Why teach curriculum music to children in primary school? An exploration of primary teachers' perceptions of music in the school curriculum

A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Education

By

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Abstract

Research has identified that music can be considered a difficult subject to teach in primary schools because of the specificity of musical expertise (Rogers et al., 2008). A range of individual factors have been found to impact on the teaching practices of primary teachers including, for example, musical background (Holden and Button, 2006; Wiggins and Wiggins, 2008), engagement in music making (Hallam et al., 2009) and access to appropriate resources (de Vries, 2013). Recommendations to improve the quality of music teaching by generalist teachers have included offering longer music subject courses as part of primary teacher education and increasing the amount of music professional development offered to teachers after they are qualified. However, current and historical contextual data shows that the situation remains unimproved.

Researchers (Rogers et al., 2008; Wiggins and Wiggins, 2008; de Vries, 2015) suggest that research has not sufficiently considered the voices of primary teachers or their sense of agency in framing the discussion about quality primary music education. The complexities of teaching music as expressed by the teachers themselves i.e. what they believe and their self-efficacy, is unexplored in the research literature.

This case study captures the individual voices of the teachers of one primary school with regard to the teaching of music: their perceptions of the subject from both professional and personal standpoints.

An interpretivist approach based on social constructionism, emphasising the subjective meanings and interpretations that individuals construct through their experiences and social interactions, was used to frame and discuss teacher perceptions. Data was collected through questionnaires and semi-structured interviews across two terms.

This exploration of the teachers' thoughts, attitudes and practice – their understandings and interpretations - suggests that they feel a need to widen the music curriculum to include the 'use' of music in everyday life, offering a curriculum which is more appropriate and relevant to the children in today's society. They talk about teaching the children how music is used for emotional regulation and mood improvement, for physical and mental well-being (including relaxation and improved focus) and for self-expression and for social connection,

as part of the taught curriculum. In this way music holds a unique position and purpose in the curriculum.

Evidence from this data suggests that teachers can be empowered and stimulated to teach music without the need for additional training.

Key Words

Primary, music, generalist teachers, music curriculum, musical intelligence, creativity, achievement, progress, assessment, wider uses of music.

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Music is an enigma… What benefit could there be to diverting time and energy to the making of plinking noises, or to feeling sad when no one has died?... As far as biological cause and effect are concerned, music is useless.

*(*Pinker, 1997, p.528)

Chapter 1 Introduction: Context and Research Questions

1.1 Introduction

Music is a human construct: for sound to be defined as music, it requires human beings to intend it as such (Radocy and Boyle, 2003; Hallam, 2006a). Although 'sound' exists as an objective reality, there are contested definitions of 'music'. Some would argue that music is the intentional organisation and use of sound: others may suggest a broader definition and include such concepts as birdsong or other 'natural' music.

Music varies between cultures and its evolution, in the widest sense, has been traced from the elemental sounds of prehistoric times to the myriad world musics of today (Spitzer, 2021; Hendy, 2014). Defining music depends on subjective judgement. The Oxford English Reference Dictionary (Pearsall and Trumble, 2003, p.953) includes the following: music is "the art of combining vocal or instrumental sounds (or both) to produce beauty of form, harmony, and expression of emotion". This restrictive definition illustrates this subjectivity: not all music is made by the voice and/or instruments; not all music has a beauty of form and harmony; and not all music can be said to express emotion. Discussion about music should be contextualised, socially, culturally, historically and geographically, especially in Western society where music is given labels according to style, period and locality; for example, 'classical', 'pop' or 'heavy metal'. Musical understanding has changed over time (Spitzer, 2021) and access to hearing it in its different forms has widened considerably.

The right to access music learning has been recognized internationally (UNESCO, 2010). In England this has been translated into policy through the government's National Plans for Music Education (DfE, 2011c; DfE, 2022) which states as their aim, to 'enable children from all backgrounds and every part of England to have the opportunity to learn a musical instrument; to make music with others; to learn to sing; and to have the opportunity to progress to the next level of excellence' (DfE, 2011c, p.9).

Music, as a curriculum subject, has had a place in primary (previously elementary) schools since the 1870s (Plowden, 1987). Developments in music education have been guided by ideological thinking but a pragmatic approach has been used by those involved in formulating policy and practice. The current school music curriculum, namely the National Curriculum in England (DfE, 2013), consists of skills development and practical work (both

individually and as part of ensembles), knowledge of the theory of music (notations, structures and conventions) and contextual understanding through an awareness of the history of music. It consolidates and formalises the teaching of four key strands of musical development: performing, composing, listening and appraising. In practice, the balance between these four elements has been affected by both external and internal factors relating to teaching and learning and is in need of review, not least because music is a marginalised subject in many primary schools.

Whilst this curriculum addresses those aspects of music deemed 'statutory' within the curriculum, it depends on how you define the curriculum as to how the subject is valued and the purpose it holds as a subject. Within the current curriculum, music as a life skill is not addressed. This raises the question, why teach curriculum music to children in primary schools?

There is some agreement that musicality is a universal trait of humankind (Spitzer, 2021: Blacking, 1995: Merriam, 1964). Commonly defined as a talent for or sensitivity to music, the definition of the term 'musicality' remains contentious: for example, research suggests that musicality, defined in this case as musical expression in performance, is dependent on the highly developed technical expertise of the performer (Sloboda, 2004; Lehmann and Ericsson, 1997; Altenmüller and Furuya, 2016). It is also culturally and historically contextual (Chaffin and G Imreh, 2002; Reid, 2001; Woody, 2003; Bautista et al., 2009). It is a term that will be further explored in this thesis.

The phenomenon of music is understood in many ways, for example, in Western society it can be celebrated and promoted for social, cultural and educational reasons. Music can be used to enforce conformity to social norms, validate social institutions and religious rituals, contribute to the continuity and stability of culture and contribute to the integration of society (Merriam,1964). Music is integral to the lives of most people because of the different levels at which it operates within society (Hallam, 2001b). The societal and personal functions of music in everyday life are many and varied and include, emotional expression, aesthetic enjoyment and physical response, entertainment, communication and symbolic representation.

1.2 Music in Everyday Life

> We exercise to music, worship to music and shop to music. This informal musical education can't help but influence the way we think in powerful ways.
>
> Armstrong (1993, p.63)

We are surrounded by music: we engage with it both actively and passively. We make choices about how and what music we listen to; however, music is also present in the background of our lives and may be barely perceived, if at all. It can affect the way we act and can alter emotions. We all listen to music in different ways and all take something different from it (Copland, 2011).

Music in everyday life functions at several different levels - at an individual, social group and societal level (Radocy and Boyle, 2003; Gregory, 1997). Its nature reflects the values, attitudes and characteristics of us as individuals, as groups and as a society.

At an individual level, music can be a powerful contributor to a person's wellbeing. Listening to music can enhance and affect how we feel: the choice of genre or song is an important mechanism in creating, sustaining or developing our emotional state (Levitin, 2024). We can use music as a manifestation of our feelings: the aural embodiment of something abstract. Music allows us to explore and engage with our emotions: it can elicit physical responses. It can help us relax when, for example, we are stressed or annoyed, and in this way helps us to cope with controlled changes of mood and emotion.

Music is used to combat loneliness. A report by Youth Music and Ipsos MORI (2019, p.16-18) states that, at the time of being surveyed, those respondents who had recently made music were less likely to say that they 'often feel lonely'. The authors also report that making music and being musical is linked to young people feeling more in control of their lives: they are more likely to look forward to the future and more likely to enjoy school.

Playing an instrument can offer intellectual stimulation, entertainment and aesthetic enjoyment. Solo performing, in private or in public, provides opportunities for satisfying one's musicianship, can improve self-esteem and can provide pleasure. Learning an instrument or singing helps us to develop transferable skills such a as concentration, self-discipline, physical coordination and can enhance literacy skills (Hallam, 2001a).

Music at a group level can be considered a means of communication. It is a social activity involving creating, interpreting, performing and hearing with shared meanings (musical and social). These shared experiences can be practical, as in playing in a band or singing in a choir, or be achieved through engagement in listening to a common music genre. It provides the opportunity for shared understandings that combine together social groups and support their identity and is a central aspect of young people's chosen youth culture (Hallam, 2006a).

Music can provide a symbolic representation of abstract ideas, behaviours and other things in society. It has played a major part in religious ceremonies for hundreds of years; has been used to develop patriotism and encourage conformity to social norms; and when used in films, it can elicit a wealth of emotion. These three examples demonstrate how music can contribute to the development, continuity and stability of a culture and the integration of society.

We are all born with the capacity to be active musicians but very few people in Western Society end up actively participating in music making in adulthood (Spitzer, 2021): our experience of music at this time is usually entirely passive (ibid, p.15).

Before the invention of mobile technologies, the model for engaging with music was to perform or sit and listen; however, modern consumption of music in Western Society is different to that of the past. Technology has empowered participation in and with music (Beach and Spruce, 2024): it has made it accessible to almost everyone who can afford it. The way we access and listen to music has undergone a change: we can take our personal music choices with us – on our phones or other electronic portable devices. Online access to music allows us to download music quickly; we can learn to play an instrument through online videos and tutorials (Green,2002; Green, 2008a); and the creation of music software allows us not only to listen, but compose through the manipulation of musical ideas.

Discourses relating to the points above emerged as important to the teachers in my research study. Music is integral to young people's lives: powerful personal and social benefits are associated with engagement with music. It has been argued (Youth Music and Ipsos MORI, 2019) that creative and musical pastimes are core to how young people spend their time, interact with others and have fun.

Should children be taught how to use music for their own emotional support and mental wellbeing in everyday life as part of the school curriculum?

1.3 Music in Schools

Education has a key part to play in the development of a myriad of life skills, including those relating to music. Teaching has a significant part to play in curriculum engagement, enjoyment and learning: in the acquisition and development of relevant curriculum related knowledge and skills, including the development of social skills. Learning enables us to become more competent and confident, to potentially see things from different perspectives and to approach new challenges. The case for music in the curriculum is often made from a range of different starting points: its place in school life is sometimes justified by reference to literature that supports its wider benefits (Welch et al., 2004: Hallam, 2010), for example, in language development (including phonemic awareness), literacy, measures of intelligence and general academic achievement (Dehaene, 2020; Lucas and Gromko, 2007; Hallam and Rogers, 2016).

Music is also a form of communication, whether this is active or passive in nature. It can break down communication barriers and support social interaction. A child may have difficulty reading the emotion in people's faces, but may have no trouble identifying whether a musical theme is happy or sad (Heaton et al., 2008: Spitzer, 2021). In his work with children with autism, Ockelford (2013) explored the dynamics of social interaction using music, in the absence of language. Rejecting the 'deficit model' that drives our top-down system of education – one in which we measure children's attainment by what they can't do – he looked more widely at how all children develop, using what they could do as the focus (Ockelford, 2013: Spitzer, 2021). His 'Sounds of Intent' programme was a practical framework for identifying growing musicality in children with significant special needs, highlighting elements of general musical development which are experienced by all.

In February/March 2018, Youth Music, a national charity supported by the Arts Council, undertook a survey to consider the views of children and young people aged between seven and seventeen in England. In the published report (Youth Music and Ipsos MORI, 2019), the authors make some provocative statements, based on the accrued data. We are told that

young people are making more music than they were a decade ago and that patterns of engagement differ according to a young person's background. We learn that those from lower income backgrounds are more likely to see themselves as musical and, in contrast to popularly presented opinion, are just as likely to sing and play an instrument. They are statistically more likely to be involved in musical activities that tie in with popular culture such as karaoke, making music on a computer and rapping. However, and this is potentially more significant, their creative identities often go unrecognised in music education, and they are less likely to get to more advanced levels of technical ability. One possible explanation for this is the unresponsive nature of music teaching and the restrictive nature of the school curriculum.

Whilst the contents of the report provide an encouraging picture, placing the contents of this report in context is important. Although quotas were set to ensure a representative sample - location, gender, age – it is not made clear what percentage of the respondents were taking part in Youth Music projects at the time. The report does state that Youth Music conducted qualitative interviews with fourteen young people, all of whom had participated in projects funded by the charity ((Youth Music and Ipsos MORI, 2019, p.23). This direct involvement in Youth Music projects will have positively influenced the responses given and affects the way results, and the associated discourses, are presented. Ipsos MORI also conducted in depth interviews with four experts in a variety of music and youth-related fields (ibid. p.23). What emerges from details contained within the report, is that the music found in popular youth culture predominates and that if music education is to become more inclusive, it needs to place more emphasis on valuing and nurturing young people's creative identities and needs to recognise the types of music which are important to those young people in the curriculum.

Educational provision in music depends on the nature of the education system, economic wealth, political factors and the perceived role and value placed on music in society (Baroness Nicholson of Winterbourne, 2023). There are debates as to whether music education should be available for all children or whether it should be available only to those who share a particular interest in or a special aptitude towards music (Hallam, 2006b). The latter debate raises concerns about how and when these children are identified, but more

importantly how children can gain access to appropriate teaching, instruments and other support.

Music is a statutory requirement of the National Curriculum (DfE, 2013). In many state schools, music becomes optional at the age of fourteen and, looking at the data released in 2021, 19% fewer pupils in England are taking music at GCSE level when compared to 2011, with A-Level music entries having fallen by 44% in the same period (Independent Society of Musicians, 2021). With this decline in pupils choosing to study music as a subject post-14, the following recommendation made by Youth Music and Ipsos MORI (2019, p.21) seems most pertinent:

> Music education in schools must be maintained but should be re-imagined, with a new model – supported and valued by Ofsted – that is more aligned with young people's existing musical identities and with outcomes that go beyond attainment to better capitalise on music's social value.

Why do primary children need to learn music and what should they get from it? If music in the primary curriculum is to have meaning for the children, its purpose needs to be determined and articulated in a way that empowers teachers to teach *something of meaning* to the children.

1.4 Context and Purpose of the Study

Research has identified that music can be considered a difficult subject to teach and many teachers do not teach or are reluctant to teach music in the primary curriculum for a variety of reasons, including the need better professional development (Roberts and O'Donnell, 2019: Ibbotson, 2022). According to the research, there is also a clear need to develop music skills among generalist primary teachers (APPG, 2019; Digby, 2020; Welch, 2020) i.e. those who teach across the range of National Curriculum (DfE, 2013) subjects to children between the ages of five and eleven. These arguments centre around teachers' capacity and agency to deliver the music curriculum, discussion of which is included in my review of literature.

The idea that many teachers do not teach or are reluctant to teach primary music was evident through my interaction with teachers and schools as a Director of Initial Teacher

Training (ITT) provision. I found that trainee primary teachers very rarely saw good practice modelled in the classroom and the specific taught music elements within the course were limited in focus (Hennessy, 2017: Bath et al., 2020). Training concentrated on teaching practice and delivery of the content of the National Curriculum (DfE, 2013) itself. As a headteacher of three primary schools I also found that the specialist teacher versus generalist teacher argument remained current, alive and relevant with teachers because of the complexity of teacher attitudes and confidence. Also relating to this discourse, I found that class teachers endorsed stereotypes.

The discourse on 'Why teach music?' is an interesting one. In my experience, teachers do not explore or challenge the rationale behind why we teach the set curriculum: it a tool for delivery of individual subjects. One could argue that it is not their place to do so; however, many teachers will articulate, and use as an argument for its status on the curriculum, that music is a 'creative subject'. From my experience, many argue that it allows children who are not academic to succeed in a different way.

1.5 Personal Context

I understand that in my position as a researcher, I was 'neither neutral nor innocent' (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2018, p.295): I am aware that I will have projected a version of myself into my research (Berger, 2015). I will also have brought my own personal characteristics, experiences, knowledge, backgrounds, values, theories, age, gender, politics, conceptual frameworks and prejudices to my writing (Pillow, 2010; Bettez, 2015).

In this section I will articulate perceptions of my positionality within this study: primarily as a practical musician, as an educator and as an academic. I will provide details of my own personal background, in the form of a biography, as I feel that this information is needed by the reader in order to contextualise and understand some of my attitudes, perceptions and engagements with music as a whole.

1.5.1 Biography

My mother was a nurse and my father was a factory worker. Neither were interested in music and very little music was heard in the house when I was young. My grandmother introduced me to playing the piano at about the age of 7 after she encouraged my parents to acquire an old instrument from a neighbour. When I started to show an interest in playing, they found me a piano teacher. I was expected to take yearly ABRSM examinations in piano playing although my results were weak.

From the age of 9, I received lessons on the clarinet. This was not my choice but that of my parents: my father, particularly, enjoyed the playing of Acker Bilk. I did not like the sound of the instrument and I found the instrument very difficult to play.

At secondary school, in the late 1970s, I engaged with the wider listening opportunities offered during curriculum music classes: this was mainly based on recordings of classical works. Whilst I preferred the sound of orchestral string instruments, I knew that my parents would not approve for a variety of reasons. I persuaded them to buy me a flute for my fourteenth birthday: this was a significant event in my musical development. Having taken six years to achieve ABRSM Grade 5 in piano playing and five years to achieve ABRSM Grade 5 clarinet, it took two terms to achieve a distinction in Grade 5 flute playing. I achieved a distinction in Grade 8 two years later. I gained a scholarship to the Royal Academy of Music five years after starting to learn to play the flute, where I studied for four years to be a professional flute player. I won both the 'Flute Prize' and the 'Early Music Prize' in my third year of study.

On reflection and with hindsight, my poor ABRSM piano results could be attributed to my lack of access to a satisfactory instrument and the quality of the teaching that I was given. The 'touch' on my home piano was very uneven, which meant that when I took exams on a good instrument, my playing was clumsy and erratic. On entry to the Academy, and access to good instruments, my piano playing improved markedly.

My inability to achieve fluency and musicality in clarinet playing was due to a lack of strength in my embouchure, a lack of flexibility in my tongue and the fact that the pads on my fingers were not large enough (as a child) to reliably cover the open holes of a clarinet. The latter problems were not obstacles for my flute playing: the nuances of the

embouchure, tonguing technique and virtuosity of finger-work are quite different. So even though both are woodwind instruments, I had a physical and mental aptitude for one and not the other. Many children find themselves in a similar position: instruments are chosen for them, without having the opportunity to try a range of different instruments to see how one reacts and relates to them. How many more instrumentalists would there be if we all had the luxury of choice and experience in this way? We, as individuals, all have affinities for different, yet specific, instruments.

Of all the instruments I learned to play at school, and at the Academy, my favourite is the viola – which I have played for longer than I have played the flute and which I still play today. I have always found it challenging and however much I practice, I cannot achieve a sufficiently reliable muscle memory to ensure technically accurate tuning, or achieve a fluent technique. However, the challenge of playing the viola and the opportunity to play as a member of an orchestral section, provides me with the most satisfaction: it satisfies both my musical ambition and my emotional strength. Technical proficiency and excellence do not always equate with enjoyment and satisfaction. And vice versa.

In summary, I am a classically-trained musician from a working-class background. I was encouraged to play as a child however, it wasn't until I found the right instrument, that any form of natural ability or talent could be perceived. Significantly though, at this point, the guiding adults in my life took control: my mother and teachers pushed me to 'use my talent' to gain a place at a conservatoire, with the aim of pursuing a career as a musician. Also of significance, was the use of religious pressure: of having been given a talent by God.

I did not enjoy my four years at the Academy but was clueless as to what to do instead. When I left the Academy, I was appointed 'Musician in Residence' at a private school for a year. During this time, I discovered the joys of teaching and educating young people. I developed a preference for teaching primary classes and studied for a Post-Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) in Oxford. Reacting against my 'forced' musical training, I qualified in the teaching of 7–13-year-olds, with a specialism in English. I choose not to publicly acknowledge my music degree or admit to being musical at this time.

My subsequent career in education covered general primary teaching, from Reception to Year 6, although I was mostly designated a Year 6 teacher. I was a class teacher/deputy headteacher for eleven years before accepting the first of my three Headships, in a range of

schools across two counties. Whilst Headteacher of a school which Ofsted deemed 'Outstanding', I also worked as a Local Authority Advisor.

The final stage of my educational career was as Primary Director of two different School Centred Initial Teacher Training (SCITT) programmes, providing PGCE qualifications accredited by a local university. In this role I was a teacher, a tutor, a mentor and an assessor: each role had differing requirements and responsibilities, to both the students and the accrediting bodies.

During my career I was also committed to personal academic development gaining, amongst other qualifications two Masters degrees in Special Needs Education.

I am now retired.

1.5.2 Positionality

Providing a biography, like the one above, highlights 'positions'. Thinking simplistically, I held the positions of musician, teacher, assessor and academic. However, personal circumstances, personal identities and social relationships defined me in these positions. For example, I spent a long time pursuing the dreams of other people (my mother wanted me to be a musician and my teachers wanted me to follow in their footsteps) instead of pursuing my own dreams – this set of circumstances affected one of my identities and the relationships I made with others. It engendered a resentment relating to practical music making and for a period of time affected how I saw myself as a musician and a teacher.

Positions are dependent on and alter relationships. In approaching my research, there was a need to define myself: for my own benefit, for the benefit of the research and for the benefit of the reader. With different positions come different subjectivities. I use subjectivity, here, to mean the quality of being based on, or influenced by, personal feelings, tastes, or opinions. I also use it to mean the quality of being that exists in one's mind. It took me time to recognise these positions.

Positionality is both personally and socially constructed:

> Whether we like it or not, researchers remain human beings complete with all the usual assembly of feelings, failings, and moods. And all of those things influence how

> we feel and understand what is going on. Our consciousness is always the medium through which the research occurs; there is no method or technique of doing research other than through the medium of the researcher.
>
> Stanley & Wise, 1993, p157.

Research is interpreted by our consciousness. We also need to consider Mertens' (2020, p.285) observation that

> researchers should acknowledge that all texts are incomplete… Texts cannot claim to contain all universal truth because all knowledge is contextual; therefore, the author of the research must acknowledge the context of the research.

Lincoln (2009) adds to the discussion concerning the position or standpoint of the author adding that the researcher also needs to understand the psychological state of others to uncover dialectical relationships - relationships that involve tensions and contradictions between opposing forces or desires.

Researchers have their own values, biases (Hammersley, 1992) and world views and these are lenses through which they look at and interpret the already interpreted world of participants (Priessle, 2006).

> What we focus on, what we see, how we understand, describe, interpret and explain are shaped by ourselves and what we bring to the situation. We cannot stand outside these.
>
> Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2018, p.302

As a researcher creating knowledge, I needed to look at myself and my positionality. Reflexivity recognises that researchers are inescapably part of the social world that they are researching (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983; Atkinson, 2006). They have to 'self-appraise their role in the research process and product' (Berger, 2015, p.220) by combating reactivity through reflexivity (McCormick and James, 1988) i.e. by continually monitoring not only their own interactions with participants, but also their own reactions, roles and biases, and any other matters that might affect the research.

I recognise that teachers work within a variety of frameworks from the micro to the macro: from school policies and Headteacher expectations, to the Teachers' Standards (DfE, 2011b), the National Curriculum (DfE, 2013) and Ofsted, for example. One could label this practice conditionality and contextuality. The practical impact of this is that I was interviewing respondents who were in positions with social, political and legal restrictions. This was highlighted, for example, by the following comments made by teachers:

> *XX (*the Headteacher*) won't get to hear about this…*
>
> *This won't get back to XX (*the Headteacher*)…*
>
> *This is in complete confidence, isn't it XX (*researcher name*)?*

The positionality of the teachers, therefore, also needed to be considered and reflected upon, with an emphasis on my own social responsibility towards the respondents. Comments, like those above, demonstrated a trust and an honesty which required ethical consideration as well as positionality.

I also needed to acknowledge that discourses and language affect positionality, for example, the use, strength and power of labels. As I discovered in my research, labels such as 'musician', 'musical', 'teacher' etc. have different interpretations and understandings and can carry normative and hierarchical judgements. All of these derive from various positions: most are socially derived and are comparative and relational. The term 'relational positionality' has been used by Crossa (2012) to refer to the relational shaping of a researcher's identity, focussed on matters of which the researcher must be aware but over which they have little control.

1.5.3 Reflexivity

My understanding of reflexivity is the process of reflecting critically on myself as researcher: 'it is a conscious experiencing of the self as both inquirer and respondent, as teacher and learner' (Lincoln, Lynham and Guba, 2018, p.143). We interrogate ourselves: it is the examination of one's own beliefs, judgments and practices during the research process and how these may have influenced the research (Sandelowski & Barroso, 2002).

Usher (1996, p.37) writes that we are 'part of, rather than apart from, the world constructed through research'. Social reality is shaped by human experiences and contexts – it is not singular or objective. Knowledge is historically, culturally and socially situated and is created through interpretations.

Hamdan (2009) uses the word reflexivity with 'discomfort'. In the course of this research, I have questioned my own assumptions and beliefs. For example, I have been forced to confront my own prejudices concerning popular and world musics and have come to reflect on the narrowness of my own listening. This was engendered in me by the learning and social situations that I experienced when growing up. I have learnt that, as a teacher, I placed limitations on the learning which can be gained from experiencing different music genres.

Through reflexivity, I discovered that some of my biases had become my motives for doing the research. I needed to deconstruct my work and the motives behind it (Lather, 1991) in order to move forwards with listening to the data. As a researcher I have tried to reflect inwardly towards myself as an inquirer and outwardly to the cultural, historical, linguistic, political and other forces that shaped the inquiry. Examples of preconceived notions I held, which needed to be challenged prior to undertaking this research, were: a belief that all teachers can teach music; that school music should conform to western classical traditions; and there is a correct way to teach music.

One of the processes I found most difficult at the start of the research, was to look beyond what I thought was being presented in the data. With a background as a musician, I found myself approaching the questionnaires and interview transcripts from the stand-point of someone confident and competent in the subject. When understanding the viewpoints and responses of non-musicians and those less confident or competent in music, I realised that I could not approach it from my default position. Doing so resulted in a biased re-interpretation of the data being presented.

1.6 Institutional Context

I undertook this research within a maintained, primary school in a deprived area (as defined by the IDACI index) in the East of England. At the time of writing, it was a two-form entry

school with classes from Reception to Year 6 (ages four to eleven): there were three hundred and fifty children on role. The Headteacher was closely assisted in leading the school by the Deputy Headteacher and four senior managers (a Key Stage 2 co-ordinator, a Key Stage 1 co-ordinator, an Early Years co-ordinator and a Special Needs co-ordinator). Including the senior managers, there were twenty-one qualified teachers working at the school. Several classes were taught by teachers who were 'job sharing' i.e. two teachers sharing a single class, and two teachers were classified by the school as 'floating' teachers - those who covered sickness and Planning, Preparation and Assessment time.

The school had a full complement of governors. Information from the website showed them to have a wide range of skills, appropriate to school governance. This was confirmed in the latest Ofsted inspection report.

Demographic information about the school, taken from the 2018 Ofsted report states that the school is a larger than the average-sized primary school. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils (as defined by Ofsted) is above average whilst the proportion of pupils who are from minority ethnic groups or whose first language is not English is significantly below average. The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is just above average and those who have an education, health and care plan or statement of SEN is below average.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) is a non-ministerial department of His Majesty's government, reporting to Parliament, which inspects services providing education and skills for learners of all ages in England. The school was inspected by Ofsted in May 2018 under Section 8 of the Education Act (2005). At the time of this inspection, the school was found to 'Require Improvement'. However, in spite of this, it was found that staff were proud to work at the school; pupils were polite and demonstrated that they wanted to learn; and pupils across the school felt safe. The report stated that 'the curriculum provision covers the subjects expected in the National Curriculum' (Ofsted, 2018). Specific comments on the curriculum related only to reading (including phonics), writing, mathematics, science and history. There was no reference to 'music' of any kind.

The school was reinspected in February 2022, under Section 5 of the Education Act (2005), and was deemed to be 'Good' in all judgement areas. The report stated that pupils enjoy

coming to school and speak with pride about their learning: they want to achieve well. They are friendly with each other and listen to each other's views carefully in class. The school is a calm place, where pupils behave and are cared for well. Bullying is not considered an issue. Parents and carers value the school and its place in the local community.

It was noted that this was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic (2021-2022) began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders, and took those conversations into account in their evaluation of the school. The inspectors judged that despite the stop and start of the pandemic, leaders had ensured that there was an ambitious curriculum in place. They commented that in most subjects, leaders were clear about the important knowledge that they wanted pupils to know and what they want them to be able to do over time. They recognised that in a few subjects, however, that curriculum plans had yet to be fully developed, referring specifically to maths, history and art. Under the July 2022 Education Inspection Framework (EIF) there was a requirement for schools to identify key knowledge and skills to be taught, so that pupils could build on their understanding and achieve well.

As required by the inspection framework, inspectors carried out deep dives into five specific subjects: early reading, mathematics, art, science and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also spoke to leaders about the curriculum in some other subjects.

The inspectors considered seventy-one responses made by parents to Ofsted Parent View, including forty-four free-text responses and forty-seven responses to the staff survey. Inspectors also considered the ninety-nine responses to the Ofsted's pupil survey.

Mention was made of the fact that teachers were benefiting from ongoing training to develop effective ways to teach each area of the curriculum; however, music was not specifically inspected as part of the inspection: neither were extra-curricular musical activities commented upon. Music was not mentioned in the report.

I have not included specific references for either Ofsted report as this would allow the school to be identified. By implication, it would therefore allow all teachers on the staff to be identified. I have personally redacted the references for ethical purposes.

Having worked with some of the schools in this locality in my role as Director of a Primary School Centred Initial Teacher Training (SCITT) provider, I set clear criteria when selecting this school. I chose to complete my research in a primary school:

- of which I had little knowledge;
- where I did not know the staff; and
- in which I had not worked in any capacity.

I was known to the headteacher of the school because my wife had been her mentor when she was a newly qualified teacher, almost thirty years ago. They had not remained in contact, however, she was aware of my musical background and was open to working with me when I approached her with my research topic. After explaining my personal education and career history as part of our initial discussion, I was viewed by her as an 'expert' in music education, with significant additional knowledge on managing schools and influencing aspects of school education through the training of teachers. She identified that a professional working relationship between us, through my research project, could potentially be beneficial for the staff at her school.

1.7 Initial Research Topic and Research Question

My initial title for this thesis was 'Primary Teachers' Perceptions of Music in the School Curriculum'; however, as the research evolved, perceptions and questions relating to the purposes of teaching music in the primary school became an important discourse for the teachers at the school. This is reflected explicitly in the current title:

> Why Teach Curriculum Music to Children in Primary School? An Exploration of Primary Teachers' Perceptions of Music in the School Curriculum

My specific research questions are:

1. How do generalist primary teachers perceive the music curriculum?
2. How do generalist primary teachers perceive musical intelligence?
3. How do internal and external factors impact on their approaches to the teaching of classroom music?
4. How can generalist teachers be empowered and stimulated to teach music?

1.8 Conclusion

In the course of this chapter, I have introduced my thinking on music as a phenomenon and as a primary school subject. I started to explore how music is used in everyday life, including the ways in which people use it for emotional support and mental well-being. In order for this to be effective, opportunities need to be provided to discuss and explore how this can be done.

In relation to music in schools, I have started a discourse concerning the purpose of music education. Is music an academic subject? To what extent is it a creative subject in primary schools? If music education is to have meaning for the children, its purpose needs to be determined and articulated in a way that empowers all teachers to 'teach' something of meaning to the children.

Research has identified that music can be considered a difficult subject to teach for a variety of reasons which will be explored later in this thesis. However, most importantly, children are entitled to an effective music curriculum. Whilst the content of which has been determined by the National Curriculum (DfE, 2013) and has been strategically planned for in the National Plans for Music Education (DfE, 2011c: DfE, 2022), one could question whether these approaches are limited in their outlook and approach.

I have presented an honest account of my positionality so that the reader can assess for themselves the extent to which I have been reflexive. It also allows the reader to be in a position to challenge and evaluate my thesis.

Music teaching is a statutory requirement of the National Curriculum (DfE, 2013) for primary teachers and contextual information about the school provides subjective detail on the school from the Ofsted inspectors' points of view – framed by the Ofsted framework itself.

What will emerge in this thesis is a nexus of two positions with regard to music teaching in the school:

- the Music curricula defined by policy and the school's expectations;
- the perceived music education needs of children for living in society and current popular cultural needs.

In order to understand the current position of primary music education, I feel it is necessary to understand the historical context concerning generalist music teaching. This is the purpose of the next chapter.

Chapter 2 Considerations in Primary Generalist Music Teaching: An Historical Context

2.1 Music up to the Plowden Report

2.1.1 Introduction

In the selective history of music education which follows, I have chosen to highlight only areas of relevance to the discourses and arguments which form the core of this thesis, namely:

1. the nature and development of the primary school curriculum linked, where appropriate, to the social and political priorities of the time;
2. the effectiveness of the teaching of the primary music curriculum, contextualised by temporal interpretations of the concept of effectiveness;
3. the effectiveness of the training and development of primary teachers to teach classroom music.

My aim is to enable the reader to appreciate that these discourses are significant and relevant in understanding current policy and practice.

2.1.2 Music as a Primary Curriculum Subject

The 1870 Education Act (UK Parliament, 2015) embodied the inception of non-compulsory, state-run education for children in England and Wales up to the age of thirteen. Discussions and reports on possible elementary school designs proposed by the School Board for London, listed the qualities that a good elementary school should possess as 'Healthful', 'Pleasant', 'Attractive', 'Stimulative', 'Instructive' and 'Useful and Influential' (Maclure, 1970, p.15-16). The Board's categorisation of music as 'Pleasant' reflects the fact that schooling, at this time, was designed to be useful and practical (appropriate to the historical period) rather than creative or artistic.

Changes in the early twentieth century saw music coupled with 'drill', as part of the drive for national efficiency and ways to improve the health of the nation. The musical skills of

correct breathing, voice production and rhythmic marching were identified as ways of strengthening the physical being (Adams, 2013): music as a practical, creative subject in its own right did not yet exist.

Sir Henry Hadow CBE, a leading educational reformer in England, chaired several committees which published a series of influential reports on education. In the 1926 report by the Consultative Committee of the Board of Education (CCBE, 1926, p.108-109), it was proposed that 'practical work in schools could be considered as a means of intellectual training suitable to the interests and capacities of the majority of the pupils', adding that 'the attainment of a reasonable standard of practical skill is, in itself, an object of importance in a Modern School'. Whilst these comments are written about the school curriculum in general, the development of more practical activities was being proposed, with increased emphasis on learning through experience and activity. This was potentially supportive of a more practical music curriculum and the ideology may, in part, have reflected the fact that Hadow championed music, being a respected and influential musicologist, music critic and composer.

It will be seen that the discourse of 'ideological aspiration' in relation to music education is one that continues to the present. Translating an ideology into practice can be difficult: Maclure (1970) notes that, while the Hadow Report of 1926 (Consultative Committee of the Board of Education, 1926) had drawn attention to changes in attitude and approach, it had reflected aspiration rather than approach. Thirty years after the publication of the Hadow (ibid.) report, a Ministry of Education Pamphlet entitled 'Music in Schools' (HMSO, 1956), was still making recommendations for a more creative approach to music making. Whilst there is aspiration for music to be a practical, creative subject, documentary evidence from the time shows that participation in communal singing was still the predominant method of music instruction and that this music 'teaching' was inconsistent, dependent on the musical skills of staff (Adams, 2013).

2.1.3 The Plowden Report

In August 1963 the Central Advisory Council for Education (England) (CACE) was asked by Sir Edward Boyle, the then Minister of Education, to consider the whole subject of primary

education and the transition to secondary education. This review (CACE, 1967) was completed by a committee of twenty-four people, chaired by Lady Plowden, and a more forward-thinking and critical approach to education and social reform had been expected (Kogan, 1987). It was an exercise in policy analysis (ibid.) which found that primary education had been neglected and underfunded. Although ways of rethinking practice were proposed, critics labelled it unreflective and as promoting rapid change without carefully considering the criteria on which 'child-centred' learning was to be based (Dearden, 1969).

The Plowden Report (CACE, 1967), entitled 'Children and their Primary Schools', communicated a serious challenge to music educators. It criticised music teaching for its reliance on mass instruction, over direction by the teacher and lack of individual progression (CACE, 1967). It stated music lagged behind other creative subjects, such as the visual arts (arts and crafts), language and literacy (Dearden, 1969). The report emphasised the importance of processes and experiences in learning which ultimately gave rise to more creative music making in schools.

2.1.4 Teaching Music through Singing

Music teaching up to the publication of the Plowden Report (CACE, 1967) was almost exclusively vocal and although massed choral singing took place in some large schools, it provided limited experience and education for children (ibid., p.251). The place of singing in the history of music education is important as it reveals some pertinent social-historical points. It had been linked to payment by results; the quality of the teaching of singing and pupil engagement was judged to be important; and singing had links with nationalistic tendencies.

In 1871, the School Board for London resolved 'that the art and practice of singing be taught… as a branch of elementary education' (London Metropolitan Archives, 1904, p.111, cited in Adams, 2013). Teachers were given a choice of teaching singing either by ear or introducing children to staff notation. A separate singing grant had been awarded for every child who attended school on a regular basis and in 1882, this grant was reduced if singing was taught by ear: it remained at the higher level if staff notation was taught (Adams, 2013). For financial reasons, many schools taught staff notation.

We see that judgements were already being made about the value of learning the theoretical skills of staff notation, prioritising this above the practical skill of singing, which required no specialist learning or teaching. Subject knowledge and teacher competence were already starting as discourses in music education.

As for curriculum purpose, music in schools in first part of the 20th century was also intended to support nationalist ideals (Taylor, 1979; Rainbow, 1989; Cox; 1993): the singing curriculum included patriotic and religious repertoire and there was a revival of English folk song and dance. Curwen (Sharp and Baring-Gould, 1906) published a volume called 'English Folk Songs for Schools' and Boosey (Stanford, 1906) published 'The National Song Book' which was used in many schools.

2.1.5 Competence of Staff

Early concerns connected to the training and competence of elementary school teachers in music began to be raised not long after the implementation of the 1870 Education Act. As early as 1887, Curwen (1887, cited in Adams, 2013) raised issues relating to music teaching standards in elementary schools, which she classified as poor. She believed that this was due to a lack of pedagogical underpinning, arising out of inappropriate training and a lack of educational literature to support the subject. Seventy years later, Plowden (CACE, 1967, p.251) observed that where a member of staff 'was musically educated, the singing of hymns and songs was often admirably done', contrasting this with a comment stating that 'in a great number of schools where there was no such teacher, standards were low'.

In 1954, Mabel Chamberlain, a teacher trainer at Stockwell Training College in London, made recommendations for more refresher courses to be set up for practising primary teachers (Chamberlain, 1954). In 1958, the Music Teachers' Association requested that a higher proportion of students should be encouraged to attend the basic music course in training colleges (MCL Minutes, 1958, cited in Adams, 2013).

This evidence, although brief, suggests that many mid-20th century generalist primary school teachers were not adequately prepared to teach music and that this was affecting attitudes towards the subject.

2.1.6 Use of Musical Instruments

Plowden (CACE, 1967) summarises the use of musical instruments succinctly: in the early 1930s, 'percussion band and bamboo pipes were a welcome innovation in infant and junior schools' (ibid., p.251), however, progress was disappointing due to teacher competence. The report also states that instruments and the music performed were of poor quality (ibid., p.252). Tracing the use of musical instruments in primary schools highlights links to significant external influences: both theoretical and musical approaches.

Departures from the singing curriculum to encourage practical music making happened in several ways. The introduction of Dolmetsch recorders into schools after World War 2 encouraged class instruction in the learning of an instrument linked to reading music and the 'Pipers' Guild' encouraged children to make and play bamboo pipes (Taylor, 1979). Both were teacher directed, giving little freedom for children to experiment or bring creative imagination to music making.

In 1957, Carl Orff's 'Schulwerk' method was introduced to primary schools, using a variety of specially made primary school instruments. Orff's method for schools was adapted for British schools by Margaret Murray (Taylor, 1979) and made a significant impact on practical musical activity in primary schools. Like the use of recorders in schools, this was a more formal method of instruction and built on skills gradually and slowly. High quality percussion instruments were introduced to schools and older cheaper instruments were replaced (ibid.). However, this method had its criticisms: the Orff method, it was also argued, was at odds with a freer experimental approach and promoted rigid thinking. It needed to be modified in order to empathise with the more 'child-centred' approach advocated in the Plowden Report.

Summing up the current position with regard to the use of instruments Plowden (CACE, 1967, p.252) suggests that the 'recorder has made considerable headway in the primary school' and that pitched percussion instruments 'a slighter one'. Adams (2013) argues, whilst the practical use of instruments to teach notation would have been novel to many teachers at this time, their use, in particular, the employment of the pentatonic scale which allowed playing without discord, gave primary schools the opportunity to experiment with new ways of introducing practical music making.

Plowden (CACE, 1967) also highlights issues with the scarcity and quality of instruments for children's practical work. One of the outcomes of the report, which concerned instruments being frequently made of poor materials and workmanship, was that the British Standards Institution Committee published a useful series of booklets on the qualities to be sought for musical instruments of all kinds (ibid.).

2.1.7 Schools Broadcasting

The BBC Schools Broadcasting Service was a significant national development to impact on school music teaching. In 1934 the first 'Music and Movement' series was broadcast, presented by Ann Driver and the programme became established as part of children's music education across Britain through medium of radio (Taylor, 1979). The emphasis was firmly placed on movement linked to musical concepts, heavily influenced by the work of Jaques Dalcroze (ibid.).

Jaques Dalcroze was a Professor at the Geneva Conservatory who provided new thinking about a less mechanistic way to teach general musicianship skills. He had raised concerns about the lack of 'inner hearing' development of his own music students and about their inability to improvise. Consequently, he devised a set of graded listening exercises for children that would encourage them to react physically to rhythm, then to pitch and harmony. He believed physical engagement was a natural bodily response and would enable the 'inner ear' to develop at more advanced level and his approach was to disengage children from static positions behind desks and to give them the space to engage with music in an environment that permitted physical response (Dobbs, 1976: Taylor, 1979).

Plowden (CACE, 1967) recognised that the School Broadcasting Council had made a great contribution in providing music of quality for the schools 'at a time when many teachers have lacked the knowledge and skill to help their pupils' (ibid., p.252). Close liaison between the School Broadcasting Council and teachers added to the value of its work, and it provided greater accessibility of recorded music of all kinds and was a valuable resource. However, BBC broadcasts were used with differing degrees of success: whilst some teachers used the programmes successfully, others misused the resource, with little teacher preparation and with only perfunctory follow up.

Televised primary music education programmes began to be broadcast in 1962. John Hosier (Schools Music Producer for the BBC) made a conscious effort to encourage generalist teachers to participate in music education with a more open and creative approach. Hosier believed that a good broadcast was one that was totally open-ended and left an enormous amount of work to be done in the classroom afterwards. He believed that the purpose of televised programmes was to put out a 'series of stimulating probes' (Ford, 1972, p.15).

2.1.8 Conclusion

At the time the Plowden report (CACE, 1967) was written, it was considered that there needed to be a shift from didactic forms of teaching to one with the child at the centre (Aubrey and Riley, 2019). It was felt that increased exploration and creativity were needed in the subject.

Plowden (CACE, 1967) also recognised that music of all kinds was available outside of the school and that the population, in general, were more aware of musical possibilities. She noted that music was a source of individual and social pleasure, also identifying that the popularity of the guitar had brought with it 'mass interest in music amongst the young' (Ibid., p.252).

2.2 Music Education after Plowden

2.2.1 Introduction

It was in the context of the severe criticisms levelled at music education in the Plowden Report (CACE, 1967) that, in 1969, Arnold Bentley submitted a research proposal to Reading University to explore several areas of primary music education in an attempt to improve the situation (Taylor, 1979). His project entitled 'Music Education of Young Children' (which ran from 1970 to 1976) had three aims:

- to increase understanding of how children learn in music;
- to clarify the aims of music education for nursery and primary school children;
- to produce guides and materials to help teachers achieve these aims.

The findings of his research identified similar issues to that of Plowden (CACE, 1967):

- Approaches to music making were found to be wide and varied but teachers showed a lack of musical training, confidence and clear guidance;
- Assessment of individual progress was highlighted as weak or not in evidence;
- There were no clear guidelines for teachers and no suitable support materials.

As a result, a scheme of work was introduced based on the acquisition of musical literacy through the learning of Western notation: the very area that many generalist teachers viewed as prohibiting them from engaging with the subject. This, too, was out of step with 'child-centred' progressive approaches which were the wider prevailing mood.

'Progressive' trends in the sixties, challenged ideas of progression in music learning: music was no longer about the sequential acquisition of foundational skills, but based around practical experimentation. These developments were seen by some as an erosion of traditional methods; however, Paynter and Aston (1970), embraced this exploratory approach to music education.

Ten years later, Swanwick (1981) presented some of his own reasoning as to why music caused so much consternation among the education community, arguing that because of the complexity of music as a subject, any proper understanding of music education could only develop when musicians and teachers brought their expertise of music, of teaching and learning, together within a single field. At this time, he also made reference to his earlier thoughts on the tensions created by 'a house divided' (Swanwick, 1977): the division between a model of music education which was 'subject centred' and one which was 'children centred'.

According to Swanwick, the former represented 'skills literacy and the value of western music tradition', whilst the latter encompassed 'experiment, creativity and an emphasis upon contemporary developments in music' (Swanwick, 1977, p.67). Two years after this, further research by Swanwick (1979) suggested that it is musicians themselves who make the best music teachers, arguing that musicians are the only credible music teachers.

In an interview for the Guardian, also in 1977, Swanwick referred to the many schemes and approaches 'dotted around isolated schools in the junior and secondary levels' that had led to the implementation of new ideas, but noted that, alongside these advances, there was still a distinct lack of adequate dialogue between all those involved in music education (Soames, 1977).

In the sections which follow, I will summarise some of the developments in generalist curriculum music teaching which pervade the years immediately after the release of the Plowden Report, (CACE, 1967). I have entitled each 'Concerning ….' to indicate that the subject matter derives from issues identified in the Plowden Report.

2.2.2 Concerning Teaching and Teacher Training

Looking to the future, Plowden's (CACE, 1967) strongest message concerned the quality of teaching and teacher training: 'It is to the musical education of the teacher that attention must first be given. By this we do not mean the education of the music specialist' (ibid., p.252).

This statement refers to the generalist teacher of primary music and not specialist music teachers, although the report acknowledges that provision for the latter existed and that this provision had been expanded (ibid.). The report makes two very pertinent points regarding specialist and non-specialist music teachers:

- the musical competence of teachers being trained in the colleges of music can be assumed but they may lack training in how to teach children;
- the musical education of the non-specialist is the key to the problem.

Musicians need to be taught to teach: teachers need to be taught music. The report then delivers a strong opinion (rather than a recommendation or judgement): it states that comparatively few primary schools can expect to have a music specialist as a full-time member of staff 'and it is even doubtful whether a specialist responsible for most of the teaching is desirable' (CACE, 1967, p.252). This point is not explored in the text of the document and no evidence is offered to support the assertion.

As an interim suggestion, Plowden (CACE, 1967) indicates that much can be achieved by the use of peripatetic teachers and private teachers and by the development of short and extended courses for teachers in service. She designates the latter as one of the jobs of the newly established 'Music Centres': to provide in-service training to teachers and opportunities for gifted children.

In 1978, the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation commissioned a report entitled on the training of professional musicians (Training Musicians, 1978) and, whilst the comments in the report should generally be read in relation to those with competence in musical skill and knowledge, there was recognition that non-musically trained primary classroom teachers, although willing to teach most subjects, did not feel prepared or confident about teaching music (Surridge, 1976). Those who thought that they were not musically gifted, lacked the confidence to take on music with their classes.

This was further supported by a second report of The Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation (1982), 'The Arts in Schools', which reasoned that where teachers feel ill at ease in teaching arts subjects, and are unable to organise these essential experiences for children, it may be because they were denied similar experiences themselves. We can see that the lack of training was still clearly impacting on the confidence of primary teachers and in order to try to rectify this unsatisfactory situation, the UK Council for Education (1980, cited in Adams, 2013) made two recommendations in their written paper:

1. that LEAs provide appropriate INSET programmes;
2. that teacher trainers reassess the amount of time they give to ensuring useful practical guidance for music.

In-service training (INSET) was acknowledged as a way of inducting teachers into some form of musical engagement with children – developing teachers' skill sets and enhancing knowledge. In the 1970s, advisory teachers and subject specialists were usually drawn from the primary sector, seconded to work within the music service alongside the music advisor. These specialists worked alongside generalists to promote confidence and encourage the inclusion of musical activities within the classroom.

Comments made at the Music Advisors Conference (1979) reiterated similar concerns to those of their predecessors stating that, in the vast majority of cases, the teaching of music

in the primary school was in the hands of the non-specialist who had learnt a little about the techniques of teaching music and who had acquired a few personal skills in music in professional studies whilst training. However, this was not the only problem being faced by primary teachers at this time. Allen (1988) tells us that falling roles in primary school and cuts in expenditure had led to cutbacks in teaching staff and there was concern that the favoured move towards an all-degree profession could affect the content of curricular studies, with music input becoming a casualty. Courses needed to help generalists to lead musical activities more effectively.

As will become clearer in my literature review, research suggests that the situation has not changed: many generalist teachers are still struggling to provide meaningful musical experiences to children.

2.2.3 Concerning Policy and Approach

It is important to recognise that the Plowden Report (CACE, 1967) is grounded in child psychology: 'Chapter 2' of the report is based firmly in Piagetian theory (Piaget, 1952; Piaget, 1957).

Plowden, (CACE, 1967) observed that in many schools, mass instruction was given in music to whole classes: little was attempted in groups or by individual methods. The report says these classroom management techniques persisted in the field of music, even in schools where it had almost disappeared in language, mathematics and art (ibid. p.253). HMI reports during the 1960s and 70s were showing a varied picture with regard to music education in primary schools (Adams, 2013); however, they identify that music was being taken more seriously and there was an attempt to emphasise its value in the curriculum. In some cases, it was an important part of school life; however, there was still a lack of opportunity for children to be more experimental and creative (ibid.).

We should note that the Plowden Report (CACE, 1967) was written during a period when popular musicians were emerging who could not read staff notation, but were teaching themselves composition, improvisation and playing instruments to a good standard; competency was being reached through informal, individual learning strategies (Green, 2002). Green (2008a) identifies that the music curriculum was not something that children

could easily relate to: rather than starting with music that the pupils were familiar with and enjoyed, it introduced them to ‘classical’ music styles, which they would be unlikely to come across outside of school. This made it difficult for pupils to connect their music learning with their lives outside the school.

The Plowden Report’s thrust in relation to the curriculum was clear: one of the main educational tasks of the primary school was to build on and strengthen children's intrinsic interest in learning and lead them to learn for themselves (CACE, 1967). The report's recurring themes were individual learning, flexibility in the curriculum, the use of the environment, learning by discovery and the importance of the evaluation of children's progress and the report stated that teachers should 'not assume that only what is measurable is valuable' (ibid., p.202), specifically with regard to the teaching of music. It also stated that the principle of individual progression was’ seldom consistently and successfully carried into the musical sphere’, contrasting this with the ‘careful assessment of language development and learning’ (Plowden, 1987, p.253).

Thirteen years later, the government publication, ‘A View of the Curriculum’ (DES, 1980, p.7), talked again of ‘individual differences and common needs’ and argued that the school curriculum should ‘contribute to children’s present well-being whatever the age and stage of growth and development they have reached’ (ibid., p.2).

