music teachers, music therapists and members of senior leadership teams (Markou, 2010; Mawby, 2011, 2014, 2015). However, to date, the views of parents and teaching assistants have been largely ignored and those of disabled children and young people entirely excluded. This thesis therefore aims to expand upon the findings of previous research by exploring what constitutes 'best practice' in music in special education from a whole school perspective.

The project has four primary aims:

- To explore the ways in which music education is currently approached in schools for children and young people who have been labelled as having SEN/D

- To explore what constitutes 'best practice' in music education in these settings
- To explore the various opportunities and barriers schools for children labelled with SEN/D face with regards to the implementation of 'best practice'
- To explore the interplay between music therapy and music education in these settings, with a view to establishing where music therapy might 'fit' within the school curriculum

In exploring 'best practice' in SEN/D music education, the aims of this thesis are not to form a prescriptive overview of how special schools should approach music education. Doing so would fail to recognise the heterogeneity of students' and practitioners' needs in different educational contexts across the country (and, indeed, worldwide). Instead, the term 'best practice' is used as a heuristic device through which to examine how various school stakeholders conceptualise what is 'best' for disabled children and young people when it comes to their music education and to explore the ways in which these ideas are implemented and experienced in practice. The underlying theoretical contribution this thesis makes to knowledge is therefore a rich and detailed examination of school culture and its effect on current educational praxis in music in special education.

The methodological approaches that were used to meet the above research aims are discussed in the following chapter.

Chapter 3 Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the methodological approach to this research project. The ontological and epistemological assumptions that underpin the research are acknowledged and the researcher's position in relation to the researched is clarified. Methods of data collection and analysis are then outlined and the ethical implications of the research methods are considered.

3.2 Research Aims

The primary aims of the research project were as follows:

- To explore the ways in which music education is currently approached in schools for children and young people who have been labelled as having SEN/D
- To explore what constitutes 'best practice' in music education in these settings
- To explore the various opportunities and barriers schools for children labelled with SEN/D face with regards to the implementation of 'best practice'
- To explore the interplay between music therapy and music education in these settings, with a view to establishing where music therapy might 'fit' within the school curriculum

In order to meet these research aims an exploration of the musical culture of SEN/D schools and the various attitudes, beliefs and experiences of the many stakeholders who form a part of this culture was necessary. For reasons which will be explored in more detail in section 3.3, ethnography was therefore chosen as a primary method of data collection for this study. As discussed in Chapter 2, there is also a need for SEN/D music education research to move beyond purely descriptive accounts of musical activities in various settings. Questions of *why* and *how* are just as important as *what*

and *when* and, to date, little attention has been paid to these questions in the context of SEN/D music education research. A more theoretical understanding of the ways in which music education is approached in SEN/D schools, coupled with an exploration of what might affect the perceived quality of such provision, is imperative to ensure that research in this field does not dilute what is in fact a complex cultural and socio-politically situated phenomenon. Grounded Theory Method (GTM) was therefore used as a systematic approach to data analysis for this study. GTM and ethnography are methodologically intertwined (Charmaz, 2014) and both approaches to data collection and analysis are not without their critics (Bryant, 2002; Conrad, 1990; Ellis, 1995; Kuper, 1999). In order to be transparent about the reasons for choosing these methods, a brief overview and rationale for each is provided below.

3.3   Ethnography

Ethnography has been used as a research method in many different fields of education research (See for example: Denny, 2011; Kingsbury, 2001; Simmons, 2014; Willis, 1997) and is also a primary research method in the field of ethnomusicology (Barton, 2014). Stauffer and Robbins (2009) contend that the first ethnographic studies in music education surfaced in the late 1970s and early 1980s and were developed in connection to ethnomusicological studies of community music in a variety of cultures (citing Zimmerman's (1983) ethnography of children's music-making and Krueger's (1985) research into the training experiences of pre-service music teachers as early examples). Barton (2014) summarises ethnography as a method that "explores cultures and communities in context" (p.97). Krueger (1987) echoes this, explaining that, in education research, ethnography enables a researcher to take into account "the complexities of interactions in schools and of the internal dynamics of institutions" (p.69). Ethnography therefore typically involves a researcher spending an extended period of time with a particular culture or community observing activities as both an active and passive participant in order to build what Geertz described as a 'thick description' of the lived experiences of that community (Barton, 2014; Geertz, 1973/1993, 1983/1993).

Jorgensen (2009) explains how the ethnographic principles of 'thick description' apply to music education research. She tracks the term from its philosophical roots in the writings of Gilbert Ryle (1971) through to its use by Clifford

Geertz (1973/1993, 1983/1993) and subsequent critique by Adam Kuper (1999). She explains that, for Ryle (1971), thick description constituted a means of interpreting thoughts and the way in which these thoughts impacted upon human actions. Geertz (1973/1993, 1983/1993) took this idea further. Jorgensen explains that, for Geertz, "the ethnographer's job is to sort out the 'structures of signification' or the symbolic meanings that actions have for their participants" (Jorgensen, 2009, p. 70). Thoughts and actions are therefore entwined and through thick description the researcher aims to make sense of the way that participants make sense of their own thoughts and actions in a given situation or context. Jorgensen (2009) explains that Kuper (1999) was somewhat critical of Geertz's interpretative, hermeneutic stance on the way in which culture could be explicated via thick description. Kuper contended that, whilst interpretation may be of importance, it remains true that human action can be directly observed in a more objective sense. It is therefore essential that a researcher's own beliefs, values, experiences and opinions do not contaminate their examination of a given research context. Kuper also criticised Geertz for ignoring matters of verification, arguing that it is difficult to know if a researcher's rendering of a culture or community through thick description is 'correct'.

Jorgensen (2009) – one of the few music education researchers to have written on the topic of ethnographic research methods in music education – considers these perspectives in relation to music education research. When discussing the issue of interpretation vs objectivity in ethnographic research, Jorgensen sides with Geertz, asserting that "there is no all-knowing ethnographer, as Kuper suggests, just a person trying to make sense of things and very much aware of the limitations of her or his particular stance" (Jorgensen, 2009, p. 73). When considering Kuper's warnings about the difficulty of validation in ethnographic research, Jorgensen is in agreement. She notes that researchers have an ethical responsibility not to conflate interpretation with reality. Therefore, acknowledgement of the researcher's position in relation to the researched – as well as any biases that this position may foster – is, in Jorgensen's view, one of the ways in which the value and rigour of a thick description can be judged. She explains:

> [T]he clearer researchers are in describing their position and the context of their observations, the more readily others can test and advance knowledge about their findings (p.78)

Jorgensen further contends that 'thick description' involves objectivity with a lowercase 'o', meaning that, once written about, observed events continue to be tested, verified and intertwined with multiple perspectives in order to establish "shared understandings that continue to be subject to revision but are useful for the present and taken as more-or-less trustworthy" (Jorgensen, 2009, p. 76). Triangulation, member checking, saturation (i.e. the point at which no new information about a core category is uncovered during data collection and analysis) and reflexivity are also key to ensuring that thick descriptions can be adequately reviewed and revised.

Finally, Jorgensen reviews the ethical implications of the use of thick description in the field of music education research. She contends that, as such research often impacts upon public policy and education practice, authors of thick descriptions of music education need to be cautious of the complexities involved in authentically representing and communicating research findings to "the various constituencies and stakeholders of music education" (p.78). She cautions that:

> Rather than just thinking of thick description hierarchically, in which one
> excavates 'down' through the substrata of ideas and practices, one may also see it
> as a multifaceted enterprise. A particular situation has a history, a theology, a
> particular organisational structure, ethical and legal codes, and ways of
> interpreting interpersonal interactions. This situation makes particular demands on
> people within specific times and spaces that can be examined physiologically,
> psychologically, institutionally, societally, anthropologically, philosophically,
> musically and in other ways. A thick description needs to take into account these
> various facets. (p.79)

Thick descriptions therefore benefit from a multidisciplinary approach and should take into account the context of the phenomena under investigation. This view marries with that of broader educational theorists. For example, Cheong (2000) – a researcher in education effectiveness – contends that the individual culture of a classroom and the teaching strategies used within it cannot be considered without also taking into account the individual culture of the school in which that classroom exists, the community in which the school exists and the society in which the local community exists. Ethnography should therefore acknowledge the ways in which macro elements of national and societal culture impact micro elements of classroom culture. Failing to do so results in what Jorgensen (2009) describes as "too narrow a view" (p.74) of a given

educational phenomenon which can have serious ethical implications for research that may result in changes to education policy or practice.

Despite its prominence as a research method in other fields of academic inquiry, an ethnographic approach to music education research in English special schools has not been carried out to date. I argue that such an approach is needed in order to provide a broader evidence base through which 'best practice' in SEN/D music education might be explored. The longitudinal, immersive nature of ethnographic fieldwork will help to build an evidence-base which examines how various stakeholders make sense of and enact their own theories of 'best practice' in music education. Examining the primary research questions listed above from an ethnographic perspective will ensure that any resulting theory of 'best practice' is not reduced to a list of arbitrary, isolated variables divorced from the context in which they were established. Rather, an ethnographic approach to data collection and analysis will ensure that the context in which participants' thoughts, beliefs and actions are formed and enacted is fully considered. Furthermore, as ethnographic research methods promote that the researcher engages with a whole culture, ethnography provides an opportunity to examine 'best practice' from many different stakeholder perspectives. The inclusion of multiple stakeholder views (i.e. those of internal and external practitioners, members of school senior management teams, primary care-givers and pupils) will ensure that the research adequately reflects the experiences of all parties involved in the cultural and organisational structure of English special schools. This includes the views of disabled children and young people who are often excluded from participating in research on topics that concern them (J. M. Davis & Watson, 2001; Feldman et al., 2013; Lewis, 2003; Slater, 2013). An inclusive approach to SEN/D music education research will ensure that suggestions for potential changes to curriculum development, teacher training, and educational policy (as well as future research) are rooted in the needs and experiences of the people these changes affect the most.

3.4   Grounded Theory

In addition to the use of ethnography as a primary research method, grounded theory was also chosen as an approach to data collection and analysis.

Approaches to grounded theory have shifted somewhat since the research method was first established. Glaser and Strauss (1967/1999) originally saw the method

as a means of moving away from theory deduced from *a priori* assumptions to theory which was 'discovered' during constant comparative analysis of data obtained from inductive social research. Glaser and Strauss believed that 'Grand Theories' derived from *a priori* assumptions run the risk of promoting ideas which were not rooted in evidence, thus skewing what could realistically be deemed as 'fact'. Furthermore, they believed that deriving new theories from those already in existence – however logical in association these derivatives may be – failed to facilitate the creation of new theories which challenged and contextualised existing ideas. Glaser and Strauss further contended that qualitative research methods had been reduced to "preliminary, exploratory, groundbreaking work for getting surveys started" (p.15) and that quantitative studies of the kind described above were adversely saturating their research field. GTM aimed to address these issues. Through its systematic use of iterative research methods including constant comparative analysis and theoretical sampling, the method allowed theories to 'emerge' from data which had been obtained and analysed using a series of rigorous research methods.

Following the publication of *The Discovery of Grounded Theory* (Glaser & Strauss, 1967/1999) Glaser and Strauss both took the method in very different directions. This was largely due to their differing epistemological and ontological perspectives. Strauss, for example, chose to develop GTM in line with the philosophies of pragmatism and symbolic interactionism (Corbin & Strauss, 2015) whilst Glaser, somewhat ironically given the initial aims of GTM, remained loyal to what has been described as either a positivist or post-positivist epistemology (Annells, 1996; Babchuck, 1996; Charmaz, 2014; Locke, 1996; Rennie, 1996). Accordingly, each author's fundamental ontological beliefs differed. Glaser believed in the existence of an objective reality which surpasses our own assumptions and beliefs. He contended that this reality would 'emerge' from data provided that grounded theory methods are used correctly (Glaser, 1978, 1992, 2002). Strauss' beliefs, on the other hand, were more interpretative (Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Locke, 1996; Rennie, 1996).

Stern (1994) acknowledged that these differences in approach led to the creation of two separate schools of GTM: the *Straussian* and the *Glaserian*. In more recent years, a third school has been established: Constructivist grounded theory (CGT). CGT was primarily developed by Charmaz (2000, 2014) who approached GTM from a constructivist paradigm. In contrast to objectivist beliefs (linked to positivism)

that contend that there exists an external reality which can be observed by a neutral observer who is "capable of studying the object without influencing it or being influenced by it" (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 110), Charmaz notes that constructivism acknowledges "subjectivity and the researcher's involvement in the construction and interpretation of the data" (Charmaz, 2014, p. 14). Constructivism also takes into account that, in any given research context, multiple realities may exist which are each influenced by a variety of factors (e.g. social, political and cultural – all of which are also socially constructed) which are further linked to the temporal and geographic locations of the research. Researcher reflexivity is seen as being imperative as the researcher's own social reality, beliefs and assumptions are thought to affect every stage of the research process (Charmaz, 2014). Therefore, a constructivist approach to grounded theory research "assumes a relativist epistemology and seeks interpretive understanding rather than a variable analysis that produces abstract generalizations separate from the specific conditions of their production and the particularities of time, space, society and situation" (Charmaz, Thornberg, & Keane, 2018, p. 416).

Rennie (1996) offers a useful overview of the way in which Glaser and Strauss' later approaches to GTM differed to one another. However, he contends that although each founder took the method in different directions, both authors remained in agreement that constant comparative analysis, theoretical sampling, and memoing are all required components of GTM analysis. Birks and Mills (2015) are in agreement and explain that, despite differences in methodology, the key approaches to GTM (which include CGT) all adhere to a set of "essential grounded theory methods" (p.10). These are: initial coding; concurrent data generation or collection and analysis; memo writing; theoretical sampling; constant comparative analysis; theoretical sensitivity; intermediate or focused coding; identification of a core category; and advanced coding and theoretical integration (Birks & Mills, 2015, p. 10). The ways in which I have used and interpreted these methods during data analysis is discussed further in section 3.8.

As a research method, grounded theory has had a complicated history and academic debates surrounding how best to carry out GTM continue to this day (El Hussein et al., 2017). Charmaz (2014) takes a pragmatic approach when recommending how to navigate the various different approaches to GTM. She advises:

> Like any other container into which different content can be poured, diverse researchers can use basic grounded theory strategies such as coding, memo-writing, and sampling for theory development with comparative methods because these strategies are, in many ways, transportable across epistemological and ontological gulfs, although *which* assumptions researchers bring to these strategies and *how* they use them presuppose epistemological and ontological stances. (p.12, emphasis in original)

My decision to use GTM as an additional approach to data collection and analysis in this study is therefore derived from my view that it complements an ethnographic approach. As mentioned above, ethnography has faced criticism for its lack of attention to detail in matters of verification (Jorgensen, 2009; Kuper, 1999). Whilst grounded theorists have mixed views when asserting whether or not GTM can be used to verify theory generation, — Strauss believed GTM could be used to verify theory via a process of abduction (Strauss, 1987) whereas Glaser and Charmaz are more critical of this process (Charmaz, 2014; Glaser, 1992), contending that GTM allows researchers to validate their inferences but not to verify them — grounded theory offers researchers a rigorous, systematic, inductive approach to data collection and analysis which helps to ensure that a resulting theory is grounded in the daily lived experiences of the stakeholders of the observed culture or community. GTM requires that the researcher remains close to their data, engaging reflexively with it through memo-writing and constant comparative analysis. This helps to avoid the production of the poetical ethnographic abstractions that Kuper (1999) was concerned about. Similarly, ethnography ensures that the researcher does not lose sight of the context of their research, thus safeguarding grounded theories from the 'abstract generalisations' that Charmaz et al. (2018) caution against. Finally, GTM allows a researcher to explore the processes in their data (i.e. the effect that one finding may have on another). When looking to construct a theory of 'best practice' in SEN/D music education, grounded theory is therefore a logical fit.

3.5   Ontological and Epistemological Underpinnings of the Research

Many contributors to, and commentators on, the continuing evolution of ethnographic and grounded theory methods have noted that it is important that researchers explicitly acknowledge their ontological and epistemological assumptions when discussing their research methods (e.g. Babchuck, 1996; Birks & Mills, 2015; Charmaz, 2014; Goodley,

1999; Jorgensen, 2009; Marsh, 2009; Stauffer & Robbins, 2009; Wasserman, Clair, & Wilson, 2009). Returning to Jorgensen's (2009) contention that writing thick description involves objectivity with a lowercase 'o', acknowledging where a researcher stands in relation to their beliefs, prior knowledge and assumptions can only serve to clarify the methodological suppositions which have informed their overall research process. This enables readers to form their own judgements as to the reliability of the findings when considered in line with their own ontological and epistemological beliefs, thus strengthening the validity of the research.

Calls for researchers to be explicit about such underpinnings are not exclusive to literature on ethnography and GTM. Guba and Lincoln (1994), for example, call for qualitative researchers to be open about their research paradigm. They describe a paradigm as follows:

> A paradigm may be viewed as a set of basic beliefs (or metaphysics) that deals with ultimates or first principles. It represents a worldview that defines, for its holder, the nature of the "world", the individual's place in it, and the range of possible relationships to that world and its parts. (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 107, emphasis in original)

Therefore, disclosing a research paradigm can be seen to be the same in practice as disclosing the researcher's fundamental ontological and epistemological perspectives.

The need for increased openness about the theoretical assumptions which guide the focus of a particular research enquiry has also been discussed within the field of music education. Burnard (2006), for example, laments that music education research has a history of ignoring the difference between methods and methodology and calls for researchers in the field to be more open about "what *methods* are used and what *methodology* governs choice and use of methods" (p. 148, emphasis in original). She explains:

> Future research would be enhanced if researchers explicitly mapped out their assumptions, theories of action, and their research process, including the 'what', 'how', and 'why' of methods and methodologies as distinct but interrelated dimensions. If this is done, other researchers can reference, extend, test, build and make links. (Burnard, 2006, p. 149)

With these views in mind, I provide a brief overview of the ontological and epistemological assumptions that underpin my research below. It is my hope that doing

so will add greater transparency to the work, enabling future researchers to scrutinise, critique and replicate the work in an informed manner, should they wish to do so.

3.5.1   Adopting a Critical Constructivist Approach

My ontological and epistemological beliefs align, for the most part, with those of Charmaz (2000, 2014, 2016). As explained in section 3.4 above, Charmaz approaches her research from a constructivist perspective. Her definition of constructivism acknowledges that researchers are subjective and that "subjectivity is inseparable from social existence" (Charmaz, 2014, p. 14).

In making sense of my ontological and epistemological stance, a chapter written by Guba and Lincoln (1994) has also been invaluable. In this chapter, Guba and Lincoln outline the ontologies, epistemologies and methodologies of four qualitative frameworks: Positivism; Postpositivism; Critical Theory and related ideological positions (such as critical feminist approaches); and Constructivism (see Table 3.1).

Taking the stances outlined in Table 3.1 into consideration, my own views align best with the theoretical frameworks of critical theory and constructivism. I would contend that, whilst an objective reality may exist, it is improbable that we will ever be able to objectively view and analyse this reality (particularly when it comes to research in the social sciences) due to our own subjective experience of the social realities under investigation. Our approach to knowledge is therefore never objective (as much as we may strive for objectivity in our work). Rather, it is always informed by our prior knowledge, beliefs, experiences and opinions. Knowledge is also historically constructed; it builds upon that which has preceded it and is always linked to the historical, temporal and geographical realities of time and place.

When placing these beliefs in line with the paradigms outlined by Guba and Lincoln (1994), it would seem that this view is firmly located within the ontological assumptions that are associated with a critical theory paradigm. However, I also contend that many social realities may exist in any given situation and/or context at the same time and that our understanding of a phenomenon is dependent upon the information we receive about it. Our interpretation of this information is also reliant upon a hermeneutic circle in which the researcher tries to make sense of the way in which participants makes sense of their own realities. As such, I also subscribe to the

theories of relativism and hermeneutic inquiry that are associated with constructivism. I therefore frame my own ontological, epistemological and methodological assumptions as adhering to a 'Critical Constructivist' paradigm.

3.5.2 Reflexivity

Reflexivity is an additional way in which researchers can acknowledge their relationship to the researched. Berger (2015, p. 220) describes reflexivity as:

> [T]he process of a continual internal dialogue and critical self-evaluation of researcher's [*sic*] positionality as well as active acknowledgement and explicit recognition that this position may affect the research process and outcome.

Reflexivity is therefore a continuous process in which the researcher critically examines the various ways in which their own beliefs, experiences, thoughts and opinions may influence and/or affect the way in which they gather and interpret data.

As mentioned in Chapter 2, a significant catalyst for this study was the previous research I had carried out during my undergraduate and masters degrees. I am neither a teacher nor a music therapist and, as a non-disabled person, I have no lived experience of disability. I therefore come to this work predominantly as an outsider. However, my previous empirical research gave me a degree of insider knowledge about the field under study. In addition, I had a significant amount of prior work experience as both play- and support-worker working with children and young people labelled as having SEN/D when I began my PhD. This knowledge and experience therefore placed me in an ambiguous position when it came to my insider/outsider identity. Ergun and Erdemir (2009) note that insider/outsider identities are not fixed. Both the researcher's and the participants' identities in relation to the research are fluid. Research in itself is also a transformative process. Those leading or participating in a study will ultimately be affected by the experience of engaging in research. A prime example of this is the paradigm shift I experienced about halfway through my PhD (see Chapter 1 for a full account of this shift in perspective).

Table 3.1: Basic Beliefs (Metaphysics) of Alternative Inquiry Paradigms (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 109)

Item	Positivism	Postpositivism	Critical Theory and Related Ideological Positions	Constructivism
Ontology	Naïve realism – "real" reality but apprehendable	Critical realism – "real" reality but only imperfectly and probabilistically apprehendable	Historical realism – virtual reality shaped by social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic, and gender values; crystalized over time	Relativism – local and specific constructed realities
Epistemology	Dualist/objectivist; findings true	Modified dualist/objectivist; critical tradition/community; findings probably true	Transactional/subjectivist; value-mediated findings	Transactional/subjectivist; created findings
Methodology	Experimental/manipulative; verification of hypotheses; chiefly quantitative methods	Modified experimental/manipulative; critical multiplism; falsification of hypotheses; may include qualitative methods	Dialogic/dialectical	Hermeneutical/dialectical

In order to critically engage with the way in which I was approaching the research process, I kept a research diary throughout my PhD. The diary was a useful epistemological tool to help examine the ways in which my positioning (e.g. as a white, non-disabled, female, middle class, young, British researcher) and preconceptions (e.g. about education, musicianship, teaching, disability) might be impacting my research. Furthermore, the diary was also a useful tool when reflecting on the ways in which new ideas and experiences were shaping my research journey. When analysing my data, memoing also served as a useful means of acknowledging and questioning the assumptions I was making about my data. These two approaches are discussed in more detail in sections 3.7.5 and 3.8.3 below.

3.6   Methods

3.6.1   Ethical Approval

Ethical approval for this research project has been granted by the University of Leeds ethical review board (Appendix A). An amendment to the original application (which enabled the researcher to include observations of external events in the data set) was also submitted and accepted in December 2015 (Appendix B). The primary ethical issues were related to the inclusion of disabled children and young people in the research. Ethical concerns are considered throughout the following discussion.

3.6.2   Participant Recruitment

Three special schools were recruited to take part in the primary research study. It was thought that three schools would be the maximum number of field-sites that could be feasibly accommodated within the three year research project.[1] Ethnographic case studies of each school were carried out during the academic year 2015/2016. A term was spent in each school. I originally hoped that research would be carried out in each setting full-time (i.e. five days a week between school opening hours, inclusive of extracurricular and after-school musical activities). However, in reality, this time

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[1] In actuality, the research project took four years to complete due to the amount of data gathered during this year of fieldwork and the intensity of the grounded theory analytical process.

commitment varied depending on the frequency of timetabled musical activities at each school.

Yorkshire was chosen as a general geographic location for the research. Three LAs were included in participant recruitment: North Yorkshire, West Yorkshire and South Yorkshire. The three main sites which agreed to participate in the research were situated in West Yorkshire and South Yorkshire. Recruiting three schools within a predetermined geographical area enabled effective comparison between cases (Glaser & Strauss, 1967/1999). Participants were identified via contact information found on Government websites and SEN/D school websites. A primary search for state-funded special schools in three regions (North Yorkshire, West Yorkshire and South Yorkshire) was carried out via their respective local authority websites. Provisional contact information was gathered from these websites. A central Government database (EduBase) was then used to ensure that complete contact information was obtained (i.e. name of school, name of Head Teacher, school address, school telephone number, school email address, and basic information about the pupils' age range and types of need the school catered for). This contact information was then collated and securely stored in a password protected Excel database on a University of Leeds secure server. Contact information was cross-checked and verified with that which was posted on each school's individual website.

Due to the inclusive nature of this research and its involvement of multiple stakeholders with various levels of authority, recruitment was carried out in several stages:

3.6.2.1 Stage 1: Schools

Primarily, participant schools were recruited directly via the Head Teacher of each school.[2] Each school was given two weeks to reply to the initial recruitment email (Appendix C). If a school had not responded within this timeframe, they were contacted again via telephone to gain an initial response. Upon expressing an interest in taking part in the study, the Head Teacher of each interested school was sent an information pack via their preferred method of contact (Appendix D). This information pack included full details of what to expect throughout the research process. The Head Teacher then had an opportunity to contact the researcher directly to ask any further questions they had about taking part. Meetings between the researcher and the Head Teacher and/or a nominated representative from the school then took place to further explain what participation in the research would entail and, where necessary, to sign informed consent forms.

3.6.2.2 Stage 2: Practitioners

Recruitment of practitioners occurred approximately three months prior to the commencement of fieldwork within each respective school. All practitioners were issued with an information pack and informed consent form (Appendix E). These were issued in hard-copy format or via email depending on the teachers' preferences. Following the issue of information packs/informed consent forms, practitioners were given two weeks to decide whether or not to take part in the research and were asked to return signed consent forms either directly to the researcher via hard-copy or email, or via a nominated school representative (e.g. the teacher with lead responsibility for liaising with the researcher or a school administrator). The informed consent form covered both observations and interviews. Practitioners who were happy to have their

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[2] In a couple of instances Heads of school were initially approached via a representative from a third party local music organisation. This approach was used in cases where the researcher already had strong links with these third party organisations, who themselves had strong links with SEN/D schools in their local area. It was thought that approaching schools in this way would help to build trust and rapport with participants, alleviating any initial concerns that may have arisen from the primary 'cold-calling' approach to recruitment. Following initial contact by the third party organisation, I was able to formally introduce myself to the Head Teacher and/or nominated representative of the school via email and the process of recruitment continued from the issuing of information packs etc., as described above.

music activities observed but were not happy to take part in interviews had the option to opt-out of taking part in an interview (or vice-versa).

3.6.2.3   Stage 3: Parents/Guardians/Carers

Once teachers had agreed to take part in the research process, the parents, guardians and carers (henceforth referred to as primary care-givers or, simply, care-givers)[3] of the children in each participating teacher's class were issued with an information pack and informed consent form for observations (Appendix F). These were printed by the researcher but issued to primary care-givers via the schools. At Schools 1 and 2 this was carried out during the first two weeks of the term of fieldwork at their respective school, whereas at School 3 consent from primary care-givers was obtained by the end of the term preceding the term of fieldwork. Primary care-givers were given two weeks to read and respond to the information provided in this pack. The information pack gave details about observations and asked primary care-givers whether they consented to their child's music activities being observed by the researcher. The information pack included the researcher's contact details so that care-givers could ask the researcher any questions that they wished to ask about the research.

Only one primary care-giver in School 2 denied consent for their child's music activities to be observed. It was initially stipulated that, should a care-giver decide that they did not want their child to take part in the observed music activity, the researcher would not conduct observations in any activities in which that child was present. However, on this particular occasion this would have meant omitting all observations of primary music lessons in this school from the research as pupils in the primary school attended a whole-school singing group as their principal means of weekly music engagement. It was therefore decided, in liaison with the child's care-givers and

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[3] At the start of this research project, I used the term 'parent' exclusively in written documents and verbal communications when approaching parents, guardians and carers to seek consent for their child to be involved in this research. Several of these primary care-givers made a point of contacting me to explain that the term 'parent' did not reflect their identity or experience. Out of respect to these participants, the term 'primary care-giver' has been chosen as a general term to reflect the identity of all parents, guardians and carers involved in the research. To be clear, in all instances, those who signed consent forms had legal guardianship of the child they were giving consent for.

teachers, that these lessons could be observed provided that the child in question was not mentioned or referenced in any way in the research data generated.

Primary care-givers were asked to return informed consent forms to their school's reception desk by no later than a date pre-specified in their information pack. If a care-giver had not returned their informed consent form by this time it was assumed that they were happy for their child's music activities to be observed (care-givers were informed of this opt-out process of consent in the information pack). The informed consent form also asked primary care-givers to indicate whether they would like more information about how they and their child could take part in an interview. Care-givers who indicated that they would like more information about taking part in this aspect of the research were asked to provide their contact details (specifically their telephone number and postal address) on an additional form on the reverse side of the consent form. This enabled the researcher to send them an additional information sheet and informed consent form relating to interviews (Appendix G). It also enabled the researcher to contact care-givers to discuss interviews in more detail and to ascertain how best to approach their child in order to invite them to take part in an interview. On this second informed consent form, primary care-givers were also asked whether they themselves would be happy to take part in an interview in order to provide further information about both their child's and their own experiences of music in the school in question. If they agreed, they were asked to indicate this on the form.

3.6.2.4   Stage 4: Pupils

Before approaching pupils to see if they would like to take part in an interview, I spent at least one month in each school getting to know the students. I did this primarily by engaging in conversation with pupils, observing day-to-day interactions and preferred communication methods, as well as engaging in conversations with practitioners and primary care-givers. In Schools 2 and 3 most of the students communicated using speech and language or alternative and augmentative communication (AAC) devices. This meant that the primary method of communication between myself and students was usually speech and language (although, of course, factors such as body language, eye contact, and tone of voice all played an additional role). In School 1, however, many of the pupils did not communicate using speech and language. Therefore, in keeping with the communication approaches which were used at the school, Intensive

Interaction (Nind & Hewett, 2001, 2005) was used as a primary means of building rapport with pupils instead of spoken conversations.[4] When discussing inclusive research techniques, J. Harris (2003) acknowledges that, although emphasis is usually placed upon assessing the mental capacity of an individual to make a choice as to whether to participate in an activity, social and environmental factors affecting that choice are also fundamentally important. Others have confirmed that this is especially true of research involving children and young people with learning disabilities (Beresford, 1997; Nind, 2009; Tammivaara & Enright, 1986). It was important that the children and young people approached to take part in the interview stage of this research did not feel pressured to agree to take part. As such, this initial time spent in schools was vital in order to establish a research relationship and build rapport with pupils.

Writing about ways in which I established rapport in this way makes these efforts sound overly methodical. Whilst I acknowledge and appreciate that developing rapport is an important and widely discussed element of qualitative research ethics (Glaser & Strauss, 1967/1999; Guillemin & Heggen, 2009; Miller, 2017), particularly when it comes to including disabled children and young people in research (Beresford, 1997; Nind, 2009; Tammivaara & Enright, 1986), in truth, rapport building with pupils in this research project was carried out in a very natural manner. I engaged in play activities with the younger students and had meaningful conversations about music, television and popular culture with older students, getting to know each student as an individual rather than simply a 'research participant'. The length of time I spent in each school (i.e. a whole term) and the face-to-face nature of the research also likely contributed to the ease with which I was able to establish relationships with pupils (D. Adams et al., 2017). A longitudinal research design meant that there was sufficient time for the students and I to get to know one another and to talk about the research and any questions and concerns they had about it. Indeed, similar levels of meaningful and respectful rapport were often also developed with practitioners, many of whom I am still in contact with.

As mentioned above, previous researchers have acknowledged that building up a friendly and informal relationship with children in research situations is important (Beresford, 1997; Nind, 2009; Tammivaara & Enright, 1986). However, it has also

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[4] A full overview of this approach is provided in Chapter 4.

been acknowledged that "research participants with learning disabilities are unlikely to be familiar with the role of the researcher" (Tuffrey-Wijne, Bernal, & Hollins, 2008, p. 189) and, as such, students may not understand that the researcher will only be around for a temporary amount of time. Furthermore, some researchers contend that building friendly and informal relationships with children with learning disabilities also has the potential to cause harm to participants. For example, Tuffrey-Wijne et al. (2008) acknowledge that "people with learning disabilities may have limited experiences with friendships, and may have emotional needs for which the researcher is not fully prepared" (p.189). As such, it is their contention that participants with learning disabilities may overestimate or misinterpret the researcher's intentions with regards to building rapport. I did not experience any such situations during my research in English special schools. In fact, I found that students were very used to having visiting practitioners in the school. As such, whilst I was aware that developing rapport with students needed to be approached with professionalism, the student's previous experiences of establishing short-term relationships with visitors to their respective school meant that worries about them misinterpreting our relationship for something more than what it was were quickly abated.

After spending a month in each school, pupils whose primary care-givers had agreed for them to be approached regarding an interview about their music experiences in school were approached via a pre-agreed method arranged in collaboration with their primary care-giver. Occasionally, teachers and support staff were also involved in discussions about which methods of providing information about research interviews would be most accessible to pupils. Methods for this stage of participant recruitment therefore varied. In some instances, a simplified version of the information sheet and informed consent form were issued to students (see Appendices H, I, J and K). These generally took two formats: the first was a simplified written version of the information sheet and informed consent form and the second was a pictographic version of the information sheet and informed consent form which used the widely accepted Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) as the primary method of communication. In other instances, written information was not appropriate and so the researcher approached students in person and verbally explained the purposes of the research and what an interview would involve. A series of comprehension questions were then asked to make sure that the pupil had understood and then a 'cooling off' period was given to allow the student time to decide whether they would like to take part. This process was

usually carried out in the pupil's classroom with their teacher or teaching assistant present. This was useful as it meant that, in instances where the researcher's verbal communication needed to be amended or simplified so that the pupil understood, a teacher or TA was usually present to support this.

When seeking pupils' consent to take part I also had a responsibility to assess each young person's mental capacity to consent to participation in the research. The Mental Capacity Act (2005) provides clear guidelines for researchers in these instances. In all cases but one it was evident that the pupils I approached were able to understand both the nature of the research, the ways in which the information they shared would be used and disseminated, and therefore the consequences of participating.

There was a single incidence where it was not as easy to ascertain whether a child participant had the mental capacity to consent to take part in the research. This was for one young person attending School 1 who had been labelled as having PMLD. This child has been given the pseudonym Noah. Noah's adapted communication and research access needs were multiple. Despite having established a positive relationship with him where I had reasonable understanding of his preferred communication methods, it was unclear to me whether Noah had capacity to give informed consent for his participation in an adapted research interview. The Mental Capacity Act (MCA) outlines that all "appropriate efforts" must be made to support a person before deciding whether they lack capacity. Furthermore, the MCA Code of Practice notes that assessment of a person's mental capacity must be carried out "at the time the decision needs to be made" (Department for Constitutional Affairs, 2007, p. 282). Therefore, rather than automatically exclude Noah from the research (which would have been unethical and against the statutes put forward in the MCA), I ensured that, when asking whether he would like to take part in an adapted interview about music (which I phrased as 'a chat about music'), an adult who could interpret his communication and represent and assert his best interests was present (in one instance this was his teacher and in another, his mother). Furthermore, principles of 'process consent' (Department of Health, 2001) were followed whereby Noah was reminded of the purposes of the 'chat' each time we met to 'discuss' his participation. 'Discuss' is perhaps not the right word here as Noah communicated using very little speech and language. Instead, his desire to take part in the research was generally assessed through his reaction to the questions I asked him. His reactions were always positive (Noah was a big fan of

music) and his mother was keen for him to have the opportunity to participate in the research and so an adapted interview was arranged to take place in his home with his mother present. I have chosen not to use the information obtained during this interview as part of the final research data-set for a variety of reasons (which I discuss further in section 3.7.3.1). However, Noah's inability to demonstrate that he understood what participating in the research would entail (despite the minimal risks posed to him from taking part) was a contributing factor to this decision. Music education research would benefit from further exploration into how best to involve children and young people with complex and multiple access needs in research so that they are not unnecessarily excluded.

3.6.3   The Participants

Three schools took part in the research project. Almost every practitioner agreed to have their lessons observed (only one class teacher at School 3 opted out of this) and only one primary care-giver at School 2 did not consent for their child to participate. Formal interviews were carried out with 36 participants. These included 11 primary care-givers, 7 teachers, 4 teaching assistants, 1 music therapist, 5 members of senior leadership and 8 students. A list of all the participants who took part in formal interviews can be found in Appendix L. All participants have been given pseudonyms to protect their identities (with the students choosing their own).

3.7   Methods of Data Collection

Data were collected via the following methods:

- Observations of classroom activities, music lessons, music therapy sessions and extra-curricular music activities;
- Semi-structured interviews with multiple stakeholders at the school (i.e. practitioners, primary care-givers and pupils);
- An ethnographic diary (in which the researcher recorded any pertinent reflections on the observation notes/interview responses generated); and

- Document analysis of relevant written materials such as each school's individual policies, teaching materials, lesson plans, Ofsted[5] reports, curriculum documents and, in the case of School 1 Site 1, staff newsletters.

Each method of data collection is explained in more detail below:

3.7.1   Observations

A total of 65 days (approximately 390 hours) of observations were carried out as part of this study. The timetable for observations of lessons, therapy sessions, and music activities was negotiated with each individual school prior to commencement of the fieldwork. Multiple examples of lessons, therapy sessions and music activities were observed weekly in each school across one academic term. Observations were dependent upon which practitioners wanted to participate in the research. This did not pose a problem at School 1 or School 3, however at School 2 one teacher with minor responsibilities for music teaching opted out of the study. This practitioner ran a weekly extra-curricular music ensemble on Thursday lunchtimes. As the teacher in question decided not to take part in the research, observations of these music sessions were not possible.

Observations employed a marginal participant design with elements of observer-as-participant design (Bryman, 2015). Initially, I began gathering observational data by sitting on the periphery of a lesson, taking hand-written notes about the activities and interactions observed during that lesson. However, it soon became apparent that it would be impossible for me to build rapport and effectively engage with the research environment if I were to always remain a passive observer. Therefore, in each field site, where appropriate, I became an active member of the observed music activities, interacting with pupils and staff members and joining in with the singing or playing where applicable. In instances where this prevented me from taking notes on a moment by moment basis, observation notes were written up immediately after an activity had ended.

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[5] Ofsted refers to the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills in England – a non-ministerial department which inspects and regulates services that care for and provide education and skills for learners of all ages.

Observation notes were hand-written during each observed session and focused on providing thick descriptions of the events taking place within that session. Primary focus was given to describing the overall structure of each observed music lesson/activity, interactions between participants (e.g. interactions between teacher and pupils, teacher and support staff, multiple pupils), pedagogy, teaching style and overall atmosphere. These notes were then written-up electronically into a coherent whole at the end of each day in order to preserve as much information about each session as possible. Throughout the year of fieldwork, practitioners leading observed sessions had the opportunity to view any or all of the observation notes taken in relation to their classes/sessions prior to data analysis in order to verify their accuracy. All practitioners felt that this was not necessary. Transparency of data generated from the research was also given to pupils. Occasionally, during observed music activities, pupils would become interested in what I was writing. In these instances full disclosure of the content of these research notes was given to pupils. This was always carried out in the moment in a way that was accessible to the pupil in question (i.e. via speech or adapted communication methods). If a pupil had questions about the data or wanted to read more of what I had written they were provided with an opportunity to explore the data further as long as this did not interfere with their participation in the activity being observed. In these latter instances an opportunity to look at the data after the music lesson/session was provided.

The use of an observation schedule was considered prior to data collection but was deemed in opposition to the principles of ethnography and GTM. Furthermore, in order to protect the identities of the children and adults taking part in each music session, it was decided that video recording was not appropriate in this instance.

3.7.2   Interviews

Formal interviews were carried out with 36 participants. These included 11 primary care-givers, 7 teachers, 4 teaching assistants, 1 music therapist, 5 members of senior leadership and 8 students. Interviews included members of the school community at all levels in the research (with the exception of school Governors and administrative staff). To accommodate the differences between the needs of the adults and the children taking part in this research approaches to interviews varied:

3.7.2.1   Adults

Interviews with adults (i.e. primary care-givers and practitioners) were semi-structured and sought to explore each individual's own experiences of music provision at their respective school. The interview questions were adapted to suit the experiences of each individual participant (for specific interview schedules, see Appendices L, M, N, O and P). Each interview lasted around an hour and was conducted in a location of the participant's own choosing (e.g. on school campus, at home, in a cafe). In some instances, follow-up interviews were scheduled in order to expand upon and re-visit questions that required further depth of enquiry in order to facilitate an effective grounded theory analysis. These follow-up interviews were carried out in line with the GTM principle of theoretical sampling (which I discuss further in section 3.8.5). All interviews were audio recorded and later transcribed using Express Scribe software. Participants were able to view the transcription of their interview prior to data analysis to ensure that no false information had been documented. Furthermore, participants were able to withdraw their data within ten working days (approximately two weeks) of the fieldwork end date at their respective school should they decide that they no longer wished to take part in the research during this time. None of the participants withdrew from the research project, however two returned their interview transcripts with amendments. These amended transcripts were used in place of the originals during data analysis.

3.7.2.2   Children

The approach to interviews with children varied depending on the age and communication needs of each child. Many (but not all) children who attend English special schools have communication impairments and some are non-verbal. This does not mean that these children are unable to communicate, however (Detheridge, 1997, 2000; Porter & Lacey, 2005; Porter, Ouvry, Morgan, & Downs, 2001). Throughout this research, every effort was made to give as many children and young people as possible the opportunity to take part in interviews. Following participant recruitment and after gaining informed consent/assent from both the child and their primary care-giver, I worked closely with each child, their primary care-givers and their teachers to devise an interview method best suited to the child's access needs. For students at School 3 (Whitney, Scooby, Louisa and Moana), a verbal interview with an adapted interview

schedule (see Appendix Q) was suitable. In Schools 1 and 2, however, adapted interview methods needed to be devised in order to meet the access and adapted communication needs of the young participants.

3.7.3   Adapted Interview Methods

3.7.3.1   Noah

Noah was 5 years old at the time of interview and attended School 1. Noah's interview was designed in collaboration with his mother and school teacher. Noah used some speech and language to communicate but had a very small vocabulary. He also had considerable developmental delay as well as a visual impairment. This meant that a traditional interview was not appropriate for Noah's access needs. An adapted interview method was therefore devised in which Noah was asked to watch and/or listen to 7 videos of different musical activities he had participated in at school during the term of fieldwork. Noah was the primary participant in all of the videos shown. The teacher regularly took videos of the pupils in her class in order to assess pupils' progress and provide feedback to parents about term-time classroom activities. As such, the videos used during the adapted interview were not recorded specifically for use in the research but were included with the teacher's and school's permission. Noah's mother and teacher felt that getting Noah to watch himself taking part in music activities and then respond to simple questions relating to what he had viewed would be an effective way of engaging his attention and exploring his views and preferences. Where Noah was not able to comment on a video verbally, his behavioural reactions to the video material could be observed and analysed instead. In order to effectively interpret Noah's behavioural reactions, it was agreed that his mother would be present during the interview in order to support Noah in communicating his preferences to the researcher. The interview was carried out at Noah's home during the Christmas holidays (December 2015). The primary aim of the interview was to find out what musical activities Noah enjoyed and what activities he did not enjoy.

Whilst in principle this was an effective adapted interview design for Noah's needs, there were several practical flaws which meant that, unfortunately, Noah's interview data has not been included in this study. Firstly, I had concerns about the way in which I recorded data about Noah's reactions to the videos and his responses to my

questions. I did not video- or audio-record these and instead relied upon my memory of his interactions and responses which I recorded in writing as soon as the adapted interview had ended. This method of data collection was not rigorous enough, in my opinion, as it left the data open to considerable contamination from my own thoughts and interpretations. It also meant that I was potentially relying on false memories of observed events when recording interview responses. On reflection, it would have been beneficial to have gained consent from Noah and his mother (who was present at the interview) to use video to record Noah's reactions so that a more thorough and reliable account of our interaction could be recorded. However, this would have meant asking for an amendment to my application for ethical review. It is therefore important to note that future research which seeks to devise flexible adapted interviews for children and young people with complex and multiple impairments should build this need for flexibility into their application for ethical review noting that, in some instances, video recording of interviews may be necessary in order to accurately record the participant's responses and interactions.

A second concern that I had was with regards to verification. Noah clearly enjoyed the interview. He joined in with his own singing in the videos and, at times, became very excitable. He responded positively with a "yeah" every time I asked whether he liked the song/activity being shown in the video. However, at the end of the interview there was a moment where my confidence wavered in the assertion that Noah's energetic reactions meant that he had enjoyed his music lessons. After having watched all of the videos, Noah's mother began to ask him whether he liked certain songs. I recorded the interaction as follows:

Noah's mum: Does Noah like Old MacDonald?

Noah: Yeah!

Noah's mum: Does Noah like Twinkle, Twinkle?

Noah: Yeah!

Noah's mum: Does Noah like the Beatles?

Noah: Yeah!

Noah's mum: Does Noah like to sing?

Noah: Yeah!

Noah's mum: Does Noah like bogies?

Noah: Yeah!

Noah's mum: See! This is what happens. He rarely says no! [Laughs].

Of course Noah could well have been telling the truth and other researchers have cautioned against too great a reliance on searches for 'truth' in research with people with learning disabilities (Goodley, 1996). For example, Goodley (1996) contends that the focus should be on asking why participants are telling their stories in a certain way rather than questioning whether they are being truthful. However, this interaction made me question whether I could rely on this single interview as an accurate account of Noah's feelings in relation to what he liked and disliked about his music lessons. In order to verify his responses and to ensure that I was not misrepresenting his views, it would have perhaps been beneficial to have arranged two or three visits to Noah's home where the interview procedure could have been repeated. Combining this repeated approach with video-recording would have allowed me to explore the way that Noah's responses changed or remained the same over time, adding greater confidence to my interpretation of his responses.

Finally, as discussed in section 3.6.2.4, I had concerns about Noah's ability to consent to his involvement in the research. These factors have all contributed to my decision not to use this interview data formally in the research.

3.7.3.2   Thomas, Mario and Luigi

Thomas, Mario and Luigi were all primary aged pupils attending School 2 (aged 6-10 years). Their interview was designed primarily in collaboration with the Class 4 Teacher at the school, with some additional input from primary care-givers. All pupils used speech and language to communicate but had additional communication needs associated with either autism or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) which needed to be taken into account when planning an adapted interview.

