

**National Music Council**  
**Local Education Authority Music Awards**  
(supported by the Department for Education and Skills)

**Report of 2001**

*Introduction*

1. This year we received a record number of submissions - 40 in all, including one joint submission; so we heard from 41 LEAs. This is attributable to a substantial increase in the number of entries from English LEAs and represents hard evidence that the Music Standards Fund is having a wholly positive effect on levels of provision. Indeed it is many years since we saw so many vital, upbeat submissions.
2. There is one particular feature that we are very pleased to identify and applaud. We ourselves, in the past, have praised many innovative projects; the difference now is that so many such projects are being incorporated into longer-lasting curriculum support.
3. We were pleased to see so much evidence of music services broadening out into an ever-increasing percentage of the school population and ensuring that the full range of young people's musical interests are supported and developed.
4. As always, we pay tribute to the heads of music services, advisers, classroom teachers, instrumental teachers, pupils, students and parents; heads and governors who in their various ways can and do make a difference; and composers and professional musicians too, who, increasingly, inspire and enthuse young people in and out of school.

*The Submissions*

5. We are conscious that our report can only touch on the many examples of good practice to be found in these submissions. Set out below are some of these.
6. **Aberdeen's** City Music School, one of Scotland's three music schools is special in the sense that it has an extensive outreach programme and commissions leading contemporary and classical composers to work with schools throughout the region. And out of one major arts project (North Sea) came an education resource pack for teachers seeking to continue developing the work. **Bury**, tantalisingly, hint at good work but withhold the detail.
7. **Cardiff** have extended instrumental tuition in their schools and launched a number of world music initiatives.
8. The Wales Music Development Fund has enabled **Caerphilly** to maintain the high standards we recognised last in 1999. Among several notable features of the year were the appointment of four FTE music tutors and two FTE choral amateurs together with the acquisition of 500 new instruments.

9. Despite a serious staff shortage, **Doncaster** continued with their week long Music Centre Festival featuring all twelve orchestras, nine bands, guitar, recorder and chamber groups and two choirs. Adults were offered small-group tuition on all instruments, and, during the year, 109 took part.
10. **Harrow** Music Service worked supportively with several other London LEAs, invested in a good range of INSET and made imaginative provision for disaffected pupils and those with special needs. The LEA's generous support for Harrow Young Musicians ensured a wide range of performance opportunities.
11. **Herefordshire** Instrumental Music Service is now making its mark with exciting initiatives, including a centre for early music, the development of a school for harp tuition, a new string programme for infants and school-based staff, world music and singing programmes, large-scale residential music courses and the commissioning of new brass and orchestral works.
12. Last year's Diploma winning **Highland Council** Education Service continues to defy the logistical odds with a substantial investment in Scottish traditional musics, comprehensive training and support to meet the diverse needs of community radio groups and their volunteers, and targeted work in three areas comprising the most excluded young people in the 15-24 age group.
13. It was a rare pleasure to hear from **Islington** and we look forward to several promising developments being extended and consolidated as a partnership between the private company under contract to the Authority and existing music provision.
14. We have previously registered our growing interest in the performance of **Kingston upon Hull's** Music Support Service. Indeed, it only remains for the multi-genre festivals, the work with professional musicians and the community arts provision generally to be integrated with schools music provision and the Service will make the headlines.
15. **Lincolnshire's** submission, despite featuring important developments that fall out of the year in question, provides hard evidence of a music support service that is growing in confidence. An intensive programme of singing projects seems to have dominated the year, though a partnership with a professional string quartet proved to be enjoyable and valuable for students and staff. Jazz featured both in school and out-of-school projects and workshops, including an interesting resurrection of the tradition of reconstructing a well known pop tune as a jazz work. If the Authority had been able fully to fund the youth service's policy of promoting music and the arts, this could have been an award-winning entry.
16. It is impossible to ignore an entry which features a Bassoon Blowout and the UK's first Tamboo Bamboo Band. Indeed, **Luton's** engagement with their multi-cultural communities is so much in evidence and successful that it was recognised by OfSTED. That is not to say that the more Euro-centric music forms were neglected; far from it.
17. **Norfolk** mean business: they have appointed an adviser for the promotion of the arts with a main music service brief. And shortly after the year-end, a dedicated adviser, to be Head of the new Music Education Service, takes up post. While performance opportunities in brass and jazz ensembles featured strongly throughout the year, it is good to learn that the county youth orchestra

is to be re-established with more support for orchestral playing through linked and targeted instrumental tuition opportunities.