The rifts in music education divided educationalists into two well defined camps: ‘traditionalists’ and ‘progressives’. The official post-War HMI view was for schools to achieve a balance between children’s imaginative and creative work and more formal basic instruction, acknowledging the growing trend towards ‘child centred’ education. The arguments about the best way to teach musical skills and knowledge continue to the present, with theorists offering contrasting views of how music is understood and learnt (Swanwick, 1977: Paynter, 1992; Swanwick, 1999: Green, 2002; Green, 2008b; Philpott, 2015).

Linked with this debate, Plowden (CACE, 1967) identified that the importance of ‘musical literacy’ was not fully understood. The suggestion was made that ‘some teachers believe that learning to read music increases difficulties and diminishes enjoyment’, which the report refutes (ibid., p.253). In support of this argument, the report reasons that without it, independent effort, progression and discovery are impossible, and that ‘unfamiliarity with

musical notation breeds the kind of suspicion that verbal illiteracy usually brings in its train' (ibid., p.253). The report also suggests that musical literacy must be closely related to active music-making; it must be functional, not theoretical.

By 1985, the official view of the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) was in accordance with this statement: 'Music Education should be mainly concerned with bringing children into contact with the musician's fundamental activities of performing, composing and listening' (DfES, 1985, p.1). This premise was central to the writing of 'Music' in the English National Curriculum (Education Reform Act, 1988).

Plowden's (CACE, 1967) comments about creativity also directly relate to the recommendations for the teaching of music in the National Curriculum (Education Reform Act, 1988). She reflects on the fact that there are two aspects of musical creativity: the making of original patterns in sound (extemporisation, composition); and the recreation of patterns already devised by a composer (performance, interpretation). The National Curriculum (DfE, 1989: DfE, 2013) for music comprises of four main areas: performing and composing; listening and appraising.

The report suggests that young children's listening powers are usually exhausted fairly quickly and that the choice of music and duration of the performance call for great judgement. Listening as a musical activity is referenced in the Plowden Report (CACE, 1967): the report states, with regard to musical appreciation, that it had 'lately fallen into disrepute', partly because 'what used to be done under that name was often ineffective' and partly because 'the best way to appreciate music is to make it' (ibid., p.254).

Changes in musical tastes took place through the 1960s and 70s and popular music entered into the curriculum in the UK during the 1970s and 1980s. This was partly in response to criticisms that the creative music movement was not pupil-centred because it overlooked the very music that pupils already knew and were familiar with (Green, 2008a).

Green (2008a) observes that it is pragmatically, economically and also ideologically very challenging for curriculum content to keep genuinely up to date with pupils' own music. 'Popular' music changes with rapidity and popular music in the curriculum has tended to centre mainly on 'classic' songs and bands (DfE, 2021a). The inclusion of 'classic' popular music tends to reproduce traditional, accepted notions of musical values. It could be argued

that, from the children's perspective, such music is as far removed from their lives and identities as 'classical' music.

2.2.4 Conclusion

From the inception of the state education system, concerns have been raised by music educators: concerns that have included, significantly, the lack of appropriate music input within training colleges, especially for generalist primary school teachers. In addition, the subject has suffered from a limited view of itself, with policy makers and those in positions of influence not looking beyond a narrow classical foundation.

As part of the Plowden review, music was considered in relation to the teaching of other areas of the curriculum, most notably in relation to the arts and language. Owing to a lack of time given to curriculum music provision within teacher training, and to the low priority that it was awarded by many stakeholders in the immediate post war years, teachers were not encouraged, or not able, to give it a high status in their classrooms. There was uncertainty about the place of music in primary schools, and about the rationale for its inclusion and who might teach it, a situation summarised by the 'specialist' versus 'generalist' argument.

It had been intended that a music specialist would not be responsible for all the music in the school, but was available for consultation, offering additional expertise. Generalist teachers were required to be responsible for classroom-based music as an integral part of the curriculum. This is an approach that was encouraged during the late 1970s and 1980s, with the music specialist being asked to take on a co-ordinating role within a school.

With an emphasis on the teaching of English and maths, music in many schools currently has a minor status within the curriculum. One could argue that, in some schools, it has almost the same status as in the 1870s where, as I wrote at the outset of this chapter, music primarily contributed to the ambience and atmosphere – the character - of the school.

We also see that not much has improved with regard to teacher training. It is concerning that Recommendation 21 of the government report by Darren Henley, 'Music Education in England' (DfE, 2011a, p.25), states that the 'time dedicated to music in most Initial Teacher Training courses is inadequate to create a workforce that is confident in its own ability to

teach the subject in the classroom'.

The argument with which Plowden concludes her writing on primary music is still appropriate today. Primary schools should be sending out pupils who have had 'a wide range of musical experience, are familiar with the idioms of sound in pitch, time and timbre, and are able to help themselves in creating and re-creating music by interpreting and using the visual symbols of conventional notation. The schools have an excellent starting point in children's enjoyment of music and rhythm, *but much work remains to be done'* (CACE, 1967, p.254).

Recently, researchers have approached primary music through different lenses. Green (2002) approaches the teaching of music through the way that popular musicians learn to play and perform, without necessarily reading music. In the past, it has been argued that the elitist attitude promoted by some musicians and educators has filtered down through the education system, leaving many teachers with little or no confidence in their own ability to be involved in musical activity on any level. This reflects poorly on the way in which music is and has been taught, its methods leaving a whole section of the population feeling less than adequate (Adams, 2013).

In January 2019, a new curriculum for music was commissioned by the government, aimed at providing a structured and sequenced reference document for teachers. In October 2019, it was announced that the publication of the DfE's new model music curriculum had been delayed until further notice, as the subjective 'required quality' had not been met. It was to have been published in the summer of 2019; however, a Department for Education statement confirmed that the framework would only become available to schools when it met 'the high standards teachers, pupils and parents' expected. The Model Music Curriculum (DfE, 2021a), with appendices (DfE, 2021b), was eventually published in 2021.

The National Curriculum (DfE, 2013), Model Music Curriculum (DfE, 2021a) and published schemes of work are based on the principle that the child needs to be fitted into a curriculum: 'The school curriculum is at the heart of education' (DES, 1981:1). This contrasts markedly with Plowden's (CACE, 1967, p.7) statement: 'At the heart of the educational process lies the child'.

Chapter 3 Review of Literature

3.1 Introduction

My aim for this chapter is to present a review of literature and current research pertaining to the teaching of music in the primary school and a range of conceptual resources that I consider of importance to my study and which are relevant to my research (Maxwell, 2013). It builds on information contained in the previous chapter.

The writing of my literature review has been cyclical in nature: my reading has informed the formation of my research questions, the methods of data collection and my analysis, which have in turn led to me reviewing the literature content and sources. The material and themes presented in this chapter inform the later chapters on the data findings and discussion. Using ideas from Ravitch and Riggan (2017), I have framed the literature review as a kind of conversation, presenting an intellectual context for meaningful discussion.

I start by presenting a brief discussion concerning music education and the ways in which children engage in musical learning.

The review and summary of current research concerning the teaching of music in the primary school which follows, has been organised in a way that demonstrates the breadth of research areas studied. Inclusion criteria for my online literature searches were as follows:

- studies using an English model for the curriculum;
- studies which used the National Curriculum since 2000;
- studies concerning generalist primary music teachers.

In some cases, I have chosen to include research outside these parameters, having given consideration to the relevance of the research findings to my own writing. I have also chosen to use studies involving pre-qualified teachers where the information can, in my opinion, be useful to elucidate the thinking and approaches of qualified teachers, especially given the lack of training provided in many primary Initial Teacher Training courses.

Next, I provide contextual information relating to the key documents relating to primary music teaching: the National Curriculum (DfE, 2013), the National Plans for Music Education (DfE, 2011c: DfE, 2022) and the Model Music Curriculum (DfE, 2021a).

Although my thesis is primarily concerned with the teachers' own perceptions of the primary music curriculum, I have chosen to include a short section on learning in music. This provides information on the nature / nurture argument and the children's sense of agency and self-efficacy in the subject. This is relevant to the ways in which the teachers in my sample perceive the teaching of music in their school.

I then explore the concept of musical creativity and musical intelligence using the work of theorists such as Philpott (2012; 2015; 2021a), Gardner (1983; 1993; 1999; 2006) and Sternberg (1997; 2020; 2021) amongst others.

Finally, I briefly explore what I perceive to be gaps in the literature and research, providing a context and opening for the rest of the thesis.

3.2 Teaching Music

In western classical contexts, the teaching of musical instruments is based on a master/apprentice model for learning and cultivating musical skills (Beach and Spruce, 2024: Stakelum, 2022), a method of teaching and learning that has been in place for hundreds of years. It promotes individual lessons and small group teaching, the recognition and promotion of 'great composers' from Western classical music and graded exams. It 'projects a particular set of assumption about what it is to be a musician and a music teacher, what it is to teach and learn music' (Beach and Spruce, 2024, p.10) and what is meant by musical knowledge.

These assumptions about the teaching of music have become widely accepted as a cultural norm and is the subliminal measure by which generalist primary teachers can evaluate school and individual performance in teaching the subject. Goals and procedures are specified and defined in advance and learning leads to certification through assessment (Wright and Kanellopoulos, 2010).

Whittaker and Fautley (2024) propose that a general music education should be combined with other aspects of cultural experience and artistic engagement. Hirsch (1988) suggests something similar when he discusses cultural literacy, which combines the culturally appropriate norms of a society with the background and taste of an individual. Both approaches link to Bourdieu's (1979) notion of 'cultural capital'.

It should be acknowledged that Hirsch's (1988) ideas are not without detractors, due to the perceived value judgements being made, and it should be noted that cultural capital does not always affect the teachers approach to the teaching of music in a positive way.

In today's society, not all music education takes place in the classroom. Non-formal learning occurs outside traditional learning environments and is not dependent on formal methods of teaching and assessment (Green, 2002; Folkestad, 2006; Green, 2008a; Lonie and Dickens, 2016; Thorpe, 2018).

Thorpe (2018) talks about the different ways in which children engage with musical learning in unsupervised settings. Everyday spaces, for example the home or a youth club, can provide opportunities for musical encounters and learning. Accessing tuition on the internet, and learning with and from others through rehearsal and practice, can begin in the primary years (Lonie and Dickens, 2016). This type of 'education' is not sequenced: activities steer interactions between participants, which in turn leads to informal learning (Folkestad, 2006)

Lucy Green's (2002; 2008a) work prompted a re-evaluation of understanding in some areas of music pedagogy, with a focus on these types of informal approaches to learning, teaching and self-study. However, Everett and Nicholson (2024, p.31) question how much difference her academic findings have made to music teaching noting that 'discourse is not the same as policy, research, or practice.' Discussion and theorisation have not led to a change in practice in schools.

Music in the general school curriculum should make a significant contribution to the education of all pupils (Paynter, 1977). But what should this contribution actually look like?

Whittaker and Fautley (2024) are of the opinion that a general music education should provide holistic musical experiences which support a learner to become a musical citizen. A primary school music education should not be in the business of training musical

performers, it should be an exploratory experience, elucidating music's various forms, facets, approaches and uses (Howard, 2012). It does not have to exist purely on the plane of formal music education in a school setting (Folkestad, 2006).

Although primary schools mostly operate at the interactive and communicative level of imparting knowledge (whether this is given or discovered through scaffolded activities) and developing skills and values, it should not be assumed that there is only one right way of teaching music. Somewhat contentiously for current approaches to teaching and education, which are driven by the setting of aims and the achievement of targets, Howard (2012) suggests that, in some cases, music education does not need to have a specific outcome in mind: the value of informal experiences in supporting broader musical development cannot be underestimated (Whittaker and Fautley, 2024).

Beach and Spruce (2024, p.9) recognise that 'music education has not always recognized and responded to changes in the ways they young people engage with music'. Can more relevant musical experiences be offered within the primary school environment? Perhaps as Kinsella et al. (2019) suggest, we should be using young people's own potential musicality as a starting point to build fruitful exchanges of musical ideas.

3.2.1 Teaching Primary Music

Recent research on the practices of generalist primary music teachers, can be described as being broadly focussed on one of two questions:

1. What impedes generalists in teaching quality music lessons?
2. What enables generalists to teach quality music lessons?

The questionable quality of music teaching has been identified at international level (de Vries, 2013) and most studies have had as their focus elements of the first of these binary opposites (de Vries, 2011; Holden & Button, 2006; Mills, 1989; Russell Bowie, 2009; Wiggins & Wiggins, 2008). Research into both questions have explored aspects of training and professional development, management, subject knowledge and curriculum, resources and materials, pedagogy, teacher agency and support.

Beauchamp's (2010) five-year longitudinal study looked at musical elements and subject knowledge in primary school student teachers entering Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) training. It was assumed that because they had had increasingly better music educations themselves (due to the introduction of a national curriculum), their knowledge base would be better at the outset of teaching. However, the assumption made about a 'better' music education would seem to misplaced due to the number of claims made that music education is 'questionable'. Teachers must possess sufficient understanding of musical elements to be able to transform them into effective lessons.

As my research progressed, it became apparent that the teachers in my sample understood my research questions to imply normative standards i.e., acceptable and unacceptable music teaching practice and standards of learning by the children. The aim of this section of the literature review is to explore issues relating to these perceptions.

There is a lower teacher confidence in music compared to other statutory curriculum subjects (Holden and Button, 2006; Hennessy, 2000) and an established body of research on primary (generalist) teachers' perceptions of their confidence and competence in the teaching and delivery of the primary music curriculum as prescribed by the National Curriculum (DfE, 2013).

In Henley's (2017) study, attitudes are not separated from competence and confidence. This is significant because one can have a positive attitude and be competent or incompetent when teaching music: similarly, with a negative attitude. Henley's (2017) results show anomalies with previous research studies. It should be noted that, in this case, the researcher worked with students at a prestigious conservatoire, acknowledging that some responses were not in line with previous research findings. An explanation for this may be found in the demographic of her respondents which show that musical qualifications were significantly higher than the national average at the place of study. de Vries (2013) discusses the concept of 'reluctance' to teach music without defining whether this is directly attributable to attitude, competence and confidence. This introduces bias in the way he constructs his argument.

Rogers et al. (2008) found that participation in training on singing, organised as part of the research, had a positive impact on teacher confidence and as a result, during the course of the study, music was taught more frequently and teachers enjoyed teaching music more. A

possible explanation for this is the 'Hawthorn Effect' (De Bruyckere, Kirschner and Hulshof, 2015). Instilling confidence in the short term is not the same as lasting confidence and the transference of skills: trying something new or different means that you are more focussed and more enthusiastic- usually a temporary positive effect. As an extension to this short piece of research, longer term effects and changes to practices could have been monitored, which would have provided more useful data and a more informed response to the effects of the training.

Mills' (1989) research separates music teaching confidence from subject knowledge. Low confidence in music does not, of itself, mean that a person will not become an effective teacher of music but over-confidence, or insensitivity to the possibilities of professional improvement, can be a serious handicap (Mills, 1989).

Key Stage 2 (KS2) teachers are generally less confident in their ability to teach music and less likely to feel they are meeting the National Curriculum (DfE, 2013) requirements for music (de Vries, 2015). As a consequence, they are less likely to teach music. De Vries (2015) study found that not all teachers in school taught music; however, explanations are not given as to why - the voices of the teachers are missing. It has been found that Key Stage 2 teachers need more support that Key Stage 1 teachers (Holden and Button, 2006) and that teachers of younger children (Key Stage 1 and lower Key Stage 2) are more likely to teach music because the curriculum and its approach is considered to be less demanding (de Vries, 2011). Reasons given for this relate to practicality in the delivery of lessons; simpler music content and length of songs; the use of instruments being easier with younger children; music being a natural part of the wider curriculum for younger children; and the pupils' interest in the subject.

Prior musical experience impacts on a teachers' ability to teach music (Henley, 2017: de Vries, 2011). Musical influences - previous and current participation in musical activities and formal music examinations – affect confidence and competence. Teachers acknowledge that the teaching of music, prior to them attending ITT and other music related professional development, is heavily influenced by their own respective music education backgrounds (Hennessy, 2000). A teacher's personal education in music can, therefore, affect their attitude and teaching style (de Vries, 2013) and it has been found that some teachers think that they need the musical skills associated with music specialists (Mills, 1989). Memories

of their own teaching influence the activities used in the classroom and style of teaching presented to the children (Mills, 1989). Because the research is based on personal, subjective responses to questionnaires and interviews, it cannot be a comment about the quality of the teaching which took place.

What becomes clear is that generalist primary teachers have different perceptions of their musical identities which affect their attitudes, competence and confidence towards the teaching of music in the classroom and often defines their approach to the teaching of music.

McDonald, Hargreaves and Miell (2002, p.4) discuss the joint concepts of 'Identities in Music' (IIM) and 'Music in Identities' (MII). 'Identities in Music' (IIM) deal with those aspects of musical identity that are defined by established cultural roles and categories such as 'musician', 'music teacher' or 'listener'. A key point about IIM is that they may not be linked to technical skill proficiency on an instrument, but rather to social influences such as family dynamics and educational contexts. 'Music in identities' (MII) refers to how we use music within our overall self-identities – the extent to which music is important in our self-definitions as masculine—feminine, old-young, able-disabled, extrovert-introvert, and so on.

The authors (ibid.) explain that this two-way distinction is useful but that there is another important aspect in the definition of musical identities. This is the idea that musical identities are performative and social i.e. they represent something that we do, rather than something that we have, namely, the ways in which we jointly engage with music in everyday life.

'Musical identity' encompasses many concepts, in particular those of 'musicality' and 'musical ability'. In her study concerning the musicality of primary generalist student teachers, Henley (2017) analyses responses to questions about participation in music (personal musical experiences) and anticipated areas of concern in teaching the subject. The theoretical framework and definition of 'being musical' applied in this research is practicable: being musically active; using music; having musical experiences; making music and performing; and making musical contributions. Musicality is defined as participation in singing and playing and formal musical qualifications only: this presents an extremely limited view of musical identity. Many perceptions of a musical identity depend on one's self-perceptions about one's one ability to 'do' music. Just because a teacher does not

recognise themselves as a 'musician', it does not mean that they are a 'non-musician' in practice: and just because a teacher does not rate themselves as 'musical', it does not mean that they are 'not musical' in practice. It is important not to limit the discussion to these as binary concepts.

The broad premise of de Vries (2013) narrative study is that teachers feel that either they 'can' or they 'can't' teach music: however, it should be appreciated that those who can, may also *choose* not to teach it. No generally applicable conclusions are presented, due to the nature of the study, but the partial formation of musical identities through positive or negative school experiences is discussed. This builds on previous findings: that prior musical experience impacts on ability to teach music (de Vries, 2011). Making links between the two parts of de Vries longitudinal study, interviews completed in 2011 and 2013, is difficult. The two studies survey teachers at different developmental points in their careers: in their first year of teaching, teachers can usually only draw on limited experiences and, in the case of teaching music, many of these may come from prior experience in the subject. By the third year of teaching, teachers have usually developed more sophisticated professional teaching skills; for example, more refined behaviour management skills, a better understanding of the curriculum and a wider repertoire of activities etc. They may have seen teachers more proficient than themselves teaching music, contributing to their own attitudes towards teaching the subject through positive and negative experiences.

For de Vries (ibid.), being musical means demonstrating one or more of the following: the ability to play and instrument; being able to sing; having the ability to read music; and/or having the ability to compose and create music. These are all specialised practical skills. His interpretation of musical identity is narrow: wider musical identities, for example, activities involving everyday listening for enjoyment, using music for emotional support and well-being and musical interpretation through dance, are neglected.

Holden and Button (2006) found that sound subject knowledge, usually derived from having learnt an instrument, enabled teachers to convey their enthusiasm for music to children and gave them credibility in the teaching situation. It is perceived by the teachers that better subject knowledge increases their confidence to teach music; however, studies have not proven this hypothesis through lesson observations. Perhaps because it is too subjective or

because it could be perceived as a form of teacher assessment, not appropriate for research.

Henley (2017) does not address subject knowledge directly, although trainee teachers are asked about their perceptions of curriculum content and its meaning. This research does not provide evidence of correct musical understanding of the National Curriculum (DfE, 2013) content statements but is informative with regard to attitudes and self-belief in one's own ability. From my own work with student teachers, some self-assess that they understand the statements fully but fail to do so in discussion, explanation and practice.

Whilst teachers may be confident in their own general pedagogical skills, they are less secure with music subject matter, content and knowledge (Holden and Button, 2006). Some teachers want structure and place emphasis on written schemes. Holden and Button (2006) found that these were followed religiously but without proper interpretation or understanding, reinforcing my point from the previous paragraph. Following a scheme does not necessarily mean that good lessons follow as a result: whilst a teacher's classroom and behaviour management skills may be skilful and proficient, the interpretation of pre-prepared music lessons may require a significant subject-specific knowledge which may be lacking.

In the same piece of research, Holden and Button (2006) identified that singing was the aspect of National Curriculum (DfE, 2013) music that was taught most frequently. This was followed by rhythm and listening. Many primary teachers feel more comfortable leading musical activities than teaching music theory, and there are suggestions that teachers can be deterred by the thought of teaching composition and musical notation (Holden and Button, 2006). From my own work in schools, the musical areas of rhythm and listening can be perceived to be the easiest to teach due to the fewer number of resources needed and perceptions that classroom management and control are easier. Composing and performing were taught less often for converse reasons.

de Vries (2015) found that the music teaching occurring in the classrooms was sequential and developmental, in complete contrast to Wiggins and Wiggins (2008) who found that the teaching of music in generalist classrooms was ad hoc, often with a focus on preparing for school concerts and assemblies. Looking more closely at the two pieces of research, de Vries was researching music professional development using the methods and principles of

Carl Orff (1963), which are in themselves highly prescriptive, structured and sequential. This holistic approach does not have the same aims or parameters as the National Curriculum in England (DfE, 2013).

Talk of 'specialist' and 'generalist' teachers pervades the research literature; however, I acknowledge that this terminology may be problematic and that 'generalist' and 'non-generalist' may be preferred (Stakelum, 2022, p.7). I will use the terms 'specialist' and 'generalist' in this thesis because this was the terminology used by the respondents in my research.

Holden and Button (2006) suggest that class teachers are keen to teach all curriculum subjects, but comments were made on the use and importance of a specialist teacher for musical expertise. In schools with music specialists, generalists are significantly less likely to teach music (ibid.). Advisory support and shared music teaching – a half-way house between generalist and specialist - have been found to be useful to generalists (de Vries, 2011).

For more information concerning specialists and generalists in music teaching, Holden and Button (2006) provide a useful and concise historical background to documents on the subject. However, one needs to look carefully at the use of terminology and its development within music teaching: the terms 'specialist', 'co-ordinator', 'Curriculum Co-ordinator' are used in research articles and one could assume that there is a continuum implied by the different terms. What remains unclear are the roles implied by each one and whether they are being used as synonyms for each other.

As was outlined in Chapter 2, the poor teaching of music in primary schools has often been attributed to inadequacies in the training of primary teachers (Barrett, 1994), the apparent lack of teacher confidence and their inadequate musical understanding and ability.

Research into the number of hours given to music in pre-service ITT was judged in some studies to not be enough (Russell-Bowie, 2009; de Vries, 2013: Jeanneret and Stevens-Ballenger, 2013). The length of subject specific content training in Initial Teacher Training has been found to impact on the likelihood of a teacher teaching music (de Vries, 2011: Mills 1989); however, it is not enough to simply present more time for music education in

teacher training (Jeanneret and Stevens-Ballenger, 2013). Concerns centre on curriculum content, teaching approaches and scaffolding through schemes (de Vries, 2011).

de Figueiredo (2002) advocates stronger teaching at university level and states: 'If more people understand the role of music in human development, the greater are the possibilities to fill a significant space for this knowledge in school'. His research paper adopts a philosophical approach and there is a lack of supporting literature to support his assertions and an absence of analysis of his findings.

Professional development in music is key in ensuring that generalist teachers teach music, particularly where teachers attend professional development together. de Vries (2015) used Wenger's 'Communities of Practice' as a theoretical basis for his 2015 study on teacher support, a strategy supported by Holden and Button (2006), suggesting that senior managers should consider instigating a collegial strategy to allow collaboration, co-operation and communication between specialist and non-specialist teachers in music. Mills (1989) writes that improved communication between school managers and trainers would enhance provision, advocating the use of support teachers in the teaching of music.

Whilst in some studies the Headteacher has been found to be key in supporting the music teaching taking place in school, both financially and personally (Rogers et al., 2008; de Vries, 2015). Jeanneret and Stevens-Ballenger (2013) suggest that the real key to success is specifically selected in-school experiences. These enable teachers to witness and participate in a range of the potential responsibilities and expectations of a music educator in primary schools.

In providing this brief review of current research concerning the teaching of primary music, my aim was to introduce the reader to the various discourses which have prompted the research projects and studies. In the next section I will explore some of the documentation (and policy) which may have influenced the perceptions and positions held by the respondents in these studies.

3.2.2 The National Curriculum, National Plans for Music Education and Model Music Curriculum

I am interpreting the National Curriculum (DfE, 2013), the National Plans for Music Education (DfE, 2011c; 2022) and the Model Music Curriculum (DfE, 2021a) as government policy - policy in the realm in which vision is constructed and actualised. The data provided later within this thesis provides insight into this interpretation.

The National Curriculum in England (DfE, 2013) is a statutory set of subjects and standards used by primary and secondary schools so that children experience commonality in their education: it specifies what subjects are taught and provides expectations of the standards children should reach in each subject. By the end of each key stage, pupils are expected to know, apply and understand the 'matters, skills and processes' specified in the relevant programme of study. The reasons for teaching music are made explicit: music education should 'engage and inspire pupils to develop a love of music and their talent as musicians' (DfE, 2013, p.196). In so doing, it is suggested, the children will develop self-confidence, creativity and a sense of achievement. Areas covered by the curriculum are playing and singing, performing, improvising and composing, understanding the inter-related dimensions of music (pitch, duration, dynamics, tempo, timbre, texture, structure and appropriate musical notations), listening and developing an understanding of the history of music.

Creativity is deemed to be one of the main purposes for study of the subject: the document states that music is 'one of the highest forms of creativity' (ibid.). Creativity is difficult to define (Humphreys, 2006) and as a concept has been much studied and much argued over (Beach and Spruce, 2024). Hansen (2015) sees the multiple definitions and theories of creativity as a potential strength and many arguments are framed around the concepts of creativity as a process and creativity as a product. I will take up this discussion later in this chapter, however, for the purposes of this thesis creativity in music should be seen as a framework of ideas that underpin music teaching.

The aims for music in the National Curriculum (DfE, 2013) also include reference to the aspiration that all pupils will have the 'opportunity to learn a musical instrument, use technology appropriately and have the opportunity to progress to the next level of musical excellence' (ibid., p.196). The word 'opportunity' is used twice in the music section of the

National Curriculum. On the second occasion it refers to an opportunity to 'progress to the next level'. How should this be understood, given that the premise of primary education seems to be about the measurement of progress? Being given the opportunity to progress is not the same as progressing. Progress in music is a significant issue for the teachers in my study.

The National Curriculum (ibid., p.196) labels music as a 'universal language'. Whilst many scholars acknowledge that people from all around the world make music, and in this way, it is a universal subject, the diverse nature and variety of music from different cultures brings the concept of music as a 'universal language' into question. It should be noted that the content of the National Curriculum in England (2013) presents a broadly Western language of music to school children, which the authors of the document have deemed 'the best in the musical canon' (ibid., p.196).

The statements in the National Curriculum (ibid.) were conceived and written so that all pupils in England experience equality of opportunity in their education. This discourse of rights (Dyson, 1999) is aimed at developing an ethical and pedagogical commitment to socially just educational experiences; however, research shows that this has not been the case.

In 2011, the government commissioned Darren Henley (DfE, 2011a) to carry out a review of music education in England. His review highlighted inequalities in provision: one example was that there was found to be 'a divide between children and young people whose families could afford to pay for music tuition and those who came from lower socio-economic backgrounds and locations' (ibid., p.10). In making this observation, he reinforced the socio-political argument concerning access to music education, in this case, concerning the opportunity to learn music by learning to play a musical instrument in school.

Clarification was needed on the purpose of music education in schools and this came in the form of the Government's first National Plan for Music Education (DfE, 2011c), entitled 'The Importance of Music: A National Plan for Music Education'. Although published as non-statutory guidance, the plan effectively became the government's policy for music education.

Education policy is a political process, being the 'realm in which vision is constructed and actualised' (Schmidt, 2015, p.48). It is a critical pathway in which discourses are made manifest in practice. It also provides an opportunity for the effectiveness of the policy to be examined and assessed (Grace, 1978).

Importantly, Henley's (DfE, 2011a) review recognised that 'no one teacher, performer, school or organisation alone could deliver every part of a rounded music education to every child' (DfE, 2022, p.10). Music Hubs were established to provide a resource for schools to use: one of the aims being to provide every child with the opportunity to learn an instrument through Whole-Class Ensemble Teaching (WCET).

Educational policy reform is incremental and there is an additive nature to the reform process: it is focussed on an improving future and works rhetorically by devaluing the current state of practice, in this case, music education (Bauman, 1991). New principles and innovations are merged with established practice, potentially conflicting with older rationales and previous practices. This can create confusion and, if not made statutory, can be rejected by schools. The key players - headteachers and staff - must understand the rationale and buy into the change. This is pertinent in the case of class instrumental tuition in schools.

Whittaker and Fautley (2024) identify that instrumental music learning in the classroom can be conceptualised in two ways: it can start with the instrument, then broaden out to encompass wider music education aims; or can just take place via the instrument (Fautley et al., 2019a). In schools, the relationship between classroom music and instrumental teaching is often complex and is not helped by a lack of clarity about what each is trying to achieve (Beach and Spruce, 2024). In the case of government policy, this is not made clear and could be one of the reasons why class instrumental lessons have had different receptions in different schools. Many teachers have clear opinions on its purpose and success. Not all are in favour.

The second National Plan for Music Education was issued in 2022 (The Power of Music to Change Lives: A National Plan for Music Education, DfE, 2022). It served as a review of the period since the first plan, setting new targets for Music Hubs and schools.

The 2022 National Plan for Music is ideologically driven by the government and, according to Daubney (2023), is not what the sector wanted. There are no defined targets for musical improvement so measuring the effect of the policy is difficult. There are no comparative evaluations concerning the effectiveness of the first National Plan for Music and it is not clear whether data exists for analysis and what truly propels best outcomes.

The government's vision is 'to enable all children and young people to learn to sing, play an instrument and create music together, and have the opportunity to progress their musical interests and talents, including professionally' (DFE, 2022, p.5) and to help clarify these expectations, the government also commissioned the Model Music Curriculum (DfE, 2021a).

The plan is ambitious in many ways. In addition to requiring that every school should have a music development plan, it states that music should be represented in every school's leadership structure and that every school should have a music lead. It also recommends the development of National Music Hub Centres of Excellence, partnered with Lead Schools, to deliver CPD and peer-to-peer support. There is no evidence supporting the success of Music Hubs.

Ian Burton (2023), CEO of Nottingham Music Hub, reported that there had been a decline in the number of practising music teachers which correlated directly to a move from individual tuition to class tuition within the authority. His recommendation was that key parts of the National Plan for Music Education were made statutory, 'otherwise it is whim and blowing in the wind'.

Research shows that primary teachers lack confidence and competence but the aspirational aim of the new music plan suggests one hour of music teaching per week in primary schools. This is not statutory and for some schools it is down to affordability, in some the costs being handed to the parents. However, the Model Music Curriculum (2021a) is central to the government's agenda for supporting curriculum music in schools during Key Stages 1, 2 and 3 (ages 5 -14). Whilst the commentary (DfE, 2021, p.3) states that the development of the document has been 'teacher led', close scrutiny of the Appendices demonstrates that this is open to interpretation: led by Baroness Fleet, Veronica Wadley, only teachers, or 'specialists', from the very highest end of musical teaching and performance have contributed. This presents its own form of bias.

In the introduction to the document, the emphasis is on making 'a great school' (DfE, 2021, p.4): whilst noting that music can enrich each student, the emphasis is on the whole school community. The opening comments acknowledge the pervasiveness of music in society and identify the opportunity for the making of social and geographical connections. It identifies four 'purposes' for music in the curriculum: creativity, collaboration, celebration, and challenge.

As with the National Curriculum (DfE, 2013) and the National Plans for Music Education (DfE, 2011c: DfE, 2022), the aim of the Model Music Curriculum (DfE, 2021a) is to ensure a universal provision of music education, for all pupils in all schools (ibid., p.4).

3.3 Learning in Music

Bamberger (1991, p.7) asks the question: 'How can a person say that she can remember, enjoy, sing, and understand the music she hears every day, and still say that she 'doesn't know anything about music'?'

Fundamentally, this is a question about the recognition of various types of musical learning. It raises issues concerning 'knowing how' to do something and 'knowing about' it (ibid., p.7-8) and the concepts of passive and active musical learning.

3.3.1 Development: Maturation and Enculturation

Burwell (2024) writes that musical development involves maturation and enculturation. Maturation is defined in terms of nature, development, genetics and biology: enculturation, in terms of nurture, ecology, instruction and the environment. Musical development involves a continuous interaction between innate capabilities and abilities that are learnt. The balance of these two factors will be different for every individual and needs to be factored into the opportunities provided in a school-based music education.

Skills such as pitch perception develops from birth: normally babies are able to identify single pitches by about seven months of age (Trainor, 2005). Discerning contours of pitch develops at about the same time. By the age of five, the average child can detect out of scale notes and by the age of seven they can detect out of harmony notes (ibid.).

Musical development is culturally dependent but culture specific features develop later: this involves challenges to established perceptions and expectations. Understanding of melodic and harmonic structures is developed throughout the primary school years (Hargreaves and Lamont, 2017), although at the same time as this is developing, children lose some of what Hargreaves and Lamont (2017) call their 'open-earedness'. Children start to innately identify and codify patterns and forms in music.

Some aspects of music understanding and music making develop earlier than others, for example, Hallam (2001a) noted that children did not include interpretive matters like dynamics unless they had obtained reasonable competence in playing. Including musical dimensions like dynamics early in the school curriculum is therefore appropriate (as fundamental subject knowledge), but the individual use of dynamics for emotional and communicative reasons may not develop until later.

McPherson, Davidson and Evans (2015) advocate early engagement with a rich range of musical skills in order to develop musical success: these skills include, reading music, playing by ear, playing from memory, improvising and playing rehearsed music. The fundamentals of musical development, which include participation in musical activities, are dependent on early experiences (Burwell, 2024).

Research suggests that the interpretation of emotion in music seems to develop relatively slowly and there is little evidence to suggest that this type of development can be accelerated (Burwell, 2024). In a review of the literature, Corrigall and Schellenberg (2015) report that children can usually perceive the emotional tone of music as they enter Reception (aged 5), 'but they tend to rely on tempo for cues – fast being happy, and slow, sad' (Burwell, 2024, p.91).

3.3.2 Learning an Instrument: Agency and Self-efficacy

Key Stage 2 is typically a good time for starting instrumental lessons (Burwell, 2024), however, most children who start to learn a musical instrument do not continue playing (Beach (2024, p.101). McPherson's (2012) longitudinal study of those beginning a musical instrument found that 27% gave up in the first two years and only 41% continued for five years. One can speculate on the reasons for giving up: these could include, for example, a

lack of motivation or aspiration, or the pressure from teacher, parents and other adults. Both could be a source of stress to the learner. Generally, it is likely that children will try a range of activities and then concentrate on the ones that excite them most (Beach, 2024).

This sense of learner agency reflects the amount of control or influence that they feel they have over their learning (Beach, 2024). Giddens (1976) describes agency as an understanding that the world does not hold a predetermined future for the learner and that they have choices which will impact on that future, whereas Swanwick (1999) describes it as the natural energies that sustain spontaneous learning. Both definitions comprise curiosity or a desire to be competent; wanting to emulate others; and a need for social interaction. Using just these three contrasting definitions, agency can include independence and control, choice and an undetermined future, and natural energies. Whichever definition we choose, the children have got to want to engage with the subject.

The children also need belief in their own abilities in a way that exercises influence over their lives (Bandura, 1994). They need inspiration and their learning needs to have relevance. Their interest needs to be captured and they need to be able to see how a music education will affect their lives. Having an interest is not the same as having talent (de Figueiredo, 2002).

3.4 Creativity in Music

There are many definitions and thoughts about the concept of creativity in music and much discussion concerns the process of composing. The teachers I have interviewed talk about the concept of creativity and this will be explored in later chapters but a brief discussion of the subject is appropriate at this point. For the purposes of this discussion, the process of creating in music should not be confused with pedagogy concerning creative teaching and creative learning (Cropley, 2020).

Writers on the creative arts have frequently talked about aesthetic creativity (Cropley, 2020) but society's understanding of creativity has evolved and, in general discourse, 'creativity' tends to be used in three ways (Cropley, 2020). It refers to:

1. A cluster of personal characteristics of people (Person) e.g. a creative personality
2. Processes (Process) e.g. creative thinking

3. Results (Product) e.g. a creative product

Creativity is treated as both a 'cause' and an 'effect', affected by the pressures of the environment. Cropley (2020) specifies six facets of creativity: knowledge; insight; intrinsic motivation; the courage of one's convictions; special personal factors, such as flexibility and willingness to take risks; and relevance. Focusing on the individual person, creativity can be defined as an aspect of thinking, a personality trait and an interaction between thinking, personal qualities and motivation (ibid., p.19).

Many ideas that we take for granted about musical creativity need to be challenged (Hill, 2012). Some of these notions include composing as a special talent, the issue of perfection, creativity as the development of original ideas and as a means of non-conforming, and using imagination. Creativity is not a special, mysterious quality of special people (Frith, 2012: Henley, 2024), a view that probably derives from a perception that composers, amongst others, demonstrate a creative genius. Musical creativity means different things in different musical settings: one of which being the primary school.

Creativity exists on two planes: one, perceived by the person creating and the other perceived by the person hearing. Clarke (2012) describes creativity as being the mental process, or ideas, that lead to a new solution. Cropley (2020) writes that creativity is a judgement in the mind of the observer. A creative product must be made by one person, communicated through a specific medium and interpreted by others.

Children as composers is embedded in the National Curriculum (DfE, 2013) but why should we be preoccupied with composing when very few follow this through? Genuine creativity in composition is given to very few (Fletcher, 1987). Hargreaves et al. (2012, p.3) suggests that there are problems in associating creativity with just one specific way of making music and suggest that focusing on imagination may be more useful to us as 'it encompasses a much broader range of concepts and behaviour'. Stakelum (2022, p.2) shares this view suggesting that 'considering imagination from the root 'imago' has been helpful in providing an interdisciplinary dimension to a narrative on responses to music: movement, drawing and verbal descriptors are highlighted as ways in which responses to music can be shared or made visible'.

Hansen (2015) talks about divergence and conformity in music with regard to the notions that creativity is a simple cognitive progress and that creativity cannot encompass conformity. The latter may be true of elite or Avant Garde creativity; however, I believe that for children in primary school, creativity can sit with existing patterns and ideas.

On a practical, educational level, Paynter (1977, p.3) believed that creativity meant 'leading out' children as they make 'divergent progress'. His view was that teachers should be planning activities which help children to develop their innate sensitivity, inventiveness and imagination. However, Finney (2021, p.44) argues that Paynter's classroom-based creative ideas were dissociated from common experience and the cultural energy they experienced outside of school. I believe that this is still the case.

By its nature, creativity requires a product or an outcome. If original thinking forms part of the creative process (Henley, 2024), it looks very different for the primary child with a limited life experience. Runco (2008) distinguishes between theories and definitions that focus on creative products and those that focus on creative potential. He argues that theories relating to the creative product 'say nothing about potential nor about students who have potential but are not yet in a position to produce anything of social significance' (Runco, 2008, p.2). Enabling and encouraging this potential is in the realm of primary education. The creative products of primary children may be 'crude, error laden, stereotyped or banal' (Cropley, 2020, p.8), but, for the children, they may be highly creative, instilling pride and achievement.

Craft (2001) reviewed the literature on creativity and education and grouped common definitions of creativity into two broad categories:

1. 'High' creativity - 'Publicly acclaimed creativity which changes knowledge and/or our perspective on the world' (ibid., p.13). This implies that only those with a special talent are creative.
2. 'Ordinary' creativity – 'the creativity of the ordinary person' (ibid., p.14). In this version of creativity, every person can be creative.

Philpott (2021a) discusses the same two polar understandings of creativity: firstly, as a divine and rare thing for the genius or for the few, and secondly, as a common and everyday phenomenon.

The question remains whether the capacity to be creative is innate and we apply it using the skills we have at the time, or whether or is contingent upon us learning a set of complex skills before we can ever hope to be creative. Whichever it is, Henley (2024) says that we need to understand the differences between technical learning and creativity.

3.4.1 Models of Creativity

With regard to models of creativity, Gooderson and Henley (2017) have highlighted the complexities of attempting to map out creative processes against one model of creativity and Hill (2012) suggests that being creative means not conforming to predetermined or pre-existing models.

Having a single understanding of creativity leads to simplistic discussions, especially in the primary school. In discussion with the respondents of my research, 'being creative' was used constructively (for example, as a planned intention or the provision of opportunities for problem solving), used as an excuse (where no other educational aim seemed to be in evidence), or meant nothing at all.

Cropley (2020, p.9) discusses five levels of creativity: 'expressive', 'technical', 'inventive', 'innovative' and 'emergent' creativity. Many children 'demonstrate expressive spontaneity, despite a lack of knowledge of musical context. These children display creativity at a humble level' (ibid.). Children need to develop familiarity within the field of music through wide listening.

Philpott (2021a) articulates many questions concerning music and creativity in education and in response, proposes five theoretical models of the creative process borrowing from wider arts education and the field of psychology. He writes about the tensions between creativity as a muse to inspire us and as a form of pragmatic problem solving. Similar tensions exist between innovation and tradition, process and product and the individual and the social.

Table 1 outlines the five types of creative process identified by Philpott (2021a). The first four are discrete in their conception: the fifth is his proposed suggestion for a more general creative process which may be more useful to encompass school music education. An expanded version of this table is included as Appendix M.

Table 1: Five creative processes identified by Philpott (2021a)

Type 1 The **subjective creative** process	*Type 2* The **conservationist creative** process	*Type 3* The **cognitive creative** process	*Type 4* The **virtuosic creative** process	*Type 5* The **critical agentic creative** process
Personal expression and externalisation of emotion and feeling.	The interaction between individual subjectivity (personal expression) and well-known traditions.	Problem-solving, linked to wider cognitive processes such as convergent and divergent thinking	Only exists as a result of the development of high-level skills	A process that embraces the possibility to both create from and challenge what counts as music and the ideologies of cultural practises

The subjective creative process has self-expression at its heart: it relates to creativity personal to the individual i.e. expressing things we feel and perceive. It is a manifestation of our emotional lives and is conceived in the world of feeling. In this version of creativity, children can be seen as makers, and not just consumers, of educational knowledge. Criticisms of this form of the creative process highlight the dissociation from wider cultural traditions (Philpott, 2012), routinely delving into subjective worlds of pupils, ignoring the rational content of music (Pitts, 2000: Best, 1992) and downplaying technique in the creative process (Pitts, 2000).

The conservationist creative process maintains the importance of the creative individual but adds encultured learning so that there is always a cultural context for the creative process. This version allows new debates concerning, for example, innovation and where it sits within tradition, and which traditions are being drawn upon. One could consider whether creativity is restricted by its cultural placing.

The cognitive creative process is a rational turn away from subjective feeling and emotion. Creativity is seen as a generic set of skills used for problem solving. It moves between convergent and divergent thinking: convergent thinking dealing with finding a single outcome; divergent thinking acknowledging multiple possibilities. The creative process is more rationalist and technical. The loss of feeling and emotion is one of the criticisms of this approach as it is concerned with the prior development of a hierarchy of skills and

techniques. In essence, this approach to creativity could be reduced to just the use of problem-solving skills.

The virtuosic creative process is elitist in conception, which becomes the argument for its criticism. Creativity can only take place on the back of developing very high-level skills.

Philpott (2021a) proposes the critical agentic creative process to allow teachers to understand how the creative process has potential for criticality and agency. Criticality comes in the form of placing creativity within a social, cultural and historical context. Agency is subjective and is achieved through personal and emotional engagement. The aim of the process is to engage in a dialogic pedagogy which allows for the creative making of meaning (ibid., p.62). He suggests that this is where music in the classroom is situated. There are different contexts for musical creativity that require interaction through expression and technique, acknowledging that skills should be dialectical not hierarchical. There is also recognition that agency is limited by structure. From my perspective, this is a combination of previously described creative processes which, whilst offering a 'catch-all' definition for the creative process, does not help teachers to unpick the value associated with the different versions outlined previously. Also, in the same way as problem-solving becomes creativity, in this version, critical agency becomes the creative process.

Table 2 includes the key points from Philpott's creative processes, providing a characterisation of the creativity, summarising the practical and pedagogical implications for children, and the ideological assumptions. It provides sample issues and details of seminal authors who have written about the processes.

3.5 Musical Intelligence

In ordinary language, one use of the word 'intelligence' is pre-eminent, namely, using it to refer to cognitive intelligence. A general definition of 'conventional intelligence' has been proposed by Cropley (2020, p.13) as requiring a 'substantial knowledge of facts, effective acquisition of new facts, rapid access to the contents of memory, accuracy in finding the best answer to factual questions, and logical application of the already known'. It is heavily dependent on recognising, recalling and reapplying.

A psychometric view of intelligence is based on the ability to answer items on specific tests of intelligence (Gardner, 2006). Interpreted using statistical techniques, the test scores provide a numerical grading of underlying ability. As early as 1915, there were psychometric tests for musical ability (Seashore, 1915; Seashore, 1938) Later examples include Law and Zentner's (2012) 'Profile of Music Perception Skills'.

In contrast, in its broadest sense, multiple intelligence (MI) theory is concerned with how people perceive and demonstrate 'intelligence behaviours'. Each intelligence has its own associated cognitive skills and processes. Cognitive processes include, for example, memory, attention, perception, and problem solving (Armstrong, 1993).

Gardner's (2006, p.6) Multiple Intelligences (MI) theory labels an intelligence as 'a computational capacity – a capacity to process certain kinds of information'. This processing includes the ability to solve problems or create outcomes that matter in a particular cultural setting or community. Drawing on data from the fields of anthropology, cognitive and developmental psychology, psychometrics, biographical studies, animal physiology and neuroanatomy, he formulated eight criteria for 'intelligence' (Gardner, 1993, pp.62-66) which, when applied, allowed him to identify eight intelligences. One of these is musical intelligence.

Gardner's (1983; 1993) theory of Multiple Intelligence has been much debated by scholars, scientists and educationalists and has not really stood the test of time. The theory has faced criticism for several reasons, including:

- a lack of empirical evidence;
- subsequent research in neuroscience;
- a tendency for educationalists and teachers to confuse it with learning styles; and
- it offering a static understanding and view of pupil competence.

Many researchers have claimed that Gardner's theory is a 'neuromyth' because there is no neuro-scientific evidence supporting the proposal for independent brain-based intelligences relating to different types of cognitive abilities (Marenus, 2025). Despite this lack of empirical support, Multiple Intelligence teaching strategies have been widely used in classrooms worldwide and in some cases, the theory has been confused with learning styles

(De Bruyckere et al., 2015). This has resulted in teachers labelling individual children's learning preferences, subsequently targeting their teaching to these learning styles, thereby potentially limiting pupil opportunity (Marenus, 2025).

These criticisms have led to a re-evaluation of the theory's relevance and applicability in educational practice. Whilst the theory has inspired educational innovations, it is now recognized that educators should focus on evidence-based teaching strategies rather than relying on neuromyths (Waterhouse, 2023).

Acknowledging these debates and interpretations, I have used Gardner's work selectively, using specific elements of his writing to stimulate discussion and explore understandings. I have used his definitions of 'domain' and 'intelligence' to explore issues of semantics as they relate to the teachers general understanding of primary music education: how domains are dependent on social context and interpretation and how intelligence can be perceived as limited if it is identified as 'computational capacity' (Gardner, 2006, p.31). I show how Gardner's understanding of the core intelligences of music have been built upon by the authors of 'Music the National Curriculum' (DfE, 2013) and how Sternberg (2021) has explored the relationship between Gardner's (1983) theory of Multiple Intelligences and his own theory of Successful Intelligence (1997; 2020).

I also use aspects of Gardner's general exploration of music education and the development of children's musical awareness, where relevant, to support my own arguments.

3.5.1 Intelligences and Domains

Musical intelligence is situated within the domain of music; however, this statement does not offer enough detail for us to understand perceptions of music (as a domain) or musical intelligence in a school context. The vocabulary is open to interpretation with everyday usage.

Using Gardner's (2006. p.31) definition, a domain is 'shorthand for a domain, discipline or craft'. This potentially presents semantic and practical problems. A discipline is typically understood as a branch of knowledge, typically one studied in higher education: a craft is typically an activity involving skill in making things by hand. Gardner uses one word to cover at least two everyday meanings. In my understanding, a 'domain' is more a

'discipline' than a 'craft': the domain of music covers both the knowledge and the variety of skills relating to the subject.

Gardner goes on to say that a domain 'is any kind of organized activity within a society, in which one can readily array individuals in terms of expertise' (ibid.). Domains are therefore dependent on a social context and are open to interpretation through hierarchies or ordered series.

The subject becomes more complex if one recognises that the domain of music comprises different areas, such as musical performance, composition, listening, musicology etc. Should these be labelled sub-domains? Or specialisms? And how do they factor into interpretations concerning hierarchies?

If an intelligence is identified as a 'computational capacity' (Gardner, 2006, p.31), then musical intelligence, skills of technique and theoretical understandings are served well: the definition enables us to create rankings and make hierarchies of ability. But how do we then define the innate responses of feeling a beat, interpretation and the delivery of something that captures the emotions?

In summary, a domain is a sociological construct; an intelligence is a biopsychological construct. Teachers can affect and control domains and can 'draw out' intelligence. The data present later in this thesis suggests that teachers distinguish between the two.

3.5.2 Musical Intelligence

Experts differ on the components of musical intelligence, the principal constituents of which depend on clarifying the elements of music.

Armstrong (1993) offers a very basic working definition: he suggests that the key features of musical intelligence are the perception, appreciation and production of rhythms and melodies. He states that these are present in the minds of 'any individual who has a good ear, can sing in tune, keep time to music, and listen to different musical selections with some degree of discernment' (ibid. p.10). This offers a partial insight into the subject for the general reader but there is a lack of detail concerning the constituent parts of musical intelligence, for example, knowledge of musical elements and skills.

For Gardner (1993, p104), the 'cores' of musical intelligence are pitch, rhythm and timbre. He makes clear that these are balanced differently within different cultures. For example, he acknowledges that pitch and its melodic structuring is more central in certain cultures, identifies that some cultures make use of quarter tones and recognises that rhythm is emphasised in the cultures of sub-Saharan Africa. Although he identifies these as 'cores', he acknowledges that the principal constituent elements required for musical intelligence are wider than this.

Engagement with the text of the National Curriculum (DfE, 2013) helps to expand our understanding: the eight 'inter-related dimensions' of music specified in the document are pitch, duration, dynamics, tempo, timbre, texture, structure and appropriate musical notations. Whilst 'pitch' and 'timbre' are common to both lists, Gardner's 'rhythm' is replaced by 'duration', encompassing the wider contextual and temporal nature of rhythm and how it is structured within measures or beats. The inclusion of texture allows an enhanced understanding of timbre. The other four 'dimensions' are equally as fundamental to musical intelligence.