The research design for this interview was heavily influenced by the lack of time the school could afford me to lead student interviews. Primary care-givers felt that carrying out interviews at school would be best for their children as being in the environment they were talking about might help to trigger associations and conversation topics related to the research questions during the interview. However, the

school found it difficult to schedule a time and location where I could meet students separately for a 20-30 minute period in order to conduct 1-to-1 interviews with pupils. I completely understood this difficulty and agreed that students' lessons should be disrupted as little as possible. As such, a compromise was reached and I agreed to speak to all three pupils at the same time in a group interview. I convinced myself prior to the interview that this would not be an issue. It was my belief that a group interview might help to keep the pupils focused and to enable them to bounce off of one another when answering questions about what they liked and disliked about their music lessons as well as what they thought could be better (i.e. exploring their views of 'best practice'). In practice, however, the interview was very unfocused. It took place in a small office space which a member of the school's SLT had kindly vacated so that I could carry out the interview somewhere private. I was very aware of the safeguarding implications of being left alone with three very young, male students in the room, however, and so insisted that we kept the door open so that other staff could see clearly that the students were not at risk. This meant that the pupils were frequently distracted by friends and teachers who were walking past the door and the pace of the interview slowed a couple of times as I tried to regain the pupils' attention.

In addition, rather than 'bouncing off' of one another in the interview as I had hoped, it was clear that the students found each other's presence to be distracting. Mario, in particular, was a very dominating presence. He rarely responded to my questions about music. Instead, when the focus of the interview came to him, he preferred to ask questions rather than answer them. This would have been ideal in terms of enabling a participatory research framework whereby the students were able to direct the discussion in the direction that they wished. However, Mario did not want to ask questions about music, he wanted to ask his classmates about whether or not they had visited various local locations. My initial response to this was to try to re-focus this engagement by asking Mario if he would like to ask his peers some questions about music. Mario immediately took control of the interview. However, rather than asking his classmates about music, he asked them questions about computer games. I thought that placing the power in Mario's hands would better engage him in the interview but in practice all this did was disrupt the interview further. This lack of focus seemed to frustrate the other pupils. Luigi commented on how noisy it was in the room and eventually asked to return to class. Thomas seemed really keen to participate and was the most responsive to my questions. However, Mario's constant questioning and

interference seemed to make him slightly uncomfortable and frustrated. This frustration began to show about half way through the interview, just before Luigi asked to leave. I had asked a question about whether or not music was used as a cross-curricular tool in other lessons and Mario interrupted and tried to engage Thomas in some imaginative play:

> Interviewer: So, who teaches music at your school?
>
> Thomas: The singing teacher!
>
> Interviewer: The singing teacher; and do you do any music in your normal classes too?
>
> Thomas: Um, we sing two songs. *Under my Skin* and *Keep on Smiling.* In the Class 4 Teacher's class.
>
> Interviewer: Oh you sing two songs in the Class 4 Teacher's class; and do you like those? Is it good or?
>
> Thomas: Yeah, the whole songs that we've been doing with the singing teacher…
>
> Mario: [Interrupting] Like if I fall like this: Thomas, help! Thomas, Thomas help! I'm going to fall. Argh!
>
> Thomas: Oh please Mario. I'm trying to talk to someone and you're being silly.

Overall, after about 15 minutes of trying to engage the students, I accepted that the interview format was inappropriate. I thanked the two remaining students for their participation, let them choose their pseudonyms, and then escorted them back to class.

This interview experience demonstrates how important matters of time and space are to a successful adapted research interview. In hindsight, whilst the compromise to carry out a focus group interview was suitable for the school, it was not suitable for the pupils. Rather than convince myself that it would be OK, I should have perhaps insisted that one-to-one interviews were needed, or perhaps asked the pupils' primary care-givers if an interview could be carried out at each pupil's home. If this secondary compromise could not be reached, the use of creative research methods may have been more appropriate than a spoken interview in this instance. Examples of creative research methods which have been used successfully with disabled children and young people in the past include photovoice (Cluley, 2017); draw, write, tell (Angell, Alexander, & Hunt, 2014); and talking mats (Germain, 2004). Using a more

creative approach in a group interview may have led to better engagement from all pupils.

3.7.4 Document Analysis

71 documents were analysed as part of this study. Document analysis was included as a research method to provide a means of exploring the way in which policy affects practice in SEN/D music education. Including documents in the research also facilitated an examination of the way in which each school had changed over time, giving a better idea of the pedagogical and socio-cultural-political background of each educational setting. Documents such as curriculum frameworks, individual lesson plans, teaching strategies, Government policies and Ofsted reports were included in this data set. The majority of the documents analysed were freely available in the public domain (i.e. school policies, Ofsted reports, national curriculum outlines and school curriculum documents). However, in instances where I required access to a school document that was not freely available in the public domain, informed consent to use this additional information was sought from the Head Teacher of the school or, in cases where documents were sought from external organisations, an individual in a relative position of authority within said organisation. In cases where informed consent to use the additional documents was not granted, the additional documents in question were not used in the research.

3.7.5 Ethnographic Diary

In order to engage reflexively with the research process I kept an ethnographic diary throughout the research. This provided a record of my own experiences in the field and my inevitable personal reactions and connections to observed phenomena. The contents of the diary were not shared with the schools taking part in the research. Schools were made aware that I would be keeping a diary in the information sheets provided at the start of the research process prior to observations. Participants were made aware that this diary was for my own benefit to ensure that my own reflections and position within the research process were noted to prevent them, as far as possible, from interfering with the analytical procedure following data collection (although, as mentioned in section 3.5 above, subjective experience can never be fully removed from the research).

The diary was also used as a means of reflecting upon the methodology used throughout the research study and its strengths and weaknesses in practice. This is in accordance with Charmaz's recommendations (2014, p. 165) and has helped to form the reflexive responses to the adapted interview techniques listed above as well as my approach to including disabled children and young people in the research. Furthermore, the methodological reflections written in this diary offer a useful means of examining the process a novice researcher embarks upon when carrying out their first large-scale qualitative research project.

3.8   Methods of Data Analysis

Data were analysed in accordance with the grounded theory methods outlined by Charmaz (2014). As discussed in detail in sections 3.4 and 3.5 above, Charmaz's use of a constructivist paradigm aligns with my own ontological and epistemological perspectives. A constructivist approach to data analysis was therefore deemed appropriate.

Data analysis followed an iterative process and, where possible, data were analysed, coded and revisited throughout the duration of fieldwork. This was often challenging given the intensity of the fieldwork and the administrative requirements accompanying it. Observation notes had to be typed-up and interviews transcribed before data could be analysed and this was not always possible in as quick a time-frame as I had originally anticipated. This made the process of concurrent data collection and analysis difficult and the majority did not occur until after all of the data had been gathered and transcribed. Once again, the ethnographic diary was an imperative component in the triangulation of methods to ensure that these issues were dealt with reflexively and that the research did not stagnate when time for formal data analysis was limited due to intensive fieldwork commitments.

3.8.1   Initial Coding

Data were initially coded on an incident-with-incident basis in accordance with the guidelines suggested by Charmaz (2014, pp.128-132). Initial coding was carried out in NVivo and involved systematically coding each interview, observation note and document on an incident-with-incident basis with as many codes as necessary to

capture the richness of the data. This process was free, open and descriptive and I chose codes that I felt best reflected the data. Figure 3.1 shows an example excerpt of an interview transcript coded with initial codes. Sections of the transcript highlighted in bold are sections that correspond with memos written during initial coding (see section 3.8.3 for further information about memo writing).

Figure 3.1: Data Excerpt Coded with Initial Codes

Initial Codes	Interview Transcript
Asking about musicianship at interview; Not being able to afford 'a discreet music teacher' Having subject specialists for English and Maths; Expecting class teachers to deliver everything; Needing skilled staff Finding that music disappears without skilled staff Getting someone in; Making up for lack of staff skills Trusting staff; Relying on specific staff members Feeling embarrassed that she doesn't know more about music in the school; Not wanting to do the interview; Not holding information well enough; Doing what's required by government; Adhering to 'normal education requirements'; Lacking regulation and accountability in music education; Seeing creative subjects disappear from mainstream curricula; Feeling pressured to obtain certain standards; Having a philosophy;	HT: We have a generic question at the end of interviewing and because we can't any longer afford to have a discreet music teacher we don't recruit in that way, it's very rare. **The only subject specialists we have now are at the secondary partnership and we've got a maths specialist and an English specialist, everybody else is expected to be a class teacher and deliver everything. But you find that if you can't do it the music disappears doesn't it?** You see? And that's why we've sort-of added on and put back in really. You see, if you ask me what happens with music at the CMLN site, you can probably tell me better than I can tell you because they do get organised and because the Class 1 Teacher is there I don't really worry about it; but whether the Class 1 Teacher does stuff with other groups or whether the staff do that, I obviously don't know, you'd know better than me and that's quite embarrassing really to say that; which is why none of us wanted to do this interview really because **we clearly don't hold that information well enough** and the world that we work in now in terms of normal education, the requirements, **there's not that much of a check on music** it's not held; and actually one of the really sad things I think is that those creative subjects, drama, music, art, are the things that are disappearing off the curriculum in mainstream because the pressure for the standards is just so high, whereas my philosophy is, in terms of those

Seeing the benefits; Developing students' self-esteem; Feeling it's important; Impacting other learning; Focusing on non-musical goals	sorts of things, **it's so enriching for our kids and their self-esteem comes from it. It's just so, so important; and actually a lot of learning comes out of it as well, it's not musical; I'm not interested in them being able to do A, B, or C in terms of musical outcomes, you know, [it's] that awe, that wonder, that enjoyment, that enrichment in their lives and that self-esteem, and that social interaction, and that social ability, and the age-appropriateness, and the behaviour is what's more important out of that learning which for musicians that can be quite hard for them can't it?**
Inspiring awe and wonder in pupils; Enjoying music; Enriching lives; Building self-esteem; Developing social interaction; Improving behaviour; Keeping things age-appropriate;	
Feeling as though it's hard for musicians to understand	

All initial codes took the form of gerunds which described, categorised and summarised each incident of data. Glaser (1978) notes that coding with gerunds assists researchers in identifying a theory of process from their data. This is achieved through the coding of actions rather than themes. Coding each incident in this way also helps to ensure that researchers remain close to their data. Charmaz (2014) explains:

> [T]he initial grounded theory coding with gerunds, is a *heuristic* device to bring
> the researcher into the data, interact with them, and study each fragment of them.
> This type of coding helps to define implicit meanings and actions, gives
> researchers directions to explore, spurs making comparisons between data, and
> suggests emergent links between processes in the data to pursue and check. (p.121,
> emphasis in original)

This iterative analytical process is supposed to take place alongside data collection so that the researcher is able to follow up on unresolved questions that arise from the data, clarify points of analysis with participants, and quickly move beyond description into interpretative analysis. As mentioned above, given the intensity of the administrative demands of data collection itself, most of the initial coding of data was carried out after the fieldwork had ended. Perhaps if the research had been carried out as part of a team, or if I had built longer breaks between ethnographic data collection at each field-site into the research design, concurrent data collection and initial coding would have been possible. However, there was simply not enough time to keep up with this pace of data

collection and analysis as a single researcher within the decided research timeframe. The ethnographic diary was essential to ensure that this central component of grounded theory analysis was not omitted from the research entirely. Often, I found that transcribing observation notes and interviews acted as a first stage of data analysis. As the data were, for the most part, transcribed at the same time as the research (only the interview data from Schools 2 and 3 were transcribed following the completion of the fieldwork). Missing information and points requiring clarification were able to be recorded in the ethnographic diary such that I was then able to follow these up with participants in real-time as the fieldwork progressed. For example, when typing up observation notes I would frequently think of questions that needed to be asked in interviews. One such example, written when typing up observation notes from School 1 on 10th November 2015, reads as follows:

> Some questions from my observations so far:
>
> What is progression in music for pupils at School 1 Site 1? Is there such a thing or is progression in music for pupils with PMLD tied up with overall progression?
>
> How are pupils assessed? Do they need to be assessed? Are my thoughts too target-focused? What's brought about this target-focused nature to my own thinking? Is experiential ok for these pupils?
>
> (extract from ethnographic diary entry on 10.11.2015)

These questions were then included in interviews, or asked informally during the fieldwork. In this way, whilst concurrent data collection and initial coding of data could not be carried out, thoughts and questions arising from the data were still recorded and acted upon wherever possible.

A large quantity of unique codes were generated from the process of initial coding (over 6500). These were then compared and contrasted with one another using the grounded theory principles of constant comparative analysis (Birks & Mills, 2015; Charmaz, 2014; Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Glaser, 1978, 1992; Glaser & Strauss, 1967/1999) in order to integrate similar codes across settings and data type (i.e. observation/interview/document). Charmaz (2014) describes constant comparative analysis as follows:

> A method of analysis that generates successively more abstract concepts and theories through inductive processes of comparing data with data, data with code,

code with code, code with category, category with category, and category with concept. (p. 342)

This inductive process constituted the first stage of focused coding.

3.8.2   Focused Coding

Charmaz (2014) explains that focused coding involves taking the codes that appear most frequently or those that have the most significance and filtering these down into higher category codes that help to conceptualise the theory being constructed from the data. NVivo is useful here as the number of sources and references associated with a specific code are listed as a default setting of the 'node' work area (i.e. where the codes for a particular project are stored within the software). This function allowed me to quickly assess which initial codes were most frequently recurring within my data set. Memos were also a useful tool here as they helped to highlight codes that were of particular significance. This provided a springboard from which I could ask questions of my codes, constantly comparing them and, ultimately, deciding which were most representative of participants' thoughts, actions and experiences.

In her chapter on focused coding, Charmaz (2014) contends that "[f]ocused coding is usually straightforward and proceeds quickly" (p.140). This was not the case for me. Given that I had 6500 unique initial codes to work with, the process of constant comparative analysis was long and, at times, arduous. In order to make the process a little easier, I devised a systematic (if somewhat rudimentary) approach to coding which involved the use of three physical notebooks (one for each field site). I used NVivo and my memos to assess which codes were the most prevalent and/or significant for each field site (using the methods described above). These codes became my first focused codes. Each was given its own page in the appropriate notebook, with the code's title being written at the top of the page. I then systematically went through each code, comparing the data coded against it with these initial focused codes. This simple method of coding allowed me to easily record which of the less prevalent codes were linked to those that I had 'levelled up' to a higher category. I recorded these codes on the appropriate page in the notebook in question (focused coding was initially carried out separately for each school), underneath the corresponding higher category heading (see Figure 3.2 for an example). This enabled me to save time when consolidating codes in NVivo as all of the codes that needed to be moved to sit underneath their

focused 'parent' code could be highlighted and moved at the same time (as opposed to the rather onerous task of clicking and dragging each code through the large data-set individually). During this process many codes were reconsidered in light of their comparison with others and several were combined or collapsed to form stronger more representative codes.

Figure 3.2: Example of Focused Coding
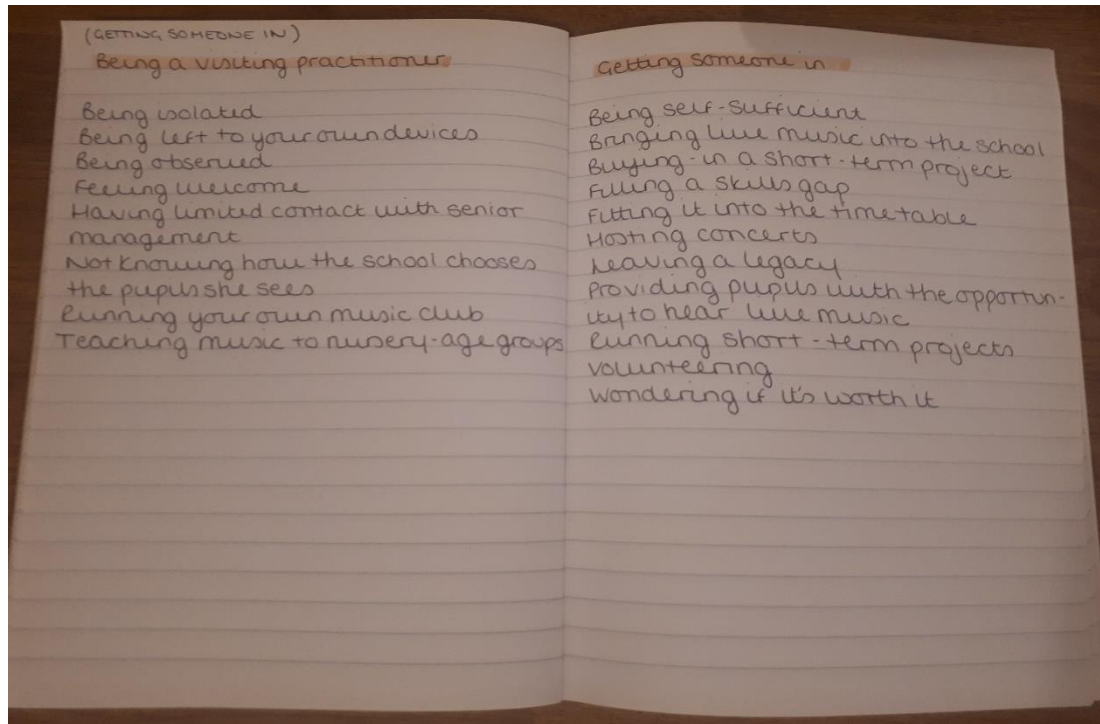
Naturally, there were times when an initial code did not 'fit' within one of these original focused code. In these instances, rather than 'force' the data into one of the original categories (a concept that many grounded theorists caution against), a new focused code was created using the title of the unrepresented code in question. The data under previous focused codes was then compared with this new code to check whether this code would represent better 'fit' for the previously coded data. Occasionally, focused codes were renamed to better fit the data.

As this constant comparative method progressed and more elements of the data were engaged with, it became apparent that some of the originally chosen focused codes were actually better suited to being a sub-code of another focused code. Figure 3.2 shows an example of this. Originally, 'Being a visiting practitioner' and 'Getting

someone in' were chosen as separate focused codes. However, as focused coding progressed it became evident that these two codes were strongly related (i.e. the sub-codes of 'Being a visiting practitioner' were dependent upon the school 'Getting someone in'). These two focused codes were therefore consolidated and 'Being a visiting practitioner' became a sub-code of 'Getting someone in' (which is represented in Figure 3.2 by the bracketed upper-case text above the initial page heading). This relationship was also recorded in NVivo using a built-in feature that allows researchers to record relationships between codes.[6] These relationships were useful when deciding which focused codes should be raised to conceptual categories during the final stage of data analysis.

Memos were also important when exploring the ways in which different codes were related to each other. During the process of focused coding, I frequently made additional memos about the ways in which codes were related. This helped to form a theory of process from the data which moved the analysis into its final stage.

3.8.3 Memo Writing

Memos were written continuously throughout the coding process. Birks and Mills (2015) describe memo-writing as:

> A fundamental analytical process in grounded theory research that involves the recording of processes, thoughts, feelings, analytical insights, decisions and ideas in relation to a research project. (p.179)

A memo was created each time a thought in relation to my data occurred during data analysis. These can generally be split into six different types of memos (an example of each memo type can be found in Appendix R):

1. **Coding memos:** i.e. memos which provided additional context for why I coded an incident with a particular code
2. **Factual memos:** i.e. memos about important facts in the data. These memos were mostly written in response to incidents within document data in order to record the various similarities and/or inconsistencies between policy and curriculum documents

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[6] For more information about this feature of NVivo see http://help-nv11.qsrinternational.com/desktop/concepts/about_relationships.htm

3. **Comparative memos:** i.e. memos that recorded a 'note-to-self' to compare and contrast this particular code and/or incident with another code and/or incident (most often from a different field-site)

4. **Questioning memos:** i.e. questions to follow-up on during theoretical sampling or constant comparative analysis e.g. Why did this happen? Why does the participant feel this way?

5. **Analytical memos:** i.e. longer-form memos that drew together codes, incidents and the relationships between them in order to foster the more abductive process of theory generation. This process led to the construction of core categories and concepts (discussed below)

6. **Reflexive memos:** i.e. memos which recorded my own reactions to certain incidents in the data

Memos were written in separate Word documents for each observation note/interview/document and included a quotation from the incident that had triggered the memo (which was written in bold text – see Figure 3.1 for an example of these quotations) followed by the memo itself (which was written in plain text). These memos were then woven into the analytical stages of focused coding (discussed above) in order to create core categories and develop theory from the data.

3.8.4   From Codes to Categories

The final stage of data analysis was to ascertain which codes formed the core categories of the analysis. Charmaz (2014, p. 341) describes categorising as follows:

> [Categorising is] the analytic step in grounded theory of selecting certain codes as having overriding significance or abstracting common themes and patterns in several codes into an analytic concept. As the researcher categorizes [*sic*], he or she raises the conceptual level of the analysis from description to a more abstract, theoretical level. The researcher then tries to define the properties of that category, the conditions under which it is operative, the conditions under which it changes, and its relation to other categories.

The process of elevating certain codes into categories was facilitated through memoing. As explained above, throughout the coding process I wrote a memo every time a thought occurred in relation to my data. As data analysis progressed, these memos

became increasingly analytical and relationships between codes, incidents and experiences became gradually more apparent (see Appendix R for an example of an analytical memo). It was through this process that descriptive codes became tentative theoretical categories. Once a code had been elevated to a tentative category, its fit and relevance was tested by returning to the data to explore the limits of the category (e.g. was it common across all schools and participants? If not why not? What were the conditions under which it varied?). Through this process the properties of the category and the conditions under which it operated and changed were made explicit. The result of this process was that a theory of process became apparent in the data. It became increasingly clear which codes were related to one another and in what way. These codes (and the relationships between them) formed the core categories of the findings presented in the following chapters.

3.8.5 Theoretical Sampling

Charmaz (2014) defines theoretical sampling as the process of "seeking and collecting pertinent data to elaborate and refine categories in [an] emerging theory" (p.192). She explains that this stage of grounded theory analysis tends to occur once tentative categories have arisen from the research following each stage of constant comparative analysis listed above (i.e. initial coding, focused coding and categorising). Theoretical sampling involves collecting additional data on these categories in order to reach theoretical saturation. Glaser and Strauss (1967/1999) describe theoretical saturation as follows:

> *Saturation* means that no additional data are being found whereby the sociologist can develop properties of the category. As he sees similar instances over and over again, the researcher becomes empirically confident that a category is saturated (p.61, emphasis in original)

As such, when no new information about a core category is uncovered during data collection (which includes theoretical sampling), that category can be said to be saturated.

Given the limited time-frame associated with a doctoral research degree as well as the demands of data collection and analysis that are associated with ethnography and grounded theory, this final stage in the analytical process has not been carried out as

part of this research project. This is not to say that it cannot be conducted in the future. As can be seen from the results discussed in the following chapters, there are many lines of inquiry that have arisen from the data which would benefit from further research. Theoretical sampling offers both myself and other researchers a useful tool with which to take this research further.

Having said this, theoretical sampling was occasionally used in response to memos. For example, in some questioning or analytical memos I would often ask myself if any literature existed on the topic which could help to contextualise participants' thoughts, views, opinions and experiences. Literature from academic and non-academic sources therefore were often included in the research by way of theoretical sampling. As discussed in Chapter 1, the point at which grounded theory researchers conduct a literature review has been a point of debate in methodological discussions surrounding GTM (El Hussein et al., 2017; Ramalho et al., 2015). However, Corbin and Strauss (2015) note that technical and non-technical literature can be used throughout data analysis in order to make comparisons, enhance sensitivity (i.e. to open the researcher's eyes to subtle nuances in their data), provide descriptive materials, stimulate questions for initial observations and interview, and confirm findings (pp.49-52). Literature can be used in this way throughout the research process. It is not seen as additional data. Instead, it is viewed as a means of comparing, contrasting and contextualising data which is gathered through GTM (for a more detailed account of the way in which extant literature has been engaged with throughout this thesis, see Chapter 1).

3.9   Summary

This chapter has discussed the specific approaches that were used to gather and analyse data as part of this research. Methods of data collection and analysis have been outlined and ethical considerations have been highlighted. The ontological and epistemological underpinnings of the research have also been acknowledged. It is hoped that this may enable to reader to form their own judgements as to the overall reliability of the findings. The following three chapters present the findings of this research.

Chapter 4 The Schools

4.1   Introduction

This chapter provides a brief overview of the context of each school. Each setting had a very different culture and overall approach to teaching, learning, curriculum design and assessment which affected the way in which music was integrated into their respective curricula. This background information addresses the first aim of this research project – to explore how music education is approached in special schools – and helps to contextualise the theoretical findings discussed in Chapters 5 and 6.

4.2   School 1

School 1 catered for pupils with a wide range of additional needs across multiple sites which were all located within a few miles of each other.[1] The school had a Head Teacher who worked from what was often referred to as the 'main site'. Each individual site also had a Site-Leader who was responsible for overseeing provision at their respective section of the school. There were five sites at the school and the idea was that each was working in partnership to provide pupils with an education which was as inclusive as possible.

The majority of pupils at the school attended the main site. There were several different sections to this site – primary classes, secondary classes, a 'severe learning difficulty corridor', some post-16 provision and also a 'complex communication corridor' which provided adapted teaching for two primary classes and two secondary classes for pupils with complex communication needs. Some of the school's post-16 pupils attended an inner city academy in order to learn functional skills and to prepare for employment. There were also two mainstream partnership sites (one primary and one secondary) which catered for pupils who ideally should have been accessing mainstream education but needed specialist support in order to facilitate that inclusion.

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[1] Henceforth, any mention of 'the school' in relation to School 1 Site 1 refers to the whole school setting inclusive of all sites. 'The site' refers to the CMLN site at which I spent a term observing music activities. Other sites are referred to by name (i.e. the primary school partnership; the secondary school partnership; the main site; the post-16 academy).

Finally, there was a separate site for pupils who had been labelled as having complex and multiple learning needs (CMLN). This was attached to a local mainstream high school but pupils had little inclusive crossover with their host site. Some pupils would eat lunch in the secondary school dining hall and occasionally pupils would attend one another's assemblies but this was the extent of the inclusion. This is the site in which I spent a term observing music activities. The fieldwork took place during the autumn term of the 2015/2016 academic year.

There were just four classes at the CMLN site with pupils ranging from pre-primary to post-16 age (specifically ages 3-19 years). At the time of fieldwork, there were 33 pupils on roll and the site employed approximately 30 staff members which included 5 teachers, a Site-Leader, 16 teaching assistants and several para-professionals such as nurses, physio-therapists and a music therapist. The site opened in 2012 and was therefore still a reasonably new facility when I started my fieldwork in 2015. Each of the four classrooms had ceiling hoist systems with full tracking which meant that pupils could have access to all areas of the classroom with additional support. All classrooms were also fitted with black-out blinds which, when paired with the site's sensory equipment, meant that they could be turned into sensory rooms when needed. The site also had a specialist Rebound therapy[2] room and hydrotherapy pool which were used as assistive methods for meeting some of the physical development targets included in pupils' personalised learning plans (PLPs).

4.2.1 Curriculum

All pupils at the CMLN site were working below Level 1 of the National Curriculum and were in receipt of what the school called its *Informal Curriculum*. As mentioned above, the school catered for pupils with a wide variety of additional needs. A one-size-fits-all approach to curriculum development was therefore unrealistic given the heterogeneous demographic of each site. To ensure that teaching and learning were appropriate for all pupils, the school had devised a curriculum with three main strands: informal, semi-formal and formal. Pupils attending the CMLN site were in receipt of the informal curriculum (an overview of this curriculum is provided in Table 4.1). Each

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[2] Rebound therapy refers to the therapeutic use of a trampoline. It is increasingly used in special schools to help pupils develop gross motor skills and participate in physical play (Duff, Sinani, Marshall, & Maz, 2016).

child had a PLP which was devised in collaboration with the pupil, their primary care-givers, teachers and other professionals. Targets included in PLPs were thus specific to each pupil. The primary aim of education within this informal curriculum was to increase pupils' independence. PLPs therefore focused on enabling pupils to develop skills that would help them communicate, socialise, and physically interact with and make sense of the world around them. For example, specific targets for one pupil in Class 4 (the oldest students in the school) included: 'To wheel himself from the school entrance to classroom pegs and reverse at the start and end of day'; 'to continue to request a known activity or want through signing or known vocalisation'; and 'to make toast with peers with adult support'.

Teaching was therefore not subject-specific at this site. Instead, the curriculum was split into seven different curriculum areas, each of which used different teaching approaches and interventions to help pupils become as independent as possible upon leaving school and transitioning to adulthood. The interventions used at the CMLN site as part of the informal curriculum can be seen in Table 4.2 below. With this in mind, the philosophy underpinning the pupils' education was very different to that of their mainstream peers.

4.2.2 Music Education

Music was everywhere in the school and the teaching staff were passionate about including music in the curriculum. However, the non-subject-specific nature of teaching at this site meant that the way in which music was taught was very different to that of a mainstream school. Music was not taught as a 'subject' per-se. Instead, in conversations with teachers and members of senior leadership, it was often referred to as a 'vehicle' or 'tool' that helped pupils to develop functional skills, thus assisting them to achieve the targets outlined in their PLPs. As can be seen in Table 4.2, music interaction was formally included in the informal curriculum map as an approach to teaching communication skills. Music was also listed as a way in which pupils could develop their creativity. In reality, however, music went much further than this. Teachers and support staff were constantly engaging pupils in music activities. It was seen as something accessible; something that pupils 'could do'. It was also seen as a way in which teachers could connect with pupils and develop relationships, getting to know one another's preferences and building them into classroom activities.

Table 4.1: School 1 Informal Curriculum Framework (adapted from the school's documentation on their curriculum approaches)

Curriculum Style	Who are the learners?	Approach to teaching and learning	Curriculum	Assessment	Future Pathways
Informal	Pupils at the CMLN site.	Engagement is key to sustainable learning. For engagement to occur pupils need support from mediators who know them well and can understand and interpret their interactions. Emotional and physical needs of learners have to be met first before learning can take place.	Personalised learning plan for each pupil (drawn up in collaboration with pupils, primary care-givers, teachers and professionals) which includes relevant and purposeful tasks that maximise motivation and help learners to make sense of the world around them.	Routes for Learning[1], MOVE[2] and Intensive Interaction[3] used to support formative assessment. MAPP[4] being developed for summative assessment. Evidence gathered through video and photographs.	Pupils remain at school until 19 then access further educational (FE) input from local FE institution.

[1] Routes for Learning (Qualifications and Curriculum Group, 2006) is an alternative assessment tool to the P-Scales (which are discussed in Chapter 2). It was developed by a consortium of researchers and practitioners and produced by the Qualifications and Curriculum Group of the Welsh Government in 2006. In contrast to the linear model of development, progress and assessment assumed in the P-Scales and the subject-specific pedagogical approaches linked to the National Curriculum, Routes for Learning bases its assessment framework on key milestones that students with severe or profound and multiple learning difficulties may experience. The idea is that a child's journey through a particular 'routemap' will be "individual and idiosyncratic depending on the interests, needs and abilities of the children concerned" (Imray & Hinchcliffe, 2012, p. 153). The curriculum is therefore tailored to the needs of the child rather than the child having to adapt, supress or ignore their needs to fit a more rigid subject-based curriculum.

[2] The MOVE curriculum is an approach to physical learning and development first published in 1991 by Linda Bidabe (a special education teacher from California, USA) and facilitated in the UK by the Enham Trust (Enham Trust, n.d.; MOVE International, n.d.). It teaches functional movement skills such as sitting, standing, walking and transferring as part of a child's daily educational activities.

[3] Intensive Interaction is a communication technique which seeks to help people connect and communicate with people with learning difficulties (Nind & Hewett, 2001). It can also be used to develop the communication abilities of people with learning difficulties (Nind & Hewett, 2005).

[4] MAPP – *Mapping and Assessing Pupil Progress* – is an SLD version of the Routes for Learning assessment framework developed by Mike Sissons from The Dales School in North Yorkshire (Imray & Hinchcliffe, 2012; The Dales School, n.d.).

Table 4.2: School 1 Informal Curriculum Map

Curriculum area	Approaches to teaching and learning
Communication	Intensive Interaction
	Musical interaction
Sensory	Sensory Stories
	Sensory Exploration
Physical	MOVE
	Hydrotherapy
	Rebound therapy
	Physio therapy
Creative	Dance
	Drama
	Art
	Music
Care (dependent living)	Food Technology
PHSCE	[Not listed]
ICT	[Not listed]

The CMLN site did not have a formal music curriculum. Instead, music was mapped onto the rationale for each curriculum area (as can be seen in Table 4.2). Students' progress in music was therefore never formally assessed as the learning targets associated with students' PLPs were primarily non-musical. The Class 1 Teacher explained that she had carried out some research into the SoI framework of musical development (Ockelford, 2008; Welch et al., 2009) and had decided that it would be a useful 'reflective tool' when watching back videos of students' participation in music activities (School 1, Site 1, Documents). She had put together a short document which summarised the ways in which the SoI framework mapped onto the teaching and assessment approaches already in use by the school (specifically, P Scales, B Squared, Routes for Learning and Intensive Interaction). Whilst this

document concluded that the SoI framework worked well with the CMLN site's existing approach to curriculum and assessment, the Class 1 Teacher explained in her interview that she and other members of senior leadership at the site had ultimately decided not to use it as a formal addition to teaching and assessment as the site was not required to "send in assessments for music" (School 1, Site 1, Interview, Class 1 Teacher). This finding, and the way that it intersects with ideas of what constitutes 'best practice' in music education for disabled children and young people is discussed further in Chapters 5 and 6.

The Class 1 Teacher described music's primary function within the curriculum as a means of facilitating and developing communication. One of the main ways in which this was facilitated was via the use of musical 'signposts' or 'sounds of reference'. These 'sounds of reference' are similar in concept to their visual counterpart, 'objects of reference'. Ockelford (2013b) describes objects of reference as:

> Largely everyday objects that [are] given symbolic meanings. For example, a spoon may be taken to mean 'food', a piece of towelling may mean 'swimming', and a bell may mean 'music' (Ockelford, 2013b, p. 162)

The 'sounds of reference' used by the CMLN site operated on a similar principle. For example, in every class, a different song would play at the start of each day of the week as the students came into school. The idea was that this auditory sensory cue would mean more to students than a verbal indication of the day of the week. Similarly, lessons would often start with a song or a piece of music to alert students to the lesson content or time of day (specific songs were also used to signpost lunchtime and home-time) and each day started with a musical 'morning group'. This was a circle-time activity with repeated songs and activities which allowed students to settle into the school day. Repetition was important here. The content of students' lessons would usually remain the same for an entire term (or sometimes for longer) as teaching staff at the CMLN site felt that repetition was immensely important to the students' learning, particularly given their perceived level of development. As the Class 4 Teacher explained:

> [W]e'll have the same session with the same activities over a term because that's best for the level at which our students are working.
>
> (School 1, Site 1, Interview, Class 4 Teacher)

The same principle applied to music used as a 'sound of reference' for events and activities. However, songs used to signpost lesson content and times of the day remained constant throughout students' time at the school (far longer than a term), in the hope that the meaning associated with it would eventually be learned by students.

A further way in which music was used to develop and facilitate communication was by combining it with Intensive Interaction. As the curriculum map in Table 4.2 shows, Music Interaction and Intensive Interaction were the two approaches to teaching and learning listed in the 'communication' curriculum area. Furthermore, from the information shown in Table 4.1, it can be seen that Intensive Interaction was one of the primary approaches to teaching and assessment used by the school in their informal curriculum.

Intensive Interaction is an approach to communication originally developed by Ephraim (1982) in an institutional setting and further developed by Nind and Hewett (1988) in an educational setting (Samuel, 2001).[1] Its primary aim is to assist people with SLD or PMLD to relate to and communicate with other people. The method is rooted in developmental theory and builds upon "what is known about how babies learn to communicate and be social" (Nind & Hewett, 2001, p. 9). Communication between the person with a learning disability and others is facilitated via a 'communication partner'. This is usually someone who is able to communicate through normalised methods of speech and language. This includes standard non-verbal fundamentals of communication such as "use and understanding of eye contact; [and] use of facial expressions" (Nind & Hewett, 2001, p. 7). The communication partner places the person with SLD/PMLD at the heart of the communicative attempt. Everything is carried out on the person with a learning disability's own terms and with their consent, the idea being that each person involved in the communication shares equal power, rather than the communication partner attempting to dictate or control the communicative actions of the person with SLD/PMLD (Nind & Hewett, 2001). The communication partner then attempts to build trust and rapport and, ultimately, communicate with the person with a learning disability by joining in their activities and responding "imaginatively and creatively" (Nind & Hewett, 2001, p. 45) to their attempts to communicate. These responses include: Imitating what the person with

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[1] The following texts provide a useful introduction to the methods and approaches used in Intensive Interaction: Barber (2008); Nind and Hewett (1988, 2001, 2005); Samuel (2001).

SLD/PMLD does; joining in with sustained physical activities such as rocking or clapping; saying something positive in response to the person with SLD/PMLD's interaction; responding dramatically to the person with SLD/PMLD (e.g. responding with mock shock or horror to a tumbling tower of bricks); responding non-verbally to the interaction (e.g. with a nod of the head, a smile, or widened eyes); and by offering a running commentary on their interaction (e.g. "that was really loud!") (Nind & Hewett, 2001).

Intensive Interaction was used as a teaching and assessment tool throughout School 1 and was consistently used in all teaching and learning carried out at the CMLN site. Previous research has suggested that music has the potential to both support communication development and act as an alternative form of communication for those for whom speech and language acquisition may be unobtainable (Ockelford, 2013b). It is therefore unsurprising that the CMLN site used music alongside Intensive Interaction as a primary approach to teaching and learning in communication.

Whilst music was not taught as a stand-alone subject at the site, several classes had timetabled activities that were centred around music. Class 1 had a 'sensory dance' session each Tuesday morning in which a series of structured sensory Intensive Interaction activities were accompanied by songs from either One Direction or The Beatles. These artists were chosen to match a learning theme of 'Old and New' which was the learning topic around which many timetabled sessions were structured during the 2015/2016 autumn term. Later in the day, Class 1 also had a music session. This session always began with the same musical 'sound of reference' – a live Proms version of *Music* by John Miles (2001) – found on YouTube, played via the classroom PC and amplified by the class' integrated sound system. Following this, the teacher would lead a series of structured activities with the class. These were repeated every week in the same order throughout the term. Finally, students and staff would have time at the end of the session to engage in Intensive Interaction with instruments. Classes 3 and 4 also had a timetabled music session each week. These took place on a Thursday afternoon and followed a similar structure to the Class 1 music session, the primary difference being that the musical 'sound of reference' used at the start of the session was ABBA's *Thank You For the Music* rather than John Miles' *Music*.

The purpose of all of these sessions was to primarily develop non-musical skills rather than musical skills and activities were aimed at helping students to work towards

meeting their PLP targets. All music sessions were led by classroom teachers, with most sessions being led by either the Class 1 or Class 4 teacher. These two teachers had the highest level of musical skill and confidence at the site and were therefore chosen by senior leadership to manage music activities. The involvement of music in the CMLN site's informal curriculum was coordinated by the teacher with the highest level of musical skill and expertise: The Class 1 Teacher. The Class 4 Teacher was also highly involved in leading music sessions with her own class and likewise led the music interaction session with students from Class 3 on a Thursday afternoon.

The CMLN site also offered a range of extra-curricular musical activities for students. These included bringing live music into school for students to watch and listen to. For example, at the end of the 2015 autumn term, a saxophonist came into school to play Christmas songs and carols and there was talk of asking a brass band to come and play for pupils in the 2016 spring term. The school also employed a Visiting Music Leader from the local Music Hub to lead an after school music club for students on a Tuesday afternoon. This was a very recent addition to the school's extra-curricular offer and I was unable to observe these sessions during my fieldwork due to a clash of commitments. Students were also often invited to participate in external music events led by the local Music Hub. These included several annual 'music days' which would be organised around a theme. In the autumn term, for example, some students from School 1 attended a Christmas themed music day. None of the students from the CMLN site attended this event. Students from School 1 were also invited to participate in local events such as a local-authority-wide Christmas concert (held in a prestigious local civic building) and the town Christmas lights switch-on. Again, students from the CLMN site did not access these activities, however students from the School's other sites did. Finally, students from School 1 Site 1 all had an opportunity to take part in a Christmas concert held at the Site at the end of the 2015 autumn term. Each class practiced and performed their own skit. These included a sound story about Christmas[2], a multi-sensory story about Christmas in France, a multi-sensory performance to Shakin Stevens' *Merry Christmas Everyone*[3] and a pre-recorded music video of

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[2] This sound story involved students playing instruments at different parts of a story about Father Christmas to mimic the sound effects of various actions or events (e.g. bells for the reindeer and Father Christmas' sleigh).

[3] In this multi-sensory performance, the music played in the background whilst the Class Teacher, TAs and students created a Christmas scene loosely matching the words of the song (e.g. for the lyrics 'children playin', having fun' the students waved paper streamers).

students dancing and having fun to Elton John's *Step into Christmas*. Parents and children from a local mainstream primary school were invited to watch the performance.

4.2.3   Music Therapy

At the time of this fieldwork, the CMLN site at School 1 also employed a music therapist. Music therapy had been offered to the site during the previous school term (Summer 2015) in order to replace a weekly music lesson provided by a peripatetic music teacher who had gone on maternity leave. The site had already bought into a package offered by the Music Hub. Therefore, when they found out that the peripatetic music teacher was going on maternity leave, they asked the Hub what they could offer to replace the music provision they would be losing. The Site Leader explained, "it was just about what happened to become available…she [the peripatetic music teacher] went on maternity leave and all they could offer in her place was the music therapist" (School 1, Interview, School 1 Site 1 Site Leader). The 'all' here is telling. It demonstrates that, rather than being a strategic, planned addition to their curriculum offer, music therapy was a chance addition to the site's curriculum.

The Music Therapist came into school for one morning a week to lead 1-to-1 music therapy sessions with four students. Each session lasted for about 30 minutes and sessions were designed to be interactive and child-led. Sessions took place in a meeting room which was located off the central school corridor. This room had no natural light but was still bright and welcoming. The Music Therapist usually spent a short amount of time prior to the first therapy session setting up the room and arranging the layout so that it would be accessible for the students participating in music therapy (all of whom were wheelchair users). The layout changed slightly from week to week but generally, at the far end of the room, opposite the door to the main corridor, there would be a box of percussion instruments and a large floor drum. A couple of comfy waiting-room chairs would also usually be positioned at this side of the room. This was where the Music Therapist would usually sit when they sang the hello and goodbye songs. At other times they would move around the room fetching instruments for the children and young people to play. Positioned against the left wall as you faced the door was a percussion tree (a rectangular metal frame upon which hand-held percussion instruments could be hung). The therapist always placed some instruments on the tree

so that they were in the students' line of sight. These usually included a gong, a triangle, some hand-bells, a wooden shaker, a tambourine and two more sets of bells. Various other instruments would be scattered about the room on chairs or on the floor in the far corner by the chairs/box of musical instruments. These instruments included a violin (usually in its case), a guitar, a melodica (usually in its case), a keyboard, and two ukuleles. Some of these musical instruments were brought to the session by the Music Therapist and others were a habitual part of the room.

Sessions always started with a hello song and ended with a goodbye song. The therapist explained that this helped to frame the session and allowed students to become accustomed to their voice and the general structure of the therapy session. As such, they were used in much the same way as the 'sounds of reference' used in general lessons and classroom activities. Between the hello and goodbye song, the content of the sessions varied. Sometimes the therapist would begin by letting the student choose an instrument and then improvising with them. Other times, the therapist would start with a pre-composed song they had written themselves called *What Can You Hear?* During this song the therapist would introduce different instruments to the child or young person singing "can you hear the bells?" or "can you hear the melodica?". The idea here was to gain an understanding of each child or young person's musical preferences so that favoured instruments could be used in future sessions to encourage engagement. For one young person, music therapy sessions were centred around improvising to the tune of his favourite songs. In each session, the therapist would generally introduce an activity or instrument to the student. They would then support the student in their music-making by improvising in response to the students' playing.

The therapist explained that their aims for therapy sessions were non-musical. When beginning sessions with a new student they would carry out an assessment of the child or young person's needs. The therapist explained:

> I generally do three assessment sessions. So three weeks with a new client – be
> that a child or an adult or whatever. And then, from that, I'll look at my notes and
> I'll do my assessment form. And on the assessment form is information about
> musical engagement, behaviour, communication, level of interaction, level of
> enthusiasm and then any overall comments where I put aims and objectives. So I'll
> assess those key areas and then I'll look at what aims and objectives I'd like to
> work on or I'd like that client to work on. So it could be with, for example, a child
> with emotional and behavioural disorders, it could be expressing feelings through

playing. With a kid like Adam [a student in Class 4] it could be trying to keep fine

motor skills up by playing the keyboard. With a kid like Kate [a student in Class

2] it might be trying to build up her confidence so that she's keen to explore other

instruments and bring her out of her comfort zone a little bit and communicate that

way. With Jari [a student in Class 1], lengthening engagement time because he

falls asleep a lot. So it depends on the child.

(School 1, Site 1, Practitioner Interview, Music Therapist)

The therapist therefore adapted the aims and objectives of their sessions to suit the needs of the child or young person.

4.3 School 2

School 2 catered for children with moderate learning difficulties (MLD) and was therefore a contrasting field site to the CMLN site at School 1. The school taught pupils from reception to year 11 (ages 5-16 years). Teaching was broken down into lower-school provision (ages 5-11 years, Key Stages 1 and 2) and upper-school provision (ages 11-16 years, Key Stages 3 and 4). Students were taught in year groups which were organised by age and ability (as is the case in many mainstream settings). Fieldwork at this school took place during the spring term of the 2015/2016 academic year. At this time, there were 124 students and 73 staff on roll. Of these 73 staff members, 21 were teaching staff (of which 5 were members of senior leadership) and 39 were teaching assistants. All teaching occurred on a single site.

4.3.1 Curriculum

The curriculum at School 2 was much more closely linked to the National Curriculum than that of the CMLN site at School 1. Overall, the curriculum was broadly organised into a primary and secondary curriculum reflecting the different ages and learning needs of pupils in both the lower- and upper-school.

For the lower-school, learning was split into subject areas. A unique medium-term curriculum plan was prepared for each class for each half-term of the school year. Each curriculum plan contained a separate section for each subject area, within which specific learning aims and objectives for the half-term were written. Occasionally, particularly in the lower year groups, aims and objectives were repeated across subject

areas for several half-terms. Objectives were a mixture between academic and functional skills and included subject-specific aims such as 'can kick a large ball' (Key Stage 1, year 3, Physical Development); 'recognise and name 2D shapes' (Key Stage 2, year 5, Maths); and 'create and debug simple programs' (Key Stage 2, year 6, Computing). Sometimes subject-areas were linked by a particular topic or theme. For example, during the spring term of 2015/2016 (the time of my observations), three subjects within the year 5 curriculum were loosely linked by the overall topic area of 'Space'. Curriculum content in English, Art and Design, and History was linked around this theme. However, specific aims and learning objectives for each of the three subject areas remained generalised, e.g. 'apply phonic knowledge and skills as the route to decode words' (English); 'communicate ideas through use of colour, form, line and tone' (Art and Design); and 'begin to recognise some distinctions between the past and present and communicate these' (History).