18. We have been told by **North Lincolnshire** of some good ground work leading up to Key Stages 1 and 2 for both pupils and teachers and of an especially fruitful partnership, over three months, with the North of England Chamber Orchestra.
19. **North Lanarkshire's** successful support of their wind bands, choirs and Rock Festival, which is central to their overall educational achievement policy, was extended to other musics. For example, Scottish Opera staged a range of workshops throughout the year. This Authority is beginning to demonstrate the most consistent commitment to music education of all the authorities in Scotland.
20. **Oldham's** impressive year of achievement was demonstrated by a variety of choral work, an intelligent pre-school project and early years musical development, a good range of projects and workshops involving professional musicians and work with unemployed teenagers. It would, for us, have been even more notable had we seen evidence of the completed Asian music programme, which based workshops in almost all LEA schools, being integrated into the overall music curriculum.
21. **Oxfordshire** continued with much of the excellent work that won them a Diploma last year. We were pleased to receive evidence of growing activity as part of the Development Plan for Lifelong Learning. We also like the Authority's policy and means of maintaining a clear link between the music service and the school curriculum. The advantages of that policy can be seen throughout this submission.
22. We are not surprised by OfSTED's recent positive report of **Portsmouth's** Music Service. We have referred elsewhere to the successful collaboration with Southampton and the Isle of Wight in the Solent Music Project. This submission, however, is special for a youth service music programme that provides for the musical needs of the Service's mainstream clients, including young women's groups, as well as disaffected young people and offenders. Such is the success of this project that we will be bringing it to the attention of the National Youth Agency as a particularly good example of youth service provision.
23. **Renfrewshire** drew our attention to a thoughtful joint music and drama project that focused on supporting the teaching of the expressive arts 5-14 curriculum in primary schools. The linking theme was the Christmas message and subject specialists were commissioned to work with a cluster of primary schools, which as well as enhancing pupils' experiences, also provided valuable in-service support to the schools' staffs.
24. **Rochdale** had a good year. We liked the idea of primary school workshops using 'A' level and GCSE students as well as instrumental staff, demonstrating twelve different instruments, in the course of delivering live instrumental workshops to primary schools.
25. **Sefton's** Music Support Service made a substantial commitment to the commissioning of new music for performance by LEA ensembles, the success of which was facilitated by fruitful partnerships with the Royal Northern College of Music and the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Society. World musics and jazz were also prominently featured in the work of the Service.

26. We detect the makings of good all-round provision in **Somerset** . Of particular interest was the adoption of a policy, in response to the Noise at Work regulations, for the protection of 'at risk' instrumental teachers who are now provided with moulded ear plugs and, along with all new staff, with base line audiometric testing and repeat testing. We shall be seeking to give this policy and practice wider publicity.
27. Our tip for the music service to watch is **Slough**. Given that it has only been fully financed since April 2000, with a part-time music adviser arriving only seven months earlier, this Service is already getting many things right through close partnerships with a range of music professionals and agencies, sound INSET, effective collaboration with other LEAs, sensitive and imaginative provision for pupils with special educational needs, a real commitment to working with the youth service and a good range of performance opportunities.
28. Many of those elements feature strongly in an excellent submission from **Staffordshire** Performing Arts; indeed this would have been an award winning entry had the year been more musically universal in its provision.
29. **Stirling's** commitment to youth participation in the organisation and creation of music is further evidenced in their submission which, like Portsmouth's, is notable for the opportunities provided throughout the year. We shall be drawing this to the attention of the Scottish Community Education Council as yet more very good practice in this area.
30. In our report of 1999, we paid tribute to **Swindon** for their recovery from crisis. Indeed, since becoming an LEA the music service has doubled the volume of instrumental tuition in schools. It was a good year all round with new initiatives to promote minority brass and string instrument playing, an increase in the number of live concerts in schools, a senior music festival to complement the already established infant and junior events, the launch of a 'rock school', the commissioning of a successful vocal cantata for 8-11 year olds to mark the opening of the National Heritage Museum and much more.
31. **Thurrock's** three music schools were pivotal to the growing number of performance opportunities provided on a variety of instruments, and, as a policy priority, the Music Service extended provision for young musicians with special educational needs. INSET was focused on good practice in instrumental teaching and, in partnership with the LEA advisory service, training packages were customised for individual schools following an audit of need.
32. The **Trafford** Music Service was radically re-structured to improve access and awareness of existing provision. We look forward to reading of the fruits of what was clearly an important turning point for music education in the Borough.
33. **Waltham Forest** ran 142 music workshops for their schools and supported 28 borough groups and bands, though we received no details of levels or genres.
34. The two **Wandsworth** Junior Centres for Young Musicians increased the number of free places to 35 per cent and provided additional classes in brass, cello, oboe, steel pans and choral music. The Service supported 44 students at the Centre for Young Musicians and we congratulate them on their continuing role as one of the most generous supporters of the Centre in London.

