

Part of London South East Academies Trust



BEXLEY MUSIC EDUCATION HUB

Inclusion Strategy

September 2023

Inclusion Lead: Louise Matthews (LMatthews@bexley-music.co.uk)

Introduction

The development of the Bexley Music Education Hub, which nurtures and supports the talent and good practice already in existence, within the education sector, as well as offering new opportunities from a range of partnerships, will continue to produce high quality diverse music education for all children and young people in the borough. This in turn, by raising aspirations and standards for large groups of young people, will continue to make an outstanding contribution in shaping and redefining the London Borough of Bexley's cultural landscape.

Bexley Music Education Hub Context

Bexley Music, part of London South East Academies Trust, is the lead organisation for the Bexley Music Education Hub, funded by the Department for Education via Arts Council England, and serving the local authority area of the London Borough of Bexley. Bexley Music is located on the premises of Belmont Academy (DA8 1LE) and is the official music provider for the borough. London South East Academies Trust (LSEAT) comprises nine schools across Bexley and Bromley, providing education for primary and secondary age children – including mainstream, special and alternative provision. The Trust forms part of London & South East Education Group which includes London South East Colleges (a further and higher education college with eight campuses across the region) and London Skills for Growth (an apprenticeship provider).

Bexley Music is fully integrated into London South East Academies Trust as the lead organisation of the Bexley Music Education Hub. The Hub is overseen by the LSEAT Music and Mainstream Provision Board which is made up of London South East Education Group (LSEEG) and LSEAT personnel and is chaired by a LSEAT Trustee. Reporting into to the LSEAT Bexley Music Board is the Bexley Music Education Hub Development Group, led by an independent Chair and consisting of partners and local stakeholders.

Vision, Mission and Values

We want our Music Hub development to enable us to continue to strengthen, expand and enrich the existing provision and to exploit the impact of music, thereby improving the quality and the range of music education opportunities for Bexley's children and young people.

Bexley Music (LSEAT), as the lead organisation for the Bexley Music Education Hub, will continue to build on and extend the current high quality and varied music opportunities for children and young people, which exist throughout Bexley, 'joining up' the provision, and seeking new partnerships within and outside the borough, in order to provide a comprehensive and diverse range of music opportunities, available to all.

All children and young people will be able to access high quality music education through the opportunity of learning to play an instrument, learning to sing, to make music with others and to draw upon the benefit of working with professional role models. Our vision is founded on the belief that all children and young people should receive encouragement to develop high aspirations for their musical engagement in formal, non-formal and informal settings.

The Inclusion Strategy

Bexley Music Education Hub, as part of LSEAT, is determined that our strategy for ensuring equality, diversity and inclusion is embedded across all areas of Hub delivery, including our commitment to ensuring equality of opportunity for all C&YP, regardless of race, gender, where they live, their levels of talent, parental income, whether they have special educational needs or disabilities, and whether they are looked after children (See SMART objectives, and Programme of Activity documents).

The Inclusion Strategy for Bexley Music aims to create an inclusive and accessible music education environment for all individuals in the Bexley community. We are committed to ensuring we are an inclusive organisation. This strategy is designed to ensure that every person, regardless of their background, ability, or socioeconomic status, has the opportunity to engage with and benefit from music education and related activities. By fostering an inclusive culture, we seek to celebrate diversity, promote equality, and remove barriers to participation.

This strategy sets out the steps we will take to ensure an inclusive and high-quality music education for all children and young people in Bexley. This strategy will evolve and adapt based on feedback and community needs.

Some communities and individuals often face barriers that prevent them from reaching their full potential in society and have fewer high-profile role models to inspire future generations. The staff and board of Bexley Music recognise that we must continually challenge and assess our ways of teaching and the resources used to ensure we meet the ideals of a truly inclusive society.

We are committed to providing inspirational music opportunities that are a source of joy, self-worth and achievement. We offer progression routes that are affordable, inclusive and seek to overcome barriers to access.

Recognising individuals from diverse cultures, perspectives and experiences is at the heart of the way we work. To this aim we will deliver our service guided by the principles of the Equality Act 2010 and seek to actively address discrimination and barriers often experienced by those

with protected characteristics (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation).

We recognise that being a diverse and inclusive employer helps us fulfil our responsibility to make a difference for young people. We seek to develop an environment where we treat all employees and young people as individuals, fairly and in a consistent way.

Purposes of the BMEH Music Inclusion Strategy

The strategy sets the foundations to build an inclusive music education culture where all children and young people are valued and recognised for their unique qualities, ideas, voices and perspectives and where they can see the hub as providing a range of diverse and suitable musical opportunities and progression pathways. Through the strategy, BMEH will broaden the range of children with whom it engages, and it will enable all children, particularly those in challenging circumstances, to have access to a useful, high quality and personally suitable music education.