The upper-school curriculum had a specific curriculum document for each subject. For most subjects, the curriculum was broken down into Key Stages (i.e. Key Stages 3 and 4) and year groups (i.e. years 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11). Long-term curriculum maps were then established for each subject. These were usually broken down into subject-specific units or topics which were mapped across the school year. Some subjects organised their curriculum topics/units by term, some by half term and, for Maths and Computing, topic areas were arranged in units which specified the number of weeks that a particular topic would be taught for. For Key Stage 4 (years 10 and 11), curriculum maps also specified whether students would be working towards a qualification in the subject.

4.3.2 Music Education

Music was taught as a stand-alone subject for Key Stage 3 students at School 2 (ages 11-14 years) and was loosely woven into some topic areas and curriculum maps for primary school students (ages 5-11 years). Most formalised music teaching took place in a designated music room which was located in an outbuilding the school had purposely built to house the music and art classrooms. However, music would also be used as a 'vehicle for learning' during regular classroom teaching which was led by the

pupils' class teachers.[4] This was particularly true of the lower-school where music was not included as a uniquely taught subject in curriculum plans.

The school employed several external music education specialists to deliver the majority of the music education on offer at the school. These included the Visiting Key Stage 3 (KS3) Music Teacher (who was employed via the local Music Hub), a Singing Teacher and three peripatetic instrumental teachers, one who taught lower-string instruments (cello and double bass), one who taught keyboards, and another who taught guitar (all three of which were employed via the local Music Hub).

The Visiting KS3 Music Teacher taught music on Wednesday mornings to all pupils in years 7, 8 and 9. Classes were organised by year group and ability. There were two year 9 classes, one year 8 class, and one year 7 class. The year 7 and year 8 classes were quite large (17 students for year 7, and 16 students for year 8). As such, students would often be split into two groups which were arranged by ability and learning need. This was primarily carried out to minimise the level of differentiation needed in a single class, ensuring that music lessons were adequately paced for all students. Half of the class would remain in the music room for their lesson with the Visiting KS3 Music Teacher and the other half would go next door to the art room where their lesson would be led by the Class 4 Teacher and a TA with a high level of musical skill (Lance). The Visiting KS3 Music Teacher was always assisted by the Class 4 Teacher and several TAs, one of which was always Lance. Lance and the Class 4 Teacher were chosen to assist with music teaching as they were both musically skilled themselves. Both staff members played an instrument to a high standard, although their level of confidence in teaching music differed (the effects of this are discussed further in Chapter 6).

The Singing Teacher was a well-known and well-loved music teacher who had been working in the local area as a music teacher and choir leader for thirty-four years. Previously, the Singing Teacher had been employed by the local music service as a peripatetic music teacher. She had begun to work towards retirement a few years prior to the start of this research but was still employed through choice as a freelance peripatetic teacher at School 2. In this setting she led two choirs: a lower school and upper school choir. Choir sessions took place on a Thursday morning in the music

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[4] Both the School 2 Head Teacher and the School 1 Site-Leader referred to music as a 'vehicle for learning' in their interviews. The implications of this description are discussed in later chapters.

room. The Singing Teacher would lead these sessions assisted by 2 TAs (one of which was Lance) who were musically skilled. One student also had a 1-to-1 support worker who was also musically skilled (she ran a local inclusive theatre group). The singing teacher also led 1-to-1 singing lessons with three Key Stage 4 students: Sarah, Daniel and Jamie (Daniel and Jamie were taught together). These three students demonstrated a high level of musical skill and so the Singing Teacher had endeavoured to provide them with additional support to nurture and develop their singing and performance skills.

During my fieldwork I had no contact with the peripatetic instrumental teachers at School 2. It was not clear exactly why this was. When I first began observations at the school I was unaware that peripatetic teachers were coming into the school. The initial observation timetable agreed with senior leadership only included the Singing Teacher's and Visiting Music Teacher's lessons. Through a process of theoretical sampling (a definition of which is provided in Chapter 3 section 3.8.5), I also eventually began to observe a musical circle-time session held on a Wednesday afternoon in the school's youngest class (which was led by their class teacher). It was only at the end of term through participant interviews that I learned of the instrumental teachers' involvement in the school's music provision and, as such, it was too late for me to formally include them in the research. What was evident from practitioner interviews was that peripatetic instrumental teaching was brought into the school to help provide appropriate musical opportunities for students who displayed particular musical aptitude and who expressed an interest in learning to play a specific instrument. The KS3 Leader explained:

> We can't ignore the gifted and talented ones, that's the thing with, with, with the cello and the keyboard because those two children have got a real aptitude for those instruments we couldn't then say "well, no, we'll just leave it" you know? We had to say "oh well we'll really support that" you know? If the kid's willing to do the lesson each week etc. etc. and he's progressing, then we'll support that and we'll pay for that.

> (School 2, Practitioner Interview, KS3 Leader)

In this way, peripatetic instrumental teaching was tailored to the needs of specific pupils, rather than being offered as standard to all students in the school.

The school also offered a wide variety of performance opportunities for students. At the end of the autumn term, all students would be involved in a whole-school Christmas production. These annual productions were a huge source of pride for the school and all students and staff were encouraged to take part. The two school choirs also took part in many external events, performing for local organisations, care homes and, once a year, taking part in a local music festival. One of the upper school class teachers also led a band with some of the secondary school students. This group regularly performed in assemblies to showcase the new songs they had learnt. Finally, the school bought in additional services such as Live Music Now[5] to help bring high-quality live music listening and performance opportunities into the school.

At the time of this fieldwork, School 2 was beginning to establish a music curriculum for Key Stage 3 students. As such, only a draft curriculum plan was in place for music education in the upper-school at the time of this research. This is interesting, given the fact that established medium- and long-term curriculum plans were in place for all other upper-school subjects at the school. Four staff at the school were given responsibility for devising the music curriculum. These were specifically the KS3 Leader, the Visiting KS3 Music Teacher, the Class 4 Teacher and Lance. The KS3 Leader, Class 4 Teacher and Lance were all staff members who had been identified by senior leadership as having sufficient musical knowledge, experience and skills to devise a suitable music curriculum for students in Key Stage 3. The Visiting KS3 Music Teacher was also involved in a consultancy capacity and the group were working in partnership to develop the curriculum, with regular curriculum planning meetings being held at the end of each term. The draft curriculum map for the 2015/2016 school year is shown in Table 4.3. Like the other Key Stage 3 curriculum plans at the school, the plan was long-term and was organised into teaching topics by year group and half-term.

At the time of writing this thesis, the curriculum map was still not formally available on the curriculum page of the school's website. Instead, the public-facing curriculum document for music included a paragraph of writing which outlined the school's overall philosophy for music education and listed some of the activities on

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[5] Live Music Now is a UK-wide charity which brings professional musicians into a variety of settings including hospitals, care homes and special schools to lead interactive live music concerts and workshops.

offer to students (e.g. that specialist music teaching was provided by external music specialists and that various performance opportunities were available to students throughout the year). It is unclear why the curriculum map had not yet made it to the school's website as a formal curriculum document (a curriculum document for all other National Curriculum subjects was available of the school's website). This discrepancy warrants additional theoretical sampling.

Table 4.3: School 2 Draft Key Stage 3 Music Curriculum

Year Group	Term					
	Autumn 1	**Autumn 2**	**Spring 1**	**Spring 2**	**Summer 1**	**Summer 2**
Year 7	Rhythmic Drumming		Keyboards	Film Music	Tuned Percussion	Make your own percussion
Year 8	Keyboards		Guitars	Ukuleles	World Music	
Year 9	←————————		Band-Based Projects (Music Technology)		————————→	

At the time of fieldwork, music was not listed as a discreet subject in any of the lower-school curriculum plans. Instead, specific musical learning objectives were occasionally included in other subject areas. For example, in the Year 3 medium-term plan for the second half of the autumn term, 'has some favourite stories, rhymes, songs, poems or jingles' was listed as a specific learning objective for literacy. Furthermore, in the medium-term curriculum plan devised for summer 2015, the Year 5 class were studying the topic of 'Sound' in their science classes. Learning objectives for this term therefore included 'use instruments to create sound'; 'identify how sounds are made associating them with something vibrating'; 'find patterns between the volume of a sound and the strength of the vibrations that produced it'; and 'design and make musical instruments'. Other subject areas that incorporated musical learning objectives

included: Expressive Arts and Design (for the Year 3 class); Understanding the World: Technology (for the Year 3 class); Communication and Language (for the Year 3 class); and Project-Work (for the Year 6 class, which involved them taking part in the school nativity show). As can be seen from the above list, one class consistently had more musical learning objectives as part of their medium-term curriculum plans than other classes. This suggests that frequency of music learning for lower-school students may have been partially dependent on the confidence and expertise of individual classroom teachers when it came to including specific music learning objectives in the broader curriculum (this finding is discussed further in Chapter 6).

4.3.3 Music Therapy

School 2 did not include music therapy provision as part of its curriculum offer at the time of this study.

4.4 School 3

School 3 catered for students aged 2-19 years with physical disabilities (PD), medical needs and complex learning needs. Fieldwork at this school took place during the summer term of the 2015/2016 academic year. At the time of the fieldwork there were 95 students on roll at the school.[6] The school employed 54 teaching staff. Of these, 4 were members of senior leadership, 10 were class teachers and 40 were TAs. Teaching was split across two sites – the main school site and an additional learning resource site for students with complex needs. Observations for this study only took place at the main school site. Teaching at this site was broadly organised by Key Stage with some Key Stages being split into two classes which were organised by ability.

4.4.1 Curriculum

Like School 2, most subjects taught at School 3 followed the National Curriculum, with teaching and assessment being adapted and differentiated to meet the students' needs. The school was organised into EYFS, primary and secondary units. Teaching at the

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[6] This figure does not include pupils who attended an additional resource unit. This unit was adjacent to the school and catered for secondary school students (ages 11-19 years) with complex learning needs.

primary and secondary stages of the curriculum were subject-specific, however teaching in the EYFS was more play-based, sensory and experiential, following the seven areas of learning and development set forth in the Statutory Framework for the EYFS: Personal, Social and Emotional Development; Physical Development; Communication and Language; Literacy; Mathematics; Understanding the World; and Expressive Arts and Design (Department for Education, 2012b). The school's public-facing curriculum information was not as detailed as that of the other schools. A separate webpage provided details for each subject. Generally, each webpage provided a written overview of the aims and approaches to teaching in each subject area and listed the various qualifications students could be entered into. Occasionally, long-term plans were included with these subject summaries which provided a more specific overview of the curriculum structure for certain subjects.

At primary and secondary level, most teaching and learning was centred around topics, with students focusing on a different topic in each subject each term or half-term. Some subjects were connected by cross-curricular aims. For example, topics and activities in Art and Design, and Design and Technology were often linked to students' projects in Science or the Humanities (specifically, History, Geography and RE). Music was also linked to other subjects by cross-curricular means. It was used in primary English to teach phonics (using the Jolly Phonics scheme of work), Modern Foreign Languages, and Science (specifically, when students were studying the topic of 'Sound'). For secondary students, the curriculum was often linked to specific qualifications. Entry level qualifications were available in a range of subjects (including Art and Design, Computing, English, Humanities, Maths, Science and Media). Higher level qualifications such as GCSEs were also available for students for whom these examinations were appropriate. In the Sixth Form, students were able to continue to work towards GCSE qualifications, where appropriate, and were also able to study for a wide range of vocational qualifications such as the City and Guilds Entry Level Award and Certificate in Skills for Working Life (City & Guilds, 2017), the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) Certificate of Personal Effectiveness ([CoPE] ASDAN, n.d.), and the Assessment and Qualifications Alliance (AQA) Enterprise, Employability and Preparation for Working Life (AQA, n.d.).

School 3 was the only school to offer students the opportunity to study towards an entry level qualification in music. Two accreditation options were available to students. The first was a Welsh Joint Education Committee (WJEC) entry level qualification in Creative, Media and Performance Arts (WJEC, n.d.). This qualification allows students to develop skills and knowledge in a range of subject-areas including: Art and Design, Drama, Media Studies, Design and Technology, and Music. Students can study towards one of three accreditations – an Award, a Certificate, or a Diploma – by submitting evidence from one or more of the subject areas listed above. As such, students could combine the study of Music with Drama and Media Studies (or any other combination of listed subjects) if they wished in order to build up the necessary credits with which to achieve an award. Students working below entry level 2 of the WJEC qualification were provided with the opportunity to study towards an Arts Award (Trinity College London & Arts Council England, 2017). Managed by Trinity College London and in association with ACE, the Arts Award offers students an opportunity to develop creative and communication skills that are integral to working in the arts sector. There are 5 stages to the award: Discover, Explore, Bronze, Silver, and Gold. Students can start at any level and accreditation is offered via the assessment of a portfolio of work that is established over a set number of hours of study. General attitudes to assessment in SEN/D music education and the way in which these intersect with ideas of 'best practice' are discussed further in Chapters 5 and 6.

4.4.2 Music Education

At the time of fieldwork, the school was in the process of developing a specific music policy and curriculum. Like School 2, this process was a collaborative effort between several members of staff who held responsibility for music teaching. These included the Key Stage 3 (KS3) Music Teacher (who was also the school's Music Coordinator), the Primary/Key Stage 5 (KS5) Music Teacher, and an additional staff member with a considerable amount of musical knowledge and skills from the additional resource unit (Mac). These three staff members had pooled their knowledge and skills in an effort to establish a comprehensive music curriculum offer for the school. The resulting curriculum document was ratified by members of the senior leadership team in 2017 and is now included with the school's online, public-facing policy documents. The long-term curriculum plan associated with this document is shown in Table 4.4. Like

School 2, the plan was long-term and was organised into teaching topics by year group and half-term. Interestingly, the only other stand-alone subject to have its own publically available policy document at the time of writing this thesis was Maths. This demonstrates the importance of music education for this school.

Table 4.4: School 3 Music Curriculum (Key Stages 2-5)

	Autumn 1	**Autumn 2**	**Spring 1**	**Spring 2**	**Summer 1**	**Summer 2**
Key Stage 2						
	Stomp	Festivals (Chinese)	Blues	Orchestra	Soundscapes	World Music (Middle East)
Key Stage 3 – 5						
Year 1	Reggae	Festivals (Indian)	Jazz	Rap	Graphic Scores	World Music (African Drumming)
Year 2	Pop (Song Writing)	Festivals (South American)	Musical Theatre	Dance Music	Film Music	World Music (Gamelan)

In addition to establishing a long-term plan for Key Stages 2-5, the curriculum document noted that schemes of work devised within this long-term plan should develop students' musical skills in four primary areas: Interaction; instrumental skills; singing; and knowledge and understanding. Furthermore, to ensure that teaching and learning were sufficiently differentiated to meet the diverse needs and learning pathways of all students at the school, the document outlined three phases of musical development (shown in Table 4.5) as well as individual learning and assessment pathways for each area of skill development (shown in Table 4.6).

As can be seen from the information presented in Tables 4.5 and 4.6, the curriculum document created during the 2015/2016 academic year went much further than just establishing a series of curriculum topics in music education to be taught throughout each school year. The document established a rationale for including music teaching and learning within the curriculum. Furthermore, it outlined a bespoke assessment framework to be used to assess students' progress. The document also included an overview of why music was important to the curriculum at School 3. These justifications included the fact that music was deemed to be a key contributor to students' personal, social and emotional development; a useful way of participating in the creative and cultural life of the wider community; a means of developing a sense of self and a unique personal identity; an approach to communication; and an important opportunity to perform in public and therefore develop a sense of confidence and self-esteem (School 3, Documents, Music Curriculum Policy). Opportunities to develop independence, creativity, teamwork and critical thinking were also listed as potential non-musical outcomes for music education. The benefits of establishing such a detailed curriculum plan for music are discussed in more detail in Chapter 6.

No matter the day of the week or time of day, music was happening somewhere in School 3. Music was taught as a discreet subject to all Key Stage 2 students (ages 7-11 years) and all Key Stage 3 students (ages 11-14 years). Key Stage 5 students (ages 16-19 years) had the option of choosing to study music as one of their post-16 subjects. Music was also an important component of the EYFS and Key Stage 1 curriculum. In these early curriculum stages music was not taught as a discreet subject. The school's curriculum overview explained:

> In Primary 1 music is used to enhance and support the teaching and learning in all
> curriculum areas : songs, rhymes and auditory discrimination games in Literacy/
> Phase 1 Phonics; songs and use of percussion instruments in Numeracy; listening
> to music styles and genres from around the world in History and Geography etc.
> Music is not taught in discrete lessons but enhances the entire curriculum as part
> of a topic based sensory curriculum, allowing music and sound to be utilised in
> creative and innovative ways to engage pupils in all aspects of learning.

> (School 3, Documents, Curriculum Overview)

This approach to music teaching and learning was consistent with the school's overall approach to teaching and learning in the early years.

Table 4.5: School 3 Planning and Differentiation Through 3 Phases of Musical Development (adapted from School 3, Documents, Music Curriculum Policy)

Phase of Development	Aimed at	Focused on
Phase 1	Students with greatest academic barriers to learning or younger students who are developing basic skills in music	Copying patterns, developing anticipation and core music skills such as instrumental control (e.g. controlling how sounds are made and changed)
Phase 2	Students who have progressed beyond Phase 1 and those students already beyond Phase 1 on entry	Performing with a stronger sense of rhythm, flow, emphasis and, where appropriate, awareness of music and other sounds
Phase 3	Students who are able to explore music, style and instruments in greater depth	Recognising and making creative use of the way sounds can be changed, organised, controlled and layered. Singing and playing with increasing technical control, accuracy of pitch, expression and awareness of breathing, diction, dynamics and phrasing as well as communicating effectively with each other and their audience to achieve an overall effect

Table 4.6: School 3 Objectives Ensuring Progression and Assessment (adapted from School 3, Documents, Music Curriculum Policy)

Musical Skill	Progression Route
Interaction Skills	Awareness; Preference; Follows; Recognises; Maintains; Responds; Anticipates; Adjusts; Suggests; Directs
Instrumental Skills	Unintentional; Intentional; Follows; Controls; Organises; Combines; Applies; Expresses
Singing	Unintentional; Intentional; Response; Control; Accuracy; Maintain; Style
Knowledge and Understanding	Encounters; Responds; Recognises; Engages; Distinguishes; Describes; Analyses; Explores; Applies; Combines; Improves; Achieves Intent

At the time of fieldwork, the only students in the school not receiving formal music lessons each week were the students in Key Stage 4 (ages 14-16 years). It was not exactly clear why this was. The Primary/KS5 Music Teacher explained:

> I don't know how it's come round to that decision. I don't know whether they [referring to senior management] have just looked at who's available and trying to fit it into that but I think that's good because you've got the basis of like the primary and then Key Stage 3 and then a gap for years 10-11 which is Key Stage 4, so where maybe they want to concentrate on more academic subjects. And then when they get into post-16 where there's less pressure on them to perform academically, it's more vocational so if you look at the post-16 curriculum, it is things like glass-painting and floristry, so that's where they've brought music back in.
>
> (School 3, Practitioner Interview, Primary/KS5 Music Teacher)

Allowing students a break in Key Stage 4 to "concentrate on more academic subjects" is indicative of the way in which music is perceived as a subject in the current educational climate in England and the effect this has on the way in which schools

incorporate music into their overall curriculum offer (an overview of the current climate of music education in England is provided in Chapter 2).

A Visiting Music Leader also contributed to the school's overall music curriculum. The Visiting Music Leader was employed to lead what was referred to as 'musical engagement' sessions on a 1-to-1 basis with pupils who were in receipt of Pupil Premium funding. She had previously been employed by the local music service as a peripatetic instrumental teacher and special educational needs specialist. However, when the local authority music service switched to an MEH following the introduction of the NPME, staff had the choice of accepting voluntary redundancy or reapplying for their job. The Visiting Music Leader chose to take voluntary redundancy and had since continued to teach music as a peripatetic instrumental teacher and special educational needs specialist on a freelance basis. She was still linked to the Music Hub as an accredited teacher, which meant that she still had access to safeguarding training, CPD courses, and support with paying for DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) checks. However, her employment status was self-employed.

The Visiting Music Leader's music engagement sessions used music technology and, occasionally, un-tuned percussion instruments to focus students' attention and encourage them to learn basic musical knowledge and skills. Sessions lasted for half an hour and were developed around the child or young person's interests and abilities. The music technology used was a suite of animated musical games and activities which were all accessed via the Visiting Music Leader's laptop. Games included a 'guess the musical instrument game' in which students could listen to various musical instruments by clicking on their animated picture and listening to the sound. Students could then play a game where an instrument played behind a curtain and they had to guess which instrument it was by clicking on the correct icon at the bottom of the screen. There was also a composition programme called 'Super Duper Music Looper' which was similar to Garage Band but with more simplistic functions. This programme allowed students to compose a piece of music by looping different tracks. They were also able to experiment with changing the tempo and dynamics of various sections of their composition. As such, some games were exploratory and others were more creative. Students would access music engagement sessions for six weeks on a rotation, the idea being that the Visiting Music Leader would be able to work with as many students as possible throughout the school year.

School 3 also offered a variety of extra-curricular musical activities for students to take part in. For example, the Visiting Music Leader led a recorder class on a Friday lunchtime with students who showed an interested in learning to play this particular instrument. A TA who was musically skilled (Donna) also led a guitar club on Thursday and Friday lunchtimes and a singing group on a Friday afternoon break-time. Donna was passionate about music and, like Lance in School 2, was valued by the music teaching staff for the skilled assistance she could bring to music lessons. She had volunteered to run the guitar club after its previous leader had left the school and the singing group had developed at the request of the students. In addition to the in-house extra-curricular activities led by Donna, the school employed two Music Leaders from the local MEH to lead an after-school music club for a 6-week period in the summer term. This club took place on a Wednesday afternoon and was held in the school's main assembly hall.

The school also took part in a variety of external musical events. For example, a handful of students and staff had recently taken part in a local festival where they came together with other local schools and organisations to form a super-choir of over 1000 voices. Rehearsals for this event took place in school on a Wednesday lunchtime and were led by the school's English teacher who was also passionate about music. During the period of fieldwork, students from one of the Key Stage 5 music classes had also performed a Samba piece they had learnt during their music lessons at a local charitable awards ceremony. This had spurred the school to create a permanent Samba band. Students at School 3 also had regular opportunities to perform in special-occasion assemblies (held within the school) if they chose to do so.

4.4.3 Music Therapy

School 3 also employed a Music Therapist. The Music Therapist had trained with Nordoff Robbins and had been employed by the school at the start of the 2015/2016 academic year. The Head Teacher explained that Music Therapy had been brought into the school to help reach their "hardest to reach" students (School 3, Interview, Head Teacher). The Head Teacher strongly felt that no learning could occur without engagement and Music Therapy was a means of facilitating that engagement, helping children to build their confidence, develop social skills and generally assist them to "get into learning" (School 3, Practitioner Interview, Head Teacher).

The Music Therapist worked at the school for two days a week. One day was spent working with students in the additional resource unit and the other was spent working with students from the main school. She led both 1-to-1 and group therapy sessions, the type of session being developed in line with students' needs and interests, as well as the corresponding aims and objectives the school had for their wider learning and participation. I only observed sessions led with pupils in the main school.

Each therapy session lasted for about 30 minutes. During the period of fieldwork the therapist experienced a room-change for her sessions. The first session I observed was held in the school's sensory room. This was a reasonably sized room with white walls and some sensory lighting equipment which was disabled during therapy sessions. All sessions after this were held in what was known as 'the outdoor classroom'. This was a summer house located at the end of the school playground, next to the school playing field. Regardless of the room that the therapy sessions were held in, the set-up was usually the same. A keyboard (placed on a keyboard stand) was usually arranged at one end of the room. A table was also placed in the middle of the room. This was covered with a patterned blanket upon which the therapist arranged a variety of hand-held percussion instruments (which included hand-bells, hand-chimes, a triangle, a woodblock, a cabasa and a variety of different beaters) and a penny whistle. Some large floor drums, a cymbal, a snare drum and a djembe were then usually placed on the floor around the room. The idea here was that students would be able to freely engage with the instruments as they wished. The therapist would usually accompany students' playing by improvising on either the keyboard, a guitar or a ukulele. Students were free to play these instruments too if they wanted to.

The structure of music therapy sessions depended on the needs and preferences of the students. As mentioned above, the therapist led both 1-to-1 and group sessions. 1-to-1 sessions involved lots of free-play and improvisation and the student was usually free to choose instruments as and when they wanted. The therapist would then choose an instrument upon which to accompany the student, joining and supporting them in their music making. The therapist also sang and vocalised often. This was usually to mirror students' vocalisations or to narrate what the child or young person was choosing to do. In contrast, group sessions were more structured than 1-to-1 sessions. The therapist usually chose two or three activities for students to engage in as a group. These were, again, tailored to students' needs and preferences. For example, for one

group of post-16 students, the therapist structured activities around the students' favourite songs. There were lots of turn-taking activities in group sessions. Each child was given an opportunity to play while others listened. Group therapy sessions had no more than 4 students in each session.

Unfortunately, I was unable to interview the Music Therapist at School 3. Therefore, it was not clear how she devised her aims and objectives for each session or why it was that she chose to lead sessions in this way. This was unfortunate as it meant that it was difficult to compare therapy sessions at School 3 with those of School 1 Site 1. As such, the fourth aim of this research (i.e. to establish where music therapy 'fits' in a school's curriculum) has not been answered as part of this research project (although some preliminary findings are discussed in Chapter 7).

4.5   Summary

This chapter has provided an overview of the varied approaches to music teaching and learning, assessment, curriculum development and, where applicable, music therapy in each of the three schools visited as part of this study. Whilst each school valued the inclusion of music within its curriculum, the approaches to curriculum development and overall teaching and learning varied considerably for each site. This initial descriptive information forms the foundation upon which the theoretical findings in the following two chapters are considered. What follows is a more in-depth analysis of the way in which 'best practice' in SEN/D music education was perceived, discussed, described and enacted by various stakeholders in each setting. The following chapters present a grounded theory of the way in which stakeholders in three English special schools conceptualise 'best practice' in SEN/D music education. The findings are rooted in the considerable evidence gathered as part of this study (a summary of which is provided in Chapter 3). Chapter 5 explores how participants described and enacted 'best practice'. Chapter 6 then outlines what affects 'best practice'.

Chapter 5 What is 'Best Practice'?

5.1   Introduction

The following two chapters explore how a variety of special school stakeholders conceptualise 'best practice' in SEN/D music education. The findings presented address the second and third research aims of this project: To explore what constitutes 'best practice' in SEN/D music education; and to explore the various opportunities and barriers schools for children labelled as having SEN/D face with regards to the implementation of 'best practice'. The findings are rooted in a thorough grounded theory analysis of all data gathered as part of this research as per the methods outlined in Chapter 3.

The stakeholders involved in this research had a great deal to say about what they considered to be 'best practice' in SEN/D music education, although many felt the question 'what constitutes 'best practice'?' was a complicated one. Additional data gathered from documents and observations add further depth to these ideas, allowing a cohesive exploration of how 'best practice' was perceived and enacted in each of the three participating SEN/D schools. The overall theory of 'best practice' constructed from the research findings is therefore nuanced and intersectional. Many of the themes overlap and interconnect to form a complex overview of how people perceive 'best practice' and the various barriers and opportunities that exist when it comes to achieving it. The results are presented in two sections. This first chapter presents the seven aspects of 'best practice' that participants felt were most important. Chapter 6 then explores what affects 'best practice'.

'Best practice' is continually placed in inverted commas throughout these chapters. This is because, as will be seen from both the findings presented in this chapter and the discussion which follows in subsequent chapters, 'best practice' is not something that can be arbitrarily reduced to a list of what is good and what is bad. A variety of socio-political-edu cultural beliefs affect the way in which people describe and enact 'best practice' (the term socio-political-edu-cultural beliefs will be explained and expanded upon in the following chapters). Chapter 7 will then examine the theory of 'best practice' presented in these findings through a more critical lens, calling into

question whether what we currently perceive to be 'best practice' in theory is, in fact, 'best practice' in practice.

5.2   What is 'Best Practice'?

Analysis of the data demonstrated that there were seven fundamentals of teaching practice that were integral to all stakeholders' views about 'best practice': adapting provision to suit pupils' needs; adapting provision to suit pupils' preferences; knowing the students; offering musical opportunities; making it accessible; making it participatory; and having fun. Each of these themes are discussed in turn below.

5.2.1   Adapting Provision to Suit Pupils' Needs

The most prominent aspect of 'best practice' described by stakeholders was the belief that teaching needed to be individually tailored to meet students' needs. This was true at both classroom and school level as demonstrated by the following quotes from school policy documents and Ofsted reports:

> We recognise that some groups of learners have learning needs that require us to provide specialised curricula, assessment and teaching.
>
> (School 1, Site 1, Documents)
>
> When planning, teachers set suitable learning challenges and respond to children's diverse learning needs. The children have barriers to learning and they have individual requirements specific to their special need. Teachers take account of these requirements and make provision to support individuals or groups of children and thus enable them to participate effectively in curriculum and assessment activities.
>
> (School 2, Documents)
>
> Teachers plan their lessons exceptionally thoroughly and individually, dependent upon the skills, abilities and aptitude of each pupil.
>
> (School 3, Documents)

Students' needs were primarily assessed in relation to what practitioners felt each student needed to be happy, healthy and safe, as well as what would help them to prepare for a future in which they could live with as much independence as possible.

Students' needs were therefore much more frequently associated with non-musical goals and learning outcomes than musical ones, with each school differing in the amount of emphasis they placed on the importance of students developing musical skills and abilities. For School 1 Site 1, for example, music was not taught as a stand-alone subject. Instead, music was used as a 'vehicle' to enable students to develop functional skills such as physical, social or communication skills. It was therefore very rare that a student would have a musical goal listed on their PLP. For Schools 2 and 3, however, more emphasis was placed on striking a balance between developing both musical and non-musical skills. Therefore, students' needs in both of these areas were assessed by teaching staff in relation to their Individual Education Plans (IEPs) and Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs).

One key element of adapting provision to suit pupils' needs was the need to ensure that lessons were pitched at the right level for pupils. 'Pitching it at the right level'[1] specifically refers to ensuring that planned learning activities were suitably challenging yet not too difficult for students to participate in. This was not always straightforward. As each school's approach to teaching and learning was highly personalised to individual students' needs, the level of differentiation needed in the classroom was considerable. This is one of the reasons why students in Schools 2 and 3 were often split into two classes for each year group (grouped by ability). Doing so allowed teaching staff to pitch lessons at different levels depending on which class they were teaching. Similarly, School 1 Site 1 not only structured their four classes by age, but also by the general learning stage the students had reached. This meant that the pace of the lessons might be faster or slower depending on the general level of understanding of the students in each class. Lesson objectives would also differ. The Class 4 Teacher at School 1 Site 1 explained:

> It has to be pitched at a level where; I mean, even between Class 3 and Class 4 it's different and so I wouldn't necessarily do loud and quiet with Class 3 because they wouldn't have that understanding of what was going on. I might do it as an activity that was sort-of an experiential activity but I wouldn't expect them to get the concept of loud and quiet. Whereas the intensive interaction with the instruments is more useful for them. Whereas Class 4 can learn how to use

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[1] Throughout the following chapters, subthemes are placed within single quotation marks to denote their direct connection to the data.

instruments and how to make noises with different instruments; and then, again, one of the classes on the main-site would be able to maybe play with rhythms.

(School 1, Site 1, Practitioner Interview, Class 4 Teacher)

In this way, the content of lessons was altered depending on the perceived needs of the students, as assessed by teaching staff.

Sometimes practitioners would pitch lessons at the wrong level. There are a number of themes which intersect with this which are discussed in section 5.2.3 of this chapter and sections 6.2.4 and 6.2.9 of Chapter 6. 'Knowing the students', 'being a visiting practitioner' and 'holding negative attitudes and beliefs about disability' (be these conscious or subconscious), in some instances affected the level at which staff initially pitched a lesson. One example of a combination of these factors was the first session of a six-week-long after-school music club led by two visiting music practitioners at School 3. This after-school club was open to all students at the school. As such, the visiting practitioners were required to devise music activities for a broad age-range (ages 2-19 years). This made it difficult for them to pitch the session at the right level for all of the students in the group. Furthermore, because the two workshop leaders were visiting practitioners, it was unclear how much knowledge they had about the students in the group before the first session. Below is a descriptive overview of the content of this session:

Vignette 5.1: School 3 After-School Music Club (13.04.2016)

The students are seated in a semicircle on chairs in the dining hall/gymnasium. There are also several students who are wheel- or power-chair users present who are seated in their own chairs. The students form a large, mixed age and ability group with pupils ranging from the early years class to post-16.

A teacher wheels a trolley of hand-held percussion instruments into the room. The workshop leaders call the group's attention. They introduce themselves and explain that they're going to be running workshops every week on a Wednesday after school – this is the first one. One workshop leader takes the lead (henceforth: primary workshop leader) and the other (henceforth: secondary workshop leader) provides support throughout the session (by bringing the primary workshop leader instruments and helping to demonstrate during the signed/sung activities). The primary workshop

leader explains to the group that they're all going to have lots of fun today but first she needs to learn their names. To do this they're going to sing a song (*Hickety Pickety Bumble Bee* from Reynolds, Valerio, Bolton, Taggart, and Gordon's (1998) 'Let's Play Music'). The primary workshop leader demonstrates what she would like the group to do: Everyone will chant 'hickety pickety bumble bee, can you say your name for me' in a 6/8 rhythm and, in turn, each pupil will respond with their name: 'my name is [name]'. Some of the students are able to do this without issue. However, the activity is difficult for pupils who use voice output communication aids (VOCAs) as they cannot keep to time. These pupils try to take part as best they can. The TAs supporting the group are very good at encouraging VOCA users to have a go. They also ensure that the workshop leaders wait for the pupil to input the sentence into their VOCAs before moving onto the next student.

At the end of this first activity the primary workshop leader talks the group through the second activity (a chant about soup and chopping vegetables). The workshop leader introduces the activity slowly and clearly. Again, pupils with VOCAs find it difficult to participate in this chanting activity. No additional instruments or assistive music technologies are embedded into the activity in order to make it more inclusive for these pupils. Even the actions (tapping the palm of your left hand with your right hand in a chopping motion) are difficult for this particular cohort as many have physical impairments. This does not have any bearing on their intellectual capacity and most would be able to take part with more inclusive provision. The pupils in this cohort mostly just sit and watch the other students taking part. One TA decides to take one of the pupils out of the workshop. It's not clear where. Another TA who is sat near to me helps a pupil to input the whole of the chant into their VOCA. She turns to me and says: "I'm not sure if this is a good idea but it's worth a try."

After this activity, the music workshop leaders announce that they're going to hand out some instruments for the pupils to play. They give each pupil a boom-whacker or a maraca. Boom-whackers are given to the pupils who are able to physically play them (i.e. those who are not wheelchair users). Those who are physically unable to play boom-whackers are given a maraca to play. The primary workshop leader leads the group in a call and response rhythm game (i.e. the primary workshop leader plays a rhythm and the pupils have to play it back to her). Pupils are mostly very good at this although some have lost interest in the workshop and are playing independently (for

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example, Ishrat, an EYFS student, is wandering around the semi-circle trying to gather up all of the boom-whackers for himself). After a few rounds of this rhythm game, the primary workshop leader asks for some volunteers from the group to come up and lead a rhythm for the rest of the group to copy. Several of the older students volunteer to do this. They seem to really enjoy having the opportunity to lead.

Next, the primary workshop leader explains to the group that they're going to sing some nursery rhymes. She begins to sing Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star. Some pupils join in but, again, this singing activity is difficult for pupils who use VOCAs. The primary workshop leader asks the group to put their hands up if they'd like to volunteer another nursery rhyme to sing. No one volunteers so the primary workshop leader suggests that they sing Humpty Dumpty. Whitney, a post-16 student sitting next to me, turns to me and says: "I was going to say something then, but I won't". I ask her what she was going to say and she replies: "Nothing. It's just that some of these songs are a little [pulls a facial expression which indicates frustration]"

Whitney later recounted her feelings about this workshop to me in her interview. When I asked how she felt about the after school music club she expressed that she thought the activities were "babyish":

> W: […] but you understand why they were babyish because we had other students [that were younger] and we had to just, like, cope with it. But I would've liked to have figured like, other songs that were, like, Frozen or something like that – but they were just like for 2 year olds and…
>
> I: [Laughs]
>
> W: …they were! But they were like 5 or 6 [years old] and they've got disabilities and so we had to just go with it.
>
> (School 3, Student Interview, Whitney)

Whitney was understandably frustrated that the visiting music practitioners had pitched the session so low. She was accepting of the difficulties associated with having such a diverse group of students to teach but knew that this rendered the session inappropriate for her.

The ability to be flexible and make changes to planned teaching and learning were important here. The workshop leaders, of course, quickly realised that they had

pitched their sessions at far too low a level for some of the students taking part. However, the level was appropriate for some of the younger students. To address the differing learning needs of these two groups of students, the visiting practitioners, in collaboration with some of the permanent teaching staff at the school, devised an alternative arrangement whereby the students would be split into two groups; a younger group and an older group. The secondary workshop leader would lead sessions with the younger group (which would take place in the EYFS classroom) and the primary workshop leader would lead sessions with the older students in the dining hall/gymnasium. For some of the older students, this basic level of differentiation still remained inappropriate as several of the post-16 students were more musically advanced than their peers. It was therefore decided that these students would be given the opportunity to support the secondary workshop leader in leading her sessions with the younger students. Whitney was one of the students who accepted this offer. When I asked if she preferred helping out with the younger students to taking part in the music workshop as a participant she said:

> W: It were better when [I] were helping but we still did the same songs so it were just, I didn't enjoy it.

> I: You still thought it was a bit babyish?

> W: Yeah. I thought "oh it's gonna sound good, there's gonna be like guitars!" and stuff like that but, I was a bit disappointed really.

> (School 3, Student Interview, Whitney)

It was clear that Whitney wanted to do more than just play percussion instruments, sing nursery rhymes and take part in musical games. She wanted to learn how to play an instrument and gain experience of performing in an ensemble. Even when adapted, the level of participation required from her for the after school club was still too low.

Teachers were clear that, when adapting provision to suit pupils' needs it was important to admit when they had made a mistake in judgement. The School 2 Singing Teacher explained:

> I think I've become quite skilled at realising what will fly and what won't and I don't have any problem in saying "right, I've made a mistake. That's not going to work" and I just pull it and move on to something else. I will not flog a dead horse forever because there's no joy on anybody's part and I think there's nothing to be gained by just simply keeping at it and keeping at it because they'll just switch off,

they won't gain anything from it, and so you lose all the positive aspects that we
spoke about earlier; of their sense of achievement that, you know, their sense of
personal attainment and enjoyment, because if you enjoy doing something you'll
work a lot harder at it, so if you start putting a block to that, you're going to lose
somewhere down the track.

(School 2, Practitioner Interview, Singing Teacher)

Teachers believed that if lessons were not pitched at the right level and suitably adapted
to suit students' needs and abilities then students would lose focus and ultimately cease
engagement with the activity. This can be seen in practice in the description of the
after-school music club at School 3 (see Vignette 5.1). By the time the workshop
leaders had reached their third activity, they had lost the engagement of several of the
students. Suitably adapting provision to suit pupils' needs is therefore deemed
imperative if students are to engage with musical activities and learning is to take place.

5.2.2   Adapting Provision to Suit Pupils' Preferences

In a similar vein to adapting provision to suit pupils' needs, participants also felt that it
was important to adapt provision to suit pupils' preferences. The students at Schools 2
and 3 particularly stressed this point. When asked what makes a good music lesson,
several students responded that finding out what students want to learn was important.
For example, when asked what she thought made a good music lesson, Lousia, a post-
16 student at School 3 explained:

L: Um, find stuff; find a song that all the kids'll be interested in […] 'cause then
you get them more motivated.

(School 3, Student Interview, Louisa)

Getting to know students' musical preferences and ensuring that teaching and learning
were inclusive of these was important to students. This did not mean that all teaching
had to be structured around what music students already liked. The introduction of new
genres, concepts, ideas and information was welcome and necessary to the students'
music education. What was important was that students were made aware of how
planned learning activities were relevant to their own preferences and prior knowledge
of music. Doing so ensured that students remained interested in the activity, therefore

increasing their motivation to engage in lessons. Teaching staff at Schools 2 and 3 were all in support of this theory:

> You can engage young people by going through their interests in music.
>
> (School 3, Practitioner Interview, Head Teacher)
>
> For me, it's got to come from what the young people want because I don't think there's any point in putting kids into a room and saying, "right, you're all gonna' learn the ukulele, you're all going to learn the flute" if they don't want to! It's got to come from them.
>
> (School 3, Practitioner Interview, KS3 Music Teacher)
>
> My opinion? [You've] just really got to encourage that enjoyment of it. Find whatever they enjoy. I mean, there are people who will say "I don't like music, I don't like this" [but] there will be one thing that they do like and that's going to be the base, the base from where they're going to be taught, I feel.
>
> (School 2, Practitioner Interview, TA, Lance)

Adapting provision to suit pupils' preferences was slightly different for students attending School 1 Site 1. This was primarily because the function of music education at the site was to help students to develop non-musical skills rather than musical skills. Having said this, adapting provision to suit pupils' preferences was still mentioned as an important component of 'best practice' by many stakeholders at this site. Comparative to students and staff at Schools 2 and 3, practitioners at School 1 Site 1 felt that music was an excellent motivator. Practitioners therefore used music as a tool to increase students' engagement in a variety of non-musical learning activities:

> [I]t's very motivating for a lot of the students so, if we're doing a choosing activity we might use YouTube [music videos] as part of that […], when we're doing physical activities as well [music] could be very motivating.
>
> (School 1, Site 1, Practitioner Interview, Class 4 Teacher)

For all schools, adapting provision to suit pupils' preferences was therefore strongly linked to increasing students' motivation to engage with learning activities, regardless of whether the desired outcomes of these activities were primarily musical or non-musical.

Allowing students the opportunity to choose how they took part in music learning activities was also an important way of adapting provision to suit pupils' preferences.

This could be something as simple as allowing students to choose which instruments they played or which songs they sung. Sometimes it was also about letting students engage in a musical activity in whatever way they wanted to engage rather than 'forcing' students to participate in a prescribed way. When I asked Jane, a TA at School 1 Site 1, how she went about adapting provision to suit pupils' needs and preferences, she explained:

> It's about knowing the child really well I think and it's letting them take the lead really. I would never force a child to do anything they didn't want to do if they're telling me [no]. Because it's about them enjoying themselves and you're not going to get the best out of anybody [by forcing them]. So I would let them take the lead really. And when we offer instruments if you offered them an instrument and they [gestures pushing away] I think you've got to, well you've got to gently encourage, that's what I'd do. But I would never force; force might be the wrong word but I think, you know what I mean, I would never upset them if they really don't want to [take part].
>
> (School 1, Site 1, Practitioner Interview, TA, Jane)

There were many examples of ways in which practitioners at School 1 Site 1 would "gently encourage" students to take part in musical activities. As was the case with 'adapting provision to suit pupils' needs', having the flexibility to adapt practice in the moment was valuable here as Vignette 5.2 shows:

Vignette 5.2: School 1 Site 1 Class 4 Music Interaction (01.10.2015)

The students are all sat in a circle in the Class 4 classroom. Some are sat on chairs, others are sat in their wheelchairs. Lucas is sitting just outside of the circle, to the far-side of the classroom, in a seated harness which is hanging from the classroom's ceiling hoist/tracking system. He is playing with a touch-tile onto which one of the TAs has recorded herself singing a nursery rhyme.[2] He presses the button to hear the tune. It seems as though he has chosen not to participate with his classmates on this occasion.

The Class 4 Teacher has just finished singing the hello song that usually starts the session. She places a red plastic box full of hand-held percussion instruments in the

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[2] A touch-tile is a small, plastic, battery-operated, hand-held object that allows you to record a short message or tune. To hear the tune you press a large button in the centre of the tile.

middle of the circle. The Class 4 Teacher takes a 'loud' and 'quiet' instrument out of a box (loud: horn; quiet: small hand-held harp). She takes it in turns to sing the next song to each student in the circle. The two TAs supporting the lesson join in: *"Hello (name) won't you play with us? Play with us? Play with us?"* Each student is visited in turn by the Class 4 Teacher and is given the choice of either the loud or quiet instrument to play. Once they have chosen, the Class 4 Teacher and the TAs sing a second refrain: *'[Name] plays on the [noisy horn/quiet harp] and this is the way he/she does it. [Honk, honk, honk/Strum, strum, strum] on the [noisy horn/quiet harp] and that's the way he/she does it!'* As the teacher and TAs sing, the students play. One by one the cycle repeats with the teacher singing hello to each student, allowing them to choose an instrument and then singing to them as they play along. Everyone is enjoying the activity and taking part as instructed. Everyone except Lucas. When the teacher has finished singing to all of the students sitting in the circle, she moves to the other side of the classroom where Lucas is sitting in his harness, playing with his touch tile. The teacher sings: *'Lucas plays on his touch tile and this is the way he does it'*. Lucas does not noticeably interact with the Class 4 Teacher as she sings. Instead, he continues to look at his touch-tile. Pressing the button to hear the tune again each time it stops.

In this example, the Class 4 Teacher was accepting of the way that Lucas felt comfortable engaging (or perhaps not engaging) in the music interaction session on this occasion. She did not force Lucas to come and sit with the rest of the class and engage in the session 'properly'. Instead, she adapted her practice to suit his needs and preferences at that particular moment in time. Lucas was still included in the session but the Class 4 Teacher allowed him to participate on his own terms and there was very little pressure for him to take part if he did not want or choose to. This example is indicative of the way in which staff at School 1 Site 1 would continuously adapt their practice to suit students' needs and preferences.

5.2.3   Knowing the Students

In order for practitioners to be able to adapt provision to suit pupils' needs and preferences, it was imperative that they knew the students well. Jane, one of the TAs at School 1 Site 1, succinctly summarised the need for this when she explained:

It's about knowing the child really and what they like as well, I suppose, to be able to adapt [teaching] to their needs.

(School 1, Site 1, Practitioner Interview, TA, Jane)

Ofsted reports for all schools also enshrined this view:

Staff use accurate and in-depth knowledge of learners' individual needs effectively to ensure that they remain well motivated and engaged.

(School 3, Documents)

[Staff] know the needs of their pupils very well and, as a result, pupils are inspired by, and highly engaged in, their learning.