## *Diplomas*

35. There was a commendable unity about provision in **Barking and Dagenham**, an area of economic disadvantage and one with the highest school population relative to total population of all the LEAs participating this year. The Community Music Service (CMS) not only maintained the ten-year old policy of free individual and group instrumental tuition, free loan of instruments and opportunities to play in CMS ensembles, but also took steps to ensure that that policy had influence in those schools which historically had not taken-up provision. In consequence, 200 additional pupils benefited during the year. Following consultation with all the LEA's head teachers a detailed expansion strategy was also embarked upon, the fruits of which will be harvested in the course of 2001/02. A range of new activities, projects and structures was introduced to support pupils' musicianship, including

- INSET for improvisation skills;
- residencies and workshops for world musics;
- London Symphony Orchestra (LSO) Discovery Projects at Key Stage 1 (in which 1200 Reception and year 1 pupils participated) together with many other activities in partnership with the LSO;
- the promotion of singing across the Borough, and an interesting continuity and progression initiative to support pupils learning to play an instrument and to stem the high drop-out rate at the secondary transition phase. A data base established to track pupils more effectively was an important ingredient in that endeavour.

36. In the course of the year, the **Camden** Music Service

- introduced an instrumental bursary scheme;
- expanded Saturday Music Centre provision with a third centre specializing in all popular music styles to complement the existing classical and jazz centres;
- doubled the number of Borough ensembles with an emphasis on the beginner and intermediate levels.

37. We were also impressed by the range and scope of the LEA's INSET programmes and the level of involvement of professional musicians, which, unusually, was especially strong in world musics - the polar regions being the only major area not covered! That was reflected in a fascinating project which we would like to see replicated in other LEAs with an ethnically diverse population: the World Song Project encourages children and their families to share songs, dance and other music with the wider community. Parents and grandparents are invited to informal drop-in sessions, leading to the eventual recording of the resulting materials. As a result of the project,

families from minority groups see that schools value the contribution they bring to the community. Schools in the Borough are building up a library of material, thereby enriching and extending the range of vocal repertoire available to all. Selected materials are to be published as a Borough resource.

38. **Dudley** are another LEA with a very large school population (15 per cent of the total). Over the years, the Music Service has made submissions which demonstrate an all round consistency of commitment to music education. Last year was no exception. Thus a substantial investment in INSET was made; collaborative work was undertaken with six other LEAs and an unusually large and varied collection of agencies and organizations, including canal trusts, an area health authority (on a drug awareness project), British Waterways, building societies ( in connection with Young Musician of the Year events) and joint activities with several charities. Furthermore, the range and scope of the involvement of professional musicians was increased and a commendably large number of group instrumental performance opportunities was provided through seven brass bands, seven wind bands, two orchestras, six string orchestras, one string chamber orchestra, one big band, four choirs, several rock and jazz bands and guitar, clarsach and keyboard ensembles. We were impressed too by a cross-curricular Live Music in Schools programme (of which ICT was an integral part), which embraced art, science and history. A rock competition for school bands ('Rock the Castle') led to a year long programme of gigs in local venues for the participants. It was also noteworthy that not only did every school receive instrumental tuition, every mainstream school was also involved in a Music Service project during the year.

39. For **Gwynedd and Ynys Mon** the foot and mouth epidemic had damaging effects on the last two months of the year. Yet the year was memorable for happier reasons. A full-time music adviser was appointed mid-way through the year. Both LEAs signed-up to a strategy aptly entitled "Enriching Experiences"; indeed the submission brims over with examples. We highlight just two. "The Bridge" was designed by the Adviser and developed by composer Bill Connor. It involved three schools from each LEA (primary, secondary and special) exploring improvisatory creative techniques based on the theme of bridging, including, naturally, the Menai Strait Bridge. Bill Connor was then commissioned to write a new piece for the Welsh Chamber Orchestra (WCO) which drew upon the work in the classrooms and incorporated defined sections to be played simultaneously by the pupils and professional musicians. During the final stages, members of the WCO visited all the schools to refine their contributions and to raise awareness of instrumental techniques. This was combined with a wide range of classical and popular repertoire concerts and educational activities for the participating and other schools in the area and a highly successful public performance of the new work, "Y Bont".