Sternberg (2021) identifies that these dimensions of music apply equally to composition, performance, musical understanding and scholarship but offers a completely different way of engaging with musical intelligence itself. For him, musical intelligence involves 'creative', 'analytical', 'practical' and 'wisdom-based' aspects. He explains in the following way.

> Creative skills are used to generate novel ideas; analytical skills are used to ensure that the ideas are logically, conceptually, or otherwise analytically sound; practical skills are used to implement the ideas and to persuade others of the value of the ideas; and wisdom-based skills are used to ensure that the ideas help to attain a common good, over the long term as well as the short term, by balancing one's own (intra-personal) with others (inter-personal) and larger (extra-personal) interests.
>
> Sternberg (2021, p.1776)

He argues that any theory of musical intelligence should have an explanatory or descriptive power, that allows application and engagement of the theory in formal and informal contexts.

Gardner and Sternberg both developed systems theories of intelligence: Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences (Gardner, 1983, 2006) and Sternberg's theory of successful intelligence (Sternberg, 1997, 2003, 2020). Both theories move away from a series of static psychometric factors and categorise human intelligence as a complex system of mental representations, structures, and processes interacting to produce intelligent behaviours.

In his critical paper entitled, 'Toward a Theory of Musical Intelligence', Sternberg (2021) has worked on a way of combining the two theories. His premise is that creative, analytical, practical, and wisdom-based processes (Sternberg 1997, 2003) can be applied in each of the domains of which Gardner writes as follows:

Table 2: An integration of the theory of multiple intelligences with the theory of successful intelligence with application to musical intelligence (Sternberg, 2021, p.1777)

Intellectual skills/Intelligence	Creative skills	Analytical skills	Practical skills	Wisdom-based skills
Linguistic				
Logical-mathematical				
Visual-spatial				
Musical	Composing music: Playing music in a novel but appropriate way	Critiquing musical performance: analysing a musical composition	Composing or playing music in a way that effectively reaches an audience	Composing or playing music in a way to achieve a social or societal good
Bodily-kinaesthetic				
Naturalist				
Interpersonal				
Intrapersonal				

Creative intelligence is used to generate novel but also feasible ideas (Kaufman and Sternberg, 2019). There is a clear link here to skills associated with creativity: creating, inventing, discovering, exploring, supposing, designing and imagining. Meaningful creativity does not always require a knowledge base; however, one cannot think creatively beyond

what has been done before unless one has some idea and appreciation of what has been done before. A second application of creative musical intelligence is in playing existing music in a musical way: an interpretation of the piece that expresses the individuality and personality of the performer (Sternberg, 2021, p.1778).

Analytical intelligence is involved when one 'analyses, compares and contrasts, judges, critiques, evaluates or assesses'. (Sternberg, 2021, p.1779). This places intelligent thinking in a context, using both knowledge and personal opinion. According to the theory of successful intelligence, learning (except rote learning) and problem solving are closely related (ibid.). As discussed in the previous section, problem solving is linked to creativity.

One uses practical intelligence when one is 'planning, implementing, actioning, persuading and evaluating' (Sternberg, 2021, p.1781). It is used to adapt to, shape and select environments. Adaptation occurs when one changes oneself to fit better into an environment; shaping occurs when one changes the environment to be a better fit for oneself or what one believes is important. Selection relates to finding a correct environment.

Practical musical intelligence derives primarily from tacit knowledge, or what one needs to know to succeed in a particular environment that typically is not explicitly taught and is often not even verbalised (Sternberg et al., 2000; Sternberg and Hedlund, 2002). It is learned through practical experience. Tacit knowledge exists in people's heads, not in books, however, it can be codified when people make an effort to do so or when learning is scaffolded.

Sternberg (2021) explains wisdom-based skills as those involved towards the attainment of a common good, for example, playing to an audience can be uplifting for both the performer and the audience. It makes everybody's lives better.

The skills underlying musical intelligence are diverse and the different aspects of musical intelligence are interdependent and interactive. Both Sternberg's (2021) musical intelligences and Philpott's (2021a) creative processes contribute to musical ability and a person becoming a musician.

3.5.3 Musical Ability

Hallam and Prince (2003) asked people from a range of backgrounds and age ranges (a mixture of those actively involved and music and not) to complete the sentence, 'Musical ability is...'. Using the data they collected, musical ability was conceptualised in relation to: aural ability, aspects of communication, practical engagement and personal qualities. The concept of musical ability was constructed in different ways by different groups but the greater the active involvement with music making, the more detailed and complex the constructions became.

Does having musical ability make one musical? Herein lies a problem. As Daubney (2024, p.76) articulates: 'The term 'musical' is value laden and personal'. Perceptions and misconceptions of musicality lead to widespread denial according to Ruddock (2018). How this affects the teachers in my school of study will be explored in my data later in this thesis.

Children need to explore the experiences and processes of musicality in the school context because musicality lies at the heart of, and should drive, all music education (Daubney, 2024). But the terminology can be a hindrance. Potential insecurities mean that teachers, and children, either give up music making or don't attempt it.

Hallam (2006b, p.93) highlights that there is little consensus about definitions related to being musical. She suggests that it often attached to a range of other terms:

- ability - defined as capacity or power;
- aptitude - interpreted as natural propensity or talent;
- talent - a special aptitude or faculty;
- potential - something coming into action or being or action.

These terms are often used interchangeably.

Musical terminology is important (Whittaker and Fautley, 2024) and in relation to music education, there are tensions in schools concerning the support of 'gifted' and 'talented' children. Gagne (2003) defines 'gifted and talented' pupils as those whose potential and skills are distinctly above average. McPherson (1997) broadly agrees but separates 'giftedness' and 'talent': 'giftedness' is a natural or innate potential; 'talent' is demonstrated through superior performance as a result of systematic training.

Regardless of a specific definition, the teachers' responsibility is to deliver an appropriate music education to all children – from those with no knowledge to those with natural ability (McPherson, 1997). They are making decisions about the 'current and future needs of young learners' (Beach and Spruce, 2024, p.70) and the focus must be clear.

It is important that schools develop an inclusive music education (Daubney, 2024). Few children will be gifted or talented musicians but all children have the right to learn music as part of the statutory curriculum up to the age of fourteen. Regardless of musical aptitude, Gordon (1980, p.3) writes that 'a child must have favourable early informal and formal experiences in music to maintain a level of potential'.

Children develop elements of musicality - communication through sound, pulse, rhythm, movement - from a very young age (Parnutt, 2009; Malloch and Treathen, 2009). They learn to connect with others through, for example, singing as part of a group at nursery or school. This may not be fluent or musical but these skills can only be developed through participation and listening to others (Daubney, 2024) – much of it through tacit learning. Swanwick (1999) believes that musical fluency should take precedence over musical literacy. Musical fluency happens through immersion and acculturation – in the case of many children, through listening.

The use of tests of musical ability (Seashore, 1915; Seashore, 1938: Law and Zentner, 2012) which sorted the able from the less able in music are mostly resigned to the past. We need to help more primary children to understand that they can feel musical (Daubney, 2024) and aspire to enjoy and use music. This is the responsibility of teachers.

Research with dedicated music teachers by Ballantyne and Grootenboer (2012) suggests that even the most experienced consider that being a performing musician is central to their success. This illustrates Hargreaves and Lamont's (2017) point that teachers evaluate their own teacher identities in relation to their own skills and competencies, influencing their development and affecting their attitudes towards teaching the subject

3.6 Gaps in the Literature and Research

The National Curriculum for England, enshrined in law by the Education Reform Act (1988), was introduced to ensure that all children in state schools received similar content in their

education across a range of designated subjects up to the age of fourteen (end of Year 9). As a result of its development, children nationally could be assessed using standardised tests. These assessment measures, it was argued, were introduced for transparency; to replace prejudice with facts; to make information publicly available; to allow easy comparisons between schools; to enable good performance to be rewarded and emulated; and to enable poor performance to be identified and remedied (Ravitch, 2010).

Soon after the development of the National Curriculum (Education Reform Act, 1988), Standardised Assessment Tests and Tasks (SATs) were introduced for use in English, Maths and Science. In primary schools, these were administered at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 (at the ages of 7 and 11). Test results were published in the form of league tables for schools.

As Asdal (2011) observes, national tests and league tables are, in their pure numbers form, abstract measures: teaching and the curriculum are relational measures. He explains that the tests and league tables are tools for translating and mediating new and different relationships between measures: standardised national tests inform the creation of league tables and league tables create competition and allow comparison (ibid.). Expectations can be defined and measured, including minimum levels of performance for schools and teachers. 'Good teaching' can be defined and influenced by these measures and school curricula can be influenced by their success, as defined by these measures (Lingard, Thompson and Sellar, 2015).

As a result of these developments, schools individual curriculum priorities were replaced by particular foci on success in literacy or numeracy. In many schools, allocating time to ensure that the children were able to meet test demands in English and Maths, was prioritised over delivering a broad and balanced curriculum across the full range of statutory subjects. The focus of interests, for many schools, shifted to accountability for success, as measured by Ofsted inspections, resulting in a rebalancing of the curriculum.

The discourse relating to changes to the purpose of education and teaching, and the control and design of the curriculum, created both positive and negative dynamics (Freidson, 1994). One of the effects of this policy development was the marginalisation of certain subjects in some schools due to the aforementioned priorities. One of the casualties of this process was music as a curriculum subject.

Music can be considered a difficult subject to teach because of the specificity of musical expertise (Rogers et al., 2008). Research has revealed the teaching of music by generalist primary teachers is questionable:

- where music is frequently little more than an afterthought to be added to other areas of the curriculum or as part of an assembly or concert item (Wiggins & Wiggins, 2008);
- by generalist teachers indicating they lack the confidence and skills to teach music (de Vries, 2011; Garvis & Pendergast, 2010; Holden & Button, 2006; Wiggins & Wiggins, 2008);
- when generalist primary teachers believe that music should be taught by a music specialist (de Vries, 2011).

A range of individual factors have been found to impact on the teaching practices of teachers, including:

- musical background (de Vries, 2011; Holden and Button, 2006; Wiggins and Wiggins, 2008);
- (current) engagement in music making (de Vries, 2011; Hallam et al., 2009);
- access to music professional development (de Vries, 2011; Garvis and Pendergast, 2010; Holden and Button, 2006);
- access to appropriate resources (de Vries, 2011);
- music in ITT courses and teacher education (de Vries, 2011; Hallam et al., 2009; Holden and Button, 2006; Russell-Bowie, 2009).

When one looks at the issues outlined above, they seem to be the same ones which were present in my brief history of primary music teaching (Chapter 2). Problems in the teaching of primary music have been identified, but where explicit solutions to the problems have been proposed, they always seem to be based around further training, either during Initial Teacher Training or Inservice training and resourcing. What has changed?

Rogers et al. (2008), whose research is based on data from questionnaires, state clearly that we have not sufficiently considered the voices of primary teachers or their sense of agency in framing the discussion about quality primary music education in the absence of specialists. Wiggins and Wiggins (2008) offer a very similar sentiment. Seven years after this, de Vries (2015, p.211) framed the same point: the 'literature lacks examples of generalist teachers explaining the teaching of music in their classrooms'. Finding out about the complexities of teaching music from the teachers themselves through interview and discussion - what they believe and their self-efficacy - is neglected in the research literature.

Within the literature, researchers have taken their sample populations from either student teachers (trainees) or qualified teachers, many driven by 'opportunistic' or 'convenience' sampling (Mertens, 2020) i.e. people readily available to take part in the study. A few have sought the views and opinions of teacher educators or lecturers (de Figueiredo, 2002). The representation of the views of an entire teaching staff from a single primary school cannot be found in the literature: views which provide information on attitudes, perceptions and capabilities in a single, real context. What are their perceptions in relation to a diverse range of school and outside factors, including for example, curriculum, management, policy and agency?

Through my research questions I will address the following:

1. How generalist primary teachers perceive the music curriculum, with insight into the complexities they perceive in relation to policy (documentation) and other factors. I will also explore how they explain the translation of this into practice (teaching and learning approaches);
2. How generalist primary teachers perceive musical intelligence and how this impacts on their teaching practice.
3. How and if internal and external factors have affected their approaches to the teaching of classroom music; and
4. How generalist teachers can be empowered and stimulated to teach music.

3.7 Conclusion

Drawing on my background as a Headteacher, Primary Music Advisor and Initial Teacher Trainer, I take as an underlying theme of this thesis the fact that generalist teachers with little or no musical experience, can be empowered to teach music to primary children without the need for further training. Having considered the perceptions of the teachers themselves, I now believe that this could be done if the content of the curriculum were to be refocussed, and explore this in the subsequent text.

I have not found the inclusion of the emotional and well-being aspects of primary music education as part of the taught curriculum in any prior research specific to primary music education. I will present a constructive argument on whether the music curriculum is appropriate for today's primary aged children, proposing a re-working of the academic and practical/creative aspects of music education, suggesting that an additional strand should be introduced to the formal music curriculum – the 'use' of music for everyday life.

Notably, my data comes mainly from semi-structured interviews and the ensuing discussion. It represents directly, the voices of the primary teachers at the school.

At the outset of the literature review, I viewed things from my own personal and social perspectives: through my own lenses. My own previous experience and knowledge brought with it assumptions about how primary music teaching and learning should be approached. The cyclical nature of carrying out this literature review and analysing the data has challenged my own perceptions and thinking significantly.

Chapter 4 Methodology

4.1 Introduction

When I first started out on this research journey, my aims were somewhat naïve and simplistic: to explore what had led to a situation where some primary teachers lack competence in primary music teaching; feel ill equipped to teach the subject; and struggle with their confidence to teach musical skills and knowledge and understand music-related academic material. I had aimed to research teachers' understanding of the music curriculum and to explore why music is often marginalised in the primary timetable. However, establishing teachers understanding would have required hours of lesson observations of them each teaching music to triangulate with what they perceived to be their experience, and the issues concerning marginalisation were already clear – not enough time in the timetable as dictated by the school's priorities.

I have learnt that neither research or knowledge construction are value free: positionality, politics and inquiry are intertwined and are sometimes inseparable. I needed to look again at how I had framed my research questions, and how my suppositions and inferences could be legitimized in order to ascertain their worth in this research area (Tsouroufli, 2022). I needed to look at how teacher understandings and the phenomena associated with the subject of study were being perpetuated within school and in the minds of the teachers. I needed to deconstruct, explore and evaluate the normative, political and ethical dimensions and assumptions within this research study.

To that end my final research questions (as stated before) were:

1. How do generalist primary teachers perceive the music curriculum?
2. How do generalist primary teachers perceive musical intelligence?
3. How do internal and external factors impact on their approaches to the teaching of classroom music?
4. How can generalist teachers be empowered and stimulated to teach music?

In this chapter I explain my understanding of the conceptual and theoretical frameworks used within my thesis. I explain how my understanding of social constructionism is used as

a lens through which to personally evaluate and discuss the data findings. I also explain my understandings of epistemology and ontology as they relate to this study.

My research is a case study of the teachers' perceptions of primary curriculum music within one school. I will justify my approach, explaining some of the advantages and academic criticisms of case study with regard to its generalisability, validity and reliability.

In the section that follows, I outline the research process I have used, so that it is transparent to the reader, and also provide a rationale and explanation of the questions contained within the questionnaire and my approach to the semi structured interviews used with respondents.

A brief section on data analysis explains my approach in this area of the research. This is followed by information about the normative, political and ethical dimensions relating to this research study.

4.2 Research Approach

4.2.1 Conceptual and Theoretical Frameworks

A conceptual framework can be defined as the system of concepts, assumptions, expectations, beliefs, and theories that support and inform one's research (Maxwell, 2013; Miles, Huberman and Saldaña, 2014). Yin (2018) uses the term 'research design' with similar meaning; for him, the research design is a logical model of proof. It deals with the logical (not logistical) problem, linking the data to the propositions and the criteria for interpreting the findings. I am using the term conceptual framework to mean the logical conceptualisation of my entire research project (Kivunja, 2018).

In writing this thesis, I have made relationships between the goals, research questions, literature review, methodology, methods, data analysis and validity explicit (Ravitch and Riggan, 2017), acknowledging positionality and the contextual factors influencing my research design and outcomes. Areas which have informed the construction of my conceptual framework include my experiential knowledge (Chapter 1), an historical context of the domain (Chapter 2) and existing theory and research (Chapter 3). My conceptual

framework can therefore be interpreted as the product of my own thinking about my research study as a whole, explained further in Appendix L.

Kivunja (2018) explains that a theoretical framework (as part of the conceptual framework) is the analytical structure that summarises and synthesises concepts and theories developed from previously tested and published knowledge, which can be used to interpret and build meaning from research data. I have thought through scenarios and possibilities, reassessing my attitudes and thoughts on the teaching of music in primary schools: most influential have been the work of Sternberg (1997; 2003; 2020; 2021) on the subject of musical intelligences and Philpott (2012; 2021a) on the subject of the process of creativity.

My theoretical framework has enabled me to report my findings in an analytical, evaluative and creative way, demonstrating understanding and interpretation of the theories being applied to the subject of my study (Anfara and Mertz, 2015). It is a synthesis of my thoughts about research in the field as they relate to my own research. Using Guba's (1981) criteria for good qualitative research, a theoretical framework helps increase the credibility of the data, may enhance the transferability of the findings from the data, increases the confirmability of the findings and improves the dependability of the findings.

4.2.2 Theoretical Perspective

There are many definitions of 'theory' (Anfara and Mertz, 2015). 'Theory driven thinking' (Watts (2020, p.115) helped me shape my research questions, the direction of the literature review and the eventual conclusions of my thesis. In the case of this study, theory is being used to create and support plausible interpretations of what I have found (Bassey, 1999). I have used theories as lenses through which to study selected phenomena.

This is important because it has enabled me to observe, perceive and describe what I consider to be meaningful events. My prior knowledge brought with it assumptions about what I might find and it was important for me to recognise and embrace this in order to be aware how it influenced the way I was thinking about the data (Kelle, 1997, cited in Jackson and Bazeley, 2018, p.7).

Ultimately, I was interested in exploring how teachers perceive their experiences as they relate to the teaching of music, what (if any) meaning they attribute to these experiences and how they construct their worlds (Merriam and Tidsell, 2016). Using a social constructionist epistemological approach, I have analysed these perceptions, drawing out what I considered to be key themes.

My theoretical perspective has been informed by my professional development, my academic learning, and my positionality. Throughout my school and university education, I had been trained to believe that creativity, in the sense of musical performance, centred on a somewhat personal means of individual expression, self-realisation and self-fulfilment. Creativity came from within.

As a result of my work with teachers in many different capacities (as a colleague, manager, leader, trainer and mentor) and through my research and reading, I came to appreciate that creativity could also be conceived of as a socially influenced phenomenon (Cropley, 2006). In this thesis I explore perceptions of both the personal and social approaches to creativity in primary music education in relation to the theory.

Teachers differ from one another in their understandings of creativity and this explains why they talk about creativity and creative pupils in different ways. The established master / apprentice model of learning music (Beach and Spruce, 2024: Stakelum, 2022), which many teachers use as a reference point when talking about music education, leans towards a personal interpretation of creative music making. A social approach to creativity encompasses wider understanding and emphasises the importance of groups, role models and mentors: all of which primary teachers can influence within the classroom.

This social approach to creativity requires that teachers reflect on the strategies in use in the classroom: ones that may differ from those derived from cognitive or personal approaches. It requires teachers to acknowledge how our realities are constructed (using understandings of social constructionism and constructivism), exploring different perceptions of creativity in the classroom and more widely in education.

Creativity is frequently discussed as a form of self-expression or a way of understanding life (Maslow, 1973; May, 1976, Rogers, 1961) that is closely connected with personal preference and personal expression. These are important aspects of personal development and are

explored, in a theoretical context, in relation to teachers perceptions of primary learning in this thesis, especially their understandings of emotional understanding, self-expression and interpretation.

Moustakis (1977) sees creativity as the pathway to living one's own life one's own way and Barron (1969) concluded that creativity requires resistance to socialisation. Other understandings of creativity pit the creative individual against society's desire for sameness (Boden, 1994) and the pressures of conformity (Sternberg and Lubart, 1995).

These understandings of creativity place an emphasis on the individual and have meant that promoting creativity in the classroom has often been seen as fostering the growth of individual children according to their specific talents and needs (McLeod and Cropley, 1989). This argument has led to some teachers thinking that special provision for musically creative children is desirable; whilst others think it is unfair or even socially divisive (Rader, 1976; Weiler, 1978).

There are thoughts that creativity should lead to something useful (Clifford, 1958; Gordon, 1961). Creative products constitute one of the public faces of creativity: in this way creativity as a process can be scrutinised. It can be assessed and rated. Products are tangible. Creative people (Cropley 1967) – when discussed as a commodity – are talked about in the same way. Success can be aligned with demonstrating a wide range of creative skills.

I believe that this is how creativity in many primary schools is perceived and structured. The National Curriculum (DfE,2013), Model Music Curriculum (DfE, 2021) and National Plans for Music Education (DfE, 2011: DfE, 2022) provide policy style statements for what it means to be creative and how creativity should be developed.

Creativity makes an impact on the social environment. It also has an impact in schools. Teachers consider the person, the process and the product (Cropley, 2020).

In my literature review I discussed Cropley's (2020) 3 'Ps': person, process and product. A 4th 'P', meaning 'Press' or environment i.e. how factors in the environment affect creativity, was later identified providing us with the opportunity of seeing creativity as a social phenomenon. Csikszentmihalya (1999, p.315) supports this argument when he asserts that

original thought does not exist in a vacuum: it exists in the context of the surrounding society and requires social agreement. Without this context, creativity would not exist.

In this thesis I explore a range of interpretations of creativity, discussing what it means to be creative in social as well as individual terms - social understandings and personal aspiration. I acknowledge and recognise the role of society in influencing the types of creativity discussed and accepted in school, for example, in terms of policy, leadership, bias and elitism and established and accepted teaching approaches in education.

Maintenance of a high level of conformity within social norms has the advantage that life becomes predictable. Rules are maintained. Within school, children are taught to provide correct answers: many children develop a need to be right. Creativity, for some, can suggest breaking the rules: creativity is, in this respect, defined by social conformity and norms.

Teachers are educators, role-models and mentors to the children in their care. Treffinger (1995) referred to the presence in the environment of creativity 'assisters': these include teachers, other school staff and classmates. Bloom (1985) observes that these 'assisters' do not need to be powerful figures.

My belief is that teachers should offer all children creative opportunities; they should offer creative individuals new life perspectives. They should offer children a safe space to explore and create. This forms a rationale for my theoretical perspective.

James, Clark and Cropanzano (1999) focussed on the effect of role models on creativity. Although talking about organisations, it is possible to transfer their suggestions to the primary school. Teachers should make people aware of creativity; creativity should be a legitimate goal for education; children should be shown how to generate novelty; and awaken positive emotions about creative activity.

Cropley (2006, p.130) makes an important point about opportunities for creativity:

> '… children are exposed to powerful forces of conformity from media, parents, and peers. They have had little opportunity (for instance because of their youth) to develop a strong sense of identity, self-worth, and the like, and thus seem to be especially susceptible to such forces. Because of this, it is of particular importance

that teachers use their status and authority to establish a congenial classroom environment.'

Children are often not able to choose the climates they are exposed to: they are more or less compelled to function in a particular setting (Cropley, 2006). This is true in relation to school.

My theoretical perspective, outlined above and explored in this thesis, acknowledges the range of personal and social influences on teachers to deliver a music curriculum of worth to the children.

4.2.3 Paradigms, Epistemology and Ontology

In designing and conducting my case study, my aim was to capture the perceptions and perspectives of the teaching staff of one primary school, focusing on how these illuminated my research interest. Different people create different understandings: they see the world in different ways, through different lenses.

Paradigms tie in to a particular world view. They are ways of looking at the world, at the heart of which are 'certain philosophical assumptions that guide and direct thinking and action' (Mertens, 2020, p.8), for example, Carr and Kemmis (1995) propose three forms of research of different philosophical perspectives or paradigms - positivist, interpretive and critical; Mertens (2020, p.11) identifies four: post-positivism, constructivist, transformative and pragmatic. My research is 'interpretive' or 'constructivist' in nature.

Epistemology is the theory of knowledge, especially with regard to its methods, validity and scope; it is the distinction between justified belief and opinion (Pring, 2004). Epistemologies are not static, they evolve (Crotty, 1998). Part of the reason for this is that knowledge comes directly from our own individual experiences and also from the testimony of others (Audi, 2010). Understandings and interpretations evolve and change.

Language is a necessary precondition for thought, interpretation and understanding: the way in which the world gets constructed (Burr, 2015). It includes the construction of the self and other people's identities. Social constructionism argues that the ways in which we 'commonly understand the world, the categories and concepts we use, are historically and culturally specific' (Burr, 2015, p.4), and are constructed between people. Social interaction,

especially the personal and social use of language, is significant: constructions of the world sustain some patterns of social action and exclude others. This means that we construct our own versions of reality within our own minds and between us. It means that there are multiple forms of reality.

This ontological position also includes the researcher's relationship with the reality of the study: whether they consider reality to be independent of their knowledge, or whether they participate in the construction of that reality. I have my own perception of reality: I have undertaken my research and written this thesis in the context of the construction of my own meaningful reality (Crotty, 1998). It is therefore value-bound and subjective. It is an in-depth exploration based on a small sample.

From an 'interpretive' or 'constructivist' position, reality does not exist outside of the human mind: it is constructed, deconstructed and reconstructed through perception, the use of symbols and in the course of our interactions with one another.

4.3 Methodology: Case Study

4.3.1 Case Study as a Methodological Approach

According to Flyvbjerg (2001), practical rationality is best understood through the exposition of cases: my interpretive study (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2018) uses a single case study design. I have chosen to research perceptions of generalist class teachers regarding the teaching music in the primary school. Whilst acknowledging that every school is different, based on the information contained in my literature review and historical context chapter, I believe this to be a representative case (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2018) which has 'practical, historical unity' (Wieviorka, 1992, p.159).

The singularity of my case study is bounded, or contained, in space and time (Bassey, 1999; Thomas, 2011): it is the study of the perceptions of the teaching staff at a single primary school within a specific time period (January – June 2023). It is also 'bounded' by contextual knowledge (Thomas, 2011) (some of which was included in Chapter 1 and some later in this chapter) and addresses the particularity and complexity of my chosen issue (Thomas, 2011).

The quantification of data was not my priority: using two different methods of data collection, I have been able to explore relationships and processes (Hammersley and Gomm, 2000). My case study presents perceptions of 'what it was like' to be in this particular situation and to that end, my research questions asked 'how' and 'why' questions (Yin, 2018), suitable for exploration by case study research. My aim was not to control variables: I did not require control over behavioural events.

The case provided a unique example of real people in a real situation (Stake, 1995; Simons, 1996; Yin, 2018) and is a detailed examination of a small sample (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2018) in a natural context (Bassey, 1999). Information (limited to the scope of the case study) has been shared with the staff and leaders of the school in anticipation of it being used to inform future practice and policy.

I have explored significant features of the case, creating plausible interpretations of what I found (Bassey, 1999). Readers and other researchers can validate or challenge my findings, or construct alternative arguments, because I have included rich, vivid and holistic description - 'thick description' (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2018; Flyvbjerg, 2001) - through the use of specific quotations, which present contexts and situations through the eyes of participants, as well as myself as researcher.

Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2018) state that it is important to let the data speak for themselves and not to over-interpret. My thesis involves a train of reasoning about the interrelationships between the elements of my study. It involves me justifying my reasoning and the conclusions which have emerged, using the evidence drawn from my empirical work.

4.3.2 Advantages and Academic Criticisms of Case Study

The strengths of using case study as a methodology for my research are as follows:

1. it is based in a real context and is strong on reality (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2018; Yin, 2018; Flyvbjerg, 2001);
2. it is socially embedded (Bassey, 1999; Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2018);
3. findings can be reflected upon (Adelman et al., 1980; Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2018);

4. generalisations may be applied (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2018; Cohen and Manion, 1989).

My case study is rooted in a real primary school context: being strong on reality is its strength. Using a social-constructionist approach, my interpretations of the teachers' understandings and actions are based on social meanings: the teachers working together in this school interpret meanings and these meanings change through social discourse (Bassey, 1999). By carefully attending to their talk about social situations, my case study represents something of the discrepancies or conflicts between the individual viewpoints held by participants: there is recognition of the complexity and 'embeddedness' of social truths. Understanding the interaction and engagement between factors and the participants can be considered a strength.

My case study is not an action research project; however, it takes place within a world of action and contributes to it. My insights can be directly interpreted and put to use by staff at the school: they may choose to reinterpret the data in order to try to establish cause and effect (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2018; Bassey, 1999).

Yin (1994; 2018) provides opposition to the idea of case study as a methodological approach, on the grounds of a lack of rigour and little basis for scientific generalisation. However, Yin's position tends towards the positivist paradigm i.e. using case study as an evaluation method in pursuit of a single object of reality. I am not writing from this position.

In contrast to Yin's view, Stake (1995) adopts a more constructionist ontology and his writing is firmly within the interpretive paradigm. He is supportive of case study and makes the point that the methods used will be different depending upon intrinsic and instrumental interests. Intrinsic interests involve researching a particular situation for its own sake – it is valuable in itself. Instrumental case studies research one or more particular situations to try to understand an outside concern i.e. as a means to an end.

4.3.3 Generalisability, Validity and Reliability

The subject of generalisation, when applied to case study, is a contested subject.

Although educational case study can be about researching and understanding localised settings like schools, this does not mean resemblances cannot be found in other similar

situations. Cohen and Manion (1989) write that establishing generalisations about the case is the aim of case study research. For other writers, a generalisation arising from case study is not an essential outcome (Bassey, 1999) and some see it as problematic (Simons, 1996; Yin, 1994).

Case studies allow generalisations which can be applied to similar situations or phenomena. Their strength lies in the attention given to the subtlety and complexity of the case in its own right. Stenhouse (1985) offers the view that generalisation and application are matters of judgement rather than calculation which Kemmis (1980, in Bassey,1999, p.25) warns should be done with caution. The evidence should be robust enough to be challenged.

I find it helpful to reflect on the work of Stake (1995) who argued for researchers to draw research conclusions in the form of assertions, which he later called 'propositional generalisations'. He uses the term 'naturalistic generalisation' for meaning made personally by the reader - personal conclusions arrived at through an individual's engagement with life. My aim was to present, with clarity, my in-depth investigation, highlighting the patterns and interdependencies of the parts (Sturman, 1994) in such a way that my assertions, or conclusions, are clear. The reader can then assess the validity and appropriateness of any generalisations.

Yin's (2018, p.43) views about 'reliability', which he defines as 'demonstrating that the operations of study, such as data collection procedures, can be repeated, with the same results' – again, demonstrate a positivist viewpoint. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2018) also define reliability as replicability and internal consistency.

I agree that there must be internal consistency, involving a clear presentation of evidence based on the data and the following of protocols. My understanding of repetition in the context of this case study would relate to the fact that the information about the methodology and methods are transparent enough that they could be replicated, however, with recognition that the results may be different. In social research, identical results could only be produced with an identical participant sample: human difference, social settings, culture and historical factors play a part in the data collected. These are necessary considerations in a case study.

4.3.4 The Avoidance of Bias

In Chapter 1 I included a brief discussion of reflexivity, the dynamics of the researcher-researched relationship. I also explained my perceptions of my own 'positions', or identities, in relation to my work.

There is a difference between reflection and reflexivity: reflection involves questioning, discussing, analysing and reviewing work; reflexivity looks at positions, the impact on and effects within the research process. I have reflected on how I may have affected the research process and my interpretations through introspection (Finlay, 2003; Wilkinson, 1988) and the dynamics and emotional relationships between myself, as researcher, and others (including unconscious motivations, implicit biases and the distribution of power) through intersubjective reflection (Finlay, 2003: Wilkinson, 1988).

To this end I have taken responsibility for making intelligible interpretations of the data rather than exclusively describing participants accounts (Gough, 2003a: Gough 2003b) which, according to Maso (2003), can increase the integrity and trustworthiness of my research (ibid.).

4.4 Research Process

Using ideas from Kemmis, McTaggart and Nixon (2014, p.20), writing in the context of critical participation action research, I have reflected on the 'sayings', 'doings' and 'relatings' of the teachers at this school in the context of music in the primary curriculum. I have explored: what primary teachers think and say about the teaching of music as a subject and the cultural and discursive arrangements that have shaped the ways they understand and interpret the curriculum requirements (their 'sayings'); what teachers teach and the material and economic arrangements that make it possible for them to teach effectively (their 'doings'); and how teachers relate to others and the social and political arrangements which shape the ways they interact within and outside the school in the context of music education (their 'relatings'). I have placed my findings in an historical and cultural context (McCulloch and Richardson, 2000).

There is a requirement for primary teachers to teach all National Curriculum (DfE, 2013) subjects. Historical data and information indicate that the delivery of generalist primary music is not equitable for all children for a variety of reasons. My extensive work in schools (both in headship and directing teacher training), anecdotally highlighted that teachers approach the teaching of music in the primary school in a variety of ways, partly based on the cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1979) that they bring with them to the profession. Many evaluate their music teaching based on the professional attributes they have developed as a teacher – behaviour management, general planning, assessment etc. – omitting an evaluation of learning in relation to music's specialist subject knowledge and skills.

When questioning, I sought answers at different levels of understanding. At a 'micro level' I looked at teachers' motivation and value preferences; at a 'meso level' I looked at organisational culture; and at a 'macro level' I looked for an understanding of policy (both school and national) (Kivunja, 2018). I also encouraged critical and creative thinking to enhance a sense of agency.

I have already provided contextual information about the primary school used in the research project. It is situated in coastal Essex in a recognised deprived area (using IDAQI information). It is at the end of a peninsula and managers often finds it difficult to attract teachers to fill vacancies. The school is a two-form entry primary school and an Ofsted inspection in 2022 found the work of the school to be 'Good' in every inspected area.

All teachers are expected to have an understanding of music in the National Curriculum (DfE, 2013) and those with class responsibility are expected to teach the primary music curriculum in line with national and school expectations. All teachers employed by the school were invited to participate in my research through a gatekeeper - the Headteacher of the school. Information about my research, the 'Participant Information Sheet' (Appendix D) and the 'Consent Form' (Appendix E) were provided and, where appropriate returned, through the gatekeeper.

There were twenty-one teachers at the school at the time I undertook my study: this included both full time and part time teachers. All teachers were keen to be part of the research project and completed the questionnaire. All but one agreed to be interviewed.

This was an online study dealing with participants through electronic means: email for the questionnaire and an online video-communication programme for the interviews. An electronic questionnaire was sent to each teacher agreeing to take part in the study. The information contained within the questionnaire allowed me to gain an understanding of the ways that they approach the teaching of primary music and how they felt this worked in practice; their perceptions of the benefits of the music curriculum, how music differs from other subjects and how they would change the curriculum (if there was a perceived need). It also allowed me to gain an understanding of their musical identities in relation to their interpretation of music in the National Curriculum (DfE, 2013).

Twenty out of twenty-one teachers offered to take part in a follow-up online interview with me to discuss some of the areas in more depth, as well as exploring other topics related to the research. Interviews, for all those agreeing to take part, were conducted through an online video conferencing programme. Transcriptions were made as soon as possible after the interview (within 2 weeks).

Teachers were able to opt into one or both parts of the project. Contextual information (demographic information) was provided by the respondents (Appendix H). All information contained in the responses has been anonymised within this thesis.

4.4.1 Sampling Strategy

In order to fill a perceived gap in the research, I wanted to explore the perceptions of an entire school teaching staff in my research study. I did not want to interview teachers across a range of schools, where, potentially, only those with an interest in the subject may respond.

My sampling strategy can be described as either 'purposive' or 'convenience' sampling (Mertens, 2020): the persons targeted in my study fulfilled my criteria for gaining the perceptions of a complete school teaching staff and those participating in the study were chosen because they were readily available within a single primary school (ibid.). However, no pressure was placed on the respondents by either myself or the gatekeeper to participate.

A non-probability sample (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2018) of this type brings with it debates concerning non-representativeness. I would argue that the school was a representative sample of schools in the area: all seven primary schools in the local area have been rated 'Good' by Ofsted; none have specialist music teachers; all schools are of a similar size; all have similar management structures. I believe that the study raises valid questions which could be used by other school leaders and their staff.

Issues of which I had to be aware were:

- having gone through a gatekeeper, who was the headteacher of the school, would the teachers actually represent their own views or the views of the school?
- non-responses to questions on the questionnaire needed to be followed up in the interview (Mertens, 2020);
- potential under-representation or over-representation of groups within the sample (Mertens, 2020) and an imbalance when using data in discussion, for example, the views of one teacher with Asperger's syndrome.

Where appropriate within the interview, I tried to elicit professional and personal views, along with a strength of feeling and commitment for one over the other.

4.5 Data Collection Methods

In preparing my research questions, I kept a diary of thoughts and feelings, events and processes. Although, it served as a chronological record and a sequence of events, it was of more use with regard to showing the development of my thinking. Tentative ideas were launched pending further consideration and I constantly found myself considering my own subjectivity. I was informally challenged on certain assumptions and perceptions when talking to headteacher and ITT colleagues.

I was aware that it was easy for me as a competent musician and an ex-headteacher to be critical of individuals (Harper, 2003). As a musician, I was critical of a lack of skills and knowledge in others and overcompensated with a generosity towards potential to teach the subject: as an ex-headteacher I had to control my potential to be critical of teaching and leadership, especially that of those in positions of authority within the school.

I was aware that as the researcher, I could have been seen as an authority figure. Due to the possible risk of making the participant teachers feel uncomfortable or 'naïve' (Ballinger and Payne, 2000), I was careful to avoid making judgemental comments in the interviews and have avoided implied criticism of individuals, or the school, in the text.

Although I was analysing the teachers' motivations and effectiveness, which could be construed as critical, my focus was on how they perceived the teaching of music in the school, as illustrated through their responses. I needed to ensure that I was not imposing a frame on my interpretation. Social interactions and the use of language are all negotiated (Georgaca, 2003) and I am aware that meaning is not fixed and that language use may have consequences that the speaker did not intend. I was mindful of the use of rhetorical strategies, for example, plausibility and persuasiveness. I was also aware I could find myself in a position where I identified more with some participants than others (Finlay and Gough, 2003) and was critically aware of my inter-subjective reactions when writing up my findings. Burman and Parker (1993) note the ethical issues involved in interpreting the words of others. To this end, each teacher was provided with a transcript of their interview, in confidence, to check that they had not been misrepresented.

It was important that individual teachers felt comfortable in their surroundings when taking part in the online interview (Ballinger, 2003). All staff undertook their interviews in a private room in school, during the school day. I checked that all felt that this provided a confidential space where they could speak freely: offering alternatives if required.

I wanted to ensure that sufficient data could be collected for me to be able to explore significant features of the case (Bassey, 1999). To this end I decided on collecting two forms of data: through a questionnaire and a semi-structured interview. I rejected using lesson observations as part of the process because I was not looking to triangulate (Yin, 2018) the teachers' opinions, confidence and competence with what they had claimed. For this study, the significant information concerned what the teachers themselves perceived about the subject – not how this translated into practice.

I also chose not to use focus groups (Hoskins, 2020) for the reason that I have discovered that, in many cases, teachers construct identities based on those around them. They are more likely to agree than to disagree: they are more likely to agree with a general comment

than offer clarification or add specific information. I was keen to understand how the teachers explained and interpreted their own experiences and what meaning they attributed to them (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016).

There is a continuum of data from the structured to the unstructured (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2018). Although questionnaires can lack nuance and provide limited insight into complex social phenomena, I chose to use the structure offered by a questionnaire to elicit the initial thoughts of the teachers. Answers and omissions then allowed me to semi-structure the interview schedule.

In the semi-structure interview, I consciously followed up on answers (or the lack of) from the first wave of data collection and used the structured part of the schedule to ensure that every teacher was asked the same questions. I then follow up on any aspect of interest, areas that needed clarification, areas of bias and inaccuracies, perhaps due to poor recall.

The stages of my research process were:

Table 3: Outlining the various stages of the research process in completion of this thesis

Stage of Process	No 23	De 23	Ja 24	Fe 24	Ma 24	Ap 24	Ma 24	Ju 24	Ju 24	Au 24	Se 24	Oc 24	No 24	De 24
Gate-holder discussion and approval	✓													
Development of Questionnaire and Interview Schedule	✓													
Obtain Ethical Approval (BREO)		✓												
Introductory email with Invitation and Participant Information Sheet			✓											
Collation of Consent Forms and online meetings if required			✓											
Electronic questionnaires				✓										

Data analysis and revision of Interview Schedule					✓	✓								
Online interviews, transcription and approval of scripts							✓	✓	✓					
Data analysis										✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

4.5.1 Questionnaire

In this section I will provide an insight into my rationale for the construction of the questionnaire. A copy of the blank questionnaire is included in Appendix F and an example of a completed questionnaire is included as Appendix I.

On Page 1 of the questionnaire, I asked for demographic information from each of the teachers. This allowed me to contextualise the individual responses. I chose to collect information regarding:

- Name
- Gender
- Age
- Ethnicity
- Disability
- Number of years the teacher had been teaching
- Number of schools they had taught in
- Year groups taught during their career
- Current year group.

A summary of this information is included as Appendix H.

I decided not to ask for information on the position (or responsibilities) individuals held within school: partly for reasons of anonymity but, more importantly, because I wanted individual, general perceptions of music education. I was interviewing a person and not a position in school. This allowed all the teachers to present both personal and professional viewpoints: sometimes, for the same respondent, these were in opposition.

The opportunity to declare any disability was included because I had been told by the gatekeeper that one of the staff had a formal diagnosis of Asperger's Syndrome. I needed the member of staff to declare this themselves, to allow me to make informed decisions as to the significance and importance of certain responses in the context of others.

Contextually, the number of years which the teacher had been teaching and the number of schools they had taught in, was important because there was the potential for perceptions to have changed. This happened in several cases, where staff articulated a change of opinion or perception across time or due to a change of situation. This contextualised information allowed me to further understand and interpret the meaning of individual responses.

Anonymity has been maintained in the main text of this thesis: there was the potential for vulnerability if certain individuals could be identified. I asked the teachers to provide the number of year groups they had taught during their career (for breadth of experience and comparison of different perceptions relating to age groups) and details of their current year group (for context). In order to keep the responses as ambiguous as possible, I have not referred to individual year groups. I have used the term 'Phase' or 'Key Stage' as follows:

Phase	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Phase 4
Key Stage	EYFS	Key Stage 1	Key Stage 2	
Year Groups	EYFS	Years 1 and 2	Years 3 and 4	Years 5 and 6

Part 1 Teaching Music

This section allowed the teachers to reflect on their personal engagement with teaching and learning in music: they were asked to explain and describe their approach to the practicalities of teaching music. It was noticeable that teachers chose which questions they wanted to answer in this section: on reflection, this may have been because they did not want to place themselves in the vulnerable position of answering in a way that was not in line with school policy, or that showed that they had not taught the subject as they should have done. Understandings of power relations and trust were important here.

Part 2: The Curriculum

This section allowed the teachers to reflect on the music curriculum. I decided to use tick boxes for the teachers to indicate whether the curriculum **benefited** the children in the class, whether it **affected** the children, and whether it **enhanced the life** of the children in the class: they were then asked to explain why they had given the responses. The teachers were happy to tick a box, but not all justified their decisions. I asked them to explain how music differed from the teaching of other subjects and how the teaching of music and art differed from each other. Comparison between the two provided more detailed responses and raised some interesting areas for further exploration. Asking them how they would rewrite the curriculum, if they had the opportunity, allowed them to think outside the box, without the restrictions of policy and expectation.

Part 3: Personal Reflection

This allowed the teachers to reflect on their own relationship with music. Answers to these questions were mostly brief but it was clear that this area needed exploring due to the personal connections with and perceptions of the subject.

4.5.2 Semi-structured Interviews

A copy of the blank semi-structured interview schedule is included in Appendix G and the transcript of an interview in Appendix J.

The structure of the interview proforma was revised several times during my initial analysis of the questionnaire data. I will contrast the 'original version' with the 'final version' in order to illustrate and discuss these changes. The following is a summary of the sections included on the semi-structured interview proforma:

Table 4: Changes to the structure of the interview proforma

	Original Version **Before Questionnaire**	**Final Version** **After Questionnaire**
Opening Page	Personal information	Personal information
Part 1	Teaching Music	Values concerning Music
Part 2	The Curriculum	The Purposes of the Curriculum
Part 3	Musical Intelligence	Identifying Progression in Music
Part 4	Personal Reflection	Constructs of Musician and Musicality
Final Page	Music in National Curriculum and EYFS Document	

In the final version, the different 'parts' of the interview were broken down into smaller sections. As part of the interview itself, I used subtitles for each section so that the teachers understood the broad area which we were discussing:

Table 5: Structure of final version

Page No.		
1	Personal Information	• Name, gender, age, ethnicity, disability • Number of years teaching and number of schools taught in. • Year groups taught during career and current year group.
2	Part 1: Values concerning Music	• Thinking about your relationship with music… • Thinking about music in the school curriculum…

3	Part 2: Purposes of the Curriculum	• Can we now think about music as a creative subject… • Thinking about listening… • And thinking about your engagement with the music curriculum…
4	Part 3: Identifying Progression in Music	• Thinking about progression… • And now about children who are musical…
5	Part 4: Constructs of Musician and Musicality	• Thinking about definitions… • And finally…

Personal Information

I prepared a semi structured interview schedule for each individual teacher onto which I copied the demographic information provided on the questionnaire. It provided me with the opportunity to look through the information that they had provided and to note down anything that I wanted to follow up from their responses in the questionnaire which required further exploration for clarity or which opened interesting and pertinent areas for discussion. I felt that it was also important to demonstrate to the individual teacher that I had looked at and valued the responses that they had provided in the questionnaire

Part 1

The subject of this section changed from information about the teaching of music to values concerning music. Responses in the questionnaire made it clear that the teachers held personal views and values which they made explicit in their answers to the questions. These teacher perceptions provided rich data. I chose to look at these perceptions by asking about their values.

Using the sub-section headings as a reference:

- 'Thinking about your relationship with music…' allowed the teachers to explain changes in attitudes and perceptions; influences on their perceptions; and values. It also allowed them to contribute to the debate on music as an elitist subject.

- ‘Thinking about music in the school curriculum…’ allowed the teachers to provide personal and professional views. It allowed them to evaluate the provision of music within their primary school without attributing blame.

I decided to move away from details of the teacher’s professional development, which was historical information, and moved to the present - how they felt about music and the curriculum at the present time.

Part 2

Originally my questions concentrated on the areas within the music curriculum that the teacher preferred to teach, celebrating lessons that they had been particularly proud of and asking for explanations of how they dealt with the knowledge based and skills-based elements of the curriculum. I moved away from the music curriculum in general and chose to guide them to think about the academic and listening aspects of the music curriculum and to tell me about progress in the subject. I also asked if and how music in the school could be improved: I explained that this evaluation of provision was designed to support the school and move the teaching forwards. It was aimed at exploring potential for curriculum development and appropriateness.

My final set of questions asked for comparative information about creativity in music, art and drama. This provided wider contextual information and allowed the teacher to further reflect on the definitions of creativity which they had used to answer the questions concerning music. To think about differences in delivery and resources. Thinking about listening prompted the teachers to think about how children develop good listening skills, the range of music they listen to in class and the range of music they felt the children should experience.

I also asked the teachers to personally contribute to the debate about the use of specialist music teachers in primary schools and explore how they had come to that opinion.

Part 3

This section was originally called ‘Musical Intelligence’ and became ‘Identifying Progression in Music’. I felt that my questions on musical intelligence would potentially make the teachers feel vulnerable because the questions themselves referred specifically to the theories of Howard Gardner, work of which they may not have been familiar: I asked

specific questions about the characteristics and the importance of understanding musical intelligence. I felt that the wording of the questions could potentially be construed as intimidating.

My final questions asked the teachers to explain how they identify progress in music and to compare this with English and maths, explaining the evidence they looked for and how they recorded this evidence. I asked how the children were taught to articulate their own progress and how this compared to English and maths. The comparisons, again, were a useful structural tool and helped to focus the explanations.

Finally, in this section, I asked about how teachers' identify musical children.

Part 4

Responses concerning teachers' own definitions of 'musician' and how this related this to being 'musical', opened up important discussion.

In the original version of the interview schedule I had included the subject content from music in the National Curriculum for Key Stages 1 and 2 (DfE, 2013) and the Early Learning Goal for 'being imaginative and expressive' from the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (DfE, 2014) for reception children. My intention had been to provide these sources as references to help scaffold the teachers' thoughts; however, having used the same idea with trainee teachers in my ITT role, I found that this restricted the responses. Many trainee teachers felt that they had to address every element of the curriculum statements, with many of the responses coming in the form of a detailed justification for what they were doing, rather than discussing their personal perceptions of the music curriculum in general.

4.6 Data Analysis

I used both manual methods and NVivo for data analysis. The difficulty in qualitative research is not in generating data but, as Richards (2009) notes, managing the data. NVivo Is a tool for handling data. It can help manage data, manage ideas, query and interrogate data, and visualise data in different forms. In NVivo, data are neatly organised into files but codes help you examine conceptual or thematic ideas, which the programme labels 'Nodes'. NVivo

has the capacity to make mind maps from the Nodes emerging from the data. (Jackson and Bazely, (2019). All information entered into NVivo was done using pseudonyms.

My approach to analysing the questionnaire data can be summarised as follows:

- I printed out and interacted with individual questionnaires by annotating in various ways: using key words and writing personal responses. I was not looking to be necessarily logical or coherent;
- I collated sets of responses to individual questions which I printed out to look for key points, main themes and key words - again these were annotated;
- I wrote brief summaries of areas of interest and potential ideas for follow up discussion.

I then loaded the same data into NVivo and analysed it using the tools available to identify commonalities and differences with my manual analysis. I was aware that the data was limited: in some cases, responses were very brief (or omitted) and questions were very structured. This affects the usefulness of a programme like NVivo. Having completed the two sets of data analysis, I revised my semi-structured interview proforma – as described above.

My approach to analysing the combined questionnaire and semi-structured interview information was similar:

- I printed out and interacted with individual interview transcriptions through annotation and interaction with personal responses:
- I recorded my thoughts and ideas about key words and bigger themes before using NVivo:
- I used the tools available to me in NVivo to organise and re-organise the data, slowly clarifying my analysis and conclusions in relation to the data. This involved, re-reading, questioning and the development of concepts worthy of comment.

Transcriptions are interpretive constructions that are useful tools for given purposes (Kvale, 1996). Coding is a way of identifying themes in a text (Bernard, Wutich and Ryan, 2017) and, according to Corbin and Strauss (2008, p.66) is ‘an abstract representation of an object or phenomenon’. I came to appreciate that codes range from being purely descriptive

(Maxwell, 2013), to more conceptual topics or themes, to more interpreted or analytical concepts (Richards, 2009; 2015). I found the move from descriptive codes and key words (Saldaña, 2021), to conceptual themes and analytical concepts was facilitated by my developing ability to interpret meaning – both literal and implied.

Further analysis took place as I was writing the main text for my thesis and examples with explanation are included as Appendix K.

I repeated this process several times as I was revising the main text of the thesis, moving informal interactions, to broad themes, to specific points of interest and lastly, to forming conclusions.

