Summary

Through these five areas, this evaluation has identified some of the longer term effects of L2M and how they reflect the National Plan for Music Education:

• The importance of strategies for progression for pupils of various abilities
• The acknowledgement of the value of both formal and informal music-making contexts
• The importance of regular performance opportunities
• The importance of a range of music-making activities
• Alignment with the National Curriculum
• The importance of professional development for teachers
• The acknowledgement of the social and personal benefits of music-making

The Impact of Listen2Me

“It is good to have a body of research that validates the success of a significant area of our work in schools.”
Cllr Roy Perry, Executive Lead Member for Children’s Services, Hampshire County Council

“The report is a unique national example of independent research carried out over a number of years into this area of musical learning.”
John Coughlan, Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Children’s Services, Hampshire County Council

“We are pleased that the social and personal benefits of music in schools have featured highly in this work.”
Joy Carter, Vice-Chancellor, University of Winchester

“By making tuition across a variety of instruments accessible to greater numbers of pupils, Listen2Me is significantly increasing participation in a wider range of musical activities.”
Jill Larner, Head of Hampshire County Council’s Music Service

“It allows for a higher level of independent learning. Pupils are more open to try out different approaches. Pupils who have had L2M experience are generally more positive about music and are keen to show what they can do.”
Secondary School Music Teacher

“More keen to perform; confidence has grown; progress, enjoyment, success is evident.”
HMS Teacher

“Great confidence boost for the pupils, and they are unafraid to make noise and sing out loud.”
Parent

“And you also do it for the enjoyment of the achievement.”
L2M pupil

Full report available at www.hants.gov.uk/hms/hms-listen2me

“This report provides clear evidence of the many benefits such a programme can provide both musically and more widely in terms of learning and personal development.”
Howard Goodall CBE, Composer and broadcaster
Listen2Me - Music for Life
A longitudinal evaluation from March 2009 to March 2012

Executive Summary

This report is the culmination of three years of visits, interviews, observations and research by Dr Vicky Feldwick, under the supervision of Professor June Boyce-Tillman MBE, University of Winchester, studying the impact of the Hampshire Music Service (HMS) Listen2Me (L2M) programme. The study follows on from a previous report completed in the 2008 academic year by Dr Feldwick into the general outcomes and successes of the initial programme. Both studies used Grounded Theory style methodologies. Such long-term and in-depth research into this subject is probably unique in England.

Previous Findings - A Synopsis

The findings of the 2008 report showed that as a result of L2M pupils' confidence was increased and their social and personal skills developed. In addition, participants had the opportunity to experience live performance and audience appreciation, whilst gaining significant breadth and depth of musical knowledge, acquired through the programme’s three-instrument approach. Overall, general classroom practices and pupils’ learning were improved. In summary, L2M gave the children involved ‘an opportunity to experience and learn a range of instruments and singing, thus opening the door to more informed choice and increasing the possibility for sustained future music-making.’

For this new report a large amount of evidence was collected in order to explore five areas from which to make recommendations. The areas were derived from the previous study, and were identified as being ‘hot topics’ of local and national interest in the future of music education both in schools and beyond.

Main Findings

1. Continuation – Barriers to Carrying On

What perceived and actual barriers to further participation in music-making exist for those who have been or are involved in L2M?

The research identified an obvious disparity between the barriers perceived by the adults and the actual barriers as encountered by the pupils. There was a difference between what the HMS tutors and class teachers regarded as music-making activities and those which the pupils and, in some cases, the parents regarded as music-making. There was also a disparity between what the pupils and what the adult staff saw as formal and informal music-making. These divides may have the potential to cause confusion for the pupils. In addition many practical barriers were identified including: support, financial, cultural, familiarity, group mentality, and time. These findings can be seen as either institutional or concerned with perception, however, there is evidence that some are being broken down by L2M.

2. Growing Up – Effects on Secondary Education

What effect does L2M have on secondary music education?

Initially there was concern about how different abilities and experiences of L2M could be accommodated in the secondary school classroom. The research determined that, although there were some differences and some challenges, these were not as pronounced as first feared. In classroom lessons teachers noticed a difference between L2M and non-L2M pupils. Those who had experienced L2M showed an improvement in their attitude to music, specifically in the areas of ensemble work, performance conventions, rhythm and increased knowledge of notation, instrument families and a willingness to sing. Many of the teachers were pleased with the increased skills of their pupils.

Overall, the research revealed a mixed picture in terms of numbers and levels of increases and decreases in the provision and take up of further instrumental lessons. However, there is evidence to suggest that participation in extra-curricular music making has increased since the introduction of L2M, with an additional increase in demand for performance opportunities for informal groups in the school setting.


What are the potential wider benefits to general classroom practice including Continuing Professional Development (CPD)?

Children who saw their teacher learn with them, particularly when it came to the physical aspects of learning an instrument, gained a greater respect for their teacher and forged a closer relationship through this shared experience of the processes of learning. Those teachers who took a particularly active role in the lessons gained the most benefit, which included increased confidence in teaching music, instrument specific skills, the ability to use pupil feedback and enhanced leadership skills to aid learning at all levels.

The pupils not only enjoyed the sessions but also looked forward to them. The classroom was a happier place and the pupils were more engaged in their activities throughout the day. There was an increase in creativity, not only in their work but also in their play and general interactions with one another. Pupil confidence, through L2M, was increased both at times of music-making and in the lessons surrounding the sessions. Even taking a small lead in L2M generated within a child a greater likelihood to volunteer to take on a similar role in a different situation.

4. Looking Beyond – Cultural Participation

How has the L2M programme had an impact on cultural awareness, participation and experiences?

L2M is very good at encouraging the pupils to be cultural creators. It does this by combining methods (composing, listening and playing) under one united focus, the instrument. The regular end of term L2M concerts produce an increase in the understanding of audience awareness, sense of occasion and performance conventions.

5. Belonging - Music and Identity

What was the impact of the programme on pupils from different backgrounds?

One of the key strengths of the L2M programme observed was the differentiation of pupils’ learning. In addition, the boundaries between formal and informal music-making were being broken down by L2M. At the end of the evaluation, many of the pupils were happier to claim the title ‘musician’.