40. In previous reports we have referred to our belief that there are rich veins of local/regional culture and heritage to be quarried through music education. We were delighted therefore to learn that these two LEAs shared that perception and commissioned a new association, Truc, whose aim is to preserve, illuminate and advance traditional Welsh instrumental music and Welsh culture, to undertake a series of visits to schools to provide live experience of traditional music and instruments and to involve young players in workshop activities. The schools' responses testified both to the high quality of those experiences and to the need to expand such provision. And,

finally, *'pour encourager les autres'*, we are pleased to receive evidence of both Authorities planning to expand provision for adults and, through the youth services, young people.

41. It is many years since we last heard from **Hampshire**, so it was with pleasure that we received the new Music Service's (HMS) first submission since it was formed from the previously separate strands of instrumental teaching, music ensembles and curriculum inspection and advice. The HMS base was flooded and permanently closed mid-year. That major disruption notwithstanding, the Service adopted its first strategic plan in October with short and long-term targets for pupils, schools and communities. Early in the year, three Millennium targets were reached with 2000 performances by school, college, area, county and community ensembles; the acquisition of 2000 instruments for use by pupils in schools and the bringing together of 2000 people in a single musical performance. Over two years, £140,000 was raised through sponsorship, donations and fundraising events to support those activities. And, most importantly, there are now more permanent gains to be celebrated with all those new instruments, including many new "minority" instruments on free loan to pupils, ensembles and schools, often in areas of social disadvantage, with free teaching and support through local musician residencies.

42. Significant local/national events such as the Civil War battle of Alton, the raising of the Mary Rose and the more recent fight for Twyford Down were the main elements in major commissions from the local composer Martin Read. Those started life as ideas from pupils formed during the development of a model of good practice for schools to adopt for their own composers-in-residence.

43. A generous Standards Fund grant with matched LEA funding facilitated the continued development of previous projects with a host of additional features, such as 'Singing Schools', 'Recorder Extravaganzas' involving professional players, expanded youth jazz opportunities, world musics (including a weekend festival), a rock and pop instrument pool, and local web-site development for curriculum guidance for class and instrumental teachers. Outstandingly good INSET, work with professional musicians, performance opportunities and collaboration with other LEAs rounded-off a memorable year for Hampshire.

44. The **Milton Keynes** Music Service too can fairly claim achievements in those areas, which, of course, we are pleased to recognise. We concentrate, however, on the provision made by the Service for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities because it represents an exemplary demonstration of what can be achieved by the employment of a dedicated co-ordinator, albeit for no more than one day per week.

45. Provision for pupils in the six special schools took various forms: a music service teacher and local composer taught composition using computer software; two tutors from the Drake Music Project worked with ten pupils through half-day workshops using switches, Soundbeam and other accessible technology; a music service teacher and local community folk band delivered a four-week project to 40 year six and seven pupils in singing, rhythm work, dance, and movement and performance using tuned percussion and instruments the children could make themselves - this project also

included discussion relating to the history of music and its possible origins in nature; two music service teachers worked with 35 pupils on a composition/performance project looking at songs and sounds related to machines (curriculum area chosen by the school) and members of the folk band worked alongside music service teachers to deliver a four week project for 21 year seven and eight pupils with learning difficulties.

46. The second strand concentrated on projects for pupils in special needs units in mainstream schools. That involved: the use of Soundbeam, switches and echo mirrors; the Drake Music Project working with pupils with physical disabilities who learnt about story-telling through music and the use of sound to create mood and character; and music service staff, school teachers and local musicians working with 60 pupils with learning difficulties on sound, rhythm and movement.

The Special Needs Co-ordinator attended meetings of the Milton Keynes Music Education Forum, thereby ensuring that the needs of people with disabilities or special needs were considered in all music education activities.

47. **Southampton's** first three-year development plan was completed by the end of the year. Very much about affirming and extending entitlement and enrichment as much as aspiring to excellence, the Music Service, jointly with Portsmouth and the Isle of Wight launched their Solent Music Project investing in:

- world music resources, developing curriculum guidelines and promoting a programme of INSET through working with and observing visiting specialists;
- community workshops for parents and governors and differentiated training for teachers to ensure the long-term sustainability of the project.