4.7 Normative, Political and Ethical Dimensions

4.7.1 Normative Dimensions

Normative generally means relating to an evaluative standard. Normativity is the phenomenon of designating some actions or outcomes as good, desirable or permissible and others as bad, undesirable or impermissible. The application of the normative dimension within my thesis explores principles and outcomes from three points of view:

- whether they support the views of myself as researcher;
- as perceived by the individual teachers in the sample;
- as implied by both school and national policy (school and national).

Standards and norms can establish, relate to or derive from context and expectations. There is a norm (or standard of expectation) for 'good' practice in teaching: in a policy context, this is detailed in the 'Teachers' Standards' (DfE, 2011b), defined by Ofsted (DfE, 2021) and may be set out in policies at school level. Teachers aim to demonstrate good practice (DfE, 2012) in the classroom; however, even with policy guidance, 'good practice' is interpreted in different ways. As teachers discussed music education through their answers in the questionnaire and in interview situations, terminology was not standardised or clear: was 'good' practice the same as 'standard' practice or 'normal' practice? 'Good' attaches a normative label to the practice; 'standard' implies a consistency across all teaching.

As an example of normativity in practice, social justice is a normative aspiration. The language of social justice can be very powerful – 'social mobility', 'equal opportunity', 'meritocracy', 'life chances' etc. These terms are used to underpin a political vision of what constitutes a fair and just society. In relation to the primary music curriculum, it relates to the 'equality' of access (and 'equity' of access) by all children to a statutory subject. Music in the National Curriculum (DfE, 2013) is presented as a standard and, therefore, I can comment evaluatively, or normatively, on it in the following ways: not all primary schools allocate sufficient time to the teaching of music; schools differ in the music subject matter taught to children; the quality of music teaching is varied. The discourse underpinning these statements is complex and it is not within the remit of this thesis to explore them; however, the discourses should be borne in mind when evaluating the meanings of the teachers.

In relation to equality of access to the curriculum we need to consider the part played by the principal stake holders – the children – in the minds of the teachers. Teachers place responsibilities on themselves for the effects of teaching on learning, self-assessing their own performances through perceived standards and norms.

Evaluation, though, 'cannot simply demonstrate a 'truth': it must 'argue a case in a context of persuasion and then settle for plausibility' (Kushner, 2017, p.16). 'Assessing merit, worth or significance is to make a judgement on the qualities of the object' (ibid., p.7), in this case the competence and confidence of the teachers taking part in the study when teaching music.

4.7.2 Political Dimensions

I referred to political vision in relation to normativity in the previous section. The political dimension in relation to the subject of my thesis concerns issues such as: how and why decisions have been made in relation to delivery of the primary music curriculum; the power relations that exist within the school and how they influence practice; the availability and distribution of resources to deliver music in the primary school; and the status accorded to the subject by the leadership of the school. It relates powerfully to arguments concerning access to music and the opportunities which can be associated with this, as well as potential and real social class and culture stratification relating to types of music.

Discussion in this area introduces the concept of competing interests: it concerns an exploration of the differing demands, expectations and capabilities of teachers and leaders in relation to policy – putting policy into practice – and explores the availability of appropriate resources to teach music effectively and the implications for school budgets. Perhaps more importantly, it explores the concept of how two types of professional knowledge are used to effect learning: the formal knowledge which all competent members of the profession are thought to share and which professionals are inducted into during their initial training and the professional knowledge of interpretation and enactment. Kemmis et al. (2014, p.12) discuss the idea of teachers being 'hemmed in' by material institutional conditions and institutional discourses that 'channel, deter or muffle' critique. How do these 'political' factors affect teachers' competence and confidence in the teaching of music and what are the competing interests?

Other ideas contained within this thesis stimulate discussion concerning whether there is a clarity of expectation between written policy, implied policy and guidance, or the asymmetries of power regarding the enactment of policy in practice and whether it is based on national or school expectations.

In England, there is a perception that the music curriculum should be built around 'Western Music' practice and culture, with an emphasis on 'classical' traditions: this is seen most recently in the Model Music Curriculum for Schools (DfE, 2021a). This has been the dominant discourse since music was introduced into the school curriculum and, as such, has remained reasonably unchallenged. I will explore how this dominant discourse has affected teachers' attitudes and approaches to the teaching of primary music and begin an initial discussion about how it is being reproduced or challenged.

4.7.3 Ethical Dimensions

Normative ethics seeks to set norms or standards for conduct: they are concerned with criteria about what is morally right or wrong and with the nature of ethical theories, values and moral judgements. Maxwell (2013) does not identify ethics as a separate component of the research design but stresses that ethical issues in qualitative research are essential and that they are an integral aspect of the research.

Virtue Ethics emphasize the moral character of ethical decision makers: it is an agent centred approach, as opposed to a consequence, act or rule centred approach (teleological and deontological approaches), directed primarily at the character and moral quality of the people involved. Moral virtues and intellectual virtues are particularly important. Virtue Ethics reveal my own moral character: fairness, openness, resourcefulness, conscientiousness, flexibility and interest. I have translated my own moral and intellectual virtues into my research.

In my research, decisions on inherent rightness are made in relation to the teachers in the school. By exploring and making judgements about the perceptions of the sample of teachers, I believe that practice can be informed and potentially improved for all.

From an alternative standpoint, my research could be considered morally desirable for the benefit of the school itself, under the broad heading of teleological ethics, in order to inform the judgments and decisions of practitioners or policy-makers; to inform decisions about how best to deliver, what to deliver, time allocations and how to use prior knowledge; to make practical judgements and decisions, for example, the long term impact of the music teaching of pupils, the skills and knowledge they acquire and relevance for life; and to inform policy judgements and decisions.

It could also be perceived that as well as establishing the strengths of their teaching, I could have been exploring their weaknesses – their deficiencies. Teachers usually want to do their best; to achieve and succeed to the best of their ability. This is how they are measured through performance management.

Many teachers play to their strengths, hoping that weaknesses will remain hidden. In addition, some teachers do have sophisticated skills of self-evaluation. Consequently, some are not objective when analysing their own practice, especially in a potentially 'weak' subject like music. These types of situation can highlight their vulnerability and can have significant effects on their self-esteem. Ethically, there is a need for the dimensions of mutual trust, respect, honesty and transparency (Hammersley and Traianou, 2012).

As I outlined above, my research questions imply normative standards i.e., acceptable and unacceptable music teaching practice and standards of learning by the children. In light of the discussion above, and to protect the participants, I completed a BREO application, which

was approved (Appendix A). The BREO process conformed to the 'Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research' (BERA, 2018), the 'UK Code of Practice for Research' (UKRIO, 2009) and the 'Concordat to Support Research Integrity' (UKCRI, 2025). I also applied the ethical principles of respect for persons, beneficence and justice (National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioural Research, 1979) to my research.

The following are examples of how I followed these ethical guidelines: participants were invited to participate in the research and were informed about the subject and objectives of the study; privacy and anonymity was guaranteed; confidentiality of information was assured; and the teachers were advised that the study would not influence the way they were viewed in school. I received signed Consent Forms (blank copy in Appendix E) from all participants and maintained professional relationships and rapport. I have striven to avoid misinterpretation of participants views and bias. The Participant Information Sheet (Appendix D) allowed teachers to understand why the research was being done and what it would involve and there were opportunities to ask questions and the opportunity to opt out of the research at various stages.

In the text of my thesis, rather than using pseudonyms, I have chosen to assign each teacher a number, preceded by the letter 'T'. Teacher contributions are therefore identified in the text through the labels T1 to T21.

4.8 Conclusion

One of my main reasons for doing this research has been my own personal interest and concerns about primary music education: it derives from my own social identity and values (Troyna, 1995). Bassey (1999) says that a claim to knowledge may contribute incrementally to the accumulated knowledge of the topic under study. I believe this is true of this thesis.

In the chapters which follow I have given new insights into the perceptions of the teachers at the primary school, based on the broad headings of curriculum, learning and agency, adhering to the rationale explained in this chapter. My discussion and evaluation are aimed at improving knowledge about teaching the subject and contributing to the public value of improving the quality of music learning for all primary aged children.

Chapter 5 Perceptions of the Primary Music Curriculum: Findings and Discussion

5.1 Introduction

This chapter is the first of three which comprise the critical analysis, synthesis, presentation and discussion of my research data and findings. In writing them, I have identified the elements of the data I considered most relevant in relation to my research questions and in light of my literature review.

Some of the areas identified were discussed by many, if not all, teachers, some by just a few, and in one instance, discussion about the use of Zones of Regulation (Kuypers, 2013), by just one teacher. I felt that it was important, and faithful to the nature of case study research, that all voices were heard if they contributed something of value to the discussion and made a valid contribution to my area of research. The format of my research strategy allowed all individuals to express themselves both professionally and personally: I believe that including all significant contributions is inclusive and mindful.

The first section is a consideration of how teachers perceive the music curriculum in school: their interpretation and responses to both policy and practice. I briefly track themes concerning how interpretations of the music curriculum differ and how different document sources are used as the basis for delivery of the curriculum.

In the second section, I examine the teachers' understandings and interpretations of creativity in music using Cropley's (2020) '3 P's' approach (Person, Process and Product) to structure the discussion. I draw on the theories of Philpott (2021a) and Sternberg (2021) to discuss aspects of creativity and how skills and intelligences are used in music teaching by this group of teachers.

Throughout the chapter, I highlight what the teachers' perceptions reveal about their understandings of the music curriculum, musical intelligence and factors impacting on their approaches to teaching the subject.

5.2 Perceptions of the Primary Music Curriculum

Perceptions concerning Delivery of the Curriculum

Current research indicates that teachers lack the confidence and skills to teach music (Hennessy, 2000; Holden & Button, 2006; Wiggins & Wiggins, 2008; Garvis & Pendergast, 2010; de Vries, 2011). Generally, in the research, this perceived lack of confidence and competence has been interpreted as being due to factors including, inadequate training (de Vries 2011; Hallam et al. 2009; Holden and Button 2006; Russell-Bowie 2009) and professional development (de Vries 2011; Garvis and Pendergast 2010; Holden and Button 2006); and a lack of appropriate resources in school (de Vries 2011). These factors affect the practical delivery of the music curriculum in line with relevant policy and curriculum documents.

In the questionnaire, only two teachers at this school stated that they lack competence in teaching primary music (T10 and T20) and only one teacher wrote that they lack confidence (T21). This would suggest a group of teachers who generally feel competent and confident in teaching the subject. However, at interview, many teachers at this school indicated, mostly by talking in the third person, that they and other staff members lacked the confidence and skills to teach music:

> *Staff want to raise the profile of music but they don't feel confident teaching music.* (T1)

> *The scheme is great if you're not confident. Knowledge and music, and…. like a little video to watch. And, I like someone to plan it for you. And then you can just follow it, monkey like, and deliver it.* (T5)

> *The amount of music done in individual classes is down to how musical the teacher is. The scheme is good if you are an inexperienced teacher or someone who is not very confident, like me. It gives you all the resources, the objectives, and the lessons. It tells you what to do. It tells you how to get to each activity and what to give the children. It provides a structure for people who are less confident.* (T19)

> *We are just bad at music.* (T6)

When talking about competence and confidence, there was a significant difference in response depending whether teachers were talking in the first or third person. A possible explanation for this is that talking in the first person means that the teacher holds themself personally accountable for their professionalism in the subject: talking in the third person deflects this accountability.

Whilst teachers may be confident in their own general pedagogical skills, they appear less secure with music subject matter, content and knowledge (Holden and Button, 2006). Some staff perceive that they lack both 'formal knowledge', evident in responses explaining a lack of expertise relating to the curriculum management of the delivery of subject-specific content, and the 'professional knowledge' of being able to interpret the music curriculum, to enact effective teaching and learning (Kemmis, McTaggart and Nixon, 2014).

Different documentation sources are used as a basis for teaching curriculum music at this school. Published schemes of work for music are viewed as important by teachers (de Vries, 2011). On the whole, teachers told me that they did not look at the National Curriculum (DfE, 2013) and almost all reported that they used a scheme instead. The following are examples:

> *The National Curriculum for Key Stage 1 isn't particularly detailed, it doesn't offer much. So, we look at the scheme and tend to go with that.* (T3)
>
> *We just use the scheme in our year group.* (T11)
>
> *I engage with the National Curriculum through the scheme, but there needs to be a bigger emphasis on the creative curriculum which is missing.* (T12)
>
> *The scheme is designed to address the statements in the National Curriculum. So, we use it.* (T20)

Evidence, from the way teachers responded in their interviews, supports the fact that music is timetabled, planned and taught within the school; however, there is an inconsistent approach to the teaching of music because teachers are allowed to choose between the use of two different schemes. The teachers select three music units to teach across the year (from a selection of ten to twelve across the two schemes per year group). The curriculum delivered is ad hoc (Wiggins and Wiggins, 2008) and continuity issues significantly affect the

planned and taught curriculum, affecting the teachers' perceptions of their own confidence and competence.

Progression in the development of skills and knowledge in music is inconsistent, as identified by the teachers of the older children (T4, T8, T13, T17, T20) who report that '*prior units'* have not been covered and, therefore, the children lack the necessary skills on which to build their learning.

T20, who was a Phase 4 teacher, reported that the children were, '*nowhere near where they should be in terms of the curriculum in music. And this is common in the upper years*.' He said that it was not possible to cover all the designated units in the scheme for music within the year, so he picked the ones where he felt more confident and which were easiest. This approach was shared by a significant number of teachers (T1, T4, T6, T10, T12, T13, T18, T19). The length of time it took to understand the content, translate this into a practical lesson and produce a formal plan were significant in the selection of music units. Units which took the shortest time to understand and plan were used by the teachers and those which were perceived as more complex were left out.

Only one teacher was aware of the Model Curriculum for Music Education (DfE, 2021). T17 (who was a classically trained musician and who had been a freelance professional) freely provided the following opinion of the document, at the end of his interview:

> *The one that sets out what should be taught each year? It says something like, introduce crotchets in Year1, minims in Year 2, semibreves in Year 3 etc. I'm thinking this is the biggest load of rubbish I've ever read, because unless you introduce them together, they are completely meaningless. Composing in just crotchets? It's just like learning your times tables... in this year you need to know this table, in the next year you need to learn this table…. it's just broken down like that, which doesn't work in music. And they put in recommended listening lists for every year. But it's still doesn't encompass a vast range or wide range of musical styles and it doesn't tell you what to do with them, either. I reckon there's a lot of teachers who will go for a one-off listening and say, 'Well, I've done that now.' But actually, one off listenings mean nothing. You have to re-listen and re-talk. Multiple times.*

In this statement, T17 is interpreting the document from the point of view of someone who is passionate and knowledgeable about music. He makes some pertinent points about appropriate timings for introducing related elements of the curriculum in order for them to make coherent sense, and classroom listening versus the concept of multiple hearings (Bamberger, 1991) of different styles or genres. The statement is informed by his own background, experience, anecdotal knowledge and evidence of having worked in various schools.

Teachers at this school do not use the National Curriculum (DfE, 2013) or the Model Music Curriculum (DfE, 2021a) as the basis for planning lessons. Most deliver lessons from a published scheme. The data suggests that these teachers perceive a need for the structure provided by a published scheme and that they are aware that attainment and progress in music are not where they expect the children to be at the beginning of units, especially in the older year groups.

The majority of teachers in this school are unaware of the Model Music Curriculum (DfE, 2021a). This should be borne in mind in all future discussions and reading of the data. Teacher perceptions presented in this thesis may demonstrate uninformed opinions and bias through a lack of knowledge of relevant published documents.

Constructing a primary music curriculum involves choices about what to include, and what not to include, (Fautley and Daubney, 2019a) in the time available (Ofsted, 2021). Ofsted (2021) does not require a checklist of activities that they expect to see in school music lessons because they recognise that there are a variety of ways in which schools can construct a high-quality music curriculum. High quality, in this context includes the quality of planning and delivery, leading to effective learning.

The attitudes of the teachers towards music, as a subject, influence their teaching and the children. We tend to take 'the sense we make of things' to be 'the way they are' (Crotty, 1998, p.59): layers of interpretation are placed on top of each other and become reality. However, some teachers at this school have strong ideas about the purpose of the music curriculum, especially the 'use' of music to support well-being. This will be explored in a later chapter.

Many children are perceptive enough to glean the covert messages delivered during music teaching: whether the teachers, with whom they come into contact, embody expertise and knowledge (Gardner, 2006).

In the next section, I will explore teachers' perceptions of creativity in the curriculum which they deliver.

5.3 Perceptions of Creativity in Music

The teachers at the school generally talk about music as being a 'creative subject'. In practice, creativity depends on the opportunities provided to the children, for example, to explore and express individuality and personality. T4 provided a typical response:

> *Music is a great subject because you create something. There is always something to be created in music – a song, a musical piece or something. This could be a whole great big composition. Or it could be on a very simple scientific level - you plug in, you pluck the string of a guitar, you are creating noise.*

This response is an example of the fact that teachers apply multiple definitions (Hansen, 2015) to the meaning of creativity: from the act of creating a product using imagination, to the physical act of bringing sound into being. Creative acts exist in a continuum (Abbs, 1989) and discussion about creative processes should be appreciated in this context.

In this section I explore teachers' perceptions of the opportunities for and the development of children's personal and social creativity in relation to the provision of music. Analysis of the teachers' responses highlights that they talk about two different dimensions of the concept of 'creativity': understandings of the opportunities for creativity in learning music and understandings of the practical creativity in music lessons. Through this discussion emerges a picture of how the teachers define creativity at this school.

Creativity requires that the children are provided with appropriate freedoms, however, as Ofsted (2021) point out, freedoms and constraint must exist in balance.

I have used Cropley's (2020) '3 P's' approach (person, process and product) to structure the discussion that follows because it broadly aligns with the way the teachers talk about creativity. Teachers talk practically about processes and products in relation to the way the

primary music curriculum is delivered and taught: they talk in a much more idealistic way about the creative person.

The theoretical perspectives of creativity outlined in my literature review can be generally applied to the practical aspects of music making i.e. composition, improvisation and singing. What emerges through the dialogue with the teachers at this school, is a belief in the concept of creativity through listening, although the teachers' responses concerning this indicate that it is undeveloped and unexplored by the teachers as a subject.

T4 describes creativity as '*a bit of a paradox*', a comment demonstrating his appreciation that creativity is difficult to define (Humphreys, 2006). Throughout the course of the interviews, teachers talked about creativity as being technically driven and involving the development of skills; they explained that it can relate to the correct use of technical vocabulary and the development of memory. At times, learning musical skills is confused with creativity, which de-limits the teachers' understanding and restricts and confuses constructions of a definition for creativity.

T6 makes a pertinent observation of her colleagues, '*Music is a creative subject. Some people talk about music being a creative subject, but actually they don't offer any creativity…. they want something rigid… and measurable*.' T21 concurs when she says that

> *one of the problems with curriculum music is that we refer to it as a creative subject but it doesn't often offer the opportunity for children to be creative. So again, it's in the curriculum because it's a creative subject, but actually they're not allowed to be creative in that subject.*

Throughout the discussion that follows, reference is made to Philpott's (2021a) five types of creative processes: the subjective creative process (subjective), the conservative creative process (conservative), the cognitive creative process (cognitive), the virtuosic creative process (virtuosic) and the critical agentic creative process (critical-agentic) as outlined in my review of literature. To improve the flow of the text, when encountering one of the words in backets, the reader should associate the process with the reference to Philpott (2021a).

5.3.1 Creativity: Processes

Creative thinking is an essential skill for everyone who problem solves, although problem solving is not a synonym for creative thinking in music. Creative thinking in music provides opportunities for the children to translate their thoughts into (original) work, projecting part of themselves into the world in which they live. Creative opportunity can empower the child to become more confident, to think on their own, to become stronger and to be a happier person. There is some debate about whether the capacity to be creative is with us from early childhood (Philpott, 2021b). For example, Paynter (2008c) believes that creativity develops parallel to the development of skills and techniques, whereas, Sherratt (1977) is in opposition, believing that creativity is an attribute of genius.

In this section, I have drawn together what the teachers were saying about the processes associated with creativity (Cropley, 2020) under three headings: exploration, opportunity and making mistakes.

Exploration

Teachers identified the process of exploration as being important in creative music making for children (T1, T2, T4, T6, T9, T10, T12, T16, T14, T21). This was linked with the notion of children having the freedom to make choices.

T6 articulates the generic viewpoint of many of her colleague when she says that children should '*enjoy the physicality of making music with a freedom that's not found in many subjects'*. She is referring to the fact that in primary schools, certain subjects, for example English and Maths, are target driven, with tight control over the delivery and assessment of subject specific knowledge and how this impacts on standards and attainment. The 'freedom' she advocates is the practical exploration of sound and form in music lessons, in recognition that creative music making is personal to the individual (Paynter, 2008a).

T9 highlights a similar point. She says that in music, '*Children can explore with it* [sound]*: they can explore their voice; they can explore the different sounds they make; they can play in different ways; they can put those sounds together, however they want'* (a subjective creative process, Philpott, 2021a). In her explanation, T9 describes this as '*abstract*

composition'; however, this was not the case in the examples she provided, as explained in the next paragraph.

She explained that the majority of her composition work with the children is to do with making '*soundscapes*', a very graphic or literal form of composition. Although based in the exploration of sound, the children compose based on their understanding and experience of, for example, the countryside or the seaside. They draw on the sounds that they know, or imagined sounds, and the structure is based upon, effectively, a visual scene or picture. Thus, exploring in this context becomes less abstract and more comparative and context-based, providing outcomes which are easier for both the teacher and children to assess and evaluate. It is a form of scaffolded exploration. Other teachers explained that they also used 'soundscapes' as a structure for compositional work.

The example of using soundscapes for composition can be identified as a cognitive creative process (Philpott, 2021a): as part of the process of composition, the children are problem solving to match sounds to real experiences. Because the compositions are not culturally and theoretically contextual – not requiring to conform to cultural and theoretical rules and practices – they cannot be labelled conservationist creative processes (Philpott, 2021a).

In the true spirit of the subjective creative process (Philpott, 2021a), T4 makes the claim that '*Experimentation is creativity in its purest form'*. It could be said that in thinking creatively in this way, you become true to yourself: you accept who you are without worrying about the judgement of others. T12 also felt that '*creativity is synonymous with exploration'*. Following this with, '*Learning may or may not go on'*. Exploration, in many cases, leads to learning; however, it may be that the learner is unaware of the learning which has taken place. It may be that the teacher cannot see or measure this learning.

Within this sub-section of creativity (exploration), we see that the purpose of a task gives an indication as to the type of creative processes which will be employed. Personal expression, or the freedom to explore and listen to sound and create without parameters or judgement allows the children to demonstrate subjective creative processes; exploration within a challenge may turn it into an exercise of problem solving through cognition.

Teachers talking about exploration in music could offer very few practical examples: they mostly described it as being an intention of the teachers and the curriculum.

Opportunity

Teachers talked widely on the subject of opportunities for creativity; however, when analysing the data, it was necessary to distinguish between what I will label 'idealistic' opportunities i.e. planned opportunities i.e. that which was possible and 'practical' opportunities i.e. those that actually happened.

T12 says that *'there are opportunities to compose as part of the music curriculum'* but that *'it is a hard part of the curriculum'*. T6 was more focussed in her explanation of opportunity, succinctly describing what others referred to more generally:

> *Okay, so the scheme has been teaching them songs and it's asking them to use particular instruments to make things. Whereas, I think they need to be able to experience music making. If the scheme is designating specific instruments, you start to lose the creativity that I'm explaining about, don't you? Because actually part of creativity is the choice I've just been describing. And as soon as you say, 'Jordan, you can do this, but you've got to do it with this'…. that's not creativity. Then the creativity goes out the window.*

T1, T5, T6, E2, T10, T18 and T19 also mentioned the lack of creative opportunity in units from the published schemes of work. T6 explained that the scheme is often prescriptive with the activities provided, resulting in a lack of creative opportunity and possibility. In this case she was also referring to the lack of opportunity of using instruments of the child's choice. She goes on to say, *'Creativity does not have an agenda. If you tell a child that they can do one thing but that they have to do it with a certain instrument, in a certain way, it is not creativity'*.

Teachers seemed to genuinely believe that children needed opportunities to create as part of their development towards being a creative person: an idea explored later in this section when I discuss the creative person.

'Opportunity' was used in two ways by the teachers. The most common use and understanding concerned opportunities planned as part of the curriculum, as illustrated above. The other context in which it was used had more negative connotations: opportunities for creativity were described as being difficult or not forthcoming because, for example:

- *'the children lack imagination'*; (T1)
- *'the children cannot translate their ideas in practise'*; (T17)
- *'the selection of instruments available to use in school is too small and too narrow'*; (T13)
- and as previously mentioned, '*the scheme is too restrictive'*. (T15)

I will return to the first two of these examples in the section on creative products, later in this chapter, but it is interesting that none of these reasons seem to be the fault of the individual teacher – they seem to be the fault of the children, who lack ideas and who are unable to translate their ideas in practice, and the school, because of a lack of resources.

Teachers talked about creative opportunities from a subjective standpoint. Most opportunities were talked about as potential possibilities i.e. planned opportunities or ideals. The practical examples provided by the teachers involved reference to suggested activities provided by a scheme which were, in effect, problems to solve using cognitive creative processes (Phillpott, 2021).

Making mistakes

One of the significant issues which emerged through interviewing the teachers on creativity, concerned their perceptions of right and wrong answers in music lessons. Below is a series of examples:

- *There are no right or wrong answers in music and you can think more outside the box.* (T7)
- *There is more licence to be creative further down the school because the curriculum is written in a way that allows you to be creative – it doesn't matter what they do – they are always right. As you move further up the school, the curriculum becomes more specific with more statements, therefore there are fewer opportunities for creativity.* (T3)
- *There are no rules or boundaries in music. No right or wrong answers*. (T7)

- *Sometimes we're supposed to be producing something really nice, and someone comes up to me with a piece that's very different to what I intended. But still. It's their expression. Their composition. They're still right.* (T8)
- *Because not everybody will hear the same things, when you compose, you have to be right.* (T10)
- *Creativity in music does not have any right or wrong answers. It allows children to show emotions.* (T19)

We see here confusion relating to the different definitions of creativity. If the intention is to use only subjective creative processes (Philpott, 2021a) – personal expression and the externalisation of feeling – then there are, potentially, no right and wrong answers. If the children are working contextually, within a theoretical or cultural context, they are using conservationist creative processes (Philpott, 2021a), and, because there are guidelines, parameters and/or boundaries to work within, the end products must be considered to be potentially accurate or not accurate. Permitted or not permitted. Right or wrong.

Working in a problem-solving way, i.e. using cognitive creative processes (Philpott, 2021a) to address the requirements of a task, potentially requires an assessed outcome. It depends on the task as to whether it can be assessed as right or wrong. Using cognitive creative processes, creative skills are coupled with analytical skills, practical skills and wisdom-based skills (Sternberg, 2021); however, these may not be in balance.

T7 mentions boundaries and rules in music lessons. How are boundaries different from rules? In music, rules are related to something concrete or explicit: they can be understood as the sets of principles governing musical practice. Boundaries can be used to be the limits of expectation for an activity, which can be something abstract. Rules can be broken: right or wrong. Boundaries can be pushed, allowing the use of subjective creativity.

With regard to creativity and making mistakes, T2 talks about both performances and compositions, and the '*right and wrong ways of doing things*'. Creativity, for her, involves *'imagination', 'justification', 'interpretation'* and *'expression'* but, she says, '*It is important that the children take risks*'. Risk taking is fundamental to music learning, but we must remember that a pupil will not take a risk if they fear making a mistake (Burnard, Boyback and Howell, 2017). Different forms of creative process involve different intensities of risk taking.

Several teachers compared music with writing (T1, T4, T14, T12). T4 drew a parallel between music and creative writing when he argued, '*a knowledge of grammar isn't vital for ideas and creativity*'. He opines that '*you can write really well, without knowing all of the vocabulary associated with grammar and punctuation. I think you can create music without knowing all that stuff*'. Through further questioning I established that for him, 'all that stuff' was interpreted as a knowledge of music theory and relevant historical knowledge. What he advocated was that primary children should be allowed to create compositions without rules. T17 reported, drawing on his extensive experience of teaching children music, that children prefer to compose and create within set guidelines and/or a concrete conceptual idea i.e. within a context (using cognitive creative processes). The context provided a focus and means for them to identify progress towards a desired outcome. They felt secure in providing '*an answer*'.

Similar to T7's comment about thinking out of the box at the beginning of this section, T19 made the comment that music lessons encourage children '*to experiment: to be creative, have fun and think outside the box*'. In many primary schools, 'thinking outside the box' is often intended as a synonym for problem solving: it is often used logistically and may provide the opportunity for children to suggest multiple, alternative suitable answers.

If the children are problem solving as part of a musical creativity, it is probable that they are engaging in cognitive creative processes (Philpott, 2021a): those linked with convergent and divergent thinking (Webster, 2002). Convergent thinking focuses on finding a single solution, suitable for problem solving tasks requiring precision and accuracy. Divergent thinking encourages creativity and multiple solutions, ideal for innovation. From the time they enter school children start to accept that they can provide right or wrong answers: although reception children are more divergent with their thinking, as they progress through primary school, children take fewer risks. Older primary aged children, where prescribed outcomes are the expected norm, are conditioned to want to give a correct answer: problem solving becomes more about providing a correct answer than being innovative and/or creative. Cognitive creative tasks may allow multiple acceptable answers; however, where the children have been 'trained' to be correct, this may affect their attitudes and approach.

In this section, I have referred to the use and development of some of these skills as being scaffolded by the teachers. However, there is a hierarchical relationship between skills and

creative expression and not all will attain independent levels of creativity. Both the teachers and the children need to understand the different creative processes: they all need to understand the parameters within which they are working, with an understanding of how to achieve the end goal.

Teachers at this school perceive creativity to be an important part of the music curriculum. Much teacher talk on the subject is aspirational, with few examples of creativity in practice.

Although teachers talk about opportunities for exploration, associated with creativity, these seem to be limited to problem solving tasks, usually driven by the requirements of a scheme. A lack of understanding of the different types of creativity means that the curriculum provided for the children lacks variety and scope. Development of this form of musical intelligence is therefore limited.

Some teachers at this school perceive that there are no right or wrong answers in music. This shows a lack of understanding of both music as a subject (the curriculum) and the nuances of creativity (musical intelligence). When composing, if the task is contextually situated, there is the potential for children to make mistakes. When performing, if music has been written down then, excepting the complex argument concerning interpretation, it can be performed with mistakes.

It is also worth considering that, by saying that there are no right or wrong answers, the teachers ameliorate the possibility of making mistakes in their own practice: this empowers them to teach the subject. This becomes a factor which impacts on their approaches to the teaching of classroom music.

5.3.2 Creativity: products

In this section, I explore understandings of musical outcomes and results - the creative product (Cropley, 2020). In particular, I explore the teachers' perceptions about compositions and performances as musical outcomes. Generally, in schools, outcomes and products need to be measurable, so that attainment and standards can be improved upon, and progress identified. However, when creativity is assessed against a set of criteria – outcomes met or not met, products right or wrong – it may lose its subjectivity and spontaneity.

There is a heritage of thinking of children as composers enshrined in the National Curriculum (DfE, 2013) and Model Music Curriculum (DfE, 2021a) and Fletcher (1987) questions why it imposed on the children so early on in the curriculum, when few adolescents follow a desire to compose.

As previously identified, in school, creativity is often about finding solutions to problems: for primary school children this is not necessarily about finding original or new solutions to the problems posed, it can be about generating feasible ideas (Kaufman and Sternberg, 2019). For the children themselves, these may be 'original ideas'. The child is being creative when he/she 'creates, invents, discovers, explores, supposes, designs, or imagines' (Sternberg, 2021); however, he/she cannot think creatively beyond what has been done before unless he/she has some idea and appreciation of what has been done before.

In the previous section, I used Philpott's (2021a) creative processes to explain the perceptions of the teachers, taking processes to mean the series of actions, or steps, taken in order to achieve a particular end point. In order for these to manifest, the children need to learn and apply skills. Sternberg (2021) talks about 'creative skills' in his theory of successful intelligence, but balances these with 'analytical skills', 'practical skills' and 'wisdom-based skills'. In the next section I will consider how these skills relate to primary children's products of creativity.

Whilst children may hear musical examples before trying to compose, the temporal nature of the product and the fact that it is not tangible, the potential lack appropriate resources, and a lack of skills (de Vries, 2011) make assessment more difficult for many children and teachers. Trainor and Zatorre (2008) write that the music curriculum should enable pupils to develop their capability to realise their imagination in sound; however, they need to hear enough examples enough times to have a reference point. This view is shared by Bamberger (1991) who advocates multiple hearings.

American composer Harold Shapero (quoted in Gardner, 1993, p.102) suggests that until the children have 'absorbed a considerable variety of tone or experiences, they cannot begin to function in a creative way'. Tacit knowledge develops and they may not be explicitly aware of the rules (Trainor and Zatorre, 2008). Practical musical intelligence, derived primarily from tacit knowledge, is typically not explicitly taught and is often not even verbalised (Sternberg et al., 2000; Sternberg and Hedlund, 2002). It is learned through practical

experience. Tacit knowledge exists in people's heads; however, it can be codified when people make an effort to do so or when learning is scaffolded.

Aspirational composing

For the Key Stage 2 teachers at this school, the biggest concern, or tension, relating to the products of compositional activities, is centred around a belief that the children were not able to translate what they were imagining or composing inside their heads, into reality.

T2 explained that the older children have problems articulating and playing what is inside their heads. She says that she thinks, '*and I have no evidence'*, that '*what is inside their head is more complex than they can produce with the instruments that they have been provided with'*. Importantly, she feels that the children are creative but that they '*cannot translate their ideas or imaginings into a composition through the skills needed for performance'* and that they may '*lack the sounds they are imagining through restrictions placed on them by choices of instrument'*. This forces the children to re-imagine their compositions, making the product fit the tools, rather than the other way round. In this way, the final composition, is a compromise of creativity.

T13 held a different opinion. She said, '*Sometimes I think they imagine what they think they're hearing. Not necessarily hearing what they have produced… If that makes sense'*. She felt that the children need the opportunity to explain their frustrations (if any) and to articulate, as far as is possible, what they think they hear. Whilst I understood and appreciated what she meant, this would be virtually impossible for the children to do. The skills of metacognition required and the sophistication of the aural analytical skills (Sternberg, 2021) needed are outside the scope of their ability.

T15 makes a similar point: '*Children can imagine significantly more creatively than they can produce in practice*.' She says that music is creative because '*it's something that you can make out of nothing'*: it can be explorative and the children can pursue different avenues. She says that it's restrictive in that they have to play certain instruments and only have a limited choice. '*The end product may be not at all like they were imagining because they have an idea in their head, they have a sound in their head, having been exposed to music elsewhere, but then they are not provided with a set of instruments that would produce the*

right sounds… They also need an understanding of how music works and need to have the skills to produce the envisaged end piece'. T15 identified that the children lack the skills and resources needed to compose in the ways that they want to, but could not see how the problem could be addressed.

T17 also adopted this position on creative end products:

> *I'll tell you one of my theories. I think that, in art, our children look for something photographic. So actually, it looks like it's supposed to be. I think they aim for the same in music. So, they hear things outside of school. They hear pop songs that they want to emulate, but they can't emulate them, because we don't offer them the skills or the instruments. So, they can't translate what they're imagining into something real. And I think, potentially, that's why they lose heart. They can't do it…*

There is a potential problem arising from the teachers' perceptions of the compositional aspirations of some Key Stage 2 children. Teachers are suggesting that the children can imagine compositions of greater complexity and detail than they can realise in practice: this could be due, for example, to a lack of knowledge, skill or instruments. Using Sternberg's (2021) theory of musical intelligence, the children may have the creative skills to compose (although we cannot actually see or determine this), but lack the practical skills necessary to compose in a way that can translate their ideas into practice or the analytical skills needed to critique the composition. The aspiration to critique their own musical composition may be an aspiration which is too far away for some.

Gratification and frustration

T15 talks about the personal gratification associated with musical performance and products:

> *They want to aspire to performing like they hear on the radio. But they've got no way of doing it because either you learn to play guitar or piano, even you're banging away on a percussion instrument, which doesn't, yeah, doesn't come out the same way. No, none whatsoever. So, the gratification is not there. There's no personal positive feedback, is there?* (T15)

She suggested that there seems to be no point in producing something and not feeling gratified in some way. For primary children, personal gratification could just be a response to meeting a set of criteria, but ultimately, in music, it should be more about pleasure or emotional gratification. An emotional reaction.

As well as receiving personal feedback, T15 felt that the children need to know that their ideas are appreciated. More importantly they need to have their ideas '*validated*', knowing that they can produce something worthwhile, reinforcing creative processes.

Gratification is paired with frustration. Returning to difficulties associated with aspirational composing, T7 talked at length about the frustration associated with not being able to translate a musical idea into reality. '*The frustration comes from the fact that they may have imagined an end product but their creation is not what they intended, not what they envisaged. It falls short of their own expectations*.' Her answer to this dilemma was, theoretically, to teach the children to '*articulate their intentions using technical vocabulary*' – a return to the potential of Sternberg's (2021) creative and analytical skills.

Later in the interview it became apparent that the frustration seemed to be coming from two sources: the frustration of the child and the frustration of the teacher. T7 explained the frustration of the child (above) but later in her response returned to the subject saying that the children needed to be able to explain what they had intended in their composition because '*Otherwise they won't make progress… If it's all in their heads, there's no way the teacher can know what learning has taken place'*. She also identified that the children's language would '*probably not translate on to paper in a way that would express the learning and progress that had been undertaken'*.

The tension concerning the frustrations outlined above could be attributable to these possibilities:

- the frustration of the children to produce what is imagined inside their heads;
- the frustration of the teacher in identifying progress and being held accountable for attainment; leading to
- the frustration linked to the confidence and competence of the teacher.

Musicians do not always know where they are heading at the outset of a project. A composition starts with ideas and motifs and the composition evolves until there is a

version of the final product. The development of a performance evolves: ideas change, interpretation changes, and no two performances are identical. Most teachers would not start a lesson without an end goal – current teaching practices require an aim or targets. If we want to encourage individual subjectivity and personal expression in music, perhaps working without end goals would be more productive.

Perhaps the children should be developing skills relating to successful intelligence (Sternberg, 2021), without the pressure of achieving previously defined success. Composing a piece of music in a way that effectively reaches an audience (practical skills) is an aim but assessing whether it was achieved or not depends on the personal viewpoints of the individual listeners – the understandings of a range of different people. The composition may work in the eyes of some and not others.

Discussion of possibilities is where learning takes place: the interplay of Sternberg's (2021) creative, analytical, practical and wisdom-based skills. It is not dependent on finding a definitive answer or producing a final product. It is also not dependent on being able to explain the nuances of what has gone wrong or right.

T20 was of the opinion that the children need to think '*in a logical way'* and explain why the instruments are being played as they are being played, for example, '*Why quietly?*' If the children always have to explain what they have done, they learn to present a product that they can justify, rather than one that is truly personal.

Interview data from the four teachers who talked about aspirational composition (teachers of the older children in the school) would suggest that the teachers perceive that children are not able to show their true potential in composing. This is because they cannot translate their ideas into reality due to a lack of skills, technical understanding and access to appropriate instruments.

Teachers at this school perceive that the children have developed musical intelligence through listening to music of their own choice, which they aim to emulate.

The perceptions of T2, T13, T15 and T17 about children not being able to translate their compositional ideas into practice, also affects the confidence and perceptions of the personal competence of the teachers themselves. Both T2 and T15 articulated that they

didn't know how to help the children because they were not skilled enough. T15 asked me for advice in dealing with the situation!

5.3.3 Creativity: Person

This last section explores understandings of creativity in relation to a creative personality (Cropley, 2020) i.e. those personal characteristics or dispositions which enable creativity to manifest in practice. Contributing to a person's individuality, they include self-expression, feelings, emotions and imagination. It is noticeable that when the teachers refer to a creative personality, they talk aspirationally: they allude to the aims for creativity in the curriculum rather than something practical or affective.

There is an implicit difficulty in discussing a creative personality because it exists both externally and internally: it can be difficult to separate a creative personality from creative thinking. Using Philpott's (2021a) five types of creative process, we could equate the creative personality with the subjective creative process (personal expression) and the virtuosic creative process (interpretation), and creative thinking with the conservationist creative process (working within frameworks) and the cognitive creative process (problem-solving). This is a false dichotomy. The creative personality can be developed across all the creative processes which all use creative thinking.

The fact that we attempt to categorise creative processes implies that creative people embody complexity. Developing creativity in children requires opportunities to experience and explore the contrasts between, for example, playfulness and discipline, or fantasy and reality. This is the job of the teacher.

The children need a passion for what they are doing, but also a sense of objectivity. Generally, it is argued that creative people have traits that they can use in a variety of roles; however, we must not forget that different subjects offer exclusivity. Creativity in science or art, is not the same as creativity in music. T2 identifies that '*creativity is difficult to develop. Other aspects are much easier to teach*'.

Interpretation

Thinking about music and creative thinking can bring out hidden talents: these may not be the same. For example, when learning to play an instrument, a talent for music may involve technical proficiency and fluency, requiring high levels of skill (Sherratt, 1977: Fletcher, 1987): a talent for creative thinking may involve interpretation and artistry. Both can offer a sense of empowerment and pleasure.

In a primary school context, we are not talking about the virtuosic creative processes described by Philpott (2021a): children work more at the level of Craft's (2001) 'ordinary creativity' or Runco's (2008) 'creative potential'. The development of skills, leading to technical competence, does not necessarily give rise to creative flair in every case (Best 1992); however, education should reflect the processes and practices of real musicians (Paynter, 2008b), with aspiration as a guiding light.

In this primary school, teachers talked about the interpretation of music as being creative: comments were framed in the context of performance of published work and listening. Children should be taught that creativity is not a domain just for special people (Frith, 2012: Henley, 2024). The children's personal expression and interpretation was considered important by the teachers at this school: they seemed to value it as an important part of the music curriculum on offer.

Teachers talk generally about expression in relation to being creative person, for example:

> *Creativity is a way for children to express themselves.* (T2)
>
> *The children can be creative when they express themselves through music*. (T18)
>
> *Creativity is all about expression: it is about the expression of emotions and the expression of an idea. There is an underpinning need to express something*. (T21)
>
> *Music allows the children to be expressive and creative and demonstrate particular strengths that they may otherwise not be able to showcase*. (T5)

To what extent are these idealistic views? Are children really provided with the opportunity to be expressive - the act of effectively conveying thought, emotional or feeling?

It is difficult to articulate emotional learning and without a special personal connection to the music, emotional interpretation is difficult. T2 talks about creativity through

interpretation using questioning, for example, '*How you are going to play the music?*' or '*How loud are you going to get?*' Questions and answers of this type could be described as interpretation in a technical sense rather than an emotional sense.

T6 explains that '*You can play music that's written for you and you can still express yourself*'. She, too, is talking about personal expression through the interpretation of somebody else's writing. T6 explained how interpretation manifests itself in her lessons; for example, directing the children to play with rubato or altered dynamics. In singing activities, expression can be achieved by explaining and exploring with them, the different ways in which words can be articulated. Both of these are examples of interpretation directed by the teacher. Children can offer performance suggestions, in an arbitrary or an informed way, depending on their skill, understanding and aptitude. Thus, creative potential is being encouraged and the creativity involved in interpretation is being scaffolded.

T12 explains that

> *Everyone has their own interpretation of music, and everyone can also play music differently. If you… my view is, if several different musicians play any particular music, they'll all play with their own style or technique. So, you've got that freedom to make it your own…*

This explanation clearly presents an understanding of interpretation as experienced by musicians and listeners. At a primary school level, T13 explains that '*the children can follow a song or a tune and come up with a slightly different way of doing it*'. She says that she encourages the children to '*perform in their own style*', linking this form of creativity to individuality. This is scaffolded creativity: it is a form of personal interpretation. It is a form of ordinary creativity (Craft, 2001), cultivating creative potential (Runco, 2008).

T8 explained a different understanding of '*interpretation*'. Describing use of a specific app for composing, using a composition strategy that she calls '*block music notation and shapes*', she explained that the children were able to create '*all sorts of weird and wonderful sounds, very simply and easily and autonomously because it was such a simple little app for them to use to create music. It was their interpretation*'. Definitely, it was an interpretation of the task; however, I feel that semantics are confused here: I would argue that use of the word 'interpretation' here should read as 'composition'. Using such an arbitrary

compositional technique, can the products (or compositions) be called 'interpretation'? Can arbitrary composition be a form of interpretation in the musical sense?

Emotions and feelings

T14 is not alone when she stated that '*Music allows children to kind of express their emotions - express their thoughts and their feelings'*. As part of her subsequent discussion, she explained that learning concerning these abstract concepts is difficult to observe as the children don't articulate it- '*we cannot necessarily see this type of learning'* - and that learning does not mean that the children are '*always improving'*. Development of a creative personality includes development of the abstract concepts of emotion, thoughts and feelings.

In practice, exploring the emotions takes place inside an individual's mind: it is an experience which cannot always be articulated (Sloboda, 2004). It is often muddled and non-linear.

T19 also acknowledged that it can be difficult for children to articulate their emotional learning: '*music allows children to show emotions and they should be able to talk about their learning in this area'*. Initially she talked about the fact that discussion of recorded music '*allows children to show their emotions'* but later in the interview decided that '*children can only show their emotions through the practical side of performing, although this is not without its difficulties'*. She explained, *'… this is significantly more difficult because they do not have the technical skills to be able to do this, perhaps in the way they would like'*. In my own experience, children of primary school age, very rarely express musical emotion through their musical activities.

T20 also talks about emotional understanding as part of the creative person.

> *Creativity is your being able to express your emotions; you're being able to use your, you know, your internal devices to come up with differences in order, and make choices and make things different. There are so many instruments out there that you… there's different talents and different skills and different mindsets and ways that you can go about doing the same thing in different ways.*

T20 places this in context:

> *to be truly creative, in my opinion, you've got to have some level of skill. You can't express yourself in some of the ways you want to, without a certain pre-existing understanding of how things work. And I think when… children… that's beyond them in terms of what I'm asking them to do.*

Whilst the dissection of creativity may seem rather clinical, it is helpful to understand that there are different aspects to the creative process. Philpott (2021a) defines the virtuosic creative process as existing as a result of the development of high-level skills. However, children can be taught a wide range of techniques as a precursor to emotional interpretation and artistry. The early engagement with musical skills, like this, is important (McPherson, Davidson and Evans, 2015) and musical development in all areas is dependent on experiences (Burwell, 2024)

Whereas most teachers talked more theoretically about the development of the emotions through music, T9 talked more pragmatically about the development of emotional understanding, explaining that she has introduced the children to the idea that music can convey emotion, referring to the use of stormy music and calm music i.e. music to create mood. This seems a more appropriate way to scaffold emotions and feeling in creativity in children.

Whilst teachers talk confidently about children being able to demonstrate emotion through the different aspects of music making, research evidence suggests that emotional responses to music develop slowly and cannot be accelerated (Burwell, 2024). Young children can perceive the emotional tune of the music (Corrigall and Schellenberg, 2015), for example sad and happy tunes, but need cues (Burwell, 2024) and guidance. Emotion in music can be scaffolded for the children – they can learn what it means for music to convey emotion in certain circumstances. Their creative potential, with regard to emotional responses and interpretation, can be channelled through discussion and description of what is taking place in the music they are listening to and through aspirational practical aims.

Teachers at the school perceive that interpretation is important in practical work and listening as part of the music curriculum. They perceive that primary aged children can be expressive. Emotional learning and emotional skills were mentioned by many teachers,

although these aspects develop slowly and the views may be idealistic. Development of the emotions through music – a 'use' of music - is not formally part of the current curriculum for music.

5.4 Conclusion

How do generalist primary teachers in this school perceive the music curriculum?

In this school, interpretations of the music curriculum differ and different documentation sources are used as a basis for the taught curriculum, namely the National Curriculum (DfE, 2013) and schemes. Only one member of staff is aware of the Model Music Curriculum (DfE, 2021a) and his opinions on it were not positive.

Most teachers at the school rely on published schemes to enable them to deliver the music curriculum. However, the sanctioned use of two schemes and the flexibility given to the staff to self-select units means that there is an overall lack of continuity and progression in the subject. This complexity significantly compounds issues concerning the teachers' competence and confidence: as teachers are unaware of what has previously been taught in the subject, they cannot readily identify gaps in learning and they cannot build on a solid foundation of prior learning.

How do generalist primary teachers in this school perceive musical intelligence?

Teachers at this school place much importance on music as a creative subject, although talk about the subject is mostly aspirational – planned opportunity rather than creativity in practice. Tensions within the sphere of creativity concern, for example, whether composition should be a pragmatic problem-solving exercise or whether it should be free and inspired: or whether creativity is a process or a product (Philpott, 2021a).

Creative music making needs to be talked about in the context of the general cognitive development of children, for example making choices and problem solving etc. (Hallam, 2015). Most activities planned by the teachers are delivered in this way i.e. as 'composing problems' (Berkley, 2004). The teacher sets tasks for the children to complete: close parameters, required for assessment purposes (in many cases), mean that the opportunity

for the use of true subjective creative processes is minimal. Creative achievements therefore, result from exploration and selection through deliberate choice (Elliot and Silverman, 2015) and the cognitive creative process can be seen as a set of skills – relating to the act of solving problems. These may or may not be creative.

Individuality, self-expression, emotions and imagination were all talked about by the teachers, even though, as previously stated, emotional responses develop developmentally at a slow rate (Burwell, 2024). Most primary aged children do not self-express, emote or feel in curriculum music, they problem solve. Many of the teachers talked about interpretation; however, this too, does not develop until the child is reasonably competent musician (Hallam, 2001a). It should be acknowledged that skill development and expression are dialectically related in the creative process (Philpott, 2021a) and that opportunities for the development of both must be given to primary aged children.

In this chapter, I have not discussed the critical agentic creative process, proposed by Philpott (2021a) as a fifth process. This is a deliberate omission because, in my opinion, it does not embody what happens generally in primary schools and is therefore, not particularly helpful when talking about primary practice. I will explain.

After discussing the four other processes, he suggests that the 'creative process needs to be conceptualised anew' (ibid., p.60). However, in his summary of the process, he says that

> The critical agentic process of creativity values all others – making meaning in a variety of musical practices and where skill and technique (including problem solving) are servants of the process. (ibid., p.61)

This process was proposed in order to offer a definition of creativity seen in many secondary schools, covering what happens in practice: the definition has been written to encompass what happens in practice. It describes school practice.

Critical agency needs to offer interrogation, interpretation and renewal (ibid. p.61) and emphasizes the empowerment of pupils and a pupil-centred approach to learning through the interaction between formal teaching and informal self-directed contexts (Folkestad, 2006). It concerns the individual's capacity to engage in critical thinking and take intentional autonomous actions towards various creativities (Kramer, 2011): it is self-directed learning

supported by critical agency (ibid.). As such, I do not feel that it fits within many primary school's approaches to class music teaching.

Teachers perceive that they are providing opportunities for creativity in music learning but this is not always the case. They need to function as facilitators of creativity by 'energising, activating or releasing it' in others (Cropley, 2020, p.18). To do this they need an understanding of the different aspects of creativity. They need to instil these different approaches to creativity in the children so that they appreciate that creative intelligence and creativity, more generally, are attitudes towards life (Sternberg, 2021).

How do internal and external factors impact on their approaches to the teaching of classroom music?

