

ARTICLE

Incidental professional development in music education for generalist teaching staff through supporting pupils in expert-led authentic music projects

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Abstract

The need for effective continuing professional development (CPD) in music education is outlined and literature on CPD for generalist teachers and teaching assistants is reviewed. A small qualitative study is then presented that took advantage of a music-making project led by folk musicians in six special schools in England. This study focused on the generalist teaching staff who actively supported their pupils to participate. The staff reported that their own confidence in working musically had increased, as had their awareness of the importance of music for children. It is suggested that these outcomes were achieved through incidental CPD, potentially paving the way for further, deliberate CPD.

Keywords: continuing professional development; music; education; generalist; incidental learning

The provision of good school music education for all children in England has long been problematic (Hennessy, 2000; Cox, 2002; Zeserson et al., 2014; Bath et al. 2020; Savage, 2021; Stanley, 2021, Poulter & Cook, 2022). After the Education Reform Act of 1988 devolved most of the education budget directly to individual schools, the National Advisory Committee on Creative and Cultural Education (NACCCE, 1999) highlighted the ‘disastrous’ demise of local education authority music services as a key factor in the uneven quality of music education subsequently seen across the country. With the introduction of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies in 1998 (Department for Education, 2011a) and the continued close accountability of educators for these two curriculum areas ever since, music education, along with other ‘non-core’ subjects, has suffered marginalisation in many schools (NACCCE, 1999; OFSTED, 2002; Spielman, 2017; Incorporated Society of Musicians, 2018; Duncombe, Cale & Harris, 2018; Savage, 2021). The situation has not been helped by the COVID pandemic, nor by the subsequent ‘catch-up’ curriculum, which has again focused on English and mathematics (Department for Education, 2021a). The quality of music education in England has continued to be inconsistent (OFSTED, 2009; OFSTED, 2012; Zeserson et al., 2014; Department of Education, 2021b; OFSTED, 2023).

This is despite government initiatives including Sing Up (Zeserson et al., 2014), Wider Opportunities (Henley & Barton, 2022), two National Plans for Music Education (Department for Education, 2011b and 2022), the development – and now redevelopment – of regional Music Education Hubs (MEHs) (Arts Council England, 2023) and a Model Music Curriculum (Department for Education, 2021c). The recent inspection report by OFSTED (2023) acknowledges that curriculum time is now being made for music, at least in the primary schools it inspected for this report. Issues of quality remain, however, and in OFSTED’s view, many primary schools are ‘doing music’ non-progressively with generalist teachers who have never been

shown how to help children improve musically over time. In secondary schools, there are similar issues regarding non-developmental music teaching, and the number of pupils taking music qualifications is declining with a corresponding drop in the number of music teachers and time for music (Bath et al. 2020; OFSTED, 2021).

The situation is unclear in special schools. OFSTED's (2023) inspection report does not mention any visits to special schools, which the lead inspector admitted was 'something to reflect on' (Stevens, 2023). The few special schools mentioned in OFSTED's earlier reports (2009 and 2012) showed variability similar to mainstream schools. Other indications of this variability are that schools 'other' than primary and secondary (presumably including special schools) engage with MEHs less than primary or secondary schools do and that 70% of over 5,000 respondents feel that children with disabilities are 'underrepresented in music education' (Arts Council England, 2023; Department for Education, 2021b).

Today's generalist teachers and teaching assistants (a term used in this article to include learning support assistants) are themselves products of England's uneven music education provision. Initial teacher education does not have the capacity to ensure all generalist teachers can fully develop their knowledge, expertise and confidence to offer high-quality music education (Hallam et al., 2009; Hennessy, 2017; Henley, 2017; Ruck Keene, 2020; Poulter & Cook, 2022; OFSTED, 2023). Given this backdrop, many generalist teachers profess a lack of confidence in teaching music (Baldwin & Beauchamp, 2014; Zeserson et al., 2014; Biasutti, Hennessy & Vugt-Jansen, 2015; Garrett, 2019; Nieuwmeijer, Marshall & van Oers, 2023). Yet OFSTED (2023) reports that schools want to provide well for their pupils, so CPD for generalist teachers and teaching assistants has a role to play (Bautista, Yau & Wong, 2017; Department for Education, 2021b).