(School 2, Documents)

In all classes, pupils are able to learn because the staff know them well, and treat them as individuals. They give them space and time when appropriate, and are firm and fair when necessary.

(School 1, Documents)

Students explained that knowing the students was vital not just to ensure that music lessons were relevant to their musical preferences but also to know when they needed time or space away from activities because of physical pain or emotional needs:

[T]hey know when I'm upset 'cause I don't have to tell them; they just know.

(School 3, Student Interview, Whitney)

Permanent staff at all three schools had little trouble getting to know students. They had plenty of time to build relationships with pupils in order to get to know them on a personal level rather than just knowing them 'on paper' from IEPs and EHCPs. For visiting staff, this was more difficult. Visiting practitioners in each setting explained that the amount of information they received from the various settings in which they worked varied immensely. For example, the Visiting Music Leader at School 3 noted:

I'm rarely given any information. I've got a name, usually, of a child and a room to fetch them from. And I usually try and say "is there anything I should know?" But usually they then tell me there may be fits or medical things which is very important and yes, I definitely should know. And occasionally, when the teacher

has time to tell me "oh they really like the cymbal." You know? Some information but more often than not I know nothing and I just – I have stock things that I will start with. And sometimes you start and you think "oh this child is way above this level!" […] So it's not ideal, is it?

(School 3, Practitioner Interview, Visiting Music Leader)

This lack of information meant that every time the Visiting Music Leader started working with a new student, she was required to get to know them, and their individual learning needs, from scratch. This took time and sometimes the Visiting Music Leader had only just started to really get to know what activities would engage a particular student by the end of their six weeks together. She also explained that sometimes it took longer to gauge students' musical abilities directly from the students as it was rare that they would be able to establish a recognisable benchmark for their musical achievements:

VML: And they're not in a position to; you know, it's very different from just teaching the flute or whatever.

I: Yeah you can't…

VML: "I did Grade 3 last year!" Okay, I know where I'm at, you know. We know where we are. It's not, it's very different [in a special school].

(School 3, Practitioner Interview, Visiting Music Leader)

Occasionally, even simple information about a pupil's impairment was not shared with the Visiting Music Leader. Vignette 5.3 provides an example of a 'musical engagement' session with Libby, a Key Stage 4 student at School 3. In this example, the Visiting Music Leader continuously tries to engage Libby using verbal and visual prompts. Libby is hesitant, however, and frequently looks to the Visiting Music Leader for reassurance when making decisions about which musical tiles to bring into her composition. What the Visiting Music Leader (and I) did not know during these sessions was that Libby is D/deaf. In her interview the Music Leader explained:

Trying to communicate with Libby was a big thing […] I suppose I maybe should've talked to [the teachers]. Nobody told me she doesn't [hear].

(School 3, Practitioner Interview, Visiting Music Leader)

This lack of knowledge meant that some of the musical activities chosen by the Visiting Music Leader were inaccessible for Libby, thus limiting her potential to develop musical skills, knowledge and understanding during these sessions.

Vignette 5.3: School 3 'Musical Engagement' Session with Libby (22.04.2016)

The School 3 Visiting Music Leader, Libby, a TA and I enter the media room. The space is a small room with a desk and a few chairs. The Visiting Music Leader has set up her laptop on the desk ready for the session. A bag of hand-held percussion instruments lies open on the floor, next to the desk. As we all take a seat, the Music Leader explains to Libby that they're going to do some composing today. She opens the computer programme that they're going to be using. The programme in question is a game-like activity where pupils can add tiles to a square grid to compose a piece of music (which fits 16 tiles in total in a 4x4 grid). Each tile has an image of a farmyard animal on it and, when clicked on, plays a bar of pre-composed music in a 4/4 time signature. The idea is that pupils can listen to the tiles and click and drag them into the grid to create a composition. They can arrange the tiles in any order they like, and there is no limit to the number of times a particular tile can be used (meaning that the composition could simply be 16 bars of the same motif played on repeat, if desired). The Music Leader verbally explains this interface to Libby, clicking a few of the tiles to demonstrate what they sound like and how to listen to them. Libby watches intently as she does this. The Music Leader then passes the laptop's mouse to Libby who hesitantly clicks on some of the tiles that the Music Leader has not played yet. The Music Leader verbally guides Libby as she explores: "what about the duck? Does it sound good?". Taking the mouse again, the Music Leader then shows Libby how to click, drag and compose using the grid. Libby watches the Music Leader as she does this and, when the mouse is passed back to her, she clicks and drags two tiles into the grid. She doesn't listen to them before adding them to the grid, she simply chooses two tiles and positions them where the Music Leader shows her. The Music Leader provides a spoken commentary on what Libby has been choosing to do and continuously offers verbal and gestural prompts (i.e. by pointing to the relevant tile on the computer screen) on what to do next: "what about the cow? That sounds good". She realises that Libby has been following these prompts and so, when it comes to choosing the third tile, she stops giving Libby this verbal and gestural support, allowing Libby to

choose a tile for herself. Libby doesn't listen to the tiles. Instead she nervously hovers the cursor over them. She looks to the Music Leader for confirmation ("sure, give it a try!") before adding two more tiles to the grid. These four tiles create a four bar phrase. The Music Leader prompts Libby: "shall we listen to it?" As they listen to the music play the Music Leader asks Libby "does it sound like a good tune?" Libby nods her head in agreement. The Music Leader suggests that Libby "try a new animal. Is there one you haven't listened to before?" Libby doesn't respond. She looks to the Music Leader. The Music Leader prompts Libby further and, pointing to a tile that they haven't listened to yet, asks: "have we listened to this tile?" The session continues in this manner. Libby never communicates verbally with the Music Leader and is very hesitant to make any choices about which tiles to choose. She doesn't listen to the composition unless prompted. Before saving the composition at the end of the session, the Music Leader decides to alter the speed of the piece by clicking an icon at the bottom of the screen. When she clicks 'play' the piece plays at double speed. The Music Leader asks Libby if she knows what she did? Libby doesn't respond so, after a little more prompting ("was it faster or slower?"), the Music Leader answers for her. After saving the piece, as a final activity, the Music Leader plays a recording of *In The Hall of The Mountain King*. The recording speeds up and slows down at certain intervals. The Music Leader hands out some of the percussion instruments from the bag on the floor. The Music Leader, the TA and I all try and play in time to the music, adapting our playing as the tempo speeds up and slows down. Libby, however, maintains a steady tempo throughout. She smiles as she watches us all switch from fast to slow and slow to fast. As the piece ends the Music Leader asks Libby if she thinks the music is happy or sad. Libby doesn't respond but nods in agreement when the Music Leader prompts "is it happy?"

The Singing Teacher at School 2 also expressed that, throughout her career, different schools had voluntarily shared information about students to different degrees. It was therefore often difficult for her to get to know students on a personal level. She had developed several strategies to overcome this which she explained in her interview:

> [I]f I can, I like to be visible. I don't want to just see them in here [the music room] in a group. So there are only very few times in a year I can do that but I'm always, always in school very early. I'm here an hour and a half before my first teaching session starts and so, if I get a chance to have a chat with a group or a child or what have you, then I will. I speak to the staff […] and I'll always come in

and say "anything I should know this week?" because, you know, I could have gone out last week and Student A was fantastic, on a high, performing beautifully and I go in the following week and there's been some catastrophic event in the intervening time and it's changed the whole demeanour and the whole thing. So yeah, on a 'need to know' basis. So I try to be present in the school. I think it's one of the big difficulties about being very part time […] you could struggle with the continuity and, you do, you need to know what's going on. To be honest, that applies to any school, in any school. So I've always made it my business to try and interact […] So, for example – it hasn't happened here because, well, I can't think why – but in the other two [schools I worked in] I'd go to sports day and I'd just say "right, give me a job!" Or I'd go to the summer fayre and what have you, so that you can see [the students] in a different environment and they also can see you and they can talk to you about different things, not just, you know, not just the teacher pupil sort-of relationship. So I think that's the way it works really.

(School 2, Practitioner Interview, Singing Teacher)

The Singing Teacher insinuates here that, in order to truly get to know students as a visiting practitioner, it is important to integrate yourself into school culture. She talks about being 'present' and 'visible', attending sports days and school fayres. She mentions that it is important for the students to see her in these different environments so that they understand that she is an integral part of the school. Attending these events and interacting with students outside of the classroom also enables her to cultivate relationships with students that are a little more personable. She talks about the difficulties that working part-time can cause with regards to not knowing what goes on in the school on a day-to-day basis and how this can cause a visiting practitioner to make mistakes when it comes to pitching the lesson at the right level. The School 2 Singing Teacher places the onus of responsibility for knowing what goes on in the school on herself, rather than relying on permanent teaching staff, or indeed pupils, to share this information with her on a regular basis. It is clear from both the Visiting Music Leader and Singing Teacher's experiences that 'working in partnership' with permanent staff at the school is imperative in order for visiting practitioners to come to know pupils sufficiently so that they can enable 'best practice' to occur in their music sessions.

Having suggested that permanent staff members had little trouble getting to know students, some information shared by primary care-givers gave the impression that

teaching staff did not always know students as well as they thought they did. For example, Helen, the primary care-giver of Jackson, a Key Stage 1 student at School 3 explained:

> I go to school and they'll go, "oh he's done such-and-such today!" and I'm like [shrugs] he does that all the time. He's been doing that since he was three.
>
> (School 3, Primary Care-Giver Interview, Helen)

Helen explained that these moments of misunderstanding often occurred because Jackson was a child who compartmentalised his environments:

> [I]t's always been the same – he's got two different Jacksons. Maybe three different Jacksons. And the things that he does at home, he does not do at school. And the things that he does at school, he does not do at home. And the things that he does at Granny's, he doesn't do them here or at school […] He's very, very compartmentalised.
>
> (School 3, Primary Care-Giver Interview, Helen)

Therefore, without communicating with Helen, the School would not reasonably know if Jackson's achievements were new or not. Communicating with primary care-givers was therefore also imperative when getting to know a student.

5.2.4 Offering Musical Opportunities

When discussing 'best practice', staff and primary care-givers mentioned that offering students as many musical opportunities as possible was important. Aside from listening to music at home and developing their own musical preferences, it was rare that students would have an opportunity to take part in music activities outside of school. For those that did attend local music or theatre groups, these were usually discovered via a recommendation from a school staff member or a fellow parent, guardian, carer or student. School was therefore the main hub of music activity for students. Staff understood this and believed that offering students as many musical experiences as possible was a significant component of 'best practice' in SEN/D music education:

> I just want them to have a broad experience of lots and lots of different forms of music and lots of different types.
>
> (School 2, Practitioner Interview, KS3 Leader)

Providing accessible, varied, enjoyable opportunities to participate [in] and enjoy all aspects of music.

(School 3, Practitioner Interview, KS3 Music Teacher/Music Coordinator)

Best practice in music is just them engaged in it and experiencing it, I think is the best example.

(School 3, Practitioner Interview, Primary/KS5 Music Teacher)

The emphasis was on allowing students an opportunity to 'experience' music. Making sure that music activities were participatory was another significant component of 'best practice' in the eyes of practitioners (as will be seen in section 5.2.6). However, most practitioners felt that offering a wide variety of musical experiences was one of the primary aims of SEN/D music education.

The newly devised music curriculum documents for Schools 2 and 3 were significant examples of the ways in which schools had put this belief into practice. Each curriculum document was structured around a wide variety of different themes (for an overview of these themes see Tables 4.3 and 4.4 in the preceding chapter). For School 2, these themes mostly revolved around providing opportunities for students to play different instruments (e.g. keyboards, guitars, and ukuleles). For School 3, themes were primarily aimed at introducing students to different genres of music (in which opportunities to sing and/or play instruments would be incorporated). Students at School 3 enjoyed this approach as it helped them to expand their musical tastes, gain exposure to new music and learn about different ways of creating and performing. For example, when asked what was "the best or most favourite thing" she had learned in music lessons, Moana, a student from School 3 explained:

M: My favourite thing like has to be like, like different genres of music. Like, Latino and Pop and Dance, and stuff like that – Reggae.

(School 3, Student Interview, Moana)

Other students were in agreement. Whitney mentioned that she liked the School 3 KS5 Music Teacher's lessons "because we learn about different genres of music" (School 3, Student Interview, Whitney). Similarly, Louisa explained that she liked learning about different genres of music because she enjoyed knowing "where different types of music come from" (School 3, Student Interview, Louisa). Having a varied music curriculum

was therefore not just essential from the perspective of the teaching staff, it was also valued by the students.

For teaching staff and primary care-givers at School 1, offering a variety of musical opportunities to pupils was important because students were often unable to seek out music experiences for themselves. Heather, the parent of Connor, a Class 4 student at School 1 Site 1, explained:

> [W]ith Connor you feel massive responsibility because everything he experiences he has to come through us, we have to take him places or we have to; he can't say "I want to try that or I want to try that." It's like food, we have to give him as much choice as possible or else we don't know what he likes. And so with music [laughs] I'm going to have to get some rap aren't I? [Laughs]. We have to let him experience as much as he can in life because he deserves that like anybody and he's, he is limited [in what he can do for himself], so it's up to us to open those avenues.

> (School 1, Site 1, Primary Care-Giver Interview, Heather)

Students at School 1 Site 1, were therefore often reliant upon teachers and primary care-givers to expose them to new musical ideas and experiences. The school was an environment in which this could be accommodated.

As will be seen from additional findings presented in Chapter 6, 'staffing considerations' had a direct effect upon the types of musical opportunities that were offered to students. Schools made the most of the musical skills of existing staff members. However, where they felt that provision would be enhanced by additional specialist support, they were open to 'getting someone in' (provided that this decision was supported by the Head Teacher and/or the school's Governors and was also within the remit of the school's budget). All schools employed additional visiting practitioners to enhance their standard curriculum offer for music. These included part-time specialist teaching staff such as the Visiting Key Stage 3 Music Teacher at School 2, the Visiting Music Leader at School 3 and the Music Therapists at School 1 Site 1 and School 3. An array of short-term workshop leaders and performing artists were also employed. For example, all three schools mentioned having hosted concerts and interactive music workshops from Live Music Now. This provision amassed to form a comprehensive curriculum offer which included timetabled music lessons, music therapy sessions, extra-curricular musical activities, and live music performances (see

Vignette 5.4 for an example of a live music performance at School 1 Site 1 and Vignette 5.5 for an example of a music activity at a day-long music workshop led by an external practitioner at School 3).

Vignette 5.4: Live Music Performance at School 1 Site 1 (18.12.2015)

One of the pupil's parents has arranged for a saxophonist to come in and play to the pupils. All of the pupils gather in the cookery classroom. There is excitement as they enter, lots of vocalisations from pupils and excited whispering and chit chat from the staff. The room is quite small to fit all of the pupils in. It is, however, the largest space School 1 Site 1 have to use for these purposes. There is a cooker, a fridge and a sink at the far side of the room, flanked by a kitchen countertop. The saxophonist stands in front on the counter behind a tall music stand. The room is very crowded but the students don't seem to mind. The saxophonist begins to play a variety of Christmas songs along with a backing track which plays through a small portable amplifier. Some of the pieces are not very well practiced but the pupils seem to enjoy the experience. As the saxophonist plays, the teachers and TAs encourage the pupils to join in by singing and dancing. Some teachers invite pupils to dance. Wheelchair users are no exception, and one teacher spins a student back and forth and around in circles as best she can in the cramped space. One pupil reclines on a gurney and the teachers and TAs dance and sing with him as he lies down. Most, if not all of the pupils get a change to dance and join in. At the end of the saxophonist's repertoire the Site Leader asks him if he will go up to each child and play a little bit closer to them on a 1-to-1 basis so that each student can have a more personal experience. The saxophonist doesn't seem to understand this request (or if he does, chooses not to comply for his own reasons). Instead, he steps in front of his music stand and plays just a fraction closer to the students, refraining from 1-to-1 engagement as the Site Leader suggested.

Vignette 5.5: Music Workshop at School 3 (20.05.2016)

Today, the primary and Key Stage 3 classes at School 3 are taking part in a music workshop led by an external practitioner from a local theatre company. The workshop is held in the school assembly hall. This is a large, open space with the usual stacked chairs and benches lining the periphery of the room. As the pupils enter the room, the

visiting practitioner (Ruth) greets them. Her greetings are spoken and signed. The atmosphere in the room is buzzing and chaotic. There is chatter and excitement from pupils and staff alike. Everyone sits on chairs or in their wheelchairs in a circle (which was arranged around a play parachute before the pupils came in. The parachute has since been taken away). When everyone is seated, Ruth calls their attention and greets them as a group. Again, this is spoken and signed. She explains that the pupils are going to be doing some drumming today. She asks the group "who has done drumming before?" Of the 25 pupils in the room, about two thirds put their hands up. Ruth hands out djembe drums to the pupils one by one. She greets each pupil by name as she gives them their own drum to play. The pupils start to play their drums as soon as they receive them. Some of the younger children play together, chatting about their drums and turning their playing into a game ("who can do it fastest?") The noise of the collective playing echoes around the open space. It's very loud. One KS3 student, William, sits at the side of the room with his hands over his ears. After a short while of being in the hall it is clear that the noise is too much for him and a TA takes him out of the room. When each pupil has a drum of their own, Ruth initiates a game as a starter activity. She explains to the pupils that when she says 'go' she wants the pupils to play and when she says 'stop' she wants them to stop. "Go!" she cries. The pupils play. Some lightly tap their drum with their fingertips, others enthusiastically beat it with both hands. When Ruth shouts 'stop!' she energetically jumps in the air with her arms and legs spread wide apart. Some pupils stop playing. Others continue. Ruth encourages those still playing to stop by raising a flattened palm to each of them (a stop sign) and addressing them individually. After a short moment of near-silence when everyone has stopped playing, Ruth shouts "Go!" again. All the pupils start playing. The sound is cacophonous and one pupil puts their hands over their ears. The sequence of go and stop repeats several times. Each time more pupils stop when Ruth shouts "stop!" By the final attempt, the majority of the pupils are stopping when instructed.

One area of 'offering musical opportunities' that was not quite so developed was the schools' approach to offering 1-to-1 or small group peripatetic instrumental lessons. This was not because students and primary care-givers were not interested in having access to this provision. Whitney, for example expressed a wish to learn how to play the keyboard, Louisa was interested in playing the drums and Moana was keen to have

singing lessons. The reason for the lack of peripatetic instrumental teaching was linked to each school's over-arching philosophy (i.e. its fundamental approach to teaching and learning – discussed further in Chapter 6). For example, the Head Teacher at School 1 did not see instrumental teaching as being relevant or appropriate for students at her school. She explained:

> So for me and my students here it's about enjoyment and having that exposure […] and lots and lots of different ways because kids engage and learn in different ways don't they? So teaching them to play an instrument isn't the best way and isn't best practice I don't think, I think it's lots of exposure to lots of different things and to find talent and an interest and enjoyment and appreciation.
>
> (School 1, Practitioner Interview, Head Teacher)

In short, peripatetic instrumental teaching did not fit with the school's over-arching philosophy for teaching and learning. The primary reason for including music activities in the CMLN site's informal curriculum was to help students develop non-musical skills. As such, having individualised lessons on a specific instrument was seen to be of little relevance to students.

Conversely, the KS3 Music Leader at School 3 mentioned that School 3 were keen to offer 1-to-1 instrumental lessons to students. The trouble was that provision of this kind would need to adhere to the school's policies regarding equal opportunities:

> Another thing we have to obviously make sure that happens within school, is that we make sure that all young people, that there's an equality of access to anything that's offered. So it would be very nice to say those young people can do that [i.e. have 1-to-1 instrumental lessons], but we've got to open it to everybody and it's about how do we do that? And how do we manage that? And how do we fund that? I think it's got a place, definitely. With any sort of one-to-one instrument learning or whatever it is, it's definitely got a place but there's a whole issue around equality, around funding, and where do we put it in the timetable.
>
> (School 3, Practitioner Interview, KS3 Music Teacher/Music Coordinator)

In this way, the school had to ensure that the offer of peripatetic instrumental lessons would be available for all students to take part in if they chose to do so. This raised questions around how the school would fund this provision and where in the timetable it would be scheduled. These were issues that the school was actively trying to find

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solutions to. However, ultimately, if sufficient funds or time were unavailable, 1-to-1 instrumental teaching would not be offered.

The final factor affecting the inclusion of 1-to-1 or small group peripatetic instrumental teaching in the schools' curricula was that some staff believed that there was not a demand for it. As can be seen from the interests of students and primary care-givers, in reality this was not the case. However, some members of senior leadership were unaware of this. For example, the Head Teacher at School 3 explained:

> HT: I think if a child or a parent said, "Is there any way we could access our child to some individual music on a particular instrument because they're showing an aptitude or a will and a want," then I'd look at it. I just don't think anybody's ever asked for it and whether or not we should be doing something more proactive – I mean we do the guitars, and we do the samba band, and we do a lot around percussion instruments but whether or not we should – and ukuleles and things like that and what's those great things where you can hit them on the floor?
>
> I: Oh, the boom-whackers.
>
> HT: Boom-whackers, yeah. If anybody really showed that, wished that they'd want to have some individual sessions on something, I'd look at it. But there just hasn't been a demand or there's not been a tradition.
>
> (School 3, Practitioner Interview, Head Teacher)

The Head Teacher makes some pertinent points here; School 3 did offer students many opportunities to learn to play an instrument in a whole class setting. However, the lack of a 'tradition' of peripatetic instrumental teaching in special schools is an interesting one to explore as it was clear that students and primary care-givers were in favour of receiving this provision. Furthermore, classroom observations in all schools suggested that students progressed in their learning much more quickly when they had 1-to-1 support:

> Each pupil needs 1-to-1 attention to improve their playing. When the teacher works closely with an individual pupil they're able to focus and learn. When left to their own devices they quickly become distracted.
>
> (School 2, Observation Notes, Year 8 Music Lesson, 27.01.2016)

Overall, the musical opportunities available to students in all 3 schools were numerous and varied. All children had frequent opportunities to sing and play instruments. Students also had many opportunities to expand their knowledge of musical styles and genres. Live music was frequently brought into each setting and music therapy was available to students in Schools 1 and 3. Staff were passionate about providing students with as many musical opportunities as possible. However, 'considering cost', 'needing time', 'having an over-arching philosophy' and 'having support from the Head' were four factors that prevented schools from diversifying their curriculum further. These themes are discussed in more depth in Chapter 6.

5.2.5   Making it Accessible

Many participants saw music as something which was fundamentally accessible:

> H: [I]t's something he can do. You know, there's a lot of things he can't do. "Does he want to take part in five-a-side football?", Cubs said.[3] "Probably not."
>
> I: [Laughs].
>
> H: You know, music is something – I don't mean he can play tunes but he can -do- things on music – he can strum the ukulele.
>
> (School 3, Primary Care-Giver Interview, Helen)
>
> A lot of people can bang a drum, even if they can't speak
>
> (School 3, Primary Care-Giver Interview, Penny)
>
> I do think it's so accessible
>
> (School 1, Site 1, Practitioner Interview, Class 1 Teacher)

As can be seen from the quotations above, however, the fundamental level of access described was often very basic. 'Strumming a ukulele' and 'banging a drum' may constitute engagement with a musical stimulus but they are not representative of developing musical skill or understanding. Therefore, in order to make music learning activities impactful, practitioners had to think about ways in which they could make these activities accessible. This was particularly pertinent for Schools 2 and 3 as their

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[3] Cubs (or Cub Scouts) is a section of the Scout Association for children and young people aged 8-10½. The Scouting Association provides a range of extra-curricular activities for its members which are aimed at developing confidence and a sense of adventure.

curricula were designed to enable students to develop both musical and non-musical skills. For School 1 Site 1, the emphasis on using music as a 'vehicle' to develop non-musical skills meant that the fundamental accessibility of music described above, had greater importance. The Site Leader explained:

> I think that we use music because it's easy to do; it covers a multitude of things because you can play it and children can listen to it, staff can sing it, it does quite a lot of stuff. (School 1, Site 1, Practitioner Interview, Site Leader)

Music was therefore seen as an 'easy' and effective tool to encourage students to engage in activities that would help them to develop functional skills. However, in order to facilitate students' involvement in these activities, there were other aspects of accessibility that needed to be taken into account. The need to adapt provision to suit pupils' moods and preferences was important, as was allowing students to engage with activities in their own way. Ensuring students were physically comfortable and minimising unnecessary distractions such as additional auditory and visual stimuli were also seen to be helpful. Finally, allowing plenty of time for students to develop new skills through music was imperative. Repetition was key and many practitioners mentioned in their interviews that without repetition students would be unable to anticipate what was required of them which could consequently affect their ability to actively participate in sessions:

> It must be repetitive. Doing a stand-alone session is not going to be useful. It's about building the anticipation so that they know where the session is going, so that they can predict, so that they can contribute.
>
> (School 1, Site 1, Practitioner Interview, Class 4 Teacher)

For Schools 2 and 3, the musical aims and objectives associated with the curriculum meant that there were additional aspects of accessibility that needed to be taken into account. Perhaps the most pertinent of these was ensuring that the instruments used during music lessons were accessible. The student participants at School 3 all recounted difficulties with 'finding an accessible instrument'. Louisa, for example, had been given an opportunity to learn how to play the guitar. However, due to the nature of some of her physical impairments, she found it difficult to adjust her fingers to fit the required position for playing: "my fingers don't really stick to the strings" (School 3, Student Interview, Louisa). Moana also recounted experiencing access difficulties in whole-class music lessons. For example, she recounted an

experience in a lesson where students were tasked with forming a junk band (i.e. using everyday objects as instruments):

> M: I were on the bucket, and my teacher like, put it like, high-up so that it were like dangling in front of me, and when I hit it, it kept swinging.
>
> I: Oh no!
>
> M: Yeah.
>
> I: That's awkward! [Laughs]. Oh dear. Wow. So they were trying to make it more accessible for you but actually, potentially made it a bit worse, because you're gonna' get hit in the face and stuff aren't you? [Laughs].
>
> M: Yeah, it were, it was [laughs].
>
> (School 3, Student Interview, Moana)

Ensuring that the choice of instrument was accessible for all students was therefore crucial.

Sometimes, no matter how hard practitioners tried to adjust their practice to suit pupils' needs, traditional musical instruments remained inaccessible for students. As Vignette 5.6 shows, occasionally the inaccessibility of these instruments meant that students were unable to participate in music lessons in the same way as their classmates. In these instances, incorporating accessible music technology into the session may have been an effective solution. School 3, for example, had recently bought in an external practitioner who specialised in accessible music technology to lead some music workshops with some of their students and to up-skill the staff in this area of practice. This was effective and the staff had learnt a lot from shadowing his work:

> So for me watching him, the best practice was engaging them but making it accessible for them I think as well. Because a lot of these pupils won't be able to pick up guitar and do a chord or they don't have those fine motor skills, same for keyboard – but they can all strum a guitar, they can all make a noise on the drum and the technology as well that he introduced; [he had] a device where he can clip it on a, it clips onto a table, [and you] just hit it and it and it makes noise, for me, that's the best practice. Just making it accessible for them.
>
> (School 3, Practitioner Interview, Primary/KS5 Music Teacher)

The School 3 KS3 Music Teacher/Music Coordinator explained that she would ideally like to invest in additional music technology resources for the school but 'considering cost', 'having confidence' and 'having adequate training' were all factors that could affect how much impact this would have for students' learning.

Vignette 5.6: Three Weeks of Samba Lessons at School 3

KS5 Music Lesson (13.04.2016)

The teacher hands out the percussion instruments to the pupils (one instrument per pupil) giving them the choice of what to play. He then gets each part to practice in turn. The Surdos go first (played by Joseph and Owen – Sheffield United rhythm), then the tamborim (played by Rosie – offbeat rhythm), then the shakers (played by Anthony, Whitney and Penelope – coca cola rhythm) and finally the Agogô (played by Natalie). The teacher then has the class play as an ensemble, cuing the instruments in one after the other (starting with the Surdos and ending with the Agogô). Almost all of the pupils end up playing well together on different parts. They are all focused and are able to follow and maintain their rhythms well. Only Anthony, a student with cerebral palsy, doesn't maintain the correct beat. He's struggling to shake the shaker in time (the instrument isn't the most accessible for him). Later in the lesson, he swaps his shaker for a drum and beater. The beater isn't quite right and he switches it from a padded one to one with a plastic head. Still it's not quite right and, despite being supported by a TA, Anthony's ability to participate in this session is limited (although he does his best to join in).

KS5 Music Lesson (20.04.2016)

Following on from last week's lesson, the teacher decides to go over the breaks in the Samba piece first (the pupils were struggling with these last week). He reintroduces break 1. The students are told that they need to play their normal rhythms until they hear him blow his whistle. When they hear this, they have to count to four and then play four crotchet beats in a row, in unison before moving onto the second rhythm they learnt last week. He asks the class to put their instruments down and practice this first by clapping the rhythm. Anthony is unable to clap and so plays on a drum instead. He still finds this difficult and, despite his best efforts, is the only student in the class who is unable to play in time

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> **KS5.3 Music Lesson (27.04.2016)**
>
> Anthony has the same drum as last week. He chooses a beater from a couple on offer from the teacher. The teacher asks him if he feels comfortable with that one. Anthony says yes. After a couple of minutes Anthony asks if he can swap the beater for a different one. He explains that he's struggling to keep hold of it when playing. A TA helps him switch to another one of his choosing. Anthony still isn't happy with this beater. The teacher brings some more over for him to try out. They're all not quite right.

Primary care-givers also mentioned that specific accommodations would need to be considered if their child were to have access to learning to play an instrument. These included the provision of one-handed instruments as well as those with adjustable volume control to accommodate students' sensory needs:

> I think she's quite limited in what kind of instrument she could play with one hand. It is quite difficult but she does, she does enjoy playing instruments.
>
> (School 3, Primary Care-Giver Interview, Giovanna)
>
> The music education that my eldest got was playing a brass instrument. For Lewis that was no good. The noise hurt his ears.
>
> (School 3, Primary Care-Giver Interview, Penny)

Additional ways in which practitioners made lesson content more accessible included ensuring that written materials were easy for students to understand (e.g. through the use of picture exchange communication systems (PECS) or by ensuring that the printed font of a document was large enough for students to read), using alternative forms of notation (e.g. graphic scores) to represent musical sounds, and using powerpoint presentations or information presented on a whiteboard to offer students a visual reminder of what they were supposed to be doing at particular points in the lesson. All accommodations were adapted to the needs of specific students. Again, the need to be flexible and admit when something was not working was important here, as the School 3 KS3 Music Teacher/Music Coordinator explained:

> You don't have to make it difficult for yourself. There are lots of things that you can do and it is a challenge a lot of the time and sometimes you think somebody will be able to do something, like Abba with his ukulele. I thought "oh

it would be fine for him," and he found it really uncomfortable. So you know, we've invested in plectrums for that situation. So again, it's that problem-solving thing all the time. Like thinking "oh yeah what can we do for them? How can we do it for them?" And just having lots of different things for them to use to be able to participate so if one thing's not working then let's try another and let's try another. Never say never. I think that's the thing, let's just keep trying until we find something.

(School 3, Practitioner Interview, KS3 Music Teacher/Music Coordinator)

5.2.6   Making it Participatory

Getting students actively involved in music activities was deemed to be a central aspect of 'best practice'. Engagement was key here and many practitioners felt that if students were not engaged, learning would not happen:

Good teaching is good learning and no learning happens without engagement. Learning cannot happen without engagement.

(School 3, Practitioner Interview, Head Teacher)

Ensuring that music activities were participatory was seen as a way of increasing students' engagement and therefore increasing students' learning.

As can be seen from Vignettes 5.1 and 5.6 in order for music sessions to be participatory they had to be accessible. For example, students who used VOCAs or wheelchairs were unable to fully participate in the after school music session described in Vignette 5.1 and were therefore resigned to watching the other students take part. Similarly, Anthony's participation in the Key Stage 5 Samba lesson at School 3 (described in Vignette 5.6) was also hindered by inaccessible instruments. Practitioners felt that not only did these passive moments of participation deprive students of the opportunity to join in and make music with their peers, they also deprived students of an opportunity to learn:

I think ensuring that they are fully participating so that it's not about putting on a performance for the students, it's about them being involved in everything that's happening, it's about them making choices about where the music is going and what's being played and interacting and responding to their initiations to interact, to interact with the other people but also to interact with the instruments and ensuring that they're engaged fully in the activity throughout, and if they're not

then acknowledging that but then finding a way of bringing them back into it.
(School 1, Site 1, Practitioner Interview, Class 4 Teacher)

An additional aspect of making music lessons participatory was ensuring that students were being encouraged to do things for themselves rather than having things done for them. This was especially important for the students at School 1 Site 1 as the level of their additional support needs often meant that people would underestimate what they were capable of doing. Practitioners expressed that staff should never play instruments for students. Instead, they should assist the students to learn how to play independently. This was generally facilitated through modelling (i.e. demonstrating how to play a musical instrument) and/or offering verbal encouragement.

Teaching staff at School 1 Site 1 mentioned that some staff were better at letting students take the lead than others:

> The only thing is that they do need reminding not to do it for them [the pupils], it's about facilitating them [the pupils] as opposed to helping them [the pupils]. They're not to hold their hand and make them shake it, they can put it in their hand and they can tap it to give them the idea of what's happening but not actually do it.
> (School 1, Site 1, Practitioner Interview, Class 4 Teacher)

Some practitioners were yet to fully embrace this aspect of 'best practice':

> I think with children like Tom [a student with complex and multiple learning needs] you've got to sort-of like do it for them. But I do like to give them time to try and do things themselves.
>
> (School 1, Site 1, Practitioner Interview, TA, Linda)

Linda had good intentions here and she does mention giving students time to 'try'. However, ultimately, she believed that Tom required substantial assistance in order to participate fully in musical activities. This went against the views of the majority of the practitioners interviewed as part of this study.

In a similar vein to not allowing staff to do things for students, another important aspect of ensuring that lessons were participatory was to ensure that staff were not simply playing music *to* students. Several practitioners expressed that students should never be passive recipients of musical stimuli. For example, when talking about music listening activities, the Singing Teacher at School 2 explained:

They're not engaged in it, it's happening to them and they're not participating and I really think the participation is a huge part and I hope that you've witnessed that here. You know? It's not being done *to* them, they are participating. I'm just the vehicle through which they can participate and that's very important.

(School 2, Practitioner Interview, Singing Teacher)

The School 2 Singing Teacher insinuates that there is an active requirement on the part of the practitioner to ensure that students are engaged and participating. She describes herself as a 'vehicle through which they can participate' which ties in with what the School 1 Site 1 Class 4 Teacher described above as 'facilitating' participation in musical activities. Staff must ensure that music activities are planned with participation in mind.

Some practitioners expressed that a participatory approach to music was sometimes difficult to find when bringing in external practitioners to lead extra-curricular music sessions with students at the school. The Class 1 Teacher at School 1 Site 1 expressed that she had experienced difficulties with this when hiring someone to lead a music club for students at the CMLN site:

So they tended to come and do, I felt it was more a bit of a performance than, you know, [participatory] things; and you know it was nice, there were multi-sensory elements and there were lots of things about it that seem like really good music teaching and it is for SLD pupils because they can do all of the actions and they can get involved but for complex needs pupils there wasn't a lot that they could do themselves, and if our whole point […] of what we do is to make [the students] as independent and communicative as possible, it was a lot of them being done-to and it was all very nice but there wasn't enough engagement for me

(School 1, Site 1, Practitioner Interview, Class 1 Teacher)

Furthermore, as Vignette 5.4 (above) demonstrates, visiting performers were often reluctant to interact with students, even when asked to do so by a member of staff. 'Pitching it at the right level' and 'adapting provision to suit pupils' needs' were therefore also important here and, as acknowledged above, staff found this very difficult to do unless they 'knew the students'. As the music club described above by the School 1 Site 1 Class 1 Teacher was led by an external practitioner, it is perhaps unsurprising that it was pitched at the wrong level. 'Working in partnership' and

'sharing information' are therefore also necessary to ensure that all music sessions are participatory.

5.2.7   Having fun

This final aspect of 'best practice' perhaps goes without saying. However, it is worth mentioning that all participants expressed that music lessons should be fun and enjoyable for both students and staff:

> For us, I think it's about enjoyment, it's about experiences.
>
> (School 2, Practitioner Interview, Head Teacher)
>
> So it's more just enjoyment. I like music as fun, definitely and I hope they've all gone away thinking music's fun rather than a boring subject.
>
> (School 3, Practitioner Interview, Visiting Music Leader)
>
> It should be fun.
>
> (School 3, Practitioner Interview, Head Teacher)

The general consensus was that if students were not enjoying their lessons they would disengage and this would ultimately mean that students would not learn.

Having fun was deemed by some practitioners to be the most important aspect of 'best practice'. The Head Teacher at School 2, for example, explained that, in his opinion, the primary function of music education should be to offer students and opportunity to have fun and enjoy themselves. The Head Teacher of School 1 echoed this, explaining that, in her experience, the quality of students' musical performances was far less important that the personal, social and emotional benefits that having fun could support:

> [W]e'd been involved in some project or other and the head of complex needs at the local authority, who's very important, was coming to present some certificates and I said "oh, you've just arrived in time to see the finalist, the winning act of X-Factor!" And it was absolutely hilarious. These two girls were singing. Their crowd participation; they were just getting everybody up […]. The whole atmosphere was just amazing in the hall. Half of the school were up and dancing. There was no structure to it what-so-ever. There was not a lot of talent in it what-so-ever either and I just looked at this woman's face and you could see she was like "oh my god, what is going off here?" but actually the kids were just having a

fabulous time and that was what it was about; and their confidence and their self-esteem that comes from that; and these are kids who struggle to read and struggle to write and might have a stammer when they're talking to you but actually [in that moment] all their inhibitions go and they just let go and it's just so nice to have those opportunities to do that isn't it? So that's what music does for us really.

(School 1, Practitioner Interview, Head Teacher)

Other practitioners felt that there was no need to place musical quality and having fun at opposite ends of a pedagogical spectrum. The Singing Teacher at School 2 felt particularly strongly about this. Her choir sessions were lively and energetic with lots of fun and laughter, yet the musical aesthetic was never compromised. In choir sessions and 1-to-1 voice lessons she regularly paused to give feedback to students about rhythm, dynamics, diction, phrasing, breathing and stylistic interpretation (see Vignette 5.7 for an example of this). She held the students to a high standard and reasoned that this was because "the music matters to me. I want the music to be done properly". Practitioners therefore had different philosophies when it came to 'Having fun'. As will be seen in the following chapter, each school's over-arching philosophy affected the way in which music was incorporated into the curriculum. Assessment of musical knowledge and skills was, in some cases, seen to be inappropriate as it was thought that this would detract from students' enjoyment of music. The implications of this finding will be discussed further in the following chapters.

Vignette 5.7: School 2 Upper School Choir Session (18.02.2016)

The students arrive in the music room for their weekly choir session. An upright piano is located at one end of the room (where the Singing Teacher sits). Facing the piano, the singing teacher has arranged 25 chairs into rows facing the piano. The singing teacher is not well today and her voice is low and husky. She explains to me that this means that she won't be able to model any of the music to the students and will instead have to rely on explaining things verbally (modelling is a key element of her usual pedagogy). Daniel and Jamie are the first students to arrive in the classroom. The Singing Teacher asks them to distribute the music folders around the class. The boys put one folder on each chair. The singing teacher asks for Daniel and James' advice as to whether the pupils should sing without folders today. James suggests that they try it once with folders to "see how it goes" and then try without. The singing teacher

confirms that she thinks this is a good idea. As the rest of the class enter room there is chatter. Some pupils look through their folders, others chat with the person next to them. There are 21 pupils, 3 TAs, the Singing Teacher and myself in the classroom today. Once everyone has arrived, The Singing Teacher verbally outlines the structure of today's choir practice. She also explains that she doesn't have much voice today and so they're going to have to listen to her instructions very carefully to know what to do. One choir member exclaims: "don't worry Miss, we'll help you". The Singing Teacher asks the choir to open their folders to *Hallelujah* (Leonard Cohen). The choir has been practicing this for a few weeks now and it has been decided that the girls will sing the first verse and the boys will sing the second. Everyone will sing the choruses. As the Singing Teacher sits down at the piano she reminds the girls that they have a tricky job which is "knowing when to come in". They've been struggling with this in previous choir sessions and this is the Singing Teacher's way of reminding them to count the bars of the song's piano introduction. The Singing Teacher plays the opening of the song but plays the wrong notes. She jokes about this and starts again. The pupils sing. The Singing Teacher stops the class just after the first chorus. She praises the boys for coming in well ("nice and quiet"). She asks the class to think more about their diction on consonants such as 'd' and 't'. She also reminds the class to keep to tempo: "don't rush ahead, listen to the piano". The pupils sing again. The Singing Teacher stops them after the first chorus. She runs through the jump at the end of the chorus asking the pupils to try not to slide their way up to it. The Singing Teacher cannot demonstrate this vocally as her illness is preventing her. Instead she uses hand gestures and talks the class through what she wants to hear. The pupils sing through the chorus again. At the end the Singing Teacher pauses for a moment and reminds the pupils to hold on to the last 'jah' for the correct number of beats. The boys sing the second verse. The Singing Teacher stops them at the end of the verse and runs through some of the diction that needs more emphasis. The boys sing again and this time the girls come in on the chorus and the whole class sings the song through to the end. The Singing Teacher provides the class with feedback and reminds them to be quiet in the penultimate chorus. She then asks the class to stand up and put their words on the floor or on their chair behind them. The pupils sing the song without words while the Singing Teacher plays the piano accompaniment. At the end of the song she praises the pupils "that was excellent!" She also gives additional feedback on some of their diction. The phrase starting "maybe there's a god above" is not clear enough. The Singing Teacher asks the

class to speak through the lyrics so that they can practice the diction. The Singing Teacher also provides additional feedback on the jump at the end of the chorus. She comically asks pupils to "avoid sounding like you've staggered out of the pub" asking for clean jumps and no sliding. Again, she can't model this today as she has no voice so she relies on verbal instruction to make her point.

5.3   Summary

This chapter has discussed the seven fundamentals of teaching practice that were integral to all stakeholders' views about 'best practice'. These were: adapting provision to suit pupils' needs; adapting provision to suit pupils' preferences; knowing the students; offering musical opportunities; making it accessible; making it participatory; and having fun. Factors that affect 'best practice' have been briefly touched upon. The following chapter discusses these in more detail.

Chapter 6 What Affects 'Best Practice'?

6.1   Introduction

In addition to outlining the seven fundamentals of 'best practice' in SEN/D music education discussed in the previous chapter, data showed that there were ten factors that had the potential to impact 'best practice'. These factors included: having an overarching philosophy; having support from the Head Teacher; being held to account; staffing considerations; having confidence; considering cost; having adequate resources; needing time; attitudes and expectations; and 'not fitting the system'. Each of these factors intersected to form an overarching system of barriers and enablers of 'best practice' in SEN/D music education. This chapter presents these findings in detail. Each factor is discussed in turn. Finally, at the end of the chapter, a hierarchical flow diagram of barriers/enablers of 'best practice' is presented (Figure 6.1). This model highlights the relationship between the individual factors discussed in this chapter and moves the presentation of the findings towards a grounded theory of 'best practice' in SEN/D music education.

6.2   What affects 'Best Practice'?

6.2.1   Having an Overarching Philosophy

Each school had an overarching philosophy that directly affected the way in which music education was incorporated into the curriculum. 'Having an overarching philosophy' specifically refers to a school's fundamental beliefs with regards to teaching and learning practices. Each school's philosophy was substantially influenced by the beliefs held by individual staff members, with those of members of senior leadership teams having a particularly strong impact on practice. This finding is of particular importance as it forms the bedrock of both how and why music was included in each school's curriculum offer.

As can be seen from the descriptive findings presented in Chapter 4, the schools participating in this study chose to include music in their respective curricula in different ways. As evidenced in previous chapters, School 1 had a very different

approach to teaching and learning in comparison to Schools 2 and 3. Firstly, the school was unique in its overall design, with teaching and learning occurring across several different sites which were all situated in different areas of the locality in which the school was based. This created a unique culture of practice and, from the fieldwork's outset, it was clear that the school was open to 'doing things differently'. As the School 1 Site 1 Class 1 Teacher explained:

> I don't know of anywhere else in the country that it's done like this. It's only here that ended up doing this. I mean, there will be others that have partnerships and things like that, but nothing to the scale of how we work.
>
> (School 1, Site 1, Practitioner Interview, Class 1 Teacher)

The primary reason for the school's unique approach to its overall design and structure was that it was 'adapting provision to suit pupils' needs'. This included the school's specially adapted curriculum with its three strands of provision: formal, semi-formal and informal. The School 1 Site 1 Site Leader explained how this curriculum had come to fruition:

> Our curriculum is based on some work we did right at the beginning, before I had the teaching and learning responsibility, where we had a group of teachers from across the special schools in the local area who met together for CPD [Continued Professional Development] - the idea being that there were no courses out there that really met the training needs of teachers who dealt with children with this level of complexity of need […] And it quickly became apparent from our discussion that the things we considered to be important – so MOVE, intensive interaction, having that personalised approach – teachers were trying to fit that in alongside the National Curriculum. So we did some research and then we wrote a policy and guidance – which you can have a copy of if you want – which was about meeting the needs of children with complex and multiple learning needs.
>
> (School 1, Site 1, Practitioner Interview, Site Leader)

The teachers involved in this CPD network quickly established that, in their own experience, standardised approaches to teaching and learning were not fit for purpose when it came to teaching students labelled as having PMLD. From their own point of view as experienced practitioners, the National Curriculum did not align with what they saw as the primary needs of their students; it did not fit their overarching philosophy. The teachers decided to establish their own curriculum framework according to what

they, in their professional (and in some cases personal) experience, "considered to be important". This culminated in the creation of the three-stranded curriculum (shown in Table 4.1).

As discussed in previous chapters, students at the PMLD site were in receipt of the informal strand of this curriculum. What was considered to be important here was that all teaching and learning should be tailored towards helping students to develop functional skills which would help them to live lives that were as "independent and communicative as possible" (School 1, Site 1, Practitioner Interview, Class 1 Teacher). Teaching was therefore not spilt into 'subjects' as is the case with most other approaches to education in England. The Head Teacher and Class 1 Teacher explained:

> We actually have a philosophy, for example, in geography and history we don't teach geography and history as discreet lessons, we use geography and history as a subject vehicle through which to learn your literacy, your speaking, your other skills; and on the majority of the time they're the skills we assess.
>
> (School 1, Practitioner Interview, Head Teacher)
>
> Historically we used to have a dedicated music teacher; we used to have dedicated teachers in subjects. As the partnership has become more complex and more diverse and the needs of the students have become more diverse really, we've lost those subject specialisms and we've had to have class teachers who teach across the whip which had an impact on music.
>
> (School 1, Practitioner Interview, Head Teacher)
>
> [W]e have no subjects, we have topics but we have no subject files […] but it doesn't mean we're just going free-for-all, this is the philosophy.
>
> (School 1, Site 1, Practitioner Interview, Class 1 Teacher)

The curriculum was therefore designed around what practitioners felt was necessary and important for students to learn. These beliefs were rooted in their experience. The teachers believed that functional skills were the most important skills for students with PMLD to acquire. Their entire curriculum was therefore centred around ensuring that students had as many opportunities as possible for this learning to take place. This philosophy affected the way in which music was used at the school. Music was not taught to students at School 1 Site 1 with the aim of developing musical skills. Instead, it was used as a means of teaching the non-musical skills that were deemed to be of

most relevance to students when it came to preparing for the future. This approach was concomitant with the overarching philosophy of the school.