Knowledge, or a lack of knowledge, of the curriculum and other relevant documentation is a factor which impacts on the teachers' approaches to delivery of the curriculum. It is unclear whether the perceived lack of competence and lack of confidence of some of the teachers at this school is due to the lack of coherence in the planning of the school's music curriculum and/or other factors. Until the planned curriculum delivers a clear progression of knowledge, skills and concepts – which the teachers adhere to – the question will remain unanswered.

Teachers of the older children wrestle with the thought that the children cannot translate their compositional ideas into practice. There is no evidence for this; however, this perception affects their own feeling of incompetence as described in the text. It would be an interesting area to research.

Chapter 6 Perceptions of Learning in Music: Findings and Discussion

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter I explore teachers' perceptions of teaching and learning in music, continuing my exploration of 'why teach music?' to primary aged children.

In the first section, I explore the relationship between attainment, progress and assessment, introducing the idea that enjoyment and emotional engagement could become formal aims of the music curriculum in primary schools. I discuss the teachers concerns regarding their perceptions of progress in class music lessons, including understandings and interpretations of a school-wide initiative to teach subject specific vocabulary and their scepticism regarding the use of recordings as evidence.

In the second section I examine the teachers' perceptions of what the music curriculum can, or should, offer children. The data suggests that the teachers feel that they should not only be teaching the children practical, theoretical and historical knowledge in music but should be teaching the children how to 'use' music in everyday life.

The section on perceptions of the wider benefits of music starts by analysing data on how the teachers themselves use music. I then explore what I consider to be some of the salient points that teachers made on the issue of the 'uses' of music with children including, the use of heavy metal music with children, music for self-regulation, music for enjoyment and pleasure and music for well-being.

Throughout the chapter, I highlight what the teachers' perceptions reveal about their understandings of the music curriculum, musical intelligence and factors impacting on their approaches to teaching the subject.

6.2 Perceptions of Achievement, Progress and Assessment

In my conversations with primary teachers, I have found that there can be much confusion and discrepancy concerning the definitions and use of the terms 'attainment', 'achievement' and 'progress'. In my writing, and in the context of my experience of primary education, I am interpreting them as follows:

- ‘attainment’ relates to the completed act of reaching a certain standard:
- ‘achievement’ relates to the mastery of a skill or the acquisition of learning;
- ‘progress’ relates to the movement (in learning or skill development) towards a desired end point.

Attainment needs to be assessed to ensure a standard has been met: achievement and progress need to be measured.

Achievement in Music

Only eight teachers (of the twenty interviewed) talked about achievement in music without being prompted. Detail contained within the interviews provides an insight as to their perceptions.

In line with general primary practice, T7, T15, T16, T17 and T20 talked about the achievement of lesson objectives: in order to achieve, the children ‘*must be able to replicate their learning’* (knowledge and/or skills) (T20). T17 explained:

> *…modern teaching. And by modern teachers I mean, teachers who teach to skill sets. It’s a lot more restricted in the expectation. You’ve got your target to meet and this is what we’ve got to achieve. These are the standards we’ve got to achieve.*

T17 talks about the development of skills: these could be, for example, practical or analytic skills (Sternberg, 2021) or creative processes (Philpott, 2021a).

Although of a similar mindset, T15 recognises that the children are potentially vulnerable in the development of practical skills: ‘*Learning to play the recorder can offer achievement to some children. For others it destroys their sense of worth. Partly because they compare themselves to others and see themselves as a failure. I’ve seen it.*’ This can affect their attitudes towards the subject.

Like many teachers, T1 talked about academic achievement with regard to English and maths. She talked about achievement in sports, especially when talking about older primary boys and sport: achievement, in this case, related to success and gamesmanship. When talking about the Arts subjects, her focus was on creativity. When discussing music

specifically, her focus was on developing confidence, enjoyment and emotional engagement: '*Achieving in music is about enjoyment. It's achieved through emotional engagement and expression*'. This broad view was shared by over half the teachers.

These teachers were suggesting that enjoyment through engagement with music is a form of achievement and should be accepted and recognised as such. How does this fit into Sternberg's (2021) view of intelligence or Philpott's (2021a) view on creative processes? Enjoyment and emotional engagement are not in themselves creative skills – they could be classed as a by-product of the achievement of the skills themselves or the motivation to succeed. Some children may take enjoyment from participating in analysis or the development of practical skills, but again, they are a product or outcome of the processes involved. In T1's comment, a nuanced definition of achievement is being applied.

T16 makes a similar point in this statement:

> *So much of education is led by achievement. You must achieve this and you must achieve that. If you're using music for enjoyment, why do you have to get to a certain point? Why do you have to feel that you have achieved something? … Using music is a purpose.*

There are two points to draw out from her perception of achievement:

1. Achievement concerns reaching end goals (getting to a 'certain point') – a perception in line with almost all other teachers at this school;
2. 'Using music for enjoyment' is a purpose of music education – if it is a purpose, then we should be able to achieve something.

If we accept that enjoyment and emotional engagement are forms of achievement, we have to also recognise that children who do not enjoy or emotionally engage with certain genres of music, may not have achieved. Does this matter?

Most people engage with certain genres on music, which may or may not be present as part of the primary school curriculum. We all engage with music to different extents and in different ways. Should enjoyment of music and emotional engagement become a formal aim of the music curriculum in the primary school? As T12 makes clear: '*Music can provide*

stress relief and enjoyment. But we [teachers] *are concerned with achievement and progress'*.

Progress In Music

Objectives

Much current teaching operates on the premise that teachers plan aims and/or objectives which they address through their teaching and which they use to assess progress at the end of a lesson or series of lessons. If children, for example, can accurately and reliably use taught vocabulary, have developed control of a skill(s), or can remember specific pieces of knowledge, they are said to have made progress. However, T15 sums up the views of many teachers at this school: '*Progress in knowledge can only be really called progress if the knowledge is retained in the long term'*.

Teachers use a variety of ways of identifying progress:

> *Recapping what has been done in the lesson is evidence of progress.* (T17)
>
> *My objectives are related to following instructions, for example, whether they can play the correct instrument when I show them a card. Some centre around the use and understanding of Tier 3 vocabulary through demonstration.* (T3)
>
> *Have they remembered the learning from the previous lesson? How have they used new language?* (T4)
>
> *They should be able to tell you some of the things they have learned in the lesson and hopefully use the vocabulary in the right context. They know the objective of each lesson.* (T12)
>
> *Do they have more confidence?* (T16)

All of these aspects of progress are looking at the delivery of specific outcomes, intentions or aims. They look at the technical aspects of music as a subject – measurable outcomes. Measurability drives assessment for progress. Are these really measures of the children's musical ability?

New learning may sit within their short-term memory, but without repetition and revisiting it may never move to their long-term memory. How, then, have they made progress?

Several teachers talked about the fact that progress is not linear.

> *And actually, progress doesn't necessarily look in a forward direction or an upwards direction. It can actually go backwards and there can be all sorts of gains. You learn from your mistakes*. (T1)

> *Progress is not linear and can go backwards. Teachers can make judgements on subject-specific terminology but it is very hard to judge creativity. Some creative projects can be successful, some not. It's not straightforward*. (T17)

> *Progress is not necessarily linear in a forward direction. It's the experience, and reflecting on the experience, which is important. It might be a negative experience that takes you backwards. But it's good learning. Good progress. Rather than just a forward trajectory, which is how we look at English and maths, I think that it does go backwards sometimes because, especially when you're…. there is some music that generally people don't enjoy. They don't like it. They need to be exposed to it in order to find that out. And so, it might not be one where they're kind of buzzing and doing lots of things, but the next one they might be*. (T6)

It is significant that both T17 and T6 make comments about progress relating to listening. T17 talks about analytic listening skills and T6 talks about enjoyment and stimulation ('*buzzing and doing lots of things'*). The development of the former is dependent on contextual and theoretical knowledge; the development of the latter is dependent on listening to a variety of pieces in different genres to find those that stimulate the individual, engendering enjoyment. Both are measurable.

Learning and teaching are about understanding and it is widely accepted (whether rightly or wrongly) that progress is linear in nature. Because of the nature of setting aims and objectives in school and the effect of national testing in English and maths, progress can appear to be going in a straight line. The development of skills can also be perceived to work on a continuum.

The teachers talk about progress going forward and backwards: this is not possible. We may make mistakes and these may have positive or negative effects on our attitude, resolve and approach, but they will inform and enhance our understanding, taking learning forwards.

Practical skills development is also non-linear: in music, the aim is for consistency. In virtuosic creative processes the aspirational aim is for unwavering, reliable high-level skills. Subjective creative processes in music making relate to the creativity of the individual – the expression of things we feel and perceive. Children as creators are responsive to external and internal influences – how can we measure this type of progress in a linear way?

T9 said that identifying progress in music is extremely difficult. She talked about teaching the children vocabulary, stating later that she does not always assess whether they have understood. '*One of the problems is that music has a knowledge element and a creative side. They would potentially require a different set of 'can do' statements.*' Her interpretation of the practical assessment of music had become solely based on Tier 3 vocabulary.

Use of Vocabulary

At this primary school, tiered vocabulary (Beck, McKeown and Kucan, 2012) is used effectively as a memory and language development tool. The aim of using this approach is to increase the amount of 'Tier 2' and 'Tier 3' words that pupils hear and use themselves.

- Tier 1 words are everyday words and will be basic words which will be used from an early age;
- Tier 2 words are focused and more common words that are found across subjects;
- Tier 3 words are subject specific and will be rare words only heard within particular contexts or subject areas.

Having identified that a whole school priority was vocabulary development, specific music related words (Tier 3 vocabulary) have been listed as being necessary to understand specific concepts and ideas in the subject for each Year group. Some of these have been taken from the National Curriculum (DfE, 2013) and others from the schemes of music used by the school. All teachers spoke about teaching musical vocabulary – '*mostly as a 'time filler'*

exercise at registration time' (T21) – as this is an area which is monitored by senior staff. Music vocabulary was therefore mostly being taught out of context.

T2, T7, T8, T10, T12 and T20 talked about progress in music solely in relation to the acquisition of subject specific vocabulary. Their perception was that vocabulary development was the single most important thing for teachers to do to move children on in their progress in music. '*If the children are not taught to articulate and use the words correctly, they just won't make progress. Which is particularly a key point at our school*.' (T7).

T2 talked about exposure to different types of music '*because the vocabulary is only going to be developed when they're exposed to something different, and they use vocabulary in comparisons and discussions'*.

The musical vocabulary listed was solely technical: useful for discussing music and using analytical skills (Sternberg, 2021). None of the vocabulary related to the experience of listening: potential feelings or emotions. If using music for enjoyment is a purpose of music education, the vocabulary to achieve this should be taught – in context.

T4 believes that the children do not need to be taught so much technical vocabulary in the primary school: '*they should just be experiencing music and developing preferences. They should be experiencing different styles of music'*.

Learning vocabulary is not, in itself, a good strategy for musical development. It is a tool for discussing and analysing and a good tool for developing understanding and intelligence when used in context.

Assessment in Music

Recordings as Evidence

Nowhere within the current National Curriculum (DfE, 2013) documentation is it made explicit what progress looks like in music. When the National Curriculum was introduced as a result of the Education Reform Act (1988), teachers were provided with 'exemplar' videos and recordings of the type of outcomes that should be expected for each year group in music. Having concrete examples of this type meant that teachers could assess, for example,

compositions and performances against examples of a 'standardised norm'. Whilst providing reassurance for some, other teachers felt they did not consider that they had the ability to produce work at what was considered an 'acceptable' level.

All teachers at the school, told me that, in line with school policy, they should make recordings at the beginning and end of a sequence of music lessons. In principle, they understood that the reason for this was to evidence progress across the series of lessons. However, there were a range of perceptions, of which these were typical examples:

> *I don't really look at them. It's for Ofsted. The way we use it. It doesn't serve the children any purpose. It doesn't really serve the teacher any purpose, apart from, they might want it to write reports, but from my own experience I never went back on any of my recordings to write reports, because it was very much a spontaneous act.* (T2)

> *Basically, it's making an evidence base, should it ever be needed. I could argue, why are we investing this much time in doing something, that, actually, we personally, as teachers, don't reap the benefits of.* (T13)

> *I think it's a good idea, but it's not for us. It's so that when Ofsted come, they can see we've done it. It's to prove that we are teaching music, not to identify progress or evaluate teaching.* (T5)

> *It's so that teachers can look at the differences – can hear when progress has been made. But I don't do it.* (T6)

One over-riding perception seemed to be that the recordings were to provide evidence for monitoring purposes and to prove to external bodies that music was taking place within the curriculum. Some teachers (T4, T12, T13, T17, T19, T21) felt that they '*knew*' what progress the children had made and could '*stand by it with a teacher judgement.*' (T4) But issues were also raised by a number of teachers about the length of time which the children could retain information knowledge: '*In six months' time, they won't remember it*'. (T17)

This process – of recording the children at the beginning and end of a unit of work – is based in a pragmatic response to the perceived need to provide evidence. T2 summarised, '*making recordings is not successful in the identification of progression. There isn't a way of recording something meaningful at the outset of the unit which you can use to compare*

with. The useful thing, sometimes, is the summative work at the end of the unit. But who knows how much progress they've made'. Some teachers (T10, T12, T19) suggested it might be better to make videos, but similar problems with the identification of progress would still exist.

T5 made a pertinent point:

> *We do it for Ofsted. That's all very well, but you're forgetting who's at the forefront... the children…. That's not Ofsted. It's difficult for teachers to articulate progress and to identify progress. If you can't articulate progress, you can't identify it. If the teachers can't identify progress, how can the children?*

T12 raised another:

> *Progress in music is really hard to determine. I could never assess progress in music because you don't do enough of it to record anything significant. You could look at how it's changed in two weeks or three weeks, but can this really be called progress. The other difficulty is that you have a whole class of children, you will have some extremely able and some that couldn't care less. How can you assess general progress in a constructive way. It's really hard to know what to do with them.*

The aural and visual elements of recordings were discussed by various teachers. It is really difficult to analyse whether there has been progress by just listening to an audio recording. Being able to watch the children's performance in video form allows you to assess the progress of a wider range of skills. It reinforces the temporal nature of composition which is talked about in other chapters, especially assessment and being a musician. It is easier to analyse written forms of music making, for example, formal notation of a piece of music, because assessment is to do with accuracy and there are clear rules to follow in many cases.

If the children do not retain knowledge or maintain learnt skills, due to a lack of curriculum timetabling, or, more contentiously, the teachers' ability to teach the subject, would they be better served looking at the aspects of the music curriculum which would enhance their well-being and their life in general? Would the 'use' of music and emotional understanding be a better underlying theme for learning in music?

6.3 Perceptions of the Use of Music

On the questionnaire teachers were asked to indicate their opinions on the following:

1. Whether they felt the music curriculum **benefitted** the children;
2. Whether they felt the music curriculum **affected** the children;
3. Whether they felt the music curriculum **enhanced the life of** children.

The question was worded to be about the music curriculum in general: if I had asked, for example, whether they felt the music curriculum benefited the children **in their class**, it could potentially have been perceived as a personal judgement about the teacher's own teaching. My intention was to open up the discussion about the purpose of the curriculum in general – why teach music?

The responses of the twenty-one teachers are included in the tables below: the number of teachers in each category, the number of teachers expressed as a percentage and some illustrative comments:

Table 6: Teachers were asked to indicate whether they felt the music curriculum **benefitted** the children

Music curriculum offers **good** benefits	Music curriculum offers **limited** benefits	Music curriculum offers **no** benefits
Total: 12 57%	Total: 8 38%	Total: 1 5%
Example comments: Background music T1 Non-academic T2 Accessible T2 Enjoyable, exciting and relatable T2 T9 Social skills, physical co-ordination T3 T11 T17 Opportunity to be creative A1 T2 T5 T9 T17 Mental health and well-being T5 T19 T20	Example comments: Lack of opportunity T4 Lack of personal confidence T6 Aids memory T7 KS2 curriculum difficult T10 T12 T16 T18 Watered down subject T13 Used by emotions T7	Example comments: Knowledge based, not skills based T15

Table 7: Teachers were asked to indicate whether they felt the music curriculum **affected** the children

Music curriculum affects the children **positively**	Music curriculum **may** affect the children	Music curriculum **does not** affect the children
Total: 13 62%	Total: 7 33%	Total: 1 5%
Example comments: Used to calm before important tests T1 T13 Aids reflection T1 Children can excel at something T2 T13 Accessible, enjoyable T3 T6 T7 Relatable and engaging T2 T5 T12 T3 T10 T11 T20 T17 No threats involved T9 T12 T19	Example comments: Children haven't developed a full appreciation of music T4 Children do not see it as relevant T4 T21 Children have no interest in playing or creating music T4 T18 Enjoy some bits T8 T18 Exploration T14 T16 Not taught regularly T21	Example comments: Children are affected by music not the curriculum T15

Table 8: Teachers were asked to indicate whether they felt the music curriculum **enhanced the life** of the children

Music curriculum **enhances the life of the** children	Music curriculum **may enhance the life** of the children	Music curriculum **does not enhance the life** of the children
Total: 9 43%	Total: 6 29%	Total: 6 29%
Example comments: Music appreciation can be taken into later life T2 T13 Influences moods T2 T13 T18 Could enhances life experiences T5 T6 T12 T13 Widens experience in listening T5 T6 T9 T10 May lead to interest outside school T9 T13 T19	Example comments: The children do not have a full appreciation of music T4 They are made to compose and listen to music they have little interest in T5 Through general knowledge T7 May introduce a new passion T7	Example comments: Music is taught badly T1 T15 T17 T11 Music is an afterthought T1 Relies on teacher ability T1 It is not relevant to their lives T1 T8 T15 T11 T17 The curriculum is not fit for purpose T15 T11

Well-being and mental health T18 T19		The curriculum is not taught often enough T15 T17 T11

Just over half the teachers felt the music curriculum offered good **benefits** to the children, with almost all indicating that curriculum offered some benefits.

Just over half the teachers felt that the music curriculum **affected** the children positively with virtually all saying that it may affect the children.

Under half indicated that the music curriculum **enhanced the life of** children with a significant number saying that the music curriculum did not enhance the life of children.

The example comments in each table offer useful insights into the perceptions of individual teachers but it should be noted that the responses record personal interpretations of the semantics of the questions. For this reason, I do not intend to discuss the data in detail, with one exception.

All three questions are very similar; however, the third question, concerning whether music 'enhanced' the life of the children, presents a different pattern in the general response:

Table 9: Summary of tables

(Numbers presented as percentages)	Positive response	Un-committed response	Negative response
Music Curriculum benefits the children	57	38	5
Music curriculum affects the children	62	33	5
Music curriculum enhances the lives of children	43	29	29

Only one teacher (5%) gave a negative response to the first two questions, whereas six teachers (29%) provided negative responses to the third question. These responses are generally about poor teaching in the subject – 'taught badly', 'an afterthought', 'relies on teacher ability' – so it could be assumed that these teachers felt that for music to enhance the lives of the children requires competent and confident teachers.

However, other negative responses also stimulate the formation of questions concerning the purpose of the music curriculum – 'it is not fit for purpose' and 'it is not relevant to their lives'. On closer scrutiny, this type of response is also reflected in the positive column: 'music appreciation is taken into later life', 'music could enhance life experiences' and 'music may lead to outside interests in school'. Data from the individual interviews helps to elucidate this point.

Speaking about the older children, T8 thinks that '*There is mileage in teaching the children to make playlists. I think it's about teaching them how to use music to support themselves emotionally… wellbeing wise...*'

T15 was in agreement about making playlists but also added that the music curriculum should '*start with their own music, so they can relate it to their own experience, then move on to different styles'*. Arguing against the inclusion of '*the technical things in music*', she felt music should be about music appreciation and '*the personal engagement that you can have with different types of music'*. She said that the teachers themselves were '*using music to support well-being and mental health. That's what we should be doing with the children. Then it would have a purpose. It would be relevant to them*.'

Whilst T18 felt strongly that the '*parts of the curriculum where they've got to sit and do music theory and composition are completely invaluable* [value-less] - *worthless…*', she passionately felt that children should be taught to 'appreciate' music, saying, '*I find the parts of the music curriculum where I am exploring genres and letting children explore and develop their own sense of appreciation, useful and valuable. I use a lot of film music – especially films they have seen and can relate to. The 'Fantasia' films are especially useful. Things like the toy soldier one* [Shostakovich's Piano Concerto No 2, first movement] *and the Sorcerer's Apprentice* [Dukas' The Sorcerer's Apprentice].' This view was also shared and articulated by T3, T16, T14, T15 andT1.

T4 felt that '*there is a missed opportunity in not using gaming music within the curriculum'*. As T4 points out, '*It can be orchestral and electronic. Some of it goes into rock and metal music*.' When discussing these points, he pointed out that gaming music does not formally appear on the curriculum anywhere but said that he strongly believed that it should have a place because it is the type of music that many children hear on a regular basis at home, '*which is not acknowledged as being of value'*. He feels that this would validate this form of

listening and musical enjoyment, and give musical credibility to this children's pastime and choices.

T4 felt that some children, '*especially older boys'*, who don't readily access music in other ways, would be significantly more engaged with the school music curriculum if gaming music was used. Whether one argues for or against the fact that gaming enhances the lives of children in today's society, the music is written, as with 'classical' music, to heighten tension, create calming atmospheres and to engage the emotions. The music has a purpose – a use – which children could learn to understand.

The Model Music Curriculum (DfE, 2021a) has a category of recommended listening entitled 'Western Classical and Film' for each year group. The **only** recommended piece of film music for primary children is 'Jai Ho' from 'Slumdog Millionaire' by A. R. Rahman which incorporates a mix of Indian classical music, folk elements, and Western musical styles. One could question whether the fusion of styles is the reason it was included. Film music is an established music genre from which teachers could find many appropriate listening choices and stimuli for composition.

At the end of her interview, T21, almost as a throw away comment, said, '*you're fighting children's perceptions of it'* - perceptions of music as a curriculum subject and its purpose. Children interact and engage with different subjects in a variety of ways, but as T7 says, '*I think that music can sometimes be the open door, or the key to open the door'*. Engagement with music happens inside the head and body: engagement may not always be seen on the outside.

T1 articulated a strong political message concerning the primary curriculum which I have included in full so that the reader can understand the relationship between her points in context and gain a sense of the passion with which it was delivered:

> *… getting political… I just wish… Yeah, I just wish that there were teachers creating the curriculum. Because it almost exacerbates that feeling of it being inaccessible. I think the written curriculum* [the National Curriculum] *makes music inaccessible, which furthers the gaps between schools that can and schools that can't. So, I wish they'd draw on expertise from the teaching community. Like us. Because it's not fair. And it isn't… it's not equitable at all. It's like the rest of the curriculum, you know, in*

maths, let's teach our children how to add, subtract, divide and multiply. And move everything else into secondary school; and it's like English, isn't it? Do they really need to know what fronted adverbials are or passive voice? Let's teach them how to formulate succinct sentences. I think that's the problem. If we teach our children how to appreciate music and how to listen to it… how it affects us… how it can support us in life… how it can offer emotional well-being….

Within this paragraph we begin to understand what T1 considers to be issues of curriculum choice and perceived restrictions concerning what she deems 'political' interference in creating the curriculum. But she, like many others, is also clear about the fact that we should be teaching children to 'use' music for support and emotional well-being.

6.4 Perceptions of the Wider Benefits of Music

As part of their interview, individual teachers were are asked to think about their personal relationship with music, in particular to explain the value they place on music in their everyday life and what were the wider benefits. Eighteen out of twenty teachers talked about emotional engagement with and through music, for example:

I listen in different ways, linking it to my emotions. Often, I am listening for the melodies, because that can help you calm down. (T1)

I use it for motivation, to feel good, to de-stress. I like to sing along with music. It's good for my mental health. For me, it's a form of escapism. (T3)

Music helps me kind of relax. A nice, jolly song can heighten my mood… lift me up and that if there is a bit of a sad one, or, if there's something that came on that reminds you of something that perhaps isn't as pleasant, then likewise, it can have an effect on me as well. I would actually say that if I was in a bad mood, or if I was feeling low, I would listen to low music, just to really, you know, make myself feel even lower. That's the sort of person I am, and if I'm in a good mood, my music will reflect that... I want to indulge - feel what it is... and sit there and feel sorry for myself. (T5)

I really, really rate the benefits of music. In terms of mental health, music is a real, strength. Just that ability to lose yourself in something and to enjoy it and to relax with it. I think music's really quite important. (T6)

And I've found, actually, recently where I've like, the last couple of months I've had a little bit of like a dip I suppose. In my head, like, a lot of worry and anxiety kind of coming forward. I've noticed that I've listened to a lot of that heavier stuff. And it's only literally, like, recently I recognize, kind of, I've sort of made a bit of a correlation between, I've not felt great in my head and therefore I've listened to that, like you know, the music with like the heavier rage to it and it's almost like that's kind of a way of venting? Like. You know, all the kinds of internal voices such as I suppose like not knowing how to channel it that's kind of, I suppose, the way that I've been channelling it. Do you get what I mean? (T14)

I love music. I love listening to music. It's brought me through some tricky times and like it's got some really positive memories but some of my strongest memories are associated with music. (T21)

I think it helps with mental health to be honest, because when I listen to a song, or when I'm singing, I feel happy… Oh, I've always thought that about children as well whenever we're singing in school. They're always smiling. It always makes them feel happy. So, I do think music has a lot of positives to do with it. You can use music to lift your mood and things, but also, you can use it to reinforce a mood. (T19)

In addition, five teachers also talked about personal emotional engagement with music in answers on the questionnaire.

Music can affect or influence an emotional state – subliminally or intentionally. Almost all teachers talked about using music, personally, to 'lift their mood', to 'cheer themselves up', to 'feel good' and to 'de-stress'. A few talked about using music to support a negative state of emotion, whether depression, sadness or anger.

When talking about this aspect several implied that they use music to 'indulge' their mood. In this sense music was being used to heighten the negative emotion and there seemed to be a need, by some, to enable this to happen:

> *Sometimes it's OK to feel sad. Sometimes I just want the music to reflect how I'm feeling. I want to indulge in that feeling.* (T19)
>
> *And sometimes you can listen to a song and it can instantly change your mood as well. And that could be a significant song that brings back memories and that can instantly change your mood. Sometimes I want to indulge myself… sometimes I have to switch music off because I can't cope with those emotions.* (T18)
>
> *I can't listen to sad music because the emotions overtake me. I would never choose to listen to a sad song when I'm feeling sad. Other people might feel the need to use music to reinforce sadness but it's not for me.* (T14)

We all use music in particular ways: we also use it as background music for many reasons – sometimes we don't want to be alone; we use it to calm us down; and we use it for emotional well-being. This use of music is not usually prescribed for us. We learn to support ourselves through music. We are not taught the latter through the National Curriculum or schemes, which are knowledge, intelligence and skills driven. The taught curriculum does not explore how to use music or teach us how it supports our emotional states.

T20, who has a formal diagnosis of Asperger syndrome, did not use music in the same way as many others although, he was aware that emotion can be expressed through music and that music could affect the emotions. His understanding was that music's links with emotions were to do with making choices and making things different.

Music was also referred to as a form of escapism. In the context in which it was discussed, I understood this to be a deliberate, positive action, but there is also an implied re-action to something negative.

Teachers explained that both music and lyrics have a part to play when engaging emotional responses. Connections can be made with both the music and the lyrics: several teachers talked about listening in different ways according to their emotional needs (T5, E2, T10, T12, T15, T21). Listening to lyrics requires, potentially, different listening (and cognitive) skills and a different frame of mind from listening to just music.

T16 explained that she listens to both words and lyrics, but that she relies more on words than music in her emotional engagement with music. She said she does not get '*the same*

emotional feedback from classical music' because she doesn't listen as intently as when there are words.

T1 talked about the use of music by one of her own children. She said that her son uses music '*when he is angry: when he comes home, he will put on music and sing to it or drum to it. This helps him to come down and alleviates his personal stress*.'

To separate the two (listening to music or lyrics) is, in almost all cases, a false dualism. Often, the music and the words are dependent on each other - interwoven. In some cases, although one maybe listening to a song with words, the words themselves are not focused upon. However, in either case, one form elevates the other.

This section has used teacher comments to illustrate the ways in which they personally engage with music. The next section explores how the teachers perceived using music with children. Throughout the following section, we need to be aware of the potential vulnerability of children when deliberately asking them to engage with their emotions and the potential for abuse.

Using Heavy Metal Music with Children

T4 talks about '*normalized*' music. He clarified this as '*pop*' music although the connotations for his use of language run deeper than this. T4 enjoys heavy metal music: he engages with his own emotional state through immersion in sound and uses the same music to de-stress, and support emotional tension, as well as for enjoyment. He clarified in his interview that he categorises heavy metal music as '*not-normal'*. Several of his colleagues talked about heavy metal music as something that should be set apart from the music accessed by primary school children.

Teachers were generally hesitant about committing to using heavy metal and rock music with the children. Potential difficulties they cited included the issues that parents may have with children being exposed to inappropriate language within the school environment.

Several teachers talked about rock and heavy metal music as being more appropriate for boys, and in several cases, more appropriate for '*challenging*' boys. By implication,

'challenging' boys, whose behaviour may be more difficult in the school environment, were paired with to what they considered to be an inappropriate musical genre.

T7 talked more positively about the children accessing this genre of music - as a way of allowing or teaching children to control their behaviour:

> *But I think, for some of the more challenging boys, and I know I'm being stereotypical there, being able to talk through… actually you can feel this emotion, you don't actually have to go around kicking a wall. Might have been a good teaching point. I think children have to find their way to let go and let out. And actually, one of the things that hasn't been tapped into potentially is noise because it does affect you in a different way.* (T7)

This opens up a new discourse concerning the use of music for supporting emotions and emotional development. Through interviewer-initiated discussion, teachers talked about the potential for heavy metal music to be used for stress relief when angry: immersion in 'sound and noise' having an effect on the body and the mind. There was a link here between emotional listening and physical states of being.

Using Music for Self-Regulation with Children

T21 talked openly about using music for emotional support, personally. She said that she prefers to teach the '*mathematical side of music'* to the children because she has '*a mathematical brain'*, and deliberately employs a problem solving, approach to the teaching of music, using cognitive creative processes (Philpott, 2021a) to suit her teaching style.

T21 has considerable experience working with older primary children. She explained to me that she, like a large number of other teachers at the school, uses classical music for calming the children down in class and for SEND children when they are feeling frustrated.

When asked about the use of heavy metal music in primary school she said that didn't see any harm in exposing primary children to this type of music. She felt that some of the 'more tricky boys who needed to let their emotions out' could benefit - her response was slow and considered:

I think that it would help if they were able to listen to music at times when they were acting out. If it's done in the right way, in a managed way and you're choosing the songs appropriately. I think it would work. However, I can see that some parents wouldn't like it.

She was referring here to the use of music for calming children down when the need arose - on an individual level rather than with a class. Her thinking progressed to,

If a child is feeling frustrated, why not give them something to relate that to? I mean we're doing a lot in my class at the moment about Zones of Regulation because my class find it really hard to manage their emotions. So, we're doing a lot of talk about emotions but actually I've not thought about music in relation to that but that could fit quite nicely to give them music or something that they can associate with that feeling. (T21)

She briefly explained the work she was doing concerning 'Zones of Regulation' (Kuypers, 2013) with her class. Zones of Regulation is about teaching children to manage their emotions, identifying emotional states with colour zones: blue, green, yellow and red zones. Working with her class, she has established that 'blue' is related to low moods, whereas 'red' is related to super-exaggerated moods, like hyperactivity or anger. 'Yellow' is a kind of warning zone and 'green' is a good zone. She said:

I've kind of tried to explain to them that yellow is your warning that you'll get into the place of nearly feeling out of control. And your red sign is when your emotions are so big that you can't go any further than that. So that's how I'm trying to explain it to them at the moment. And they are responding well. But it might be that music, in essence, in theory, could play a part in managing their emotions.

She identified that responses to music might be different for every child: what works for one child and what one child sees as a red zone, might be different to another child. In clarifying her thinking, she said that she wasn't aware of children ever being invited to bring in CDs or music that they could use for self-regulation. She rationalised this to be a useful idea for use with her children.

It may be, that if they were at home, some of them might go to listen to something in their bedroom in response to their behaviour, but I've never known it in school. As

adults we use music to help us calm down or to change our moods. So, why don't we give the children the opportunity to do the same. Or teach them how to use music for that purpose?

Music is taught as an academic subject: we don't teach children how to use it in their lives. As adults we use music to help us calm down or to change our moods. Why don't we give the children the opportunity to do the same? Why do we not teach them how to use music for the purpose of managing emotions? This would be equally as valid as teaching notation and composition. And, for some, probably more useful.

If we're preparing children for the real world then that is what, ultimately, what they will end up doing in the real world. They will end up using music to help them. Most won't remember notation, unless they're playing an instrument. They won't want to compose unless they do it electronically through an app or something. (T4)

Using Music for Enjoyment with Children

T12 talked about using reading and music as an '*emotional crutch*' and that she had done this since she was a child. After explaining that she used this as a replacement for not being emotionally supported by her parents, she said:

In English, you've got reading for pleasure. And yet for music, well not in my experience, it's not about listening for pleasure. It's more sort of talking about it and learning it specifically. So yeah, I don't think there's enough of listening to music for pleasure.

T15 also argued a case for listening for pleasure. She argued that there's an emphasis on reading for pleasure in the school because it is a life skill that we can all use. She posed the following rhetorical questions:

Why not listening for pleasure? Listening for support? Listening for well-being? And right now, with our children and the impact that Covid has had on them the so many of them struggling with their mental health. And you know we promote, get a book and try and transport yourself to some other world reading a book. Well, why don't we promote music more with… go and put the headphones on. Listen to your

favourite bit of music. See if that helps your emotions. And yeah, I think that there's a need for that in the curriculum.

T12 said much the same thing when she asked: '*For the many children who are struggling with their mental health, in the same as we use a book to transport us to another world, and add to the sense of ourselves, why don't we use music in the same way?*'

The parallel here, with the maintenance of good mental health through reading for pleasure, is a significant one for at least eight teachers – reading for pleasure is a priority for the school. This, potentially, is an area of the music which could be planned for, resourced, taught and used.

Emotional engagement in public spaces or forums (like school) needs careful consideration. We cannot engage in emotional listening unless somebody allows us to do it and supports us in doing it. As T21 says, '*we have to have permission to listen in that way. It places us in a really vulnerable position. Listening in an emotional way – it needs to be very private'*.

Using Music to Explore Emotions and for Well-being with Children

T21 was exploring the use of Zones of Regulation as a pilot study in the school: she was the only teacher doing this and was due to report back at the end of the school year. However, she was not the only teacher to talk about exploring emotions with children:

- T4 felt that children should be able to access the music that they like, in school, and should be able to explore their feelings in relation to this. He thought that this should be facilitated by the school, *'before the children learn the technical and academic sides of music'*.
- T1 explained that, in her opinion, children should be able *'to talk about their feelings and engage with their emotions, and that side of things, within the safety of the school'*.
- T7 suggested that an eclectic view of music and a wide range of listening is required to develop emotions, music should develop not just one emotion, but as many as possible. She said that '*music offers an opportunity for all round emotional well-being. It also provides a connection to other people. We need to explore those*

connections'. She defined the latter as a form of connection or emotional support through a shared love of the same music, even if no dialogue takes place.

T5 talked about the '*emotional*' verses the '*clinica*l' ways of engaging with music. She explained that 'emotional' engagement involves listening and reacting, for example, the exploration of sound and how it makes us feel, identification with different sounds and preferences. This form of learning in music is personally driven and she explained that it relies significantly on emotional responses in the broadest sense. The '*clinical*' side to engagement in music concerns the music curriculum: the learning of skills and knowledge. She also said that it includes '*playing without intelligence or emotion'*. She says that both forms of engagement require understanding, acknowledgement and validation, and that both elements should be taught in school.

At the end of his interview, T20 said:

> *I think music in itself has great benefits for children, it is so good for their personal, social and emotional development. Music can evoke so many memories and powerful images within children that the effect of music cannot be underestimated. However, the curriculum itself is not very motivating. It is taught as an academic subject. I feel that music is still an important part of the curriculum and has many benefits for pupils but in its current form it has many elements that deter people* [teachers] *from engaging in it.*

He explained that the latter comment referred to the fact that he felt that teachers needed to be an expert in music before they could teach it. He explained that his comment about the music curriculum being 'not a very motivating' related to his feeling that we provide children with a reason for engaging in music: '*we should teach children how music is used in the real world'*.

Staff believe that music can be used to support emotional well-being: some suggest that children should be taught to use music to affect and control their emotions. There are ethical issues about working with the emotional responses of primary aged children and their vulnerability.

In her questionnaire, T2 said that if she had an opportunity to rewrite the music curriculum, she would '*shift the emphasis of the primary part to exposure of modern genres of music and have a section on how people can use music to support their own mindfulness and support well-being'*. Similarly, T5 wrote that music should be used and is '*also good for children's mental health and wellbeing, giving them a break from core subjects'*.

6.5 Conclusion

How do generalist primary teachers in this school perceive the music curriculum?

Teachers at this school perceive enjoyment and emotional engagement (mainly through listening) as a 'use' of music, explaining it to be, therefore, a purpose of music education. Over half of the teachers in the school articulate that enjoyment and emotional engagement are forms of achievement, though not in the traditional sense concerning the acquisition of knowledge or acquisition of skills.

Teachers at this school understand the need for progress in curriculum subjects and they use aims and objectives in line with school policy. They recognise that progress should be measured in order to ascertain what learning has taken place, and to identify areas for further study and consolidation. Some teachers identified that not all progress is linear, especially in the development of creative intelligences where an end point may not be clear. In creative processes, progress is not always tangible, visible or desired in the conventional sense: teachers need to be permitted some release from the constricting, conventional concepts/interpretations of progress and progression.

Teachers at this school also perceive (or have been trained to accept) that learning vocabulary is an important method, and for some the single most important technique, of music learning and personal development in the subject. However, learning subject specific vocabulary out of context limits the children's understanding. The vocabulary taught is based on that necessary to discuss knowledge and skills i.e. technical in nature. If, as they identify, the 'use' of music an important strand of music learning, then the language for this also needs to be addressed. It needs to be listed, taught and used in context.

Beach and Spruce (2024, p.150) write that

> Assessment in music is not, nor can ever be, a wholly neutral or objective at. It is a process that is inevitably imbued with personal and communal beliefs and values. These beliefs and values lie at the heart of your understanding of music is and what constitutes good music…

Teachers offered a range of beliefs and values on the subject of assessment in music, expressing underlying fundamental concerns about the curriculum:

- not enough music is done to record anything significant;
- time periods (units of teaching) are very short in order to be able to identify progress;
- there is a diverse range of abilities and starting points for the children so differentiated assessments are very difficult.

Difficulties with the process of assessment means that teachers at this school do not analyse progress in music because they cannot identify progress. If they had relevant evidence, it is unclear as to whether they would know how to analyse progress. Most perceive that there is no purpose in looking for progress in music because it's not being monitored. They also perceive that children can't make progress because of the reasons outlined above. This is an effect of not having a robust curriculum in the first place.

Difficulties with formative and summative assessment processes and the identification of progress, link with self-perceptions of the teachers' own performances. If a teacher is measuring (or not able to measure) the children's progress, there is an associated personal accountability by the teachers, linked with underperformance or a lack of effectiveness.

Assessment should be about understanding the uniqueness of the individual learner, offering feedback appropriate to the individual needs and values of the learner (Christmas, 2024). Is there a reason why these needs and values could not include enjoyment and emotional expression?

How do generalist primary teachers in this school perceive musical intelligence?

Teachers need an awareness of musical intelligence in order to make sense of assessment, progression and the curriculum. Musical intelligence can most readily be developed through listening and responding to music. Listening for pleasure and the development of listening skills provides children with a grounding in aural competency, musical expectation and to develop musical intelligence. A range of perceptions of musical intelligence were discussed by the teachers.

The data suggests that the teachers at this school feel that the music curriculum should not only teach children how to listen to and appreciate music but that this should be widened to include how to 'use' music in everyday life and how it can provide emotional support and well-being.

For example, some teachers suggested that learning to make playlists would support the emotional well-being of some older children. Personal musical preferences should be developed by offering children a wider range of repeated listening opportunities linked to a discussion about the nuances of those preferences and dislikes. A considerable amount of research on music and emotion has been undertaken (Juslin and Sloboda, 2011).

Some teachers at this school perceive heavy metal music could be 'used' with the children; however, they perceive that the parents would not approve. Some perceive that it could be used as a tool for self-regulation.

One teacher perceived that music (generally) could be used in teaching the children to regulate their behaviour, formally as part of the curriculum. It can be used, for example, for its calming influences and for letting out frustrations. The management of emotion was being developed as part of the taught curriculum in this class: the inclusion of music had not been considered.

It was also suggested that the use of more film and gaming music, as a stimulus for listening and other practical musical activities, would be a way of engaging the children with classical, electronic and other genres of music in more accessible way. This should be done on the understanding that musical pieces should be listened to multiple times to allow appreciation and understanding and to develop a possibility of listening for pleasure and emotional development.

Beach and Spruce (2024, p.150) write that ‘Musical life stories play a vital role in constructing their musical values and beliefs and hence to how and what they access in music’.

Teachers perceived that children should be taught to ‘use’ music as part of the curriculum. Listening for pleasure should be introduced: just as reading for pleasure is already addressed. Teachers also perceived that children should be taught how music can affect and support the emotions.

How do internal and external factors impact on their approaches to the teaching of classroom music?

Teachers perceived that the areas above should be addressed as part of the school music curriculum. They require no special expertise or curriculum knowledge other than an interest in music, an acceptance that a broad listening diet is to be encouraged, and a careful respect for the emotional vulnerability of children. Teachers may feel more confident and competent to teach these areas – as long as the curriculum was mapped and planned appropriately.

If the teachers enjoy teaching music, it will come across.

Music learning should be contextualised in the sense of personal development and its use in later life – child, teen and adult. This cannot necessarily be seen externally: personal development of the mind and emotions makes us vulnerable but can offer learning for life.

Why teach music?

Chapter 7 Perceptions of Agency when Teaching Music: Findings and Discussion

7.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I explore the teachers' perceptions of agency. Teacher agency refers to the capacity of teachers to act purposefully and constructively (Priestly, Biesta and Robinson, 2015; Emirbayer and Mische, 1998). It is a major factor in professional growth, both individually and with colleagues; however, it can be both empowering and prohibiting.

I start by engaging with the teachers' perceptions of what it is to be a 'musician': formulating a common definition derived from the data, and presenting more nuanced views. This helps explore the intelligences which the teachers associate with being a musician and which, by implication, should therefore be part of the curriculum for music. The teachers' view on the temporal nature of being a musician is also discussed.

In the second section I examine the teachers' perceptions of 'classical' music. The purpose of this is to understand how attitudes towards classical music affect teacher agency in delivery of the curriculum.

The teachers' perceptions of specialist music teachers are then considered. Firstly, their perceptions of whole-class primary specialists, presented separately through the eyes of Key Stage 1 teachers (teachers of 5-7-year-olds) and Key Stage 2 teachers (teachers of 7-11-year-olds). Secondly, I summarise the teachers' perceptions of whole-class instrumental teachers.

As in the two previous chapters, I highlight what the teachers' perceptions reveal about their understandings of the music curriculum, musical intelligence and factors impacting on their approaches to teaching the subject.

7.2 Perceptions of a 'Musician'

Using data taken from the questionnaire, specifically questions concerning the teachers' perceptions of being a 'musician' and their descriptions of their own musical background, I have tabulated the responses of the twenty-one teachers. The question did not specifically

ask for a 'Yes/No' response: the tally has been formulated from the descriptive responses given by the teachers.

Table 10: Teacher responses to the question, 'How would you describe yourself in relation to the term 'musician'?'

Answer:	Yes	No	Unspecified
Number of Teachers	1	17	3
%	5	81	14

Table 11: Summary of information taken from the 'Personal Reflection' section of the questionnaire concerning teachers' musical background

Name	Number of teachers	%
Musician	1	5
Learnt instrument as a child - primary	7	33
Learnt instrument as a child - secondary	11	52
Can read staff notation	12	57
Singer	7	33

From this information we can see that eleven teachers learnt to play an instrument at secondary school and that twelve teachers can read staff notation. In each case, this is over half the teachers at the school. Only one of these teachers labelled themselves a musician.

I will explore the teachers' perceptions of being a musician in this section because it is a factor which impacts on their attitudes and approaches to the teaching of classroom music. Their personal interpretations of being a 'musician' affect the way they approach the development of musical intelligence in children.

In her interview, T14 rhetorically questioned whether everyone was already a musician. In response, she decided that '*Everybody's got the potential to be a musician, whether that's people who play an instrument or singers'*. (T14) This philosophical standpoint seems a good place to start my discussion.

T10 explained that she often tells the children in her class that they are '*musicians*' and '*musical*' in order to encourage and empower them (Daubney, 2024). '*Sometimes*', she says, '*the children are not very good at music but as teachers, we are good at encouraging them. We teach them to aspire to things, but that doesn't necessarily mean that they're going to get there'*. This view was shared by other Key Stage 1 teachers. Aspiration is a driving force towards becoming a musician.

Definitions of musician

The teachers offered a range of definitions of 'musician'. Most teachers said that musicians play, sing and enjoy music, for example:

> *The natural thing to describe a musician is someone that plays an instrument or sings. But I would argue that actually someone that just appreciates music is a musician as well.* (T1)
>
> *Musicians are practical music makers.* (T4)
>
> *A musician is someone who enjoys music and who enjoys making music and listening to music.* (T6)
>
> *Somebody is a musician if they can play an instrument or compose… I would sincerely hope that if you are a musician, you do find great pleasure in music.* (T8)
>
> *Someone who is able to play an instrument... Or... including playing their voice, I suppose, and any instrument that creates a sound or beat.* (T12)
>
> *A person who plays an instrument or a person who sings, or both.* (T19)

Nuanced interpretations of 'musician' included:

- T4 saying that he had always had the '*potential*' to be a musician, '*but not the doing'*. He was also specific about the fact that '*A musician would be someone who creates music in any form*.' (T4)
- T2 questioning whether percussionists were musicians and deciding that singers could only be musicians if they reached a certain level of competence: '*You can play music…. But then you go down the road. What is music? People hitting tin lids, is that a musician? That's what Stomp do. So yeah… I'd love to go and see it. But is that being a musician? Is it just being able to keep time?*'

(STOMP is a theatrical dance group who demonstrate, in their performances, a unique blend of rhythm, movement, physical comedy and dance. https://www.stomp.co.uk/about/)

The last comment raises concerns about this teacher's understanding of music education, given that primary music is often made with untuned percussion instruments.

T17, who had been trained as a professional musician, was of the opinion that

> *there are different kinds of musicians. I think you've got your creative musician who can pick up in an instrument and play anything. You've got your musician who can listen and relate the piece of music to feelings and emotions. Then, I think, you've got another distinct category - your mathematical musicians, which is what I would say I am. That is looking more at… more the technicalities of it, that if you put the music in front of me, I can read it and do it as more of a kind of bang, bang, bang! Rather than showing any creativity whatsoever. And I don't think you need to be necessarily creative to be a musician.*

It is interesting that he distinguishes three kinds of musician: the 'creative musician', the 'emotional musician' and the 'mathematical musician'. This, too, is an extremely nuanced answer, and must be placed in the context of someone with a music conservatoire education. He labelled himself a mathematical musician because he 'just reads music'. He also said that he is not creative - by this, he meant he cannot improvise or play jazz. Other teachers at the school respected him as a musician, as evidenced by their talk about his practical work with the children. His comments offer a different interpretation and perception of being creative.

T4 expanded his definition to include electronic music and technology-based composition: *'…all the composers, you know, who use composition software. Yeah, you've got people who can't actually play drums or guitar, but then you give them electronic composition software... They could knock out a pretty good song. They are musicians*.' He talked about software as being 'the instrument' and his perception of a musician included anyone who created music in any form.

The interviews also generated some unexpected statements:

- T8 talked about a friend at secondary school who was very proficient but did not enjoy playing the piano because she had been forced to play: she had progressed from one examination to the next. T8 told me that this person was not a musician.
- T13 defined a musician as *'… somebody who makes music. Somebody who can play a musical instrument or sing well'*, following this with a potentially controversial statement, '*I think that not all singers are musicians! ...*'

When these teachers had a chance to review and approve the transcription of their interview, T8 clarified her comment saying that her friend was competent in her playing but that, to be musician, required getting something back from the experience.

A composite definition of these teachers' perceptions of a musician can be written as follows: a musician is someone who creates or performs music in any form (instrumental, singing or electronically) and/or someone who enjoys music.

Proficiency and Talent

The insights in this section tell us that the teachers create their own definition of what it is to be a musician. Looking at the statistics at the beginning of this section, and using the composite definition in the previous paragraph, if a musician is someone who performs music in any form, then one could argue that at least half of the teachers at the school could have been defined as a musician. However, most teachers felt that being able to play an instrument in one's youth, did not mean that you were currently a musician – I will explore the temporal nature of being a musician later in this section.

Although not all musicians can read music, or need to read music (Green, 2002; 2008a), the expectation that a musician needed to be able to read music was implicit in the teachers' responses. For example:

> *Musicians should be able to read music and they need a certain level of skill.* (T4)
>
> *A musician is talented and shows a dedication to learning in the type of genre of music or the type of instrument that they want to play. And they can read music.* (T19)
>
> *A musician has to read music.* (T20)

Proficiency and talent were related issues for the teachers when they talked about musicians as:

> *Somebody who is very, very talented. Musicians come in different forms, so depending on what musical instrument…. You have got to know what you are doing, what you are playing.* (T7)
>
> *…probably someone who can either play a musical instrument or sing. Yes, someone who's got that talent. Someone who can play up to a certain level.* (T9)
>
> *Somebody who can play a musical instrument well or somebody who is massively talented in singing - if you are a vocalist.* (T15)
>
> *Somebody who has musical talent. Who is able to read music and play an instrument well.* (T21)

Being able to read music and technical proficiency were part of the teachers' perceptions of what it is to be a musician.

Based on her perception that musicians play to a certain technical level, T9 was adamant that she was not a musician. She had reached a good level of proficiency in playing the cello, played in orchestras and passed exams but said, '*I was never confident at doing it. I never felt something that was…. You know, sort of just built into me. I didn't. I wasn't a musician – I just played the cello*.' Further discussion revealed that she considered a musician as someone who can perform with confidence.

T14 had a similar viewpoint. She has never considered herself to be a musician, even though, at school, she had played the piano and the classical guitar to a very proficient level:

'*Calling myself a musician would, basically, mean owning it! Saying, oh actually I'm quite good at that, which I wasn't.*'

In the minds of these two teachers, proficiency (competence) and confidence are linked: for them it is an issue of self-perception and self-imposed high standards. T14 also talked about the fact that she has '*very high standards'* and that she '*never meets those standards'*.

Another issue, which was a perception of several teachers, concerned the thought that singers were not musicians. For example, T21 defined a musician as '*somebody who has musical talent. Who is able to play music and an instrument*.' She stated that she did not think of singers as being musicians. T15 said that she was a good singer and had '*done musical theatre'*, but that she was not a musician. T12 said she loved to sing but that she was not a musician:

> *Singing at home doesn't necessarily make you a musician, in my opinion. But I guess, if we were talking in the classroom, I guess I probably would be promoting that it was, and that all these children were amazing little musicians. I would be giving that positive vibe and praise, and telling them that they were the best musicians in the world.*

Temporal nature of being a musician

In their interviews, teachers talked in a way which highlighted perceptions about the temporal nature of being a musician. This is summed up in T1's explanation: '*In the past, when I was learning an instrument* [at secondary school], *I felt like a musician. But my playing wasn't musical. Now I consider myself musical but not proficient, so not a musician'*.