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for generalist teachers

Avalos (2011) offers a teacher-centred definition of CPD that focuses on active and willing involvement in professional improvement, whatever the actual approaches used. Kennedy & McKay (2011) agree and, importantly, extend the definition to include CPD's ultimate impact on the quality of children's education.

There is consensus that beneficial outcomes are more likely when CPD activities address individual professional needs and when teachers have agency in deciding how, what, when and where to learn (Makopoulou et al., 2021; Armour et al., 2017; Bautista, Yau & Wong, 2017; Spruce, Stanley & Li, 2021; Kennett *et al.*, 2022; Gyimah & Ayinselya, 2022). Moreover, approaches involving the most agency appear to be the most effective: giving demonstration lessons for colleagues to critique (Miyazaki, 2016), taking on leadership roles as part of a multi-school CPD project (Noble, 2021) producing online training materials (Cox, Noonan & Fairclough, 2022) or being involved in research (McAteer, 2013; Cordingley, 2015; Cain, 2015; Hodges, 2015; Poultney, 2017; Noble, 2021).

Jarvis (2010) and Njenga (2023) point out that incidental everyday learning often goes unnoticed, yet can also be of significant value (Eraut, 2011; Shanks, 2023). This informal workplace learning is sometimes considered part of CPD (Eraut, 2011; Kennedy & McKay, 2011; Shanks, 2023), yet its impact could be more widely recognised.

One context in which incidental CPD may occur is where there is an artist 'in residence' in a school. Here, teacher CPD is not typically the prime focus and may not be discussed (e.g. Ungemah & Stokas, 2018; Hunter, Broad & Jeanneret, 2018; Holdhus, 2019; Lindetorp et al. (2023). In other studies, discussion focuses on the CPD of the artists rather than the school staff (Kenny, 2010; Karlsen & Karlsen, 2022). Paris & O'Neill (2018) surveyed teachers about the perceived benefits of hosting visual artists in their schools and some mentioned CPD benefits to themselves, which appear to have arisen through incidental CPD as the artists worked with pupils.

Studies by Hunter, Baker & Nailon (2014) and Miller & Bogatova (2018) involving deliberate CPD through extended artist-teacher collaborations also report positive impacts.

Music education CPD for generalist teachers

Opportunities for music education CPD can be limited. Zeserson et al. (2014) describe ‘a crisis of [music education] CPD at all levels’ and Sirek & Sefton (2023) say there are few opportunities unless teachers seek them out themselves. Yet music teaching causes anxiety for many generalist teachers (see above) so they may not seek out CPD. Bautista, Toh & Wong (2018) report that generalist teachers are less willing to participate in music education CPD than specialists (a finding echoed by Thomas [2022] investigating visual arts teaching). Nevertheless, teachers may agree to participate if CPD is directly offered to them. OFSTED (2023) found that ‘nearly all teachers were keen to develop their practice and welcomed any training they were receiving’.

It should be acknowledged that published research into music education CPD often focuses on generalist teachers who have accepted offers of structured CPD activities, and the published literature does not fully reflect the potential benefits of less formal, incidental CPD. For early-year teachers, the main CPD approach is to be mentored over a period of time (Bainger, 2010; Barrett, Zhukov & Welch, 2019; Nieuwmeijer, Marshall & van Oers, 2023). With primary-phase teachers, a wider variety of CPD approaches is reported: being mentored, immersive musical experiences, observing, assisting expert teachers in the classroom, practising and reflecting and attending perhaps more ‘traditional’, though richly experiential, after-school training sessions. Such approaches are typically used in combination and over an extended period (e.g. Varvarigou, Creech & Hallam, 2012; Sinclair, Watkins & Jeanneret, 2015). These studies all report benefits in terms of teachers’ confidence in music teaching and some also report improved skills.