The Class 1 Teacher also mentioned that a school's overarching philosophy can affect the perceived relevance of CPD. In her interview, she described going to CPD events which were aimed at enhancing the musical skill-set of teachers working with students with PMLD. She often had difficulty implementing the things she learned at these events into her own practice because they did not fit with her school's overall approach to teaching and learning:

> I think that some of it that they talk about, especially with some of the iPads and stuff, it's like "that isn't practical for me to use in the classroom because the classrooms don't work like that"
>
> (School 1, Site 1, Practitioner Interview, Class 1 Teacher)

This implies that if external organisations want CPD to have impact, they need to understand how schools operate on a day-to-day basis. Understanding a school's overarching philosophy may help to make CPD more relevant and therefore more useful to the practitioners that work within these settings.

For Schools 2 and 3, their overarching philosophies were more closely linked to those of current English education policies. The general structure of teaching and learning followed a subject-based approach which was rooted in the National Curriculum. Furthermore, the overall design of the students' schooling aligned with the age-based year groupings of standard primary/secondary progression routes. However, individual philosophies and attitudes towards music and disability did affect the way in which music was incorporated into the curriculum.

One example of this was the way in which each school chose to approach the assessment of students' progress in music education. School 3 had recently developed a comprehensive assessment framework for students at all levels of the school which formed part of their newly designed music curriculum. Students' progress was assessed against a specially designed developmental framework that the school had established by drawing upon their own unique philosophy of pedagogical practice, the National Curriculum and the SoI framework of musical development. The fact that neither the National Curriculum nor the SoI framework were sufficient as stand-alone assessment frameworks reveals much about the way in which a school's overarching philosophy

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affects their approach to musical assessment. Ideas about what music is 'for' and how it should therefore be taught and assessed have a strong bearing on the way in which a school approaches assessment. The underlying aims of music education at School 3 were outlined in full in their newly established music policy and practice guide. These were: to enable students to develop creative skills; to enable students to connect to the community; and to enable students to become 'successful learners', 'confident individuals' and 'responsible citizens'. Teaching approaches and assessment frameworks were therefore tailored to meet these goals. In this way – in a similar vein to School 1 Site 1 – teaching and learning in music education was adapted to fit what practitioners' believed was important for students to learn.

In contrast, School 2 did not assess students' progress in music. This was because the school believed that music's primary function was to provide students with an opportunity to have fun. Assessment was seen as something arduous and therefore clashed with teachers' ideas of what constitutes 'best practice' in SEN/D music education. The School 2 Head Teacher explained:

> We don't have any formal assessment of "the children can achieve this, that and
> the other." It is about fun, enjoyment and taking part; and I don't want to spoil that
> "oh you haven't quite got that right, go back and do it again" no, "that's great but
> can we do it better? Great! That's great! Can we do it? Great, that's great!" yeah;
> without condemning or marking or giving them five out of ten or, no, I don't want
> that, I want this to be purely for relaxation and enjoyment.

> (School 2, Practitioner Interview, Head Teacher)

This did not mean that students' progress was not monitored at School 2. There were many examples, particularly in the Visiting KS3 Music Teacher's sessions, of students being asked to demonstrate what they had learned in lessons by either performing to the class or by verbally reflecting upon a specific task or activity. In this way, progress was monitored. However, it was not assessed against a specific assessment framework. The Head Teacher explained that it was often difficult to find an assessment framework that was fit for purpose in special education:

> It's quite hard assessing children with special needs anyway because all the
> systems that are out there were made for mainstream pupils. So our pupils don't
> keep up with that. We have to take whatever we've got, adapt it, break it down and

chunk it down and do the bits. For us, I think it's about enjoyment, it's about experiences.

(School 2, Practitioner Interview, Head Teacher)

Schools 1 and 3 had also had similar experiences with existing assessment frameworks and had spent considerable time and effort converging and adapting existing systems in order to better reflect the needs of the students and the philosophies of the school. For School 2, however, the overarching philosophy of the school was that music education was for "relaxation and enjoyment" and, as such, specific assessment in music was deemed unnecessary.

It is evident here that practitioners' individual attitudes and beliefs towards what is necessary and right for students differs from school to school. Beliefs about disability were also shown to interact with practice. These are discussed further in section 6.2.9 below. Overarching philosophies are therefore directly tied to socio-political-edu-cultural beliefs of what students need in order to live lives that are as fulfilled and independent as possible once they leave school. The term 'socio-political-edu-cultural beliefs' and what it means for this theory of 'best practice' will be discussed further in Chapter 7. However, it is important to acknowledge here that students' needs are not seen through a neutral lens. Instead, they are directly related to societal views of what disabled children and young people need to be 'happy, healthy and safe' in both their present and future lives. For music education, normative beliefs about musical 'talent' and 'ability' also affect the way in which music is taught to students (as will be discussed in section 6.2.9 below). Individual practitioners' philosophies therefore combine with more widespread societal beliefs and constructions in order to form an overarching philosophy about what is 'best' in music education for disabled children and young people attending special schools.

6.2.2   Having Support from the Head

Having support from management, and in particular the Head Teacher, was seen to be a significant enabler of 'best practice'. When asked to describe any barriers to providing 'best practice' in SEN/D music education, practitioners explained:

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[I]t depends on the priorities and the passions of the people who are leading the school doesn't it?

(School 1, Practitioner Interview, Head Teacher)

[I]t's very much led by the head. He's interested and passionate about music.

(School 2, Practitioner Interview, Singing Teacher)

Sometimes it's the Head Teacher that's the barrier.

(School 3, Practitioner Interview, Head Teacher)

The Head Teacher was therefore seen as a potential gatekeeper to achieving 'best practice'. Without their support, practitioners felt that music would simply cease to be included in the curriculum. This suggests that staff with the capacity to make decisions about the way in which a school is run have a large impact on the overall quality of music provision in their school.

In all three of the schools visited as part of this fieldwork, music was valued by the Head Teacher:

[O]ne of the really sad things I think is that those creative subjects, drama, music, art, are the things that are disappearing off the curriculum in mainstream because the pressure for the standards is just so high, whereas my philosophy is, in terms of those sorts of things, it's so enriching for our kids and their self-esteem comes from it. It's just so, so important.

(School 1, Practitioner Interview, Head Teacher)

So, as a Head Teacher then - when we look at the population and we look at engagement and we look at provision - for the population we've got, for me, even though it might not be up there on the National Curriculum and sort of expected value in that way, to me in our population it was vital.

(School 3, Practitioner Interview, Head Teacher)

I: Other people feel that you're quite integral to music being such a big part of the school. How would you respond to that?

HT: [Agreeing] No, no, I think you are right. I mean, I've been in schools and there's a school down the road that the head has come in and – another special school – they don't value music and the result is that music's disappeared in their school and it's not a major part of the curriculum.

(School 2, Practitioner Interview, Head Teacher)

Having a Head Teacher that valued music education was therefore fundamental when it came to facilitating 'best practice'. In the quotations above, the School 1 and School 3 Head Teachers mention that, within the current culture of educational practice in England, music is not seen to be as important as other subjects within the National Curriculum. As was seen in Chapter 2, despite the implementation of the NPME, there is ample evidence to show that these assertions are correct. In a special school, the pressures associated with the EBacc and the National Curriculum are lessened to a certain extent (see section 6.2.10, 'Not Fitting the System', for a more in-depth discussion about this). This does not mean that music is automatically guaranteed a slot in a school's curriculum, however. 'Valuing music' is of particular importance and, in order for music to be valued, the subject has to be seen to have benefits.

For the Head Teachers interviewed as part of this study, these benefits were usually linked to non-musical outcomes. Each Head talked about how music was vital to their school curriculum as it helped students to develop their confidence and self-esteem. It was seen as a way of facilitating communication and developing social skills. It was also viewed as a way of ensuring that students had an opportunity to express their creativity. Many practitioners mentioned the importance of having a Head who could 'see the benefits' of music education:

> I'm very lucky in that obviously the Head is very, very passionate about music and understands and appreciates all the benefits that music can bring to young people's lives.
>
> (School 3, Practitioner Interview, KS3 Music Teacher/Music Coordinator)
>
> And the Head teacher as well – we're fortunate that she sees the benefit of music for special needs teachers as well. So if the KS3 Music Teacher/Music Coordinator and myself or Mac or anyone else who delivers music in the school says "right, I've seen this. It'll have the benefit." Then, more likely than not, she'll say "yes, do it – go ahead and get it".
>
> (School 3, Practitioner Interview, Primary/KS5 Music Teacher)
>
> Music isn't my passion, I am not musical but I see what our kids get out of it and my kids are my passion.
>
> (School 1, Practitioner Interview, Head Teacher)

Having a Head Teacher that saw the benefits of music led to them granting their staff more freedom to develop their practice and 'adapt provision to suit pupils' needs'.

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For some Head Teachers, having personal experience of the value of music meant that they placed greater importance on including it in their school's curriculum:

> I've never been able to play musical instruments; I love listening to music and I've got both my sons involved in music and I could see what they got out of it; it made them great people because they went and joined in with bands and orchestras and things like that, the discipline to learn and practice is all there.
>
> (School 2, Practitioner Interview, Head Teacher)
>
> Music – I play the guitar, you know, self-taught. I get so much enjoyment from it, from that creative and expressive part.
>
> (School 3, Practitioner Interview, Head Teacher)

For the School 2 Head Teacher, this experience came from seeing the positive impact of music making for his two sons. For the School 3 Head Teacher, her own personal experience of teaching herself how to play the guitar had enabled her to see, first hand, how music might benefit her students. These experiences, contributed to the overall value they felt that music had for their students. This personal belief in the importance of music had a positive impact on the amount of support the Head Teachers gave to the inclusion of music education in their respective school.

6.2.3   Being Held to Account

Having support from the Head Teacher was important when it came to achieving 'best practice' in SEN/D music education. However, many practitioners expressed concerns that 'valuing music' and 'seeing the benefits' of music were not enough on their own to guarantee support from senior leadership. 'Being held to account' was therefore imperative if schools were to consistently achieve the standards of teaching and learning associated with 'best practice'.

It is important to acknowledge that this finding was closely connected to practitioners' views about the current state of the English education system. Despite being a foundation subject in the National Curriculum, practitioners felt that music was not deemed important by central government. Many teachers mentioned that schools were not legally held to account in the same way for music as they were for other subjects such as literacy and numeracy:

Legally we used to have to report a level in every foundation subject at the end of year 9. So, what we tended to do was assess all subjects in year 7 and assess them again in year 9 and wouldn't assess in between in those foundation subjects, so music would be one of those. That was more when; the requirements are not quite the same now so I don't have to report a music level to anyone and I'm not going to get an Ofsted inspection on my music progress, I'm going to get an Ofsted inspection on my literacy progress and my numeracy progress, which is why in a lot of schools it's gone out of the window hasn't it? Or it's tokenistic 6-weeks of this; but I can't quite categorically hold my hand up and if you asked me to produce the music levels of my kids now I'd have to ask the music teacher to sit down and assess the kids and I don't ask her to do that, because nobody wants; what am I going to do with that data? Which is a bit sad from your perspective…

(School 1, Practitioner Interview, Head Teacher)

[W]e never did until now assess post-16 because it wasn't, it wasn't [required]; where Maths and English might've been a legal requirement to assess, music never was. But [we've] now started to do it for music from September […] So for us, and again because we're a special needs school, we're not under pressure to show results in music anyway, and legally we don't have to put an assessment in place for music, but we want to do it as a school so we can show progress; and pupils might not show progress in Maths or English.

(School 3, Practitioner Interview, Primary/KS5 Music Teacher)

Being held to account by central government was a complex issue. In one sense, as the School 1 Head Teacher and the School 3 Primary/KS5 Music Teacher mention above, the fact that schools were not legally obliged to report on students' progress in music was something negative. Music provision was placed in a precarious position as schools focused their attention on striving to meet the national standards required of students in literacy and numeracy (which, as the School 3 Primary/KS5 Music Teacher implies, were seen to be potentially insurmountable for some students attending special schools). On the other hand, linking accountability to assessing students' progress was seen to be something that would hamper a schools' ability to adapt provision flexibly to suit pupils' needs. For example, members of senior leadership teams were concerned that current standardised assessment frameworks were not fit-for-purpose for disabled students (particularly for those labelled as having PMLD). Furthermore, some practitioners worried that assessing students against standardised criteria would mean

that they would be seen to be failing in music. The consensus was that all students were capable of making progress in all subjects. What was deemed to be 'enough progress' in the eyes of the Department for Education was the primary concern. Schools therefore valued the freedom they had to create their own assessment frameworks (despite the additional workload that this entailed). In doing so they could ensure that students' progress was monitored in a way that reflected the unique developmental pathway and musical preferences of each student (these findings are discussed further in section 6.2.10). Being held to account by central Government was therefore seen to be both a help and a hindrance to enabling 'best practice' in SEN/D music education.

This finding raises an important question: if accountability to central Government education initiatives is both unhelpful and undesirable in this instance, who ensures that Head Teachers are held accountable for facilitating 'best practice' in music education? Participants expressed that this was mostly dependent upon the staff within the school. Having staff that were willing to 'champion music' and hold Heads of school to account for its inclusion in the curriculum was imperative. As the School 2 Head Teacher explained:

> [Y]ou need backing, you need people to believe in it, you need people to drive it. If you haven't got them it won't work, it will not succeed.
>
> (School 2, Practitioner Interview, Head Teacher)

This advocacy could come from many directions. Sometimes teaching staff would champion the inclusion of music in the curriculum:

> So the teacher with primary responsibility for music at the main-site and I have taken on the roles of making sure music is happening.
>
> (School 1, Site 1, Practitioner Interview, Class 1 Teacher)

> I'm a teacher at School 3 with a responsibility for social and emotional and mental health but also I do take responsibility for music so I lead on that because we felt quite strongly that there are very big strong links between emotional well-being and music so it all kind of fitted under my umbrella.
>
> (School 3, Practitioner Interview, KS3 Music Teacher/Music Coordinator)

Support for music education could also come from school governors:

[T]he governors are really my accountability measures and my checks of what I'm doing and holding me to account and telling me off if it's not right and they do, they can be quite challenging; but one of my governors is very, very passionate about music […] and this particular governor who's actually worked in the school so knows the school really, really well, kept having a dig at me about music […] And we probably do more because [of] the governor actually, and it's a bit of a joke between the two of us now and he still doesn't think that we do enough, but then that's his passion, isn't it? And he's driving that. And if he wasn't on my governing body no one would be asking me a question about music at all. Nobody ever does, the other governors actually laugh at him now when it comes up.

(School 1, Practitioner Interview, Head Teacher)

We have a governor who used to teach music here […] So she's the one that came in and sort of looked and observed the music therapy in the early stages and the later stages and she's an advocate on the governing body.

(School 3, Practitioner Interview, Head Teacher)

Parents also played a role in ensuring that musical opportunities were offered to students:

Lucas' mum seems to be the one that always suggests some sort of music-type thing. She must be searching.

(School 1, Site 1, Practitioner Interview, TA, Jane)

There is a potential problem here, however. What happens when a school lacks passionate and interested staff, governors or parents who are willing to champion music provision in their school? Practitioners felt that this was where long-term strategic planning was important:

[T]here should be a music curriculum document like a policies thing with a long-term program of study with sort of information that says what we do and why we do it and who we do it for and that should be on the website. The KS3 Music Teacher/Music Coordinator, one of her responsibilities is music so as Subject Coordinator, then she should be able to – whoever asks – explain what the music curriculum is and how we teach it, when we teach it, and why, and what the philosophy behind it is. And there definitely should be a program of study, saying what's taught and to which group of children when and what the progression is and what we hope to get out of it. So I definitely would hope that we have that.

(School 3, Practitioner Interview, Head Teacher)

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Such a document would help to establish a long-term safeguard for music education in each school setting. It was believed that a formal policy would help to ensure that students received fair and equitable provision, regardless of who was in charge of the school. Furthermore, policies and schemes of work could be linked to a school's overarching philosophy, allowing staff the flexibility to be able to adapt provision to suit pupils' needs and preferences (rather than being held to account by more stringent national standards). However, the initial implementation of such a policy document was still reliant upon the employment of passionate and skilled staff members who could develop their ideas into a long-term strategic plan. Schools 2 and 3 were in the process of capitalising on the highly skilled music practitioners they had employed at the school at the time of this study in order to produce this plan. School 1 had yet to fully commit to the implementation of a strategic policy document. The Head Teacher explained:

> So, we are collecting different areas of the curriculum that we think are important that we need to measure; music hasn't come up as one of them, but it might be and we could write our own criteria, you know, having the confidence to actually play in assembly, having the confidence to go to a performance and do that, singing on your own, it could be anything because it's what we feel is important […] and there is some mileage in doing it, as I'm sitting listening to you I'm thinking "we really ought to do it" because actually it's the equality of offer that people get isn't it? And I can't give you 100% consistency. I know that all my kids are exposed to music and have an enjoyment of music but in terms of their own development in that way I don't know if I need to do [more]. But, in fairness, if you look in the fair and equitable point of view, you know, if you get this teacher for two years who doesn't do anything to do with music and isn't interested and for some reason you don't happen to get exposure to these other bits then that's not right is it? So maybe there is [some benefit in having a strategic policy]. And so by collecting some sort of evidence – I'm not sure I'll ever get there because it's not at the top of my list – but there is an equity and a fairness in that isn't there? And that's my, our monitoring response really for the teaching and learning. But I tell you, it all goes back to literacy and numeracy because that's the pressure and that's the only thing that Ofsted are interested in and that's what we're all held to account by.
> (School 1, Practitioner Interview, Head Teacher)

The School 1 Head Teacher was conflicted in this answer. She understood the benefits of having a strategic plan in place for music education. However, the subjects she felt most accountable for were literacy and numeracy as these were the subjects that had the

biggest bearing on how well the school was seen to be performing in national league tables and Ofsted inspections. Therefore, without staff members who were willing to champion music by suggesting that it should be added to the list of 'important' subjects that required better long-term planning, it was unlikely that the School 1 Head Teacher would push for such a policy document to be developed. Having interested teachers who are willing to champion music is therefore key to ensuring that schools develop the strategic planning necessary to hold senior leadership teams to account for the continued implementation of 'best practice' in music education.

6.2.4   Staffing Considerations

As the findings above demonstrate, staffing considerations were of the utmost importance to achieving 'best practice' in SEN/D music education. However, staffing considerations went much further than having staff that could champion music and hold senior leadership teams to account. All schools mentioned that 'having staff with relevant expertise' was important to ensure that music lessons were of a high standard. For example, when asked what constitutes 'best practice' in music education for students labelled as having special educational needs the School 1 Head Teacher laughed and said:

> Having teachers that have got the talent in the first place! [Laughs].
>
> (School 1, Practitioner Interview, Head Teacher)

Despite these views, none of the schools employed a full-time music specialist. Instead, all three utilised the expertise of two or three members of their full-time teaching staff who happened to be musically skilled. 'Making the most of practitioners' skills' was therefore an important factor in facilitating 'best practice'. These skills would always be secondary to general classroom teaching skills (i.e. the ability to teach across all subjects to a single class). However, participants did mention that Heads of School would often be on the lookout for teaching staff who could bring something "new and extra" to the school's overall curriculum offer:

> We don't; we never; well, we advertised for a music teacher for what the Class 4 Teacher came in with but when you look at teachers to work in a school like ours you do look at what else they bring into a school. I like to bring in sport, I like to bring in music, I like to bring in arts and crafts and things; so teachers who have

applied for the jobs, what I actually am looking for is: good teachers who can deliver the curriculum that I want them to deliver, but what else can they offer us? And when it comes to clubs and things, is there anybody else who can offer something different? Something new and extra.

(School 2, Practitioner Interview, Head Teacher)

I mean the Head Teacher obviously at interview will sort of glean what your skillset is and then may say to you when you start, "you know, I'd like you to do this," so usually she has kind of an idea about what people can offer.

(School 3, Practitioner Interview, KS3 Music Teacher/Music Coordinator)

We have a generic question at the end of interviewing and because we can't any longer afford to have a discreet music teacher we don't recruit in that way, it's very rare. The only subject specialists we have now are at the secondary partnership and we've got a maths specialist and an English specialist, everybody else is expected to be a class teacher and deliver everything, but you find that if you can't do it the music disappears doesn't it?

(School 1, Practitioner Interview, Head Teacher)

As the School 1 Head Teacher suggests, this relatively serendipitous approach to recruiting staff with musical expertise left the continued quality of music education in each school in a state of flux. She further explained:

[I]f the Class 1 Teacher left tomorrow, I'd lose so much from that site, the [PMLD] site, around music; and she may well do; and I might not replace her, I might not, you know? I didn't advertise for someone who could play the saxophone, I advertised for a complex needs teacher. It just happens that the Class 1 Teacher has that talent and that interest and develops it further and that's what's really hard about things like this in the world that we work in now, that it's coincidental as opposed to planned.

(School 1, Practitioner Interview, Head Teacher)

Having staff with relevant expertise was therefore crucial to ensuring both the sustained quality and the continued provision of music education in special schools. Without such teaching staff, there was a risk that this provision would be lost.

In order to safeguard against the loss of full-time staff with relevant expertise in music education, schools were open to 'getting someone in' to fill the gaps in their provision. Visiting practitioners were usually part-time staff who were employed via

the local music hub to meet a specific need identified by members of senior leadership. For example, in her interview, the School 1 Head Teacher explained that she had noticed that students at the main-site "didn't have a music specialist […] so we looked at buying in some extra teacher time from the local music service" (School 1, Practitioner Interview, Head Teacher). School 2 had also brought in the Visiting KS3 Music Teacher as part of a strategic decision to help "build some kind of curriculum so that, again, if budgets change and we can't buy the music teacher in, then the Class 4 Teacher, or Lance or somebody can pick it up and kind-of run with it" (School 2, Practitioner Interview, KS3 Leader). Cost was clearly an important consideration here (as will be discussed further in section 6.2.5 below). Continued funding for 'getting someone in' could never be fully guaranteed. Therefore, it was important that visiting practitioners worked with the school in order to leave a legacy. This could consist of improving the strategic planning for music education in each school (by assisting them to devise curriculum policies) or by up-skilling members of the school's full-time teaching staff (which, as the School 2 KS3 Leader explains above, included TAs). The ideal scenario was that schools would become self-sufficient in teaching music without having to buy in too many additional part-time or short-term specialist staff. As the School 3 Head Teacher explained:

> Currently, I don't think we buy anything in from the music service other than the [odd] one-off production because I think now, over the last 5 years, we've looked around for who to bring in and what to bring in and we've learned from the partnerships that we've had and the projects that we've had and now we've got the Primary/KS5 Music Teacher who's very into music with his samba band, the KS3 Music Teacher/Music Coordinator is now in a position where she can do more with music and bring to it the strength that she's got, and I feel that we're quite self-sufficient now in being able to provide what we need.

> (School 3, Practitioner Interview, Head Teacher)

Of course, the continuation of this self-sufficiency relied upon the sustained employment of full-time staff with musical expertise. If either the Primary/KS5 Music Teacher or the KS3 Music Teacher/Music Coordinator left their post at School 3, the Head Teacher would have to decide how best to fill the resulting skills gap. If funds were unavailable to 'get someone in' and/or the replacement class teacher lacked the same level of musical knowledge and expertise as the departing member of staff, music education would be adversely affected.

Whilst it seemed as though none of the schools' senior leadership teams had experienced much difficulty in 'getting someone in' to meet these needs, some practitioners did mention that this strategy was reliant upon music hubs and other organisations having "suitable, qualified staff" who were able to meet the specific needs of the school in relation to music education. For example, the School 3 KS3 Music Teacher/Music Coordinator explained:

> I know I have asked for support from the Music Service, but again they have challenges around having suitable, qualified staff that are working for them. You know, they haven't got the skills to then pass on to us. Because I suppose it's such a specific thing. You know, it's kind of; and not all special schools, I don't think, put the emphasis on music and the arts. I don't know, I don't know. But, yeah, challenges.

> (School 3, Practitioner Interview, KS3 Music Teacher/Music Coordinator)

This finding suggests that it is therefore important that local music hubs and national and regional music organisations ensure that inclusive music education is at the heart of their offer. Without this support, special schools may be unable to ensure that their students are receiving 'best practice' in music education. Having suitable training opportunities as part of both ITT and CPD courses is also important to ensure that staff in all settings are suitably skilled to consistently maintain the high standard of music education that students are entitled to.

The final staffing consideration that was seen to affect 'best practice' was the need for support from TAs. All of the schools had a very high ratio of staff to students and music lessons would generally have at least a 2:1 ratio of students to staff. This was necessary to ensure that students had adequate support throughout the lesson. Classroom teachers therefore usually had at least three TAs working alongside them in music lessons. Teachers described this support as "essential". Without it, it would be difficult to adapt provision to suit pupils' needs meaning that lessons would be less accessible and therefore less participatory. For example, when asked how important TAs are to facilitating 'best practice' The School 1 Site 1 Class 4 Teacher explained:

> They're essential. They're brilliant, they; because none of the students are able to access the session without support, just for a teacher to do it on their own you're not going to get the same interaction and the same participation as if you've got the TAs, and also to keep the pace of the lesson up as well, because if you're

taking instruments round the more of you that are there to actually hand them out and help them [the better].

(School 1, Site 1, Practitioner Interview, Class 4 Teacher)

Data collected during classroom observations demonstrated that this was the case in practice. In all schools, students were far more engaged and focused when they had 1-to-1 support. This finding was similar regardless of whether students were working on their own or in a group. Primary care-givers also saw the benefits of high levels of support for their children, with one guardian/carer explaining that she had deliberately tried to ensure that her child ended up in a setting with a high ratio of staff to students:

And then when he came up to go to nursery at the mainstream school I said "no, he's not going into nursery, I'm keeping him there [in the SureStart nursery he had been attending before]" because they were, the ratio of adults to children were better. Do you know what I mean? It was 100% better.

(School 2, Parent Interview, Patricia)

Having support from TAs also affected whether schools could offer after-school extra-curricular music activities. Again, these activities required a high ratio of staff to students to ensure that they were accessible and participatory. For some students, it was also necessary to ensure that practitioners assisting these sessions had adequate knowledge of students' medical needs and had received training to meet these needs (e.g. in case a child had a seizure). Visiting practitioners leading after-school music sessions usually lacked this level of knowledge and expertise. Schools were therefore reliant upon TAs being willing to work late in order to help facilitate these activities, as the School 1 Site 1 Site Leader explained:

Because then again, you're sort of reliant on, like, we're reliant on our school staff being willing to stay, even though they get paid to do it, because they're never going to recruit anybody for an hour after school or have a team of people who came round because, again, they've got the same problem: nobody knows the children and what they're going to do. So that's a bit of a catch-22 thing.

(School 1, Site 1, Practitioner Interview, Site Leader)

In this way, TAs were not only integral in ensuring that music activities reached the standards associated with 'best practice', they were also essential to ensuring that students had access to extra-curricular music activities.

6.2.5 Considering Cost

Cost was another potential barrier/opportunity for enabling 'best practice' in music education:

> The barriers are always time and money.
>
> (School 2, Practitioner Interview, Singing Teacher)
>
> Budgets are always tight.
>
> (School 3, Practitioner Interview, Head Teacher)
>
> You need money.
>
> (School 2, Practitioner Interview, Head Teacher)

Schools required sufficient funding to enable 'best practice' in music education, particularly when it came to 'offering musical opportunities' and 'making it accessible' (two aspects of 'best practice' discussed in detail in Chapter 5). Without adequate funds, participants explained that schools would be unable to afford to provide the "broad and balanced" (School 2, Practitioner Interview, KS3 Leader) curriculum that students were entitled to. Furthermore, ensuring that students had access to adequate resources such as accessible instruments also relied upon the school having enough money to be able to purchase these.

As discussed above, 'staffing considerations' were also affected by cost. If schools did not have full-time staff (usually classroom teachers and/or teaching assistants) who were able to teach music in a way that met both the overarching philosophy of the school and the individual needs and preferences of the students, schools would need to 'get someone in' in order to provide this. However, 'getting someone in' was reliant upon the school having sufficient funds to be able to do so. If neither funding nor staffing were available to support the implementation of 'best practice' in music education, the quality of music teaching and learning at each school would inevitably decrease:

> [I]f we need specialists we'll try and get them. How much we'll be able to afford
> doing that in the future; and one of the first, you know, when my budget gets
> tighter one of the first things I'll have to review is how much the music peripatetic
> stuff that I pay for, because it's quite expensive. I probably pay about £15,000 a
> year for all of that added together. Can I carry on justifying that? Because it could
> be that's a teaching assistant in a class. So it will be one of the first things that

starts to go; and that's really sad and I'm not happy to be saying that because it's such an extra isn't it? And then when you look at the talents of the staff I've got left behind it then becomes a weakness doesn't it? And you have to balance those pros and cons.

(School 1, Practitioner Interview, Head Teacher)

As the School 1 Head Teacher explains here, external pressures associated with funding cuts and national educational priorities had the potential to impact heavily on the quality of music education in special schools. There is a sense of inevitability here when the Head Teacher says "*when* my budget gets tighter" instead of "*if* my budget gets tighter". It paints a worrying picture that 'best practice' in music education is simply unsustainable within the current confines of the English education system.

At the time of fieldwork, two out of the three participating schools had a specific budget for music:

It's planned and it's budgeted for. Yeah. All our people that we buy in are budgeted for. It's a case of "what do we need?" "Well, we need this, we want this." So we'll budget for it and if we can get it then we have it.

(School 2, Practitioner Interview, KS3 Leader)

Specific budgets for music were deemed to be an important factor in enabling 'best practice':

It has to start with the money. I think there would need to be a designated budget.

(School 2, Practitioner Interview, Singing Teacher)

However, prioritising funding for music education from within the school's budget relied upon 'having support from the Head'. As explained in section 6.2.2 above, 'valuing music' and 'seeing the benefits' were important factors in ensuring that Heads of school were open to facilitating 'best practice' in music education. All three Heads of school taking part in this study believed that music benefitted their students. As such, they were willing to spend money on additional staff and resources:

We've got enough money to cover it; but it is costly and you do, you have to say it is going to be a part of the ethos of the school or else you wouldn't be able to afford to do it. (School 2, Practitioner Interview, Head Teacher)

Obviously money is put into it, resources are put into it because it's prioritised.

(School 3, Practitioner Interview, Head Teacher)

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Having a specific budget for music education also helped to facilitate teachers' CPD in this area. However, several practitioners mentioned that the low cost of many training opportunities available in music education was also a factor here:

[I]f there was something that I said "I think it's really important to go on this" I think they would support me. And I think because, on the whole, a lot of the music stuff I've been on has been quite cheap.

(School 1, Site 1, Practitioner Interview, Class 1 Teacher)

I just saw it [a training opportunity] and I asked the Key Stage 3 Music Teacher if she were going and she couldn't go. And I said "well, could I not go then instead?" And she went, "well, you can for me, yeah." So I then went and asked management if I could go, and they went, "well how much is it da-de-da-de-dah" and I said "it's not, it's free. It's only for the morning. You know, it'd be fine."

(School 3, Practitioner Interview, TA, Donna)

Schools therefore welcomed subsidised training and development opportunities from third-sector organisations and external training partners. Without such support, it was unclear whether staff would be able to attend CPD events specific to music education.

Schools also appreciated support from local MEHs when it came to matters of CPD, 'staffing considerations' (see section 6.2.4), and 'having adequate resources' (see section 6.2.6). However, practitioners explained that hubs were also facing financial difficulties as a result of recent funding cuts. This had resulted in a reduction of the amount of support they were able to offer special schools:

[I]t's very sad because it [the hub] used to be absolutely superb and it used to be one of the highlights in the local area; when I first came here 19 years ago it was one of the few things that the local area could be proud about. Unfortunately it's been cut and cut to the bone and now they just provide the service that they've got and it's very limited and I think they do the best job that they can do in the circumstances.

(School 2, Practitioner Interview, Head Teacher)

Funding was therefore being squeezed from all angles of the music education sphere. To add to this flood of funding difficulties, primary care-givers and students explained that access to music activities outside of school were also few and far between because local organisations had experienced significant losses of funding in recent years:

N: There isn't a lot of activities for disabled children like the ones she used to do. She used to go to a Monday club now…

P: They cut the funding for that, didn't they?

N: …the funding's gone for that so that's gone out the window.

P: That was her main thing.

N: The Saturday one, that's now gone out the window. And like, unless you actually pay, like the one she used to go for the drumming, unless you pay to go; but there isn't really many other things for them to do.

(School 3, Primary Care-Giver Interview, Phil and Nina)

Most parents and primary care-givers explained that they could not afford to send their children to out-of-school activities that required them to pay a fee. Difficulties with transport arrangements, disruptions to family routines and the need for parental respite from care-giving duties were also significant factors affecting students' access to music activities outside of school. The school was therefore the main hub of music activity for disabled children and young people. This finding only serves to increase the importance of adequate funding for special school music budgets as, without this financial support, disabled children and young people's access to music education is severely limited.

6.2.6   Having Adequate Resources

'Considering cost' also impacted a school's ability to provide the resources needed to achieve 'best practice' in music education. Buying resources was reliant upon schools having sufficient funds to do so. Schools therefore had to be strategic in what they spent their money on:

We don't have an infinite budget, and budgets are getting a lot, lot tighter but, for example, when the music teacher [at the main site] wanted to start a ukulele band we didn't have any ukuleles, you know? And so we don't like fads and habits and so I don't like to spend money and then not have it but if we think we need something and the kids are going to get something out of it then we'll resource it in that way; and over time I think with music, you know, there is a budget for each year, it's not a huge budget but if a request comes back for something else, you know, if we've got the money we'll find it; that's getting harder now because

budgets full-stop are not like that; and then over time you build up your resources don't you?

(School 1, Practitioner Interview, Head Teacher)

[I]t's all supposed to be, what's the word? Sustainable. So, all that equipment will never, well, won't run out for absolutely ages and it won't go out of date for absolutely ages. Those drums, unless someone goes sitting on them or standing on them, they won't get broken.

(School 2, Practitioner Interview, TA, Lance)

Investing money in items that were going to last a long while and benefit the majority of students was seen to be a priority. All three schools had prioritised spending in relation to musical resources in the years prior to this fieldwork and so were well equipped with instruments and music technology that could be used to engage students in a variety of musical learning opportunities. This included licenses for iPad software such as Garage Band (Schools 2 & 3) and accessible instruments for students with PMLD such as Resonance Boards and a Sound Beam (School 1 Site 1). All three schools also had access to instruments from their local Music Hub. However, making the most of these resources could sometimes be an issue. One practitioner, for example, felt that many of the instruments purchased were not used to their "maximum potential". When talking about 'having adequate resources' they explained: "I've never seen those being used [points to some steel drums] but I'm sure they didn't cost a few pennies." Ensuring that practitioners had received training on how to use instruments or at least felt comfortable working with them was therefore important. Training did not have to come from external organisations, it could be achieved by allowing staff time for 'sharing practice' with one another and/or to experiment with different instruments. This would help to ensure that staff were confident enough to introduce new instruments to students in lessons when appropriate.

Some practitioners also believed that 'considering space' was an important aspect of 'having adequate resources'. Specifically, having a designated music room was seen to be an enabler of 'best practice':

Um, other blocks [sighs]. Actually, I think this space as well [referring to the music room]. As soon as we moved the lower year 7's back into this class they reacted so well and performed so much better than they usually did. So it's just environment as well. If you did a music lesson in a normal class, it wouldn't, I

don't think it would go as well as if you were actually in the music room. You do music in the music room. Doing music in an art room, it, it's not the same, it won't promote the same reactions.

(School 2, Practitioner Interview, TA, Lance)

[Ideally], there would be a lovely big space, that would be soundproofed and you would have fantastic bits of kit all over it. Because, you know, in an ideal world, that would be just fantastic so the kids could come in and you could get straight on with making music, so that would be, that would be amazing.

(School 3, Practitioner Interview, KS3 Music Teacher/Music Coordinator)

Out of the three schools that participated in this study, School 2 was the only school that had a designated music room. This was a space that had been specifically built for the purposes of hosting music lessons and extra-curricular music activities and was affectionately referred to as the 'music pod' by students. School 1 Site 1 and School 3 led music lessons from general classrooms. Observations did not show any marked differences between levels of student engagement in each space. However, exploring the effect of space on student engagement was never a specific research aim during observations and this finding would therefore benefit from additional research. The only noticeable difference between music lessons at Schools 2 and 3 were that the space in School 2 (the specially built music-room) was far larger and far more open than the teaching space at School 3 (a general classroom). This meant that students had plenty space to engage in group work without becoming distracted by their peers. Group work at School 3 was mostly carried out as a whole class as the classroom was not conducive to allow students to work in smaller groups.

Some practitioners also mentioned that 'having adequate resources' had the potential to impact their CPD. Several practitioners mentioned using resources such as the internet and books to help develop their practice. Feelings were mixed about how useful these resources were, however:

VKS3MT: Generally […] when I used to search the internet for resources for mainstream secondary it would be a lot easier to find things to help me – and books-wise as well, literature-wise there's not, I haven't found anything that's that helpful. It's either extreme sort-of therapy type things or; and so much on behaviour, so many books on behaviour but it's not what I want. Yeah.

I: What would you want?

VKS3MT: I would want, um, maybe some lessons, some actual lessons and ideas. I think I'd want ideas of tried and tested things that people have done; which I could definitely be sharing [laughs] because I've done a few! But, um, I just don't know what's out there, and I have looked quite a lot and it's just a bit, it's not, I don't know; I'm not finding what I want. So, you've just got to do it yourself really haven't you?

(School 2, Practitioner Interview, Visiting KS3 Music Teacher)

[T]here's plenty of training actually out there if you look for it and resources. There's a lot of resources; there's quite a lot for music actually isn't there? I think. Not that I look for other things, I just imagine there's loads for; there probably is for every subject. I don't know. But, yeah. When I first, very first went into a special school, I really didn't have a clue what I was doing and I had to make it up a lot but now it, it's; the internet has come along since then and it's very easy to find some inspiration, isn't it?

(School 3, Practitioner Interview, Visiting Music Leader)

Knowing where to look for useful resources was a primary concern. For the Visiting KS3 Music Teacher at School 2, hearing others' views about 'best practice' through books and online forums was also desired. The two quotations shared above demonstrate that practitioners sometimes had dissimilar views about how useful CPD resources were to their teaching practice. It is therefore reasonable to hypothesise that 'having an overarching philosophy' may well have been another potential barrier/enabler here; when existing resources match a practitioner's overarching philosophy regarding teaching and learning in music education, they are perhaps more likely to feel as though those resources are adequate. However, if philosophy and resources do not align, teachers may be more likely to feel that their needs are under-represented in the CPD literature. This finding would benefit from additional theoretical sampling to explore whether this hypothesis holds true for the practitioners who took part in this study. Regardless, the finding adds further emphasis to the importance of ensuring that CPD providers collaborate with practitioners to ensure that training and development opportunities are relevant to practitioners' needs.

At a day-to-day classroom level, 'having adequate resources' also occasionally had an impact on lesson efficiency. Specifically, insufficient quantities of instruments, sheet music, headphones and/or lesson hand-outs for each student occasionally meant that lessons were disrupted until the error was resolved. 'Finding an accessible

instrument' was also occasionally a barrier. For example, during the term of fieldwork at School 2 the Year 8 class were learning how to play the guitar. In her interview, the Visiting KS3 Music Teacher explained that "we've had a hurdle with the guitars, with the actual holding of the guitars and sort-of coordination there so, [it] might be a relief to do something more accessible for some of them." Classroom observations confirmed this:

> Pupils play with their own technique. Some play with their hand over the top of the guitar neck rather than the bottom and one pupil is struggling to hold the guitar correctly. The teacher gives this pupil a box to put her feet on so that she can position the guitar better on her knees.
>
> (School 2, Observation Notes, 03.02.2016)
>
> The ability in the class is mixed. Some pupils really take to the guitar playing, others struggle.
>
> (School 2, Observation Notes, 17.02.2016)
>
> The Class 4 teacher tells the Visiting KS3 Music Teacher that one pupil in her group has been struggling to play the guitar because he's left-handed. The Visiting KS3 Music Teacher replies: "Oh, we'll have to get it re-stringed. Is there anyone here that can do that?"
>
> (School 2, Observation Notes, 17.02.2016)

Inaccessible instruments were a significant barrier to learning and engagement for some students. Practitioners' willingness or confidence to experiment with instrumentation was also sometimes a barrier. There was a sense that there was a 'correct' way to play and engage with certain musical instruments and, if students' bodies did not conform to these traditional methods, the instrument was deemed inaccessible. Being open to adapting instruments and experimenting with technique was important here. As the School 2 KS3 Leader explains:

> You might have a child that wants to learn a specific instrument but physically they, you just know they're not going to be able to do it. So it's whether you can adapt that or persuade them to do something else […] but there are ways round it and you can be very persuasive in kind-of, you know, if you've got a child that can't play a guitar for whatever reason and can maybe play a keyboard or, or something that's adapted or whatever then I think you can get round those barriers.
>
> (School 2, Practitioner Interview, KS3 Leader)

Ensuring that instruments were accessible for students by adapting them to suit specific needs and preferences was therefore a significant consideration in achieving 'best practice' and an important aspect of 'having adequate resources'.

6.2.7   Having Confidence

In addition to the staffing considerations discussed in section 6.2.4, many practitioners felt that 'having confidence' was a significant enabler of 'best practice' in music education. Practitioners generally felt that it was important to have confidence in two areas of practice: leading music activities and teaching students labelled as having special educational needs. For example, the School 3 KS3 Music Teacher/Music Coordinator explained:

> [I]t's having the confidence […] because I think, as a teacher, if you feel you have got your confidence to 'have a go' almost, that's the first hurdle. Because with any teaching, in particular with special needs, you never really know how it's going to go and what's going to happen and whether you're going to have some challenging behaviour, whether you're going to have a young person particularly anxious about something. So, you know, it's that confidence. And now I feel that I do have that confidence, being able to sort of go in and do things and then obviously being able to go with the flow. So for me it's about having that confidence plus the skill set and obviously now I realise that obviously the skill set that I do have I can very much use here. So it's confidence, realisation that actually what you're doing in the mainstream setting is equally as valid in a special school setting, and having the confidence and the flexibility to be able to adapt things to allow young people to access different things whether it be like a physical barrier, or hearing. You know? It's just about thinking outside the box.
>
> (School 3, Practitioner Interview, KS3 Music Teacher/Music Coordinator)

'Having confidence' was therefore often linked to 'having experience' and trusting in your professional skills and abilities. Experience could be gained in a variety of ways; in initial teacher training and CPD courses, for example, or by sharing practice and working in partnership with colleagues. However, many practitioners felt that experience (and therefore confidence) mostly came from 'giving things a go' and experimenting with practice – solutions which, in themselves, required a certain level of confidence:

You have to be brave and just try things, don't you? And then if it doesn't work: "oops, we won't do that again!"

(School 3, Practitioner Interview, Visiting Music Leader)

'Having confidence' was also linked to musical identity. For example, some practitioners expressed that their confidence to teach music was greatly increased if the topic they were teaching was something they loved and/or had practical experience of:

It is my thing! And I am really, really confident in that area because it's like I said, I love it.

(School 3, Practitioner Interview, TA, Donna)

So if it's practical, you know, such as strings, percussion, yes [I am confident] because that's what I do outside of school. That's what I do with – I'm in two bands, one of which travels all over Europe, we perform in front of different groups so I'm confident in that. I can, you know, give me a drum kit, any percussion instrument. If you go to my home, I've got about 20 different percussion instruments from all over the world from cajons to hand drums and various things.

(School 3, Practitioner Interview, Primary/KS5 Music Teacher)

This finding is related to those discussed under 'staffing considerations' (see section 6.2.4), as practitioners who were confident about their musical skills and abilities and/or were passionate about a particular subject-area were much more likely to put themselves forward to assist with music teaching. However, some practitioners mentioned that having musical skills and experience were not, in and of themselves, enough to encourage full-time staff to get involved with music teaching:

I happen to know that there are a couple of people here who have musical ability and who would run outside and hide under a bush rather than display that and I think that's just a confidence thing because there's no lack of ability, I know that for a fact, but they don't want to put it out there to be witnessed.

(School 2, Practitioner Interview, Singing Teacher)

Sometimes I think some of the [younger members of staff] perhaps don't have the confidence to come and say, "I'd like to do this," but actually they'd be more than capable and they'd love to do it.

(School 3, Practitioner Interview, KS3 Music Teacher/Music Coordinator)

Having musical skills and experience was therefore not always a guarantee that practitioners would be confident enough to lead musical activities. An individual's personal, musical and professional identity were therefore additional considerations when exploring issues of confidence.

Furthermore, it was clear from the research findings that 'having confidence' was not a dichotomous state of being; practitioners were not simply 'confident' or 'not confident' when it came to teaching music. Many practitioners explained that, because music was such a broad art form with a diverse spectrum of genres, styles, instruments, techniques, ideas, and approaches, it was impossible to have the knowledge and confidence to teach everything:

> [I]f you put me in a room and ask to do music theory or composition then no, I'm not confident.
>
> (School 3, Practitioner Interview, Primary/KS5 Music Teacher)
>
> Well I hear about everybody who has music degrees, and they seem very rigorous in the, I don't know, in the history. My music history's not very good but I'm very; I'm quite well up on the contemporary [composers].
>
> (School 3, Practitioner Interview, Visiting Music Leader)
>
> It's like, the Class 4 Teacher isn't very comfortable with the guitar so if she does what she knows and actually teaches the class, I can keep whispering in her ear "say this" [laughs].
>
> (School 2, Practitioner Interview, TA, Lance)

Practitioners therefore felt that it was important to be introspective about the extent of their own knowledge and musical expertise and the way in which this might impact their practice. Having confidence (and time) to experiment with practice and 'challenge yourself' was seen to be of benefit, as the School 3 KS3 Music Teacher/Music Coordinator explained:

> I am challenging myself next year and we're doing reggae. So I thought, "right, I'm gonna' challenge myself and we're gonna' look at the chord progression and we're gonna' get the kids involved and we're gonna' put some rhythm, we're gonna' put it in" – so I think, yeah. It's about your own CPD isn't it? And sort-of, again, confidence in your own abilities and thinking, "oh, okay let's give this a go." I suppose it's a personal thing, I don't know. (School 3, Practitioner Interview, KS3 Music Teacher/Music Coordinator)

Having confidence *was* a personal thing and it was clear that practitioners' confidence levels fluctuated depending on a complex network of factors relating to identity and prior experience.