48. Also as part of the Development Plan, in the special needs area, we noted several interesting projects, including a special schools brass strand (which led to the formation of a special schools brass band - possibly the first of its kind in the country). Equally, if not more, remarkable at one of the Authority's special schools, 50 per cent of the pupils learn to play a brass instrument. We were also particularly pleased to see provision being made for children, so often overlooked, in the City's hospital school.

49. In three years, there has been a 64 per cent increase in the number of pupils learning to play an instrument. To cope with that growth, it was necessary for Southampton to purchase 430 new instruments reflecting a judicious mix of world and western classical 'minority' instruments - and the Service maintained its policy of not charging for their use. All schools used their delegated funds to subsidise tuition and in over 50 per cent of cases tuition was provided free of charge. Moreover, the schools bought £100,000 worth of tuition more than the sum delegated by the LEA, with the result that there was opportunity for any interested primary school child to learn to play an instrument.

50. **Surrey Youth Music and Performing Arts (SYMPA)**, an integral part of the County Arts Unit, contributed to the LEA's expansion of their visual arts, dance and drama provision. That expansion created even more demanding workloads for staff trying to deliver programmes broadening music and opportunities designed to engage disaffected and disadvantaged young people. One of the most successful examples of that was provided by the Rhythmix project, a Standards Fund collaboration with



Brighton and Hove, East Sussex and Medway, involving live music-making for young people not previously involved in music service activities, through World musics, pop, DJ music technology, steel pan, gospel and jazz. SYMPA continued to deliver “Menuhin’s Children”, a long-running project to provide disadvantaged children with the experience of learning the violin (coloured violins helped to give the participants street cred!). A potentially useful initiative introduced in the year, called “Download”, enabled specially-prepared music to be emailed direct to schools together with supporting text, lyrics and guidance notes for teaching staff. Also available was up-to-date expert advice on a range of topics. And schools were able to ask for a backing track for a hymn or song for assembly or classroom use.

51. The “Upbeat” project was located in a purpose-built performing arts centre with the needs of special school pupils in mind. Twenty schools and units signed up for workshop classes for recorder players, dance, music-drama and song composing sessions with Richard Stilgoe. Primary school festivals continued to enthuse pupils and parents. And at a more senior level, a new community-based project brought pupils, parents, amateurs and semi-professional musicians together to play one of Mahler’s ten symphonies each year for the next ten years.

52. We hope the next submission from Surrey will tell us more about their INSET provision, without which it will be difficult to sustain the many ambitious programmes embarked upon.

## ***Major Trophy***

53. In 1997, when **Brighton and Hove** regained their status as an LEA, they hit the road running and were awarded NMC diplomas in 1998, 1999 and 2000. The Head of the Music Service did not disguise his determination to do better! We attribute the successful achievement of that ambition to at least three factors. First, the inheritance of much good practice from the previous music service (East Sussex), with which effective collaboration has continued. Secondly, there was the successful development of initiatives previously recognized in our reports, such as the Centre of Contemporary Music (CCM) and the City's Music Centre and the provision of opportunities for young musicians to work creatively with young performing and visual artists, which led to the creation of a new dance post. Thirdly, there was yet wider collaboration with Medway, East Sussex and Surrey as part of the exemplary 'Rhythmix' project, which is referred to elsewhere in this report. And finally, there was a demonstrable commitment to imaginative and thorough INSET alongside the remarkably successful pursuit of new approaches to policy and practice. Here are some examples that caught our eye:

- a new student forum established at the Music Centre gave students opportunity to organise their own events and provide the Music Service with student feedback (to encourage participation and wider access, membership of that Centre and the new CCM was common);
- a Discovery Recital programme with a very positive evaluation provided Key Stage 1 & 2 pupils in 28 schools with the experience of live music involving interaction with ensembles;
- the provision of financial encouragement to part-time instrumental teachers to attend INSET days, facilitated a marked improvement in service communication and delivery;
- the development of an integrated approach to the provision of orchestral studies increased access and the range of opportunities available. That was demonstrated by the creation of a new Youth Sinfonia, which studied wide repertoire, from classic works to contemporary orchestral music including jazz and popular genres;
- a partnership developed with a local sixth form college provided AS Music Technology courses at the CCM. Demand was high - 28 students were recruited.

54. Every pupil was provided with opportunity to learn an instrument, yet the LEA have work to do to raise the proportion who take up that chance. We will be surprised if this splendidly enterprising Music Service does not meet that challenge.

## *Conclusion*

55. The warm thanks of the National Music Council go to all the Authorities mentioned in this report. And the Council's congratulations go to all the Diploma winners and especially to the Major Trophy winners, **Brighton and Hove**.

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