Other studies make a purposive sampling of participants rather than an open offer. Cloete’s & Delport’s (2015) year-long collaboration with three generalist teachers improved autonomy and agency in teaching music, and indeed willingness to do so, though the teachers’ standpoints at the start of the study are not described. Saunders et al. (2014) evaluated a large project run by a London orchestra focused on supporting children’s literacy through music. At the outset, only a minority of the generalist teacher participants said they were confident to teach music or enjoyed teaching it, but after extensive in-class and after-school CPD, the number doubled. Ibbotson & See (2021) investigated generalist teachers involved in a large trial of a musical intervention focused on children’s learning and behaviour. Teachers received extensive out-of-class training followed by in-class modelling and mentoring, with gradually tapered support. Pre- and post-CPD surveys of forty-one generalist teachers showed increases in their knowledge, understanding, confidence and self-efficacy about music teaching.

Perhaps it is not surprising that these CPD initiatives were successful considering the financial investment involved. In this regard, Garrett’s (2019) case study of a whole-school in-house project is of interest. The initiative, in an OFSTED-rated ‘outstanding’ primary school that sought to enhance its provision even further through music, was borne out of consensus amongst the generalist teachers, implying their willingness to be involved from the outset. Central to the project’s success were ‘collaborative discussions that enabled the subject [of curricular music] to be reconstructed in a collective way’ (Garrett, 2019, p225). Through a highly agentic approach, the teachers challenged themselves to teach music every week, learning together.

For generalist teachers of children with special educational needs, little research has been published, perhaps reflecting the lack of music education CPD available (Wong & Chik, 2016). There are, though, studies that might usefully inform CPD activities. For example, Ockelford and his colleagues have developed a theoretical framework (Sounds of Intent) to describe the musical behaviour and development of children with complex needs (Welch et al., 2009; Shaughnessy et al., 2023). Kaikkonen & Kivijärvi (2013) and Sutela, Juntunen & Ojala (2016) discuss the specific

potential of Orff- and Dalcroze-inspired approaches, respectively. Wong (2021) suggests that giving pupils with learning disabilities time to explore sounds is an effective teaching strategy.

Other research focuses on what teachers need to know about children's special needs when teaching music. For example, Grenier (2016) suggests that mainstream generalist teachers lack CPD about inclusion in music lessons; Gerrity, Hourigan & Norton (2013) report that even music specialist teachers feel ill-prepared, and Au & Lau (2021) say that the more knowledge private music teachers have of autism, the more positive they are about teaching children with this disability.

CPD for teaching assistants

Tarry & Cox (2014) describe how CPD for teaching assistants has lagged behind the increase in their numbers in the UK over the past two decades, and both Bignold & Barbera (2012) and Cramer & Capella (2019) point out that little research attention has been paid to their CPD needs. Sharma & Salend (2016) made a systematic review of international literature but found few mentions of professional development for teaching assistants and pointed out that without CPD, 'teaching assistants in many classrooms inadvertently serve to undermine the goals of inclusive education' (p128). Nicholson, Rodriguez-Cuadrado & Woolhouse (2018) concur, stating that teaching assistants' practices are often undervalued, a point made repeatedly in other studies (e.g. Houssart & Croucher, 2013; Anderson, Blitz & Saastamoinen, 2015).

From the few studies published, it appears that teaching assistants are often 'picked' to participate rather than exerting agency over their own CPD (Roberts & Norwich, 2010; Douglas, Light & McNaughton, 2013; Lindetorp et al., 2023). Even with volunteers, CPD does not automatically yield success. McLachlan (2016) hosted fortnightly professional discussions for a year with teaching assistants specialising in visual impairment, benefitting some but not all of them. Griffiths & Kelly (2018) interviewed teaching assistants who had completed an advanced course in dyslexia and found that some lacked the ongoing in-school support to utilise their training.

