

## Chapter Six

### Pedagogic Discourse at Aberquaver

#### 6.1 Presentation of the data

The data presented in this and the following chapter arose out of four investigational methods:

- i) observations of music lessons with the case study class;
- ii) a questionnaire administered to the case study class;
- iii) analysis of school and state documentation in the form of the school prospectus, the most recent school inspection report, the scheme of work for the Music Department and the National Curriculum for Music; and
- iv) interviews with senior management, Mrs. Metronome and pupils from 9C individually, in pairs and as groups.

Brief comment will be made on the data in this and the next chapter and a full discussion, guided by the research questions outlined in Section 8.1, will follow in Chapter Eight. I felt it was important to take all measures possible to contextualise the discussion of the research questions, attempting to provide a basis of validity and reliability for the data presented, through a process of elaborated description (Luria, 1972). I propose, therefore, to present, first of all, a picture of the school as drawn from documentation and interviews with staff and students. I will then present my lesson observation and questionnaire data as they appeared at the end of initial analysis, subsequently discussing them with reference to the research questions, drawing upon excerpts from interviews and documentary evidence to triangulate, amplify or present an alternative view of the issues arising. I hope that by presenting the initial data before discussion, it will be possible for readers to form their own opinions more easily of the interpretations I have placed upon issues and to judge the validity of my claims.

#### 6.2 The School

Fieldwork was conducted in the school, named Aberquaver for the purposes of this report, an 11-18 Roman Catholic High School in South East Wales, between

September 2004 and June 2005. There were around 750 pupils on roll in the school in each of these years, with official Year 7 intakes of 120. The school selected by religious affiliation. Priority was given to pupils from Roman Catholic families within the catchment of the school but Roman Catholic pupils from outside the catchment area and pupils of other or no overt religious denomination also attended. Out of 127 Year 7 pupils entering the school in 2004/5, 100 came from feeder Roman Catholic primary schools. Applications of the remaining 27 pupils to be admitted to the school were considered by the governing body and decisions taken in the context of the reasons given for wishing to attend the school and the number of places already committed to pupils attending feeder Roman Catholic primary schools. Most applicants to the school were successful. While pupil abilities spanned the whole range and the school was located in one of the most socio-economically disadvantaged unitary authorities in the UK, only 10% of its pupils received free school meals, as opposed to 20.7% in the authority as a whole (NAW, 2004) and 17.7% nationally in Wales. In the year 2003-4, 57% of pupils entered for GCSE examinations achieved 5 GCSEs with grades A\*, compared to an average for the unitary authority as a whole of 40% and the national average for Wales of 51% (NAW, 2004). Given that measures of free school meals are now a very widely used proxy for social class composition and 5 GCSEs, grades A\*-C is taken as the 'gold standard' of pupil achievement, we might say that, while its intake was socially and ability superior in relation to other schools in the authority, Aberquaver merely had a socially and ability mixed composition that was nearer to being 'balanced' than that of many Welsh comprehensives.

According to the deputy head interviewed on April 7, 2004, pupils were placed into forms on arrival in Year 7 to provide gender balanced groups representing different feeder primary schools, maintaining at least one friendship from each and representing a range of academic ability. Pupils remained in these form groups for registration and pastoral care throughout the school. In Year 7, pupils were taught in their mixed ability form groups for all subjects except Mathematics where the department felt strongly that pupils achieved better academic results when grouped by attainment according to their end of Key Stage 2 Standard Achievement Test (SAT) results. In Years 8 and 9 pupils were further set by attainment not only in Mathematics but also in English and Science, based on end of year exams and continuous assessment. In addition, pupils in Year 9 were banded and then set within these bands for Geography, History, French and Welsh. Music, RE and Art continued to teach pupils in mixed ability form groups throughout Key Stage 3. When

I asked the deputy head why this was he replied that it was an historical arrangement and had never been questioned in his time at the school. However, when I sent this draft chapter to Mrs. Metronome, Head of Music and the teacher with whom I conducted the study, her recollection was that:

'this was not true as staff had continually challenged setting, banding and mixed ability arrangements. The present system seems to be a compromise since certain departments are strongly against mixed ability teaching. In fact the setting/banding system makes for an inequality of numbers in forms across the year group and thus affects those of us that teach mixed ability classes. For example one year nine class may have 32 pupils while another has only 25'.

Both such a mixture of grouping regimes, dominated by setting in English, Science and, particularly Maths and differing perceptions of their status on the part of school managerial and teaching staff can be described as having been perfectly ordinary in mainstream English and Welsh comprehensives for many years (Davies, 1977; Evans, 1985; Fitz, Davies and Evans, 2005). Pupils with statements of Special Educational Needs (SEN) were taught in discrete SEN classes, one class within each year group. These classes had between 12 and 15 pupils per year throughout KS3. The school had an SEN coordinator (SENCO) who drafted Individual Education Plans (IEPs) for each pupil and monitored their progress within the school.

The school timetable operated on the basis of five 55 minute lessons per day and their distribution by subject at Key Stage 3 is shown in Table 6.1 and at Key Stage 4 in Table 6.2. While the non-option curriculum for KS4 was compulsory for all pupils, option choices allowed a measure of individualization of pupil curricula at KS4. Aberquaver offered both GCSE and Entry Level options, Entry Level being designed for lower attaining pupils. The option choice leaflet, a copy of which is given as Appendix 3, was distributed during the Easter term of Year 9 following a Parents' Evening which pupils were also invited to attend in order to receive individual advice from teachers on the content of each GCSE subject specification and their suitability as individuals' GCSE choices. Teachers also gave a talk to Year 9 pupils in lessons prior to option decisions in which they described the content of their KS4 course and the qualities required in those opting to study the subject. There was no discussion between departments as to individual pupils' suitability for particular subjects, the school management believing that pupils and their parents should make informed, free choices. However, Catholic school philosophy required all pupils to take GCSE RE, seen as integral to its ethos. While this took time, in comparison with non-

parochial schools, from other options, the school avowed itself committed to giving all pupils as much choice as possible within them, given time and budget constraints.

**Table 6.1 Lesson allocation per subject: Key Stage 3**

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Number of 55 minute periods per week (25 period week)</b>
RE	2
Maths	3
English	3
Science	3
Geography	2
History	2
Welsh	2
French	2
Games/PE	2
Art	1
Music	1
Design and Technology	2

Key Stage 4 optional subjects were placed within four option blocks (see Appendix 3) and pupils required to choose one from each. A number of subjects, including Music, offered an entry level qualification, the Certificate of Educational Achievement (COEA), an examination course designed for students not suited to GCSE study, as well as GCSE. COEA students often had Special Educational Needs. The syllabus for Music was based around themed topics within which students perform, compose and appraise. Music appeared in option block 2 for GCSE choices, alongside Business Studies, Technology, French, Food and Nutrition and History and in option block 3 at entry level, alongside Media studies. Subjects were reported to be grouped within these option blocks based on the experience of the member of staff responsible for timetabling and his experience of the combinations that appeared to work well and allow the maximum number of pupils to study subjects that they really wanted to pursue. At interview on 7 April 2004 this member of staff indicated that he could only recall two instances where pupils had really wanted to study a subject and been unable to do so because of the constraints

of option choice blocking. However, Mrs. Metronome had a different perception of the matter, claiming that this was:

'Again not true – since there are problems every year with clashes. This option block arrangement has been changed every year – the biggest clash being P.E. against Music. There is little continuity from year to year'.

Although most subjects were offered in two option blocks, Music GCSE was only offered in one. The deputy head said that this was because each option block equated to one timetable slot and because of the wide ability and background of pupils

**Table 6.2 Lesson allocation per subject: Key Stage 4**

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Number of 55 minute periods per week. (25 period week)</b>
RE	2.5
English	3.5
Science (double award)	5
Maths	3
Games	1
Welsh baccalaureate (comprising PSE, Welsh, Work-related education and IT)	2
Options (pupils choose 4) GCSE Technology, Geography, Media Studies, Welsh, Business Studies, French, History, Music, Art, Information Technology, PE, Italian. <i>Entry Level</i> PE, Key Skills, Technology, Media Studies, Music	2 per option

opting to take GCSE and entry level Music in the school, staff in the Music Department (see Section 6.3) wanted all KS4 pupils in one class per year with both members of staff timetabled to teach them at the same time. Mrs. Metronome understood that: 'this has recently been changed to make all subjects more equal and I believe each subject now appears only once in the options'. At the time of the study, however, Music only appeared once and other subjects twice. The deputy head indicated that, on average over the past ten years, between 12 to 19 pupils per year, out of a cohort of about 128, had opted to take GCSE Music, with a further 6 to 10 pupils per year opting to take COEA (entry level) Music. Therefore, between 17.5% and 33% of the cohort had chosen, over this period, to take Music, significantly above the 8% average in Wales as a whole. At the conclusion of my study I returned to the school to find out how many pupils opted for KS4 Music in the academic year of my study, 2003/4 and was informed that 25% of the Year 9 cohort had done so.

### **6.3 The case-study class 9C**

The Music Department was staffed by one full time music teacher (the Head of department, Mrs. Metronome for the purposes of this report) and one part time music teacher (0.6, Mrs. Baton for the purposes of this report). Mrs. Metronome had spent her entire teaching career working within this school and was about to retire, slightly ahead of statutory retirement age. It was with Mrs. Metronome and her Year 9 class (9C for the purposes of this report) that I conducted my research.

The school's arrangements for timetabling meant that Music was taught to tutor groups so that 9C were taught it together. They were described by Mrs. Metronome as a 'nice class'. Some of the pupils were 'a bit lippy' and there were 'some good composers and players'. Two female violinists were members of the school orchestra and another female drummer was 'an able musician'. One pupil was supported by an LSA as he had Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties and could be 'a challenge'. Music was one of the few curriculum subjects in which he joined his tutor group, mainly being taught in discrete SEN groups. Academically, 9C were on a par with the other tutor groups in Year 9 according to school assessment data. Tutor groups comprised a mix of ability and social groupings from primary school. This was reflected in their fairly even academic profile, according to the deputy head. In Music,

9C had fewer pupils who had additional instrumental tuition than the other year 9 tutor groups taught by Mrs. Metronome and this was reflected in a slightly lower general attainment profile in Music than other forms. Although there were two pupils in 9C who were working above the expected National Curriculum level for Music approaching the end of Key Stage 3, the majority (20 or 66%) were working at around the expected level with 8 pupils below this level. In other tutor groups 80% of pupils were working at the expected level. I accompanied 9C to French on one occasion to observe them in another subject and I was surprised to observe the different nature of the class when in a more formal classroom situation. Much of the individual character I noticed in pupils in Music seemed less apparent in this formal 'desks in rows' situation. As a class 9C were welcoming and friendly and received me into their music lessons with generosity. They coped with my questions and interviews with the usual teenage embarrassment but were cooperative and helpful throughout the research project. I enjoyed watching experimental development of dreadlocks, (how long can you leave your hair without washing it?) and hearing stories of weekend high jinks, following blossoming romances and observing the roller coaster of adolescent experience.

#### **6.4 The Music Department**

The Department had last been inspected by Estyn in 2000 and had received gradings of 1 (Very Good) for all key stages and post-16 work. Standards of pupil achievement were high in Music with 80% of pupils achieving level 5 or above in the end of Key Stage 3 assessments and 100% of pupils achieving GCSE grades A\*-C or Entry Level pass in Key Stage 4. The department taught the National Curriculum for Music to all pupils at Key Stage 3 and offered GCSE and COEA, now called 'Entry Level' Music at Key Stage 4. Entry level qualifications are designed to be motivating programmes of study for pupils for whom GCSE is not suitable. They are also designed to be co-teachable with GCSE specifications. Aberquaver also offered A level Music for post sixteen pupils, divided into AS level in year 12 and A2 level in year 13 (9 pupils were studying Music, 4 in year 12 and 5 in year 13 in academic year 2003-4). A programme of extra-curricular musical ensembles (choir and orchestra) was also provided for those who wished to attend, run by Mrs. Metronome and Mrs. Baton in lunch hours. The choir numbered about 40 pupils from Years 7 to 13 with several members of staff also participating. 60 pupils were involved in the school orchestra; whose players also ranged from Years 7 to 13. Mrs. Metronome avowed that her philosophy was that as soon as a pupil could play a scale on their

instrument they joined the orchestra. Mrs. Metronome also encouraged pupils to form rock bands and allowed these to rehearse in the music performing room at lunchtimes. There were 10 such bands in 2003-2004. The department organised several concerts a year and provided the music for school religious services, termly Masses for each year group and Masses on Holy Days of Obligation. The allocation of teaching between Mrs. Metronome and Mrs. Baton is shown in Table 6.3.

**Table 6.3: Allocation of teaching within Music Department, Aberquaver R.C. High School. 2004-5**

<b>KS3</b>	<b>Mrs. Metronome No. of groups taught</b>	<b>Mrs. Baton No. of groups taught</b>
<b>Year 7</b>	<b>3 +1 SEN</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Year 8</b>	<b>2 +1 SEN</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Year 9</b>	<b>4 +1 SEN</b>	<b>1</b>

<b>KS4-</b>	<b>Mrs. Metronome No. of lessons</b>	<b>Mrs. Baton</b>
<b>Year 10 ( COEA and GCSE combined class)</b>	<b>2 team-taught</b>	
<b>Year 11 ( COEA and GCSE combined class)</b>	<b>2 team taught</b>	

<b>Post 16</b>	<b>Mrs. Metronome No. of lessons</b>	<b>Mrs. Baton No. of lessons</b>
<b>Year 12 (AS level Music)</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Year 13 (A2 level Music)</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>

The Department was housed in two music rooms situated opposite each other, one laid out as a performance area and the other as an ICT music room. Diagrams of these rooms are given at a later stage in the presentation of the lesson observation data as Figures 6.2 and 6.3. In Mrs. Metronome's view the Department was well-resourced. At interview in October 2003 she revealed that she had learned how to acquire resources, particularly instruments, in her 35 years' teaching experience and how to push for capitation from senior management. Mrs. Metronome now had a separate capitation allocation for the school orchestra and choir which meant that her subject capitation did not have to stretch to resourcing extra-curricular activities. She



was also allowed to keep money received from ticket sales for school concerts to use for the extra-curricular work run by the Department.