Previous research has shown that prior musical experiences and beliefs, content of ITT courses, support and encouragement from senior colleagues, and being able to tailor what you teach to fit within your own comfort zone all have an impact on trainee primary school teachers' feelings of confidence in relation to teaching music (Hennessy, 2000; Hennessy, Rolfe, & Chedzoy, 2001). Indeed, many practitioners taking part in this study expressed that their Initial Teacher Training did not adequately prepare them to teach music to disabled children and young people. Further research into the ways in which training, prior experience and musical identity affect music education practice in UK special schools would be of benefit to expand upon these findings.

Additional factors that were seen to increase practitioners' confidence in leading musical activities with disabled children and young people included 'having a lesson plan' and 'repeating activities'. These factors were particularly important when it came to boosting TAs' levels of confidence in leading music sessions when teaching staff were absent. Occasionally, teachers would be unable to teach/lead timetabled music lessons/sessions due to scheduled one-off meetings with members of senior leadership, off-site attendance at CPD events, or simply because they were ill. When this occurred, TAs would usually be asked to cover for absent teaching staff. When discussing TAs' confidence in providing cover for music lessons, participants explained:

> When we've got planning, it's fine. You know, you're just reading from that – and you know, putting clips on or whatever to do with that area. So no, as a cover supervisor, I'm absolutely fine.
>
> (School 3, Practitioner Interview, TA, Donna)
>
> I don't really mind because I've done a few now and I know, because we sang that song last year as well, that hello song – so the "will you sing with me" –we did that last year so I've done it a few times. So I don't mind doing that.
>
> (School 1, Site 1, Practitioner Interview, TA, Linda)

Ensuring that TAs had access to lesson plans and curriculum documents was therefore deemed important to ensure continuity of 'best practice' in teaching and learning in music lessons where teachers were absent.

6.2.8   Needing Time

Time was another potential barrier/enabler of 'best practice' identified by participants. The adult participants in this study (i.e. practitioners and primary care-givers) felt that disabled students required greater amounts of time than their non-disabled peers to develop musical knowledge and skills:

> I: Ok, so in your opinion, what constitutes best practice in music education for pupils with special needs?
>
> J: Oh god. Taking your time.
>
> (School 1, Site 1, Practitioner Interview, TA, Jane)
>
> Being prepared to put extra time – to allow for extra time in each task.
>
> (School 2, Practitioner Interview, Visiting KS3 Music Teacher)
>
> In a mainstream setting I might say "well this is what I hope to achieve in a term" all I probably say in special needs is "this is what I hope to achieve" but not putting a timeframe on it. I might, I might somewhere have that little parameter where I think "well, we should be able to get that done this term" but if it doesn't work out like that [it's ok].
>
> (School 2, Practitioner Interview, Singing Teacher)

Allowing students enough time to respond to specific questions or musical stimuli within individual lessons was also deemed important. Lesson and curriculum plans therefore had to be adapted to suit the individual learning needs of students. The important thing here was that 'needing time' was not conflated with 'being unable to achieve in music'. Here practitioners' views differed. For some, the fact that students did not learn at the same pace as some of their non-disabled peers resulted in low expectations of students' potential capabilities (the way in which attitudes and expectations have the potential to impact upon 'best practice' is discussed further in section 6.2.9). For other practitioners, disabled students' potential was seen to be no less infinite than that of their non-disabled peers'. It was simply accepted that disabled students' achievements would be reached over a different timeframe and in different

ways to the perceived 'norm'. As such, the overall aims and expectations for disabled children and young people's achievements in music education remained high. As the School 2 Singing Teacher explained:

> They're just kids […] it doesn't really matter where I am, I teach the same because I know that what I've got is the same, it's just the rate at which and the way in which whatever [learning outcome] will be achieved.
>
> (School 2, Practitioner Interview, Singing Teacher)

'Needing time' was also linked to 'staffing considerations'. In section 6.2.4 it was explained that all three schools tried to make the most of full-time practitioners' musical skills and abilities prior to 'getting someone in' to teach music or to lead specific musical activities. However, in all three schools, teachers who had responsibility for teaching music were not employed purely as music teachers. Each had their own class to teach and manage. Furthermore, in settings where teaching was subject-based, some practitioners also specialised in additional subjects such as physical education (PE). To enable these staff members to teach music, time had to be made available in the timetable for them to lead music lessons with multiple classes in addition to their own. Timetabling restraints therefore occasionally meant that teachers with the skills and knowledge needed to teach music were unable to do so:

> We get the guitar teacher in for the guitars because again, we've got one or two staff that are good at guitars and can play guitars but haven't got the time to deliver it.
>
> (School 2, Practitioner Interview, Head Teacher)

> I don't do a lot of music in school and that's purposeful I guess in one sense is that I don't have time because I do so much other stuff and the outdoor ed[ucation] takes a lot of my time so I don't have the time to pick up a guitar and sit with kids, unfortunately.
>
> (School 2, Practitioner Interview, KS3 Leader)

> So as far as music's place in how it's taught in the curriculum – taught in primary, it's not in Key Stage 3 but it – no, it is in Key Stage 3, sorry. It's not in Key Stage 4 but it is in post-16. Now I don't know how it's come-round to that decision. I don't know whether they've just looked at who's available and trying to fit it into that.
>
> (School 3, Practitioner Interview, Primary/KS5 Music Teacher)

When full-time teaching staff were unable to teach music due to time-constraints and timetabling issues, schools would consider 'getting someone in' (as the School 2 Head Teacher explains above). However, employing freelance, part-time practitioners also relied upon them having enough time in their schedule to teach music at that particular school on the desired dates:

> [The school had] been after me [laughs] for a few years. But, literally, [there was] just no space in the timetable and then one day I turned round and [they] said "is there any chance?" and I just turned round and said "actually, yes!" So the rest is history. Here I am!
>
> (School 2, Practitioner Interview, Singing Teacher)

'Needing time' therefore had the potential to affect the quantity of musical experiences that schools were able to offer students. The same could be said for extra-curricular musical activities. As practitioners at School 3 explained:

> I think as teachers we'd like to do more at lunch time but then we find that we're pulled from all different directions and I've talked about, "oh I'll do this, oh I'll do that" […] you know? and it's just [groans], time!
>
> (School 3, Practitioner Interview, KS3 Music Teacher/Music Coordinator)
>
> But it's where the time is going to come from to do it? This is what it all boils down to, finding the time.
>
> (School 3, Practitioner Interview, TA, Donna)

In this way, 'needing time' was deemed to be a significant barrier/enabler when trying to achieve the elements of 'best practice' associated with 'offering musical opportunities' (see Chapter 5, section 5.2.4).

'Needing time' was also seen to be a potential barrier/enabler when it came to 'knowing the students'. As the School 1 Site 1 Class 4 Teacher explained:

> [I]t takes a good amount of time before you actually get to know them and get to know their preferences and how they express themselves, how they communicate.
>
> (School 1, Site 1, Practitioner Interview, Class 4 Teacher)

Before practitioners were able to adapt provision to suit pupils' needs and preferences, they first had to spend time getting to know students. Without this time, there was a risk that students' progress and achievements may be misinterpreted. For example, some practitioners at School 1 Site 1 felt that visiting practitioners were unable to

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interpret the students' interactions correctly because they had not had the opportunity to spend enough time getting to know the students prior to working with them:

> [I]t's a really difficult thing isn't it? Because [they don't] know the children very well and so really coming in for that short amount of time doesn't give a clear picture.
>
> (School 1, Site 1, Practitioner Interview, Site Leader)

This lack of knowledge meant that students' actions and responses in music activities led by external practitioners could sometimes be misinterpreted as 'breakthroughs':

> For example, enthusing about what Daniel was doing [in music therapy sessions] and the Class 2 Teacher said "well, he already can do that…"
>
> (School 1, Site 1, Practitioner Interview, Site Leader)

'Needing time' to get to know students was also therefore reliant upon full-time practitioners 'needing time' to share information with visiting practitioners. This was easier said than done as visiting practitioners often perceived full-time practitioners to be "too busy" to share this information:

> [T]he teachers are swamped, they don't have time to tell me. And I suppose that's the biggest part of it.
>
> (School 1, Site 1, Practitioner Interview, Music Therapist)

> You don't know a whole lot [laughs]. Sometimes I have a TA with me to help, who knows the child. That's helpful! But it's not a specific criticism, they haven't got the time to, to um; but that would be a recommendation I have – is to at least give basic information if possible.
>
> (School 3, Practitioner Interview, Visiting Music Leader)

Visiting practitioners therefore often lacked sufficient information about the students they worked with. Examples of information that would be useful to visiting practitioners included information about students' preferred ways of communicating (particularly for non-verbal students who would be unable to explain this to visiting practitioners themselves) and information about any specific sensory impairments/needs that might require the visiting practitioner to make specific adaptations to music lessons (increased sensitivity to loud noises, for example). Simple information about what students had already learnt and achieved in school music lessons and activities would also have been useful. Without this information, visiting

practitioners were left with limited understanding of a child or young persons' musical preferences and abilities which therefore increased the risk that they would pitch lessons at the wrong level, inadvertently limiting what students would be able to achieve. Finding time for visiting and full-time practitioners to work in partnership and share information about students' needs and progress was therefore seen to be important when it came to enabling 'best practice'.

6.2.9   Attitudes and Expectations

As alluded to in earlier sections of this chapter, attitudes and expectations had the potential to affect not only the implementation of 'best practice' as detailed in Chapter 5, but also the way in which practitioners described 'best practice' in general. A recurring theme in the document data analysed as part of this research was that all schools had 'high expectations' of students:

> All teachers have consistently high expectations of all learners.
>
> (School 1, Documents, Curriculum Policy)
>
> We have high expectations of all our children.
>
> (School 2, Documents, Curriculum Policy)
>
> Teachers and teaching assistants' expectations of pupils are ambitious and pupils rise to these expectations.
>
> (School 3, Documents, Ofsted Report)

If taken at face value, it is easy to arrive at the conclusion that 'having high expectations' of disabled children and young people was therefore an important component of 'best practice' in the eyes of participants. Indeed, it goes without saying that all teachers and primary care-givers taking part in this research wanted the best for their children. However, what was 'best' was not decided through a neutral lens. Attitudes towards disability, music and musicianship collided with imagined realities of students' seemingly inevitable futures once their time in education had come to an end. These attitudes and beliefs then shaped the way in which schools constructed their overarching philosophies when it came to teaching and learning. For example, some adult practitioners in this study were frank in their acceptance that the majority of the students they taught would live either a life of unemployment or a life in care:

> Our children will probably not be employed for the majority of their lives. We've
> got to try and encourage them and tell them how to use their time productively
> because they'll have many, many hours, weeks, years, on their own and doing
> their own thing […] and if they can play musical instruments themselves it's
> fantastic, if they know how to listen to music, that's fantastic. Ok, they'll all know
> how to play computer games because they all do; and use Facebook, because they
> all do. But, you know, it is really giving them a skill to hopefully help them enjoy
> their lives, because they're going to have, they've got a tough life ahead of them.
> Very few get employment, very few get anything other than social education
> centre experiences. They are looked after by the state and it's getting worse, the
> support's getting less and less.
>
> (School 2, Practitioner Interview, Head Teacher)
>
> [I]t's scary once they leave school, it's really, really scary.
>
> (School 1, Site 1, Practitioner Interview, Class 1 Teacher)

These attitudes were unique to the adults interviewed as part of this study. When asked about their futures, students' responses were quite different. Students' imagined futures included working as nursery assistants, event managers and actors. They had dreams and aspirations and knew that realising these ambitions meant going to college or gaining work experience. In short, they were far more optimistic about their future than their teachers, parents and carers were.[1]

Of course, the adults interviewed as part of this study had grounds for their somewhat fearful assessment of students' future employment prospects. Recent figures from the Office of National Statistics (ONS) show that, in the UK:

> There were an estimated 3.8 million people of working age (16-64) with
> disabilities in employment in April-June 2018, an employment rate of 50.7%. The
> employment rate for people without disabilities was 81.1%. (Powell, 2018)

With just over half of disabled people of working age in employment at the time of writing this thesis, adult participants' views are not unfounded. However, the reasons for these outcomes are tied to a complex web of socio-political factors (Harwood, 2014). Of relevance to this study is the way in which the accepted probability of

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[1] It is worth stating here that the views of students who had been labelled as having profound and multiple learning difficulties and/or complex needs were not captured as part of this study. This finding is therefore limited to students who had been labelled as having severe or moderate learning difficulties.

disabled children and young people living lives in unemployment or care had a tendency to shape educational practice. With students' potential for future employment deemed limited, overarching philosophies of music education were re-written and the very meaning of the term 'high expectations' was re-shaped to fit within the confines of the 'realistic'. Pragmatic projections of students' potential futures had a strong bearing on what was deemed appropriate for disabled children and young people to learn in the present. The boundaries that shaped 'high expectations' were not determined by students. Instead, they were shaped by adults' views of what skills and knowledge would 'best' help to prepare students for these pre-determined futures.

It is important to pause here to acknowledge that these attitudes are shaped by a variety of socio-political-edu-cultural beliefs; many of which will be discussed further in Chapter 7. Students' self-imagined futures do not escape this. Responses to the question 'what would you like to do when you leave school'? will inevitably be tied to a variety of cultural norms and ideals. In a neoliberal capitalist society, for example, it is logical that children would imagine their futures to feature employment. Furthermore, in a society that sees gainful employment as an essential component of a meaningful and productive adult life (Snyder & Lopez, 2007), and with the UK care system under significant financial strain (ADASS, 2018) it is also understandable that non-disabled people would equate futures that do not feature employment as being "scary".

It is therefore clear that a variety of political, sociological and psychological factors affect personal beliefs about the potential future lives of disabled children and young people. These beliefs and the way in which they intersect with ideas about what is 'best' in music education are difficult to unravel. The primary aim of this study is to explore what various stakeholders in special education believe constitutes 'best practice' in SEN/D music education and the various barriers and opportunities that exist when trying to achieve this ideal. The findings presented here and in the following section (see section 6.2.10) touch upon the ways in which ableism and disablism operate in music education. Although Chapter 7 serves to critically engage with the findings of this study, this particular barrier to practice warrants a significantly greater amount of interdisciplinary intellectual engagement than can be afforded within the remit of this thesis. Regardless, it is important to present findings related to attitudinal barriers here such that they may serve as a springboard for future research and

discussion. The views presented below are representative of implicit biases towards disabled children and young people. None of the participants taking part in this study sought to actively discriminate against the children and young people they taught or cared for. Nevertheless, the findings below show that common stereotypes and stigma associated with disability affect the way in which disabled children and young people's education is shaped and enacted.

As mentioned above, attitudes towards disability, music and musicianship collided when it came to participants' views about 'best practice'.[2] For a small number of participants, disability and/or specific impairments were seen as barriers to achieving 'best practice' in music education:

> [N]o matter what the song it is it's going to be a bit neither here nor there. So even though they've practiced these for months and months some of them are going to be a bit off. But that's only because of how they are. It's not because they haven't practiced it enough it's just that they're always going to be like that. It's not something curable that they've got […] Like, more practice doesn't make them not autistic.
>
> (Citation withheld to protect participant's identity)
>
> Disability can put barriers in the way no matter what people say, it can do.
>
> (Citation withheld to protect participant's identity)
>
> [S]ometimes their mind can be blank one. That's what we work with.
>
> (Citation withheld to protect participant's identity)

These attitudes led to 'low expectations' of what students would be able to achieve in music:

> [Y]ou generalise in an additional needs school that the standard isn't going to be too high.
>
> (Citation withheld to protect participant's identity)
>
> [Y]ou tend to assume that children in special needs [schools] have very low ability and therefore your expectations are very low.
>
> (Citation withheld to protect participant's identity)

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[2] Unless noted otherwise for the remainder of this section, the term 'participants' refers specifically to the practitioners and primary care-givers who took part in this study.

To combat this, participants felt that it was necessary to "get the expectations right" in special education:

> [O]nce you get the expectations right in specialist and the opportunities right then
> I just think the support and the development and the self-esteem of these young
> people are on a massive trajectory.
>
> (School 1, Practitioner Interview, Head Teacher)
>
> If you believe that they can do it then they've got a better chance of doing it, if you
> don't believe they can do it, they can't. I go back to what I said earlier, I said if
> you haven't [taught] in mainstream and you don't see what mainstream children
> are achieving you could come in here and say "well they're not going to get that so
> therefore we'll go for that" which is a much lower ambition. If you can see what's
> going on in mainstream and say "right, that's their entitlement, that's what we've
> got to try and aspire to, how close can we get?" and until you push it you never
> really know.
>
> (School 2, Practitioner Interview, Head Teacher)

As the School 2 Head Teacher explains above, these expectations were always set in relation to a perceived 'norm'. This norm was frequently informed by normative ideas of child development. Knowing how children *should* develop meant that disabled children and young people, particularly those with learning disabilities and complex needs, were frequently seen to be functioning at a level below the norm. This had the potential to influence people's expectations of what disabled children and young people were capable of achieving in music.

Expectations surrounding students' potential to develop musical skills and abilities were also affected by ableist assumptions about what it means to be musically 'talented'. For some practitioners, disabled children and young people would always be limited in what they could achieve in music education because their non-disabled peers would always be able to out-achieve them:

> In mainstream, no they can't compete to mainstream, that's why they don't always
> get the fair chance to opportunity because yeah, they'll be somebody who can do it
> better than them; that doesn't mean they can't do it and they can't do the best of
> their ability; and while it always knocks out with our parents, what they say is "it
> is so good" they can't believe that they can perform as well as they actually do.
> You know, we've got, we've got Downs children singing really complex words
> and songs and things and really getting involved on a stage and having a great

time. But again, against mainstream pupils when you've got kids who really *can* sing and really *can* dance, they wouldn't get a look in.

(Citation withheld to protect participant's identity)

Here, dominant views about musical aesthetics, talent and ability coincided with views about disability to result in the view that what is 'good' for disabled children and young people will never be as good as "kids who really *can* sing and really *can* dance".

'High expectations' for disabled students were therefore set within specific paradigms which were inevitably shaped by dominant socio-cultural and socio-political views about musical talent and disability. When establishing 'high expectations' for students, the question "how close can we get [to a perceived norm]?" was therefore an implicit factor when it came to "getting the expectations right". The implications of this finding are discussed further in Chapter 7.

6.2.10 Not Fitting the System

The final factor that affected the realisation of 'best practice' in music education for disabled children and young people was that students were constantly fighting to have their achievements recognised in an education system that was not designed for them. They did not 'fit the system'. Again, normative ideas of child development were a key hindrance here. Many participants expressed that the disabled children and young people they taught were 'developing differently' to the perceived developmental trajectory around which the English education system had been established. Sometimes students' development was described by participants as being delayed:

[H]e's five or six years behind his age group.

(School 2, Primary Care-giver Interview, Patricia)

He's six; mentally about 2, we think, but obviously we don't know.

(School 3, Primary Care-giver Interview, Ceri)

Other times, participants explained that, in their experience, students' developmental trajectories were often very different to those set forth in commonly accepted developmental theories. This made various learning theories and developmental models seem 'naïve' when it came to their application in a special education context. For example, when asked if she left initial teacher training feeling prepared to teach music

to students labelled as having SEN/D, the School 2 Visiting KS3 Music Leader explained:

> [Laughs]. I still don't feel prepared to teach them! [Laughs]. Um, in what way? Well it's just totally different [laughs]. I think with the GTP [Graduate Teacher Programme] training you were, you were given all these things, like, like the Bloom's taxonomy and the way people learn and you were given things like independent learning to focus on and this kind-of, it does apply in special needs, but it's not, it's not a straightforward as that; its' not as clean-cut as that. So to teach with those things in mind, it's a bit daft really. It's a bit, um, naïve I think.
>
> (School 2, Practitioner Interview, Visiting KS3 Music Teacher)

The most noticeable effect this had on practice was with regards to assessment. It has already been noted above and in Chapters 4 and 5 that each school approached assessment in music teaching and learning in different ways. What all three schools had in common was that they each felt that the standardised assessment frameworks currently being used in the English education system were not 'fit-for-purpose' when it came to assessing the progress of students labelled as having SEN/D:

> It's quite hard assessing children with special needs anyway because all the systems that are out there were made for mainstream pupils. So our pupils don't keep up with that. We have to take whatever we've got, adapt it, break it down and chunk it down and do the bits.
>
> (School 2, Practitioner Interview, Head Teacher)

> The trouble is that if you're not neuro-typical – and children with complex and multiple learning needs are not neuro-typical by the fact that they were premature births or some other things that went on, so their brains are not wired in the same way as normally developing children – so actually developing an assessment system that just follows the developmental pathway doesn't really work.
>
> (School 1, Site 1, Practitioner Interview, Site Leader)

> Many linear or hierarchical assessments will be unable to detect the very subtle changes in behaviour shown by these learners, regardless of how many 'small steps' are provided. In real life, children's development and learning is not compartmentalised. A fit-for-purpose assessment for learners at the early stages of development must take a more holistic view of learners and focus on how they learn. (School 1, Site 1, Documents, Curriculum Document)

The effect this had on practice was specific to each school's overarching philosophy (as discussed in section 6.2.1). Some schools chose to write their own assessment frameworks and others chose not to assess in music at all. For some students, assessing progress against a linear progressive pathway was also inappropriate because their conditions were degenerative. The School 1 Head Teacher explained that, when it came to 'assessing students' progress' for this small cohort of students, the general aim was as follows:

> For some of those students the target is to maintain [a certain level of skill acquisition] but sometimes it is to accept that they're going to go backwards and giving them actually new skills.
>
> (School 1, Practitioner Interview, Head Teacher)

These students were therefore never going to be seen to be 'making progress' under the auspices of standard developmental frameworks. However, this did not mean that they did not make progress and develop new skills in accordance with their own developmental trajectory:

> Our students are making progress, they're just making progress in different ways.
>
> (School 1, Site 1, Practitioner Interview, Site Leader)

These stagnant views of child development often did a disservice to disabled children and young people. They *were* making progress. They *were* growing and developing and achieving. They just were not doing so in the same way or at the same pace as what was deemed to be developmentally appropriate for a 'typical' child of their age.

The lack of appropriate assessment frameworks for children and young people who were 'developing differently' also placed significant pressures on individual special schools – and, indeed, often individual practitioners – when it came to 'pioneering practice'. Practitioners at all three schools, had dedicated significant time and energy into researching and developing their own unique methods of assessment that best fit their overarching philosophies for teaching and learning at their respective schools. Practitioners saw this as an important component of 'adapting provision to suit pupils' needs'. However, if 'fit-for-purpose' assessment frameworks already existed, practitioners would have been able to devote much more time to developing their teaching practice and improving the day-to-day curriculum offer for their students.

As far as music education was concerned, two out of the three schools had heard of and were using the SoI framework of musical development to complement their teaching practice. However, SoI was never used as a stand-alone assessment framework. It was always combined with additional assessment approaches or was disregarded as a formal assessment framework entirely, despite its perceived relevance to students' musical development. For example, the School 1 Site 1 Class 1 teacher explained:

> [L]ooking at the Sounds of Intent stuff; so I don't really use it because I think it's really good but it's just another assessment thing that I don't want to spend time filling in, but, in terms of my music teaching, it probably does follow those stages that they've set out but I don't refer to it necessarily, but I think if I looked at it I'd go "Oh yeah, we're starting at response to sound, making independent sound" or whatever. […] I think the Sounds of Intent framework would probably show where we're looking at but we don't; I looked at it and was like "this is really, really good" but I never have to send in assessments for music, so I think if you're working in a special school which wants a level for music every year then, fair enough use that, but I think it is something else time consuming that there isn't all the hours in the day to do.
>
> (School 1, Site 1, Practitioner Interview, Class 1 Teacher)

School 1 Site 1's decision not to use the SoI framework of musical development as a formal assessment tool was linked to the previously discussed themes of 'having an overarching philosophy' (section 6.2.1) and 'being held to account' (section 6.2.3). What is interesting is that practitioners at the site had all mentioned how difficult it was to find appropriate assessment frameworks that effectively accounted for students' unique developmental pathways. Here was a tool, specific to music, that was deemed to be of relevance. However, it was not used because it was deemed to be too "time consuming" and did not fit the school's overarching philosophy when it came to the purpose of music in the curriculum.

'Not fitting the system' meant that, ultimately, schools were constantly trying to balance 'doing what is required' with doing what they believed was right. Several practitioners mentioned in their interviews that special schools were not as constrained by the National Curriculum as their mainstream counterparts were:

It's flexible in special needs, you're not governed by the National Curriculum and in a Primary or a mainstream setting you have to teach the National Curriculum and it's all academic. Each school's got to show improvements year after year after year; the pupils have to show improvement year after year after year or even from week to week. Where here, it's more about the well-being of the pupil. Are they happy? Are they safe? Can they be independent? Their life skills?

(School 3, Practitioner Interview, Primary/KS5 Music Teacher)

[I]t's much more of a sensory approach and independence skills, rather than National Curriculum.

(School 1, Site 1, Practitioner Interview, Class 4 Teacher)

This was felt to be beneficial as the National Curriculum was seen to be yet another way in which students did not 'fit the system':

L: We used to have to do the National Curriculum.

I: And what was that like?

L: Ridiculous.

(School 1, Site 1, Practitioner Interview, TA, Linda)

Having the flexibility to adapt provision to suit pupils' needs was important to participants. Being able to step out of the confines of the National Curriculum was therefore seen to be beneficial. Doing so allowed schools to ensure that provision was suitably adapted to students' needs. They were then able to do what they felt was 'right' for students. This included allowing students the freedom to learn at their own pace rather than being penalised for not meeting national standards:

There's so much pressure [in mainstream]. The academics, there's so much pressure but, like, in the special schools, maybe not School 2 but at the school my daughter's in, where it's an SLD school they've probably got more time to explore those things because they're not trying to keep up with all the things they need to do to keep them 'on-track', you know?

(School 2, Primary Care-giver Interview, June)

Having said this, schools were still required to demonstrate that students were making progress in ways that allowed them to be compared with other schools in national league tables. The new and innovative assessment frameworks developed by individual schools were therefore not readily accepted by external education authorities as viable

alternatives to standardised measures of assessing pupils' progress. This was particularly true for School 1 Site 1 and perhaps provides an additional reason why the SoI framework was not included as a specific assessment tool for music in this particular school. Thus, the flexibility afforded from having freedom from the pressures and confines associated with the National Curriculum only went so far, as the following two quotations from a School 1 Ofsted report and curriculum document demonstrate:

> The school has a lot of data and has begun to analyse this further to see how an individual pupil's progress might compare with what is expected nationally, but this is at an early stage.
>
> (School 1, Document, Ofsted Report)
>
> The team have produced a document to convert attainment on Routes for Learning to P levels for reporting purposes.
>
> (School 1, Site 1, Documents, Curriculum Document)

Despite the fact that School 1 Site 1 had spent an incredible amount of time and effort developing a new assessment framework that better suited students' unique pathways of learning and developing, at the time of this fieldwork, assessments carried out under this system still had to be converted to reflect standardised measures that could then be compared and contrasted with "what is expected nationally". Practitioners remained bound by 'doing what is required' even if it went against what practitioners felt was 'right' for students. Students' progress was therefore still judged within a system that was not deemed 'fit-for-purpose'.

Some practitioners were determined to fight for the system that they deemed best for their students. The School 1 Site 1 Site Leader perhaps put it best when she explained:

> I'm not a believer in this mantra of "we need to do it for Ofsted", no, we need to do it if it's best practice and if it's going to add to what we're doing, other than that we don't need to do it. You just need to learn to have your arguments really to argue the case for why.
>
> (School 1, Site 1, Practitioner Interview, Site Leader)

Practitioners were therefore hopeful that they could work to change the educational structures that left their students at a permanent disadvantage in a highly competitive education system.

6.3   Summary: Towards a Grounded Theory of 'Best Practice'

The findings discussed in this and the preceding chapter have shown that, for participants taking part in this study, there were seven key aspects of 'best practice' in SEN/D music education. These seven themes had the potential to be affected by ten additional factors which represented potential barriers and opportunities to achieving 'best practice'. It is clear from the discussion above that these factors had a tendency to intersect. 'Having an overarching philosophy' for example was affected by the 'attitudes and expectations' of individual staff members and 'Having adequate resources' was affected by 'considering cost' and 'having support from the Head'. Figure 6.1 below presents these factors as a hierarchical flow diagram to demonstrate how each barrier/opportunity intersects to form a working theory of what affects 'best practice' in SEN/D music education. Infrastructural factors such as 'staffing considerations', 'needing time' and 'having adequate resources' can be found at the bottom of the flow diagram. The financial, managerial and attitudinal barriers which may prevent this infrastructure from being put in place are shown at the top of the flow-chart. Higher-order themes are shown in boxes with a doubled-lined border. Relevant sub-themes are shown in boxes with a single-lined border. If an obstruction occurs at any point in the flow chart, the realisation of 'best practice' in SEN/D music education is adversely affected.

Whilst this model reflects the experiences and beliefs of the participants taking part in this study, it does require testing with additional research. It would be useful to explore whether this process is unique to schools in Yorkshire or whether it adequately represents the experiences of school stakeholders in other parts of the country. Furthermore, it is inevitable that this process will be culturally specific. Therefore, comparing these findings to similar studies carried out in other countries and within other education systems would be beneficial. The final chapter in this thesis aims to begin this process by exploring how this theory compares with wider literature on 'best practice' in SEN/D music education.

Figure 6.1: Hierarchical Flow-Diagram of Barriers and Enablers of 'Best Practice' in SEN/D Music Education in England
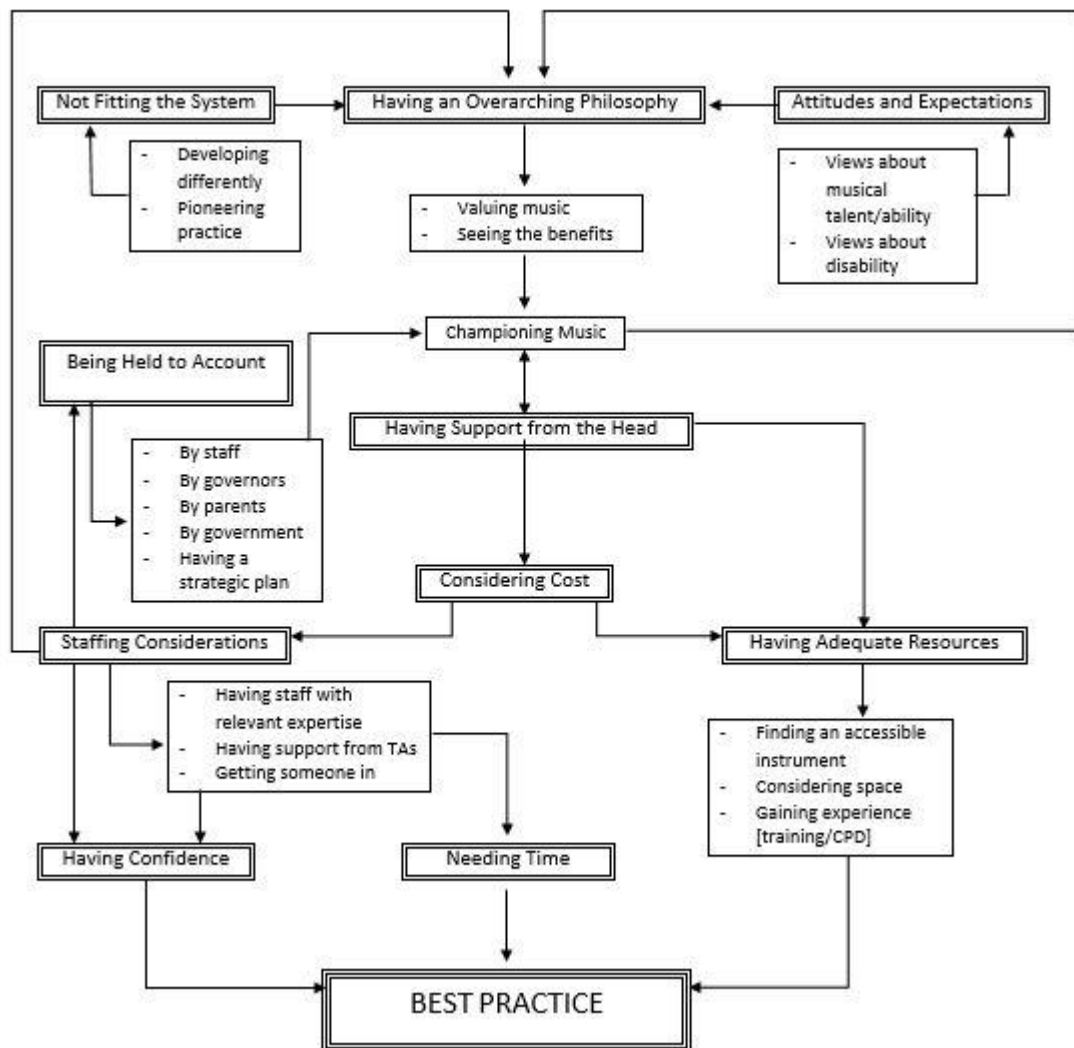
Chapter 7 Discussion

7.1   Introduction

This thesis aimed to explore music in special education from a variety of perspectives in order to build upon the findings of previous research. The project had four primary aims:

- To explore the ways in which music education is currently approached in schools for children and young people who have been labelled as having SEN/D
- To explore what constitutes 'best practice' in music education in these settings
- To explore the various opportunities and barriers schools for children labelled with SEN/D face with regards to the implementation of 'best practice'
- To explore the interplay between music therapy and music education in these settings, with a view to establishing where music therapy might 'fit' within the school curriculum.

The project aimed to better understand not only *what* is happening in music in special education but also *why* and *how* English special schools are choosing to incorporate music into their curricula in certain ways. The term 'best practice' was used as a heuristic device through which to achieve these aims. It was hoped that a better understanding of what constitutes 'best practice' in SEN/D music education (according to a variety of stakeholders) and the processes involved in achieving it would lead to practical suggestions for ways in which the 'patchy' provision identified in previous research (Department for Education, 2011c; Welch et al., 2001; Welch et al., 2016; Zeserson et al., 2014) could be improved.

Ethnography and grounded theory were chosen as the primary research methods for this project. Ethnography allowed the researcher to immerse themselves in the unique culture of each school such that the context in which participants' thoughts, beliefs and actions were formed and enacted could be fully considered during data

collection and analysis. Grounded theory then served to move the data beyond description towards a more theoretical understanding of the ways in which 'best practice' in music education were described and enacted by the stakeholders in each of the three participating special schools.

The following discussion aims to place the key findings of this research project in a broader context by exploring how this theory of 'best practice' fits within the wider research literature published in this field. Some important questions arising from the research findings will be presented and suggestions for future research will be considered. Each of the four research questions listed above will be used as a starting point for this discussion. However, as the results presented in Chapters 4, 5 and 6 of this thesis frequently intersect, it is illogical to discuss each Chapter in complete isolation. Therefore, at times, findings from multiple questions will be discussed under a single heading. The chapter concludes with an evaluation of the limitations and implications of the research, with a particular emphasis on the importance of making future research in the field of music education both accessible to and inclusive of the views of disabled children and young people.

7.2 How is Music Education Approached?

Chapter 4 provided an overview of the way in which music education was approached in each school. Each setting had a very different approach to teaching, learning, curriculum design and assessment which affected the way in which music was integrated into their respective curricula. This is perhaps unsurprising given that 'adapting provision to suit pupils' needs' was one of the primary factors agreed upon by the majority of participants in this study when describing 'best practice' in music education (see Chapter 5). Each school had a different student demographic; School 1 Site 1 catered for students labelled as having PMLD/CMLN, School 2 for students labelled as having MLD, and School 3 for students labelled as having PD, medical needs and complex learning needs. The varying provision in each setting can therefore be attributed to the ways in which each school adapted provision to suit pupils' needs.

The overarching philosophy of each school also differed. The term 'overarching philosophy' here specifically refers to a school's fundamental beliefs with regards to teaching and learning practices. As discussed in Chapter 6, a school's philosophy was a key barrier/enabler of what participants deemed to be 'best practice' in SEN/D music

education (see Figure 6.1). For School 1 Site 1, this philosophy was documented in their informal curriculum framework (see Table 4.1). Teaching was not subject-specific at this site. Instead, subjects were used as 'vehicles' to help students develop skills in seven curriculum areas (see Table 4.2). Music was listed as an approach to teaching and learning in two of these areas: communication and creativity. Music was therefore predominantly aimed at helping students to develop non-musical skills. Ockelford's (2000) concept of education *through* music (see Chapter 2 for a full overview of this concept) serves as an accurate description of this approach. Students' progress and attainment in music was therefore not formally assessed at School 1 Site 1. Having said this, the Class 1 Teacher had explored the use of the SoI framework of musical development (Ockelford et al., n.d) as an assessment tool. She noted that, although she felt the framework was "really good" and that it accurately portrayed the musical development of the students in her class, the Site had ultimately decided not to use it because they were not required to "send in assessments for music" (School 1 Site 1, Class 1 Teacher). 'Being held to account' was therefore a barrier to practice here (see Chapter 6). However, the lack of accountability for assessing students' musical progress was also linked to the Site's overarching philosophy. The Site did not assess in any of the National Curriculum foundation subjects. It therefore makes sense that they did not make an exception for music.

School 1 Site 1 also used music as a sound of reference. The use of music for such a purpose was not observed in either of the other two schools taking part in this study. However, the most recent iteration of the PROMISE research (Welch et al., 2016) found that some schools who took part in the survey (n = 10) used music as a sound of reference during transition times, greeting times, lining up, tidy-up times, lesson changes, at the end of the school day, and as a way to signify the day of the week. This suggests that the practice is used in other settings. It would be interesting to explore whether the schools that reported using music at such times in the PROMISE research were also schools that taught students labelled as having PMLD. If this is the case, it would add further support to the conclusion put forward in this thesis that music education practice in English special schools varies because schools are 'adapting provision to suit pupils' needs'.

In contrast to School 1 Site 1, Schools 2 and 3 did teach music as a discrete subject. Having said this, the way in which music was incorporated into the curriculum

was very different in each setting. At School 2, music was taught as a stand-alone subject for students in Key Stage 3. It was also loosely woven into some topic areas in the primary school curriculum (i.e. Key Stages 1 and 2). An upper school and lower school choir were also important weekly music-making opportunities for students attending School 2. In School 3, music was taught as a stand-alone subject to all students in Key Stages 2 and 3. It also formed an important part of the EYFS and Key Stage 1 curriculum. Students in Key Stage 5 could also choose to study music as one of their post-16 subjects. Neither school taught music at Key Stage 4. It was not exactly clear why this was. The School 3 Primary/KS5 Music Teacher explained that Key Stage 4 was a time where students needed to "concentrate on the more academic subjects". Additional research is needed to explore exactly why these schools are choosing not to offer music at Key Stage 4. One hypothesis is that the current drive for standards in a handful of core National Curriculum subjects (for a full discussion, see Chapter 2) could be affecting the way in which special schools choose to offer arts subjects to students in Key Stage 4 (Daubney & Mackrill, 2017, 2018; Fellows, 2017; Greevy et al., 2012; Johnes, 2017). For example, many participants taking part in this research mentioned that their teaching priorities were being swayed by the need to continuously demonstrate students' progress in English and Maths. Having said this, the most recent iteration of the PROMISE research showed that, of the 57 schools responding to the survey, 83% taught music at Key Stage 4. This would suggest that the omission of music from this Key Stage is not currently common practice in special schools in England. This particular finding therefore warrants additional research if we are to fully understand why these schools are choosing not to teach music at Key Stage 4.

Schools 2 and 3 also approached assessment in very different ways. Again, this difference was related to their overarching philosophy. At the time of this research School 3 was in the process of establishing a detailed music curriculum plan. This included a bespoke assessment framework that four practitioners at the school had developed by drawing upon the National Curriculum, the SoI framework of musical development and the school's own philosophy of pedagogical practice (see Tables 4.5 and 4.6). The School 3 Primary/KS5 Music Teacher explained that, although it was not a statutory requirement to assess students in music, the school felt it was important to monitor students' progress in the subject through regular formal formative assessment. Conversely, although School 2 was also in the process of establishing a music

curriculum at the time of this study, they had chosen not to formally assess in music. The School 2 Head Teacher explained that this was because the main aim of music education at the school was to provide students with an opportunity to have fun. Assessment was seen as something that would detract from students' enjoyment of the subject. Therefore, formal assessment of students' musical progress was deemed inappropriate. This did not mean that students' progress was not monitored. There were many instances in Key Stage 3 music lessons, for example, where the Visiting KS3 Music Teacher carried out informal formative assessments of students' progress to inform her lesson planning. In contrast to School 3, however, this assessment was not carried out against a specific assessment framework and was not formally recorded or reported.

In addition to 'having an overarching philosophy', 'being held to account', 'attitudes and expectations' and 'not fitting the system' were all seen to be important factors that affected the way in which schools chose to monitor students' musical progress and attainment. All three schools mentioned that there was little accountability at a national level to assess students' progress in music. School 1 Site 1 and School 2 also noted that many assessment frameworks currently available to special schools were not fit-for-purpose because they were developed for mainstream pupils with normative frameworks of development in mind. Finally, participants' attitudes and expectations of what disabled children and young people would be able to achieve in music (which were further influenced by their beliefs about talent and disability) also affected what and how schools decided to assess in music education.

The varying approaches to formal assessment in each setting raise important questions about the perceived purpose of music education in special schools. Each school had differing beliefs about what music was *for* when it came to teaching students labelled as having SEN/D. When discussing the purpose of music education Welch and Ockelford (2010) assert that "[t]he primary function of music educators is to nurture and develop each individual's inherent musicality" (p. 49). Jellison (2015) echoes this, arguing that successful music programs are ones that teach "knowledge and skills that are central to a musical life" (p. 18). However, musical outcomes were, for the most part, secondary to non-musical outcomes for the children and young people attending each of the three schools participating in this study. As such, monitoring and assessment of students' progress *in* music was only deemed to be appropriate by one

school. There is therefore a disconnection between theory and practice here. Theories such as those of Ockelford (2000) and Robertson (2000) that claim that music education is primarily teacher-led and focuses on developing musical knowledge and skills, do not account for the way in which an amalgamation of the above factors serves to influence schools' policies and pedagogies (see Chapter 2 section 2.4.1 for a full overview of these theories). In 2008, Ockelford asserted that "music education for children and young people with complex needs is still a pedagogical infant" (p. 3). The findings of this research demonstrate that the same can be said for the philosophy of music education. Exploring what music education is *for* and establishing a sector-wide philosophy of practice when it comes to teaching students who happen to be disabled is therefore an important area for future enquiry.

All three schools employed external music specialists to lead some of their music activities. This was most notable at School 2 where the main bulk of music teaching was carried out by external practitioners (specifically the Visiting KS3 Music Teacher and the Singing Teacher). School 2 also employed three peripatetic instrumental teachers whose teaching practice was not observed as part of this study. At School 1 Site 1 and School 3, the majority of music teaching was carried out by general class teachers. However, School 3 did employ a Visiting Music Leader to lead 'musical engagement' sessions with students who were in receipt of Pupil Premium funding. They also briefly employed two Visiting Music Leaders to lead an after-school music club for six weeks of the summer term. In a similar vein, towards the end of the Autumn 2015 term (i.e. the period of fieldwork at the school), School 1 Site 1 also employed a Visiting Music Leader from the local Music Hub to lead an after-school music club. Both School 1 Site 1 and School 3 employed a Music Therapist.

In Chapter 6 it was explained that 'staffing considerations' and 'considering cost' were two of the principle factors that affected when, how and for what purpose schools decided to employ visiting music leaders and specialist music teachers. For the most part, each setting was seeking to be as self-sufficient as possible by making the most of the skills of their full-time staff. This included TAs. Schools 2 and 3, for example each had at least one TA who had taken a lead role in helping to teach music lessons and organise extra-curricular musical activities. Schools did not actively seek to employ full-time teaching staff with musical skills. Rather, during recruitment it was looked upon as an added bonus if potential staff members were able to teach music. As

the School 1 Head Teacher explained, this serendipitous approach to recruiting staff with musical expertise left the continued quality of music education in each school in a state of flux. If schools lacked staff with the relevant skills and confidence to teach music they were usually open to 'getting someone in'. These specialist teachers were most frequently employed via the local Music Hub. However, cost was a concern here. All three schools explained that the employment of external music specialists was dependent upon their having enough money in the school budget to fund them. In order to prioritise funds, it was important that members of senior leadership both valued and saw the benefits of music education. Being held to account by staff members who were willing to champion music was also a key factor that influenced the way in which each Head of school made decisions about 'staffing considerations' (see Figure 6.1).

It is clear that this serendipitous approach to employing staff with the relevant skills and confidence to teach music places music in special education in a precarious position. The participants taking part in this study suggested that developing school-specific, long-term music policy and curriculum documents could serve to safeguard against the negative effects of these 'staffing considerations' (although some schools faced barriers to creating these documents; see Chapter 6, Section 6.2.3). A recommendation of this research would be that schools take this a step further to ensure that a Music Coordinator is employed in every school. This practitioner should have the relevant skills and confidence to be able to manage the music curriculum in each school, leading and consulting on music teaching across all Key Stages. The Music Coordinator would be responsible for building links with the local Music Hub (with reciprocal input from the Hubs, of course). Identifying school-wide areas of pedagogical strength and weakness and supporting the training and development of non-specialist staff members (which includes TAs) would also be a priority. This is not a new suggestion. Many special schools already have a designated Music Coordinator whose role is to manage the music activities in their school (Welch et al., 2001; Welch et al., 2016). The problem is that these roles are rarely a compulsory component of each school's employment practice. Without this safeguard, the quality of music in special education is always going to be dependent on 'considering cost' and 'staffing considerations'.

