



SHOULD MUSIC BE TAUGHT MORE IN SCHOOLS?

MUSIC is everywhere. It's within all of us, in the way our hearts beat, and it's all around us in nature – just think of bird song or trees rustling in the wind, or the sound of the ocean or rain. Music has been proven to lift moods, improve blood flow, lower stress and raise dopamine (a feel-good chemical in the brain). In fact, it's thought that music-making in humans can be traced back at least 35,000 years! It has so many positives, but it's not always a priority in education. In this report, we look at some of the benefits of music and consider whether it should be taught more in schools.

THE BENEFITS OF MUSIC

Music is good for the brain

- It's one of the few things that uses both sides of the brain.
- Music helps lots of children learn how to speak and count, often through song.
- It can help the brain to focus better. Classical music can improve concentration and productivity.
- Music can help you to remember things. Is there a song that reminds you of a certain moment or memory? Lots of people use songs to help them with revision too!
- It can help with problem solving and creative thinking.



Music brings joy and is great for your wellbeing

- Music has been proven to release endorphins and raise dopamine levels (both feel-good chemicals in the brain).
- It can improve mood and reduce stress levels.
- Listening to our favourite songs is uplifting and motivating and can inspire individuals to pursue their goals and dreams.
- Music can be used as therapy, in meditation and for mindfulness.



It's a great way to connect with others

- Sharing music brings people together and improves community and connection.
- Performing together and working together is fun and helps people to form friendships. Singing with others can be a great way to do this!
- Music can be used to communicate where words cannot. It breaks down language barriers and allows people who are non-verbal (can't speak) to express themselves. There's a famous saying that "Where words fail, music speaks".



It can be pursued as a career

- The music industry is huge and there are lots of jobs within it.
- Some people think that with the increasing use of artificial intelligence and robots, things like music and creative subjects could become increasingly important.



MUSIC IN SCHOOLS

Not always prioritised

Music is part of the National Curriculum in England, which means it has to be taught to young people between the ages of 5 and 14. But this isn't always the case, and lots of children go without being taught music in school, or not being taught music as much as they should. There are a number of reasons why this could happen:

- Not enough teachers are trained in how to teach music or don't feel confident enough to teach it.
- Schools are so busy and there are other subjects that teachers have to prioritise.
- It's expensive to teach music and there isn't enough money put into it.
- The Covid-19 pandemic meant that many people missed out on the opportunity to learn music.

What has the Government done?

In June 2022, the Government released an important document, *The power of music to change lives: a national plan for music education*. One of the things it said is that music is important and should be a focus for schools. The Government said it would give schools more money and support to help them teach music.

Why do some people think music shouldn't be a priority?

Some people say that music shouldn't be taught more in schools. Most of the people campaigning for better music education are those who have been positively impacted by music or are musicians. Not everybody is interested in music and would rather learn about other things, like sport or cookery, for example. Other people think music is a waste of time and that schools should focus more on academic subjects like English and maths.

ORGANISATIONS MAKING CHANGE

Music for Youth

Music for Youth is a national youth music charity that wants to make sure every young person gets to learn and perform music. It holds its Proms each year at the iconic Royal Albert Hall in London. This year's is on 14-15 November and will bring together 3,000 talented young musicians from across the UK to perform on stage.



The Music for Youth Proms at the Royal Albert Hall

The theme for the 2023 Proms and now a national campaign is A Thank You Note. It celebrates the positive impact music teachers can have and how music unites us all. Ask a parent, guardian or responsible adult to show your thanks by using #ThankYourMusicTeacher online.

To buy tickets to the Proms and to find out how to get involved, visit mfy.org.uk.

ABC of Opera

The Academy of Barmy Composers, also known as ABC of Opera, is an organisation that goes into schools in Wales to teach opera through storytelling workshops. It wants music to be inclusive for everyone and uses opera as a tool to learn about lots of different subjects! The goal is for young people to realise that music can be for anyone. In fact, one child who took part in a workshop suggested that ABC should stand for Any Body Can, because anybody can get involved with music with ABC Opera!



An ABC of Opera workshop

OVER TO YOU!

Should music be taught more in schools?

Let us know at first.news/polls