The performing area was equipped with a range of tuned percussion instruments, mostly alto xylophones and metallophones with one bass instrument of each type. Mrs. Metronome indicated that she found that pupils could not hear themselves well enough when playing soprano instruments so that she had stopped buying them. There were three six-string electric guitars and five bass guitars which, she claimed, all pupils had the opportunity to play, as well as a drum kit permanently set up in the performing room in front of the piano. There are also 12 electronic keyboards with built in recording function. The ICT room was used for composing work and equipped with 16 midi workstations with PCs and keyboards, an interactive whiteboard and data projector and audio playback equipment. Technology resources had built up slowly over the past five years. Mrs. Metronome had managed to acquire an initial seven computers from the IT department when they were upgrading and replacing their existing machines. The Head then had allowed her £2000 to purchase software and to cover installation and networking costs. The machines are connected to the school network which meant that teachers could access any pupil's work from their machines and display it through an interactive whiteboard. They could also mark composing work outside of classroom time. Midi keyboards had been purchased in bulk at a discounted price. Mrs. Metronome discovered that the IT department was receiving soundcards and headphones with their new machines that it was not proposing to use which she also managed to obtain. This technology proved to be such a success with GCSE and A level pupils that the Head teacher then provided enough money to purchase the number of workstations required to allow the technology to be used at Key Stage 3. The programme *Cubasis* was run as sequencing software and *Sibelius* as a computer scoring package. Mrs. Metronome indicated that Year 8 pupils had achieved excellent results with *Sibelius*, much to her surprise, as it required pupils to enter notes onto a stave rather than playing them into a sequencer, as with *Cubasis*. She had encountered some problems with using *Cubasis* with some of the Key Stage 3 pupils who had difficulty playing to a midi click and were, therefore, unable to record their ideas accurately. On the whole, though, she was delighted with the results of having this technology and said that most Key Stage 3 pupils were now musically computer literate by the beginning of Year 10, which helped them a great deal with KS4 composing work.

#### 6.4.1 The scheme of work for Key Stage 3 Music

Having read and discussed the scheme of work for Key Stage 3 Music with Mrs. Metronome, its condensed representation, by units of work, presented in Table 6.3 was drawn up. It is necessarily some what bloodless until read in the light of her philosophy of music education and pedagogical approach to curriculum, classroom practice and assessment contained in the extended extract from our interview of 7 May 2004 which follows it as Extract 6.1. It should be borne in mind that by the time of this interview I had already observed a number of lessons, mainly with the Year 9 target group but also in other years. The rather complicit form of some of my questions and prompts rather reflects this experience shared with Mrs Metronome.

**Table 6.4 Key Stage 3 Music units of work**

Unit of Work	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9s
	Introduction to basic instrumental techniques Singing in unison and two parts	Music Around the World	Riffs
	Musical building bricks-musical elements	Timekeeping-music in various time signatures	Star Children
	Performing in an ensemble: Elvis 'Love Me Tender'	composing a march and fanfare	Jazz The Blues
	Group compositions (i)song writing and	Chinese Music	Sound Pictures based on The Sea
	Group compositions (ii)a programmatic piece	Step and Leap Composing	Music in Wales Welsh Pop Music Welsh Folk Music

This scheme of work does not look vastly different to many others one reads in the course of visiting school music departments around Wales. What marked it out as different was the approach to its delivery adopted by Mrs. Metronome. This emerges in the following extract, which begins after a discussion concerning the ICT work with pupils that Mrs. Metronome undertook at Key Stage 3.

**Extract 6.1 A view of Mrs. Metronome's pedagogic discourse** (interview 7 May 2004  
RW = researcher, MM = Mrs. Metronome)

RW: So really what do you think the big picture is, what are you trying to do with the kids particularly from when they come in, in Year 7 until the end of Year 9?

MM: Obviously give them some key skills [...] um, obviously also enable them to achieve their full potential because I think most children are very musical, they all listen to music or like music when they come here so there's no reason really to put them off if you start on that premise and build on that- the fact that they actually like it, it has got to be a very positive factor hasn't it?

RW: You know I get so many students who say 'this is a good class there are lots of musicians in here' and I say 'what do you mean?'

MM: They're all musicians, everybody is a musician.

RW: That's right. They think musicians are only kids who have instruments and I keep saying to them everybody sitting in front of you is a musician.

MM: Yes, I do try to get away from this view that they have that they are only musicians if they play an instrument. Well they all play an instrument.

RW: They do.

MM: Even now I have parents coming to me on a Year 9 option evening saying 'oh they won't be doing Music because they can't play an instrument'. That kid is playing xylophone to at least Grade 2 level and parents don't even know.

RW: Its so entrenched isn't it because the children themselves?

MM: A lot of it is because parents themselves were badly taught

RW: That's really interesting. Do you think the kids think of themselves as musicians by the end of it or do you think you're still fighting that battle?

MM: I think I have to spend quite a lot of time praising because they probably think they are worse than they actually are [...] and that's confirmed when I go to other schools and I see how much better mine are. Its not an issue [...] they don't say 'I'm not going to do that', they will always have a go because the atmosphere I hope in my classroom is that we listen to each other and we encourage and praise, we don't put somebody down if they do it wrong, there is no wrong, it's best to have a go and make some mistakes and [...] I always tell them I make mistakes but I don't let them know until I've done it, we just do it. And there's lots of spin-offs from that. When we have Assemblies for example, there's no big issue about kids getting up and doing things, we don't have any of that like they seem to have in other schools where they won't do something.

RW: How did you come to sort of adopt this approach where you do a lot of classroom ensemble playing because that doesn't happen in that many other schools although it's a great way to teach. Was that something you'd done on teaching practice yourself and then [...]?

MM: Yes

RW: Yes

MM: No, I'm not quite sure how I came to it. It was long before the National Curriculum. In fact when the National Curriculum started I was asked to do some

INSET training on that because I was the only person doing it, I was the only person then who had a keyboard, they already had keyboards up and running then and it was quite a new concept to other people, I, it just seems obvious to me. If you have children playing, you know they, most schools have an orchestra and the head of music will stand up and conduct the orchestra so why should a classroom be different? I don't see why it should be any different? To me it is exactly the same. The only difference is probably that you've got a lot of children in there that have to have help with reading skills, but you can organise your work to compensate for that.

RW: Its sort of a different take on the American band system isn't it, where every class is a band

MM: Every class *is* a band

RW: And every kid is given an instrument and they spend their music lessons playing those instruments.

MM: Yes, yes. It also [...] um it gives Music a lot more street cred if you have things like drum kits and guitars in the classroom or anything they want to play. We had one kid one year who wanted to play the harmonica and he ended up as a brilliant harmonica player, absolutely wonderful. So anything they want to play really, I will try and accommodate it. The funny thing is that children who play orchestral instruments very rarely want to play them they prefer to play keyboards.

RW: Is that sort of peer cred do you think?

MM: I think, I think some of them just feel they get plenty of that kind of playing and that kind of music outside in the other ensembles and they just want to join in the classroom.

RW: Do you think, do you remember, did you start off straight away having a kit there and a guitar and things like that?

MM: Um, yes right from the beginning, it all stemmed from the kit.

RW: So its drawing a lot more on the music the kids have been listening to out of school, is it?

MM: Yes.

RW: Closing that loop.

MM: I just started with, there was no material I started with simple arrangements of music and learnt as I went along

RW: It is interesting in other schools I've done my questionnaire in other schools and I say to the kids 'do you think the music you do in school is real music?' In other schools they tend to say no because it's not like the kind of thing we listen to. Much more of them here say yes here because you know they relate it to what they listen to out of school and the sort of instruments that they're playing.

MM: They do, a lot of them do ask me oh can't we do so and so but there are certain sorts of sound which don't lend themselves to classroom ensemble, there's no point just doing that, you cannot make it sound the slightest bit authentic. You've got to stick to styles which you can really make sound as authentic as possible.

RW: Do you sort of write stuff to order if you particularly want to do something do you [...]?

MM: Sometimes. But the trouble with that is it has a very short shelf-life.

RW: Chart stuff?

MM: I did a lot of Spice Girls stuff and I've just binned it all now because what's the point of keeping it all?

RW: Because they won't play it.

MM: But some stuff [...] which is [...] lasts for ever, like you know the Glen Miller stuff we do, any jazz pieces any blues pieces we keep on doing that, anything which is becoming part of the standard repertoire that children that they will always recognise those are fine. But these groups that come and go [...] I would like to be able to do Nirvana. I just don't think it would work in the classroom.

RW: No, it's the rhythms isn't it, and if you simplify them too much it becomes something else doesn't it, it's not the original?

MM: Yes

RW: Do you ever have kids playing rhythm guitar or chord guitar?

MM: Oh yes.

RW: Those kids just play anyway?

MM: You just happen to have seen a class where [...]

RW: there aren't guitars?

MM: Yes but every other Year 9 class I've got rhythm guitars

RW: And do you do that from Year 7, have some kids on guitar from Year 7 or is that something they introduce themselves?

MM: The problem with rhythm guitar is that it takes a long time on a one to one basis to teach them the chord patterns and the movements.

RW: Can't they just play single basic notes?

MM: Yes, but you can't teach it very quickly so by the time they get to Year 8 they've usually learned six or seven chords by then I'll write a part for them. There are very few in Year 7 who are confident enough to just to read it off a line

RW: Where do you think they get those six or seven chords from? They teach each other or the older kids do they go to them and ask?

MM: Some of them do, we have a good system here of cascading. Some of them have lessons of course and if they have lessons well there's no problem they can come and play straight away but they still have to be taught things like full bars and half bars and luckily I'm a guitarist so perhaps that helps. Because you can [...] the other very important thing about a classroom orchestra is that I really do believe you must teach them the correct techniques you know I don't want them to think these are baby instruments

RW: No

MM: So they must learn to play them properly so they learn properly with hammers some of them multiple hammers they play chords, the proper technique on bass guitar, the proper technique on everything, try to do the fingering on the keyboard but if they really can't master that and very few of them can get really good fluent finger

action because I only see them once a week, you know its just not practicable so in the end they end up doing it any way they can

RW: Yes, you do an introductory, is it your first unit looking at instrument techniques in Year 7, is that right?

MM: No, in Year 7 I only do keyboards at the beginning.

RW: Just keyboards?

MM: So during the first term they look at all the instruments, but the first half term they do just do keyboard work.

RW: So they can't

MM: It is one of the things they don't do in junior school you see so they don't have any idea about moving around a keyboard.

RW: So they all do that?

MM: Yes.

RW: So you start building that technique from Year 7?

MM: Yes.

RW: That's very interesting. What about appraising work, you don't seem to do any of that on its own? For example, in the unit on sound pictures, where you did the PowerPoint with the pictures of sea paintings, do they do an appraising exercise at the beginning?

MM: No. Because they learn far more from performing and composing it. I might play this as an example at the beginning they don't just see pictures, they'll hear Benjamin Britten and they'll hear Debussy.

RW: I like that. At the end of last year when I came in you were just about to do it, you showed me the PowerPoint with the sound clips and the pictures

MM: Yes, but this to me now it's a writing exercise which the kids hate and its, I wonder what value it has? You make them sit in silence and listen to a piece and it all depends on can they tell the difference between a flute and an oboe and does it matter in the end anyway? When they're going to compose they've got to know the difference because they've got to select a flute and an oboe then they can learn it that way. Does it matter if they can't pick it out of an orchestral texture?

RW: The purpose of this was for us to have a mark out of 10 to write in our mark book.

MM: Exactly and what does that mark tell you? It tells you that kids who are good at writing get the high marks and the kids who can't express themselves get the low marks. It doesn't mean that they're not musical. So we've binned those now, we don't do it any more. We spend; we put far more effort on self-appraisal so we might for example say what instrument do you use? Why did you choose this? So they might recognise say that the flute is a nice high pitch, its got a nice soft sound whatever, they've got to give you some reason for choosing their instrument which has got far more value than telling me what instrument is playing here.

RW: Which bar does the bass guitar come in?

MM: Yes that sort of thing.

RW: That's absolutely true but your appraisal stuff has got to be good then.

MM: Yes. It's got to ask the right questions.

RW: That's the more musical approach isn't it? What about, do you do any group composing?

MM: Yes in Year 7 they do, all groups compose.

RW: Do they? I haven't seen very much...

MM: They compose a song, and they do a sound picture in groups. We'll be starting that next term.

RW: And do you move away from that later on, because you think they've got the skills to work more individually?

MM: Well The reason I do it in Year 7 is its putting them in a small group in Year 7. It teaches them to listen to each other, talk about ideas and get on with working with others. When they get into Year 8 I think you put them into pairs or pairs on computer or we do whole class composing because if you put them into groups they're just going to waste time. You find yourself running around like a madman because they're all in groups in different places and they'll only work when you come into the room and then as soon as you've left the room they do nothing

RW: I absolutely agree.

MM: But yes we have to do it in Year 7 and get it out of the way.

RW: But as they get older, you find paired work gets better results?