It is important to note that previous research has found that the employment of a specialist SEN/D Music Coordinator is often not straightforward. For example, when

reporting on two case studies of music education and music therapy in special education, Mawby (2015) found that one special school taking part in her study had struggled to recruit a specialist music teacher who could teach music to students across all Key Stages. In the end, the school decided to offer the role to a music therapist "on an unqualified teacher basis" (p. 59). A similar situation also occurred when a Music Education Hub (Kent Music) recently tried to recruit an SEN/D music specialist/strategic manager (Self, 2017). A long recruitment drive resulted in just 4 applications to the role. There is also therefore a need for better training of SEN/D music education specialists in ITT and beyond. Greater access to and prioritisation of CPD in inclusive music education for music practitioners working across the sector is also crucial. Nationally there are several organisations that are already taking the lead in this area (Drake Music, OpenUp Music, the One Handed Musical Instrument Trust (OHMI), NYMAZ[1] and the Sounds of Intent PGCert being five notable organisations/initiatives that offer training in this area) and much positive change has occurred in recent years. More needs to be done, however, to make this training accessible to a greater number of practitioners and to support sector-wide development (Kinsella, Fautley, Nenadic, & Whittaker, 2018; Perkins & Keogh, 2017). Indeed, the most recent PROMISE research echoes this finding, acknowledging that "survey respondents would welcome increased opportunities for staff development" (Welch et al., 2016, p. 253).

Schools 2 and 3 offered students a variety of opportunities to play instruments, sing and perform. Both schools took part in an assortment of external events. At School 2, these predominantly involved students who sang in the upper school choir. The choir were regularly invited to perform at local care homes and charitable events. In the summer term both the lower and upper school choirs also took part in a local music festival. In addition, School 2 took great pride in their annual Christmas concert which provided an opportunity for all students in the school to perform. Students at School 3 were also given the opportunity to perform at a variety of external events. At the time of fieldwork, for example, some students in the school had taken part in a local music festival where they had come together with other local schools and organisations to form a choir of over 1,000 voices. At the end of the summer term, some of the Key Stage 5 students also performed a Samba piece they had learnt during their music

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[1] The North Yorkshire Music Action Zone.

lessons at a local charitable awards ceremony (which had inspired the school to create a permanent Samba band). Students at School 3 were also regularly given the chance to perform in special-occasion assemblies if they wanted to.

School 1 Site 1 did not offer students as many practical performance opportunities as Schools 2 and 3 but they did offer a variety of extra-curricular musical activities for students to take part in. These included bringing live music into the school for students to watch and listen to, employing a Music Leader from the local Music Hub to lead an after-school music club and, at the end of the Autumn term, all of the School 1 Site 1 students took part in a Christmas concert. Whilst this was a valuable opportunity, each of the class performances involved very little musical engagement and/or playing/singing from the students. Most of the skits either involved the students dancing to music or engaging in multi-sensory activities that occasionally involved the use of hand-held percussion instruments.

The reasons for the lack of active musical performance opportunities (i.e. activities where students are actively engaged in creating music rather than performing to music) for students labelled as having PMLD is an area that would benefit from additional research. It is difficult to say for certain why School 1 Site 1 did not offer these opportunities to their students. When describing 'best practice' in her interview, the Class 4 teacher mentioned that she felt that performance opportunities would be beneficial for students attending other school sites because it would enable them to "showcase to people who maybe know them really well, who care about 'this is what we can do'". However, she felt that performance opportunities for students at the CMLN site were less relevant. It is not clear why this was. The school knew their students exceptionally well so there is a chance that the decision to limit performance opportunities was grounded in the Site's commitment to 'adapt provision to suit pupils' needs'. However, it is also reasonable to hypothesise that 'attitudes and expectations' and 'making it accessible' (i.e. 'finding an accessible instrument') were additional reasons that performance opportunities were limited for students labelled as having PMLD. Recent research has found that disabled children and young people are often excluded from playing and performing in ensembles (Deane, Holford, Hunter, & Mullen, 2015; Fautley & Whittaker, 2017; Gall et al., 2018a, 2018b; Perkins & Keogh, 2017). A primary reason for this is lack of access to accessible instruments and repertoire (Gall et al., 2018a, 2018b). At practice level, organisations such as the

OHMI, OpenUp Music and Drake Music are breaking down barriers when it comes to accessible music-making for disabled children and young people by working with disabled musicians to create adapted instruments. OpenUp Music have also increased disabled children and young people's access to performance opportunities by launching the Open Orchestras programme (OpenUp Music, n.d.). Research in this field has yet to catch up with this innovative, paradigm-shifting work (Gall et al., 2018b; Perkins & Keogh, 2017). A better understanding of the specific barriers to accessing performance opportunities for children and young people labelled as having PMLD would therefore be a considerable contribution to the field.

In addition to variation in performance opportunities, each school's approach to instrumental and vocal tuition also varied (see Chapter 4). Students in all schools had an opportunity to play musical instruments and to sing. However, the traditional peripatetic small group or 1-to-1 music lessons found in many mainstream schools in England were notably absent in two out of the three special schools visited as part of this research project. School 2 was the only school to formally bring in specialist peripatetic instrumental teachers to teach students on a 1-to-1 basis. This provision was offered to students who showed a particular musical aptitude and who expressed an interest in learning to play a specific instrument. School 3 did offer some small group/1-to-1 instrumental tuition but this was reliant upon the staff employed at the school giving up their time to lead these sessions (i.e. 'staffing considerations'). Donna, a TA at School 3, had offered to use her skills as a classically trained guitarist to lead a guitar club for a small group of students at Thursday and Friday lunchtimes. The Visiting Music Leader at School 3 also led a recorder group with students on a Friday lunchtime. Conversely, School 1 Site 1 did not offer peripatetic instrumental or vocal tuition as an opportunity for students.

There were three reasons for the lack of permanent peripatetic teaching at School 1 Site 1 and School 3. Firstly, the Head Teacher at School 1 Site 1 explained that peripatetic tuition did not fit with the school's overarching philosophy. Traditional instrumental/vocal tuition was felt to be inappropriate for students labelled as having PMLD, perhaps because many instruments were inaccessible. Secondly, School 3 faced issues with ensuring equality of access to such tuition. The School 3 KS3 Music Teacher/Music Coordinator explained that if the school were to offer peripatetic vocal/instrumental lessons, these would need to be made available to all students who

wished to take part to keep such provision in line with the school's equal opportunities policies. Funding, and timetabling issues (i.e. 'considering cost' and 'needing time') prevented this. Finally, the Head Teacher at School 3 expressed the belief that there was not a demand among students for such provision. Interviews and informal conversations with the students and primary care-givers taking part in this research revealed that this was not actually the case. For example, Whitney, Moana, and Louisa (three students at School 3) all expressed a desire to learn to play a musical instrument in their interviews.

The School 3 Head Teacher's incorrect assumption about the lack of demand for this provision amongst her students is perhaps indicative of wider assumptions about the applicability of this style of teaching to special education. The theories of practice put forward by Ockelford (2000) and Robertson (2000), for example, both placed 'training' (which included peripatetic teaching) in a separate strand to music education in their models of SEN/D music education (see Chapter 2, Section 2.4.1 for a full overview of these theories). This suggests that such provision is seen as an addendum to music education for disabled children and young people. However, elsewhere in the literature, peripatetic vocal and instrumental teaching (alongside general classroom music lessons) has been referred to as one of the two core approaches to music education in England (Kinsella et al., 2018). The lack of such provision for children and young people attending special schools therefore warrants additional research. Why is it that peripatetic vocal/instrumental teaching is seen to be inappropriate for the majority of students labelled as having SEN/D? The three reasons given above suggest that the decision of whether such provision should be included in a special school's curriculum depends upon a school's overarching philosophy. It therefore stands to reason (given the findings presented in Figure 6.1) that the factors that shape a school's philosophy (i.e. 'not fitting the system' and 'attitudes and expectations') significantly affect this decision. Additional research which explores these factors would be a welcome addition to these research findings.

7.3   What is 'Best Practice'?

Chapter 5 outlined seven fundamental teaching practices that were integral to all stakeholders' views about 'best practice'. These were: adapting provision to suit pupils' needs; adapting provision to suit pupils' preferences; knowing the students; offering

musical opportunities; making it accessible; making it participatory; and having fun. Each of these factors is discussed in turn below.

7.3.1 Adapting Provision to Suit Pupils' Needs

Adapting provision to suit pupils' needs was the most prominent aspect of 'best practice' identified in this research. This finding aligns well with previous literature published in the field of SEN/D music education (e.g. Adamek, 2001; Darrow, 2009, 2014; T. Harris, 2016; Jaquiss & Paterson, 2017; McCord & Watts, 2006). Students' needs were primarily assessed in relation to what practitioners felt each student needed to be happy, healthy and safe, as well as what would help them to prepare for a future in which they could live with as much independence as possible. This meant that students' needs were more frequently associated with non-musical goals and learning outcomes than musical ones (although each school differed in the amount of emphasis they placed on the importance of students developing musical skills and abilities). Ockelford (2008) notes that the first iteration of the PROMISE research (Welch et al., 2001) demonstrated similar findings, concluding that "it appears that music coordinators find it easier to conceptualise *extra*-musical outcomes to musical activity with pupils with SLD and PMLD than purely *musical* attainment and progress" (Ockelford, 2008, p. 28, emphasis in original).

Furthermore, ensuring that teachers pitched music lessons/sessions at the right level was a crucial element of adapting provision to suit pupils' needs. Doing so ensured that students found the lesson content both engaging and enjoyable. Being flexible was also believed to be an important aspect of 'best practice' by participants in this study. The need for flexibility in music lessons has also been highlighted by Darrow (2014) and T. Harris (2016) who note the importance of fostering an adaptable, responsive approach to instruction in music education for students labelled as having SEN/D. Engaging in reflexive practice was also seen to be important. Adapting provision to suit pupils' needs therefore required continued engagement from teaching staff both within and between lessons to ensure that learning opportunities were pitched at the right level for students.

Despite the importance of adapting provision to suit pupils' needs, a significant finding of this research has been that students' needs are not seen through a neutral

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lens. Beliefs about talent, disability and students' seemingly inevitable futures of unemployment and care (see Chapter 6, section 6.2.9 for a full discussion of this finding) all affected the way in which practitioners decided what was 'best' for students. This finding is discussed further in section 7.4.

7.3.2   Adapting Provision to Suit Pupils' Preferences

Adapting provision to suit pupils' preferences was also seen to be an important aspect of 'best practice' in SEN/D music education. The students at Schools 2 and 3 particularly stressed this point. They explained that teachers were more likely to motivate students to participate in musical learning activities if they were inclusive of students' preferences. Practitioners at School 1 Site 1 also noted that music was a great motivator for students labelled as having PMLD.

Allowing students the freedom to choose how they took part in musical learning activities was also important. Sometimes this was as simple as letting the students decide which song to sing or instrument to play. For School 1 Site 1, however, this also meant letting the students choose when not to participate in music activities. These findings are concurrent with those of previous research (Bell, 2014; Gerrity, Hourigan, & Horton, 2013).

7.3.3   Knowing the Students

In order to adapt provision to suit pupils' needs and preferences it was imperative that practitioners knew students well. However, getting to know the students took time. This made it difficult for part-time visiting practitioners to successfully adapt provision in these ways. Collaborative working between full-time and part-time staff was therefore imperative. Visiting staff explained that it was important to have information about the students they were teaching. This went beyond the usual sharing of primary health-care needs. In order to be able to pitch their sessions at the right level, visiting practitioners required additional information about students' preferences and previous achievements in music. This information was very rarely shared.

Sharing information was important for all visiting practitioners. However, it was particularly important for visiting staff who were working with students for a short period of time (i.e. on short-term projects or carousel sessions). These practitioners had less time to learn students' needs and preferences first-hand from the students

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themselves. This often meant that not much learning occurred in the first few sessions as the visiting practitioner had to spend time gauging what would be appropriate for students through trial and error. This was reported to be frustrating and unnecessarily labour intensive for both the visiting practitioner and the student. Sharing information was therefore particularly important if short-term music activities were to be successful.

It was clear from the research findings that 'needing time' to share information was a significant barrier to 'best practice' when it came to getting to know the students. What remains unclear from the data is the way in which this situation can be improved. The School 2 Singing Teacher explained that, for her, it was important that visiting practitioners made sure that they were 'present' and 'visible' at the schools they worked at. She explained that arriving to work early and attending school events such as sports days and school fayres had helped her to get to know the students. Whilst this approach may have worked well for the School 2 Singing Teacher, for many visiting practitioners the nature of their freelance work schedules will make this impossible. There is also a risk that such practices could become exploitative as they are likely to be reliant upon the visiting practitioner giving up their time in an unpaid capacity. Schools need to ensure that visiting practitioners have adequate information about students prior to working with them. Time needs to be made available to share this information. Open channels of communication between visiting and full-time staff throughout short-term projects are also imperative so that the sharing of information is continuous and collaborative. To ensure that student voice is not denied here it is also important that decisions about what information gets shared with visiting practitioners are made in collaboration with the students. Additional research which explores the best ways to improve communication and information sharing between full-time and part-time staff and which takes into account student voice would be beneficial. Such research would facilitate the development of realistic and useful solutions to this particular barrier to 'best practice'.

7.3.4   Offering Musical Opportunities

Practitioners and primary care-givers at all three schools felt that offering students as many musical opportunities as possible was an important aspect of 'best practice' in music education. School was the main hub of musical activity for students. Many

students and primary care-givers experienced difficulties when it came accessing extra-curricular activities outside school. Having said this, there was plenty of evidence to suggest that students frequently engaged with music at home.

The emphasis of 'offering musical opportunities' was on allowing students a chance to experience a wide variety of music. Curricula were designed with this in mind, with each term or half-term focusing on a different musical instrument, theme or genre. Students at School 3 particularly enjoyed the approach their school took to organising the music curriculum (which focused on a different genre of music each term). Moana, Whitney and Louisa all mentioned how much they enjoyed learning about different genres of music. Moana even mentioned that she had downloaded some of the music she had learnt about in school onto her iPod, demonstrating that students' experiences in the classroom had the potential to affect their personal engagement with music at home.

It is important to note that the types of musical opportunities offered to students corresponded with each school's overarching philosophy. At School 1 Site 1 music was used as a means of helping students to develop non-musical skills. At Schools 2 and 3 the desired outcome of music education was to facilitate students' enjoyment of music and to increase their ability to use/listen to music in their leisure time. None of the schools mentioned music as a viable career path for students and the development of musical skills was usually secondary to the development of non-musical skills. This meant that opportunities to learn to play an instrument to a high standard were usually not offered to students (as discussed in section 7.2 above). A variety of socio-political-edu-cultural beliefs contributed to this decision. The perceived reality of students' futures was a particularly pertinent factor. The impact of tailoring music education to fit a pre-determined 'realistic' future (which, crucially, is usually not decided by the child or young person themselves) is discussed further in section 7.4.

7.3.5 Making it Accessible

Many participants described music as something which was fundamentally accessible. However, for access to move beyond simplistic musical engagement such as strumming a ukulele or banging a drum, practitioners had to think about ways in which they could make musical learning accessible. This was closely connected to 'adapting provision to

suit pupils' needs'. For students attending School 1 Site 1, making the environment accessible by attending to students' physical and sensory needs was an important access consideration. Adapting provision to suit pupils' moods and preferences was also key and repetition was essential. As the School 1 Site 1 Class 4 teacher notes, "doing a stand-alone session is not going to be useful. It's about building the anticipation so that they know where the session is going, so that they can predict, so that they can contribute" (see section 5.2.5). Repetition has also been highlighted as an important element of 'best practice' in SEN/D music education in the wider literature (Gerrity et al., 2013; T. Harris, 2016; Jellison, 2015).

For Schools 2 and 3, where curricula were designed to enable students to develop both musical and non-musical skills, ensuring that students had access to accessible instruments was vital. Again, instrument adaptations had to be considered in relation to a child or young person's individual needs. As discussed in Chapter 6, 'having adequate resources', 'having confidence' and 'attitudes and expectations' could all serve as barriers to achieving 'best practice' in this area. For example, during the term of fieldwork at School 2, students in Year 8 were learning how to play the guitar. This instrument proved to be inaccessible for several students. Beliefs and assumptions about there being a 'correct' way to play the guitar and lack of confidence and knowledge on the part of the practitioners to be able to adapt the instrument to suit pupils' needs limited students' learning opportunities. Bell (2014), himself a teacher of students with learning disabilities, highlights a number of ways in which the guitar can be adapted, many of which have stemmed from research in the field of music therapy. Teaching staff at School 2 were unaware of such adaptations, however (as was I at the time of fieldwork). There is therefore a need for increased training and knowledge sharing in this field. In addition, research which explores the various ways in which traditional acoustic instruments can be adapted to suit the needs of learners with a variety of access needs would be a valuable contribution to the literature (Kinsella et al., 2018).

7.3.6 Making it Participatory

Getting students actively involved in music making was deemed to be a central aspect of 'best practice'. The focus here was primarily on ensuring that students were engaged in music activities. Many practitioners felt that if students were not engaged, learning

would not happen. In order for music sessions to be participatory, they had to be accessible. An important aspect of 'making it participatory' was allowing students time and space to make their own choices and play instruments for themselves. Some practitioners struggled with this. Ensuring that all staff shared the same approach when it came to ensuring that music lessons/sessions were participatory was therefore imperative.

'Pitching it at the right level', 'adapting provision to suit pupils' needs' and 'knowing the students' were three additional elements of 'best practice' that fed into 'making it participatory'. As noted above, this occasionally meant that visiting practitioners struggled to achieve what participants deemed to be 'best practice' in this area (see vignette 5.1). 'Working in partnership' and 'sharing information' were therefore imperative if part-time visiting music teachers were to maximise the effectiveness of their sessions when it came to ensuring that they were participatory.

7.3.7   Having Fun

The final aspect of 'best practice' agreed upon by all participants was that music lessons should be fun. For School 2 this was the primary aim of music education. In a similar vein to 'making it participatory', 'having fun' was seen to be an important aspect of increasing students' engagement and therefore, ultimately, their learning.

7.4   What Affects 'Best Practice'?

Grounded theory analysis of the data found that there were 10 factors that affected 'best practice' in SEN/D music education. These were: having an overarching philosophy; having support from the Head; being held to account; staffing considerations; considering cost; having adequate resources; having confidence; needing time; attitudes and expectations; and not fitting the system. The way in which all of these factors intersect to form a working theory of what affects 'best practice' is shown in Figure 6.1. This hierarchical flow-diagram demonstrates the process through which schools are not only achieving 'best practice' but also the way in which they make decisions about what constitutes 'best practice'.

A number of infrastructural barriers to 'best practice' are depicted at the bottom of the flow diagram. These include 'staffing considerations', 'considering cost',

'having adequate resources' and 'needing time'. The Head Teacher was seen to be a crucial gatekeeper when it came to ensuring that these factors were in place. This finding aligns with those of previous research studies which have explored which factors affect the quality of school music provision (Abril & Bannerman, 2014; Zeserson et al., 2014). 'Valuing music', 'seeing the benefits', 'being held to account' and 'championing music' were all conditions that served to convince Heads of school to allocate the staffing, time, finances and resources needed to facilitate 'best practice' in music education. Many of these conditions were reliant upon 'staffing considerations'. Without passionate staff members who were willing to champion music and hold Heads of school to account, there was a strong chance that music would disappear from the curriculum. This finding adds further weight to the recommendation that the permanent employment of a full-time Music Coordinator should become a compulsory requirement of every special school. Without this safeguard, music provision in special education will be persistently patchy.

'Having confidence' was another potential barrier/enabler of 'best practice' in SEN/D music education. Practitioners taking part in this study generally felt that it was important to have confidence in two areas of practice: leading music activities and teaching students labelled as having SEN/D. Having confidence was frequently linked to 'having experience' and trusting in your professional skills and abilities. However, participants reported that having musical skills and experience were not always a guarantee that teachers would be confident enough to lead musical activities. An individual's personal, musical and professional identity were therefore additional considerations when exploring issues of confidence. Furthermore, confidence was not seen to be a dichotomous state of being. Teachers were not simply 'confident' or 'not confident' when it came to teaching music. Music is a broad art form with a variety of genres, styles, instruments, ideas and approaches. The practitioners taking part in this study (i.e. teachers and TAs) felt that it was not possible to feel knowledgeable and confident in all areas. 'Reflecting on practice' and 'knowing your limits' were therefore important considerations for these individuals. Doing so enabled them to determine where they might need additional training and/or experience to help boost their confidence. 'Experimenting' and 'challenging yourself' were also seen to be useful ways of developing practice in areas that teachers were less confident in teaching.

An important finding in relation to 'having confidence' was that many practitioners expressed that their ITT did not adequately prepare them to teach music to disabled children and young people. Some teachers taking part in this study had decades of teaching experience and had therefore completed their training at a time when inclusion was not as high on the educational agenda. Others (such as the School 1 Site 1 Class 1 Teacher, the School 2 Visiting KS3 Music Teacher and the School 2 Class 4 Teacher) had completed their training very recently. All reported leaving ITT feeling unprepared to teach music to students labelled as having SEN/D. There is much evidence in the literature to suggest that this finding is not unique to practitioners in England. For example, research has shown that teachers in the USA (e.g. Hammel & Gerrity, 2012; Hourigan, 2007, 2009; Jones, 2014) and Hong Kong (Wong & Chik, 2015a, 2015b; Wong, Chik, & Chan, 2015) report feeling similarly unprepared to teach disabled children and young people upon leaving ITT. The experience of such unpreparedness is therefore not exclusive to the participants taking part in this study.

Research in the UK relating to issues of practitioners' confidence to teach music following ITT has mostly focused on exploring issues of primary teachers' confidence levels (Biasutti, Hennessy, & de Vugt-Jansen, 2014; Hallam et al., 2009; Hennessy, 2000, 2017; Hennessy et al., 2001; Seddon & Biasutti, 2008). These studies show that prior musical experiences and beliefs, the content of ITT courses, support and encouragement from senior colleagues, and being able to tailor what you teach to fit within your own comfort zone all have an impact on trainee primary school teachers' feelings of confidence in relation to teaching music. However, Hennessy (2017) explains that it is very rare for PGCE programs to offer more than 8 hours of music input for trainee teachers. Furthermore, despite recent calls for improvements in SEN/D input in ITT (Carter, 2015; Salt, 2010), the most recent Newly Qualified Teacher (NQT) survey (Department for Education, 2018a) reports that, currently, only 53% of NQTs reported feeling prepared to teach pupils with SEN/D. These findings may explain why many teachers taking part in this study (including those who were recently qualified) left ITT feeling unprepared to teach music to children labelled as having SEN/D. To date, it would appear that there has been little to no research which specifically explores how ITT providers are approaching the topic of inclusive music education in their training courses. This is an area that warrants additional research. Furthermore, a more substantial review of the specific factors which affect NQT's

feelings of confidence and preparedness to teach music to students labelled as having SEN/D would also be of benefit.

The hierarchical flow diagram presented in Figure 6.1 also drew attention to two factors that have a significant impact on the way in which a school formulates its overarching philosophy. These were 'not fitting the system' and 'attitudes and expectations'. It was acknowledged at the end of Chapter 6 (when discussing these factors) that a variety of socio-political-edu-cultural beliefs affected the way in which participants conceptualised 'best practice' in SEN/D music education. The term socio-political-edu-cultural beliefs has been used deliberately here to account for the ways in which the social, the cultural and the political coalesce when people make decisions about what is 'best' in education. As Cheong (2000) contends, schools do not operate in isolation. Their practices are influenced by the culture of the community and society in which they operate. The intricacies of the ways in which socio-political-edu-cultural beliefs affect practice have only begun to be touched upon in this thesis. Nevertheless, the findings of this research demonstrate that students' needs are not seen through a neutral lens. Attitudes towards disability, talent and musicianship coupled with the imagined realities of students' seemingly inevitable futures of unemployment and care all served to influence what adult participants felt was 'best' for disabled children and young people when it came to music education. This is problematic when the very foundation of 'best practice' in music education (as perceived by the participants in this study) relies upon practitioners 'adapting provision to suit pupils' needs'. If socio-political-edu-cultural beliefs serve to influence how these needs are perceived (which, in turn, affects the way in which schools shape their overarching philosophies) an important question arises: is 'best practice' really best practice?

As mentioned in Chapter 6, a full examination of this finding requires much greater interdisciplinary intellectual engagement than can be afforded within the remit of this thesis. Regardless, a thorough critical exploration of the way in which ableism and disablism operate in music education is an important recommendation for future research. A starting point for this work would be to re-examine research in the field of music and special/inclusive education through a Critical Disability Studies (CDS) framework (see Chapter 2). Important work in this area has been started by scholars such as Lubet (2009a, 2009b, 2011a, 2011b), Straus (2011, 2014) and T. Dobbs (2012, 2017). Such an approach would challenge researchers to question the accepted 'norms'

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in music education. In addition, disabled people cannot continue to be excluded from music education research. As a field we need to move past research approaches that position disabled children and young people as 'other'. Such approaches only serve to reinforce disabling attitudes. Moving away from studies that carry out research *on* disabled children and young people and embracing a framework that calls for counter-hegemonic research *with* disabled people is a crucial first step (Norris, 2016).

7.5   Where Does Music Therapy Fit?

Music therapy sessions were observed at School 1 Site 1 and School 3. Chapter 4 provides an overview of the ways in which music therapy were included in each schools' curricula. Unfortunately, the research question 'where does music therapy fit' was unable to be answered as part of this thesis. As explained in Chapter 4, the primary reason for this was because the School 3 Music Therapist was unable to take part in an interview. This meant that it was not possible to conduct a full comparative analysis of the varying approaches to music therapy in each school. This is not to say that there are not some useful, original findings in the dataset. Preliminary results demonstrate, for example, that the way in which music therapy is included in a school's curriculum is affected by many of the same factors identified in Chapter 6. Furthermore, the similarities, crossovers and distinctions between music therapy and music education seem to align well with the results of previous empirical research (Mawby, 2011, 2014, 2015). Music therapy at School 1 Site 1, for example, had very similar aims and approaches to those of music education at the site. Both focused on using music as a vehicle to develop non-musical skills. This meant that full-time staff at the site struggled to see the benefit of having music therapy as an additional strand of their curriculum. In contrast, the Music Therapist at School 3 had been strategically bought in by the Head Teacher to work with students the school was struggling to engage in subject-based lessons. As a result, despite being part-time, the music therapist was a valued member of staff at the school with a clear remit around which to shape her practice. As mentioned above, these findings align well with those of my previous research (Mawby, 2011, 2014, 2015). There is therefore scope to compare and contrast these findings with a view to preparing them for future publication. The time constraints associated with doctoral study have prevented such an analysis from being

carried out to date. However, this is certainly a priority for future work as it would constitute an additional original contribution to the field of music in special education.

7.6   Research Evaluation

This thesis has explored what constitutes 'best practice' in music education from a whole school perspective. In doing so it makes several original contributions to the field:

1) It moves beyond previous descriptive accounts of music in special education to explain how and why schools are choosing to incorporate music in their curricula
2) It includes the views and experiences of disabled children and young people
3) It adopts a longitudinal qualitative approach to data collection using two methods that have not yet been used to explore music in special education: ethnography and grounded theory

The methods used in data collection and analysis are a particular strength of this research. Ethnography facilitated a prolonged period of data collection in each school. The approach helped to build a broad evidence base (specifically 36 interviews, 65 days of observations (approx. 390 hours), and 71 documents) through which 'best practice' in SEN/D music education could be explored. It also allowed the researcher to build lasting relationships with the research participants, fostering a collaborative approach to data collection and analysis. Such an approach was particularly beneficial when it came to making the research accessible for student participants. Grounded theory then facilitated a move beyond descriptive accounts of music education in each setting to consider the ways in which various organisational structures, actions and beliefs influenced practice and decision-making. One of the strengths of the method is that, rather than coding for themes, it analyses actions in order to build a theory of process from the data (Charmaz, 2014). The culmination of this analytical process is shown in the hierarchical flow-diagram presented in Figure 6.1.

Analysing such a large data set using GTM was labour intensive. Three stages of coding were carried out, all of which required close engagement with the data through methods of constant comparative analysis, memoing and, where necessary,

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theoretical sampling (for an overview of each of these approaches, see Chapter 3). This took a considerable amount of time. A caution to future doctoral-level grounded theorists would be to ensure that there is enough time in the research time-line to gather, transcribe and analyse all of the data to the standard required. Whilst the data gathered as part of this research has been analysed to the rigorous standards of a GTM approach, I had originally hoped that I would be able to return to the field to carry out theoretical sampling of some of the less saturated categories of this research. The limited time-frame of my doctoral candidature, coupled with the demands of data collection and analysis meant that, in the end, this was not possible. This is not to say that such research cannot be conducted in the future. As can be seen from this discussion, there are many lines of inquiry that have arisen from the data which would benefit from further research. Theoretical sampling offers both myself and other researchers a useful tool with which to take these findings further.

An additional strength of the work is that it includes the views and experiences of disabled children and young people. To date, to my knowledge, no music education research conducted in the UK has formally sought to include these perspectives. Indeed, I have only been able to find one study conducted world-wide that includes disabled children and young people as equal participants (Gerrity et al., 2013).[2] The students' views add greater rigour to the data-set, ensuring that all stakeholder views are taken into account when developing a theory of 'best practice'. Of course, there are still voices that are missing from the conversation. Despite my best efforts I was unable to devise a suitable adapted interview method for four of the eight student participants who agreed to take part in semi-structured interviews as part of this research (see Chapter 3). Greater attention therefore needs to be paid to the topic of inclusive research methods in music education. In particular, there is a need for more creative methods that make such research accessible for children and young people labelled as having PMLD. Consulting the work of scholars from Disability Studies would be a useful first step here. Furthermore, adopting a flexible approach to data collection methods is crucial. Much like the music lessons described by practitioners in this study, in order to be effective, research methods need to be able to meet the specific access needs of each individual participant. These access needs should never be assumed by

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[2] This was a mixed-methods study, conducted in the USA, which explored the conditions that facilitate learning among students with special needs.

the researcher. Instead, they should be considered in collaboration with the disabled child or young person, with additional input from parents/guardians, carers and teachers when needed. Not only does this allow for more inclusive research methods, it also grants the disabled young person a degree of agency in the way in which they choose to participate in the research.

Three schools were visited as part of the research project and data were collected across a full term in each setting. This longitudinal approach to data collection fostered a detailed understanding of the way in which each school included music in their curricula. However, the findings presented in this thesis only reflect the experiences of three special schools in Yorkshire. Additional research is required to explore whether they are representative of the wider culture of music education practice in England. Having said this, research suggests that the hierarchical model of barriers/enablers of 'best practice' presented in Figure 6.1 may be applicable to other education contexts such as the USA (Abril & Bannerman, 2014). Therefore, explorations of the wider relevance of this grounded theory of 'best practice' in SEN/D music education should not just be limited to a UK-context.

7.6.1 Recommendations for Future Research

The findings of this thesis, evaluation of the methodology and consideration of the literature have identified several lines of inquiry that would benefit from additional investigation. Researchers may wish to consider the following recommendations for future research:

- An exploration of whether/why special schools are choosing not to offer music as a subject at Key Stage 4. Is this related to wider education policy changes?
- Research which seeks to develop a sector-wide understanding of what music is for in special education. This research should also take into account the views of disabled musicians.
- An exploration of whether/why there are so few performance opportunities for students labelled as having PMLD. What are the barriers to practice here?
- An exploration of whether/why there is a lack of peripatetic vocal/instrumental teaching in special education.

- An exploration of the way in which communication and information sharing can be improved between permanent full-time teaching staff and part-time visiting music practitioners working in special schools.
- How/are ITT providers including content on inclusive music education in ITT programs?
- An exploration of the specific factors which affect NQT's feelings of confidence and preparedness to teach music to students labelled as having SEN/D.
- An exploration of the ways in which ableism and disablism operate in music education.
- How can we make music education research more inclusive of children and young people labelled as having PMLD?

Researchers may also wish to consider:

- How this theory of 'best practice' applies to Music Education Hubs
- What are the current progression routes for disabled children and young people who wish to become professional musicians?

7.6.2   Recommendations for Policy and Practice

Considerations for policy and practice development also include:

- A full-time Music Coordinator should be employed in every special school. Doing so will help to safeguard music in special education and end the patchy provision currently found in these settings.
- The provision of music and SEN/D input in ITT courses needs to be improved. It is understood that there are currently financial, time and workload barriers to achieving this (Hennessy, 2017). However, if the quality of music education for disabled children and young people is to improve, we need to ensure that NQTs feel confident to teach these students. A focus on offering additional CPD in this area should also be a priority.
- Information about accessible instrument adaptation needs to be shared with special schools and Music Education Hubs. The recently established *Short*

Guide to Accessible Music Education (Lines & Westrup, 2017)[3] has made a wonderful start. However, information about possible adaptations to traditional acoustic instruments has received little attention in current music education literature.

7.7 Concluding Remarks

This thesis has explored what constitutes 'best practice' in music in special education from a whole school perspective. The term 'best practice' has been used as a heuristic device in order to examine how school stakeholders conceptualise what is 'best' for disabled children and young people when it comes to their music education and to explore the ways in which these ideas are implemented and experienced in practice. The underlying theoretical contribution this thesis makes to knowledge is therefore a rich and detailed examination of school culture and its effect on current educational praxis in music in special education.

Ethnography and grounded theory were chosen as the primary research methods. Ethnography allowed the researcher to immerse themselves in the unique culture of each school. Doing so meant that the context in which participants' thoughts, beliefs and actions were formed and enacted could be fully considered during data collection and analysis. Grounded theory then served to move the data beyond description towards a more theoretical understanding of the ways in which 'best practice' in music education was described and enacted by the stakeholders taking part in the study.

The findings show that participants agreed upon 7 key elements of 'best practice' and that there were 10 barriers/enablers to achieving this. This analysis also enabled a theory of process to be constructed from the data. A hierarchical model of the ways in which these barriers/enablers intersect and affect one another was presented in Figure 6.1. Whilst this model is rooted in the experiences and beliefs of the participants taking part in this study, it does require testing with additional research to ascertain whether it is representative of the experiences of school stakeholders from other areas

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[3] See https://theshortguidetoaccessiblemusiceducation.files.wordpress.com/2016/12/the-short-guide-to-accessible-music-education.pdf

of the country. Furthermore, an important finding of this research has been that a variety of socio-political-edu-cultural beliefs affect the way in which practitioners and primary care-givers conceptualise the needs of disabled children and young people. This is problematic when the very foundation of 'best practice' in music education (as identified by participants' own conceptions of the term) relies upon practitioners 'adapting provision to suit pupils' needs'. It has therefore been argued that a thorough critical exploration of the way in which ableism and disablism operate in music education is an important recommendation for future research.

In addition to the above, the findings have highlighted several additional avenues for future research (see section 7.6.1). These include revisiting the data gathered as part of this study to explore how the findings relating to music therapy compare with previous work and exploring how future research can be made more accessible for children and young people labelled as having PMLD. Recommendations for practice and policy have also been considered (see section 7.6.2).

Overall, the rich data presented in this thesis facilitate a deeper understanding of the current place and practice of music in special education. The qualitative research methods used have enabled new theorising which paves the way for future research in music education and related fields. This theory is not only rooted in practice, but also takes into account the views and experiences of multiple stakeholders which include the views of disabled children and young people. The result is a detailed theory of how stakeholders in three English special schools currently describe and enact 'best practice' in SEN/D music education. A significant contribution of the work has been its identification of what might most accurately be described as the best context for 'best practice' (see Figure 6.1). These findings require additional research in order to assess their applicability to other educational settings. However, this rich and detailed examination of school culture has elucidated the processes through which 'good' music education might be achieved in special education. These findings will be of relevance to school leaders, teachers, teaching assistants, Music Education Hubs, wider music organisations, policy makers, the music industry, parents, guardians, carers and friends and allies of disabled children and young people. Such findings add further context and nuance to a wide body of research which has explored the persistent 'patchiness' of music provision within the English education system. Such inequalities can no longer

be tolerated. These findings therefore have the potential to shape future policy, training and, most importantly, the musical experiences of disabled children and young people.

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Appendices

Appendix A Ethical Approval

Sarah Mawby

School of Music

University of Leeds

Leeds, LS2 9JT

PVAR Faculty Research Ethics Committee

University of Leeds

27 April 2015

Dear Sarah

Title of study:	**Music in schools for children with special educational needs: A whole school perspective**
Ethics reference:	**PVAR 14-067**

I am pleased to inform you that the above research application has been reviewed by the Arts and PVAC (PVAR) Faculty Research Ethics Committee and I can confirm a favourable ethical opinion as of the date of this letter. The following documentation was considered:

Document	Version	Date
1. PVAR 14-067 Ethical_Review_Form_V3_PhD_FINAL [Signed].pdf	1	27/03/15
2. Example Recruitment Email to Head Teacher.pdf	1	27/03/15
3. Comprehension Questions.pdf	1	27/03/15
4. Information Pack & Informed Consent Form - Schools.pdf	1	27/03/15
5. Information Pack & Informed Consent Form - Practitioners.pdf	1	27/03/15
6. Information Pack & Informed Consent Form - Parents [Observations].pdf	1	27/03/15
7. Information Pack & Informed Consent Form - Parents [Interviews].pdf	1	27/03/15
8. Information Pack - Children & Young People [Simplified].pdf	1	27/03/15
9. Information Sheet - Children & Young people [Makaton Social Story].pdf	1	27/03/15
10. Informed Consent - Pupils [Parent Signature Only].pdf	1	27/03/15

11. Informed Consent - Pupils [Parent & Pupil Signature].pdf	1	27/03/15
12. Information Pack & Informed Consent Form - Documents not Freely Available in the Public Domain.pdf	1	27/03/15
13. Interview Briefing Document [for Adults Supporting Children in Interviews].pdf	1	27/03/15
14. Ethical Review Form Reference List.pdf	1	27/03/15
15. Fieldwork Risk Assessment [Signed].pdf	1	27/03/15
16. lone_working_approval_form [Signed].pdf	1	27/03/15

Committee members made the following comments about your application:

- Whilst there are evident ethical issues in working with children with special educational needs the researcher demonstrates a thorough exploration of how these will be addressed, in particular how information can be adapted to suit the needs of the children, and checking their comprehension of the project. The researcher is to be commended on a very well prepared application.

Please notify the committee if you intend to make any amendments to the original research as submitted at date of this approval as all changes must receive ethical approval prior to implementation. The amendment form is available at http://ris.leeds.ac.uk/EthicsAmendment.

Please note: You are expected to keep a record of all your approved documentation, as well as documents such as sample consent forms, and other documents relating to the study. This should be kept in your study file, which should be readily available for audit purposes. You will be given a two week notice period if your project is to be audited. There is a checklist listing examples of documents to be kept which is available at http://ris.leeds.ac.uk/EthicsAudits.

We welcome feedback on your experience of the ethical review process and suggestions for improvement. Please email any comments to ResearchEthics@leeds.ac.uk.

Yours sincerely

Jennifer Blaikie

Senior Research Ethics Administrator, Research & Innovation Service

On behalf of Dr William Rea, Chair, PVAR FREC

CC: Student's supervisor(s)

Appendix B Acceptance of Amendment to Ethical Review

Sarah Mawby

School of Music

University of Leeds

Leeds, LS2 9JT

PVAR Faculty Research Ethics Committee

University of Leeds

9 December 2015

Dear Sarah

Title of study:	**Music in schools for children with special educational needs: A whole school perspective**
Ethics reference:	**PVAR 14-067 amendment December 2015**

I am pleased to inform you that your amendment to the research application listed above has been reviewed by the Chair of the Arts and PVAC (PVAR) Faculty Research Ethics Committee and I can confirm a favourable ethical opinion as of the date of this letter. The following documentation was considered:

Document	Version	Date
PVAR 14-067 amendment Dec 2015 EthicalReview_NoticeOfAmendment_PVAR14-067.pdf	1	07/12/15
PVAR 14-067 amendment Dec 2015 17. Information Pack & Informed Consent Form - External Event Organisers.docx	1	07/12/15
1. PVAR 14-067 Ethical_Review_Form_V3_PhD_FINAL [Signed].pdf	1	27/03/15
2. Example Recruitment Email to Head Teacher.pdf	1	27/03/15
3. Comprehension Questions.pdf	1	27/03/15
4. Information Pack & Informed Consent Form - Schools.pdf	1	27/03/15
5. Information Pack & Informed Consent Form - Practitioners.pdf	1	27/03/15
6. Information Pack & Informed Consent Form - Parents [Observations].pdf	1	27/03/15
7. Information Pack & Informed Consent Form - Parents [Interviews].pdf	1	27/03/15
8. Information Pack - Children & Young People [Simplified].pdf	1	27/03/15
9. Information Sheet - Children & Young people [Makaton Social Story].pdf	1	27/03/15

10. Informed Consent - Pupils [Parent Signature Only].pdf	1	27/03/15
11. Informed Consent - Pupils [Parent & Pupil Signature].pdf	1	27/03/15
12. Information Pack & Informed Consent Form - Documents not Freely Available in the Public Domain.pdf	1	27/03/15
13. Interview Briefing Document [for Adults Supporting Children in Interviews].pdf	1	27/03/15
14. Ethical Review Form Reference List.pdf	1	27/03/15
15. Fieldwork Risk Assessment [Signed].pdf	1	27/03/15
16. lone_working_approval_form [Signed].pdf	1	27/03/15

Please notify the committee if you intend to make any further amendments to the original research as submitted at date of this approval as all changes must receive ethical approval prior to implementation. The amendment form is available at http://ris.leeds.ac.uk/EthicsAmendment.

Please note: You are expected to keep a record of all your approved documentation, as well as documents such as sample consent forms, and other documents relating to the study. This should be kept in your study file, which should be readily available for audit purposes. You will be given a two week notice period if your project is to be audited. There is a checklist listing examples of documents to be kept which is available at http://ris.leeds.ac.uk/EthicsAudits.

We welcome feedback on your experience of the ethical review process and suggestions for improvement. Please email any comments to ResearchEthics@leeds.ac.uk.

Yours sincerely

Jennifer Blaikie

Senior Research Ethics Administrator, Research & Innovation Service

On behalf of Dr Kevin Macnish, Chair, PVAR FREC

CC: Student's supervisor(s)

Appendix C Example Recruitment Email to Heads of School

Dear <Head Teacher>,

My name is Sarah Mawby and I am a postgraduate researcher at the University of Leeds working towards a PhD in music education. I am currently carrying out a research project which aims to explore the ways in which music is used in schools for children with special educational needs.

The primary aims of the research project are as follows:

- To find out what constitutes 'best practice' in music education for children with learning difficulties and disabilities
- To explore the various opportunities and barriers schools for children with special needs face with regards to the implementation of 'best practice'
- To explore the interplay between music education and music therapy in SEND schools, with a view to establishing where music therapy might 'fit' within the school curriculum.

My aim is to spend a term in three SEND schools in Yorkshire. During this time I would observe music lessons, music therapy sessions (if applicable) as well as any other music activities the school may offer pupils (e.g. extra-curricular activities). I would also carry out interviews with practitioners, parents and pupils (the word 'interview' is of course used lightly in the case of pupils as these will be adapted depending on their needs) in order to explore their views and experiences of SEND music education.

I was wondering if this is something your school might like to be involved in?

By taking part in the research you will be ensuring that teachers, parents and pupils are given a voice in the research literature on music education. There has been a lot of debate recently in the academic literature as to what constitutes 'best practice' in this field. It is my belief that practitioners, parents and pupils should have their views heard on this matter as, ultimately, research influences policy and policy should be rooted in the needs of those which it affects the most.

If you are interested in taking part please contact me at your earliest convenience. I will then send you an information pack which provides further detail about how the research will be carried out and what schools can expect from taking part. In the meantime, I am more than happy to answer any questions you may have (contact details below). Furthermore, I am happy to set up an initial meeting to discuss the project further should you feel that this is appropriate.

Thank you for taking the time to read this email. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Kindest regards,

[Email Signature]

Appendix D Information Pack and Informed Consent Form for Schools (sent to the Head of School)

Information Pack &

Informed Consent Form for Schools

Sarah Mawby – Doctoral Research

Music in schools for children with special educational needs:

A whole school perspective

This Information Pack/Informed Consent Form has three parts:

- **Information Sheet (to share information about the study with you)**
- **Contact Details (should you wish to ask the researcher any further questions about the research study)**
  Informed Consent Form (indicating your agreement to participate in this research study)

Information Sheet

My name is Sarah Mawby and I am a postgraduate researcher at the University of Leeds working towards a PhD in music education. I am currently carrying out a research project which aims to explore the ways in which music is used in schools for children with special educational needs.

Purpose of Research

The primary aims of the research project are as follows:

- To find out what constitutes 'best practice' in music education for children with learning difficulties and disabilities
- To explore the various opportunities and barriers schools for children with special needs face with regards to the implementation of 'best practice'
- To explore the interplay between music education and music therapy in SEND schools, with a view to establishing where music therapy might 'fit' within the school curriculum.

Details of Research Method – What Can I Expect?

I aim to carry out ethnographic research in three SEND schools in Yorkshire. I will spend a term in each school observing music lessons, music therapy session and additional musical activities (e.g. extra-curricular activities).

Research data will be gathered in four ways:

Observations

An observation timetable will be devised and agreed with you [the Head Teacher] and the practitioners who are happy to have their music sessions observed as part of this study. It is my aim to work in the school full time but the amount of lessons I observe and the amount of time I spend at the school each week will be flexible depending on what your school can accommodate.

Interviews

Interviews will be carried out with a variety of stakeholders at the school. It is my aim to include practitioners, parents and pupils in interviews. For parents and practitioners, each interview will last no longer than an hour and will take the form of an informal chat about their views and experiences of music education in the school. For pupils, interviews will be adapted to suit their individual needs. Some may take place as play-based interviews where the researcher will play some games with the child/young person, some may take the form of social stories, and some may take the form of adapted more traditional interviews (i.e. question and answer interviews but with adapted communication methods). All participants will be issued with their own information pack and asked to sign an informed consent form

prior to agreeing to take part in an interview. Again, for pupils, these materials will be adapted and parental consent to participate will also be required.

Document Analysis

I am also interested in the way in which policy affects practice. As such, it would be very valuable to review documents such as Ofsted reports, curriculum frameworks, government policies and general school policies as part of my research. It is thought that most of these documents will be available in the public domain. Where a document is not publically available, I will ask for your permission to review it by way of an additional document analysis consent form. There is no obligation to include documents which are not freely available in the public domain. Should you not wish for me to include certain documents in my research, you can indicate this on the form and I will refrain from using them in the study.

Ethnographic diary

I will also be keeping an ethnographic diary throughout the research process. This is to help me separate my thoughts, opinions and experiences from those of the practitioners, parents and pupils. It is important that I do this to ensure that your voices are adequately represented in the research and are not tainted by my own views. This diary will be personal to me and will not be viewed by anyone but myself. Having said this, I may use quotes from the diary in my research write-up if applicable (the school and all participants will not be identifiable in these instances as all information will be anonymised).

