

# TRINITY LABAN CONSERVATOIRE OF MUSIC & DANCE

London Schools Excellence Fund  
**LSEFR1231 TEACH THROUGH MUSIC**



Self-Evaluation Report  
**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

## Introduction

- Teach Through Music (TTM), a one year professional development programme, set out to strengthen subject knowledge and pedagogy amongst London's Key Stage 3 (KS3) music teachers. It is one of two programmes funded by the London Schools Excellence Fund that targeted KS3 music.
- The London Schools Excellence Fund (LSEF) was based on the hypothesis that investing in teaching, subject knowledge and subject-specific teaching methods and pedagogy will lead to improved outcomes for pupils in terms of attainment, subject participation and aspiration.
- TTM is a partnership between Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music & Dance (lead partner), Barbican Guildhall, Sound Connections, Trinity College London and University of Greenwich.
- This report summarises Trinity Laban's Final Self Evaluation of Teach Through Music, as submitted to the Greater London Authority in October 2015. It is designed to demonstrate the impact of Teach Through Music on teachers, pupils and the wider school system and reflect on lessons learnt. This evaluation draws on the findings of Professor Martin Fautley, Director, Research in Education, City of Birmingham University as independent evaluator, as well as qualitative evidence, participation data and the experience of partners.

*“(Next year) I am going to lead musical learning by modelling, rather than verbally explaining before a task. I am going to use ‘circle singing’ in the school choir.”*

Teacher Pledge from Final Conference



## Participation

- 233 music teachers, musicians and other educators participated in the programme from 99 schools and 35 cultural organisations.
- 120 (52%) were school employed classroom teachers. This group were the most actively engaged, accounting for 73% of attendances at courses and events.
- Schools from 28 out of London's 32 boroughs took part, with teachers ranging from NQTs to those teaching for over 30 years.

## Impact

- Independent evaluation found that *"the professional learning which has taken place during the course of Teach Through Music has been highly significant"*. 100% of respondents to an end point survey reported that the programme had made a "considerable difference" to their KS3 teaching.
- Outcomes for teachers include increased musical confidence, new tools with which to improve teaching, new approaches to assessment and progression, growth in partnerships with music organisations and improved ability to connect to a pan-London community of practice.
- There are some early indications that changes in teaching practice have led to improved attainment, musical confidence and motivation amongst pupils but it has not been possible to reliably evaluate impact on pupils within the timeframe and resources available.
- There is also some evidence that TTM has empowered teachers within wider school systems, and that this is vitally important in achieving teachers' own aspirations for musical teaching and learning.
- Cultural organisations valued the opportunity to 'force KS3 music up the agenda' in their work and revisit barriers to engaging with KS3 curriculum music

*"I will create more opportunities for creative/open-ended composing in my schemes of work and develop improvisation as a focus for assessment..."*

Teacher Pledge, Final Conference

## Programme Design

- The community of practice model, incorporating classroom teachers and others involved in KS3 music, has been successful in empowering teachers to achieve individual development goals, appropriate to them, their school and pupils.
- Networking, opportunities to share practice with music teachers across borough boundaries and dialogue with artists and 'experts' were most valued by teachers.
- Distance learning via a Virtual Learning Environment and coaching from Fellows were less valued and take up was low. Social media, however, proved an effective means of connecting teachers between face to face training events.

- Co-design of classroom activities emerged as a model of skills sharing and peer support instigated by teachers. This may be an effective and sustainable means of building peer relationships and supporting practice development.