MM: Yes, we get much better results when we put them into pairs even if you do a whole class thing at the end, if you put them into pairs they make something and we put it all together to make a whole class composition and then that works quite well.'

It becomes apparent from this interview that Mrs. Metronome has a strong commitment to equipping her pupils with musical skills in playing an instrument to enable them to participate in music in a meaningful way as she sees it. A large proportion of her curriculum is devoted to pupils making music as a class band with bass guitars, drum kit and a variety of classroom instruments. Mrs. Metronome has a strong affiliation to popular musical culture and tries to align her curriculum with what she perceives to be the musical interests of the children she teaches. There are, however, problems with achieving authenticity within genres so reliant upon complex rhythmical features and the ability to carry out a high degree of manipulation of sound through the use of specialist ICT. Mrs. Metronome's determination to keep her pupils engaged in practical music making has led her to dispense with written appraisal tasks and much of the group composing work found in so many other music departments. She has evolved this approach to the curriculum through a lifetime of teaching music through responding to and developing the musical needs and interests of her pupils.

In addition, I was fortunate to be present when Mrs. Metronome talked to 9C about GCSE Music, indicative as further contextualisation of her approach to music education, given here as Extract 6.2.

**Extract 6.2    Prospecting GCSE Music with 9C (Extract from field notes: 8 March 2004)**

Mrs. Metronome then announced to the class that she needed to talk to them about GCSE Music as several people had asked her about it following the release of the option booklets. She emphasised that pupils don't need to play an orchestral instrument to take GCSE Music.

MM. '...everyone in this school plays an instrument'

Mrs. Metronome gave as examples the names of pieces the class had learnt recently as ensembles and told the class that these pieces would be acceptable for GCSE performing. She said that pupils could also play drum kit or guitar if they wished and mentioned that most of this year's boys are doing just that.

MM. 'If you play in a band that's good, you can tape yourselves playing and submit that you have plenty of time to produce the work-two years for one solo and one ensemble One of the advantages of doing GCSE Music in this school is the access to technology you will have. Not many other schools in this area have access to the sort of technology you have here - one machine to each pupil.'

Mrs. Metronome emphasised that there was hardly any writing, in response to a question from a pupil. She talked about the listening exam and indicated that only short word answers were mainly required there. Mrs. Metronome emphasised that the GCSE course is 75% coursework and that pupils need to be able to work independently.

This information was very much in accord with the information previously given to me. It verified Mrs Metronome's inclusive and egalitarian approach to the KS4 Music curriculum.

## **6.5 Lesson observation data**

The data presented here is derived from field notes taken in 16 music lessons observed with 9C over a period from October 2003 to May 2004. Seven lessons were chosen for detailed analysis as representative of the range of musical activities and locations I had observed. Other lesson observation data was used to amplify findings.



**Table 6.5: Categories for coding and analysis of lesson observation data.**

<b>Message system</b>	<b>Curriculum</b>	<b>Pedagogy Instructional Discourse</b>	<b>Pedagogy Regulative Discourse</b>	<b>Evaluation M.M.</b>	<b>Evaluation Pupils</b>
<b>Description</b>	Content and Mode of transmission	Mode of interaction	Mode of interaction	Mode of evaluation of knowledge	Mode of evaluation of knowledge
<b>Sub-category 1</b>	Curriculum content-musical genre	M.M./pupil interaction	M.M./pupil interaction	What is recognised as being good	What is recognised as being good
<b>Sub-category 2</b>	Curriculum content-musical activity	Pupil/M.M. interaction	Pupil/M.M. interaction	What is recognised as being bad	What is recognised as being bad
<b>Sub-category 3</b>	Organisation of pupils	Pupil/pupil interaction	Pupil/pupil interaction	What is recognised as being worthy of time/effort	What is recognised as being worthy of time/effort
<b>Sub-category 4</b>	Shape of lessons	Pattern of contact - whole class/ groups/ individuals?	Classroom rules and regulation, How is order maintained?	What is recognised as a waste of time/effort	What is recognised as a waste of time/effort
<b>Sub-category 5</b>	Curriculum time	Open/closed interaction?	Control and management-who takes the decisions about what is done, how it is done and how it is regarded?		
<b>Sub-category 6</b>	Teaching strategies	Styles of questions used? Are they open or closed?	How are pupils brought to attend?		
<b>Sub-category 7</b>	Materials	Are the pupils allowed to make suggestions?	Does Mrs. Metronome deal with pupils individually or collectively, in public or private?		
<b>Sub-category 8</b>		Is difference accepted/ rejected/ cherished			

As indicated in Sections 5.9 and 5.10, I coded observations under initial headings derived from Bernstein's (1973b) analysis of the three crucial educational message systems: curriculum, pedagogy and evaluation. I then used a process of network analysis (Bernstein, 1996; Brown and Dowling, 2001) to expand these categories to produce relevant sub-categories, as shown in Table 6.5 below. Bernstein's (1973b) categories of curriculum, pedagogy and evaluation have been developed into curriculum, pedagogy (Instructional Discourse) pedagogy (Regulative Discourse), evaluation (MM) and evaluation (pupils). A brief description of each category is given in Table 6.5 whose rows show the sub-categories into which each descriptor was further disaggregated for coding and analysis.

### 6.5.1 Curriculum

In considering curriculum and knowledge content, I used the music-specific sub-categories genre, the style of music within or about which Mrs. Metronome was teaching; and area of musical activity, defined in terms of the National Curriculum areas of musical activity, drawn from Swanwick's (1979) broadly adopted C(L)A(S) P model, which we saw in Section 2.2 stood for:

C=Composing,

(L)= Literature or knowledge *about* rather than through music,

A=audition,

(S) =skills acquisition and

P=Performing,

where ( ) indicates those areas subsidiary to the main areas of performing, appraising (audition) and composing. The National Curriculum Programme of Study for Music, in these terms, features the areas of performing, composing and appraising, within which attention to skills acquisition and literature are subsumed

#### 6.5.1.1 Musical genre

Lessons observed introduced or developed a variety of musical genres during which pupils worked within the styles of twentieth and twenty-first century popular music, Western Art Music and the jazz style known as Chicago Blues. Table 6.4 shows the genres of the seven lessons chosen for detailed analysis. The rationale for choosing these seven lessons, given in Section 6.4, was that they formed a

representative cross-section of the types of musical activity and methods of working with pupils observed during the study. Other observation data was collected from additional lessons which were often continuations or extensions of those selected for detailed analysis. Data from these lessons will be referred to in amplification of that drawn from the seven lessons analysed in detail as appropriate.

**Table 6.4 Musical genres of seven lessons chosen for detailed analysis**

Lesson	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Genre	Popular	20 <sup>th</sup> C Western Art	Blues	Blues	Jazz	Pop	Pop

It can be seen from the table above that the Year 9 curriculum, as observed, was biased towards the popular music aspect of the KS3 curriculum. Pupils responded positively towards this and appeared to relate well to the music studied. This was in sympathy with the work of authors, such as Swanwick (1999), Green (2001, 2005), Durrant (2001) and York (2001) who have suggested that a music curriculum that is culturally relevant to young people's own musical interests is more likely to be successful in securing motivation and enthusiasm.

Pupils performed as a class ensemble consisting of piano, electronic keyboards, drum kit, electric bass guitars and tuned percussion during these lessons. The repertoire included an early 1960s pop song *Da Doo Ron Ron*, a 1940s jazz piece *Perdido*, and a piece composed by Mrs. Metronome in the popular music style known as rock and featuring a 'riff' - a repeated melodic figure. They also learnt to perform a number of riffs from popular songs of the day. They composed a piece, using computers and both *Sibelius* and *Cubasis* music sequencing software, based on these repetitive figures or 'riffs'. They also used the story *Star Children* as a stimulus for composition, portraying the idea of outer space. This story had also inspired a piece by the Welsh 20<sup>th</sup> century art music composer Alun Hoddinott which pupils listened to as a starting point. Pupils also learnt to improvise and compose within the jazz style of the 12-bar Blues in its traditional Chicago Blues format, using both electronic keyboards and computers. Appraising was used throughout lessons to introduce compositional stimuli, evaluate pupils' own and others' performing and composing work and establish stylistic and compositional features. There was clear

continuity and progression and a holistic development of performing, appraising and composing skills within the sequence of lessons.

#### 6.5.1.2 Area of musical activity

The lessons which I observed featured a variety of tasks and approaches. When lesson observation data was coded for analysis of the distribution of time spent on the three areas of the music curriculum, as defined within the National Curriculum for Music (ACCAC, 2004), it was interesting to note that there were different patterns of time distribution according to the central focus of the activity, as Table 6.5 and Figure 6.1 reveal.

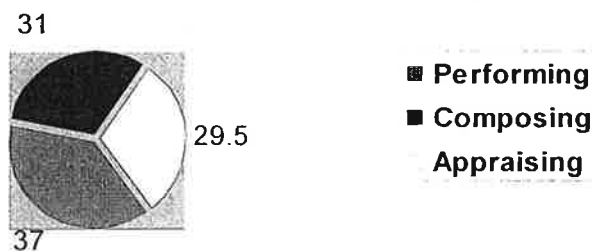
**Table 6.6 Distribution of time spent on NCM areas at KS3, by genre in seven lessons.**

Lesson	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Genre	Pop	20 <sup>th</sup> C western art music	Blues	Blues	Jazz	Pop	Pop
Musical activities In minutes per lesson	A=25	A=20	A=15	A=10	A=10	A=10	A=10
	C=30	C=35	C=40	C=20			
				P=25	P=40	P=40	P=40
% per lesson	45%A	36% A	27%A	18%A	27%A	27%A	27%A
	54% C	64% C	63%C	36%C			
				45%P	72%P	72%P	72%P

Averaged across the seven lessons this time distribution to discrete activities was fairly even, totalling 29.5% Appraising, 31% Composing and 37% Performing.

**Fig. 6.1**

**Percentage distribution of performing, composing and appraising activities across lessons observed (n =7)**



Appraising was always integrated within practical activity, as my field notes from lessons observed on 2 February 2004 and 8 March further exemplified:

**Extract 6.3: 9C Learning about the Blues (Extract from field notes 8 March 2004)**

MM plays pupils recording of class performance of Blues piece learnt in previous lesson. Pupils are questioned about the features of Blues from analysis of their own performance.

Pupils listened to examples of the genre of music within which they were to be working and engaged in aural analysis of this music with their teacher. They also discussed and evaluated recordings of their own composing and performing work. At interview, as we noted in Extract 6.1, Mrs Metronome's claim that she never taught appraising as a separate component of the curriculum but always sought to integrate it within performing or composing activities seemed to be consistently true. She also indicated that she had recently updated her scheme of work to remove any written listening exercises, believing it to be more musical to use appraising within the context of the other two practical elements of the curriculum, performing and composing. The remarkably equal balance between attention to the three areas of the National Curriculum for Music, Performing Composing and Appraising is of particular interest, therefore, when one considers Mrs. Metronome's decision to dispense with formal written appraising tasks and shows that, despite her decision, pupils were still receiving a balance of the three areas of the national curriculum, albeit packaged in a less pedagogically traditional and, arguably, more naturally musical way.

Skills acquisition became a natural part of pupils' learning in performing lessons, where Mrs. Metronome's 'class band' approach to performing involved pupils in acquiring instrumental skill alongside ensemble performing skill. This will be discussed in detail in the following section. Literature studies in terms of the acquisition of knowledge of musical vocabulary or theoretical knowledge were also integral parts of composing and performing lessons but subservient to the desired musical end. They were only introduced when Mrs. Metronome considered it necessary to underpin pupils' musical understanding of the task. Through a practically based curriculum involving a strong core of class band performing most Year 9 pupils observed could read staff notation with a fair degree of fluency and were as comfortable working with the notation base composition programme *Sibelius* as with the notation free sequencer *Cubasis*. In fact, many pupils expressed, to my surprise, a preference for *Sibelius* as they liked to see the notation to help them understand what they were composing. This appeared to be a vindication of Swanwick's (1979ff) model of a practically based curriculum focused on musical activity within which skills acquisition and literature skills were subsumed. Fears from critics of the initial national curriculum proposals that such a curriculum would result in musical illiteracy seem to have been unfounded when the curriculum is delivered musically, as in Aberquaver and the decision of the Welsh Curriculum Council not to insist on teaching of staff notation as an explicit requirement also appeared to have been founded in sound judgement. Similarly, incorporating the teaching of musical theory within a practically based curriculum, as need arose, appeared to work just as well, if not better, than teaching it in isolation. For example, in the lesson observed on 4 October 2003, pupils were to be working on a computer based composition task involving the composition of several riffs to fit over an existing backing sequenced by Mrs. Metronome. She considered this an opportunity to teach or re-teach the term 'riff' combined with appraisal of the previous lesson's performing work, as Extract 6.3 from my field notes demonstrated.

**Extract 6.4: Mrs. Metronome Teaching the Term 'riff' to 9C (Extract from field notes, 4 October 2004)**

10.01 MM plays a recording of the class performing from 2 weeks previously. This is a class ensemble performance of a piece in the style of a rock song based on riffs. Pupils are grouped in front of the interactive whiteboard. They discuss strengths and areas for improvement in their performance.

10.05 MM explains that in today's lesson pupils will look at composing riffs. She asks for a definition of a riff.

10.10 Pupils answer giving examples of riffs they have already played e.g. Deep Purple song, Stereophonics' song, Robbie Williams' Millennium.

10.12 MM congratulates pupils and reminds them that they have already performed a piece composed of riffs-as in the recording played to the class. Pupils are attentive and engaged.