However, well-thought-out CPD for teaching assistants can be effective. Roberts & Norwich (2010) trained teaching assistants to run reading interventions, with continued support given after the training, which was found to be pivotal to the positive impacts on children's reading. Brock & Carter (2015) also found that follow-up support and coaching consolidated teaching assistants' learning of an unfamiliar teaching technique. Douglas, Light & McNaughton (2013) found that a series of four half-hour individual training sessions showed promise in improving teaching assistants' communication interaction strategies. In each case, there was extended and personalised support for professional development.

Though teaching assistants want and welcome CPD (Abbott, McConkey & Dobbins, 2011; Houssart & Croucher, 2013; Anderson, Blitz & Saastamoinen, 2015), the need for adequate CPD for them persists (e.g. Antinluoma, Ilomäki & Toom, 2022; Breyer & Gasteiger-Klicpera, 2023), as does the need for research into its impact (Brown & Devecchi, 2013).

Music education CPD for teaching assistants

There are few published studies based on mainstream classes. Saunders et al. (2014) do mention that teaching assistants were involved in their study, though it is unclear what the impact was on them specifically. Welch (2021), reviewing recent studies of CPD through class-based mentoring in early-year settings, mentions teaching assistants but conflates them with teachers using terms such as 'nursery staff' and 'participants'.

The literature is also sparse when it comes to working with children who have special educational needs. Pethybridge (2013) and Tomlinson (2020) both look at music therapy rather

than music education, finding that after being present in sessions run by experts, teaching assistants were somewhat better able to use vocal communication and singing in their own work with children. Grimsby (2023) hosted discussions between three music specialist teachers and three teaching assistants. Although little CPD occurred, this study usefully portrays the complexities and ambiguities of the role of teaching assistant, whose willingness and agency to develop professionally appear neglected compared to that of teachers.

Context of this study

In 2020, a MEH in the south-west of England secured funding from the Paul Hamlyn Foundation for a community music organisation (CMO) to 'explore and test' an established approach to running folk-music projects in schools. The funded project involved six special schools and was called 'All Together Now' (ATN)¹. As well as exploring the benefits to pupils with special educational needs, an additional aim was to look for any impacts on the schools' own music education provision. The COVID pandemic delayed the start of the project to September 2021 and it was completed in July 2022.

The CMO followed their customary approach. Two folk musicians visited each school seven times, bringing with them a range of open-tuned acoustic folk instruments such as mandolins, violins and dulcimers. On their first visit, they met school staff in an after-school session, discussing the specific context and the children's needs, explaining and demonstrating what they would be doing with pupils and allowing staff to experience the folk genre and handle the instruments so they would be able to support their pupils. Five delivery sessions followed, on a weekly basis, in which the CMO musicians worked responsively with a total of 144 pupils following a plan consisting of a 'hello' song, warm-up activities, playing instruments rhythmically, singing, song-writing and a 'goodbye' song. School staff supported individual pupils, including modelling joining-in, so they were actively involved in the sessions. The seventh session was an opportunity for pupils to share their musical work in an informal performance.

For the funded ATN project, the CMO added an eighth session, designed to be an opportunity for some deliberate CPD for school staff. However, in practice, the CMO musicians said that the staff needed more experience before taking on the leading of music. This point is further discussed below.

As a board member of the MEH and a part-time lecturer in initial teacher education, I was asked to research the impact of the ATN project on the generalist school staff. The research question focused on CPD: What might generalist teachers and teaching assistants learn about music education from a practical music project for pupils run by professional musicians in their schools?

Method

Approval was granted by the ethics committee of the local university's Institute of Education for this exploratory, qualitative, inductive research (Leavy, 2017, p9; Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2018, Braun & Clarke, 2021). All consents were gained for data collection.