## Project Delivery

- Teach Through Music was an ambitious project that benefitted from the subject expertise, resources and in kind support of a world class partnership of music education organisations. Partners consider the programme to have been effectively led and well managed by Trinity Laban.
- While the programme met overall participation targets, the restricted timeframe, teacher workload and lack of support from senior leaders limited the capacity of teachers to engage with the programme.
- Programme content was commissioned or co-designed with a range of partners, building capacity and experience within the sector.
- The diversity of the Teach Through Music community, which extended from classroom teachers to musicians, cultural organisations, academics and national bodies, was a strength of the programme and provided for rich debate and learning
- If replicated, such a project would better spread a similar level of resource and activity over a longer time period, to allow more teachers to engage and embed learning into classroom practice. An additional year for evaluation, would allow for more meaningful assessment of impacts on teachers, pupils and wider systems
- Had time allowed, Teach Through Music would have benefitted from more effective dialogue with head teachers and school improvement teams, including representation of these stakeholders on the project steering group

*“I can’t wait to do some whole-class improvising 😊 and sing, sing, SING!”*

Teacher Pledge, Final Conference

## Resourcing & Sustainability

- Teach Through Music was an expensive programme, with a lifetime project cost of £399,985 of which £364,626 was funded by the London Schools Excellence Fund and the remainder was contributed in kind by partners. No costs were passed on to schools. These costs reflect the ambitious scale and scope of the project and the lack of prior infrastructure for communicating with and engaging school employed music teachers.
- While a programme of this scale is not sustainable without financial support, new networks have been built and substantial learning has been achieved that will be shared with the wider sector.
- Legacy resources include
  - independent evaluation of both Music Excellence London programmes, with recommendations for the wider sector
  - a series of short films focusing on assessment, singing and composition, to stimulate discussion within KS3 Music Teacher networks nationally
  - Case Studies of 10 Teach Through Music teacher projects
- Teach Through Music partners are in discussion with Music Mark to develop a sustainable KS3 Music Teacher network for London

*“(I will) work towards developing our CPD programme in response to the ideas shared today, including enabling networking across borough boundaries and devising the programme with a more long-term view, i.e. not delivering one-off sessions.”*

Cultural Partner Pledge, Final Conference



## Key Findings

- Teach Through Music confirms Ofsted's findings that professional isolation continues to be a major issue for secondary school music teachers; the pressures of planning, assessment and public performances prevent them attending opportunities to network or share practice outside of their school (Ofsted 2012)
- In addition we found that music teachers often lack the support of managers/senior leaders to attend subject specialist CPD, even where this CPD is free of charge and contributions towards teaching cover costs are available.
- Secondary music teachers find whole school systems developed around the needs of other subjects, and lack of understanding of musical learning among SLT, to be barriers to more musical teaching. Their isolation from a subject specialist community of practice disempowers many from articulating problems or proposing alternatives
- Teachers value opportunities to engage with wider practice, beyond their own school or borough, to network and gain access to music education experts
- Given access to such high quality opportunities, teachers report being rapidly able to assimilate debates and ideas into changes in teaching practice. In some cases this has led to music teachers becoming more active in shaping whole school policy
- Teachers and cultural organisations of all sizes see the benefit of working in partnership to enhance KS3 music through access to live musicianship, diverse artists and connection with music industries and communities. However, cultural organisations report being less able to effectively contribute to KS3 music than other aspects of curriculum phases due to lack of capacity amongst teachers to engage.
- Improved communications infrastructure, supporting KS3 teachers to navigate and engage with the myriad offers of London's cultural organisations, could unlock access to significant musical resources and expertise for KS3 music
- There is demand amongst music hubs, higher education institutions, national bodies, cultural organisations, individual musicians and others who take active roles in supporting KS3 music for opportunities to connect with and debate KS3 teaching and related issues. Continued dialogue between this group and schools could also serve to unlock significant musical resources and expertise.
- High-quality subject specific CPD is important, and needs to figure more highly in local and regional thinking. This should be combined with effective advocacy for regular subject specialist CPD as an entitlement for teachers

*Funded by:*



Department  
for Education

**MAYOR OF LONDON**

*Delivered by:*

**TRINITY LABAN CONSERVATOIRE  
OF MUSIC & DANCE**

*In partnership with:*



**TRINITY**  
COLLEGE LONDON

**barbican**

**Guildhall**  
SCHOOL  
of Music & Drama



UNIVERSITY  
of  
GREENWICH