Subsequently, Mrs. Metronome considered that pupils needed to understand the concept of primary triads to be able to compose riffs that would fit within the underlying harmonic framework. She, therefore, introduced this concept to pupils whilst setting the task. The following extract from my field notes of 9Cs lesson on 11 October 2003 demonstrates the approach adopted.

**Extract 6.5: 9C Learning about harmony (Extract from field notes, 11 October 2003)**

10.15 MM explains that today the class need to find out about the harmony that lies behind the riffs. There follows a question and answer session to discover the meaning of the term 'harmony'. MM discusses the terms 'chord' and 'triad' with pupils and demonstrates how to score a triad on the interactive whiteboard, as she taps each note on the stave, the sound plays. She then taps the completed triad and pupils can hear the whole chord played. Mrs. Metronome then shows and plays pupils the three primary triads in the key of C major and explains that she has shown the pupils chords I, IV and V. She explains the use of Roman numerals to signify that these chords are built on the first, fourth and fifth notes of the scale.

10.20 MM then shows and plays pupils on the interactive whiteboard the sequenced first phrase of the melody of '*Love Me Tender, Love Me True*' harmonised with triads I IV and V. Pupils are able to watch and listen as the phrase plays and to hear, see and understand the harmonisation.

**6.5.2 Teaching strategies.**

Two quite distinctive teaching strategies were observed, differentiated according to lesson activity and location. All performing work took place in the main music room which was arranged as an ensemble performing space (see Figure 6.2) and was marked by a master/apprentice or conductor/musician style of instruction, Mrs Metronome interacting with her pupils as performer and director. She led activity from the piano, demonstrating musical techniques or technical difficulties and asking pupils to imitate her. There were brief introductions as she launched quickly into playing the piece of music the class was to perform that day and then encouraged pupils to play through immediately, with her. She worked with sections of the classroom ensemble at a time, giving those she was not engaged with a practice task to do while she did so. This often resulted in pupils engaging in peer teaching and

copying, with more accomplished players 'teaching' their peers and leading small group rehearsals. It struck me both as I watched this and subsequently that Mrs. Metronome had evolved a whole class way of working along lines suggested by Green (2001, 2005). She was, in effect, working with the whole class as a rock band, albeit containing a rather unorthodox tuned percussion section. The nature of her way of working with the class, putting herself in the role of leader of the band and delegating to pupils responsibility for their 'section', meant that pupils naturally initiated the informal learning and teaching methods that rock/pop groups use in their work. Rather than treating the classroom ensemble as an orchestra, as Salaman had done previously, Mrs. Metronome treated it as a band, with a strong focus on a nuclear rhythm section of bass guitar, piano and drumkit, lead lines on keyboard and tuned percussion and frequent opportunities for sections or individuals to 'take the floor' and solo. Usually Mrs Metronome worked with the electronic keyboard players first, as they could then practise with their headphones on while she rehearsed the tuned percussion, bass guitars and drummer. If an individual pupil was having a particular problem she would interact with them briefly on a one to one basis, though tending to work with sections or groups of pupils as much as possible. The exception to this was the drummer whose role was considered so integral to the rhythmic steadiness of the performance that Mrs Metronome interacted with them alone quite often, albeit briefly. At intervals throughout the lesson, she would bring the performance together in class rehearsal of the section previously learned, acting as director/leader for this performance from the piano as she played. Her musical role was integral to maintaining the ensemble and she interacted strongly with drummer and bass guitarist to this end. Beginnings and ends of performing lessons were characterised by appraising sessions of either an example of the genre within which work was being conducted, the piece to be performed with teaching points highlighted or a recording of the pupils' own work which was analysed to secure improvement. Mrs. Metronome led questioning sessions, here focusing pupils' attention on important musical aspects of the recording:

**Extract 6.6 Appraising in context. (Extract from field notes, 15 March 2004)**

MM: 'What should we be listening for here then?'

Pupil: 'Balance'

MM: 'Good, yes, balance; can we hear the melody clearly? Are the supporting parts- the tuned percussion, basses and drums too loud?'

Pupil: 'Right notes?'



MM: 'Yes, well done, are we playing accurately? Are we making mistakes or playing all the right notes?'

Pupil: 'Are we together?'

MM: 'What do we call that, when lots of us are all playing really together-French word, can you remember?'

Pupil: 'Ensemble?'

MM: 'Ensemble good. Right - these are the things we should be listening for, then - balance, accuracy, ensemble - one voice absolutely together because we're all playing the same thing.'

In retrospect, it appears to me that much of the success of Aberquaver's music curriculum was due to this pedagogic approach. In interacting musically with her pupils, Mrs. Metronome delivering instrumental, theoretical and musicianship skills, empowered them as musicians and learners and giving the curriculum cultural relevance. This, I felt sure, was reflected in the number of pupils who chose to continue studying the subject in KS4.

Teaching strategies in composing lessons focused around a longer, didactic introduction of the task with Mrs. Metronome modelling the activity she wished pupils to undertake, usually using the interactive whiteboard. In these sessions there was more use of questioning in the introductory section, with pupils' attention maintained through the use of the whiteboard and music software which played sound as Mrs. Metronome demonstrated concepts. In all but one of the lessons such work was undertaken in the ICT music suite, Mrs Metronome modelling the composing activity and demonstrating the technology skills that she wished pupils to acquire. There followed a period of individual or pair work at computers during which Mrs. Metronome circulated among pupils, helping and advising on an individual/pair basis. At intermediate and final points in the lesson she would stop work and share examples of pupils' composition work, displaying it on the Interactive whiteboard as the sound played. She would then discuss successful features of the work with them, always accentuating its positive aspects and keeping classroom atmosphere upbeat throughout each session, as Extract 6.7 illustrated.

**Extract 6.7: Sharing work with 9C (Extract from field notes 20 October 2003)**

Mrs. Metronome tells pupils to save their work. She displays some examples of good work on the interactive whiteboard. Pupils listen to the music, they watch the score as the music plays. Mrs. Metronome makes a point of displaying some work produced by James, a pupil who has a Learning Support Assistant because of an emotional and behavioural disorder (EBD). The teacher offers positive comments on it. This

positive reinforcement noticeably affects James' demeanour. Other pupils congratulate him on his work and also offer positive comments.

These lessons were concluded by a reminder to pupils of where to save their work on the network system so that it was easily accessible for Mrs. Metronome to assess at a later stage.

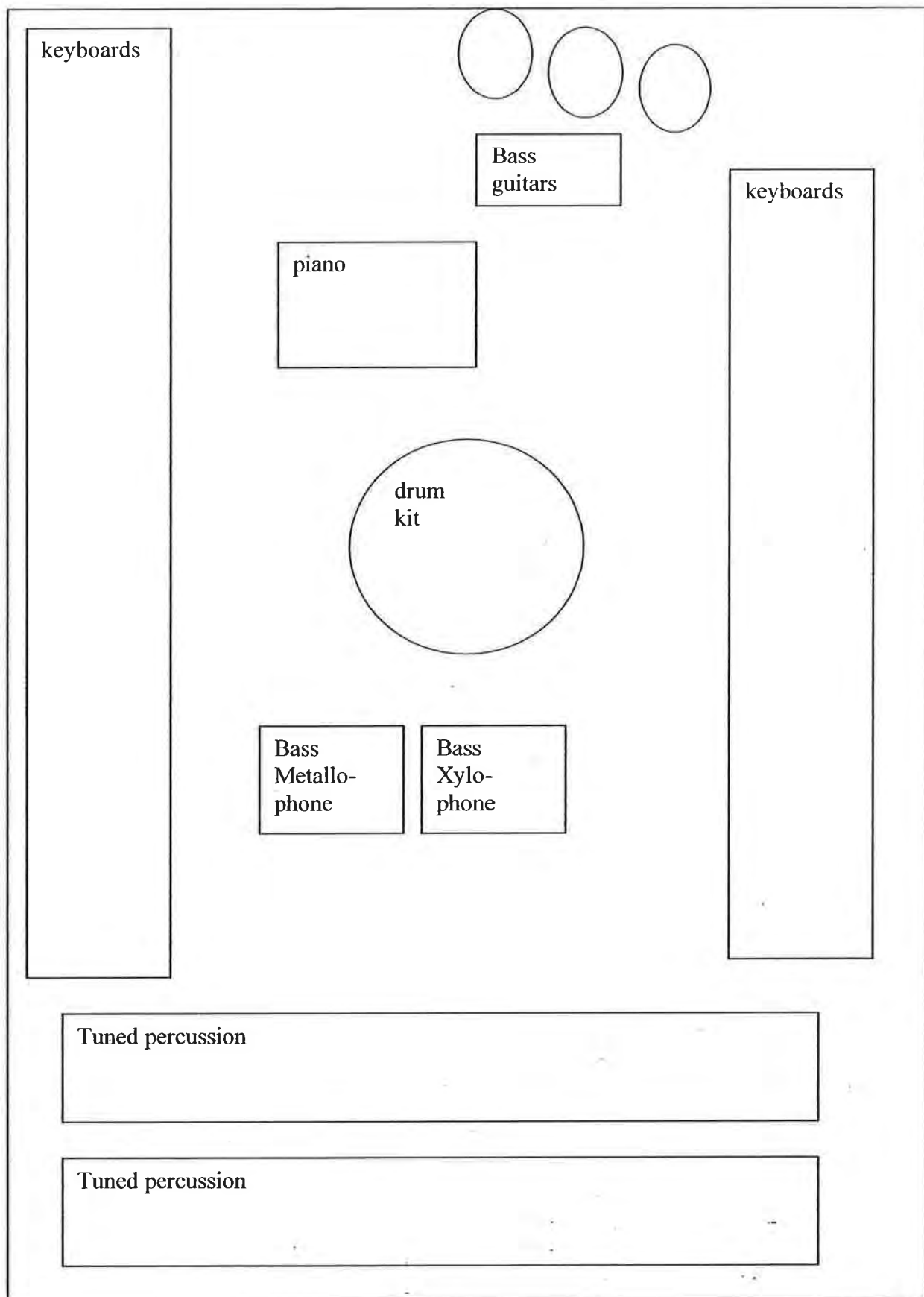
This approach to composing had a number of distinctive features: firstly, it removed the barrier to composition often experienced by pupils lacking advanced motor skills. In much of the group composing work undertaken traditionally in KS3 music lessons, pupils work in small groups with a selection of tuned and untuned percussion instruments and sometimes an electronic keyboard or pupils own instruments to produce group compositions. Those pupils who do not have well-developed motor skills are often at a disadvantage in these situations, as what they can compose is limited to what they can play. In contrast, working with a sequencer allows pupils to record at a slow tempo or pace and then speed up their work for replay. This means that they can record ideas at a speed slow enough for them to manage to play them accurately but then hear them played back at the speed they imagined when they conceived them inside their head. This is both enabling and motivating. Similarly, pupils' choice of sounds with which to work is not limited to those instruments they can play. The sequencer allows them to produce the sound of an oboe by pressing a keyboard key, with a click of the mouse it becomes a steel pan or a trombone. The sound world this opens up to pupils is exciting and stimulating, arguably much more so than that of tuned and untuned percussion. The individual or paired nature of this work is also significant in terms of pupils' and teacher evaluation of their learning. It is very difficult for five or six children to have equal input to a group composition and equally difficult for their teacher to fairly assess each individual's input. The individual or paired work made possible by sequencers, allowing one or two pupils to build up multi-layered sounds that they would be unable to play otherwise, allows far greater compositional input into composition work by the individual pupil and also allows the teacher more opportunity for realistic assessment.

### **6.5.3 Materials**

Materials were also distinguished by type of activity. Performing activities required a range of classroom instruments, as shown in Figure 6.2. Pupils chose to

specialise in playing one of these types of instruments during Year 9, so that each knew where to sit for the lesson according to the instrument they had chosen. My field notes for a lesson observed on 17 November 2003 verify this: 'Pupils enter the room in an orderly manner. They all seem to know where to sit and go to their instruments with no fuss. It looks like a band setting up for rehearsal'.

For performing lessons, sheet music for the piece to be performed was required, as was audio recording and playback equipment for recording class performance and re-playing it for analysis. The music used for ensemble performing was arranged using one of the music sequencing software packages available in the department. Mrs Metronome also had access to this technology at home and frequently used it to prepare materials for use in school. Arrangements followed a pattern that she had devised as a result of years of trial and error in arranging for whole class performing. This process of arranging music for her pupils appeared key to the success of the 'class band' performing lessons. Mrs. Metronome had a very clear understanding of the capabilities of pupils in her school at different periods throughout Key Stage 3 and was able to write musically and stylistically convincing pieces for them to perform while gradually developing their technical and musical capabilities. Keyboards and tuned percussion parts carried the melody, usually with one of these 'sections' of the ensemble playing it at any one time and the other supporting with a counter melody or harmony part. Melodic interest was, however, evenly distributed between the two groups during each piece of music and a number of pieces provided opportunities for improvisation and solos. Bass tuned percussion instruments played a simpler harmonic supporting part to allow for differentiation. Bass guitars held the bass line within the ensemble and the drum kit, played by one drummer in Year 9 but split between several pupils in Years 7 and 8, kept a rhythm part and established a common pulse. Mrs. Metronome's piano part contained a synthesis of all the lines of the ensemble and also elaborated some harmonic or melodic elements. This arrangement format was observed in lessons on 11, 18 October 2003, 17, 24 November 2003, 9, 16 February 2004, 1, 8 March 2004 and 10 May 2004.