Semi-structured interviews were chosen as a suitable and practical means to access participants' perceptions, feelings and reflections (Punch, 2009, p114; Morris, 2018; McGrath, Palmgren & Liljedahl, 2019). I carried out interviews just after the end of the ATN project in each of the six schools involved. Importantly, this method did not impinge on the actual musical activities of the CMO with the pupils, since any changes to routine, or the presence of an unfamiliar person, could have detracted from the quality of the sessions (Denscombe, 2017; Rozsahegyi, 2019; Wolfers et al., 2020).

The interview questions were broad and designed to allow for both positive and negative feelings and reflections to be articulated. After an orienting ‘How did the project go?’ there were prompts to reflect on any highlights and/or downsides. ‘What did you find out?’, ‘What did you learn?’ and ‘How did the project leave you feeling?’ were followed up with further questions as required.

All material from the interviews was transcribed, logged and entered into a database. An interpretive thematic analysis was then undertaken to derive possible themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Clarke & Braun, 2017). The analysis was reflexive as themes began to suggest themselves from a process of coding (Ayre & McCaffery, 2022; Braun & Clarke, 2021).

Triangulation of some aspects of the interview material was achieved through the additional method of unstructured naturalistic observations by me in three of the six adult-only initial ATN sessions (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2018; Rozsahegyi, 2019).

Interview participants

Each of the six special schools involved in the ATN project caters for a different range of pupil needs with correspondingly different ratios of teachers and teaching assistants. A mix of 78 teachers and teaching assistants was involved in total. Data were gathered for the present study from just under half of the group. The sample of 37 interview participants was opportunistic, working with each school to find a suitable moment to conduct interviews during staff’s paid non-contact time. The interviews were face-to-face or online depending on the COVID situation at the time: two interviews were individual and six were conducted with groups of participants. The interviewees were five music lead teachers, eight teachers and 24 teaching assistants. Since the present article focuses on generalist staff, the data from the music lead teachers are not considered within the scope of this article.

Findings relating to the CPD impact of the ATN project on generalist school staff

The interview data and field notes indicate two clear impacts of the ATN project on the generalist school staff; one on musical confidence and the other on attitudes to music education. As there are no obvious differences in the impacts on generalist teachers and teaching assistants, they are presented together in this section.

Firstly, the ATN project led to reported increased musical confidence amongst the generalist staff. From field notes of observations during initial adult-only sessions, it is clear that many of the staff were reticent, nervous and self-conscious at the start. However, as they began to join in with the musical activities, their observable behaviours changed. The interview material indicates that generalist teachers and teaching assistants clearly experienced how accessible and enjoyable musical activities can be and that they continued to participate musically as they supported their pupils to access the children-focused CMO delivery sessions. Examples of interview comments include:

It wasn’t threatening . . . it felt comfortable, you wanted to join in and help model that with [pupils]. There was nothing complex that you couldn’t do . . . At school I had really negative experiences – to [the point where I would] think ‘oh I’ve got to take part in these lessons . . . ohhhh!!’ But actually it was OK. (School 3 teaching assistant)

I think it’s improved everybody’s confidence in grabbing an instrument. (School 4 teaching assistant)

*I didn't realise I liked instruments! Or rather, I didn't think I cared, that I was indifferent, and that first session I was like 'Oh f***, I want to play the autoharp' [laughter] And I did. I was like 'woohh!'* (School 6 teaching assistant)

[It has given me] confidence in ... stuff that I wouldn't normally try ... I think, that sort of belief, rather than just giving the impression that I can do it, I actually believe I can do it. (School 1 teacher)

Oh yes, we've joined in! ... It makes you sort of want to carry it on (School 6 teaching assistant)

I'm not a musician, so music would sometimes be a bit scary for me or, you know, it'd be overcomplicated. But they came in at quite a simple level and it's perhaps opened my eyes to see that actually, I could possibly achieve that even without musical knowledge. (School 4 teacher)

The second impact of the project was a raised awareness amongst school staff of the importance of music in children's education and development. This awareness grew directly from the authenticity of the music-making activities. Staff witnessed the positive effects of the musicians' work in their own schools with 'their own' pupils. They were keen to recount the numerous examples of positive change they had observed, including pupils' sustained listening (which lasted beyond the music session); better confidence, concentration, engagement and effort beyond the norm; focus; responsiveness; appropriate behaviours (and an absence of usual 'triggered' behaviours); memory, song-learning, recognition & recall; anticipation; mental health, reduced anxiety; sociability (as pupils were more chatty, happy, excited and interactive); language development; 'life-skills' and personal pride.

