



BLACKPOOL MUSIC SERVICE

MODERATION REVIEW SUMMARY OF MUSIC SERVICES

Blackpool Music Service has now undertaken a further review in the programme of peer moderation for local authority music services in partnership with the Department for Education (DfE). The purpose of the programme is to carry out, on a national and voluntary basis, a process of joint evaluation of internal review procedures of each music service.

This Moderation Review took place in the Spring term 2011.

The text and judgements were reached and agreed jointly between the music service and the evaluation partner, after they had worked together for three days.

The summary is an internal, unpublished document, shared between the host music service, local authority and the DfE. The intention is for it to inform local development planning and contribute to national benchmarks. We very much hope that all parties find it useful as a tool in raising levels of achievement and participation, in and through music.

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MODERATION REVIEW SUMMARY *for* BLACKPOOL MUSIC SERVICE

1. *Introduction and context to the review*

This moderation review of Blackpool Music Service (BMS) took place in March, 2011.

During the visit evidence was reviewed and collected through:

- Music service documentation including self evaluation form (SEF), Local Authority Music Plan (LAMP), policies, evaluations and exemplar teaching plans/assessment
- Jointly observed sessions with the head of service including a Wider Opportunities (WO) lesson and Early Years sessions
- Formal interviews and informal discussions with a range of stakeholders, including a project manager, head teacher, class teachers, instrumental teachers, music teachers and steering group members

2. *A summary of agreed progress in achievement and standards, teaching and learning*

Achievement and Standards

BMS staff assessment of pupils' progress and effort is recorded weekly. These formulate annual written reports for all pupils, copies of which are provided for schools and parent/carers.

Data are collated and submitted through annual returns to the DfE Participation Director and illustrate progressive improvement and participation over time. Increased playing standards and participation are evident in the formation of a wider range of progressive ensembles including Intermediate Wind Band, Brass Band and Senior Youth Choir.

Although an increase in pupils taking formal Associated Board Royal Schools Music (ABRSM) examinations has occurred, BMS has identified a number of pupils not accessing examinations. Through consultation the service has identified reasons for this, including costs and parental support in terms of time off work to take their children to examination centres. The service is addressing this by introducing internal, cost effective, BMS Music Medal examinations. These are taken within pupils' usual one-to-one lessons and assessed by BMS teaching staff. Assessment criteria for brass and woodwind are now being piloted.

A Steering Group has been established and meets once each term. Member representation includes BMS staff and school leaders, as well as school music teachers. Schools participating in annual events are now incorporated, with an increased recognition from schools for ensuring high standards. At a steering group meeting during the MSEP visit, members debated whether an event should be a 'sing-a-long' forum for any level of school participation, or whether entry criteria should be introduced, thereby promoting higher standards.

Teaching and Learning

Annual lesson observations, conducted by the head of service, are consistently high with an average grading of 88% at least good each year, with 58% outstanding and no inadequate lessons. Staff engagement with the Trinity/Guildhall Key Stage 2 Continuing Professional Development (KS2 CPD) programme has resulted in an increase of lesson observations since the last Music Service Evaluation

Partner (MSEP) visit with noticeable positive effect in the confidence of staff in their provision and lesson delivery.

Judgements of jointly observed sessions between the head of service and MSEP have been consistently agreed during the past two visits. Particular observed strengths include excellent rapport, clear focus on musical development and musical responses from learners. Where slight weaknesses in teaching and learning occur, personalised support is put in place to address the identified areas for development.

Exemplar teacher documentation made available during visits identifies succinct weekly recording of pupil assessment, which directly informs successive planning to meet the needs of pupils.

Mid-year teacher reports are collated, capturing evaluation of timetables, school support and any further support required. This enables the head of service to evaluate the effectiveness of individual school engagement and the organisation of instrumental tuition and/or Wider Opportunities (WO) and, where necessary, provide extra support.

The jointly agreed judgement is that BMS is maintaining outstanding work in both strands.

