

The Becta ICT in Music Consultancy 2004-7

In 2004, NAME was contracted by the British Educational Communications and Technology Agency (Becta) 'to support the use of ICT in music at KS3 and 14-19'. This one-year contract was developed during two subsequent annual contracts intended to 'support the professional development of teachers in using ICT in music teaching and learning'. During the first year the contract was jointly managed by NAME and the Schools Music Association (SMA). A steering group made up of representatives from across the music education sector – the National Music Management Group (NMMG) – was set up, and David Ashworth was appointed as Lead Consultant in Music and ICT. Some of his work was specifically Becta related – for example, writing termly newsletters and providing appropriate content for the Becta website – while the rest of the contract was spent addressing a set of key issues identified by the group. These included areas such as

- The integration and embedding of ICT with existing musical activities in the classroom while also identifying a wider range of potential performance opportunities/multimedia work. Capitalising on the capacity of ICT to generate motivation, engagement and collaboration.
- Setting higher expectations for ICT work and developing appropriate means of recording and assessing it. Explore use of e-portfolios – with appropriate regard to issues relating to quality and quantity.
- The most effective use of existing resources. For example, regarding the computer as an instrument in its own right and working with its strengths instead of merely using it as an acoustic or notation substitute.
- The availability, promotion and use of new software – especially that moving beyond notation/sequencer packages – and hardware, including whiteboards. Linked with this was a need for effective evaluation of new resources.
- Ways of supporting teachers in their use of ICT in the classroom, especially through peer to peer CPD and through a range of support staff. Linking into support structures provided by Local Authorities and music services.
- Acknowledging pupil expertise in this area. Using such expertise as a resource in schools while also expanding intranet home-school access to help link musical involvement in and outside school.

These aspects were explored in presentations at national conferences for NAME, SMA, the Federation of Music Services (FMS), the Incorporated Society of Musicians (ISM), the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust (SSAT), the National Association of Advisors for Computers in Education (NAACE) and the National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts (Nesta), as well as the British Education and Training Technology exhibition (BETT).

Research was carried out across the NAME regions to identify leading music ICT practitioners and examples of best practice. A series of regional conferences was organised where these teachers could share their work with their peers, and subsequently many of these practitioners were brought together to form a panel for the Becta 'Ask an Expert' series. This group continues to work together providing training on ICT for the Trinity Guildhall/Open University's KS2 CPD programme for those involved in whole class Instrumental and vocal work (see www.ks2music.org.uk).

NAME's leading role in supporting the use of ICT in music was recognised nationally and NAME and David have since been asked to provide a consultative role in many new initiatives and activities, including work for Futurelab, the BBC, SSAT and Teachers TV.

New developments in music teaching at Key Stage 3 have been especially important and NAME and David were able to make a significant input into the new KS3 Curriculum, Key Stage 3 Music Strategy and Musical Futures. Many of the ideas and issues were brought together in 'Electrifying Music' – a Paul Hamlyn Foundation funded publication that was supported by NAME. This pamphlet can be downloaded from www.musicalfutures.org/rdProjects_inner_ict.html.

Examples of website resource materials developed during this period are accessible alongside this report.

David Ashworth is now Project Leader for www.teachingmusic.org.uk, and future developments in music and ICT will be addressed on this site, which is jointly managed by NAME and the Music Education Council (MEC) and funded by the Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA). Contact him at davidashworth16@hotmail.com.

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