For [child's name] ... to take a violin, and play it, and enjoy it – and actually be able to communicate that to people - that was quite magical. And it made me realise how important the arts are. (School 1 teacher)

Yeah, [child's name] does love it. He might not be showing it because he's not playing an instrument but he hasn't left the room once, and he's wanting to hear what's going on, and he's got his head towards the wall to hear the vibrations. (School 2 teaching assistant)

[Child's name] started singing for everybody. It's like noise, not words. But I was just, honestly, so taken back. And honestly, it brought them all together. They were all clapping and it was just the most beautiful thing ever. (School 6 teaching assistant)

This awareness of music's importance was associated with a reported increase in motivation to include music in children's education, with many interviewees evaluating their school's current provision and some already making new links to music in their work.

I don't think SEN, speaking personally, do enough stuff like this ... It's all still very much maths and English here. (School 6 teaching assistant)

The students responded well to the talent of the people that were doing it, and that's something that we don't have ... Whenever there was a lull ... they would fill that time with really talented music. Which is different to [my level of skill] playing a tambourine. (School 2 teacher)

We've got drums and things like that that get chucked, or bells that get used as hammers
(School 4 teaching assistant)

That's something I was going to ask them to do, is to show us how to tune them . . . I've got a ukulele but I don't know how to play it. Only 'Sponge Bob'! (School 6 teaching assistant)

When we made our own song [in the ATN project] . . . we went away and found the Makaton signs . . . And we then did a whole song of like them signing and singing the song. (School 3 teacher)

We're doing rhythm things in some of our stories now. It's helping them remember the story because the beat's there, which is interesting. (School 4 teaching assistant)

Discussion

In the post-experience interviews, the generalist teachers and teaching assistants nearly all said they felt more confident to work musically themselves and with pupils, offered examples that indicated they had witnessed and grasped the importance of music education and expressed the desire to do more.

Yet these outcomes were achieved by school staff who were involved in the ATN project because they worked with particular children, not because they had volunteered or shown particular willingness at the outset. As other researchers have also found (e.g. Biasutti, Hennessy & Vugt-Jansen, 2015; Garrett, 2019), there was obvious anxiety amongst the generalist staff initially. Nevertheless, they were expected to support their pupils' participation in the ATN project as part of their jobs and thereby, incidentally, participated musically themselves. Many of them expressed surprise that they could do it and enjoyed it.

It is suggested that the present study is an example of incidental CPD (Shanks, 2023), unlike much previous research, which could be described as deliberate CPD (e.g. Bainger, 2010; Saunders *et al.*, 2014; Ibbotson & See, 2021; Nieuwmeijer, Marshall & van Oers, 2023). The ATN project seems to have had CPD impact even though – perhaps *because* – it did not put its direct focus on music education CPD for generalist staff. Rather, the staff and CMO musicians alike were focused on the children's music-making.

Special school staff are often experts in focusing intently on how to support individual pupils and it would be natural for them to do so across a range of educational contexts, as here (Hammel & Hourigan, 2011). This allowed the incidental CPD to come to light in this project. The scope for such incidental music CPD is not confined to special schools however. Active involvement by school staff while focusing on helping their pupils has CPD potential in mainstream settings too. As Lamont, Daubney & Spruce (2012) point out, funding is needed to buy the time in school of music experts. Therefore, it makes sense to maximise the CPD potential of any such opportunities. Incidental CPD, as described here, could make a useful first step.