**Fig. 6 2: Classroom Layout for Performing at Aberquaver**

In composing lessons, Mrs. Metronome used the resources available in the ICT music suite for all but one lesson. The suite consisted of sixteen networked PCs with midi keyboards, an interactive whiteboard and data projector system and two software packages for music, *Sibelius* and *Cubasis*. She also used audio playback equipment for pupils' recordings of other composers' works. In some of these ICT based music lessons, Mrs Metronome gave pupils a prepared midi sequence within which to work which she had sequenced beforehand and saved to the network. Pupils were instructed as to how to download the file from the network, save it to their own folder and open it to work with. The following Extract 6.8 exemplifies this:

**Extract 6.8: 9C Composing with a *Sibelius* backing track (Extract from field notes, 22 March, 2004)**

[Pupils are around the interactive whiteboard. MM has a *Sibelius* score on the whiteboard.]

MM: 'I've made a backing track for you-here it is in Year 9 work Blues Backing. Now, I want you to copy it into your folder like this. Here it is-class listen. It's a backing with keyboard, guitar and drums. You can see that there are two instruments there with no music. Now, I want you to not click something in but play it in. Which scale do you think you could use?'

Pupil: 'The Blues Scale?'

MM: 'The Blues scale good, yes. Which one?'

Pupil: 'A?'

MM: 'Good A. Why is that?'

Pupil: 'Because the blues is in A'

MM: 'Mood, how do you know that?'

Pupil: 'Because the first chord is A in the bass.'

MM: 'Good well done. What notes are in the A blues scale then?'

Pupils: 'ACDEGA'

MM.: 'Good, [drawing and tapping these notes on the stave on the whiteboard] what about the blue notes? Do you remember what they are-the ones that make it sound really bluesy?'

Pupil: 'D sharp and G sharp'

MM: 'That's right-taps on notes on the board, can you here the bluesy sound there? What I want you to do is this. I want you to play in a Blues melody for these instruments here with no music [points to two empty staves]. You could play it all in on one instrument but I've tried it and I think it sounds better to have a conversation between clarinet and saxophone. Everyone understand? Right then, off you go!'

In another composing lesson, pupils were given a broader brief. They were to compose a piece of music on the theme of *Space*, having read a story entitled *The Star Children* and listened to a piece of music by Alun Hoddinott of the same title. Here Mrs Metronome encouraged pupils to use the technology available as creatively as possible and to experiment with the variety of sounds available through the computer sound cards. This activity yielded some particularly effective and imaginative results, as this extract from my field notes of 24 November 2003 exemplified:

**Extract 6.9 9C Composing with *Cubasis* (Extract from field notes, 24 November 2003)**

MM [to whole class]: 'If you haven't got the red diamond icon you'll need to go to programmes-Steinberg-Cubasis VST. Right click, save to desktop.'

[to pupil]: 'This is what I said at the beginning, My Computer, Programmes etc.'

[MM. gets all computers running ]

[to pupil]: 'Have you found the programme files? You haven't got to there yet? It should be there, right?'

MM: 'Right Kaye, have you got the icon there? Good. Find some other sounds now. You might want to change those ones, just play around with the sounds and see what you think.'

MM: [to RW] 'We're one computer down'

MM: [to whole class] Right, has everybody got the sounds up?

[to pupil with headphones on sorting the computer]: 'OK?'

[To pupil]: 'You've recorded something in already? Well done. Did you remember it needs 8 clicks before you start?'

MM: [to whole class] 'Well done because you haven't used it since last June'

[to whole class]: 'If you've found some instruments that you like, save it to your folder now.'

[All pupils are now on task. Some chat but it's all about work]

MM: [to whole class]: 'Has anyone else found sweep pad? Sweep pad is a really good sound.'

Individual pupil: [to M.M] 'Miss ours is clicking all the way through'.

MM.: 'Yes that's because you've got the midi click on'.

[MM. explains this function and how to remove it.]

MM: [to individual pupil] 'Shakuhachi. What does that sound like? Yes it's alright. You can change any of these. Sweep pad is a particularly good one. You don't want it all

sounding too twinkly-you need something deep as well. Look for some sustained sounds.'

The composing lesson observed on 1 March 2004 that took place in the main music room featured the use of sequencing keyboards and worksheets with instructions for pupils as to how to sequence a twelve bar blues chord sequence into the memory of the keyboard and the notes of the Blues scale for the key in which the pupils were working. This was the only time I saw Mrs .Metronome use a conventional worksheet with the class. She described it to me as an 'aide memoir' for a harmonic sequence they had already explored practically in previous lessons (16, 23 February 2004). It also gave an individual reminder of the steps required to record into the keyboard's memory, quite a complex process.

#### **6.5.4 Organisation**

There were two distinctive patterns of activity organisation, according to type. In performing activities, the class worked either as a whole, playing together as an ensemble, or rehearsed in large groups or musical 'sections' with Mrs. Metronome rehearsing one group of instruments at a time. Individual practice time was given to pupils in between sectional or whole class rehearsals. Pupils also interacted on an individual, supportive basis, developing their work through demonstrating and copying each other. The following extract from field notes of the lesson of 15 March 2004 exemplified this:

#### **Extract 6.10: 9C Performing (Extract from field notes, 15 March 2004)**

MM: 'Tuned percussion, you've got tremolo there. That's sticks as fast as possible.'

[Demonstrates, pupils copy]

Pupil: [to pupil] 'How did she do that?'

Pupil: 'Look, like this, it's like a wobble'

Pupil: [Giggle] 'Oh, got it.'

MM: 'Keyboards and bass you've got a glissando. That's a slide. Let's all finish together.'

[They practice the ending]

[One bass guitarist shows the pupil next to her how to do the glissando by sliding the finger down the fretboard. Pupil copies.]

MM: 'Keyboards, to get those rests in the tune, you've got to lift your hands off.'

[Demonstrates] 'Let me hear that.'

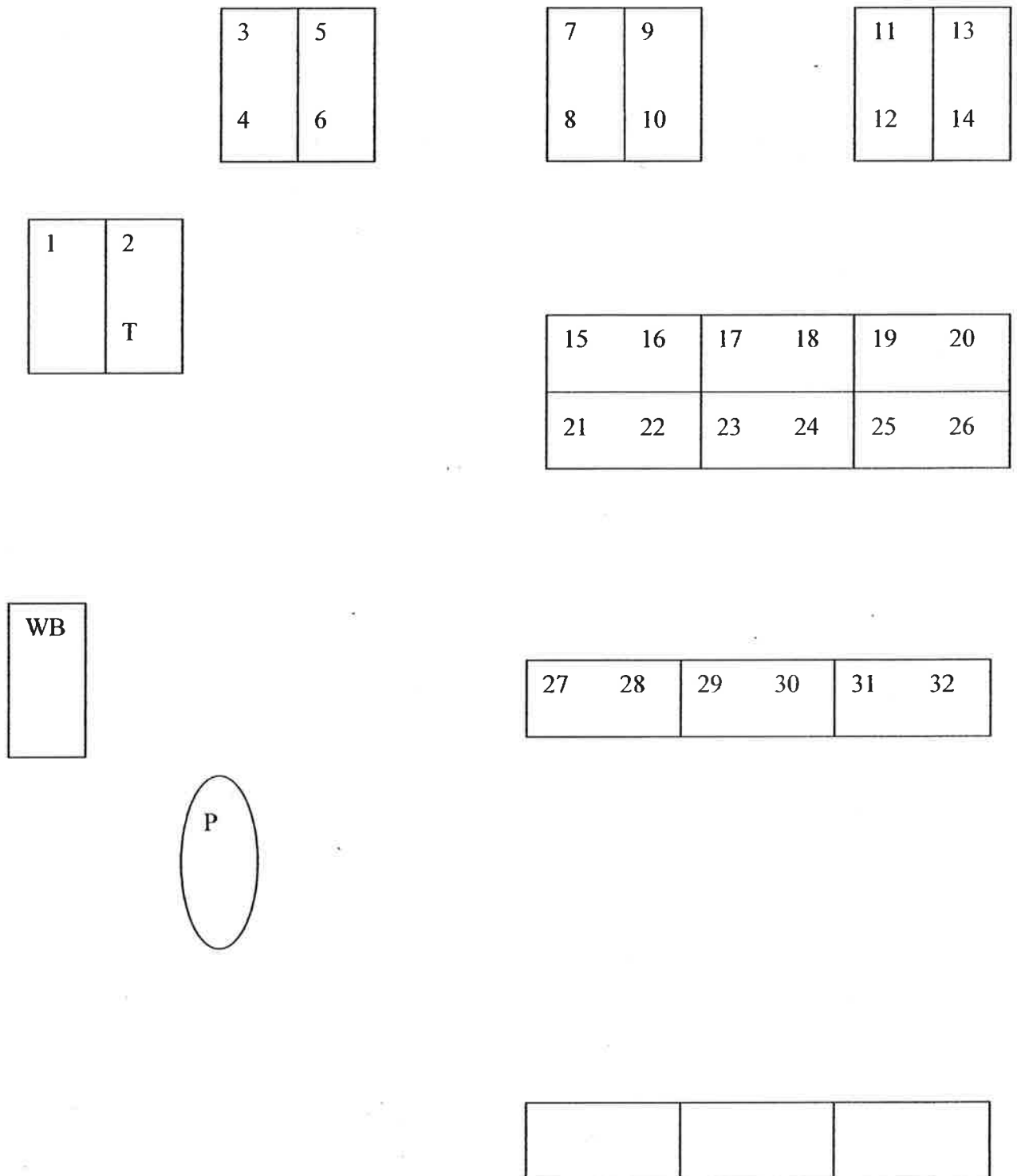
[Pupils copy]

MM: 'Good. That's what I want to hear'.

- In composing lessons, there was an initial whole class introduction and then an extended period during which pupils worked in pairs at their workstations, sharing each computer and midi keyboard, as in Figure 6.3. Some of the more able pupils worked alone. Mrs. Metronome worked with individuals or pairs of pupils. At various points during lessons and at their concluding stage there was reversion to whole class teaching, as work was listened to and commented upon. Mrs Metronome confirmed that she rarely used group work in composing, as she found it an ineffective strategy, tending to disadvantage less able pupils and result in generally lower standards. In one composing lesson (9 February, 2004) pupils were improvising around a 12-bar blues framework, working in pairs at keyboards and recording the blues backing sequence into keyboard memories to improvise. This was the only occasion when these pupils composed without the aid of ICT during this year and scheme of work, apart from some keyboard-based improvisation during the Blues unit.



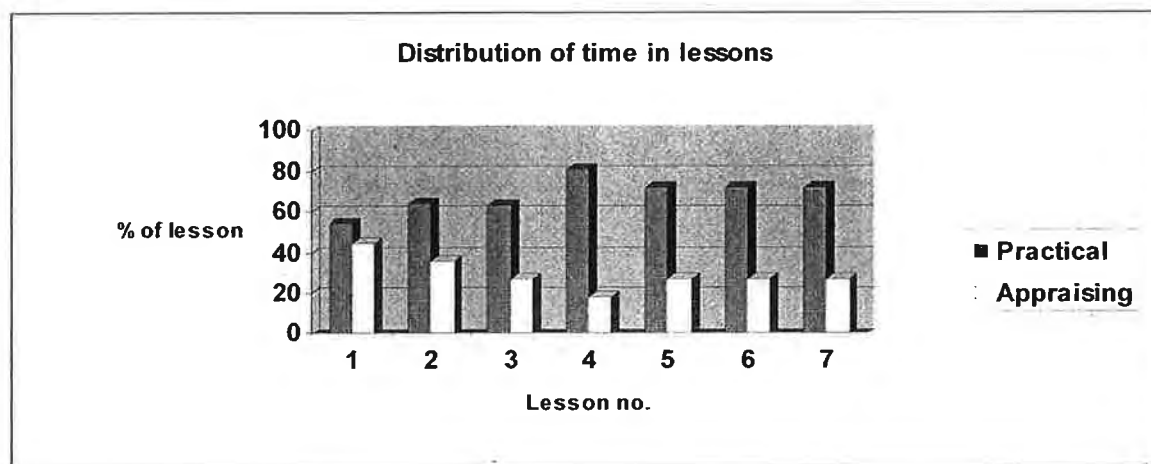
**Fig. 6.3:Classroom Organisation of ICT composing Suite**



### 6.5.5 Shape of lesson time

Curriculum time allowed for Key Stage 3 Music in Aberquaver was one 55 minute lesson per week. All lessons observed followed an extremely well-established exposition, development, conclusion shape, with most time devoted to practical activity, either performing or composing, as represented in Figure 6.4

Fig. 6.4



Performing lessons were characterised by a short introduction of five or ten minutes' duration comprising an appraisal of a previous performance or listening of a new piece. Pupils then worked with Mrs. Metronome to master the piece, the work being broken down into sections of about ten to fifteen minutes, the whole class being brought together to rehearse each section as it was learned. Lessons were brought to a close in the final ten minutes or so by recording the piece and appraising the performance. Composing lessons were characterised by longer introductions lasting about twenty to twenty-five minutes during which pupils appraised examples of the compositional genre within which they were going to work, using their appraisal to come to an understanding of the stylistic features of a particular genre. There was then a period of some fifteen to twenty minutes when pupils worked at the task either in pairs or individually with individual support from Mrs. Metronome as needed. Pupils also supported each other, those who were more at home with the technology often sorting out problems for others who were struggling. In the last ten minutes or so of such lessons Mrs Metronome would display one or more examples of pupils' composition work on the whiteboard for listening to and discussion of their successful features. Pupils would then be reminded to save their work to the network.

Mrs Metronome, then, adopted a 'task and finish' approach to her Key Stage 3 curriculum, on the whole designing work that was intended to be completed in a single lesson. Sometimes performing work was revisited for a second lesson to polish and refine performance, though Mrs Metronome indicated at interview that she found pupils gained little from labouring over a task, particular composing, for lengthy periods of time and that little improvement was secured in final standards of work produced by so doing. Pupils appeared to make better progress, in her opinion, when faced with a succession of progressively more demanding tasks that featured new ideas and materials, on a frequently changing basis.