Other teachers reported similar perceptions:

- T13 stated that she was a musician, at school, because she played instruments. Now she's not a musician, because she can't play them any longer. She said that '*you have to be playing, in order to be a musician'*. She would, however, class herself as musical. [T13 achieved Piano Grade 6, Theory Grade 6, played the clarinet to a good standard, and sung in choirs.]

- T5 considered herself a musician when she played the cello as a young person, but does not consider herself a musician now. This was down to the fact that at the time she was practising regularly, and is now not a practising cellist, so not a musician. She said that she could still play the cello '*but not like before'*. [T5 played the cello proficiently in orchestras and played the piano.]
- T10 played the recorder when very young and took Grade 1 piano. Through her responses, it was clear that her expectations for musicians now is very high. However, she did say that whilst she was playing the recorder or the piano at a primary level, she would '*definitely have classed myself as being a musician'*.
- T8 used to consider herself a musician but does not consider herself to be one any more. She can still play the piano but does not consider herself a musician at the present time '*because I don't particularly enjoy playing anymore'*. [T8 played the flute, violin and piano to a very high standard and is still a competent dancer.]

What emerges from the data is that when the teachers who could play an instrument competently (based on data evidence) stop playing, they no longer consider themselves to be musicians, even though the vast majority of these people can still read music and still talk passionately about the subject and their performing history.

The teachers demonstrate changing perceptions and understandings of what it is to be a 'musician'. Perhaps an explanation for this is that adults have the benefit/detriment of wisdom and hindsight and can contextualise their reflections normatively. T13 identified that '*expectations of yourself, and your expectations of other people, change as you get older… I think adults are much more reflective. And that maybe says more about me as a person. I think your expectations of yourself and your expectations about other people are raised*.'

7.3 Perceptions of 'Classical' Music

T1 stated that '*the perception of most people is that classical music is only for snobs and whatever'* and T3 reported that '*there are public perceptions about some music being highbrow – you need to be able to understand it to enjoy it. Things like classical music and*

opera. They have associations with bow ties and ballgowns. This contrasts with things like festivals and gigs… which our parents go to.'

Further bias and stereotyping can be interpreted from responses by these teachers:

- *But I think… no disrespect to our parents, but when they went home, you know, if my sister, she, you know, if her kid went home and said, 'I listened to a bit of opera', her husband would laugh and he would probably reproduce that stereotype. We'd be fighting against the parents at home. I think parents would sniff and laugh. Or maybe turn them* [the children] *towards stuff that they know more about and like, which would be the stuff that's perhaps a lot less elitist and more populist*. (T4)
- *Although we may introduce different genres to the children in school, the parents will offer different opinions and start to build brick walls through their own bias and opinion*. (T20)
- *The children at the school should be able to experience music in all its forms and genres, but that there is still a stigma of elitism in music which I find worrying. Especially in the area that our pupils are from. The parents don't listen to classical music so the children don't want to.* (T12)

The latter three comments offer personal and stereotypical views about the parents in the school's locale. This is a potentially damaging teacher perception and value judgement: one that suggests that the families in the area do not access classical music and would not want their children to access classical music. When challenged, none of the teachers could provide evidence (hard or anecdotal) that this would be the case: they explained that they were drawing on their knowledge of the children and the parents in this locality.

This could consciously or subliminally be a personal bias or a justification for not wanting to teach the music curriculum. As such, for some teachers, I believe this could be a factor impacting on their attitude to teach music: perhaps it guides the way they approach and engage with the music curriculum.

T5, who said that her class are '*open to listening to classical music'* speculated that she did not think that they could appreciate opera. This perception closes down a whole genre of music, of which the children will already have heard examples, most likely on the television

or through gaming. Exposure to different genres and different composers is vitally important in the development of personal preference. It should be a main focus for primary children whilst they are still open to hearing different types of music and before they start becoming influenced and aware of musical bias.

T4 offered a more balanced viewpoint:

> *It's purely that children have very limited experience of classical music and that they follow their parents or other figures around musical choices. Classical isn't the most popular or well-known genre and a lot of children wouldn't know what make of it.*

The previous comments all provide evidence of a narrow view of 'classical' music. 'Classical' music is heard in everyday life through television and film, music for gaming (as previously mentioned), music in shops and other public places. Some of it would be instantly recognisable by some parents and children.

Several teachers suggested starting with the music that the children already know and prefer. T9 said, '*I think that people access the types of music they know they like, rather than necessarily experimenting with things that they don't know whether they like or not*.' T16 was of the opinion that the children's learning in music '*definitely comes from TV, social media, definitely TikTok in the background of videos, Instagram, whatever'*.

T16 makes a value-laden point regarding accessibility to different instruments:

> *Well, I think it just depends on what type of music you're teaching. You know, if you're teaching about a harp, and you know, of course, people, they're not going to be familiar with playing or seeing a harp in the classroom, or children, especially in our school. For example, you know they're not going to have seen that. But if you spoke about…. I'm trying to think…. of like, an acoustic guitar, I'm sure they will have at least seen one, and then be able to relate a bit better and like it's, I think, it just depends on the type of music you're talking about…. Like classical music. I think it sometimes can be difficult for children in a school like ours to relate to it, because it's not something they hear at home. It's not something they see on the TV very much.*

Teachers and children can access a wide variety of different video recordings of instruments online – solo performances, orchestral music, bands etc. Just because they have not seen

an instrument in real life, does not mean that they cannot see and hear the instrument being played through video recordings.

As an anecdotal example from my own experience, primary aged children are incredibly observant and fascinated by various instruments seen on video: I have heard them discuss the 'keys' on a double bass, the red and blue strings on a harp and the range of techniques involved in playing a range of percussion instrument.

7.4 Perceptions of Specialist Teachers

The school had previously employed two specialist music teachers to cover 'Planning, Preparation and Assessment' (PPA) time; however, they quickly cancelled the contracts of each of them because they could not maintain expected behavioural standards in the classroom. They were not replaced: this was a management decision supported by the teachers.

In the questionnaire, several teachers wrote about the cost of specialist music teachers and the priorities for the curriculum as identified and offered by different schools. Limited funding and budgets were cited in several cases as being the reason why schools, in general, may not have specialist teachers. It was identified that specialist teachers could be used as a form of staff development. Several teachers referred back to their own school experiences (as a pupil), when they perceived that '*free specialist music teachers were the norm'* (T10).

The school's most recent Ofsted report stated that teaching in the school was 'good'. This would suggest that all teachers at this school are effective generalist primary teachers (Ofsted). What do these teachers perceive that specialist music teachers could offer?

Perceptions of specialist music teachers in Key Stage 1 and Early Years

The collective perception of the Key Stage 1 and Reception teachers at this school was that specialist teachers could not offer anything more to the children than they could deliver themselves.

T3 believes that, with Key Stage 1 children, at the curriculum level they are working at, '*there isn't much that a specialist music teacher can teach the children that I'm not already*

offering' because the level of musical expertise required '*is at a low level for this age of children'*. Whilst comfortable and happy teaching the subject, T3 said that a specialist music teacher might '*be able to play instruments or be able to teach vocal ranges and things that I could not do'*.

T9 said that she can appreciate why specialists are used, but prefers to teach music herself. She acknowledged that there was a '*possibility that if a specialist music teacher took my class, the children could get more out of it'*. However, she was of the opinion that the class teacher was in a better position to know the children personally and to engage them more fully. The class teacher would be '*able to make links with other subjects'*, drawing on '*knowledge in other subjects'* that they know the children have studied. She reported that she knew her children better socially, developmentally, behaviourally, in language-based ability and in maths-based ability.

T14 explained about having negative feelings concerning the use specialist music teachers with younger children. Speaking from experience in other schools, she reported that specialist teachers '*pitched the lessons inappropriately for the children'* and did not have the '*ability or inclination to address this'*.

T16 said that specialist teachers '*are not useful for the younger children'* and felt that a specialist music teacher would not offer the children a better music education than the class teacher. She worried that '*with intense music lessons, all the enjoyment would be taken out of the subject'* and that '*Children need to have the freedom to explore the subject for themselves'*.

Perceptions of specialist music teachers in Key Stage 2

Key Stage 2 teachers at the school explained that they had concerns that they would be 'deskilled' if music were taught by a specialist and not by themselves. However, many teachers wanted a specialist teacher to teach their class music for a short while as a professional development opportunity.

> *I think they're an excellent resource when the school can afford them. But it can deskill a teacher if it's over relied on… If it was imposed on me, right now I'd feel*

supported and happy because I guess their knowledge would be vastly superior to mine. But I'd want to be there to pick it up myself and then take it on. (T4)

I have worked with a specialist music teachers in other schools. They are really good and I have learnt from them. But now I want to teach it myself – I don't want to lose my skills. (T6)

If the school had a specialist music teacher, the children would have regular music lessons. That would be a benefit. But I would want to stay in the room and learn how to teach music. (T7)

If you don't regularly teach a subject, you quickly by come unskilled in that subject. (T10)

When I ran my school, I bought in specialist teachers for music which in some ways was unfortunate because the class teachers became deskilled. But it did provide release time for teachers. (T17)

T4, T6, T7, T10, T18, T19 and T20 all reported that they would want to remain in the classroom with the specialist music teacher to learn how to teach music: they saw it as an opportunity for formal professional development. Often managers see it as an opportunity for statutory release time (PPA). The same teachers also reported that they (personally) would be able to maintain discipline in their class, potentially avoiding dual standards of behaviour. This was a significant issue for them, both for consistency of expectation and because of the perceived amount of time needed to address behavioural issues after the music lesson, when they took back full responsibility for the class.

T8 said that specialist teachers may potentially '*be more creative in their approach to the teaching of music'*. She verbally presented a list of pros and cons for having specialist music teachers in school as she perceived them: she liked the idea that children could learn an instrument; she felt that the specialist music teacher may be able to do singing assemblies with the whole school; and that they could '*have an input into end of term concerts'*. She too, talked about the fact that she knows teachers who have been deskilled because they have not been able to teach music, '*because a specialist teacher has been imposed on the class'*. Significantly, she felt that with older children, who potentially may have been turned away from music, the class teacher was in a better position to engage them and achieve

better participation in the lesson. To this end she felt that class teachers were in the best position to teach music '*even though my subject knowledge may not be as wide as a specialist teacher'*.

Perceptions of instrumental lessons

A musical education can be seen, by some, as learning to play a musical instrument (Beach and Spruce, 2024) and, as previously mentioned, one of the aims of Music Hubs was to provide every child with the opportunity to learn an instrument through Whole-Class Ensemble Teaching (WCET) (DfE, 2022).

The school had engaged the services of the local Music Hub who provided ten free recorder lessons (across 1 term) to each class of Year 3 children on a yearly basis. Children learnt the notes from d to b (six notes, bottom octave) but were not taught to read music. Lessons were an hour long and they included singing and other musical activities. No child carried on playing the recorder (or any other instrument) as a result of these lessons, even though opportunities were offered by the school and the Local Authority.

If the children did not learn to read music and if no children continued playing as a result of having had specialist music lessons, were the lessons appropriate? Did they enhance the curriculum offered by the school?

The specialist teacher at the school taught children to play the recorder by demonstration and use of memory - by rote. I feel that it is possible that some children learnt to play 'by ear' but this requires musical awareness and use of aural discrimination by the participant. Responses from the teachers in this school suggested that the teachers had hoped that an understanding of formal notation and the ability to read music would be delivered as part of the lessons.

T15 said that because '*the lessons move so slowly, most of our musical children are actually put off rather than being stimulated*'. If children do not have a sense of achievement, or worse, if they have a sense of failure, they are unlikely to engage further in playing a musical instrument.

T17 had employed a specialist music teacher, whilst managing another school. He felt that a dedicated music teacher was invaluable. This teacher had been trained as a professional musician and had a keen interest in the subject. He had provided instrumental tuition to all classes in Key Stage 2 in his school but the children had not been taught melodic instruments – only Djembe drumming. He argued that, '*They had regular tuition on the drum, giving them a solid grounding in rhythm and playing together'*. He stated that '*from my own experience prior to this, children didn't continue to play tuned instruments if they had learnt them at school - unless their parents wished them to do it'*.

Although this is anecdotal evidence, it stimulates thought concerning the wider rationale for whole class instrumental tuition.

T15 said that she did not believe that peripatetic music teachers were effective. She questioned,

> *If it is only for one term, what is the point? As the children do not progress far enough to have developed an interest… Learning an instrument in this way and at an elementary level, does not and cannot be… in fact… it does not really add to anything.*

This teacher had hoped that the lessons would fulfil the National Curriculum (DfE, 2013) statements concerning notation and ensemble playing. She perceived that the only impact would be on those who continued with musical instrument lessons, and in her experience, '*children at this school do not continue'*.

As T16 stated, '*Even non-musical teachers can teach songs'*. T19 explained her perception of how this was different with a specialist teacher:

> *Obviously, we teachers, we aren't very musical but we would teach them the songs. They'd learn the songs… it would sound alright. Sometimes it would sound good. But when the specialist teacher came in to work with them, she had experience in conducting. As so, therefore, she would use all these hand signals that we didn't understand but the children knew exactly what she meant and their performance was, like, spot on really. She knew how to get the best out of them.*

T19 was the only teacher to offer a specific reason why a specialist music teacher might obtain better results with the children, other than having better subject knowledge and

enhanced skills. Her perception was that the specialist music teacher could use hand signals and conduct the children, which would improve their singing. Whilst acknowledging that the specialist teacher knew how to get the best act of the children in a performance, she explained that, essentially, the class teacher knew how to get the best out of the children generally in music. This was a strongly presented theme across all of the teachers' responses: better teaching is as a result of knowing the children, knowing their abilities across a range of subject areas, playing to their strengths, knowing their behavioural traits and knowing how to engage them.

7.5 Conclusion

How do generalist primary teachers in this school perceive the music curriculum?

One of the reasons for having music on the school curriculum is to teach children how to be musicians. It states this in the National Curriculum (DfE, 2013, p.196): 'A high quality music education should engage and inspire pupils to develop… their talent as musicians…' In society, the term 'musician' is used and understood in many different ways. The teachers' perceptions of 'musician' illustrate that the term is used to encompass the basic skills of playing, singing and listening, as identified in the National Curriculum (DfE, 2013). Their definition also includes Sternberg's (2021) musical intelligences, as well as more nuanced understandings which involve interpretation and individualism, proficiency and talent (Philpott's, 2021a, virtuosic creative processes), and the temporal nature of being a musician.

Singing is a core component of music education (de Vries, 2015) for all those teaching music in the school. Research shows that this stems from staff beliefs about the value of singing because it is something that all people can do (ibid.). Perhaps, for this reason, singing forms the main-stay of the music curriculum in a large number of schools and is a form of music making that almost all children will participate in at some stage. Telling the children that they are singers and musicians is something that teachers do to boost children's confidence, stimulate pride and spark aspiration. However, some teachers at this school perceived that singers were not musicians.

The content of the National Curriculum (DfE, 2013) presents a broadly Western language of music to school children deemed 'the best in the musical canon' (ibid., p.196). 'Classical' music also features prominently in the year group specific repertoire lists of the Model Music Curriculum (DfE, 2021a). These 'judgements' about quality and relevance bring with them a potential divide between music that is of worth and music that is not: a binary position (Johnson-Williams, 2024).

Societal and personal attitudes towards different genres of music have influenced how the teachers perceive the curriculum. Some perceive musical hierarchies (Beach and Spruce, 2024), for example, classical music for the elite and pop music for others, which are potentially translated through the teachers' attitudes towards teaching the subject. For some teachers, 'classical' music is associated with a lack of accessibility, a higher social class, higher status and climbing social expectation. Attitudes towards classical music may have led to apathy in some.

In the Youth Music and Ipsos MORI (2019) report, classical music was conspicuous by its absence in the map of children's favourite genres. Turino (2008) suggests that this is because classical music is the least accessible and least participatory music in our culture (Spitzer, 2021).

Attitudes towards 'classical' music were apparent in the interviews through the negativity it received. However, I must acknowledge that many teachers did not talk about it, so a negative bias may play a part in my assumed importance of the subject. However, statements made by some of the teachers were perceptions and interpretations which could be perceived as demonstrating bias and prejudice. Some of the teacher's personal perceptions were presented as potentially damaging value judgements, which could affect the children's educational opportunities if they were widely held and acted upon.

How do generalist primary teachers in this school perceive musical intelligence?

Aspects of musical intelligence identified by the teachers, related to their perception of being a 'musician', included creating and performing music in any form (instrumental, singing or electronically) and enjoying music.

Proficiency and talent in playing an instrument or singing (practical skills and virtuosic creative processes) were perceived as being integral to being a musician, as was being able to read music (practical skills). Their perceptions of musicians also included exhibiting confidence in performing or creating a product (practical and wisdom-based skills).

How do external factors impact on their approaches to the teaching of classroom music?

Only one out of twenty-one teachers labelled themselves a musician: seventeen said that they were not a musician and three did not commit either way. However, eleven teachers had learnt to play an instrument at secondary school and twelve could read staff notation.

The teachers' self-belief in themselves – their own skills and competencies - influences their teaching and development (Hargreaves and Lamont, 2017). Social situations and the overt and subtle effects of hierarchical language use, leads the teachers to believe that they are not musical and not musicians (Ruddock, 2018). In turn, this leads to insecurities (Daubney, 2024) concerning their ability to teach the subject.

The temporal nature of being a musician was made clear throughout the interviews by teachers who were able to play an instrument and read music. At the time they were learning and playing an instrument, almost all considered themselves musicians: when they stopped playing and practising, they were no longer musicians, even though they could still read music (even if the skill needed revision) and still talked passionately about their experiences.

Research has shown that the teaching of music by generalist primary teachers is questionable when teachers indicate they lack the confidence and skills to teach music (de Vries, 2011; Garvis & Pendergast, 2010; Holden & Button, 2006; Wiggins & Wiggins, 2008). Over half the teachers at this school had played an instrument and could read music, and yet they perceived themselves not able to deliver the primary music curriculum. This data would indicate that being a musician is a temporal concept: knowledge may be stored, skills may be dormant, but for those who have made music in the past, the ability to deliver primary music lessons should be possible.

In Key Stage 1, it was perceived that specialist music teachers were not needed to teach music in this school because they could offer very few additional benefits to the children, if

any. The perception of Key Stage 1 teachers was that a personal knowledge of the children across all aspects of education meant that they were in a better position to give a meaningful music education to the children, placing the subject within a context of learning in other subjects.

Perceptions of Key Stage 2 teachers regarding the effectiveness of specialist music teachers were different. Generally, teachers in Key Stage 2 felt they would be de-skilled if they were denied the opportunity to teach class music regularly. However, many said that they would welcome working with a specialist music teacher as a form of personal professional development in the short term. Concerning classroom and behaviour management, teachers expressed concern about perceived dual standards of behaviour between their own lessons and that of a visiting music teacher.

Before talking to the teachers at this school, I was a strong advocate for specialist class music teaching across all year groups in the primary school but I have been challenged on my viewpoint, especially for Key Stage 1 children. One of the reasons that many people become primary school teachers is so that they can teach every subject, as opposed to specializing in just one or two like secondary teachers. Many teachers appreciate the challenge of teaching a 'difficult' subject, like music: almost all teachers at this school wanted to teach the subject themselves.

Chapter 8 Empowering Generalist Primary Music Teachers

8.1 Introduction

In the opening chapter of this thesis, I started to discuss music as a phenomenon and as a primary school subject. I introduced how music is used in everyday life, including the ways in which people use it for emotional support and mental well-being. In order for music to be used effectively in this capacity, opportunities need to be provided to experience and explore how this can be done.

My motivation for undertaking this research study was to explore how the primary music curriculum can have meaning for both the teachers and the children. If music education is to have meaning for the children, its purpose needs to be determined and articulated in a way that empowers all teachers to 'teach' something of meaning to the children.

In Chapter 1, I stated that a nexus of two positions with regard to music teaching in the school would emerge:

- the music curriculum as defined by policy and the school's expectations;
- the perceived music education needs of children living in today's society and current popular cultural needs.

I believe that this chapter, whilst not reconciling these two positions, presents a plausible alternative music curriculum suggested by the perceptions of the teachers at this school.

The title of my thesis refers to teachers' perceptions of the primary music curriculum - perceptions being the lenses through which we view reality. In formulating their perceptions, teachers gather information about people and assign meaning to their actions: they gather data from situations and assign meaning through their own interpretations. For the teachers in my sample, this was through both primary (personal) and secondary (reported) experiences: both at the present time and historically situated.

Each person can only interpret twenty-five per cent of the information experienced by them (Jenkinson, 2014). As such, one could argue the teachers' perceptions are fraught with selective bias. But interpretation mostly takes the form of evaluation. The teachers' perceptions will have been linked to different forms of self-motivation: in relation to this research study, the teachers' reasons for acting or behaving in a particular way will have

been enacted through a process of selection, organisation and interpretation. They will all be individual and therefore, in one sense, all perceptions hold equal validity.

My research questions were:

1. How do generalist primary teachers perceive the music curriculum?
2. How do generalist primary teachers perceive musical intelligence?
3. How do internal and external factors impact on their approaches to the teaching of classroom music?
4. How can generalist teachers be empowered and stimulated to teach music?

In the sub-sections which follow, I present further exploration of my research findings in relation to these questions.

On the subject of how generalist primary teachers perceive the music curriculum, I discuss the teachers' perceptions of the primary music curriculum, creativity in the curriculum, achievement, progress and assessment, and the use of music in everyday life.

On the subject of how generalist primary teachers perceive musical intelligence, I further explore creativity and emotional understanding and interpretation.

On the subject of how internal and external factors impact on the teachers' approaches to the teaching of primary classroom music, I focus on musical genres, specifically 'classical music', and specialist teachers. I conclude with a more general discussion concerning teachers' agency and self-efficacy.

Throughout this discussion I have included summary boxes. These originally served a strategic purpose for structuring my writing: they were an organisational tool to help me clarify my thinking and focus my narrative. They took the form of summary boxes containing focussed statements concerning my findings, brief details of relevant contextual research (referred to elsewhere in this thesis) and a statement (or statements) concerning what my research was saying that was different with comments on why this was important.

I have chosen to retain these summary boxes for the benefit of the reader.

8.2. Further Discussion of Research Findings

8.2.1 How do Generalist Primary Teachers Perceive the Music Curriculum?

Perceptions of the Primary Music Curriculum

A high-quality music education depends on effective subject and school leadership (Ofsted, 2021) and starts with allocating sufficient curriculum time to teach the music curriculum. Deciding on the learning components of the music curriculum requires choices about inclusions and omissions, since musical components are not all-purpose (Ofsted, 2021), but this requires a co-ordinated approach.

In an attempt to stimulate and encourage regular music teaching across the whole school, school leaders have introduced a system whereby the teachers can choose which scheme (from two different published schemes) and which units to teach to the children, as long as they are year group appropriate (as designated by the scheme). This has led to an inconsistent and incoherent music curriculum that lacks continuity and progression (Wiggins and Wiggins, 2008). This in turn affects the teachers' perceptions of their own competence and confidence. Ofsted (2021) is flexible with regard to a music curriculum but state that it must be high-quality. By selecting potentially disparate individual units of a scheme, the aim of musical progression from the National Curriculum (DfE, 2013) has been be lost.

Findings

In Key Stage 2, teachers perceive that the attainment of the children is too low. They state that the children are not where they should be or need to be, as measured by their inability to access and complete age-appropriate units in a published scheme, which the teachers trust is a reflection of the standards expected by the end of key stage statements in the National Curriculum (DfE, 2013). Low attainment in the subject affects the teachers' self-perceptions of their effectiveness (confidence and competence) to teach the subject.

Contextual research

As previously stated, prior research has shown that music can be considered a difficult subject to teach because of the specificity of musical expertise (Rogers et al., 2008). There is a reported lack of confidence and skills in teaching the subject (de Vries, 2011; Garvis & Pendergast, 2010; Holden & Button, 2006; Wiggins & Wiggins, 2008).

Individual factors which have been found to impact on the music teaching practices of teachers include a lack of training (de Vries 2011; Hallam et al. 2009; Holden and Button 2006; Russell-Bowie 2009) and professional development (de Vries 2011; Garvis and Pendergast 2010; Holden and Button 2006) and access to appropriate resources (de Vries 2011).

What is this research saying that is different? Why is this important?

The teachers at this school can be considered 'good' teachers (as reflected in the outcome of their most recent Ofsted inspection). Over half of them have a musical background: they have played a musical instrument in the past and can read music.

Based on analysis of the data from the interviews, the self-perceptions and opinions of the teachers taking part in this research indicate that most teachers in the school lack the confidence and skills to teach the primary music curriculum.

This research would suggest that a significant factor causing a lack of confidence in their ability to deliver the curriculum is not due to the factors suggested by previous research. It is due to 'ad hoc', ineffective whole school curriculum planning. The use of two schemes and the flexibility given to the staff to self-select units means that there is an overall lack of continuity and progression in the subject. This complexity significantly compounds issues concerning the teachers' competence and confidence, as teachers are unaware of what has previously been taught in the subject, they cannot readily identify gaps in learning and they cannot build on a solid foundation of prior learning. However, teachers do not recognise this to be the source of the problem. They blame their lack of confidence and competence on a lack of appropriate training and professional development.

Attainment at this school is not measured by the statutory end of key stage statements in the National Curriculum (DfE, 2013) and the curriculum is neither flexible or creative enough to deliver what the teachers perceive the children need.

Creativity in the Curriculum

Teachers talked about the creative opportunities that they offer the children in music lessons: in most cases they talked about composition, however, it should be recognised that composing is a highly complex composite activity (Pearce and Wiggins, 2004). In many interviews, the words 'composition' and 'creativity' were used interchangeably: in some cases, they were used synonymously.

Generally, the teachers at this school report that they are not confident in teaching composition to their classes or providing children with opportunities to create. Some blame the children by saying that they lack imagination and that they cannot translate their ideas into practise; some say that the selection of instruments in the school is too small; and some report that the scheme is too restrictive.

The Durham Commission on Creativity and Education (2019) was a collaboration between Arts Council England and Durham University that aimed to identify ways in which creativity, and specifically creative thinking, could play a larger part in the lives of young people from birth to the age of nineteen, both within and beyond the current education system. One of main recommendations in their report was to enhance the professional development of music teachers (Durham University and Arts Council England, 2021). The Commission hoped to find out what was working well and where there might be gaps that could be addressed.

Conditions required for the promotion of creativity were identified by the Commission as:

- building on skills, knowledge and understanding already acquired;
- providing a structure that encourages discipline, practice, and rigour;
- providing opportunities for learners to problem solve, experiment, take risks, make mistakes, try again; and
- giving learners space for self-directed learning.

This general view of creativity places problem solving at its heart: prior learning and contextual information are used to explore, take risks and make mistakes – all elements identified by the teachers at this school as being part of musical creativity. However, this could be considered a limited view of creativity: the creative processes (Philpott, 2021a) discussed as part of this thesis, introduce the idea that the creative experiences offered to children should be wider than just problem solving (using cognitive creative processes). Both the teachers and the children should learn about the different types of creative process, with the aspiration of being able explore personal creativities, seeking a balance of opportunity and providing experience of a variety of creative opportunities.

Whilst not all music learning takes creativity as its aim (Clarke, 2012), the key to unlocking musical imagination is to provide experiences and ask questions (Henley, 2024). Giving learners space for self-directed learning, the fourth of the conditions identified by the Commission, also needs to be planned for. This element is missing from the music curriculum at my research school.

We all have musical intelligence (Bartolomei-Torres, 2022) but musical creativity means different things in different musical settings and situations (Frith, 2012). 'We are all musical, but only sometimes creative' (ibid.).

Finding

Teachers at this school perceive music to be a creative subject: they perceive creativity an important part of the music curriculum.

Contextual research

Research shows that there are many interpretations and models of creativity in music (Gooderson and Henley, 2017; Clarke, 2012; Hansen, 2015; Craft, 2001; Philpott, 2021a, Cropley, 2020). Creativity embodies multiple ways of making music covering a broad range of concepts and behaviour (Hargreaves et a., 2012). Genuine creativity in music is achieved by very few (Fletcher, 1987).

What is this research saying that is different? Why is this important?

I identify with the view that there are multiple conceptions of creativity in music and have a special affinity with the creative processes proposed by Philpott (2021a)

This research would suggest that the teachers at this school have narrow views concerning creativity: they have a simplistic and limited conception of creative processes. As a result, the children experience problem solving activities as creativity. Opportunities for subjective creative processes (a freedom to explore) and conservationist creative processes (working within traditions and cultures) seem to be absent. A very small number of teachers scaffold opportunities to develop virtuosic creative processes (for example, changing dynamics or tempo). This leads to a limited one-dimensional interpretation of the concept and the subject.

An understanding of different forms of creativity would allow the teachers to vary the aims and approaches they use in their teaching, engaging children in a wider range of creative processes and scaffolding their learning about creativity, leading to improved creative development in the children through the challenges on offer.

It should be noted, however, that this research, like prior research on primary music teaching, has relied on the teachers to interpret their own teaching, resulting in subjective judgements. Further research on the practical opportunities for creativity, provided by teachers, with data collected through the completion of questionnaires and interviews, triangulated with lesson observation data, could be a subject of further study.

Achievement, Progress and Assessment

Less than half the teachers interviewed talked about achievement in music without being prompted. They applied a general understanding of attainment and progress. Attainment was conceived in relation to academic progress and the development of skills. Progress in music was associated mainly with the setting of aims and objectives, and the accurate use of subject-specific vocabulary.

Kemmis, McTaggart and Nixon (2014) present the argument that we do not all see progress, improvement and development in the same way: interpretations can be in opposition with

each other, but what became clear through the interviews, was that the teachers at this school could not identify progress in music beyond the setting of short-term targets.

In music, some aspects of progression will be quite linear and others will not (Burnard and Younker, 2004). This was recognised by some of the staff; however, the way it was articulated was confusing in relation to musical learning, especially when some said that learning can go backwards. At times, I feel that non-linear learning was used as a justification for a lack of direction in the teaching, as an excuse for a lack of progress and to mask feelings of incompetence and lack of confidence.

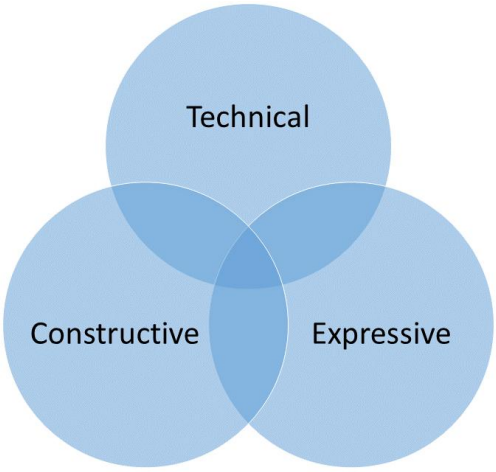
Assessing music is complex: the teacher may need to use different approaches for different domains of music. Ofsted (2021) identifies that it is difficult to judge whether a performance or composition is 'good' suggesting that teachers use 'quality first' assessment. However, in the context of primary music making, it is extremely hard to reliably judge musical quality. Quality is not just about recognisable progression. Musical quality concerns specific musical judgements (Fautley and Daubney, 2019b) which many teachers at this school do not feel able to make.

The assessment of music was associated with using recordings as evidence and there was a very strong view that this was purely to provide evidence to external bodies that music was being taught. The teachers' reported that the recordings were not useful for identifying pupil progress.

Research suggests that pupils make most progress in music when assessment is focussed on tasks that are clear and broken down into small, achievable steps (Christodoulou, 2017; Wiliam, 2011; Sweller, van Merriënboer and Paas, 2019). Whilst the teachers at this school felt that they could not identify progress in the long term, they could make judgements against short term lesson objectives. Many composition tasks provided by the teachers had clear parameters (Ockelford, 2016) and individual targets, but the steps did not contribute to a cohesive whole and did not move conceptual learning forwards. Much assessment in this school, related to the teaching of subject-specific vocabulary: much of which was taught out of context and related to the theoretical and technical sides of music.

Ofsted (2021a) talks about three pillars of progression in music education: technical, constructive and expressive that interrelate in musicianship.

Figure 1: Pillars of Progression



'Technical' development is necessary for pupils to translate their musical intentions successfully into sound. It involves instrumental playing or singing but may also focus on music technology. The 'constructive' pillar refers to knowledge of how musical components come together - both analytically and in the creative process - and the 'expressive' pillar, is focused on the more indefinable aspects of music: quality, meaning and creativity.

Ofsted (2021a) suggests that within the primary music curriculum these three 'pillars' should be seen in balance. Whilst the first two are largely skills and knowledge based – the sorts of areas where the teachers at this school could set short term targets – progression in the expressive element is more complex. Ofsted suggests that the expressive strand includes 'musical quality', 'musical creativity' and 'knowledge of musical meaning' across the world and time.

Throughout the interviews, most teachers returned to the idea that enjoyment and emotional engagement should be deemed a purpose of music education and therefore a contributive element to achievement in music. Whilst not being a judgement on 'musical quality' and not being a form of 'musical creativity', it could be argued that it is related to 'musical meaning'. Making the children aware of this aspect of musical learning, and understanding its power and potential use, would make it a form of knowledge. Using this interpretation of learning and knowledge, enjoyment and emotional engagement would potentially fit within this last 'pillar'.

In the document, 'Research Review Series: Music', Ofsted (2021) states that music offers young people the chance to work in an aural dimension 'that often sits outside our capacity to describe in words'. However, for the purposes of primary learning, assessment and progress, music is conceived of as an evidence-based subject, dependent on words: the formal documentation - the National Curriculum (DfE, 2013) and the Model Music Curriculum (DfE, 2021a) - have as their educational foundations, discussion, description, explanation and justification. Children and teachers need to be able to articulate a rationale, their ideas, their imagination and their aspiration.

Gardner (1993, p.109) writes that 'Except among children with an unusual musical talent or exceptional opportunities, there is little further musical development after the school years begin'. He makes the point that musical illiteracy is acceptable in society.

'Literacy' in relation to English, as a curriculum subject, includes reading, writing, oracy and listening. How do we *use* our ability to read and write? How do we *use* oracy and listening? Conversely, what do we miss out on in our own lives and society if we *do not use* these literacy skills?

What, then, is the meaning of musical literacy? Everyday understanding would define it as the reading, writing, and playing of music, as well an understanding of cultural practice and historical and social contexts. But how do we 'use' music in our everyday lives? What do we miss out on in our own lives and society if we *do not use* music?

Should the music curriculum for primary aged children include education on the 'use' of music in our everyday lives?

The use of music in everyday life

Teachers talked personally about the wider benefits of music more than any other aspect: eighteen out of twenty teachers talked about emotional engagement through music. Most discussions moved from personal use to their feelings about using music with the children and for the children.

Questions on the questionnaire generated interesting information regarding the purpose of the music curriculum. Many teachers felt that one of the purposes of the music curriculum

should be how to 'use' music in everyday life: for emotional support and well-being. As an example, learning to make playlists for a variety of purposes was suggested for the older children. Listening to a wide range of genres whilst at primary school was advocated to give the children more opportunity to identify the styles they liked and could identify with. Heavy metal music was discussed with mixed views but it was suggested that gaming and film music would be a good way of engaging some children in the music curriculum.

In alluding to affect and pleasure, Gardner (1993) suggests that we encounter what might be the central puzzle surrounding music. Listening for pleasure as part of the development of listening skills was advocated by the teachers, but also enjoyment as an end product in itself, with parallels drawn with reading for pleasure. References were made as to how this would help support mental health.

Teachers also made suggestions that children should be taught to use music for self-regulation. The use of music for self-regulation was talked about in detail by one member of staff who was piloting a version of the 'Zones of Regulation' (Kuypers, 2013) approach with the children, with a view to extending it throughout the school. Music had not been considered as part of this initiative but the teacher could see positive strategies for its use and for the regulation of emotion in the classroom.

Research by Stigler and Miller (2018) led them to reject the idea that teaching can be defined in terms of best practices. Instead, in order for learning to be effective, the teaching needed to be contextual and meaningful for the children. It was also necessary for teachers to focus on what the pupils are thinking rather than what they are doing (Dehaene, 2020). Simones (2017) asks us to consider transformational learning for music teaching. This includes consideration of how and why music is taught and its link to society. The result being fundamental and potentially profound changes in perspective (Nerstrom, 2017).

There was a strength of feeling that primary children should be taught to 'use' music as part of the formal school curriculum. Teaching about the 'uses' of music would not require special expertise or knowledge. It would not require more training and professional development. It would not need to be measured in terms of progress or attainment.

Music can enrich individual lives in many ways, not least with regard to mental health and wellbeing (Chapman, 2022). The National Plan for Music (DfE, 2022) recognises that music

'contributes widely to the wellbeing and enrichment of people and communities' (ibid., p.12). There is also reference to the notion that children 'may benefit' from the 'mental health and wellbeing aspects of music making' (ibid., p.32 and p.45) and that music 'can support broader outcomes', including mental health and wellbeing (ibid., p.64). The use of music 'as a tool to ease the challenges of transition to secondary school' (ibid. p.35) is also mentioned. For many, the music they love will be part of the narrative of their lives and bring colour to the experiences that shape them (Ofsted, 2021).

Findings

The teachers at this school perceive that attainment in music, in common with all other subjects, is concerned with the acquisition of knowledge and the development of skills. They perceive that the single most important factor in raising attainment concerns the learning of subject specific vocabulary, which, in many cases, is taught out of context. Almost all teachers said that they could not assess progress in the subject: assessment strategies were judged as ineffective.

Contextual research

The statement above links with the fact that music can be considered a difficult subject to teach because of the specificity of musical expertise (Rogers et al., 2008) and other associated references (previously listed).

The school believes that the children's personal vocabulary will remain limited if they do not adopt teaching strategies to expand acquired vocabulary. To this end they have a policy for vocabulary development based on Beck, McKeown and Kucan's (2012) work of 'tiered' vocabulary. This is used effectively as a memory development tool with the aim of developing wider vocabulary usage and understanding of subject specific vocabulary. This in turn is expected to result in progress and higher attainment in the subject.

What is this research saying that is different? Why is this important?

Attainment, progress and assessment in music is dependent on a coherent, high-quality music curriculum. This is lacking in the school and was highlighted in an earlier section. It

also significantly affects the teachers' perceptions of their own competence and confidence in delivery of the subject.

As part of the discussion concerning the purpose of the curriculum, teachers identified that teaching and learning concerning the 'use' of music was absent from the curriculum and felt strongly that it should be included.

Many teachers felt strongly that the children should learn to 'use' music in everyday life, including for emotional well-being, as part of the music curriculum. This research would suggest that a significant positive development for the primary school music curriculum would be to recommend 'the use of music' as a formal strand of the curriculum.

This would empower the teachers to teach something they deem significant in the subject, without full recourse to the conventional acquisition of knowledge or the development of skills in the subject. It would have a potentially significant, lasting benefit for the children, even if they chose to take no further interest in practical music making in later life.

It would not rely on the recommendation, so common in previous research, that, in order to address problems of teacher competence and confidence, teachers need to have more training. This has not been forthcoming, as seen by looking at the historical context of music education.

8.2.2 How do Generalist Primary Teachers Perceive Musical Intelligence?

Creativity

The multiple and changing ideas of creativity (Henley, 2024) have been discussed earlier in this thesis. In the context of discussing creativity at a primary school level, I am not designating creativity as a special talent (Frith, 2012: Henley, 2024) for the few, or as non-conformity and originality (Henley, 2024).

Teachers identified exploration as being an important part of making music creatively. Hallam and Bautista (2012) suggest that it is through exploring possibilities that children develop creative and critical thinking: a skill that is essential for advanced learning. This may

be why, in this school, many tasks given to the children are exercises in problem solving through cognition – using cognitive creative processes. The teachers are focussed on learning because their performance is measured by the learning which takes place in their classrooms. Many teachers will be aware that, except for rote learning, learning and problem solving are very highly related (Sternberg, 2021, p.1779). This applies to music teaching and learning.

Examples of personal expression in creativity - the freedom to explore and listen to sound and create without judgement (subjective creative processes) - were rare in the teachers' responses. Perhaps because it is more difficult to identify the learning which has taken place.

Some teachers stated that there were no right or wrong answers in music: these perceptions were linked to the concept of making of mistakes. The accuracy of these beliefs depends on the type of creative processes which are being used. Subjective creative processes potentially have no right or wrong answers, but this is dependent on the task which has been set. If there are parameters delineated by the task or theoretical or cultural contextual considerations, children could be working using conservationist creative processes or cognitive creative processes, in which case, there may be right and wrong responses. Cognitive creative processes, or problem solving, are prevalent in the musical activities in this school.

By suggesting that there are no right or wrong answers, teachers ameliorate the possibility of making mistakes themselves. This potentially empowers them to teach the subject because they may perceive themselves as less vulnerable.

Some teachers perceived that the children could imagine more detailed (creatively better) compositions inside their heads than they could translate into practice. Talk was anecdotal and there was no tangible evidence of this perception.

Gardner (2006, p.47) explains that in the creative arts, the typical ten-year-old child (Upper Key Stage 2) enters a period of 'literalness'. They strive to produce creative works that are as accurate as possible in terms of representational fidelity. The teachers at this school talked about this in relation to art lessons: the children rated their art products by whether they were true representations of what they were supposed to be. Drawing a parallel to

musical compositions, this may explain why teachers of Upper Key Stage 2 children, felt that the children could imagine more complex compositions that they could produce in practice. By this age the children are able to draw on a wealth of everyday listening, potentially imagining compositions based on the tacit learning and multiple hearings which have taken place over their life-times. More detailed analysis of the children's classroom comments and discussion with children, would allow the teachers to form firmer impressions of their attitudes, aspiration and potential.

Why should this be different for the older children in the school? Gardner (2006, p.46) contrasts the attitudes of ten years olds to the tacit learning which takes place in the first years of life. Children develop symbolic skills and theoretical conceptions largely through their own interactions with the world in which they live. They do not rely on explicit teaching. But by the age of ten, children 'want to know the rules of the game' (Gardner, 2006, p.47). Generally, they want to be right and achieve success.

This 'representational fidelity' (Henley, 2024) is a form of perfection: 'if the children do not value anything other than this kind of perfection, they set themselves an impossible target… that causes anxiety and stress' (ibid., p.22). This in turn will affect their attitude towards music as a subject.

Creativity is a form of musical intelligence. Whilst there are no references in the second National Plan for Music Education (DfE, 2022) to musical intelligence, there are a few references to creativity: music provides children with the opportunity to '*explore* their creativity' (ibid., p.2) and to '*develop* their creativity' (ibid., p.7). More importantly the document states that, for many, 'music will simply be a source of joy, comfort and companionship throughout their lives' (ibid. p.7) – significant 'uses' of music in everyday life.

Findings

Some teachers are under the misconceptions that there are no right or wrong answers in music because it is a creative subject. Teachers of the older children perceive that they can imagine more complex compositions than they can produce in practice.

Contextual research

Theoretical and historical knowledge in music is, on the whole, correct or incorrect: teachers understand this fact. However, some perceive that in composition and other creative activities there are no right or wrong answers. This depends on the type of creative processes being developed.

Research by Philpott (2021a) details five types of creative processes. Subjective creative processes are characterised by personal expression and the externalisation of emotion and feeling: this form of creativity is freer in concept and may not have right or wrong answers.

Conservationist creative processes (Philpott, 2021a) use, as their basis, the interaction between individual subjectivity and well-known traditions or cultures. Because creativity within this type of creativity is located within the strictures of culture and tradition, answers and responses may be correct and incorrect. The same may be true of cognitive creative processes (ibid.) or problem solving, dependent on the context provided for the creative task.

Virtuosic creative processes may be dependent on interpretation: this is a complex area within music (Fletcher, 1987), with diverse opinions on how it is achieved and developed.

What is this research saying that is different? Why is this important?

The perception that music is neither right or wrong demonstrates a lack of subject-specific knowledge. Children at this school experience a very limited conception of creativity in two ways: firstly, an incorrect view that they cannot make mistakes in music: and secondly, because they are creating by problem solving, a restricted form of creativity. As such, children do not have the chance to demonstrate or develop the full gamut of creative skills.

A more comprehensive understanding of the different forms of creativity would allow the teachers to widen the curriculum and use terminology accurately.

The teachers' perception that the older children can imagine more complex compositions than they can produce in practice has not been the subject of previous research. Because the teachers held such strong views, it would be worth considering this as a topic of further research.

Emotional Understanding and Interpretation

Musical intelligence and a musical personality can be stimulated and promoted in the classroom through a range of musical activities. (Bartolomei-Torres, 2022). Interview data suggests that the teachers at this school talk more idealistically about the children's creative personalities (Cropley, 2020). A creative personality exists externally and internally and it can be difficult to separate creative personality from creative thinking.

Teachers talk about interpretation and artistry. Interpretation is assigned as a factor of creativity by the teachers at this school: they understand it as a way for children to express themselves. Primary aged children can learn about interpretation, if it is scaffolded by their teachers. This is closely linked with the development of emotions and feelings.

Teachers also talk about emotional understanding as part of the creative process; however, as previously stated, emotional responses to music develop slowly and cannot be accelerated (Burwell, 2024). As such, interpretation and emotional understanding are rarely seen in the musical practice and products of most primary children.

Emotional intelligence is the ability to recognise, understand and manage our own emotions, as well as the emotions of others, leading to better interpersonal relationships and decision making. As part of the taught music curriculum, teachers at this school perceive that music is linked to the expression of emotions and self-regulation. Could this repertoire of knowledge and skills be expanded as part of an understanding of the 'use' of music in everyday life?

In an earlier section of this chapter, I presented the teachers perceptions concerning the 'use' of music and suggested that it be considered part of the formal music curriculum. Teachers considered enjoyment and emotional engagement to be an aim of music learning and, if so determined, it should be a stated aim of music education. Teachers considered that children should listen to a wider range of genres in music, should make playlists for different reasons, should learn to use music for self-regulation and should enjoy music for pleasure and enjoyment.

The 'use' of music would effectively become a form of agency for the children. Ultimately, a form of self-determination. Care would need to be taken to ensure that the children felt safe and secure in lessons where they were developing autonomy and making decisions about music preferences and musical activity (Jellison, 2012).

‘Music plays an important role in the formation of individual and group identity’ (Spruce, 2024, p.146). Musical tastes and preferences (particularly from the teenage years onwards) can be signifiers of the groups to which they consider they belong and are expressions of their individual and collective identity. Foundations for these preferences and tastes are laid in the primary years.

‘We perceive the world without labels, and we can label it only when we have decided how its features should be organized’ (Rosenfield, 1989, p.187). There is a potential for bullying and persecution if a child develops musical tastes outside the norm, as perceived by their peers. There is also the potential for musical preferences to be developed in a more open and nurturing environment, in some cases, eliminating bias and elitism.

Findings

Teachers perceive that emotional understanding, self-expression and interpretation are being exhibited in music activities and lessons. They perceive that self-expression and interpretation are evident in the children’s learning processes and products in the subject.

Contextual research

The early engagement with musical skills, like self-expression and emotional interpretation, is important (McPherson, Davidson and Evans, 2015) and musical development in all areas is dependent on experiences (Burwell, 2024). Research evidence suggests that emotional responses to music develop slowly and cannot be accelerated (Burwell, 2024). Young children can perceive the emotional tune of the music (Corrigall and Schellenberg, 2015), for example sad and happy tunes, but need cues (Burwell, 2024) and guidance.

What is this research saying that is different? Why is this important?

Self-expression is assumed by the teachers to be inherent in creative musical activity. The children’s personal expression, and interpretation, was considered important by the teachers at this school. They perceived it to be of value as an intrinsic and expected part of the music curriculum on offer.

Ways of understanding emotion in music can be scaffolded for the children – they can learn what it means for music to convey emotional meaning in certain circumstances. Their creative potential, with regard to emotional responses and interpretation, can be channelled through discussion of what is taking place and through aspirational practical aims.

Development of a music curriculum which considers the 'use' of music would include learning about emotional understanding and expression as part of formal, controlled curriculum.

As previously stated, this would empower the teachers to teach something they deem significant in the subject, without a full recourse to the conventional acquisition of knowledge or the development of skills. It would make an impact on and produce a lasting benefit for the children, even if they chose to take no further interest in the academic or practical aspects of the subject in later life.

8.2.3 How do Internal and External Factors Impact on Teachers' Approaches to the Teaching of Primary Classroom Music?

Musical Genres: Classical Music

Music education in England has placed greatest value on the processes, practices and repertoire associated with classical music (Small, 1998; Bull, 2019; Spruce, 2024). The content of the National Curriculum (DfE, 2013) presents a broadly Western language of music to school children, deemed 'the best in the musical canon' (ibid., p.196). 'Classical' music features strongly in the lists produced in the Model Music Curriculum (DfE, 2021a). However, in the Youth Music and Ipsos MORI (2019) report, classical music was conspicuous by its absence in the map of children's favourite genres.

Music from other cultures and traditions has been evaluated in terms of these views, processes and practices rather than on its own terms (Spruce and Matthews, 2012). Research suggests that the dominance of classical music within music education has led to the alienation of many people from music education (Spruce, 2024).

Stereotypical views were expressed by some of the teachers at this school with regard to classical music. It was labelled by some to be highbrow and associated with certain higher social classes (Adams, 2013). Elitism was evident in some responses.

Analysing the teachers' responses in the interviews, it became clear that many teachers perceived classical music as orchestral in nature and there was little recognition that orchestral music is used for television, film and gaming. The latter genres of music were perceived as needing to be on the curriculum for primary aged children.

I would suggest that societal and personal attitudes towards different genres in music have affected how the teachers perceive the curriculum. These may be subliminally translated into the way the teachers present the subject to children: teachers may avoid using lessons in which classical music is used for illustration, and favour other genres which they personally find more accessible. In this way teachers are making choices about what to present to the children during music lessons.

Finding

Some teachers talked about 'classical' music with a negative bias.

Contextual research

Many Western countries have traditionally placed greatest value on the processes, practises and repertoire of classical music (Small, 1998; Bull, 2019: Spruce, 2024). Music from other cultures is often evaluated against Western standards (Green, 2002; Spruce and Matthews, 2012).

What is this research saying that is different? Why is this important?

Some teachers at this school perceive 'classical' music to be negatively associated with a lack of accessibility, social class, status and social expectation. Assumed attitudes towards classical music have led to apathy in some teachers to teach it.

Some of the teachers' personal perceptions were presented as potentially damaging value judgements, which could affect the children's educational opportunities if they influenced the choice of curriculum units offered to the children.

The teachers' personal perceptions of classical music may potentially affect attitudes towards the teaching of the subject. Teachers at the school talked about providing children with more varied listening experiences to develop preferences earlier on in their school careers. They also suggested using the children's current listening choices and preferences as the basis for introducing new styles and developing and contrasting listening preferences.

Discussion about (through contrasting and comparing) and analysis of music could be initiated from familiar starting points i.e. the music that the children like and know, potentially resulting more meaningful and relevant learning in the subject and a greater interest in music.

Specialist teachers

Perceptions of the effectiveness of specialist class music teachers differed between teachers in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.