Further Information:

- Participation in this research is entirely voluntary.
- You will be free to withdraw your school from the research at any time during the fieldwork and up to 10 working days after the completion of the term of fieldwork.
- Similarly, all participants will be free to refuse to answer any interview questions or withdraw from interviews and/or observations at any time during the fieldwork and up to 10 working days after the completion of the term of fieldwork (this will be explained in their individual information packs and informed consent forms).
- All participants and schools will remain anonymous in all aspects of the research, including the interview transcription, observation notes and final write-up.
- Participants will be able to view the written transcription of their interview and the final write-up of the observation notes prior to data analysis to ensure that no false information has been documented.
- Parts of the interview transcriptions may be used as quotes in the body of my PhD thesis. Furthermore, should the research be published, parts of the interview transcription may be used in any subsequent research paper drafted for publication (again, all participants and schools will remain anonymous in this write-up).

What's next?

Should you feel that your school would like to take part in this research please complete and sign the informed consent form on page 5 of this information pack and return this to the researcher using the enclosed stamped addressed envelope.

Upon receiving the signed consent form the researcher will telephone you to discuss the process of recruitment for school staff members, parents and pupils. We can then decide how best to proceed with this.

Contact Details

Should you wish to ask any further questions about the nature of this research and what your participation will entail the please do feel free to contact me:

Email: [Email address]

Tel: [Telephone number]

Address: Sarah Mawby

                [Address Line 1]

                [Address Line 2]

                [City]

                [Postcode]

I will be happy to answer any questions that you may have.

Furthermore, should you wish to take part in this research study, please contact me within two weeks of receiving this information pack. We will then be able to talk further about the school's involvement and how best to notify practitioners, parents and pupils about the study.

Informed Consent Form

Please find overleaf an informed consent form. Should you wish to take part in this research project, you will need to sign this form. Prior to signing, please ensure that you have read the information in this information pack carefully and have understood what the research project entails. You are more than welcome to ask any further questions prior to signing the form should you be unclear about any of the information given. The researcher will also sign the form in your presence.

[Please see form overleaf]

Consent to take part in 'Music in Schools for Children with SEND: A Whole School Perspective'

[To be completed by the head of school]

	Add your initials next to the statement if you agree
I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet explaining the above research project and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the project.	
I understand that the school's participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw my school from the study at any time within the timeframes explained in the information sheet. I understand that I can withdraw my participation without giving a reason and without there being any negative consequences. In addition, should I not wish to answer any particular questions or provide any particular documents for inclusion in the research, I understand that I am free to decline. Should I wish to withdraw my school's participation from the study, I understand that I can do so by contacting the lead researcher (Sarah Mawby) via telephone: [telephone number] or via email: [email address] Should I chose to withdraw my school's information from the study, I understand that any information obtained prior to my withdrawal will be destroyed.	
I understand that the school's name will not be linked with the research materials and that all participants will not be identified or identifiable in the report or reports that result from the research.	
I agree for the data collected from my school to be used in relevant future research in an anonymised form.	
I agree to take part in the above research project and will inform the lead researcher should my contact details change.	

Name of participating School	
Name of Head Teacher	
Head Teacher's signature	
Date	
Name of lead researcher	
Signature	
Date	

*To be signed and dated in the presence of the participant

Information Pack &

Informed Consent Form for

Practitioners

Sarah Mawby – Doctoral Research

Music in schools for children with special educational needs:

A whole school perspective

This Information Pack/Informed Consent Form has three parts:

- **Information Sheet (to share information about the study with you)**
- **Contact Details (should you wish to ask the researcher any further questions about the research study)**
- **Informed Consent Form (indicating your agreement to participate in this research study)**

Information Sheet

My name is Sarah Mawby and I am a postgraduate researcher at the University of Leeds working towards a PhD in music education. I am currently carrying out a research project which aims to explore the ways in which music is used in schools for children with special educational needs.

Purpose of Research

The primary aims of the research project are as follows:

- To find out what constitutes 'best practice' in music education for children with SEND
- To explore the various opportunities and barriers schools for children with SEND face with regards to the implementation of 'best practice'
- To explore the interplay between music education and music therapy in SEND schools, with a view to establishing where music therapy might 'fit' within the school curriculum.

Why have you received this information pack?

You have received this information pack because the head teacher of your school believes that this research is something your school might like to be involved with. However, before we get started, we need to see if this is something that teachers and school staff would be willing to participate in.

Details of Research Method – What can you expect?

In order to explore the aims listed above I aim to carry out ethnographic research in three SEND schools in Yorkshire. I will spend a term in each school.

Research data will be gathered in four ways:

Observations - I will observe as many music activities as possible including music lessons, music therapy sessions (if applicable) and additional musical activities (e.g. extra-curricular activities).

Interviews - I will also carry out interviews with practitioners, parents and pupils (the word 'interview' is of course used lightly in the case of pupils as these will be adapted depending on their needs) in order to explore their views and experiences of SEND music education.

Document Analysis - I am also interested in the way in which policy affects practice. As such, I would like to review documents such as Ofsted reports, curriculum frameworks, government policies and general school policies as part of my research.

Ethnographic diary - I will also be keeping an ethnographic diary throughout the research process. This is to help me separate my thoughts, opinions and experiences from those of the practitioners, parents and pupils. It is important that I do this to ensure that your voices are adequately represented in the research and are not tainted by my own views.

So what will you have to do?

Should you wish to take part in the research, you have three options. You can either:

- Agree to take part in both observations and interviews
- Agree to just take part in observations
- Agree to just take part in an interview

Should you agree to take part in observations; what will this involve?

I will spend a term observing some of your lessons. You will be able to choose which lessons you think would be useful for me to observe and an observation timetable will be devised and agreed between us and the head teacher. This initial timetable may be subject to change as we get to know one-another and the research progresses, but any changes will always be agreed and negotiated with you and the head teacher.

You won't be asked to do anything differently during the observations. You will simply teach the lessons as you normally would. I will sit on the periphery of the class and will jot down some observation notes. These will then be written up after the observation and you will have the chance to read them, if you would like to, to ensure that no false information has been documented.

The only thing you will have to do that will be different to your normal lessons is to introduce me to the class prior to the lesson and make sure that it is ok with them that I observe the session. This will have to be done before each observed class as it is important that the children have an opportunity to choose not to take part in the research. Should a child indicate that they are not happy for me to observe the lesson, I will not conduct the observation on that occasion. Furthermore, should a child become upset or agitated by my presence at any time during the lesson, I will stop carrying out the observation and will leave the room.

Should you agree to take part in an interview; what will this involve?

An interview will be scheduled for a time and place that is convenient for you (this can be outside of the school timetable if you'd prefer). The interview will last no longer than an hour and will take the form of an informal chat about your views, opinions and experiences of music in SEND schools. The interview will be audio recorded and later transcribed. You will be able to view your interview transcript, if you would like to, to ensure that no false information has been documented. Should you read the transcript and decide that you wish to change or withdraw any of the information discussed during the interview you will also be able to do so.

Further Information:

- Participation in this research is entirely voluntary.
- You will be free to withdraw from this research at any time during the fieldwork (i.e. the term in which the researcher is visiting the school) and up to 10 working days after the completion of the term of fieldwork.
- Similarly, you can refuse to answer any interview questions or withdraw from interviews and/or observations at any time during the fieldwork.
- All participants and schools will remain anonymous in all aspects of the research, including the interview transcription, observation notes and final write-up. This means that you should not be able to be identified by other schools/members of the public in any aspect of the research. Having said this, you may be identifiable to people who work at or attend your school. Every effort will be made to prevent this from happening. However, the researcher cannot guarantee anonymity in this case.
- Parts of the interview transcription may be used in the body of the research write-up. Furthermore, should the research be published, parts of the interview transcription may be used in any subsequent research paper drafted for publication (again, all participants and schools will remain anonymous in this write-up).

What's next?

Should you feel that you would like to take part in this research please complete and sign the informed consent form on page 6 of this information pack. You will need to indicate whether you would like to take part in both observations and an interview or just the observations or just the interview. You will need to return the completed form to the reception desk at your school by no later than <insert date here>.

Upon receiving the signed consent form the researcher will arrange a meeting with you to discuss your involvement and begin to establish a potential timetable for observations.

Contact Details

Should you wish to ask any further questions about the nature of this research and what your participation will entail the please do feel free to contact me:

Email: [Email address]

Tel: [Telephone number]

I will be happy to answer any questions that you may have.

Informed Consent Form

Please find overleaf an informed consent form. Should you wish to take part in this research project, you will need to sign this form. Prior to signing, please ensure that you have read the information in this information pack carefully and have understood what the research project entails. You are more than welcome to ask any further questions prior to signing the form should you be unclear about any of the information given. The researcher will also sign the form in your presence

[Please see form overleaf]

Consent to take part in 'Music in Schools for Children with SEND: A Whole School Perspective'

	Add your initials next to the statement if you agree
I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet explaining the above research project and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the project.	
I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time within the timeframes explained in the information sheet. I understand that I can withdraw my participation without giving a reason and without there being any negative consequences. In addition, should I not wish to answer any particular question or questions, I am free to decline. Should I wish to withdraw my participation from the study, I understand that I can do so by contacting the lead researcher (Sarah Mawby) via telephone: [telephone number] or via email: [email address] Should I chose to withdraw my information from the study, I understand that any information obtained prior to my withdrawal will be destroyed.	
I understand that my name will not be linked with the research materials, and I will not be identified or identifiable in the report or reports that result from the research.	
I agree for the data collected from me to be used in relevant future research in an anonymised form.	
I agree to take part in observations and understand what this will involve	
I agree to take part in an interview and understand what this will involve	

Name of participant	
Occupation	
Participant's signature	
Date	
Name of lead researcher	
Signature*	
Date	

*To be signed and dated in the presence of the participant.

Information Pack & Informed Consent Form for Parents (Observations)

Sarah Mawby – Doctoral Research

Music in schools for children with special educational needs:

A whole school perspective

This Information Pack/Informed Consent Form has three parts:

- **Information Sheet (to share information about the study with you)**
- **Contact Details (should you wish to ask the researcher any further questions about the research study)**
- **Informed Consent Form (this must be completed to let the school and the researcher know whether you give permission for your child's music activities to be observed as part of this research study)**

Information Sheet

My name is Sarah Mawby and I am a postgraduate researcher at the University of Leeds working towards a PhD in music education. I am currently carrying out a research project which aims to explore the ways in which music is used in schools for children with special educational needs.

Purpose of Research

The primary aims of the research project are as follows:

- To find out what constitutes 'best practice' in music education for children with SEND
- To explore the various opportunities and barriers schools for children with SEND face with regards to the implementation of 'best practice'
- To explore the interplay between music education and music therapy in SEND schools, with a view to establishing where music therapy might 'fit' within the school curriculum.

Details of Research Method

In order to explore the aims listed above I aim to carry out ethnographic research in three SEND schools in Yorkshire. I will spend a term in each school.

Research data will be gathered in four ways:

Observations - I will observe as many music activities as possible including music lessons, music therapy sessions (where applicable) and additional musical activities (e.g. extra-curricular activities).

Interviews - I will also carry out interviews with practitioners, parents and pupils (the word 'interview' is of course used lightly in the case of pupils as these will be adapted depending on their needs) in order to explore their views and experiences of SEND music education.

Document Analysis - I am also interested in the way in which policy affects practice. As such, I would like to review documents such as Ofsted reports, curriculum frameworks, government policies and general school policies as part of my research.

Ethnographic diary - I will also be keeping a diary throughout the research process. This is to help me separate my thoughts, opinions and experiences from those of the practitioners, parents and pupils. It is important that I do this to ensure that your voices are adequately represented in the research and are not tainted by my own views.

Why have you received this information pack?

You have received this information pack because some of your child's teachers (<insert names here>) have agreed to have their music activities observed as part of the research. However, before we get started, we need to see if this is something that you would be happy for your child to participate in. I would also like to ask if you would like to have more information about how you and your child can take part in the interview stage of this research.

What will my child be asked to do?

Your child will take part in their music activities as usual and will not be asked to do anything that is different to their normal school routine. The only difference will be that the researcher will be sitting somewhere in the room taking some notes about what is happening in the session. These notes will not refer to any child by name. In short, your child will remain completely anonymous in all aspects of the research. The observation notes will simply document what happens in each observed music activity.

Will my child be told about the observation?

<Insert name of practitioner> will be asked to let the children know in advance that someone new will be coming to watch their music sessions. This should help to alleviate any stress or anxiety that your child may feel about the planned presence of a new and unfamiliar person in their class. At the start of each session, the researcher will be introduced to the children by <insert name of practitioner> and her presence in the music session will be explained. The children will also be given the opportunity to communicate how they feel about the presence of the researcher at the start of each music activity. If there are any problems or concerns the researcher will address these in a way that is both clear and understandable to the children taking part.

What happens if my child is upset or distracted by the presence of the researcher in their music activity?

Should the presence of the researcher upset the children at any time during any of the observed music activities, the researcher will stop her observation and will leave the room.

Will you be making a video-recording of the class/therapy session?

No. Your child's music activities will not be video recorded. The researcher will simply write notes about what is happening.

What if I don't want my child to be observed – will it mean that they miss out on their <insert name of music activity>?

Absolutely not. Participation in this research is entirely voluntary and you are perfectly within your right as a parent to say that you do not wish for your child's music activities to be observed in this way. If you do not want your child to be observed it simply means that the observation will not take place in music activities that your child takes part in. Your child will still get to take part in their music activities as usual.

I am happy for my child's music activities to be observed – How do I let you know?

If you are happy for your child's music activities to be observed by the researcher, please complete the Informed Consent Form on page 7 of this Information Pack. Please write your initials in the appropriate boxes on rows 1, 2, 4 & 5 of the form. Please ensure that you leave the initial box on row 3 blank. You will then need to sign and return this form to the school's reception by [insert date – last day of term prior to intended term of fieldwork].

I don't want my child's music activities to be observed - how do I let you know?

If you do not want your child's music activities to be observed by the researcher, please complete the Informed Consent Form on page 7 of this Information Pack. Please write your initials in the appropriate boxes on rows 1 & 3 of the form. Please ensure that you leave the initial boxes on rows 2, 4 & 5 blank. You will then need to sign and return this form to the school's reception by [insert date - last day of term prior to intended term of fieldwork].

What if I do not return my Informed Consent Form by the date given above?

If you do not return your informed consent form by the date given above, it will be assumed that you are happy for your child's music activities to be observed.

I have some more questions – who do I contact?

If you're unsure about any of the information given here, or would like to know a little more about why the research is being carried out then please feel free to contact the researcher directly using the contact details on page 5.

Further Information:

- Please be aware that informed consent forms must be returned to the school by [insert date - last day of term prior to intended term of fieldwork].
- All participants and schools will remain anonymous in all aspects of the research, including the observation notes and final write-up.
- The observation notes will be included in the write-up of the researcher's PhD thesis. As indicated previously, your child will not be referred to by name and will remain anonymous in all aspects of the research.
- The researcher has almost five years of experience working with children and young people with special needs, including those with SLD and PMLD. She has worked for organisations such as KIDS, The National Autistic Society and the NSPCC and has a great deal of experience in this field. The researcher also has a full, enhanced DBS check and has up-to-date safeguarding training.

Interviews

As mentioned at the start of this information pack, I would also like to interview some of the pupils and parents at <insert name of school here> in order to explore their views and experiences of SEND music education (the word 'interview' is of course used lightly in the case of pupils as these will be adapted depending on their needs).

Should you wish to have more information about how you and your child can get involved in this stage of the research, please write your initials in the appropriate box on row 6 of the informed consent form (which can be found on page 7). You will also need to provide a contact address using the form on page 8 so that an additional information pack can be sent to you. This pack will provide information about what these interviews will entail. It will also give you an idea of what you can expect should you agree to take part.

Putting your initials in the box on row 6 of the informed consent form on page 7 does not mean that you agree for you and your child to take part in an interview. It just means that you agree to being sent more information about interviews.

Contact Details

Should you wish to ask any further questions about the nature of this research and what your child's participation will entail then please do feel free to contact me directly:

Name: Sarah Mawby

Email: [Email address]

Tel: [Telephone number]

I will be happy to answer any questions that you may have.

Informed Consent Form

Please find overleaf an Informed Consent Form. You will need to complete this form to let both myself and the school know that you are happy for your child's <insert name of music activity here> to be observed as part of this research project.

Please be aware that the Informed Consent Form must be returned to your school's reception by [insert date - last day of term prior to intended term of fieldwork]. Should you not have returned your form by this time, it will be assumed that you are happy for your child's music activities to be observed.

[Please see form overleaf]

Informed Consent form for Parents – Observations

'Music in Schools for Children with SEND: A Whole School Perspective'

		Add your initials next to the statement if you agree
1	I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet explaining the above research project and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the project.	
2	I confirm that **I CONSENT** to having my child's music activities observed by the researcher.	
3	I confirm that **I DO NOT CONSENT** to having my child's music activities observed by the researcher.	
4	I give permission for the anonymised observation notes to be used in the write-up of the research project. I understand that my child's name will not be linked with the research materials and that my child will not be identified or identifiable in the report or reports that result from the research.	
5	I agree for the observation notes to be used in relevant future research in an anonymised form.	
6	I would like to have more about how my child and I might be able to take part in an interview as part of this research. Please send me an information pack.	

Name of parent/guardian	
Name of child	
Signature of parent/guardian	
Date	
Name of lead researcher	
Signature	
Date	

Please return this completed form to your school's reception by no later than [insert date]

Thank you for reading this Information Pack

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Your Contact Information

(To be provided should you wish to receive more information about interviews)

PLEASE COMPLETE IN BLOCK CAPITALS

Your Name	
Your Child's Name	
Your Address*	
Your Telephone Number**	

* An information pack will be sent to you via post.

**All contact information will be stored securely in a password protected database. The researcher will be the only person with access to this information. Your contact information will only be used for the purposes of this research. It will not be shared with anyone else.

Information Pack & Informed Consent Form for Parents (Interviews)

Sarah Mawby – Doctoral Research

Music in schools for children with special educational needs:

A whole school perspective

This Information Pack/Informed Consent Form has three parts:

- **Information Sheet (to share information about the study with you)**
- **Contact Details (should you wish to ask the researcher any further questions about the research study)**
- **Informed Consent Form (this must be completed to let the school and the researcher know whether you give permission for your child to be approached to take part in an adapted interview about their experiences of music in their school)**

Information Sheet

My name is Sarah Mawby and I am a postgraduate researcher at the University of Leeds working towards a PhD in music education. As you are aware, I am currently carrying out a research project which aims to explore the ways in which music is used in schools for children with special educational needs.

Purpose of Research

The primary aims of the research project are as follows:

- To find out what constitutes 'best practice' in music education for children with SEND
- To explore the various opportunities and barriers schools for children with SEND face with regards to the implementation of 'best practice'
- To explore the interplay between music education and music therapy in SEND schools, with a view to establishing where music therapy might 'fit' within the school curriculum.

In order to explore the aims listed above I aim to carry out ethnographic research in three SEND schools in Yorkshire. I will spend a term in each school.

Research data will be gathered in four ways: *observations, interviews, document analysis and an ethnographic diary*.

Why have you received this information pack?

You have received this information pack because you indicated on your informed consent form for observations that your child might like to take part in an 'adapted interview' about their musical experiences (which will be adapted to suit their individual needs and abilities). In this pack I provide a little more information about what these interviews will entail. I also ask for permission to approach your child in order to invite them to take part in an interview.

I would also like to know if you would be happy to take part in an interview to chat about your own experiences of music in SEND schools. More information about what this will entail is included on page 5.

Your child's interview

What exactly is an 'adapted interview'?

I'm very much aware that each child at <insert name of school> will have very different needs and abilities. As such, the way in which your child will be asked to communicate their own thoughts and feelings about their musical experiences will be adapted to suit their own individual needs. 'Interview' is perhaps not quite the right word to use here. It sounds very formal and somewhat ignorant of the additional needs your child may have. But I promise you that this isn't meant to be the case. Should you agree for your child to be approached to take part in an interview, I will work closely with you and your child's teachers to devise an interview method that will suit your child's needs. In some instances, a verbal interview may be suitable. In others, adapted interview methods will be more appropriate. These could range from adapting the means of communication (using BSL, Makaton, PCS etc.) to more broadly adapted techniques such as social-story interviews or play-based interviews. Should you agree for your child to be approached to take part in an interview, these methods will be discussed with you in more detail (either in an informal meeting or over the phone).

How will you 'approach' my child to ask them if they'd like to take part in an interview?

Your consent is only the first step towards deciding whether your child would like to take part in an adapted interview about music. I will also ask your child directly to see if they would like to take part. Again, I am aware that this is not always a simple task. However, it is important that your child does not feel forced into taking part and understands, as best as possible, what taking part in an interview will involve. Information will be provided to them in a way that is accessible and understandable to them. The way in which I approach your child will be discussed and decided upon with the help of both you and your child's teachers. Examples of ways in which your child might be approached and invited to take part in an interview are as follows:

- Adapted information sheets, for you and your child to read and discuss together
- 1-to-1 meetings with you and your child to discuss what taking part in an interview would mean/entail (these can be carried out on the school premises or at your home)
- Video letters and information (in British Sign Language/Makaton etc.)
- Audio letters and information
- Specially created music-research lessons in which I and your child's teacher will collaborate to teach a class all about research: what it is, what it's for, and how it can be carried out. The session will culminate with information about this project and the children taking part will be asked if they would like to take part.

Other means of approach/invitation may also be negotiated depending on what you think would be best for your child.

What happens if my child <u>does not</u> want to take part in an interview?

The researcher will not interview your child.

What happens if my child <u>does</u> want to take part in an interview?

If your child does want to take part in an interview I will need to get consent from both you and your child in order for them to take part.

How will you get consent?

I will meet with you and your child at a time and place that is convenient for you. During this visit, I will ask your child a series of simple questions about what taking part in an interview will involve. Again, this can be done in a variety of ways; via a simple conversation, a social story or a game. Should your child be able to answer these questions in a way that you feel suggests that they have understood what taking part in an interview will mean, I will ask you to sign an informed consent form on their behalf. Should your child be able to sign the form themselves, I will ask both you and your child to sign the form.

Where and when will the interview take place?

The interview will take place at a time and place that is convenient for your child. This could be within the school time-table or outside of school at your own home – wherever seems more appropriate.

Will you record the interview?

Yes. The interview will be audio recorded. I will also transcribe the interview (i.e. everything that's said/done will be copied from the recording in written form).

I am happy for my child to be approached to take part in an interview – how do I let you know?

If you are happy for your child to be approached to take part in an interview, please complete the Informed Consent Form on page 9 of this Information Pack. Please write your initials in the appropriate boxes on rows 1, 2, 6, 7 & 8 of the form. Please ensure that you leave the initial box on row 3 blank. You will then need to sign and return this form to the researcher using the enclosed stamped, addressed envelope.

I don't want my child to be approached to take part in an interview - how do I let you know?

If you do not want your child to be approached to take part in an interview, please complete the Informed Consent Form on page 9 of this Information Pack. Please write your initials in the appropriate boxes on rows 1 & 3 of the form. Please ensure that you leave the initial boxes on

rows 2, 4, 6, 7 & 8 blank. You will then need to sign and return this form to the researcher using the enclosed stamped, addressed envelope.

I have some more questions – who do I contact?

If you're unsure about any of the information given here, or would like to know a little more about why the research is being carried out and what an 'adapted interview' will entail then please feel free to contact the researcher directly using the contact details on page 7

Further Information:

- Participation in this research is entirely voluntary.
- Information given during your child's interview will be included in the write-up of my PhD thesis. This may include direct quotes from your child about their musical experiences. Your child will not be referred to by name, age and will remain anonymous in all aspects of the research.
- Your child will be able to stop the interview at any time should they decide they no longer want to talk to me about music.
- Should your child like to, they will be able to choose to have an adult present with them in the interview (this could be a parent, teacher or TA etc.).
- I have almost five years of experience working with children and young people with special needs, including those with SLD and PMLD. I have worked for organisations such as KIDS, The National Autistic Society and the NSPCC and I have a great deal of experience in this field. I also have a full, enhanced DBS check and have up-to-date safeguarding training.

Your Interview

Why do you want to interview me?

In this research project I am interested in hearing the views and experiences of as many people as possible who have a connection to music in schools for children with SEND. This means that I am not only interested in interviewing teachers and pupils but also the parents of pupils. I'd really like to hear how you feel about music education. All too often in education research the experiences of parents and pupils are not taken into account. I'd like to begin to change this with my research. In taking part in an interview you will also be helping to give a little more context to the things your child has communicated in their interview.

What will I be asked to do?

If you would like to take part, an interview will be scheduled for a time and place that is convenient for you (e.g. at your child's school or at your own home). The interview will last no longer than an hour and will take the form of an informal chat about your views, opinions and experiences of music in SEND schools. I'll also ask some questions about your child's musical experiences. The interview will be audio recorded and later transcribed (i.e. written down word-for-word). You will be able to view your interview transcript, if you would like to, to ensure that no false information has been documented. Should you read the transcript and decide that you wish to change or withdraw any of the information discussed during the interview you will also be able to do so.

Further Information:

- Participation in this research is entirely voluntary.
- You will be free to withdraw from this research at any time during the fieldwork (i.e. the term in which the researcher is visiting the school) and up to 10 working days after the completion of the term of fieldwork.
- Similarly, you can refuse to answer any interview questions or withdraw from interviews and/or observations at any time during the fieldwork.
- All participants and schools will remain anonymous in all aspects of the research, including the interview transcription, observation notes and final write-up. This means that you should not be able to be identified by other schools/members of the public in any aspect of the research. Having said this, you may be identifiable to people who work at or attend your child's school. Every effort will be made to prevent this from happening. However, the researcher cannot guarantee anonymity in this case.
- Parts of the interview transcription may be used in the body of the research write-up. Furthermore, should the research be published, parts of the interview transcription may be used in any subsequent research paper drafted for publication (again, all participants and schools will remain anonymous in this write-up).

What's next?

Should you feel that you would like to take part in an interview please complete and sign the informed consent form on page 9 of this information pack. You will need to return the completed form to me using the enclosed stamped addressed envelope by no later than <insert date here>.

Upon receiving the signed consent form the researcher will arrange a meeting with you to discuss your involvement and to talk about how best to approach your child to take part in an adapted interview.

Contact Details

Should you wish to ask any further questions about the nature of this research and what your child's participation will entail then please do feel free to contact me directly:

Name: Sarah Mawby

Email: [Email address]

Tel: [Telephone number]

I will be happy to answer any questions that you may have.

Informed Consent Form

Please find overleaf an Informed Consent Form. You will need to complete this form to let me know that you are happy for your child to be approached and invited to take part in an adapted interview as part of this research project. Furthermore, you will also need to let me know whether you are happy to be interviewed about your own feelings about music education at your child's school.

Please be aware that the Informed Consent Form must be returned to me using the enclosed stamped addresses envelope by no later than <insert date here>. Should you not have returned your form by this time, it will be assumed that you are not happy for your child to be approached and invited to take part in an interview.

[Please see form overleaf]

Informed Consent form for Parents – Interviews

'Music in Schools for Children with SEND: A Whole School Perspective'

		Add your initials next to the statement if you agree
1	I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet explaining the above research project and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the project.	
2	I confirm that **I CONSENT** to my child being approached and invited to take part in an adapted interview by the researcher.	
3	I confirm that **I DO NOT CONSENT** to my child being approached and invited to take part in an adapted interview by the researcher.	
4	I confirm that **I CONSENT** to take part in an interview about my own feelings about music education in SEND schools.	
5	I confirm that **I DO NOT CONSENT** to take part in an interview about my own feelings about music education in SEND schools.	
6	I understand that mine and my child's participation is voluntary and that we are free to withdraw from the research at any time within the timeframes explained in the information sheet.	
7	I understand that neither mine nor my child's name will be linked with the research materials, and we will not be identified or identifiable in the report or reports that result from the research.	
8	I agree for the data collected from me and my child to be used in the research write-up and any relevant future research in an anonymised form.	

Name of parent/guardian	
Name of child	
Signature of parent/guardian	
Date	
Name of lead researcher	
Signature	
Date	

Please return this completed form to the researcher by no later than [insert date]

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Can you help with some questions about music in your school?

My name is Sarah and I would like to ask you some questions about music in your school.

This is a chance for you to tell someone what you think about music at your school.

- If you say 'yes' I will come to talk to you.
- I can talk to you at school or at your house.
- If you need another person to help you talk with me you can choose who this is.
- If you say 'yes' I will write about what you have told me in a book.
- If you tell me anything that you don't want to be in the book I won't put it in.

More information

Before you decide whether you would like to say 'yes' or 'no' you might need some more information. These pages answer some of the questions you might have.

Can I say 'No' if I don't want to be involved?'

Yes, of course you can say 'No'. It is up to you whether you want to take part. If you say 'No' you will not have to say why you said 'No'. And no one will mind or be sad or cross with you if you say 'No'.

If I say 'Yes', who will come and talk to me?

If you say yes, I will come and talk to you about music.

When will you come and talk to me?

I will come and talk to you at a time that is ok with you.

Where will you talk to me?

I will talk to you at your school or at your house – it's up to you.

How long will you talk to me for?

I will talk to you for <insert pre-agreed length of time (agreed with primary care-givers) here>.

What if I change my mind and want to stop talking to you?

That's fine. You can stop talking to me at any time. Or you may want to take a break. Before we start talking I will ask you to let me know how you will say 'Stop'.

Will you understand what I say?

If you use a particular way of communicating, I will make sure that I understand this before I talk to you.

What if I need some help with saying what I want to say?

I would like to give you whatever help you need to talk to me. I will ask you what help you need and will make sure that you have help.

Why did you pick me?

I talked to your <primary care-giver> and <teacher>. They thought you might be interested in talking to me about music.

What kinds of questions will I be asked?

I will ask you questions about what you like and don't like about music at your school. I will also ask you if you think anything could make music at your school better.

If I would like to take part, what do I need to do next?

If you would like to talk to me about music you will need to tell your <primary care-giver>. Your <primary care-giver> will then tell me that you would like to talk to me. After you have told your <primary care-giver> I will come to visit you so that you can choose where you would like to talk to me. Your <primary care-giver> will also sign a form for you to say that you would like to talk to me about music.

Appendix I Informed Consent Form: Pupils [Primary Care-Giver Signature Only]

Informed Consent form for Pupils – Interviews

'Music in Schools for Children with SEND: A Whole School Perspective'

[To be signed by a parent on behalf of their child]

		Add your initials next to the statement if you agree
1	I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet explaining the above research project and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the project.	
2	I confirm that my child has also received information about the research project, has had the opportunity to ask questions, and has demonstrated their understanding of what it means to take part in an interview by answering some comprehension questions.	
3	I confirm that **I CONSENT** to my child taking part in an interview	
4	I understand that my child's participation is voluntary and that they are free to withdraw from the research at any time within the timeframes explained in the information sheet.	
5	I understand that my child's name will not be linked with the research materials, and they will not be identified or identifiable in the report or reports that result from the research.	
6	I agree for the data collected from my child to be used in the research write-up and any relevant future research in an anonymised form.	

Name of parent/guardian	
Name of child	
Signature of parent/guardian	
Date	
Name of lead researcher	
Signature*	
Date	

*To be signed and dated in the presence of the participant

Appendix J Informed Consent Form: Pupils [Primary Care-Giver and Pupil Signature]

Informed Consent form for Pupils – Interviews

'Music in Schools for Children with SEND: A Whole School Perspective'

[To be signed by a parent on behalf of their child]

		Add your initials next to the statement if you agree
1	I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet explaining the above research project and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the project.	
2	I confirm that my child has also received information about the research project, has had the opportunity to ask questions, and has demonstrated their understanding of what it means to take part in an interview by answering some comprehension questions.	
3	I confirm that **I CONSENT** to my child taking part in an interview	
4	I understand that my child's participation is voluntary and that they are free to withdraw from the research at any time within the timeframes explained in the information sheet.	
5	I understand that my child's name will not be linked with the research materials, and they will not be identified or identifiable in the report or reports that result from the research.	
6	I agree for the data collected from my child to be used in the research write-up and any relevant future research in an anonymised form.	

Name of parent/guardian	
Name of pupil	
Signature of parent/guardian	
Signature of pupil	
Date	
Name of lead researcher	
Signature*	
Date	

*To be signed and dated in the presence of the participant

Interview Briefing Document for Adults Supporting Pupils in Interviews

Sarah Mawby – Doctoral Research

Music in schools for children with special educational needs:

A whole school perspective

Why have you received this information?

You have received this information because you have agreed to support <name of pupil> in an interview about their experiences of music in school.

This information pack provides you with information about what to do and what not to do to help support <name of pupil> during his/her interview.

What to do:

- DO assist in clarifying communication between <name of pupil> and the researcher
- DO assist the researcher in making sure that questions are asked in a way that is accessible to <name of pupil>

What not to do:

- PLEASE DO NOT answer questions for <name of pupil>. Even if you think <name of pupil> is struggling to answer and you feel that you can provide some information on his/her behalf, this is <name of pupil's> interview and it is important that we do not disempower him/her.
- PLEASE DO NOT talk about your own thoughts and feelings during the interview. If you have a comment you would like to make about your own experiences of music in SEND schools you are more than welcome to talk to the researcher about this after <name of pupil>'s interview.
- PLEASE DO NOT tell anyone about what <name of pupil> has said during his/her interview. <name of pupil> has chosen you to be present at their interview because they trust you to help them. It is important that you maintain this trust by keeping anything <name of pupil> says during the interview confidential.

If you have any concerns about this please do not hesitate to contact the researcher directly using the contact information below:

Contact Details

Name: Sarah Mawby

Email: [Email address]

Tel: [Telephone number]

I will be happy to answer any questions that you may have.

Appendix L Interview Participants

School	Participant	Role/Occupation
School 1 Site 1	Gina	Primary Care-giver
School 1 Site 1	John & Eleanor	Primary Care-giver
School 1 Site 1	Heather	Primary Care-giver
School 1 Site 1	Linda	Practitioner (TA)
School 1 Site 1	Jane	Practitioner (TA)
School 1 Site 1	Class 1 Teacher	Practitioner (teacher)
School 1 Site 1	Class 4 Teacher	Practitioner (teacher)
School 1 Site 1	Music Therapist	Practitioner (music therapist)
School 1 Site 1	Site Leader	Practitioner (senior leadership)
School 1 Site 1	Noah	Student
School 1	Head Teacher	Practitioner (senior leadership)
School 2	Cally	Primary Care-giver
School 2	Patricia	Primary Care-giver
School 2	June	Primary Care-giver
School 2	Lance	Practitioner (TA)
School 2	Visiting KS3 Music Teacher	Practitioner (teacher)
School 2	Singing Teacher	Practitioner (teacher)
School 2	KS3 Leader	Practitioner (senior leadership)
School 2	Head Teacher	Practitioner (senior leadership)
School 2	Thomas	Student
School 2	Mario	Student
School 2	Luigi	Student
School 3	Helen	Primary Care-giver
School 3	Giovanna	Primary Care-giver
School 3	Penny	Primary Care-giver
School 3	Phil & Nina	Primary Care-giver

School 3	Graham & Fiona	Primary Care-giver
School 3	Donna	Practitioner (TA)
School 3	Visiting Music Leader	Practitioner (teacher)
School 3	Primary/KS5 Music Teacher	Practitioner (teacher)
School 3	KS3 Music Teacher/Music Coordinator	Practitioner (teacher)
School 3	Head Teacher	Practitioner (senior leadership)
School 3	Scooby	Student
School 3	Whitney	Student
School 3	Moana	Student
School 3	Louisa	Student

Appendix M Interview Schedule: Music Therapist

1. Tell me about your job
   a. How long have you been a music therapist?
   b. How long have you worked at the school?
   c. What other settings do you work at?
   d. How are MT sessions normally conducted? (1-1/Group?)
   e. How does leading MT sessions in SEND schools differ to other settings?

2. Tell me about your training
   a. Where did you train?
   b. What modules did you take?
   c. What practical experience did you gain?
   d. Did you leave training feeling prepared to lead music therapy sessions with children with SEND?
      i. What made you feel this way?
   e. What about general musical training?

3. How much do you know about the way in which music is used within the school?

4. What are your aims for music therapy for the pupils with which you work?
   a. How do you communicate these with pupils/parents/other staff members?
   b. How do you assess progress and development?

5. How much liaison do you have with the other staff here?
   a. How much do you know about the pupils before you start working with them?
   b. Does this differ to other settings?
   c. How do you feel about the level of interaction you have with the staff here?

6. What makes music therapy sessions different to general music activities at this school?
   a. Talk about what I've observed – similarities between intensive interaction and MT

7. In your opinion, where does music therapy 'fit' in a whole school curriculum for SEND schools?
   a. What does it offer SEND schools that they can't get elsewhere?

8. What feedback have you had from staff/parents about the way in which MT is helping to support pupils at the school?

9. Anything else you'd like to add?

Appendix N Interview Schedule: Teaching Assistants

1. Tell me about your job
   a. What is your role at the school?
   b. How long have you had this role?
   c. How long have you worked at the school?
   d. Have you always worked in SEND settings?
   e. What ages have you supported?

2. Tell me about any training you've had
   a. Where did you train?
   b. What modules/courses have you taken?
   c. What practical experience did you gain?
   d. How did music factor into this?
   e. How has the training you've received prepared you to support music activities with children with SEND?

3. Talk to me about your musical background
   a. Do you play any musical instruments?
   b. Any formal musical training?

4. How is music used within the school?
   a. Signposting?
   b. Any extra-curricular activities?
   c. Why music therapy?

5. How confident do you feel in supporting music activities for the pupils you help to support?
   a. How do you adapt the level of support you provide depending on each child's need?
   b. Talk to me about how you feel about leading music lessons when the teacher is absent

6. In your opinion, what constitutes 'best practice' in music education for pupils with SEND?
   a. How does the school support this?
   b. How do you feel about the way in which music is used/taught in the school?

7. What opportunities are there for developing 'best practice' in music education at your school?
   a. CPD?
   b. How do you share and develop 'best practice' with colleagues?

8. What are the barriers to providing 'best practice' in music education in your school?
   a. Do these differ to other subjects?

9. Anything else you'd like to add?

Appendix O Interview Schedule: Teachers and Senior Leadership

1. Tell me about your job
   a. How long have you been a teacher?
   b. How long have you worked at the school?
   c. Have you always worked in SEND settings?
   d. What ages have you taught?
   e. How does teaching in SEND settings differ to teaching in mainstream settings?

2. Tell me about your ITT
   a. Where did you train?
   b. What modules did you take?
   c. What practical experience did you gain?
   d. How did music factor into this?
   e. Did you leave ITT feeling prepared to teach music to children with SEND?

3. How is music used within the school?
   a. Signposting?
   b. Any extra-curricular activities?
   c. Why music therapy?

4. How is music taught within the school?
   a. How do you devise a music curriculum?
   b. How do you assess pupils' attainment and progress?
   c. Do you ever use music technology in lessons?
   d. How do music lessons differ to other lessons?
   e. What roll do TAs play?
   f. What happens when the teacher cannot lead the lesson?

5. In your opinion, what constitutes 'best practice' in music education for pupils with SEND?
   a. How does the school support this?
   b. How do current curriculum guidelines support this?
   c. How does the Local Authority support this?
   d. Does 'best practice' differ depending on the severity of the pupils' additional needs?

6. What opportunities are there for developing 'best practice' in music education at your school?
   a. CPD?
   b. How do you share and develop 'best practice' with colleagues?

7. What are the barriers to providing 'best practice' in music education in your school?
   a. Do these differ to other subjects?

8. Anything else you'd like to add?

Appendix P Interview Schedule: Parents

1. Tell me a little bit about [name of child]

2. How does your child interact with music at home?
   a. Does your child enjoy music?
   b. What kinds of music does he/she listen to?
   c. How does your child react to music?

3. Does your child take part in any music activities outside of school?
   a. Can you tell me a little bit about them?
   b. What made you/your child want to take part in these activities?
   c. How often does your child take part in musical activities?

4. How much do you know about the music activities you child takes part in at school?
   a. Do you get feedback on your child's achievements in music?
   b. How does the school communicate this to you?
   c. How important is it for you to know about how your child is engaging with music at school?

5. What musical opportunities would you like your child to have at school?
   a. What makes you say that?
   b. How frequently would you like your child to take part in musical activities at school?

6. Is there anything you'd like your child to take part in musically that they don't currently have access to? (Inside school or out?)

7. Tell me a little bit about your own music preferences.
   a. What kinds of music do you like to listen to?
   b. Do you play any musical instruments and/or sing?
   c. Would you class yourself as a musician?

8. How important is music in your life?
   a. What opportunities does music offer you?
   b. How does music affect you?
   c. How often do you listen to music/participate in musical activities?

9. How important do you think music is in your child's life?
   a. What opportunities does music offer your child?
   b. How does music affect your child?

10. Is there anything else you feel you'd like to say or something that I've not asked that you feel is important to mention?

Appendix Q Interview Schedule: Students

*** To be adapted depending on the access needs of the students ***

1. Do you like music?
   a. What do you like about music?
   b. What don't you like about music? / Is there anything you don't like about music?

2. Who teaches music at your school?
   a. What do you like about [teacher's music lessons]?
   b. What don't you like about [teacher's music lessons]?
   c. Is there anything that would make the lessons better?

3. If you could do anything in your music lessons what would you do?
   a. What would the teacher be like?
      i. Why?
   b. What kinds of music would you like to learn [about]?
      i. Why?
   c. Would you prefer to have a music lesson on your own or with your friends?
      i. Why?

4. What do you think of the music room [School 2]?
   a. Do you like it?
   b. What do you like about it?
   c. What would happen if you had your lessons in a different classroom?

5. Do you do any music outside of school?
   a. What kinds of music?
   b. How long for?

6. What music do you like to listen to?
   a. Who's your favourite band/artist/musician?

7. Do your parents/carers play music at home?
   a. What kinds?
   b. What do you do when the music is on?

8. What would you like to do when you leave school?

9. Is there anything else you'd like to tell me about music?

10. Do you have any questions for me?

Appendix R Memo Examples

Examples of each memo type listed on pp. 90-91 are provided below. Each memo type lists the source of the memo (i.e. the corresponding interview transcript, observation note, document etc.), the quotation/thought/code/source that triggered the memo, and the memo itself.

1. **Coding Memo Example**

   Source:

   > School3_PractitionerInterview_HeadTeacher_Memos

   Trigger/Quotation:

   > "It should be fun"

   Memo:

   > Should this be coded at 'making it fun', 'having fun', or both? Check these codes from School 1 and 2 to see how they compare and make a decision from there. Enjoyment codes may also tie into this so also check those. Perhaps all of these could be consolidated into one code?

2. **Factual Memo Example**

   Source:

   > School1Site1_Docs_CurriculumMap_Memos

   Quotation/Trigger:

   > The entire source

   Memo:

   > Interesting to note that musical interaction is included as one of the primary means for developing communication in the informal curriculum at School 1. It is listed alongside intensive interaction. There are no subject-specific elements of the curriculum in this strand. This is in contrast to the semi-formal and formal curriculum which do list subject-specific curriculum areas (with English/literacy skills and Maths/mathematical skills being at the top of the map). Creative subjects are at the forefront of the informal curriculum, with dance, drama, art, music and food tech also being listed in creative and care/dependent living sections of the curriculum map for this strand.

3. **Comparative Memo Example**

Source:

School2_PractitionerInterview_HeadTeacher_Memos

Trigger/Question:

"I think best practice is trying to put on as big a variety as possible."

Memo:

This aligns with the School 2 KS3 Leader's perspective. Compare these two

sources.

4. **Questioning Memo Example**

Source:

School3_PractitionerInterview_KS3MusicTeacher/MusicCoordinator_Memos

Trigger/Quotation:

"Because I did have conversations before about singing because we had one

young lady who shared a massive interest in kind of developing her singing

and I did go and ask if there was any chance that we could get somebody in to

develop that, but it didn't happen. I mean, I do understand where she's

coming from. But it would be lovely, wouldn't it? In an ideal world."

Memo:

This is a good example to use in relation to the Head Teacher's comments

about not thinking anyone had ever asked to have 1-to-1 tuition on an

instrument. Why didn't this happen? Illustrates how important 'Having

support from the Head Teacher' is. You can 'champion music' but if senior

management don't say 'yes', it's not going to happen. What makes senior

management say 'yes' to something? From my data so far it would seem that

'seeing the benefits', 'valuing music', 'having support from governors' and

'having an overarching philosophy' (i.e. the proposal fitting in with this) all

play a role.

5. **Analytical Memo Example**

Source:

School1Site1_FocusedCoding_Memos

Trigger/Quotation:

The Site Manager's interview transcript and the codes *developing differently*

and *having an overarching philosophy*

Memo:

The Site Leader at School 1 Site 1 is, by virtue of her role, a member of "the extended senior leadership of the school". This means that she has an impact on "what happens in the rest of the school in terms of policy and things like that".

I've put stars around the *developing differently* code in my print out of the initial coding for this interview. I think this could potentially be developed into a higher category code. There's a lot from interviews and document analysis that could come under this: the school's unique curriculum and assessment framework (*having an over-arching philosophy*); the fact that lessons are not taught as discreet subjects as part of the informal curriculum; the fact that staff at the school are always having to research and adapt their provision as new approaches and assessment tools that they feel suit their philosophy are released. These codes (*developing differently* and *having an overarching philosophy*) are intertwined somehow. How can I better extrapolate and explain this? There's a quote in the Site Leader's interview that I think summarises some of the issues the staff at School 1 Site 1 have been having with assessment etc.:

"The trouble is that if you're not neuro-typical – and children with complex and multiple learning needs are not neuro-typical by the fact that they were premature births or some other things that went on, so their brains are not wired in the same way as normally developing children – so actually developing an assessment system that just follows the developmental pathway doesn't really work"
(School 1 Site 1, Site Leader, lines 61-65)

This interconnection between the *developing differently* and *having an overarching philosophy* might also explain why the Sounds of Intent framework was considered but not used as an assessment tool at the school. It fits well within the *developing differently* bracket (as explained by the Class 1 Teacher) but it doesn't fit with the school's *overarching philosophy* and so it was discarded. Do new interventions and curriculum/assessment frameworks

have to tick both boxes in order to be integrated into the school's day to day practice? The site's *overarching philosophy* is based on research and various educational initiatives that senior leadership at the school thought would work well. There's another code here that may play a part as well: *filling the gap.* New initiatives and interventions seem likely to make it into the curriculum and assessment policies if they fill a gap that the school has identified in their provision. The Sounds of Intent Framework, for example, doesn't fill a gap.

6. **Reflexive Memo Example**

Source:

Withheld to protect participants' identity

Trigger/Quotation:

"But that's only because of how they are. It's not because they haven't practiced it enough it's just that they're always going to be like that. It's not something curable that they've got… Like, more practice doesn't make them not autistic, so."

Memo:

I'm getting progressively more and more shocked by the ableist language in this interview. There seem to be some deeply rooted assumptions/beliefs about disability here that are affecting [the participant]'s attitudes and expectations towards/of students. I need to be aware of how my shock here could affect my interpretation of this quotation. Think I need to go back to the data and compare this with some of the other interview data just to be sure that I'm not elevating this unnecessarily.