Eraut (2000) points out that such incidental, implicit learning can later be made explicit through deliberate review and reflection, as happened here. When the staff involved in the ATN project later talked about their experiences in interviews, they realised – made explicit – what they had learned. These realisations could provide a foundation for subsequent involvement in deliberate CPD so that new-found musical confidence and advocacy could translate into positive outcomes for pupils (Avalos, 2011; Kennedy & McKay, 2011). The CMO's observation that generalist staff were still 'not ready' for deliberate CPD during their last ATN session is an indication of how carefully any follow-on CPD would need to be introduced. Perhaps staff would be more receptive to deliberate CPD *after* having an opportunity to realise the incidental, implicit CPD already achieved through supporting pupils.

Whilst incidental CPD by definition does not involve deliberate agency on the part of the learner, maximising generalist teachers' and teaching assistants' agency in planning and participating in follow-on CPD, perhaps along the lines described by Garnett (2019), could help to ensure its effectiveness (Makopoulou et al., 2021; Armour et al., 2017; Bautista, Yau & Wong, 2017; Spruce, Stanley & Li, 2021; Kennett *et al.*, 2022; Gyimah & Ayinselya, 2022).

Limitations of this study

The only baseline data gathered were observations of participating staff in three of the initial adult-only sessions. It would have been useful to gather pre- as well as post-experience data about the generalist staff's self-efficacy regarding music education to add clarity to the findings (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2018).

The sampling of just under 50% of the project participants for interviews was opportunistic and may not have been typical of the participant group as a whole (Denscombe, 2017; Collins, 2015). And as I was known to be involved in teacher training and associated with the local MEH, this may positively or negatively have affected the material gathered (Morris, 2018).

While taking an inductive approach to data analysis allows themes to emerge directly from the data set, this approach has limitations due to its inevitable subjectivity, as the researcher is 'the instrument of analysis' (Nowell et al., 2017). Though there was no inter-researcher corroboration of themes drawn from the data, the observational data offered a degree of method triangulation of the findings from interviews (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2018). In-person observations of the musician-led sessions with pupils would not have been appropriate given the context (Rozsahegyi, 2019), but video recordings of the school staff's engagement and behaviours, to triangulate their interview contributions more robustly, would have strengthened this study.

Conclusions

Given the limitations and small size of this study, the conclusions are tentative. There are indications that when deployed as active helpers supporting pupils in a music-making project led by experts, generalist teachers and teaching assistants increased their own musical confidence and their awareness of the value of music education. It is suggested that these outcomes for generalist staff were achieved through incidental CPD because the focus was on the children's learning, not the staff's. Later, the staff realised on reflection that they had overcome personal anxieties around music-making. They had also witnessed music's importance for 'their own' pupils, resulting in more positive attitudes to music education.

Further studies are needed to explore and test the potential benefits of incidental music education CPD, and, in particular, to investigate whether it is the presence of expert musicians, the active staff participation, the authentic practical music-making, the focus on supporting pupil learning and/or the experience of witnessing 'one's own' pupils' learning that are influential factors. It would also be interesting to explore the notion of incidental CPD in other areas of education that can cause anxiety among generalist staff, such as mathematics (Jameson, 2020). Finally, it would be useful to explore ways to transition effectively from incidental to deliberate CPD. In the present study, this transition was achieved through reflective discussions after the practical experiences, which allowed the implicit learning to become explicit, as described by Eraut (2000).

Biasutti, Hennessy & Vugt-Jansen (2015) and Garrett (2019) are among those who attest that music often causes anxiety for generalist teaching staff. Therefore, an implicit approach to CPD such as the one outlined in the present study might be useful for school leaders to consider as a starting point. This study has shown that incidental learning by generalist teaching staff as they actively supported children's musical participation in the classroom led to increases in staff's

musical confidence and motivation, with some indications of positive impacts on their subsequent work in school.

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Note

1 All Together Now <https://www.plymouthmeh.com/all-together-now/>

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