Key Stage 1 teachers at this school felt that they could deliver an appropriate music curriculum without the use of specialist teachers. Teachers in Key Stage 2 felt that the use of specialist teachers could enhance the delivery of the music curriculum. They worried about being de-skilled in teaching the subject. Most said that they would welcome the use of specialist teachers in the short term as a form of professional development.

With regard to the work of specialist instrumental teachers in the school (namely in recorder teaching), the teachers' expectations had not been met. The teachers had expected the children to learn conventional notation. This did not happen and the children learnt to play the recorder by rote with little musicality. These teachers were also disappointed that none of the children continued in their instrumental studies.

Finding

Teachers' perceptions of the usefulness of specialist teachers were divided: responses were Key Stage specific.

Contextual Research

Research has revealed the teaching of music by generalist primary teachers is questionable when generalist primary teachers believe that music should be taught by a music specialist (de Vries, 2011; Holden and Button, 2006).

What is this research saying that is different? Why is this important?

Research has not differentiated between the advocated use of specialist teachers with different ages of children.

Key Stage 1 teachers at this school perceived that specialist music teachers were not needed because they could offer very limited additional benefits to the teaching of the subject. The perception of all Key Stage 1 teachers at this school was that a personal knowledge of the children themselves, across all aspects of education, meant that they were in a better position to give a meaningful music education to the children, setting the subject within a context of learning in other subjects.

Perceptions of Key Stage 2 teachers at this school, regarding the effectiveness of specialist music teachers, were different. Regardless of how well they felt they taught the subject, generally, teachers in Key Stage 2 felt they would be de-skilled if they were denied the opportunity to teach class music regularly. They said that they would welcome a specialist music teacher into their classrooms as a form of personal professional development in the short term but were concerned about dual standards of behaviour between their own lessons and that of a visiting music teacher.

Teachers at this school, although reporting to be, on the whole, lacking in confidence and competence, would prefer to teach music themselves than have a specialist music teacher.

In England, generalist primary teachers are often deployed to teach music without appropriate training (Ibbotson, 2022). The challenges that they face, how they feel

demoralised, their lack of confidence and their perceived musical inadequacies have been documented (Digby, 2020; Kulset and Halle, 2019).

Prior research has identified that for generalist primary school teachers, an additional consideration is teachers' continual professional development (CPD) and the curriculum support they receive in music: a subject in which many do not feel confident (Hennessy, 2000; Seddon and Biasutti, 2008).

Research suggests that Continuing Professional Development (CPD) which focuses on the teachers as musicians would be beneficial (Seddon and Biasutti, 2008). The rationale for this is that by developing the teachers' musicianship, their confidence and understanding in delivering a quality musical education to pupils would be enhanced.

However, as previously identified, the amount of specific music training has not increased within teacher training courses and additional professional development, for established teachers, has not materialised. Research repeatedly asserts that generalist primary teachers lack the confidence and skills to teach music. This does nothing to eradicate the situation or move the current situation forwards.

Throughout all my research interviews at this school, staff talked about wanting to raise the profile of music and were positive about the subject. They were confident with their own pedagogic skills (Holden and Button, 2006). Some perceived they lack expertise relating to curriculum management of the delivery of subject specific content and some lacked professional knowledge of being able to interpret the music curriculum to enact effective teaching and learning (Kemmis, McTaggart and Nixon, 2014). But there is a desire and the potential for music to be taught more effectively at this school.

Data suggests that the attitudes of the teachers towards music influence their teaching and the children; however, it is unclear whether the lack of confidence and competence is due to the incoherent planning of the curriculum or other factors. The planning of the curriculum needs to be organised to enable progress to be made by the children and for meaningful assessment to take place.

Kemmis, McTaggart and Nixon (2014, p.12) propose that teachers are 'hemmed in' by material institutional conditions and by institutional discourses. An underlying factor which formed the basis of all the interviews responses undertaken as part of this study, are the

interpretation and reinterpretation of current discourses. These discourses are manifest in the actions of the staff in the school communicative space: the social practice of the school (ibid.). School and staffroom-based language is deployed in the attempt to produce certain meanings and effects (Edwards et al., 1999) meaning that discourses produce social positions from which the teachers speak, read and write.

Formal and informal discourses occur throughout the school day between a diverse group of people and understanding develops both consciously and sub-consciously. Some discussions (whether the teacher participates actively in them or just overhears them) move the teachers' understanding and attitudes in a certain direction, perhaps towards certain more widely held views. Some will act in the opposite direction: teachers may be ushered into rejecting certain points of view or rationales because of the arguments they hear. Although these persuasive practices may act as a form of power, it may not be the power of policy or the leadership of senior staff. It is the power of the voices of the teachers themselves.

Teachers need to understand what is being suggested and assess whether they personally feel that there is a truth within what is being proposed. They need to feel that what is being discussed is sincere, exploring the morals of the situation. These four validity claims (Habermas, 1985) allow teachers to socially negotiate and influence the direction of school practice.

There was a strength of feeling in the school that the music curriculum should teach children to 'use' music. Examples were provided and justified and a range of persuasive arguments were used to put across individual points. This was not proposed as a formal motion by the teachers and was not presented as a formally organised policy. However, it was the underlying curriculum intention and drive of the majority of teachers themselves.

Self-efficacy i.e. a person's perceived ability to be able to effectively perform a particular task, is lacking in this school in music. The teachers at this school report that the current approach to music teaching does not produce the desired or intended results. Teacher agency is the capacity to coordinate learning skills, motivation and emotions to produce a particular effect or reach desired goals i.e. actual ability. Agency concerns the capacity of individuals to have the power and resources to fulfil their potential: self-efficacy is a foundation for agency. Teachers should be empowered to act on their the agency to adapt

and change the music curriculum to make it more meaningful for both themselves and the children in the school.

In this school, teachers have latent agency to teach the 'uses' of music. Using the ideas, explained as part of the interviews, they have the knowledge to build a curriculum which incorporates 'the use of music'. I feel they have the motivation and emotional passion to achieve this aim.

8.3 Recommendations: How can Generalist Teachers be Empowered and Stimulated to Teach Primary Music?

Recommendation 1

Four defined strands of musical development and understanding (knowledge and skills) should be formally recognised: 'academic', 'creative', 'practical' and 'the use of music'. This should be formally explained and articulated in music documentation. Teaching understanding relating to the 'uses of music' is something that does not necessarily require additional CPD, knowledge or skills. It concerns personal responses and, as such, can be validated and respected by all.

Included with this is listening for pleasure. As well as being a 'use' of music, it would also enable the tacit development of listening skills, to give children grounding in aural competency, musical expectation and to develop musical intelligence.

The development of personal musical preferences with repeated listening opportunities of various musical genres, linked to discussions about the nuances of those preferences, and likes and dislikes, should also be included regularly in music education. Children should also be taught that within a single genre, one can like and dislike pieces/songs, and that this is permissible. The curriculum should seek to validate and support personal preferences.

Proposed ideas for 'The Uses of Music' – a potential new strand of the Primary Music Curriculum

How do we use music in our everyday lives?

- Emotional regulation and mood improvement
- Background ambiance for tasks
- Social connection and shared experiences
- Physical and mental well-being including relaxation and improved focus
- Self-expression and cultural identity

For mood and emotion:

Mood regulation e.g. learning about how music can lighten your mood, reduce anxiety, and help process emotions making it a coping mechanism for challenging situations.

Inspiration and motivation e.g. learning how creating an energetic playlist can motivate workouts or make mundane tasks more enjoyable.

Listening for pleasure e.g. discussing and having the opportunity to listen to different genres of music for no other reason than pleasure.

For ambience and environment:

Atmosphere e.g. teachers explaining and talking about the use background music to create a pleasant and inviting ambiances for study.

Routine enhancement e.g. learning that music can add joy and make routines like morning registration and lining up more pleasant.

For social connexion:

Bonding e.g. discussing how music connects people fostering a sense of unity and shared experience.

Cultural identity e.g. learning how music plays a vital role in defining individual and collective identities and is central part of cultural events, rituals and ceremonies.

For Health and well-being:

Stress reduction e.g. learning how listening to slow, calming music can lower blood pressure and heart rate, contributing to overall relaxation and well-being.

Improved sleep e.g. learning that soft and calming music can be incorporated into bedtime routines (at home) to improve sleep quality.

Cognitive benefits e.g. explanation that music can help with focus and concentration.

For self-expression and identity:

Personal expression e.g. learning that music serves as a tool for self-expression (and self-regulation), allowing individuals to communicate feelings and perspectives that words may not.

Memory and nostalgia e.g. learning how music is deeply tied to personal memories and can evoke strong emotions and nostalgia, reminding us of past experiences.

Recommendation 2

Relevant and appropriate specific nuances of 'creativity' in music should be explained to teachers, with age-appropriate expectations for primary aged children and an expectation that they should be planned for in the taught music curriculum. An understanding of different forms of creativity would allow the term to be used more specifically, and a wider range of creative processes to be planned and taught in class-based music lessons. This would allow different children to experience and engage with a range of creativities.

Recommendation 3

There should be an acceptance that progress is not always tangible, visible or desired. Music learning should be contextualised in the sense of personal development and its use for later in life – child, teen and adult. Tacit learning cannot necessarily be seen externally: personal development of the mind and emotions makes us vulnerable but can offer learning for life. Current education is driven by progress and the measuring of attainment. To remove proof of progress from the music curriculum would take the pressure off teachers, empowering them to teach the subject.

Recommendation 4

An understanding of musical intelligence should drive curriculum content. This contributes to our understanding of musicality and being a musician – it should be recognised that not all children aspire to play a musical instrument and that they can be put off by what they see as 'meaningless' instrumental lessons. Musical intelligence should be defined for

teachers, acknowledging that aspects of musical intelligence can be developed through listening, especially listening for pleasure.

Recommendation 5:

More should be done to eradicate perceptions concerning elitism in music. There is evidence of assumed attitudes towards music and the different genres in this school. Perceptions of elitism and music affect the way that teachers approach teaching the subject, their own confidence and the development of their own agency in teaching the subject.

8.4 Validity and Limitations of Research

In order to 'end-validate' my work, I shared extracts from the anonymised data analysis and discussion chapters with the headteacher (gatekeeper) at the school, in confidence. The purpose of doing this was for her to act as a critical friend, to discuss and to challenge my perceptions. She was also able to share relevant contextual information where she felt it was needed.

In so doing, I discovered that both the current headteacher and the previous deputy headteacher had backgrounds in literacy teaching. The headteacher had been a literacy consultant for the local authority and, as a result, literacy teaching was strong within the school. This helped to explain why the teachers sometimes drew parallels with literacy teaching, for example, reading for pleasure and its parallel concept, listening for pleasure.

There was always the possibility that the headteacher would adopt a defensive position if she met with information from my work she found more difficult to accept, for example, the way the teachers talked about recording the children's work to identify progress. The headteacher was pragmatic about the information presented in the data, which she aimed to use for school and staff development.

I explained the boundaries of my study in Chapter 4: in summary, it is the study of the perceptions of the teaching staff at e primary school within a specific time period (January – June 2023). It is also 'bounded' by contextual situational knowledge i.e. the current staff, led by the current leadership team, with the current intakes of children.

In my methodology chapter I explored issues of generalizability. I wrote that whilst educational case study can be about researching and understanding localised settings, this does not mean resemblances cannot be found in other similar situations. These resemblances could be overt – ideas and information which are current discourses in education – or covert – not discussed for any number of reasons.

My case study highlights the perceptions of teachers at this school. It stimulates questions about whether some of the thoughts of the teachers at this school are common to other schools, but have just not been voiced. My findings concerning the 'use' of music in the curriculum needs to be more widely discussed and the potential application for music education considered.

8.5 Areas of Further Research

It should be noted that this research, like prior research on primary music teaching, has relied on individual teachers to interpret their own teaching and experiences, resulting in subjective judgements situated within both individual and social contexts. The individual voices of a wide range of teachers need to be heard further.

Further research on the practical opportunities for creativity provided by teachers, with data collected through the completion of questionnaires and interviews, triangulated with lesson observation data, could be a subject of further study. This would inform understanding of the complex relationships between intended learning, opportunity, teaching practice and the impact of the teaching through the effectiveness of the outcomes on the subject of a full range of creativities.

The teachers' perceptions that the older children can imagine more complex compositions than they can produce in practice has not been the subject of previous research. Because a few of the teachers held such strong views, it should be considered as a topic of further research. Discourses concerning aspiration and imagination in music could be explored further.

Another interesting subject for further research would be an exploration of relationship between the teachers attitudes towards different genres of music, including 'classical'

music, and how this potentially affects the way they approach, plan and deliver the music curriculum. How does this affect competence and confidence in the subject?

8.6 Conclusion: Contributions of this Research

Emerging from my research is different understanding of why we should teach music in the primary school, emanating from the voices of the teacher themselves. A strength of the research is the way in which individual voices are represented: valuing both individual and common perceptions. The voices of individuals are not lost in numerical data or through the structured response mechanisms of questionnaires and surveys.

I am aware that as a result of listening to individual voices, I have made subjective decisions about what to include – what to hear. I have allowed all individuals to express themselves, providing a wealth of valid data. My approach has been inclusive and mindful.

My research has considered teachers' perceptions and experiences of teaching class music and how they can be empowered and stimulated to teach music.

As part of the main text of this thesis I have indicated how I believe my thesis contributes to the research on the subject of primary music teaching. The three key areas of this contribution sit within academic knowledge of the area; professional knowledge of the area; and professional practice. In summary:

Academic knowledge:

My research makes a unique contribution to academic knowledge by being the only research highlighting the professional and personal voices of the teachers themselves concerning the primary music curriculum in its widest sense. The teachers' perceptions are not constrained by established policy or historical context: they are current and relevant to both the teachers and the children.

Professional knowledge:

Through the eyes of the entire teaching staff at one school, the research offers a unique understanding of the complexities of teaching primary music (as perceived by the teachers) and possibilities for its future development.

With regards to professional knowledge, by way of example, teachers lack knowledge and understanding of creativity. Explanation on the subject will help teachers to understand the nuances and contextualise their own confidence and competence. This could be achieved through information sheets and scaffolded discussions in the staffroom. Rather than professional development centring around the theory of music, an understanding of creativity would help to focus the planning and delivery of lessons, widening learning opportunities.

Professional Practice:

The proposition of an additional strand of formal music education – 'the use of music' – is new, exciting and relevant in today's society. It would need schools to incorporate it into their individual music curriculum policies, recognising 'the use of music' as an important part of children's musical development. However, developing understanding of the wider uses of music makes music more relevant for everyone. Perhaps this new direction would stimulate a wider interest in music, as a subject, for more children.

8.7 Final Thoughts

In his book *How the Mind Works* (Pinker, 1997), prominent cognitive psychologist Steven Pinker argues that music is a non-essential byproduct of other mental faculties, like language. He argues that in a 'Darwinian' sense, music serves no survival function and suggests that if music were to vanish, human life and survival would continue virtually unchanged. The essence of this thinking is captured in the quote on page x. at the start of this thesis.

Critics of Pinker argue that music has deep evolutionary roots related to the importance we place on, for example, social bonding and emotional regulation (Spitzer, 2021). These two activities could be interpreted as two of the uses of music, a theme which has been developed throughout this thesis and which contributes to an answer to the question, why teach music to children in primary school?

The quotation on page x. of this thesis was included because it challenges us to question the benefits of putting effort into the practice of making music and engaging emotionally with music through performing and listening. Data and arguments presented in this thesis clearly

suggest that there are significant personal and social benefits if consideration is given to the 'uses' of music.

Pinker (1997) acknowledges that music stimulates the pleasure circuits in the brain for entertainment, brings intense pleasure and has cultural significance. And whilst I agree with Pinker's (ibid., p.528) statement which reads, 'As far as biological cause and effect are concerned, music is useless' (included on page x of this thesis), I would challenge his suggestion that if music were to vanish, human life and survival would continue virtually unchanged. Given the ways in which we currently 'use' music in our society, if music were to disappear, whilst not having an effect on human survival, it would significantly affect human life through experience.

> Music provides the soundtrack to our lives. It stirs powerful emotions and feelings, recalling vivid memories. It defines who we are, creates precious bonds and friendships, makes us feel better. Music does all these things and so much more. And how we listen to, participate in and involve ourselves in music has changed.
>
> (Youth Music and Ipsos MORI, 2019, p.2)

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Appendix A Brunel Ethical Approval Letter

College of Business, Arts and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee
Brunel University London
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20 December 2022

LETTER OF APPROVAL

APPROVAL HAS BEEN GRANTED FOR THIS STUDY TO BE CARRIED OUT BETWEEN 20/12/2022 AND 31/12/2024

Applicant (s): Mr John Morgan

Project Title: Primary Teachers Perceptions of Music in the School Curriculum

Reference: 40567-LR-Dec/2022- 42527-1

Dear Mr John Morgan

The Research Ethics Committee has considered the above application recently submitted by you.

The Chair, acting under delegated authority has agreed that there is no objection on ethical grounds to the proposed study. Approval is given on the understanding that the conditions of approval set out below are followed:

- **Questionnaire: You indicate that putting their name is optional.**
- **Data Storage: You store your data on the Brunel network server and destroy raw data once your degree is awarded.**
- **The agreed protocol must be followed. Any changes to the protocol will require prior approval from the Committee by way of an application for an amendment.**
- **Please ensure that you monitor and adhere to all up-to-date local and national Government health advice for the duration of your project.**

Please note that:

- Research Participant Information Sheets and (where relevant) flyers, posters, and consent forms should include a clear statement that research ethics approval has been obtained from the relevant Research Ethics Committee.
- The Research Participant Information Sheets should include a clear statement that queries should be directed, in the first instance, to the Supervisor (where relevant), or the researcher. Complaints, on the other hand, should be directed, in the first instance, to the Chair of the relevant Research Ethics Committee.
- Approval to proceed with the study is granted subject to receipt by the Committee of satisfactory responses to any conditions that may appear above, in addition to any subsequent changes to the protocol.
- The Research Ethics Committee reserves the right to sample and review documentation, including raw data, relevant to the study.
- If your project has been approved to run for a duration longer than 12 months, you will be required to submit an annual progress report to the Research Ethics Committee. You will be contacted about submission of this report before it becomes due.
- You may not undertake any research activity if you are not a registered student of Brunel University or if you cease to become registered, including abeyance or temporary withdrawal. As a deregistered student you would not be insured to undertake research activity. Research activity includes the recruitment of participants, undertaking consent procedures and collection of data. Breach of this requirement constitutes research misconduct and is a disciplinary offence.

Professor David Gallear

Chair of the College of Business, Arts and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

Brunel University London

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Appendix B Institutional Approval

RE: Request for permission to undertake EdD research with the teachers at <Name of School>

Dear John,

Following our conversation about your EdD research concerning primary teachers' perceptions of music in the curriculum, I am writing to confirm that I am happy, as Headteacher of <Name of School>, for you to go ahead with your study.

I understand that you are interested to see how the teachers at my school approach the teaching of classroom music. This includes what influences them and their considerations when approaching the subject. I understand that your online questionnaire and online interview schedule, which you have shared with me, allow you to explore my teachers' perceptions and experiences of the subject.

You have explained your aims to be:

- How do primary teachers perceive the Music Curriculum (NC)? How do they approach the teaching of music in practice?
- How do primary teachers perceive musical intelligence and how does this influence teaching practice?
- How do external factors impact on their approaches to the teaching of classroom music?

I am hoping that the information from your study will help support, develop and enhance practice in the teaching of classroom music at <Name of School>.

I can confirm that we have discussed the methods you propose to use and am happy to proceed on this basis. Please continue with your BREO application.

Yours faithfully

<Name of Headteacher>
Headteacher, <Name of School>
<email of Headteacher>

Appendix C Introductory Letter

Dear <Name>,

I am writing you ask that you consider taking part in a research study that I am completing as part of my Doctor of Education (EdD) degree through Brunel University London. I am contacting all teaching staff at <Name of School> to ask if they will participate. <Name of Headteacher>, Headteacher, has given me permission to do so and is supportive of the research.

I am undertaking this research study to learn more about how teachers perceive the teaching of music and its place in the school curriculum.

With this email, you will have received a 'Participant Information Sheet' giving more information about the research process and a 'Consent Form'. Please take time to read the information and consider whether you would like to take part.

If you choose to do so, the 'Consent Form' should be completed, signed and returned to <Name of Headteacher>. The short questionnaire will be sent to you shortly after receipt of this form.

Many thanks.

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

(for inclusion at the beginning of the online questionnaire/survey)

Study title

Primary Teachers Perceptions of Music in the School Curriculum

Invitation Paragraph

I would like to invite you to take part in a research study that I am carrying out, to explore teachers' perceptions of music in the primary curriculum. Before you decide if you would like to be involved, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask me if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part. Thank you for taking the time to consider my invitation.

What is the purpose of the study?

I am interested in finding out about teachers' perceptions of music in the primary curriculum: the way they approach the teaching of classroom music and their perceptions and experiences of the subject.

I am undertaking the study as part of my Doctor of Education degree at Brunel University, London, which I expect to be completed in 2024.

Why have I been invited to participate?

I am inviting all teachers currently employed by <Name of School> to take part in the study. I will include everyone who is interested in taking part to the maximum of 21 teachers.

Do I have to take part?

As participation is entirely voluntary, it is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep and you may be asked to sign a consent form.

If you decide to take part, you are free to withdraw at any time up until 31st December 2023 and without having to give a reason. You are also free to withdraw your data before I submit

my study for marking (31st December 2024) without having to give a reason. There will be no penalties whatsoever, if you choose not to take part.

If you choose to submit your questionnaire anonymously, you will be unable to withdraw.

What will happen to me if I take part?

If you agree to be involved in the study, I will collect responses through an online questionnaire. You can include your name on the questionnaire or can complete it anonymously by leaving the name space blank.

At the end of the online questionnaire, I will ask if you would be prepared to take part in a follow-up online interview to provide an opportunity to discuss some of the areas in more depth. If you agree to this, you will need to provide a secure e-mail address for me to be able to make contact with you. The online interview will be recorded.

I will use information provided in an anonymised form.

Are there any lifestyle restrictions?

No, there are no lifestyle restrictions.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

There are no anticipated risks or disadvantages associated with taking part in this study.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

I believe that involvement in the project has the potential to raise awareness of your own perceptions of primary music in the classroom, allowing you to articulate your thoughts on the primary music curriculum in general. This may have a positive impact on your teaching.

What if something goes wrong?

I don't anticipate that anything can go wrong, but if it does, you are able to withdraw your involvement in the study. You are also able to make a complaint to the Chair of the Ethics Committee (please see details below).

Will my taking part in this study be kept confidential?

All information which is collected about you during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential for the duration of the study. Any information about you which leaves the University will have all your identifying information removed. With your permission, anonymised data will be stored and may be used in future research – you can indicate whether or not you give permission for this by way of the Consent Form.

If during the course of the research evidence of harm or misconduct comes to light, then it may be necessary to break confidentiality. I will tell you at the time if I think I need to do this, and let you know what will happen next.

The data will be kept securely for the duration of my EdD degree. After this point it will be destroyed in line with Brunel University London, policy.

Will I be recorded and how will the recording be used?

If you agree to take part in a follow-up online interview, it will be recorded to allow a transcript to be made. On completion of the transcript, the recording will be deleted. The transcript will subsequently be shared with you to allow you to check that the points you make are clear and as you intended.

What will happen to the results of the research study?

The findings from the research will be written up as part of my dissertation. If I am successful in gaining the EdD degree, a copy of the thesis will be available online through an appropriate dissertation repository. You will not be identified in any report of publication unless you specifically request it.

Who is organising and funding the research?

The research is not funded: it is being organised by me (<Name of Researcher>) in conjunction with Brunel University London.

What are the indemnity arrangements?

Brunel University London provides appropriate insurance cover for research which has received ethical approval

Who has reviewed the study?

This study has been reviewed by the College of Business, Arts and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee.

Research Integrity

Brunel University London is committed to compliance with the Universities UK Research Integrity Concordat. You are entitled to expect the highest level of integrity from the researchers during the course of this research

Contact for further information and complaints

Researcher name and details:

<Name of Researcher>

Supervisor name and details:

<Name of Supervisor>

For complaints, Chair of the Research Ethics Committee:

<Name of Research Ethics Committee Chair, College of Business, Arts and Social Sciences>

Thank you for taking the time to read this document.

Appendix E Consent Form

CONSENT FORM

Primary Teachers Perceptions of Music in the School Curriculum

Principal Investigator: <Name of Researcher>

APPROVAL HAS BEEN GRANTED FOR THIS STUDY TO BE CARRIED OUT BETWEEN 01/01/2023 AND 31/12/2023

The participant should complete the whole of this sheet.		
	YES	NO
Have you read the Participant Information Sheet?	☐	☐
Have you had an opportunity to ask questions and discuss this study?	☐	☐
Have you received satisfactory answers to all your questions?	☐	☐
Do you understand that you will not be referred to by name in any report concerning this study?	☐	☐
Do you understand that:		
• You are free to withdraw from this study at any time	☐	☐
• You don't have to give any reason for withdrawing	☐	☐
• Choosing not to participate or withdrawing will not affect your rights?	☐	☐
• You can withdraw your data any time up to 31/12/2024	☐	☐
I agree to my online interview being recorded.	☐	☐
I agree to the use of non-attributable quotes when the study is written up or published.	☐	☐
The procedures regarding confidentiality have been explained to me.	☐	☐
I agree that my anonymised data can be stored and shared with other researchers for use in future projects.	☐	☐
I agree to take part in this study.	☐	☐

Signature of research participant:	
Print name:	Date:

Primary Teachers Perceptions of Music in the School Curriculum Questionnaire for Teachers

Please complete all parts of this questionnaire with as much clarity as possible.

Short, bullet point responses are fine – your ideas will provide a stimulus for further discussion.

Personal Information:

The following information will allow me to contextualise your responses:

Please be assured that all information contained in your responses will be anonymised. Questionnaires can be completed anonymously: putting your name on is optional.

Name:				
Gender:	**Male**		**Female**	
Age:				**years**
Ethnicity:				
Disability:				
Number of years you have been teaching:				**years**
Number of schools you have taught in:				**years**

Year groups taught during career:	**EYFS**	**KS1**	**Years 3/4**	**Years 5/6**
(Please tick one box)				

Current year group:	**EYFS**	**KS1**	**Years 3/4**	**Years 5/6**
(Please tick one box)				

Please move to 'PART 1 – Teaching Music'

PART 1 – Teaching Music

This section will allow you to reflect on teaching and learning in music.

Briefly describe and explain your **approach to the teaching of primary music:**

How often **have you planned** to teach music to your class this academic year?

How has this plan **worked out in practice** so far?

When thinking about **teaching** and **learning** in **music,** explain any aspects which, **for you**, are **'inhibiting'** and/or **'empowering'**:

- **'Inhibiting'** aspects:

- **'Empowering'** aspects:

Reflect on your use of **different strategies** (**'visual', 'aural'** and **'kinaesthetic')** when you engage in class music:

Please move to 'PART 2 – The Curriculum'

PART 2 – The Curriculum

This section will allow you to reflect on the music curriculum.

Tick the appropriate box to indicate whether you feel the **music curriculum benefits** the children in your class**:**

Music offers **good** benefits	Music offers **limited** benefits	Music offers **no** benefits

Please explain why you have ticked this response:

Tick the appropriate box to indicate whether you feel the **music curriculum affects** the children in your class:

Music affects the children **positively**	Music **may** affect the children	Music **does not** affect the children

Please explain why you have ticked this response:

Tick the appropriate box to indicate whether you feel the **music curriculum enhances the life** of the children in your class:

Music **enhances the life of the** children	Music **may enhance the life** of the children	Music **does not enhance the life** of the children

Please explain why you have ticked this response:

Thinking from your own personal perspective, explain how the teaching of **music differs** from the teaching of other subjects.

Music and art are both creative subjects in the curriculum. How do you find **teaching the two subjects compares**? **Differs**?

Explain **if** and **why** you feel music still has a **place** on the National Curriculum:

If you had the opportunity to rewrite the music curriculum, explain **what you would choose to do?**

Please move to 'PART 3 – Personal Reflection'

PART 3 - Personal Reflection

This section will allow you to reflect on your relationship with music.

Please give details of your **experience of music** and/or **participation in musical activities** to date:

How would you describe yourself in relation to the term **'musician'**?

How would you describe yourself in relation to the term **'musical'**?

How would you describe your attitude to **'singing'**?

In relation to the questions in this section (above), what has contributed to your **personal views** and **values?**

Please rate your experience of music and / or participation in musical activities: on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is 'no experience' and 5 is 'much experience'	
Please rate your musical ability: on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is 'poor' and 5 is 'good	
Please rate your singing ability: on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is 'poor' and 5 is 'good	

Do your reflections (in this section) **affect the way you teach**?

Is there **anything else** that you would like to say about this subject?

If you would be prepared to take part in a follow-up online interview with me to discuss some of the areas in more depth, please provide a secure e-mail address for me to be able to make contact with you.

Email address:

Primary Teachers Perceptions of Music in the School Curriculum
Semi-structured Interview Schedule for Teachers

Personal Information:

The following information will allow me to further contextualise teacher responses:

Name:				
Gender:	**Male**		**Female**	
Age:				**years**
Ethnicity:				
Disability:				
Number of years you have been teaching:				**years**
Number of schools you have taught in:				**years**

Year groups taught during career:	**EYFS**	**KS1**	**Years 3/4**	**Years 5/6**
(Please tick one box)				

Current year group:	**EYFS**	**KS1**	**Years 3/4**	**Years 5/6**
(Please tick one box)				

Follow up any responses / ideas from the teacher's questionnaire which:

- require further exploration for clarity;
- open interesting and pertinent areas for discussion.

PART 1 – Values Concerning Music

This section will allow the teacher to further reflect on the values they attach to music.

Follow up any responses / ideas from the teacher's questionnaire which:

- require further exploration for clarity;
- open interesting and pertinent areas for discussion.

<u>Thinking about your relationship with music….</u>

Explain to me the **value you place on music** in your (everyday) life.

What are the **wider benefits** of music?

How do you listen to music: in what circumstances?

Why do you listen to music?

What do you listen out for? Whole pieces/phrases/moods?

Do you listen to words? Music? Both?

Do you prefer to listen or listen and watch?

What has **influenced** your views on this?

Look for evidence of external influences and internal influences.

How has the **value you place on music changed** across time (your lifetime).

Further questions (if needed as prompts):

What part did music play in your own upbringing and schooling?

There are debates about music being an **elitist** subject – what are your thoughts on the subject?

*Why is it that music can be perceived as **elitist**?*

<u>Thinking about music in the school curriculum….</u>

What **value** do **you** place on music in the curriculum?

What **value** does the **school** place on music in the curriculum?

Thinking about how we use music in everyday life, **how** do you think children ought to be taught music? How should this **influence** the curriculum on offer?

PART 2 – The Purposes of the Curriculum

This section will allow the teacher to further reflect on the creativity and listening in the music curriculum, and their engagement with it.

Follow up any responses / ideas from the teacher's questionnaire which:

- require further exploration for clarity;
- open interesting and pertinent areas for discussion.

<u>Can we now think about music as a creative subject….</u>

Explain how **music is a creative** subject:
What is your understanding of **creativity** in music?

How do you ensure that **creativity is included** in your music lessons?
*To what extent can children **express themselves** through music?*
What are the limitations?)

How does this **compare to creativity** in art and/or drama?

<u>Thinking about listening…</u>

How do children **develop good listening skills** in music?

What **range of music** does your class experience? And how?

What range of music do you think they **should experience** in school?

<u>And thinking about your engagement with the music curriculum….</u>

How do you engage with the music National Curriculum?
Do you feel able to break away from the prescribed curriculum?
How does a set curriculum empower or hinder you when teaching music?

What are your **thoughts** on the use of **specialist music teachers** in schools? How have you come to that **opinion** on the subject?

PART 3 – Identifying Progression in Music

This section will allow the teacher to further reflect on progression in music teaching and learning.

Follow up any responses / ideas from the teacher's questionnaire which:

- require further exploration for clarity;
- open interesting and pertinent areas for discussion.

<u>Thinking about progression….</u>

How do you identify **progress in music** within a lesson? Over time?

Compare this *with English and Maths:*

What evidence do you **look for**? What evidence do you **record**?

How are children taught to **articulate their own progress** in music?

How does this ***compare*** *to English and Maths?*

<u>And now about children who are musical….</u>

How can you **identify** those children, in school, who are musical? *(Internally and externally based perceptions).*

PART 4 – Constructs of Musician and Musicality

This section will allow you to reflect on definitions relating to music, social, cultural and historical factors.

Follow up any responses / ideas from the teacher's questionnaire which:

- require further exploration for clarity;
- open interesting and pertinent areas for discussion.

<u>Thinking about definitions….</u>

How would you **define a 'musician'**?

How does this relate to **being 'musical'**?

*How would you **define being 'musical'**?*

Were there any times in your past when you would have **considered yourself a musician** or **musica**l? Or

Are there times in your past when you would have considered yourself **more musical** and more like a musician?

How have your views on music been shaped:

- **Social** influences?
- **Cultural** influences?
- **Historical** influences?

<u>And finally….</u>

What are your thoughts on being allowed to **learn alongside the children**?

Is there **anything else** that you would like to say about this subject?

Appendix H Participant Data: Summary Demographics

Gender

	Male	Female
Number of Participants:	4	17

Age

20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59
3	7	5	6

Disability

None	Disability
20	1

Number of Years Teaching

1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21-25	26-30
6	2	4	6	0	3

Number of School Taught in

1-2	3-4	5-6	7-8	9-10
8	7	4	1	1

Year Phases Taught

1	2	3	4
2	9	5	5

All White British - significance

First Name	Gender	Age	Ethnicity	Disability	Number of Years Teaching	Number of Schools Taught in	Year Phases Taught
T1	Female	48	White British	None	11	4	2,3,4
T2	Female	52	British	None	3	5	2,3
T3	Male	31	White	None	1	1	2
T4	Male	29	White British	None	2	2	3,4
T5	Female	37	White British	None	15	2	1,2,3,4
T6	Female	44	British	None	16	4	1,2,3,4
T7	Female	35	White British	None	10	4	2,4
T8	Female	25	White British	None	2	1	2,4
T9	Female	55	White British	None	13	3	1,2,3

T10	Female	50	White British	None	20	5	1,2,3
T11	Female	41	White British	None	20	1	2,3
T12	Female	54	British	None	17	6	3,4
T13	Female	49	White British	None	27	6	1,2,3,4
T14	Female	30	White British	None	8	2	1,3
T15	Female	51	White British	None	29	9	2,3,4
T16	Female	27	White	None	3	1	1
T17	Male	51	White British	None	30	7	2,3,4
T18	Female	40	White British	None	18	2	1,2,3,4
T19	Female	33	White British	None	12	4	2,3
T20	Male	33	White British	Aspergers	4	4	3,4
T21	Female	37	White British	None	16	4	1,2,3,4

Appendix I Example of Completed Questionnaire

Primary Teachers Perceptions of Music in the School Curriculum Questionnaire for Teachers

Please complete all parts of this questionnaire with as much clarity as possible.
Short, bullet point responses are fine – your ideas will provide a stimulus for further discussion.

Personal Information:

The following information will allow me to contextualise your responses:

Please be assured that all information contained in your responses will be anonymised. Questionnaires can be completed anonymously: putting your name on is optional.

Name:				
Gender:	**Male**		**Female**	✓
Age:				**years**
Ethnicity:	**White British**			
Disability:	**-**			
Number of years you have been teaching:				**years**
Number of schools you have taught in:				

Year groups taught during career:	**EYFS**	**KS1**	**Years 3/4**	**Years 5/6**
(Please tick one box)		✓	✓	

Current year group:	**EYFS**	**KS1**	**Years 3/4**	**Years 5/6**
(Please tick one box)				

Please move to 'PART 1 – Teaching Music'

PART 1 – Teaching Music

This section will allow you to reflect on teaching and learning in music.

Briefly describe and explain your **approach to the teaching of primary music:**

We follow the <Name of Scheme> scheme work for music. It should cover all of the national curriculum.

How often **have you planned** to teach music to your class this academic year?

Weekly

How has this plan **worked out in practice** so far?

There have been times this year where we haven't been able to fit music in every week due to lack of time.

When thinking about **teaching** and **learning** in **music,** explain any aspects which, **for you**, are **'inhibiting'** and/or **'empowering'**:

- **'Inhibiting'** aspects:

Lack of time due to a full timetable.

- **'Empowering'** aspects:

Performances e.g. Nativity

Reflect on your use of different strategies ('visual', 'aural' and 'kinaesthetic') when you engage in class music:

I use all of them.

Please move to 'PART 2 – The Curriculum'

PART 2 – The Curriculum

This section will allow you to reflect on the music curriculum.

Tick the appropriate box to indicate whether you feel the **music curriculum benefits** the children in your class**:**

Music offers **good** benefits	Music offers **limited** benefits	Music offers **no** benefits
✓		

Please explain why you have ticked this response:

It allows the children to develop skills that they would not have the chance to develop in other areas. It also gives them opportunities to develop social skills and group work.

Tick the appropriate box to indicate whether you feel the **music curriculum affects** the children in your class:

Music affects the children **positively**	Music **may** affect the children	Music **does not** affect the children
✓		

Please explain why you have ticked this response:

Children enjoy the practical side of this subject. Almost all children, as I have said, enjoy singing and get excited when the instruments come out. I think this is an opportunity to do something different from the rest of the curriculum. For some they look forward to the weekly music sessions.

Tick the appropriate box to indicate whether you feel the **music curriculum enhances the life** of the children in your class:

Music **enhances the life of the** children	Music **may enhance the life** of the children	Music **does not enhance the life** of the children
✓		

Please explain why you have ticked this response:

The music curriculum allows children to sing and make music together. Some children sing at home, some in the playground and some do not choose to sing at all. Classroom singing is a way of encouraging everyone to join in. Almost all children under class enjoy singing and you can see it on their faces. Playing percussion is more difficult as more negotiation has to take place.

Thinking from your own personal perspective, explain how the teaching of **music differs** from the teaching of other subjects.

It is more practical than other subjects. There is less recording / written work.

The children listen to music an outside school, however, it is not the same as the music they listen to inside school. But the children have their own preferred music styles, probably influenced by what their family listens to. In school we tend to listen to more classical music or famous songs. The work they doing composition is really just improvisation and noise making.

It is easier to research history and geography facts and to experiment in DT and art. Music is one of the subjects where teachers think they can't do it unless they have a musical background although it is easier in Key Stage 1. I think it is more acceptable for children to make random noise in Key Stage 1 with the instruments, but further up the school as children need to produce more recognisable pieces it is more difficult. It is difficult show progression and difficult to assess unless you know what you are doing.

Music and art are both creative subjects in the curriculum. How do you find **teaching the two subjects compares**? **Differs**?

Both are enjoyable to teach as they allow the children to be creative. Children enjoy both subjects and participate well. Art produces a final product and children record their ideas in their sketchbooks throughout the block of work.

However, I think art is easier to teach. Preparation and organisation are easier. The children stay in their seats so behaviour is easier to control. The children get excited about instruments and are sometimes a bit daft. Children can produce effective pieces of artwork even with limited skill – the paintings look like a painting! With music, the compositions don't sound like pop songs or other music the children have heard. Younger children seem to be fine with this, but the older children lose heart when they can't produce something recognisable.

Explain **if** and **why** you feel music still has a **place** on the National Curriculum:

I feel music still has a place on the National Curriculum as it allows the children to develop skills that they would not have the chance to develop in other areas. It encourages the children to be creative. However, the National Curriculum doesn't seem to be flexible enough to include pop music and other things that the children are listening to at this time.

If you had the opportunity to rewrite the music curriculum, explain **what you would choose to do?**

Make it a mixture of singing and using instruments and including conversations about music in the children's everyday lives, like pop songs, and music on TV. How does it make us feel? Based in the reality of their lives, rather than in the abstract.

Please move to 'PART 3 – Personal Reflection'

PART 3 - Personal Reflection

This section will allow you to reflect on your relationship with music.

Please give details of your **experience of music** and/or **participation in musical activities** to date:

Outside school, I enjoy attending concerts and musicals. I have also previously been part of a local choir and attended many performances and competitions. Inside school, I have been involved in many school performances.

How would you describe yourself in relation to the term **'musician'**?

I would not describe myself as a musician.

How would you describe yourself in relation to the term **'musical'**?

I enjoy musical activities, particularly singing.

How would you describe your attitude to **'singing'**?

I absolutely love singing! I have previously been a member of a local choir which I enjoyed very much.

In relation to the questions in this section (above), what has contributed to your **personal views** and **values?**

Please rate your experience of music and / or participation in musical activities: on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is 'no experience' and 5 is 'much experience'	3
Please rate your musical ability: on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is 'poor' and 5 is 'good	3
Please rate your singing ability: on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is 'poor' and 5 is 'good	5

Do your reflections (in this section) **affect the way you teach**? No

Is there **anything else** that you would like to say about this subject? No

If you would be prepared to take part in a follow-up online interview with me to discuss some of the areas in more depth, please provide a secure e-mail address for me to be able to make contact with you.

Email address: <Not included>

Appendix J Example of Transcribed Semi-Structured Interview

Interview with T8
<Date>
<Time>
<Length of Interview>

Interviewer: Explain to me the value you place on music in your everyday life.

T8: Oh, oh, wow! I think it's huge. I'm constantly listening to music, whether it's to sort of chill at the end of an evening, or sort of work out to in the gym or on my drive in and out of school, I'm also listening to music all the time. So, I listen to a vast range of music throughout the day, while I'm cooking. There's always something going on in the background in my flat. So, yes, I would say other than when I'm at school, there's always something going on through my speakers.

Interviewer: Why is that?

T8: It's partly that I don't like silence. And music keeps me going. Yeah. I think it's a mixture. I think sometimes there's times when I think... Oh, sometimes there's times I don't realize I haven't got music on, because there's all the voices in my head going on. But others, definitely. For the gym. Yes, to energize. After a day of work, to have a more calming playlist on…. sort of like, relax back out of the sort of like craziness that is being at school, and then of an evening, as well, to relax before going to sleep. So… Yes, I would say it sort of helps me plan my day almost.

Interviewer: How do you organise your music?

T8: Yes, yes, so, I have playlists. I subscribe to Spotify so, and then I can put on whatever one that I'm going for. There is mileage in teaching the children to make playlists. I think teaching them how to use music to support themselves emotionally... well-being wise, and I think I think the curriculum's too narrow.

Interviewer: So, what are the wider benefits of music?

T8: Calming, energizing, relaxing. I think it also brings people together as well, sort of like going to concerts to support your sort of favourite artist. Or, you know, when you're around at a barbecue or at an event, there's music on. Yes, I think it can also be a very social thing that people can listen to and enjoy together.

Interviewer: How do you listen? Do you listen to words, for melodies, for harmonies?

T8: I think sometimes, it is words, definitely, 'because you can sort of learn the song. And then there's sort of key phrases and things in there that stand out to you and can help you. Take advice on in your life, because some of the words are very meaningful. Some of the words are also... it's sort of like helps. You understand what the artist is going through, and

how they dealt with a particular situation. So sometimes it can be words. I find I have to be sort of really listening to the music to pick up on the words as opposed to if I'm say driving around. Sometimes the words, certain phrases, will pop into my head, but otherwise for me it's mostly the rhythm and that. If the piece of music's got a good intro to it genuinely, I'm quite hooked.

Interviewer: Are there any other wider benefits of music?

T8: Yeah… I use music at the gym. I don't realize that I'm doing it, but quite often if I'm, sort of like, lifting weights or something, or particularly if I'm on the, oh, the treadmill, or, sort of like, the bike, or something I'll end up actually sort of peddling to the bass of the music without realising.

Interviewer: Do you prefer to listen music or to watch it being performed?

T8: I think going to watch, live music is phenomenal. I particularly like going to the ballet and I've been to the opera a couple of times, and I think a live orchestra, or when you're watching a musical in London, again, if there's a live orchestra as opposed to a recording. I think that's for me. It's far more moving. But yes, I guess it for me. It's definitely more of a listening element than a watching a performance. Because whenever I'm listening to the music for the ballet, I'm watching the dancers on the stage as opposed to what the orchestra up to.

Interviewer: What has influenced your views on all this?

T8: I do play a couple of musical instruments, and I love to dance. I have done my whole life. So, from the age of sort of 5, right up until I was 18, and then I did a university as well. But my degree is in genetics, so not. Some of it is because of my dance background.

Interviewer: Are there any other influences on your musical journey?

T8: Oh, I would say definitely, as I was growing up, I really enjoy listening to classical music, and I definitely get that from my parents. I would say then, when I sort of started to create my own taste and music, was very much influenced by my friends. Also, definitely the playlist I listen to. I subscribe to one that's sort of like the chart music, so depending on what's in the charts. I'll then pick and choose what ones I like out of that to add to my own personal playlist, and then I would say, sort of like, yes, close friends and family influenced me definitely, if it but again, if someone plays something that I'll like, I'll then ask them. Or I'll Shazam it through my phone and then work out what the song is, and add that into my own playlist. I'm not a massive fan of country and Western, but blues and jazz. My sister and I, actually, for her birthday last year went to… it was like a speakeasy in London, where they had, like a jazz band and that was that was absolutely phenomenal. And I would say recently, through my boyfriend, I've started listening to more R&B rap and African as well, and I like buts of all of it. But there's there are a couple of artists that I found through that as well. But there are certain things I like. There are certain things Zach could just leave.

Interviewer: How has the value you place on music changed across your lifetime?

T8: I would say that when I was younger I didn't... I don't know that 'value' is the right word, but my appreciation for music has come, particularly since I've gotten older. I listen to it more as pleasure, as supposed to when I was dancing, I was listening to it, the majority of the time, to learn the dances to the music, whereas and then I'd find myself, sort of like, getting stuck on very particular music, because that's what I was learning for performances. Whereas now I'll listen to a much wider range.

Interviewer: There are debates about music being an elitist subject - what are your thoughts on that?

T8: I would say…. Perhaps it was considered that way, sort of like, when the greatest music wasn't so, perhaps, so readily available in terms of what people classed as music… in terms of going to see an orchestra, but now that people are able to literally create music on a laptop in their home and get it out there. And people are listening to it, like, one of my sort of like new artists I've been listening to is a guy called Russ, and he produces and creates everything himself literally from his bedroom, and you hear about the story of Billy Eilish and how she created things. So, I would say. Perhaps it once was, but I personally don't believe it is now. I believe anyone can listen to music. It's much more readily available.

Interviewer: Why do you think that music can be perceived as elitist?

T8: Things like opera and ballet can be seen as elitist. I think that this is like the role balance they are trying to do more to stop that, because it's just phenomenally expensive to go. But now that's the reason I'm sort of going to see opera… I've never seen it live, but they do live streams in the cinemas, so I've been to several with my Mum and a couple with friends, actually a couple of ballets with friends which has been really lovely. To be able to go, particularly at university. We used to go to see the ballet at the cinema, and because I was friends who danced - who did ballroom and Latin, but I'd never done. I'd never seen a ballet. I took loads of them to see the Nutcracker, and it was amazing they had never seen a ballet before, and they were then hooked, which is lovely. Cost can be an issue, too.

Interviewer: What range of music do you think that children should experience in school?

T8: All music. They're never too young to hear any sort of music. I don't think as long as…. obviously, some rap music, in particular, has got a bad reputation for swearing in it, but otherwise I think, no, I think that the earlier that they get exposed to everything the more they're able to find out what they like rather than just what they might be exposed to from their parents at home. I'd say, particularly from a, sort of like, potentially, deprived area that we are in here. The stigma of classical music being linked to ballet and opera and it being horrendously expensive, would perhaps prevents parents from thinking that they can expect to, or even thinking about exposing their children to the classical music genre.

Interviewer: How would you suggest listening to a wider range of music should happen in school?

T8: I'm thinking about my class now. And ballet. And sometimes they really surprise me. I think if we were to have learnt a book, say, for example, I know the Royal Ballet have just done Cinderella…. If they were to watch a well-known production and have a chance to talk about it in between the different acts, and then sort of had very specific things to watch out for, I think that actually… I think they would watch it. It wouldn't work for everyone, because it's not necessarily going to, because you're gonna get that in any class. If I was to put on some rap music, the exact same thing would happen. No, I think if it was introduced…. like the classic one, that everyone typically gets introduced to is Nutcracker first, around Christmas time, because it's so magical, and it's such an easy story to follow. If, for example, this last year, if we'd have had a free opportunity to go to the Nutcracker, you know, and cost wasn't an issue, a hundred percent, not just because I know the Royal Ballet do live performances for children. And the other one is, there are different versions of Nutcracker because the Matthew Bourn version is quite different from the normal version. So different versions… It's, a spectacle, isn't it? It's not just the music. It's the whole spectrum of what you're seeing, and also admiring the fact that they have such strength and athleticism. I think particularly in the sort of like, male ballet world. There's sort of a stigma against, sort of like, homosexuality which I think could play a factor. But I think that's through not being educated enough to realize that. Well, it doesn't matter, and the also the amount of training. And I read a statistic once that, it was like, a full-length ballet is the equivalent of 4 football matches. If you are on the whole time. If you're dancing… which I just thought was phenomenal.

Interviewer: What value do you place on music in the curriculum?

T8: I sort of see it in terms of, I wish I had more time to be able to expose them to more music. I do think it is very important to them, but I don't think the current curriculum actually gives them a chance to educate them on the range of musical genres that they actually need. And necessarily… the things I think it should just be able to particularly a primary level, be able to be teaching them about an appreciation of music, and how they can express themselves through music rather than potentially technical terms, and no, I mean, that's my belief.

Interviewer: Listening, experiencing, expressing emotion…

T8: And leave the rest to a lot later, because if you can hook children in early enough, you can destroy some of the prejudices that already they're starting to build up, definitely. Okay. I know lots of them do come from the media.

Interviewer: What value does the school place on music in the curriculum?

T8: Oh, that's a good question. I mean, we do a lot. Yes, I would say that we do it in terms of performances.

Interviewer: Are performances part of the music curriculum?

T8: I thought, learning to sing, and being able to sing in a group, was one of the National Curriculum statements. I see them as overlapping and blurring. Well, I think the only way I

would be able to fit it in is the singing aspect of things is for the children to learn a performance, because there's so many things that…. I mean we've got the summer fete coming up, and we've got to do a performance of learning a song. We had Christmas Carol concerts. That's the only opportunity I have with the pressure of all the other subjects around, to be able to do the singing element of the curriculum. I'm very fortunate in the fact that I'm much happier teaching French, and Paul is much happier teaching music, so I haven't been doing music as part of the curriculum - because we've swaps classes and play to our strengths. But I guess we do have Rocksteady as well. I'm part of the band. The teacher's band of rock steady, and to listen to those performances and the, sort of, every year that I've taught I've always had children in my class that have been up on stage performing. And the praise they get from their peers, and the excitement from their peers at being able to watch their friends. Performing is brilliant. So, I definitely say, and that's why, sort of, I like Rocksteady. Really, the concerts that we do really show how it brings everyone together to listen to music. So, I think it can be a big boost and it's also the confidence it has in those children to be able to learn something and put themselves out there on the stage.

Interviewer: Explain to me about Rocksteady?

T8: It's done through assemblies. Oh, I can't remember what it's called, but yes, they have a live stream or a stream that comes out that literally goes through the National Curriculum and teaches children different aspects of the National Curriculum which my Year 6 absolutely love and it is a great way to introduce notation and all of the aspects of the National Curriculum. But it is taught by a very knowledgeable person very confidently which I know, sometimes, are certain aspects I'm not so good at. So yeah.