## **6.6 Pedagogy: Instructional Discourse**

### **6.6.1 Patterns of teacher-pupil interaction**

As can be deduced from the descriptions above, patterns of contact between Mrs. Metronome and pupils varied quite distinctively according to whether pupils were performing or composing during lessons. Performing lessons featured a master/apprentice model of teacher-pupil interaction, where Mrs. Metronome interacted with pupils as a master musician, directing groups of them or the whole class from the piano. She interacted on a more individual level with the group conventionally known in popular music and jazz as 'the rhythm section' i.e. drummer and bass guitar/s. These players were positioned around the piano, as they would be in a modern performance setting and fulfilled the important role of maintaining the rhythmic and harmonic pulse of the music - or the groove. Traditionally these players form a tight-knit unit that has very close communication by eye contact and speech as it is so important that they play together. This is also the reason for their geographical closeness within the band and it obviously made it easier for Mrs. Metronome to interact less formally with them in these lessons. In the course of classroom interaction, then, Mrs Metronome was much more likely to address rhythm section pupils individually than members of other sections of the class ensemble, with who her interaction took the form of group rather than individual direction. The following extended Extract 6.11 from lesson observation notes of 15 March 2004 presents as 'uncoloured' a picture of the musical life of this class as possible, demonstrating various patterns of teacher./pupil interaction within the performing setting.

**Extract 6.11: 9C Polishing their Performance (Extract from field notes, 15 March 2004)**

[Mrs. Metronome distributes the music for the ensemble piece that the pupils had begun to learn last lesson. Everybody has the power on if required. There is a mixture of bass guitars, tuned percussion, keyboards and drum kit. Mrs. Metronome leads from the piano]

MM: 'Right, let's see how much we've got to revise since last week. From the top and 1.2.3.4.'

[Pupils begin to play. They perform the piece through to the end.]

MM: 'Good, not bad at all, just a bit of polishing to do. Keyboards, that awkward bit in bar 6.'

[Mrs Metronome demonstrates an awkward leap in the melody; she sings the note names as she plays].

'If you're not sure of the notes, write them in. Right, headphones on.'

[The pupils playing keyboards begin to practise]

MM: 'Tuned percussion-remember we were going to use the D as our anchor with the left beater. D-FG Left-Right -Right'

[Demonstrates holding imaginary beaters]

MM: 'OK let's try it.'

[All the tuned percussion play accompanied by Mrs. Metronome on piano, the drums and bass guitars.]

MM: 'Right, first time round it was really good. Second time it was out of time. It's the same thing. Let's try it again.'

[All play]

MM: 'That's better. Good. Right, let's try the middle 8.'

[All play]

MM: 'Right, that last one should have been with the left hand. Again.'

[Tuned percussion plays again.]

MM: 'OK'

[This time the drummer (female!) plays her fill slightly out of time. Mrs. Metronome stops.]

Jan: [drummer] That wasn't good was it?

MM: 'It's fine. Relax.'

[Mrs. Metronome shows some fill ideas on the drum kit]

MM: 'Keep it simple'

[Shows a simple rim shot and cymbal pattern].

MM: 'OK?'

[Pupil tries and then nods]

MM: [to Jan] 'So, when I say middle 8 Jan that's your chance to drop your feet out and do some extra with the sticks. OK? If you want, you can keep your feet going all the way through. Right everybody, from the top.'

Composing lessons, however, featured a different pattern of teacher-pupil interaction with more use of questioning and what could be conceived of as more traditional pedagogies. There was a more traditional introductory section to such lessons, where Mrs Metronome gave an exposition of the topic to be covered, pupils were questioned in response to appraising an extract of recorded music, a task was set and pupils then set to work. Teacher interaction was divided between the whole class, pairs and individual pupils throughout. The following (again extended) Extract 6.12 from field notes of 24 November 2003 exemplified the approach adopted in the expository section of the lesson:

**Extract 6.12: Star Children Composing Task (Extract from field notes, 24 November 2003)**

[*Star Children* worksheet distributed. MM waits for silence]

MM: 'Ross this is your first warning.'

MM: 'Last week you played a piece called *Branwen*.'

[MM praises performance.]

MM: 'It was a piece for synthesisers and guitars. We talked about the characterisation of the person in the music. This week we're looking at a piece by a local composer Alun Hoddinott.'

[MM introduces background to *Star Children*. It was inspired by a holiday in Borneo. There is dense jungle in the centre of the country. MM relates story of SAS training mission where group abseiled down a canyon one mile deep and were lost for days. MM explains that this gives a picture of how impenetrable this landscape is]

MM: 'The story of *Star Children* comes from a traditional tale told to Hoddinott in Borneo'

MM: 'James. This is your second warning.'

[MM reads story, stopping to explain and flesh out the story.]

MM: 'James. I'm not going to speak your name again. It will be time to go to Miss Davies. We are going to listen to how Alun Hoddinott tells this story in music first and then you are going to compose a piece describing a journey through space.'

[MM plays recording of *Star Children*. Pupils are instructed to listen for how Hoddinott describes the story and ideas they could use themselves].

MM: 'Tell me some adjectives to describe that music!'

Pupils: 'Eerie'

Pupil: 'Sinister'

Pupil: 'Flowing'

MM: 'If you had to say it was moving or it wasn't, which would you choose?'

Pupils: 'not moving'

MM: 'Not moving, good. What's the word for that?'

Pupil: 'Static?'

MM: 'Good, does everyone know that word - static, still?'

MM: 'If you had to say it was dark or light what would you say?'

Pupil: 'Dark'

MM: 'Dark, good. How can we tell that?'

Pupil: 'Low pitch notes'

MM: 'Good, lots of low notes.'

As can be seen from this extract, questions tended to be closed or semi-closed. This guided pupils towards answers and gave them an implicit idea of the compositional techniques they could use in their forthcoming work.

### 6.6.2 Questioning and types of questions

The questions used in performing lessons tended to be closed or rhetorical:

MM: [to whole class] 'Right, I'm waiting for quiet. Keyboards, I asked you last week to find an instrument that was good for jazz. You could have clarinet, trumpet. Something loud' (Extract from field notes 23 March 2004)

Pupils were directed in their tasks by Mrs. Metronome when learning pieces for performance though, when refining and polishing, they were allowed some creative input. Composing lessons featured a much greater use of open questioning, as can be seen in Extract 6.9 Composing with *Cubasis* pupils were, in addition, often allowed freedom to explore the sounds available to them through the technology.

Mrs Metronome was receptive to pupils' creative ideas in composing lessons in the IT suite. She responded enthusiastically to them and also appeared to allow them to discover what worked and what did not through experimentation, while always being ready to act as arbitrator if they were unsure where to go next:

**Extract 6.13: Listening to 9C composing (Extract from field notes, 1 December 2003)**

Pupil: [calls MM] 'Miss! Listen to this. Is it better with this?'

MM: 'Let's listen? I like the sounds but I think you're right-maybe just start with that and then bring the other one in.'

MM: [to whole class] 'Right everyone, look at the board now. Rhys has captured this idea of space right from the start.'

MM: [To pupil]: 'Did you copy and paste this bit?'

Pupil: 'Yeah'

MM: 'Good. Then he's going to put something else in here.'

MM: [to class] 'Right, two good words there. It's static and eerie. Hardly anything happening

As can be seen from the extract above, pupils felt able to share their work with Mrs. Metronome and ask for her opinion. She reacted sensitively to their work and shared good ideas with the class through the interactive whiteboard. There was an atmosphere of collaboration between pupils and teacher in this activity with shared ownership of decision making.

### **6.6.3. Pupil initiated teacher interaction**

In performing lessons and, interestingly, the one composing lesson I saw that took place in the performing ensemble room, Mrs. Metronome kept a very firm grip on pupils' ability to initiate interaction with her. It appeared that the space dictated her approach to pedagogy. In this space, she was very definitely an authority figure and pupils rarely initiated contact. They responded only when requested to do so unless they were playing in the rhythm section, positioned very close to her at the piano. With these pupils, as we have already seen, she interacted a little more freely. There were very obvious classroom control reasons for this difference in approach when interacting within a whole class and paired work settings. When a pupil tried to interject in her exposition during the composing lesson observed in the performing

room, he was quickly and uncharacteristically stopped as Mrs. Metronome pressed ahead with her explanation to the class:

MM: 'What notes did we use last time?

Pupil: 'The Blues scale.'

MM: 'That's right, the Blues scale. Nice easy notes. We used the white notes on the keyboard and one black note - D sharp a very important note. It's called the Blue note.'

Pupil: 'Miss, do you have to do words?'

MM: 'Why don't you let me finish?' (Extract from field notes, 09 February 2004.)

In composing lessons in the music ICT suite Mrs. Metronome was much more open to pupil initiated interaction and operated a relaxed 'workshop' approach to teaching. Pupils called out to her from their workstations quite freely and she was happy to respond to their calls and to discuss their work informally with them. This quotation from my field notes of 29 March 2004 shows the freer interaction between her and pupils in working with the ICT. Here the pupils were directing the teacher as she looked for the work in their network folder to display on the interactive whiteboard:

Pupil: [to MM]: 'Miss, go back now. I'll show you where.'

MM: 'Here? It should be in your music folder.'

Pupil: 'Go back. There it is in that folder.'

MM: 'Oh yes, I see, thank you'.

On another occasion, my field notes of a lesson in the ICT suite on 26 April 2004 showed pupils calling the teacher over to listen to their work in a relaxed and informal way and Mrs. Metronome responding similarly:

Pupil: 'Miss, can you listen to ours before we log off?'

MM: 'OK' [listens through headphones] 'Oh, that's a much better start isn't it? Much better. You've got some nice things there. You could think about something that kept you in time there. Remember the word ostinato that you did in Year 8?'

The field notes of 8 May 2004 also show a relaxed and open style of pedagogy with pupils in the ICT suite. Here Mrs. Metronome allowed pupils to choose their method of working (in pairs or individually) at the pupils' suggestion:

Pupil: 'Do we work on our own or in pairs.'



MM: 'I don't mind if it's in pairs because there will be some more people coming in. You choose'

#### 6.6.4 Pupil-pupil interaction

Pupil-pupil interaction often took the form of peer-teaching during performing lessons, as indicated at Section 6.5.2. When pupils rehearsed their parts in class ensembles they worked with Mrs. Metronome to rehearse their section and were then given individual practice sessions during which I observed a great deal of peer teaching by demonstration and copying. This appeared to be very effective at allowing pupils of all skill levels to develop fluency, accuracy and technical skill on their instruments. I was particularly impressed with the speed at which pupils could master new music, the class being able to learn and perform new pieces within a single 55 minute lesson. Pupils appeared to know who in their section would be able to help them with a particular problem and were not afraid to ask others for help. There was remarkable candour amongst them in playing to one another and receiving constructive criticism:

Pupil 1: 'Listen. Is this right, or is it all completely wrong?'

Pupil 2: 'Yeah. It's right. Just, that last bit goes like this'. [Demonstrates]

Pupil 1: 'Like this.' [Copies]

Pupil 2: Yeah that's it, you got it.'

Pupil 1: 'Cool!' (Extract from field notes, 1 March 2004).

A similar pattern of pupil-pupil peer teaching occurred when pupils undertook improvising activity in the performing room in the lesson of 15 March 2004. Again pupils were neither afraid to share mistakes with each other nor to receive very frank feedback as the extract below demonstrates. This contrasts interestingly with Green's (2001) concern that, as a population, we are unwilling to make music together for fearing of making mistakes as we are accustomed to hearing recorded perfection. These pupils appeared to have become so accustomed to playing together in an open and mutually supportive environment that they were quite willing to perform their mistakes to each other for help and advice. This suggests a more hopeful future for amateur music making in the population at large, should a similar approach to music making be adopted in more schools.

**Extract 6.14 Peer Feedback 9C (Extract from field notes, 15 March 2004)**

Pupil 1: 'Mine's so fast.'

Pupil 2: 'Turn the tempo down you idiot. You've got to count like this' [holding the chords down and counting 1,2,3,4]

Pupil: [to partner] 'Listen to this, it's not right.'

Pupil 2: 'Oh, I know, do this.'

[Re-sets auto-rhythm on keyboard]

[Pupils 5 and 6 are having intense discussions about the task]

Pupil 5: 'It's quite good actually [listening through headphones to sequenced backing and their improvisation] 'I think you messed up on the last bit'.

Pupil 8: 'Mine it went wrong, I know it did. Listen.'

Pupil 9 [Giggle]

Pupil 8 'Did you press them two together?'

Pupil 9: 'Listen to this' [unplugs]

MM: 'That's the wrong rhythm. Who's got that rhythm?'

Pupil 9 'Can you do it?'

Pupil 8: 'No'

Pupil 9: 'Press those two together. Turn the tempo down. To 84. Now press that.'

Pupil 8: 'Then you press that?'

Pupil 9: 'NO. Don't press nothing till the D.'

There were times, however, when some higher-attaining pupils appeared to feel that they were being used by others to help them get good grades. This was particularly true of Fiona. I sat alongside her and her composing partner Alice as they were working in the computer suite on a blues composition and observed the following exchange:

Alice: 'Right, play.'

Alice: 'Play it up there.' [Higher]

Fiona: 'OK'

Alice: 'Back to the beginning. That sounds good that does'.