3. A summary of progress in addressing developmental issues arising from previous review

i. to diversify provision by extending Creative Music-Making Projects, such as World Music genres, into sustainable programmes

The Creative Music-Making Projects continue to be a service highlight, particularly the annual African Music Festival. In consultation with schools, the decision was made to expand this festival to develop drumming and singing through further training and bespoke formation of progressive schemes of work. Evaluations from training, school workshops and performance days provide evidence of outstanding provision for participants involved at all levels.

ii. to review the management structure to further support distributive leadership

Since the previous visit, the local authority (LA) Music Strategist and deputy service manager are no longer in post. Whilst the deputy post remains vacant, BMS now reports to the Head of Learning within the Learning, Schools and Community division of Blackpool Children's Services. An Advanced Skills Teacher (AST) is making a significant contribution in managing the Early Years programme. Other identified members of staff taking on further leadership roles are responsible and accountable for their individual choirs and ensembles. This is having a positive impact in supporting the head of service in designating responsibilities.

iii. to increase training opportunities for staff to develop their ICT and literacy skills in order to further support written assessment of pupils

BMS members of staff participating in Trinity/Guildhall Key Stage 2 CPD programme have been able to share best practice and networking opportunities. This is creating a synergy between teachers who would otherwise be more isolated. One very experienced teacher based within a school expressed delight in the support given through meeting other BMS staff and school based colleagues. The impact is demonstrated in the different approaches to planned provision and with the music learning environment visited.

Report and assessment templates have been reviewed and redesigned to support all staff in effective pupil report writing. BMS will determine the additional success of this amendment in the summer term 2011.

- iv. to develop the KS3 and KS4 curriculum support by utilising music services instrumental teachers; to explore further links to other creative arts, for example, drama, dance and musical theatre**

The capacity to develop this particular area is limited due to significant challenges related to long term school staff absence. However, bands led directly by BMS staff based within secondary schools continue to flourish with increased membership from the planned transition process, enabling pupils to continue learning.

BMS has made very good progress towards meeting the recommended development points in less than a year since the previous MSEP visit in June 2010.

4. A summary of the agreed evaluation of the Key Stage 2 Wider Opportunities and singing programmes

All primary schools in the local authority continue to work in partnership with BMS to deliver at least a one year WO Programme for children in Key Stage 2. A range of instrumental programmes is available and they are chosen by schools through consultation with music coordinators. A total of 78% of pupils expressed an interest in wanting to continue beyond first access with 68% pupils actually continuing instrumental learning. Many schools have extended their provision by providing a second year WO Programme and developing school bands.

BMS competition events for schools, such as *Pop Idol*, *Choir of the Year* and *Schools Alive*, have inspired schools to sustain music provision within their own school. For example, schools organise mini-Pop Idol as whole school events with the winner being selected to represent the school in the BMS event held at the Grand Theatre. Ticket and DVD sales have increased with many more families supporting their schools and children's achievement.

The agreed judgement is that BMS provision for Wider Opportunities and singing remains outstanding and meets national aspirations and targets.

5. A summary of the evaluation of the impact of partnerships

BMS makes best use of local and international partnerships through developed relationships with Blackpool Children's Services, Grand Theatre and Mugenko Drummers.

Evaluations from joint workshops and performances with the Soweto Choir showed how they extended pupils' learning, appreciation and experience of African countries, communities and cultures as well as music. Developed schemes of work complemented and sustained teachers' provision beyond initial workshops and performance.

Numerous opportunities are made available locally for young people to perform, for example at the recent North of England Education Conference (NEEC) hosted by Blackpool. A total of 79% of conference delegates rated the music entertainment provided by BMS young musicians as outstanding.

BMS have made excellent partnership links with the local radio station *Radio Wave*. Presenters often compere BMS events held at the Grand Theatre and promote BMS music events on their radio shows. This endorses the value of young people's musical contributions within and for the community.

A Pupil Steering Group has been established to capture and directly respond to the requests of the young people BMS serves. Impact of the Youth Concert Band performing with professional bands

during the annual Armed Forces Week inspired steering group members to design and organise a band uniform. This has enhanced their identity and reflects the improved music quality they produce.