Interviewer: Can you explain to me how music is a creative subject?

T8: Oh, well, I guess your you can use it to express your, sort of, feelings and emotions, and it changes your, sort of, mood. And then, I guess, you're also able to be creative with music in lots of different ways in terms of being able to compose your own music, while for me, the best way that I'm creative with music is through dancing to it. So, I think, yeah, I think in a nutshell that.

Interviewer: Can you explore that point with me?

T8: Dance?

Interviewer: Yes.

T8: Potentially it would be great to teach dance in a cross-curricular way, yeah. To be able to link PE and music together. So, for example, say, sort of, you know, how the same before, if you said, would my Year 6 boys enjoy watching the ballet, if we'd have learnt about the story of Cinderella watch some of the royal ballet performing it, and then they had a chance to use mime to create their own scenes to a piece of music that would be very interesting to do.

Interviewer: You talked specifically about mime when we were talking about dance. Was that a conscious thing?

T8: Okay. Yes… No, I don't think so. Although maybe… Yes, if I was to say you were going to create a dance. Oh, I don't know, say a different fairy tale to this piece of music, I'd have 90% of boys - they would switch off entirely. And the other 10% wouldn't be happy. But would get on and do it. Whereas if I'm were to say, you need to create a sort of movement piece explaining the story of a fairy tale to this piece of music, I, definitely, would get a lot more. I would then have it completely the other way. 90 % would want to do it.

Interviewer: You've moved from mine to movement….

T8: I manipulate language depending on…. I know I did when I was with the children, depending on who they are.

Interviewer: At what point does a movement piece become a dance?

T8: So, I think, for me, it would start off as a mine to tell a story, and then they would make it bigger and bigger, and add in more movement, and I would perhaps say, 'Right well, you've got a mime to explain this part of the story and a mime to explain the next part. How are you going to join them together? I want you to create movements which could join them.' Then, without them realizing, because they don't, they have a dance. Movement to music.

Interviewer: How do you ensure that creativity is included in your music lessons?

T8: So, when I was in Year 4, my favourite unit to teach was through Chrome Music Lab, where the children were learning. We taught them specific vocabulary and then they were able to go off and do it. And very, very quickly and easily, using sort of block music notation and shapes. Oh, that was one of the best ones, was they're able to draw on the screen either a circle or triangle or square, and then, depending on where they put them on the screen it would change the pitch of them, so they're able to learn the words through that. And so, they were able to create all sorts of weird and wonderful sounds, very simply and easily and autonomously because it was such a simply little app for them to create music. It was their interpretation. Yeah.

Interviewer: So, Chrome Music Lab is the name of an App, yes?

T8: Yes, yes. So, I think it's important to be able to work independently. Because for the children to be able to work things out themselves and create something that they found nice is one thing. And then we were able to…. they were able to then collaborate in big groups with the iPads. Each one got given a different instrument on the Chrome Music Lab, and they had to create a piece of music between the iPads that they had.

Interviewer: So, there was a degree of collaboration?

T8: Yeah. But there hasn't been training on the use of some of those apps. I think that was purely because when we were in Year 4, and I was planning the computing and music

lessons, and so I used a cross-curricular approach. The music, I think, it was actually the computing curriculum that had this App. I went on and found it, and really realized, cool, this is phenomenal. So, we were able to do a cross-curricular unit, where they were learning how to use them, and problem solve and do the computing curriculum whilst also, then, creating music and learning about the different effects. Cause, let's face it, there's not enough time in the curriculum to be able to fir everything in. So, this is like the most phenomenal win-win situation that I found for us to be able to do two, subjects that are often less together.

Interviewer: Could you use the same App with older children?

T8: Yeah, I think so. I think so with different starting points. You could get them to create longer pieces of music. And we only used one of the Apps. There are some more advanced ones. But I didn't need to look into that.

Interviewer: How does creativity in music compare to creativity in art?

T8: I guess it's just the different mediums that you're using, because in art you're using, perhaps, paints or pencil or charcoal, or whatever. But then with music, you're using instruments or an App to create.

Interviewer: Do you have a preference for one over the other?

T8: I think…. I think to do. I don't think it should be easier to do one or the other, because you're able to express your own… you're just... it should be the same. I guess it depends which one you've had more experience in. I prefer, personally myself, to create a piece of music, because I've got more experience myself in that, and art I'm not very patient with. I can either do it or I can't, and I'm not willing to put in the practice to make it better. Whereas music…. If I was told, 'What would you rather teach this afternoon art or music?', I would choose music.

Interviewer: Can you explain?

T8: Sometimes it can be a right pain to get out whatever the art equipment is that you've got to get out. I would say, it's easier to get the children to participate in it. Also, when, it comes to it, I guess, in some ways, resourcing is an issue, because the musical instruments are sort of dotted here, there, and everywhere over the school, so to be able to find the right all the right things.

Interviewer: How do you think children develop good listening skills?

T8: In music?

Interviewer: Yes.

T8: I think, I guess, to be able to appreciate a piece of music, you have to sit there, and I wouldn't necessarily get them to sit there in silence, but I'd be getting them to think, how

does this make you feel? And writing things down, or to create a soundscape about a piece of music, or to think about what colours it reminds them of. I think it's also, if say, we're doing a bit of composition work with the children, they have a particular way that they might want it to sound. But they're not able to. They don't have the tools to be able to get there, whereas, with art, they can go, 'Right, I'm wanting to draw an apple. I know I'm going to need the red paint…whereas if they're going to want to have a particular melody, it can be very hard for them to know which notes are correct. That's where the Chrome Music Lab works quite well, because they would literally have bars that they could move up and down to get the right sound without needing to know too much.

Interviewer: Can you tell me more about compositions?

T8: One of the problems is that children know what they want to create, or compose, but they can't do it. And this is especially the case the older they get. They've heard so much music outside. But actually, they don't have the skills to translate what they're imagining into any physical form.

Interviewer: What range of music does your class experience?

T8: I couldn't honestly say 100% exactly what they listen to because of the Internet. They're out there on Tick Tock, and I'll hear them singing, like, the latest trends of little memes and things. The sort of background music to that. So, I know they're watching an awful lot of memes out there, because, then, the common ones that I listen to, I happen to come across. I've heard them singing.

Interviewer: What do they experience in school?

T8: In school, so I guess what they do with Paul. So, they listen to, obviously, the sort of classic Christmas songs…. they definitely get a lot when we're doing an end of term Year 6 'Leaver's song'. They'll get it whenever we have sort of like parties or movement breaks. They'll get, sort of like, Pop songs, because that's what they're interested in. Paul does play them some classical music, and I'll also put it on if we're doing an independent write or PE, or we need some calming time, I'll put on some. I'll just go on YouTube and Google and type 'calming music'. And so, they'll be listening to that. If it's a time when I need them to be calm, and I feel it will help. Some of them really like it, and some of them don't.

Interviewer: So why do it?

T8: I think it's gonna help the majority of the of the class. It's normally one or two that will go off. There's always gonna be one or two who go off task, whatever you do.

Interviewer: How do you engage with the music National Curriculum?

T8: I think, the last time I looked at it was probably when I was filling in your questionnaire, I think, yeah.

Interviewer: And before that?

T8: When I was last planning Year 4 music. I'm not a massive fan of Kapow, because I don't think it necessarily covers everything equally. And yes, I don't think it is, I know, and I also, sort of like, I'm very conscious of being able to get what I want from that particular music unit. So, I'll go back to the National Curriculum and check, yes, I've definitely covered throughout the year all of the things that they need to have covered equally because I don't think Kapow does that. Kapow is very selective, just as they say, much the same thing, and it is very, from what I can pick out, very formulaic. 100%. And it's not really creative. I think in terms of... If you're not confident in teaching music, it's quite good, because it literally tells you exactly what to do for every lesson, but in terms of the outcomes on the children. I'm not sure. I don't think it's that good, but I guess if we're not going to have a specialist music teacher in the school that is able to create their own scheme, as teachers it's very handy to have a scheme, but I think it needs to be different. But as to what exactly needs to be, I couldn't say.

Interviewer: You just mentioned specialist music teachers. What are your thoughts on the use of specialist teachers in schools?

T8: So, I think they can be positive and negative. I think in some ways it's brilliant, because well, I'll just say what I've seen. So, when I was at primary school I had... There were teachers that were coming on Tuesday that would teach children that had chosen to pay for lessons, either violin or piano lessons, and then they would do a singing assembly with the whole school, and then we would have end of term concerts. So, a lot that had had a violin or piano lessons would play, and that was the <Name of County> Music Services. From what I can recall… Then I did my teacher training at <Name of Training School>, and they had a specialist music teacher, and that was fantastic because the children really enjoyed the lessons, and they were exposed to a lot more musical things. I guess if they were taught confidently by a teacher, and music was very big…. Then speaking to my mentor that I had at the time, and she was good at it, <Name of Mentor>, she says that she's then not taught music for years, and so would not be happy to teach music, and so whilst, although I think it benefits, potentially, the children in terms of the lessons were fantastic, and I watched <Name of Music Teacher> several times teach music, it deskilled the teachers. But it's the same as if you have a specialist in any subject. A French teacher or a specialist PE teacher, or whatever. Yeah. So, I mean, for me, for my teacher training, it was fantastic because I was watching brilliant lessons being delivered. But it can deskill teachers because a specialist teacher has been imposed on the class.

Interviewer: What about at this school?

T8: Yes, I guess I am happy to teach it. Very happy to teach it. I guess it's having… for me, the biggest factor always, when teaching music is, when am I going to fit it all in. That's become even more apparent in Year 6. When do you? When do you fit in? Which is bad. Because it should be considered just as important as so many other subjects. And I guess the problem is, I don't like the curriculum in music at the moment, so and I don't think it has the benefits that it could do so. Therefore, I'll hold my hands up and it's pushed down my list priorities. But I still think that it is better for the children that I do it. Even though my subject knowledge may not be as wide as a specialist teacher.

Interviewer: Do you use music throughout the day with the children?

T8: I do use it, sometimes, for calming them down, or for settling them. So yes, every morning during the SATs week, I had background music playing to calm the children, as some said, they really quite enjoyed it. Some of the girls came up to me and said they quite enjoyed that. We also had... I had more in the afternoon, more free time for the children. As we were leading up to SATs, we would do only one subject an afternoon, so they could spend more time independently doing an activity. And so, we would often have, you know, when things were just getting a bit too much, we'd have a dance party. They didn't do the whole curriculum. I carried on teaching, so we were still doing a bit of music, but it wasn't the whole lesson every week, but we were still, we were doing things like silly games like clapping rhythms and things like that, as I would do them as like movement breaks in between things. But I wouldn't teach. They had a lot of extra stuff in the afternoon, which, after I taught reading because I didn't have time to fit that in the morning, we would then do, and a different a completely different subject.

Interviewer: How do you identify progress in music?

T8: Oh, that's a good one, I would say, for the vocabulary. When I was teaching in Year 4, particularly through the vocabulary, that the children were able to independently use and apply it to their work. For example, when we were doing the Chrome Music Lab, how they were able to either individually improve on their piece by sort of thinking about different things that they liked and didn't like about their piece, and if they went back to it. I think it's a hard one, though, to potentially assess, because if the children are creating a piece of music, and you're thinking, 'Cor, that sounds absolutely horrendous', that's their bit of creativity that they have gone and done. So, it's the same, even in Year 6. Sometimes we're meant to be producing something really nice, and someone comes up to me with a piece that's very different to what I intended. But still. It's their expression. So, I would say, yes, the vocabulary is a good one. See whether or not they'll be able to get it. And then, I guess, in the singing, whether or not they're able to sing nicely altogether as a group in tune.

Interviewer: Just going back to your child that brings you a piece that you think is absolutely dreadful, to what extent do you think that's because they don't have understanding or the appropriate skills?

T8: Oh, that's a good one. So, I would say, oh, I think when it comes to music, perhaps they don't quite have the listening skills to realize that that is very off key, and I would not put those notes together. I think that can definitely be a factor. But also, they… I don't think they necessarily understand that notes together sometimes sound a bit better than those notes together. They, also, they don't have the right instruments. Where is the balance in that? In the National Curriculum, it doesn't say anything specific about consonance and dissonance. Sounding good or sounding bad. It doesn't mention those words.

Interviewer: What evidence do you look for? What evidence do you record?

T8: So, when I taught Year 4, we would... The children would be able to upload their pieces of music on to Seesaw. So, the school just introduced it. We use it to record them. If we were doing a singing, we would record them at the start, and then their final performance.

Interviewer: Did you do that?

T8: Oh, yeah. If we are, yes, yes, we might not remember at the very start of the lesson. But yes, we would definitely have evidence for the beginning, what it was at the start, and been hopeful about the improvements.

Interviewer: Why did you do it?

T8: We sometimes went back to it, often to have a quick giggle, because it was really terrible. And then show that the hard work was worth it. It did get better, or sometimes, even if it was sounding bad at the end, you thought well, at least it was better. Actually, I think we just listened because we just thought, 'Oh, look!' When we uploaded the last one, we uploaded it next to the other one, and we thought, 'Oh, let's see if it has improved'.

Interviewer: Did you listen with the children?

T8: No. I listened with T13, who was my partner, teacher.

Interviewer: How are children taught to articulate their progress in music?

T8: Oh! I guess in some ways, maybe they don't need it, because it's…. I guess it depends what you're teaching, because if you're teaching a child to be able to play the recorder, for example, you would, well, to some extent, it does have to get better. But in terms of composition, say, as long as they're able, for me, in order to realize that they're making progress, I would hope that they would be able to say, 'Oh, I've used rhythm here, and this is my rhythm that I have used in my piece of work'. That is how I would hope that they would be able to show their progress. So, it's leading back to when I said about being able to articulate the Tier 3 vocabulary. If they're able to say… if we had a deep dive in music for Ofsted, and they said, 'What have you been learning about in music?' 'Aah! We've been composing pieces of music on Chrome Music Live, and we've been learning about rhythm.' And they were able to explain what rhythm was... That's the progress I'd hope that'd be able to see.

Interviewer: How can you identify the children, in your class, who are musical?

T8: That's interesting. Sorry. I'm just going through my class and think. Hmm. I know the ones that's enjoy music. I can definitely say which enjoys either listening or singing. You can see a change in the child when they are doing something around music or with music, which to me was a big surprise with some of them, particularly some of my boys. I was very surprised that they actually really enjoy singing, and as long as they're focused and not messing around with their friends, actually seeing and stand really nicely and in general enjoy listening to all sorts of music.

Interviewer: It's really interesting that you've gone to the listening enjoyment side, again.

T8: Yes, well, I, as far as I'm aware, I have 2 that can play an instrument out of my class, and one of them does rock steady. One of them has private piano lessons, so I don't feel that that's a fair way of being able to assess whether someone's musical. I do think it ought to be to do with enjoyment and that side of things, as well as just the technical side of playing.

Interviewer: Could you tell me more?

T8: Sorry. I also feel, from the area that our children are in, often they don't have the opportunity, because they're parents can't afford to pay for it. But that doesn't necessarily mean that they're not musical.

Interviewer: Hold on to that thought….

Interviewer: How would you define a musician?

T8: I think… Well, I think it's got to be… somebody is a musician if they can play an instrument or compose.

Interviewer: So how does that relate to being musical?

T8: To me, being musical, is finding pleasure in music, and I would sincerely hope that if you are a musician, you do find great pleasure in music. But I have seen from friends in the past, that isn't necessarily the case. I had a friend who by Year 9 at secondary school, was taking her grade 8 in piano, but she did find any enjoyment in playing the piano anymore, because she had literally just been forced. Yes, forced by her parents to take the grades literally through the years of schooling that she had had. And then, also, because of that, had only got a very skewed view of music, and how she'd also only ever played, because in order to pass a grade, you play pieces of music, and then you move on to your next pieces of music to the next grade. She never enjoyed it. She was never a musician.

Interviewer: Are singers musicians?

T8: Yes, yes, their music is through their voices. Yes!

Interviewer: Were there times in your past when you would have called yourself a musician?

T8: Well, I play reasonably well, and I can play several instruments.

Interviewer: What do you play?

T8: Flute and the piano.

Interviewer: At what levels?

T8: Well, I went up to grades 5 in piano, and grade 7 in flute.

Interviewer: So, would you consider yourself a musician?

T8: I would say I used to be. I don't think I am now.

Interviewer: Can you explain?

T8: Yeah! I will occasionally play the piano around my parents' house if asked to very nicely.

Interviewer: Can you still play?

T8: Yes, yes, I can. Still.

Interviewer: But you wouldn't consider yourself a musician at the present time?

T8: No, because I don't particularly enjoy playing anymore.

Interviewer: Are you musical?

T8: Yeah, I think so. I love listening to music and music's a big part of my life.

Interviewer: So in in the past, when you were doing music exams, would you have considered yourself a musician, then?

T8: Yeah, yeah, I think, cause I, yeah, I was playing it every day. And I was playing in an orchestra, and I enjoyed it then.

Interviewer: How have your views on music been shaped? Do you think there have been any social, cultural or historical influences?

T8: Oh! Probably, I would say, probably, but not so prevalent as the social. Is dance cultural?

Interviewer: I would say dance is social, but, in some circumstances, it could be cultural.

Interviewer: What are your thoughts on being allowed to learn alongside the children.

T8: I think that's really lovely, because, I think, particularly with playing a new instrument…. Say, if all of my children were suddenly asked… suddenly we had a free opportunity for a specialist teacher to come in and teach the children… the trying to think of something that I would want to…. I don't know how to play the double bass, for example, I would a hundred percent want to be involved in those lessons, because I think it's really important for the children to see that their teacher, learning as well. And I think that would also motivate quite a few of my students because they'd say it's a bit of a competition who can play the double bass.

Interviewer: Do you think competition plays a part in music teaching?

T8: Yeah. I would hope not. I know that I just mentioned it in terms of being a motivation for my children, but I would hope that it would be for the individual. But I know, if, say we were learning to play something altogether as a class children would be comparing one another. Which they do in anything, don't they? It's comparison, competition. It depends what you do with the results of your comparison, I guess, or how it makes you feel.

Interviewer: Is there anything else you would like to say about this subject?

T8: I hope your findings make a big difference to the curriculum and change it.

Interviewer: I think there are ways of empowering teachers who are not musical to want to put music back in the curriculum.

T8: Thank you. It's been really interesting. Actually, I've really enjoyed it.

Appendix K Illustration of Data Analysis

Example of the interaction between manual and NVivo analyses

Using teacher understandings of creativity as an example, I will briefly outline some of my thinking and how it developed. As will be perceived, this is a simplified version of the process.

Early in 2024, at the outset of my manual analysis and immersion in the data, I perceived a need for the exploration of the teachers' perceptions of the provision of opportunities for creative development. I identified that the teachers discussed the music curriculum through an interpretation (including a misinterpretation) and application of perceived policy (school and national). This involved personal understandings, interpretation and engagement with a range of curriculum material. The teachers' understanding of creativity involved personal definitions and self-imposed limitations, and a preoccupation with self-expression and freedom.

I wrote in my notes (dated March 2024):

> *A false identification of musical opportunity as synonymous with creativity exists in many cases. For example, many teachers cite musical creativity as having no wrong answers. Other definitions of creativity involve self-expression and freedom of choice, although these are not talked about in a creative sense. Music is classed as a creative subject within the primary school curriculum.*
>
> *In order for music to be a creative subject there must be opportunities for creativity. My thinking is that, broadly, this involves the use of imagination or original ideas to create something. Other areas covered by creativity include: inventiveness: innovation; originality; individuality; artistry; expressiveness; inspiration; vision etc. Where do these fit in?*
>
> *Often children are given controlled opportunities to experiment with instruments and forms.*
>
> *Use of the school scheme is deemed to be rigid with a fairly tight interpretation by the teachers.*
>
> *Creativity in primary music tends to be based on concrete interpretation of form or visual stimuli.*

Creativity is also enacted as improvisation. Creativity is seen as activity driven.

At the time, I asked myself the following questions to guide my exploration:

- What are the parameters of creativity in primary school music?
- Should/Can creativity have a planned progression in music in the primary school?

NVivo analysis (August 2024) allowed me to group data according to key words. I first extracted all data using the stem word 'creative'. This generated a large and file (or 'Node') which needed sub-classifications.

I initially looked for data on 'experiencing creativity' but this produced results which were not useful for or relevant to my research questions.

I next decided to interrogate the data for insights into:

1. The creative person and a creative personality;
2. Creative processes and creative thinking; and
3. Creative products.

This was in line with Cropley's (2020) work on the subject.

Further interaction with the data, saw the emergence of themes regarding the teachers' perceptions of a creative personality, for example, creativity as expression and as self-expression, creativity as feelings, emotions and mood changes, creativity as imagination and creativity as individuality.

My understanding at the time was that the teachers talked about the following with regard to creative thinking:

- Creativity as freedom and exploration, which at the time I summarised as 'processes of choice';
- Creativity as opportunity, which I called 'processes of possibility';
- Creativity as making , which I called 'processes of learning'; and
- Creativity as interpretation or 'processes of translation'.

I also interrogated for ‘creative products’ using the search terms ‘end product’, ‘performance’ and ‘composition’, also searching for perceptions of ‘performer’, ‘musician’ and using the stem word ‘musical’.

Figures 2 and 3 provide one illustration of the ways in which I interacted with the text as themes were being refined. The pictures provide examples of:

- how I organised the teachers’ responses into broad themes for analysis (section headings and bold italic print (in black):
- how I engaged with the teachers’ responses (teachers’ responses in red ink and personal comment in purple pen) to ascertain possible meanings, identify ambiguities and find supporting arguments;
- how I started to categorise significant themes (green pen).

The extract (Figures 2 and 3) shows a selection of data concerning ‘Creativity as interpretation, expression and feeling’ (bold printed text).

The red printed text is a dictated interaction with the teachers’ responses, for examples, I identified teacher interpretations and definitions (as they use them whilst they were speaking), picking out key words and making further comments in purple pen. I make comments to be followed up on such as and identify potentially important quotes:

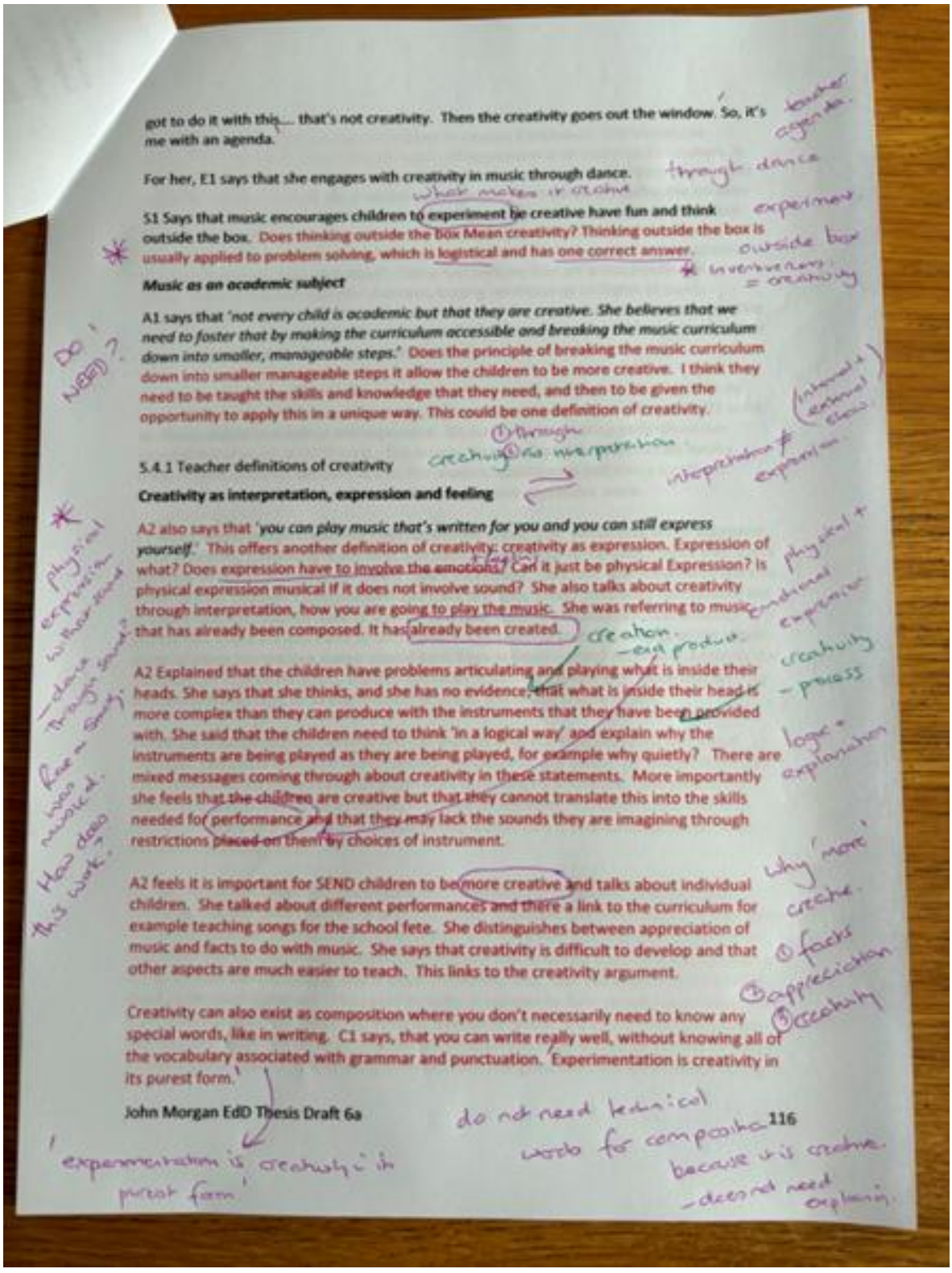
Physical and emotional expression.

Experimentation is creativity in its purest form.

Where does this interpretation come from?

Finally, I started to write potential theme categories, such as, ‘creation – end product’, ‘creativity = feelings/emotions’ and ‘creativity as interpretation’ (green pen).

Figure 2: Example of data analysis and engagement with material



got to do it with this... that's not creativity. Then the creativity goes out the window. So, it's me with an agenda.

For her, E1 says that she engages with creativity in music through dance.

S1 Says that music encourages children to experiment be creative have fun and think outside the box. Does thinking outside the box Mean creativity? Thinking outside the box is usually applied to problem solving, which is logistical and has one correct answer.

Music as an academic subject

A1 says that *'not every child is academic but that they are creative. She believes that we need to foster that by making the curriculum accessible and breaking the music curriculum down into smaller, manageable steps.'* Does the principle of breaking the music curriculum down into smaller manageable steps it allow the children to be more creative. I think they need to be taught the skills and knowledge that they need, and then to be given the opportunity to apply this in a unique way. This could be one definition of creativity.

5.4.1 Teacher definitions of creativity

Creativity as interpretation, expression and feeling

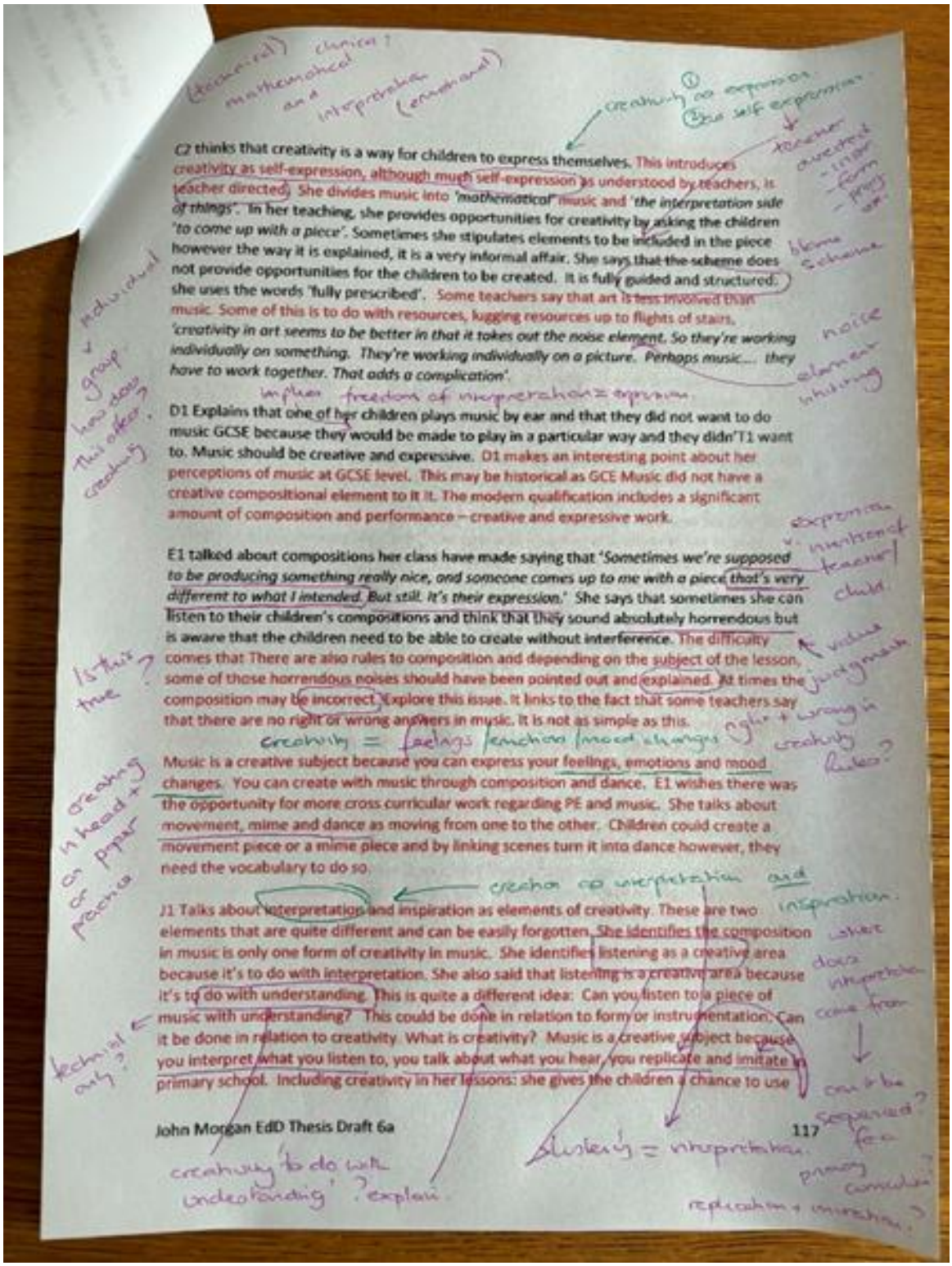
A2 also says that *'you can play music that's written for you and you can still express yourself.'* This offers another definition of creativity: creativity as expression. Expression of what? Does expression have to involve the emotions? Can it just be physical Expression? Is physical expression musical if it does not involve sound? She also talks about creativity through interpretation, how you are going to play the music. She was referring to music that has already been composed. It has already been created.

A2 Explained that the children have problems articulating and playing what is inside their heads. She says that she thinks, and she has no evidence, that what is inside their head is more complex than they can produce with the instruments that they have been provided with. She said that the children need to think 'in a logical way' and explain why the instruments are being played as they are being played, for example why quietly? There are mixed messages coming through about creativity in these statements. More importantly she feels that the children are creative but that they cannot translate this into the skills needed for performance and that they may lack the sounds they are imagining through restrictions placed on them by choices of instrument.

A2 feels it is important for SEND children to be more creative and talks about individual children. She talked about different performances and there a link to the curriculum for example teaching songs for the school fete. She distinguishes between appreciation of music and facts to do with music. She says that creativity is difficult to develop and that other aspects are much easier to teach. This links to the creativity argument.

Creativity can also exist as composition where you don't necessarily need to know any special words, like in writing. C1 says, that you can write really well, without knowing all of the vocabulary associated with grammar and punctuation. Experimentation is creativity in its purest form.'

Figure 3: Example of data analysis and engagement with material



C2 thinks that creativity is a way for children to express themselves. This introduces creativity as self-expression, although much self-expression as understood by teachers, is teacher directed. She divides music into *'mathematical'* music and *'the interpretation side of things'*. In her teaching, she provides opportunities for creativity by asking the children *'to come up with a piece'*. Sometimes she stipulates elements to be included in the piece however the way it is explained, it is a very informal affair. She says that the scheme does not provide opportunities for the children to be created. It is fully guided and structured: she uses the words 'fully prescribed'. Some teachers say that art is less involved than music. Some of this is to do with resources, lugging resources up to flights of stairs, *'creativity in art seems to be better in that it takes out the noise element. So they're working individually on something. They're working individually on a picture. Perhaps music.... they have to work together. That adds a complication'*.

D1 Explains that one of her children plays music by ear and that they did not want to do music GCSE because they would be made to play in a particular way and they didn'T1 want to. Music should be creative and expressive. D1 makes an interesting point about her perceptions of music at GCSE level. This may be historical as GCE Music did not have a creative compositional element to it it. The modern qualification includes a significant amount of composition and performance – creative and expressive work.

E1 talked about compositions her class have made saying that *'Sometimes we're supposed to be producing something really nice, and someone comes up to me with a piece that's very different to what I intended. But still. It's their expression.'* She says that sometimes she can listen to their children's compositions and think that they sound absolutely horrendous but is aware that the children need to be able to create without interference. The difficulty comes that There are also rules to composition and depending on the subject of the lesson, some of those horrendous noises should have been pointed out and explained. At times the composition may be incorrect. Explore this issue. It links to the fact that some teachers say that there are no right or wrong answers in music. It is not as simple as this.

Music is a creative subject because you can express your feelings, emotions and mood changes. You can create with music through composition and dance. E1 wishes there was the opportunity for more cross curricular work regarding PE and music. She talks about movement, mime and dance as moving from one to the other. Children could create a movement piece or a mime piece and by linking scenes turn it into dance however, they need the vocabulary to do so.

J1 Talks about interpretation and inspiration as elements of creativity. These are two elements that are quite different and can be easily forgotten. She identifies the composition in music is only one form of creativity in music. She identifies listening as a creative area because it's to do with interpretation. She also said that listening is a creative area because it's to do with understanding. This is quite a different idea: Can you listen to a piece of music with understanding? This could be done in relation to form or instrumentation. Can it be done in relation to creativity. What is creativity? Music is a creative subject because you interpret what you listen to, you talk about what you hear, you replicate and imitate in primary school. Including creativity in her lessons: she gives the children a chance to use

After much engagement with the data, both manually and electronically, my themes became less prescribed and 'looser' in their descriptions. This was partly due to a realisation that I was trying to interpret data by imposing finite categories, without really listening to what it was trying to tell me.

The processes of creativity evolved into sections on 'exploration', 'opportunity' and 'making mistakes'.

Of significance for the teachers concerning the products of creativity were 'aspirational composition' and 'gratification and frustration'.

And concerning the creative person, the data revealed that the teachers were concerned with 'interpretation' and 'emotions and feelings'.

Although this is a very brief outline of my engagement with the data provided in the interview transcripts, I hope the reader can appreciate the evolution of my ideas.

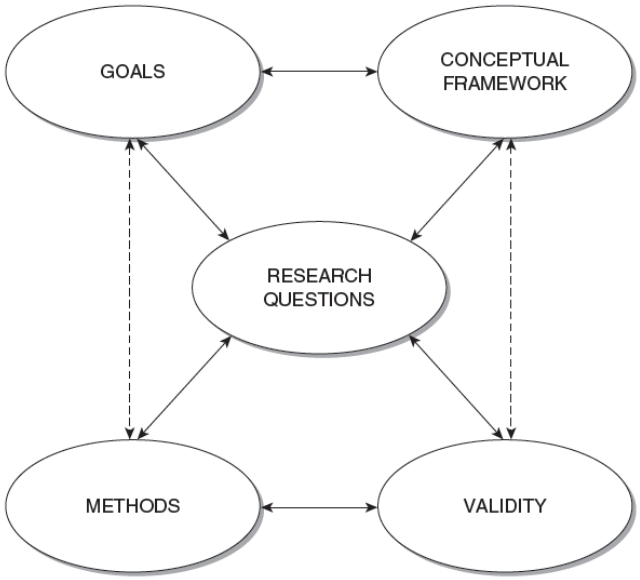
Appendix L Conceptual Framework

My theoretical framework is a summary and synthesis of published theories and concepts from research articles and books (Kivunja, 2018) that I have used to support the development of the discussion and arguments presented in this thesis. It provides the structure for my own interpretation of meaning and helps to demonstrate the credibility, transferability and confirmability (Guba, 1981) of the data analysis. In addition, it helps to support the dependability (Krefting, 1991) of the work.

Although my theoretical framework contains references to concepts, my conceptual framework serves a different purpose. As Kivunja (2018, p. 47) identifies, a conceptual framework is 'the total, logical orientation and associations of anything and everything that forms the underlying thinking, structures, plans and practices and implementation of… [my]… entire research project'.

I adapted the work of Maxwell, (2013) to help formulate and organise my conceptual framework, using as a rationale his interactive model of research design (Figure 4). I also used the work of Ravitch and Riggan (2017).

Figure 4: Maxwell's (2013, p.5) Interactive Model of Research Design



In practice, I devised a flow chart illustrating my understanding of the relationships between different areas of my conceptual framework, which evolved as I progressed with my work.

I explored and honed:

- my starting points;
- my personal interests and goals; and
- my identity and personality (Ravitch and Riggan, 2017, p.9).

These influenced the areas that I initially researched as part of my literature review. Subsequent interaction with my data and its analysis meant that I had to re-assess the relevance of sections of my literature review, re-working it into something relevant to the whole. It became a cyclical process.

Further thinking and planning allowed me to identify the relationship between:

- my conceptualisation of the above (starting points, interests and goals, identity and personality and literature review);
- my research design and questions (initial and final);
- my data collection and fieldwork;
- my data analysis; and
- the presentation, exploration and explanation of my findings.

A photograph of my final working conceptual framework is shown in Figure 5. Details of pages 1 and 2 are shown in Figure 6 and details of pages 3 and 4 are shown in Figure 7.

Figure 5: Photograph of Conceptual Framework

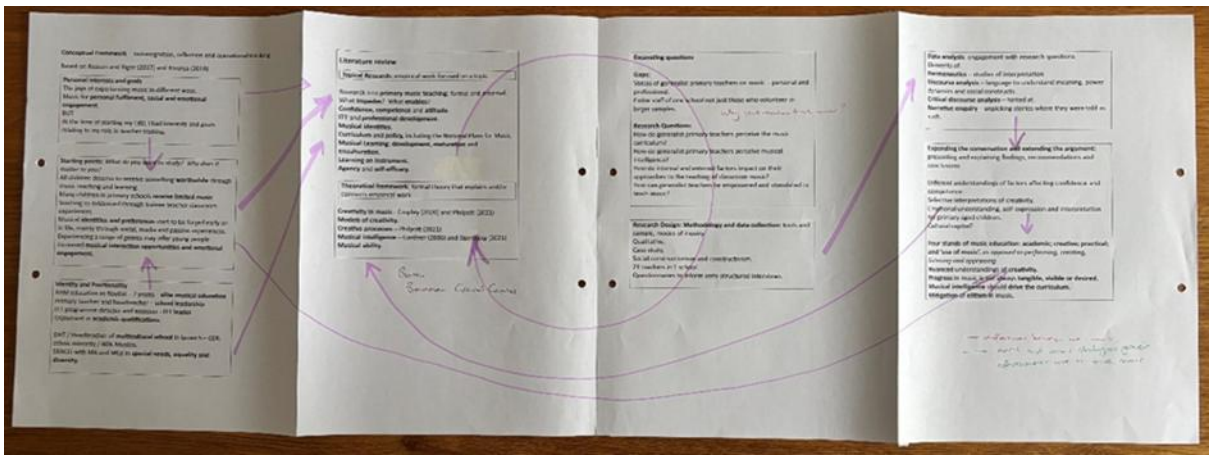


Figure 6: Photograph of pages 1 and 2 of Conceptual Framework

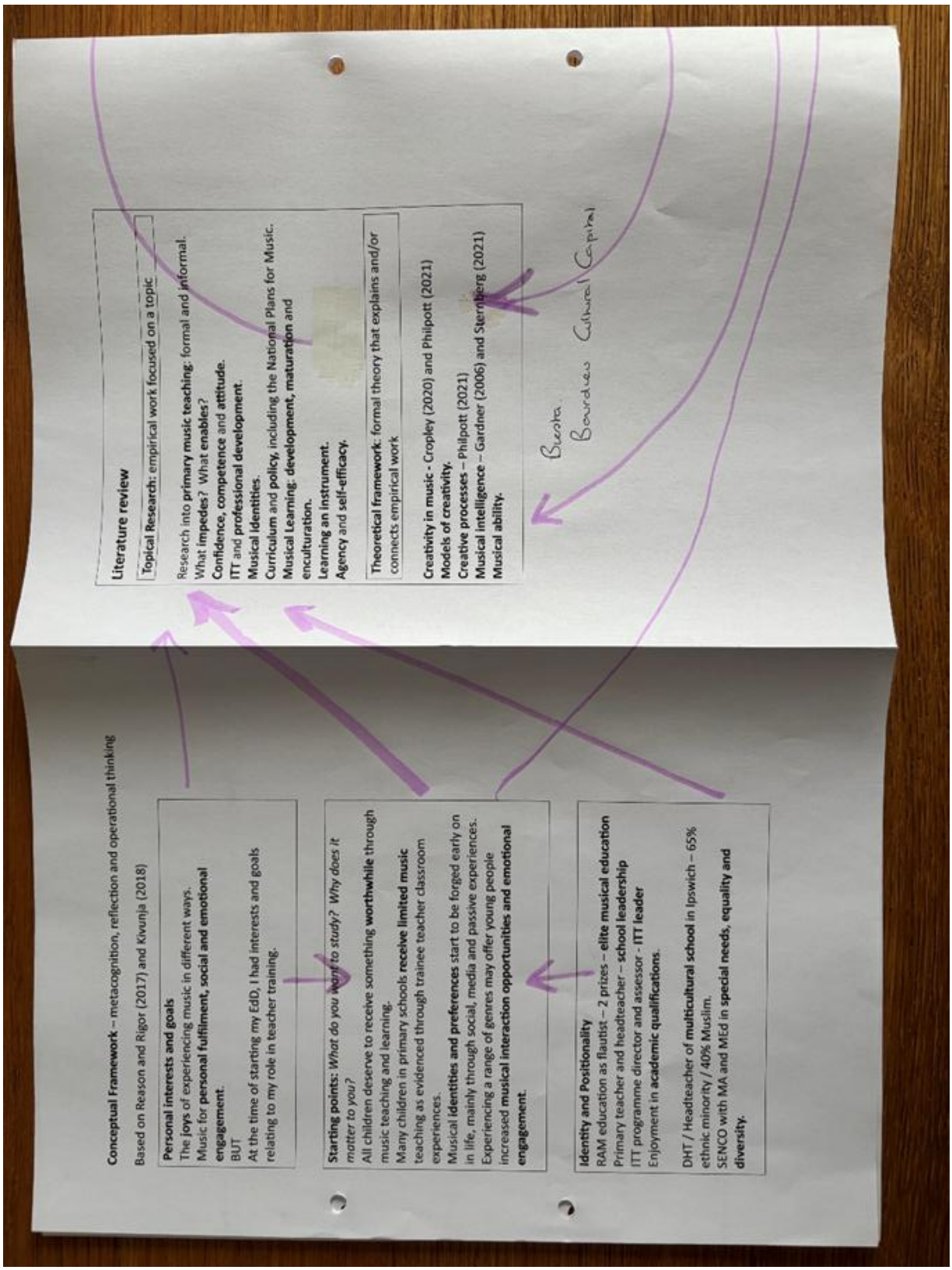


Figure 7: Photograph of pages 3 and 4 of Conceptual Framework

Excavating questions

Gaps:
Voices of generalist primary teachers on music – personal and professional.
Entire staff of one school not just those who volunteer in larger samples.

Research Questions:
How do generalist primary teachers perceive the music curriculum?
How do generalist primary teachers perceive musical intelligence?
How do internal and external factors impact on their approaches to the teaching of classroom music?
How can generalist teachers be empowered and stimulated to teach music?

Research Design: Methodology and data collection: tools and sample, modes of inquiry
Qualitative.
Case study.
Social constructionism and constructivism.
21 teachers in 1 school
Questionnaires to inform semi-structured interviews.

Data analysis: engagement with research questions
Elements of:
Hermeneutics – studies of interpretation
Discourse analysis – language to understand meaning, power dynamics and social constructs.
Critical discourse analysis – hinted at.
Narrative enquiry – unpicking stories where they were told as such.

Expanding the conversation and extending the argument: presenting and explaining findings, recommendations and conclusions

Different understandings of factors affecting confidence and competence.
Selective interpretations of creativity.
Emotional understanding, self-expression and interpretation for primary aged children.
Cultural capital?

Four stands of music education: academic; creative; practical; and 'use of music'. *as opposed to performing, creating, listening and appraising.*
Nuanced understandings of **creativity.**
Progress in music is not always **tangible, visible or desired.**
Musical intelligence should **drive the curriculum.**
Mitigation of elitism in music.

My motivation for pursuing research in this area originally stemmed from the fact that as a headteacher (with fifteen years of experience) and as a director of Primary Initial Teacher Training courses (for ten years), I regularly encountered in primary school staff a reluctance to teach curriculum music. I knew that teachers perceived difficulties with the subject matter, and research on the subject has been included in my literature review. Teacher confidence, competence and attitudes have been regularly researched.

I never wavered in my belief that generalist primary teachers have the ability to deliver something worthwhile to the children in music education but my realisation that nothing much had changed in recent years, that research across time was offering no solutions and that ITT training could not offer enough of an education in the subject, meant that I had to rethink where I was going in the subject.

The personal interests and goals expressed in in my conceptual framework (Figure 5) stemmed from my personal joy of experiencing music in different ways and my own awareness and experience of music for personal fulfilment, social and emotional engagement.

In summary, although initially my starting points were concerned with the practicality of non-specialists delivering primary classroom music, my underlying drive concerned a passion that music should be recognised as being an integral part of people's emotional lives and a firm belief that teachers have the ability to deliver something worthwhile (for both the children and the teachers themselves) if encouraged.

My own positionality as an elite musician, a teacher, a leader and an academic meant that seeing and understanding what the data was telling me was complex: this has been explored in this thesis. I reflected on the fact that musical identities and preferences are forged early on in life, sometimes through interaction with social media and passive experiences. My own musical identity was channelled and honed by others, as well as my own life choices, and I came to believe that if children were offered a range of listening experiences in school, their interest in music and their self-motivation in the subject may lead to them seek out musical opportunities and other emotional engagement with the subject.

The arrows on Figure 6 show the relationships between my personal interests and goals, my starting points, my identity and positionality and the literature review.

As my work progressed, I found it useful (and necessary) to distinguish between what I called my 'topical research' and my 'theoretical framework'.

I designated as 'topical research', information from research articles and other empirical work focused on a specific topic, for example, research into primary music teaching - both formal and informal. Other areas of topical research were:

- the teachers' confidence, competence and attitudes;
- Initial Teacher Training courses and teachers' professional development;
- musical identities;
- curriculum and policy, including the National Plans for Music;
- musical learning, including development, maturation and enculturation;
- learning to play an instrument; and
- the teachers sense of agency and self-efficacy.

My 'theoretical framework', or formal theory that explains and/or connects the empirical work, evolved through my searching through the literature and my interaction with the data. Through a conscious process of engagement with theory and data, I chose to explore and concentrate on the following:

- models of creativity and practical creativity in music, in particular the work of Cropley (2020) and Philpott (2021);
- creative processes, in particular the work of Philpott (2021);
- musical intelligences, in particular the relationships between the work of Gardner (2006) and Sternberg (2021); and
- musical ability.

Referring to my conceptual framework (Figure 5), I found the label 'excavating questions', as proposed by Ravitch and Riggan (2017, p.16) a useful term of guidance for exploring the relationship between my research question and what I identified to be gaps in the literature. This also helped to ensure that I was focussed on trying to develop new knowledge or offering a reinterpretation of existing knowledge.

The information presented above helped me focus on an appropriate methodology: this work was a qualitative research study using a case study approach. Interpretations were made and presented using a consideration of the principles of social constructionism and constructivism.

Data analysis was completed both manually and using NVivo. I recognise that within my analysis I use elements of different research approaches, namely:

- hermeneutics – studies of interpretation;
- discourse analysis – for example, language to understand meaning and social constructs;
- critical discourse analysis – for example, language to understand power dynamics;
- narrative enquiry – deriving data from stories where they were told as such.

My findings and recommendations formed the section in my conceptual framework labelled 'expanding the conversation and extending the argument' (Ravitch and Riggan, 2017, p.16). I summarise these as:

- different understandings of the factors contributing to and affecting teachers' confidence, competence and attitudes;
- selective interpretations of creativity;
- emotional understanding, self-expression and interpretation for primary aged children.

Finally, my 'extension of current arguments' section relates to the following:

- a proposal that there should be four reformulated strands of music education: academic; creative; practical; and 'use of music'. as opposed to performing, creating, listening and appraising;
- an understanding of the nuances of creativity;
- a recognition that progress in music is not always tangible, visible or desired;
- a recognition that musical intelligence should drive the curriculum; and
- an awareness of elitism in music.

This appendix has been written to explain in more detail the processes I went through to provide cohesion in my research – both thinking and writing – thereby explaining my conceptual framework.

Appendix M Types of the creative process, adapted from Philpott (2021a, p.52)

Type	*Type 1* The **subjective creative** process	*Type 2* The **conservationist creative** process	*Type 3* The **cognitive creative** process	*Type 4* The **virtuosic creative** process	*Type 5* The **critical agentic creative** process
Characterization of creativity	Personal expression and externalisation of emotion and feeling.	The interaction between individual subjectivity (personal expression) and well-known traditions.	Problem-solving, linked to wider cognitive processes such as convergent and divergent thinking	Only exists as a result of the development of high-level skills	A process that embraces the possibility to both create from and challenge what counts as music and the ideologies of cultural practises
Practical and pedagogical implications for children	Children are given opportunities, through creative composition and improvisation, to experience and translate sensations and problems.	Children's creativity is developed and placed within a context of traditions from various cultures.	Children are set musical problem-solving tasks to develop skills in creativity.	Children are taught a wide range of technique and skills as a precursor to any creative activity.	Children are given opportunities for self-directed learning and supported by critical pedagogy.
Ideological assumptions	Subjectivist and progressive. Process oriented. Expression is more important than skills.	Individual creativity located in established traditions. Balance between innovation and tradition. Balance between expression and technique.	Creativity is a set of cognitive skills which can be learned. Skills and technique underpin expression.	There is a hierarchical relationship between skills and creative expression. Not all can become virtuosic.	Eclectic but critical and agentic relationship between innovation and tradition, expression and skills. Recognition of multiple creativities.
Sample issues	Creativity is not located in culture and tradition i.e. it is not contextualised. Skills are downplayed.	Locating creativity within cultures and traditions. Which cultures? Which traditions?	Approaches are too generic. There is an implied hierarchical relationship between skills and expression.	Could be interpreted as an elitist model based in Western classical ideology.	Critical agency needs to be placed in the context of established (powerful) structures and ideologies.
Seminal authors	Witkin (1974) Ross (1978) both based in wider arts education theory	Abbs (1989) – based in wider arts education	Webster (2002) Berkley (2004) Both Music specific drawing on cognitive psychology	Fletcher (1987) – Music specific	Burnard (2012) Green (2008a) Spruce (2015) Philpott (2015)