Fiona: [Improvising into headphones.] 'Whoohoo! I don't care if it sounds good. You just want me to get you a good grade. Everyone's like you. Right then let's record this shall we.' (Extract from field notes of music lesson 9C 01.03.04)

I observed this situation again at a slightly later point in the lesson when Fiona was summoned by Rob to fix his machine:

Rob: 'Ours ain't working. Go work it out Fiona.' [Fiona shows Rob who is talking about his Maths test.]

Fiona: 'Look you've just got to wait for it to play.'

RW: 'Have you sorted it?'

Fiona: 'Yes. He's just dippy.'

Rob: 'It still isn't working'

Fiona: 'I wasn't recording, I was playing,' [She goes back to show them how to record]. (From field notes of music lesson 9C 01.03.04)

I should add, however, that Fiona had a tendency to 'play to the gallery' when being observed, tended to adopt a 'cool' persona involving exaggerated statements when I talked to her.

#### **6.6.5 Classroom rules and regulation: control and interaction.**

Patterns of control and interaction also varied according to activity. An initial register was taken at the beginning of every lesson which helped to settle pupils and obtain silence. Exposition phases of lessons were characterised by whole class control and interaction strategies. The class was admonished as a whole, when necessary, with individuals being named if they failed to respond. Mrs. Metronome had taught this class since Year 7 and, knowing individuals well, had a good grasp of their management and discipline. If she needed to speak to the class during an activity she would raise her voice slightly, causing pupils to stop work and listen. These whole-class, public interaction and control strategies were used throughout performing lessons where the class were working in large groups or as a whole. In composing lessons there was more one to one interaction throughout development phases and pupils were admonished on a more private, individual basis, when necessary. One pupil with an emotional and behavioural disorder (but who was not statemented) who attended lessons with a learning support assistant who attempted to help him produce appropriate coping strategies received numerous personal reprimands.

In the lessons observed Mrs Metronome was firmly in control of all aspects of classroom interaction, including maintenance of order. Presumably, having been

doing it on a weekly basis since Year 7, pupils were very well-drilled in the process of classroom ensemble performing. The well embedded regulative discourse of their lessons required very little overt individual or collective reprimand. The following extract from my field notes of the first performing lesson that I observed on 11 October 2003 exemplifies this:

'Pupils enter room, they seem to know where they are sitting and which instrument they will be playing [MM explains to me that in Year 9 they specialize in one instrument and play this all year.] Register taken. Pace of work fast.'

In composing lessons some initial, overt regulative instructions were required but Mrs. Metronome addressed pupils individually by name and the atmosphere was relaxed and friendly:

[Class organised in rows in front of interactive whiteboard. MM requests pupils by name to move to front of class] MM: 'I know its not very comfortable sitting like this, so let's do this introductory work as quickly as possible and then move on.' (Extract from field notes, 8 December 03)

In the ICT studio a stable pattern of seating had also been established so that there was minimal disruption once pupils moved to workstations to compose, as the following extract from my field notes of 29 March 2004 showed:

'Register taken. Established seating plan chosen by pupils at beginning of year. All single sex pairs! Pace of work fast. Task achievable within one lesson as long as pupils work hard. All pupils are now on task. Some chat but it's all about work.'

Ends of lessons tended to be more relaxed than beginnings. In performing and composing lessons Mrs Metronome was able to let pupils go as they had packed away or saved their work to the network. There was no formal dismissal and pupils appeared to respond maturely to this freedom, leaving in a quiet and orderly fashion:

MM: [to whole class]: 'Right, it's nearly time for the bell. Will you make sure that you've saved in your music file and then you can log off? Right when you've saved and logged off you can go.'

[Pupils leave as they are ready. There is no fuss or disruption. Some pupils stay behind to show Mrs. Metronome their work or discuss arrangements for a forthcoming concert] (Extract from field notes, 29 March 2004)

James, the EBD pupil, could be quite disruptive when Mrs. Metronome needed to speak to the class so that, on some occasions, she used the school's discipline

procedure of issuing three warnings followed by the ultimate sanction of sending the pupil to the Head of Year:

[*Star Children* worksheet distributed. M.M. waits for silence]

MM: 'James this is your first warning.'

MM: 'James. This is your second warning'

[M.M. reads story, stopping to explain and flesh out the story.]

MM: 'James. I'm not going to speak your name again. It will be time to go to Miss Davies.'

MM: [To whole class] 'Right switch off please. Switch off. For the third time, switch off please'.

MM [to whole class]: 'Last week we did [...] You don't need to touch the keyboards. Leave them off. James this is a warning leave the keyboard alone.'

MM: 'Put your keyboard off'

James: 'It says off'

M.M.: 'Right you're going out. I won't have you defying me like this.'

[James taken to Head of Year by Learning Support Assistant] (Extract from field notes, 1 December 2003)

James was not seen to misbehave in performing lessons, where he played bass guitar. He was also capable of producing very good composing work when working in the ICT music suite, where Mrs. Metronome was vigilant in ensuring that everyone opened the right programme at the start and did not wander off in exploration of the Net:

[MM circulates, checking that everyone's machine is working.]

MM: [to James] Just put the shortcut in, try it now! I don't know what you're in but come out now!' (Extract from field notes, 8 December 2003 )

Any overt control that needed to be exerted during lessons tended to be done in the form of a statement of expectation, such as 'I've stopped', presupposing that pupils knew the regulative principle that when teacher stops playing everyone stops to listen to a comment or instruction, as in a professional musical ensemble, exemplified in the following extract:

MM: [to whole class]. 'Right, I'm waiting for quiet. F sharp and G sharp are black notes. Who isn't playing black notes?'

[To bass guitarist] 'Fran, I've stopped'

[Pupil stops playing.] (Extract from field notes 1 March, 2004)

As noted in Section 6.6.1 while pupils were allowed more input into musical processes and the music being created in composing activities, Mrs Metronome still had a very firm overview of the end results which she desired and guided pupils firmly towards them. She selected the work to be played at the end of lessons as examples of good practice and, although pupils' comments were invited, she made summative comments as to the strengths of the pieces played and the reasons for their effectiveness.

## **6.7 Knowledge Evaluation**

### **6.7.1. Teacher**

In performing lessons Mrs Metronome was the master teacher and her pupils were apprentices. She directed their acquisition of skill and musical learning, knew what she expected from them and was sensitive to their failings, encouraging and supporting them as they acquired skills within the framework of what she expected to be accomplished in a particular lesson and did not accept less. This was well illustrated in Extract 6.16:

#### **Extract 6.15 Mrs. Metronome Evaluating 9C's Performance (Extract from field notes, 15 March 2004)**

[MM sets up the tape recorder. The class perform the piece]

MM: 'Was that good enough to keep? What do you think?'

[Pupils mainly answer 'Yes']

MM: 'Don't pack up. Right, These are the things we should be listening for: balance, accuracy, one voice-absolutely together because we're all playing the same thing.'

[MM takes the tape from the smaller recorder to the big sound system for pupils to listen back to. Listen back to tape]

MM: 'Was it good enough to keep?'

[There is a mixed response. Some pupils say that it wasn't together]

Pupil: 'In one part you could only hear the keyboards.'

MM: 'I think we'll just do one more take. See if we can get it a bit better.'

[Pupils perform again while recorder is running. M.M. stops recorder. They listen to the recording again]

MM: 'Good that's better.'

MM: 'Andrew will you collect the music please.'

In composing lessons she was receptive to pupils' ideas as long as they stayed within the brief she had given them. If they wished to explore outside that brief she identified other opportunities when they would be able to do so:

Pupil: 'Miss, I tried Hard Rock listen.'

MM: 'Yes, we'll do hard rock later. Are you ready to do your tune now? Give yourself an intro - now.'

[Pupil improvises]

MM: 'OK. When you get something you like write it on the sheet'. (Extract from field notes, 22 March 2004)

Mrs Metronome had the final say as to whether a piece of work was good or not, tending to use the musical quality of the product to justify her views:

MM: [listens to Pupils' 1 and 2 work. She offers advice, suggesting that they move some of their sounds to a higher register, showing Pupils 3 and 4 how to pitch shift]. 'I can really hear the guitar part but I can't hear the vibraphone part so well.'

[She shows pupils how to adjust the volume of the track.] (Extract from field notes 29 March, 2004)

Mrs. Metronome frequently used knowledge evaluation as a motivational tool to raise pupils' self-esteem, particularly for those who struggled in other areas of the school curriculum:

'Mrs. Metronome tells the pupils to save their work. She displays some examples of good work on the IWB. Pupils listen and watch as the music plays. Mrs. Metronome makes a point of displaying some work produced by the less able pupils and offering positive comments about it.' (Extract from field notes, 29 March 2004)

It was noticeable that in the one composing lesson observed away from the music ICT suite, Mrs. Metronome had to do a lot more of this sort of motivational and encouraging evaluation during the lesson than she had done in the ICT based composing lessons:

### **Extract 6.16 9C composing without ICT (Extract from field notes, 6 April 2004)**

MM: [coming over] 'Right, how are we doing over here? You have some good ideas? I wanted to play yours from last week. You've got 03. We're doing rock next week. I want you to do Blues today. Let's hear your tune.'

Pupil 1: 'I ain't got it miss, its rubbish.'

MM: 'That's perfectly good/ what's wrong with that. AAGAGGFE that's good. Writes on sheet. So you've got it there.'

Pupil 2: 'Miss I haven't got one. Can't think of anything to play.'

MM: 'Right I'm going to start this and you play.'

[Pupil 2 plays]

MM: 'That was perfectly good. What was wrong with that?'

MM: [to Pupil 3] 'Well done. You've got lots of ideas there. Let's hear it.'

Pupil 3: 'No Miss. It isn't any good.'

MM: 'Come on' [Listens] 'Good. You have remembered what I said about keeping it simple. And using repetition. This here is the climax. [Pointing to the chord progression in third line of Blues pattern]. Could you give us something different there? How about swinging it? [Plays swung quavers]. Can you feel the swing there? More like the Blues isn't it?'

### **6.7.2. Pupils**

At this point of their Key Stage 3 music education, having followed a programme of ensemble playing since Year 7, pupils were able to make informed and musical judgments about the results of their class performing. They were hard judges of their own work and frequently made comments to their teacher about balance, accuracy and quality of ensemble. This could be seen when they evaluated their ensemble work. Unsurprisingly, while some merely went through the motions, agreeing to anything to avoid further work, it was unexpected how few they were:

'We practised in sections like this for 10 minutes and then Mrs. Metronome asked the keyboard players to unplug and we played together to the end of the verse, refining and revising points over several repetitions. After the recording Mrs. Metronome played the tape back to the class and asked them what the verdict was. One keyboard boy called out: 'Its great miss' and then sotto voce to his friend 'we don't want to have to do it again' (Extract from field notes, 10 May 2004)

I found the following exchange between three pupils sitting together during an improvising lesson of interest as revealing the particularity of teenage musical tastes.



They were listening to a variety of the backing auto-accompaniments on the electronic keyboards, not what they were supposed to be doing but an activity, in my own teaching experience, they often undertook when working at keyboards. All three of them evaluated different backings as being good:

Pupil 15: 'Listen to this. Lucy take your headphones off. Its funk, it's cool.'

Pupil 16: 'Try Reggae'

Pupil 17: 'Tried it. It's crap.' (Extract from field notes, 19 January 2004)

There was also an interesting comment from one pupil concerning her relationship to the Blues genre, the subject of keyboard-based composing work. Even when this was transferred to ICT for an extension task, she indicated that she could produce work likely to receive a good grade, even though she had no personal identification with the style within which she was working and did not evaluate the work produced as of musical worth by her own internal referents. But this was Fiona, the girl noted in Section 6.6.5 who appeared to be trying to generate an image of 'cool' by making negative comments to me about school and school work and about Music:

'Fiona: 'That sounds alright ' [To RW] 'Do you want to listen?'

RW: 'It's good. Which bit do you like best?'

Fiona: 'I don't like any of it. You don't have to like it do you?' (Extract from field notes, 26 January 2004)

One area of disparity of pupil evaluation of their music lessons was in the matter of the instruments they played. This was strongly divided according to gender. The section particularly noticeable in this respect was the tuned percussion. When I chatted to the girl tuned percussionists in a lesson when I played alongside them they were very happy to be playing these instruments and had chosen to do so, without exception. Two were violinists of Grade 3-4 standard and said that they preferred playing tuned percussion in lessons to bringing in their violins, enjoying playing a different instrument and learning new skills. Some of these pupils were playing tuned percussion at quite an advanced standard, using multiple beaters - up to four in some cases - allowing them to play chords and master skills, such as tremolando and trill. The following exemplified a very different perspective from the boys playing tuned percussion, however:

**Extract 6.17 Playing tuned percussion alongside 9C (Extract from field notes, 22 March 2004)**

RW: 'Have you always played tuned percussion in music?'

Pupil: 'Yes'

RW: 'Since Year 7?'

Pupil: 'Yes'

RW: Do you like it?

Pupil: 'No'

RW: 'What would you like to play?'

Pupil: 'Guitar or drums'

[I spoke to the two boys playing the bass metallophone and xylophone. They said they were fed up. I asked them why. They said that they had been playing tuned percussion since Year 7 and were fed up because Mrs. Metronome wouldn't let them change instruments.]

I discussed these views at some length with Mrs. Metronome. In response to being shown this section of the report Mrs. Metronome added:

'I remember these two boys – one had tried kit several times but just couldn't behave, taking every opportunity to show off and spoil the ensemble. The second boy was actually a useful guitarist but wouldn't leave his mate to sit with the other guitarists'.