The agreed judgement is that BMS makes excellent use of its partnerships to further pupil opportunities in high quality learning and performing.

6. A summary of the impact of funding and finance arrangements

Financial data made available during the past two visits show that BMS offers exceptional value for money.

BMS maximises its limited ring-fenced government Standards Fund Music Grant and makes effective use of additional sources of external funding. The support of the LA in providing the purpose built building for BMS positively enables young people of Blackpool to value and aspire to the high quality musical provision.

In order to further reduce and control expenditure, teaching staff agreed to freeze any increase in their pay for 2010-2011. Ensembles and bands are now exclusively run by one staff member, although a number of teachers continue to support by volunteering their time. For example, a Newly Qualified Teacher recognises and takes advantage of shadowing an experienced teacher in an area outside the usual teaching schedule to further professional development.

BMS will receive a 10% reduction in the 2011-2012 allocation of government funding from the limited initial grant. The service is currently able to absorb the reduction within its forecasting with little impact to the provision.

7. An agreed evaluation of one of the strands: Special Programme - Tiddly Om Pom Poms (TOPPs)

BMS applied and was awarded a Youth Music grant to develop and deliver an Early Years Music Programme within Blackpool Children Centres. Creatively entitled *Tiddly Om Pom Poms (TOPPs)*, the service has exceeded its initial target with 100% of children's centres engaged in the programme. A new centre has also recently opened within a Special School.

Jointly observed sessions were agreed to be unequivocally outstanding. The extensive and thorough planning impressively complements the programme delivery. All music leaders follow the overarching planned learning objectives whilst adding and embedding their own teaching approaches. Children selected as case study are being tracked and observed throughout the project. These provide evidence of the direct impact that provision is having on musical, social and communication development. Statistical data report that 97% of case study children were able to listen actively for longer periods of time and sing in a range of ways; 94% of children demonstrated improved levels of co-ordination and control of gross-motor skills. Qualitative data show children who are reluctant to talk at centres discuss music sessions with parents/carers at home.

A total of 12 Children Centre trainees were originally planned to receive CPD through team teaching and training sessions. This target, again, has been exceeded with 17 trainees current receiving direct CPD. Centre Managers report that TOPPs music leaders actively seek to build positive relationships with trainees through good training, whilst at the same time leading sessions with children.

The programme is also proving to enable growth in parent/carers' confidence in positively interacting with their own children through observing and active involvement in the music sessions.

Particular acknowledgement should be made of the exceptional high quality contribution the Advanced Skills Teacher makes to managing, assessing and leading the project.

The positive impact, already evidenced within six months of starting the programme, is agreed to be outstanding.

8. A final summary of progress over the three reviews with agreed recommendations

BMS embraces the opportunities and builds upon the expertise of its teachers and leaders in maximising local knowledge for high quality musical delivery for children, young people and families within Blackpool.

The service is reflective, self-evaluative and responds positively to its stakeholders. It has a strong sense of direction, which has been successfully built up over time as a result of the exceptional dedication, leadership and competence of the head of service.

Over the three MSEP visits since April 2009, BMS has jointly acknowledged its strengths and identified areas of development to implement improvements.

Music Service accountability being aligned with the LA Head of Learning enables significant support and enhanced opportunity for BMS to further integrate its contribution to shared outcomes for all children and young people within Blackpool.

Whilst improvements and progress have occurred since the last MSEP visit; the reduced number of senior leadership could have a negative impact. Increased capacity within the management structure would allow the head of service to fully embrace and secure the future strategic planning, implementation and self-evaluation of the service.

Agreed recommendations for sustained future development are:

- to consider employment of another senior manager to oversee, develop and monitor the teaching and learning of specific instrumental learning and music curriculum
- to ensure data, such as pupil assessment, standards and teacher monitoring, are systematically available to comparatively and efficiently inform future planning
- to develop service plans in line with government's future National Music Education Plan through proposed music education hubs
- to continue to explore wider links with other creative arts, including drama, dance and music theatre

The music provision and support for meeting individual needs of schools, pupils and families has progressively improved over time and, overall, Blackpool Music Service is outstanding.