Action Plan

- Audit the current programme and skill base
- Develop a programme of workforce development, including reflective practice
- Develop a team of inclusion champions with skills in and understanding of cognitive diversity, assistive technology, the social model of disability, and the Sounds of Intent model.
- Develop an infrastructure and systems to support inclusion
- Build a workforce and, if appropriate, governance body that is more representative of the local population
- Monitor more closely who is included in music provision, particularly in relation to who progresses from first access music making
- Increase the quality of musically inclusive practice
- Develop at least one inclusive ensemble that is easily accessed by disabled and non-disabled children
- Investigate progression routes for young SEND musicians
- Explore the engagement and recruitment of disabled music educators
- Consult with young people and stakeholders on their perceptions of inclusivity and relevance of the hub.

- Build into the programme, a review of progress based on take up, retention, data, innovation, achievements and progression. Critically reflect on remaining gaps and modify on-going strategy with this in mind
- Explore the 'HEARD' approach, developed by Youth Music:
 - *Holistic - placing emphasis on personal, social and musical outcomes*
 - *Equitable – people facing the biggest barriers receive the most support*
 - *Authentic - developed with and informed by the people we do it for*
 - *Representative – the people we work with as participants and colleagues reflect our diverse society*
 - *Diverse – all musical genres, styles, practices are valued equally*

To fulfil the aims of the Inclusion Strategy, Bexley Music is making the following commitments:

Engagement

To engage all young people, we commit to:

- ensuring that the demographic of children who access in-school-teaching and out of school ensembles continues to be fully reflective of the demographic of the area
- identifying and seeking ways to overcome any barriers that prevent any young person from engaging with musical activities in Bexley
- ensuring that equity, diversity and inclusion is at the heart of all our planning when developing new programmes and music projects

Music for teaching, rehearsal, and performance

To ensure that Bexley Music's teaching, rehearsals and performances can be, and are, accessed by all young people, we commit to:

- continuing to ensure that the musical learning Bexley Music provides reflects diverse cultures and communities, both in the actual music used and in the variety of methodologies used in teaching, learning, and performing
- being more forward about celebrating the diversity of the music, composers and methodologies used, especially in performance situations

- including music by a diverse range of composers and performers, including from musicians and composers/styles outside of 'mainstream' Western classical and popular traditions
- avoiding propagating stereotypes that suggest limits to what any young person can do or achieve
- music being taught, learned, and performed in ways that show respectful understanding of its cultural background and context
- making music and teaching resources from diverse cultures available to schools and the wider music education community across the Music Hub

Role models

We commit to:

- acting as role models, supporting children and young people to achieve their full potential and develop a lifelong love of music, providing and promoting role models for young people that reflect the characteristics highlighted in the Equalities Act, including staff, students, composers and performers
- ensuring that we continuously strive towards a workforce and Board membership that reflects the diversity of the borough, and the characteristics highlighted in the Equalities Act, and that we consistently review our recruitment policies and methods to ensure job adverts reach as wide an audience as possible and that the positions advertised are accessible to all.

Identification and avoidance of prejudice and bias

We commit to:

- collecting and monitoring information and data to support our understanding of how barriers and perception influence young people's access and/or engagement with Bexley Music
- becoming more aware of the challenges and difficulties faced by young people
- training staff to be aware of and avoid any prejudice around a truly equal, diverse and inclusive approach to our work, and from making assumptions based on 'common understandings' that may create barriers
- making clear that any form of prejudice, bias, or hate speech towards anyone has no place in Bexley Music

Adaptive Instruments

Bexley Music Education Hub is planning to invest in a number of adaptive instruments to enable pupils with special educational needs or disabilities to be included in Whole Class Ensemble Tuition programmes and/or to take instrumental lessons. These may include Soundbeams, Skoogs, Clarions, one-handed clarinets etc. Bexley Music has access to a Skoog and Cmpsr software, but is keen to expand the stock and access to provision. Where existing stocks are not suitable for a pupil, we will liaise with neighbouring Music Hubs or contact other providers (e.g. Drake Music) to enable participation.

Partnership Working

Providing inclusive and accessible music education is fundamental to everything we do. This plan is closely linked to our ongoing needs analysis and business planning. Running through all our work is a commitment to equity, diversity & inclusion, and to ensuring that the voice of young people informs everything we do.

We are committed to supporting our most vulnerable young people, by forging closer links with schools, key local organisations and specialist providers. This will ensure that access to music opportunities is both equitable and relevant to the needs of the children and young people in Bexley. To support this vision, we will ensure an equitable distribution of resources to improve opportunities for everyone, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds and underrepresented groups.

This approach has directly led to the following recent developments:

- Enhanced opportunities for children with SEND to engage in instrumental music and ensembles;
- Development of specialist weekly PPA, instrumental and vocal tuition in Special Schools;
- Successful funding application to the London Music Fund to support progression opportunities in Bexley;
- Bexley Music Scholarship & Bursary Scheme to support CYP facing financial barriers;
- Commitment to the Bexley Music Student Council to help inform future planning and ensure that youth voice plays an important role in decision making.