I explored with Mrs. Metronome the problem of allowing pupils to play what they wanted to play. She indicated that she understood that many of the boys wanted to play guitar but that it had become apparent to her during her twenty plus years of teaching that there was insufficient time in the Key Stage 3 curriculum to teach everyone to do so. Similarly, although she tried to have a rotation of drummers so that as many pupils as possible had the opportunity to play the drum kit and, in the earlier years split the kit between several players, there could only be one drummer in a band and that restricted opportunity. She claimed that she operated an open access policy in the department outside lesson time and that pupils frequently came along to practice on the kit in breaks and lunch time. She also allowed pupil groups to use the music rooms as rehearsal spaces. Mrs. Metronome also thought that individuals had a definite affinity with particular instruments and that not everyone was suited to playing keyboards or guitars; some pupils responded particularly well to the layout of tuned percussion, as they could see the letter-named notes laid out in front of them and the action of striking the bars suited them and their motor skills

especially well. We concluded that an instrument that could be struck but produced the sound of an electric guitar would be the ideal compromise.

This chapter has presented data obtained from lesson observations of 9C in Music and interviews with senior management at Aberquaver and with Mrs. Metronome. An attempt has been made to present as detailed a description as possible of the musical life of 9C in school as possible in the context of the organizational and pedagogic factors shaping Music as a subject in the school. Chapter seven will now present data obtained from questionnaires and interviews administered to the pupils of 9C during the course of the study.

## **Chapter Seven**

### **Pupil Questionnaire and Interview Data**

#### **7.1 Questionnaire data**

Responses to the questionnaire administered to case study class 9C (30 pupils, 19 girls, 11 boys) are set out and analysed in item order below. The questionnaire may be found in Appendix 1. In respect of each item they are first presented overall, then analysed and discussed in terms of gender and access to instrumental tuition, crucial axes of social difference in the music education literature, alongside family, peer, ethnic, musician and other social groupings (Green and O'Neill, 2000). Though within the scope of this study and data I was permitted to collect I was able to examine some possible effects of gender, family, peer group, the pupils' concepts of musicianship and themselves as musicians, because of data protection issues, the school was not happy for me to collect data relating to pupils' parental occupation or other measures of social class. However, I was able to ascertain in the questionnaire whether pupils had formally purchased or received informal tuition from friends and family and to further verify this at interview and in conversation with Mrs. Metronome. Given a growing body of evidence to show that those pupils with access to instrumental tuition outside the classroom tend to belong to middle class families (Green, 2000; Philpott 2001), access to purchased instrumental tuition can, therefore, be read cautiously as an indicator of social class, I am able to make some cautious readings as to the effect of class on my data. Ethnicity was not seen as worthy of investigation in respect of this sample as, with the exception of one second generation Chinese student, all others were classed by the school as 'White European'. This was typical of the school and general population as a whole from which I drew which had remarkably few pupils of other ethnicities (verified in interview with deputy head, April 2005)

It is important to remember, particularly with respect of the pattern of some responses, that the questionnaire was administered late in Year 9, after option subject choices had been made. Though no claim is, of course, made as to the representativeness of this class, either of Aberquaver or any other musical community, the patterns of response are compared with major punctuations in the music education

literature. A full discussion of these and the findings of Chapter Six will follow in Chapter Eight.

### 7.1.1 Section A

**Table 7.1 Responses to question A1: How important to you is music in everyday life?**

Very important	Quite important	Not important
14	15	1

It can be seen that of the sample of 30 respondents, just under half placed music as being very important in their everyday lives and exactly half as quite important, only one judging it not important. Music appears to play a 'key and central role' in these young people's life, supporting the first part of Sloboda's (2003: 243) statement that 'music retains a key and central role in the lives of most people who see themselves as 'not musical''

**Table 7.2 Responses to question A.2: Why do you say this?**

Category of response	Number of comments	Examples of comments
Mood regulation/elevation	14	'Sometimes it can help you with problems. It can soothe you if you're angry. If you're down it can cheer you up. If you're sad it can show you we're all suffering in some way.'
		'I like to listen to music. It puts me in a good mood.'
		'Music makes people feel good. Music can also make you express yourself. Music can make you very angry.'
		'Because I always listen to music, it makes me feel better.'
Like listening to it.	13	'Because music is nice to listen to when you get home from school.'

		'Because I love listening to music all the time if I am not doing anything else'
		'Because people listen to music a lot even if its pop music.'
		'Because I listen to music everyday.'
Helps me to relax	6	Because music helps me relax and I like listening to it.
		Because it helps me relax
		Because it helps me relax. I listen to it when I am working, when I am bored, so I need it a lot.
Enjoy playing instrument	3	I practice music a lot because I play violin and piano.
		I also really enjoy playing the violin, not only as a hobby but for my GCSE music level.
Helps with problems	2	Because music sometimes shows issues, real life traumas and can help you with many items in life.
		Helps me to relax when I get home, and it can help you solve problems.
Like dancing to music	2	Cause I like to dance to it and listen to it
		Because I like to dance to it
Related to career aspiration	1	Because I want to be a drummer.
It would be boring without it	1	Without it things would be boring.

Of the 45 responses (more than one was allowed, average 2, range 1-3), the most frequent was that music was used for 'emotional self-regulation', concurring with the findings of Sloboda (2003: 243) and North, Hargreaves and O'Neill, (2000: 75) the latter concluding that 'music is important to adolescents, this is because it allows them to (a) portray an 'image' to the outside world and (b) satisfy their emotional needs.' Nearly half (22) of these responses referred to emotional purposes, such as mood regulation or

elevation, relaxation or helping with problems, 13 voiced enjoyment of listening but only 3 enjoyment of playing. This would appear to concur with Green's (2001) contention that as a society we now play less and listen more. There is also an interesting contrast with Finney's (2003a) finding that 'sing-dance-listen' characterises the out of school music curriculum. The pupils of Aberquaver appeared to predominantly listen more and sing and dance less, though whether a year's age difference between Finney's Year 8 pupils and our Year 9 group is a factor is a matter of conjecture.

**Table 7.3 Responses to question A3: Would you say that you are musical?**

Yes	No
14	16

Pupils were more or less equally divided in seeing themselves as musical or not musical. Given that 29 out of 30 pupils perceived music as being important in their lives, this would now appear to confirm the second part of Sloboda's (2003: 243) assertion that 'music retains a key and central role in the lives of most people who see themselves as 'not musical''. It was interesting to note, however, that virtually half of this sample saw themselves as being musical. To what extent their music education in school had developed this self-perception is difficult to ascertain, though answers to the second part of this question, presented below, may partly illuminate this. An interesting coda to this train of thought appeared on the evening I wrote this section when I watched a documentary on probably the greatest jazz singer of all time, Ella Fitzgerald (*Ella Fitzgerald: Something to Live For*, Artsworld, January 14 2006) in which, in an interview with the conductor André Previn, she announced that she was not a musician. This stopped Previn in his tracks and when he asked her what she meant by not 'a musician' she explained that she could not play an instrument and did not work from staff notation: 'the music just comes from inside, I sing what's inside me'. Such a perception of musicality and musicianship as inherently tied up with instrumental ability and the ability to read notation that appears to be embedded here may be taken as an instance of views at a global, social level. Is it any wonder, therefore, that Music continues to battle as a school subject?

**Table 7.4 Responses to question A4: Why do you say this?**

Category of response	Number of comments	Examples of comments
<b>Reasons for Yes responses</b>		
I play an instrument	10	Because I play the violin every week and would love to start a new instrument, maybe the cello.
		Because I play violin and piano
		I can play the keyboard.
I like music	3	I like music
I like dancing to music	3	I like dancing to it. Because I like to dance to it but not musical in a way where you play instruments.
I like to listen to music	2	I like it and I like to listen to it.
I sing	2	I like to dance, sing and play my own music
		I love singing and playing instruments but I can't really sing or play instruments.
I can read and write music	1	I think I am musical because I can read music and play several instruments.
<b>Reasons for No response</b>		
I can't play an instrument	9	Because I'm a terrible instrument player.
		No because I do not play anything
		Because I can't play anything on the other hand I have a good rhythm and can listen/feel anything.
I don't join in things like orchestra and choir	2	Because I don't really get involved with musical things such as choir orchestra
		Because I don't really get involved with things like orchestra
I don't listen to all types of music	2	I don't listen to all different types of Music either only pop music.
I can't do music	1	Because I like music but I can't



		play that well.
I can't write Music	1	I'm not interested in learning to play an instrument and I find it difficult to write music.
I can't sing/don't like singing	2	Because I don't like singing and I don't play an instrument.

Of 38 responses (more than 1 allowed, average 1.5, range 1-2), the most significant reason for 'answering yes' (10/21) concerned pupils' perceptions of their own musicality, in that that they played an instrument. Similarly, the most significant reason for a 'no' response was that they did not play an instrument (9/17). As only 6 pupils indicated that they had instrumental tuition in answer to a later question, it can be ascertained that 4 pupils assessed themselves as 'playing an instrument' on the basis of their school music lessons. On examination of the questionnaires, these turned out to be keyboard or bass guitar players - in other words those playing 'real' instruments in school lessons. None of the tuned percussion players answered in the affirmative. While this may be regarded as progress in the right direction, given coherent curriculum time for more pupils to develop skills on instruments which they perceived as 'real', one wonders how many more of them would answer in the affirmative.

**Table 7.5 Responses to question A5: Would you like to be involved in music in any sort of way when you leave school? (for fun or work)**

Yes	No
18	12

More pupils wanted to be involved in music when they left school than did not – 18:12 (60%:40%) Again, this appears to confirm Sloboda's (2003: 243) assertion that 'Music retains a key and central role in the lives of most people who see themselves as 'not musical'. Given that 14 pupils assessed themselves as 'not musical' and yet 18 pupils indicated a desire to be involved in music when they left school, 4 of them must therefore be amongst those considering themselves unmusical.

**Table 7.6 Responses to question A6: If you said yes to question 5, in what way would you like to be involved in Music?**

Category of response	Number of comments	Examples of comments
Play an instrument	6	I would just like to carry on playing the violin as a hobby and in my spare time.

		To play for a hobby
		I always wanted to learn and be able to play an instrument.
		Maybe try to play something
Be in a band	5	I would like to be in a band
		Carry on in my band or just mess around with my friends
		Band
Anything fun	4	'Anything fun really, I'll do anything for fun'
		'I would like to be able to play an instrument and for fun'
		For fun, I play the flute in church sometimes and I'd like to play at carnivals.
Listen to it	1	Listen to it
Sing (including karaoke)	2	I love karaoke
		I would like to dance and sing
Dance	1	I would like to dance and sing
Play in an orchestra	1	I would like to be in an orchestra with my clarinet
Be a drummer	1	I would like to be a professional drummer
Own a shop/ work in the business	2	Maybe get a job in the Music business
		Open a shop
Teach	1	Maybe to teach

The most frequent responses here were 'play an instrument' or 'be in a band' (11/24), while other music related occupations and simply 'fun' also figure. Again, there is a strong thread linking instrumental ability and musical participation. In Aberquaver Mrs. Metronome was seeking to develop her pupils' ability to play an instrument through her approach to the curriculum and this appeared to be having positive results for some of her pupils. However, she admitted that there was insufficient curriculum time to teach pupils skills on some instruments, such as the guitar that pupils valued very highly in terms of their cultural relevance to their own musical worlds. One wonders to what extent pupils' instrumental skills are being developed in schools favouring a more traditional curriculum model based predominantly around group composing. Could this

be a factor in the poor national recruitment to KS4 Music and reported low levels of enjoyment of school music (Harland et al 2000)? As Finney (2003a: 2) observed:

'the statutory once-weekly secondary school general music lesson is in danger of being viewed as contrived and, in social-cultural terms, moribund compared to the situations and contexts where musical learning is achieved out of the classroom.'

After all, pupils are unlikely to enjoy lessons in which they feel that they cannot participate for lack of appropriate skill. As Swanwick (1999: 68) claimed:

'We have to be aware of student achievement and autonomy, to respect what the psychologist Jerome Bruner called 'the natural energies that inform spontaneous learning': curiosity, a desire to be competent; wanting to emulate others; a need for social interaction.'

In respect of the desire to be competent, it could be argued that instrumental skill has a key role to play. How can pupils feel that they are competent in Music, if they cannot play a 'real' instrument well enough to participate in performing activities? In Swanwick's (*loc. cit.*) terms:

'If music is a form of discourse then it is some ways analogous to, though not identical with, language. The acquisition of language seems to involve several years or more of mainly aural and oral engagement with other 'languagers'...long before any written text or other analysis of what is essentially intuitively known.'

Just as coherent time is required for people to acquire language by 'languaging', so it is for people to acquire music by 'musicking'. One 55 minute lesson per week at KS3 hardly counts as such 'coherent time'.

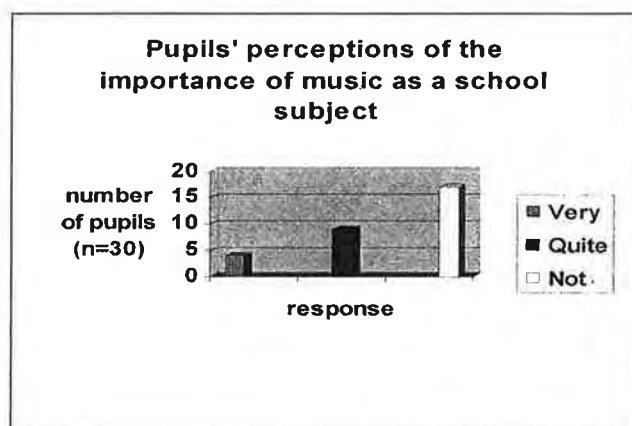
### 7.1.2 Section B

**Table 7.7 Responses to question B1: How important to you is Music as a school subject?**

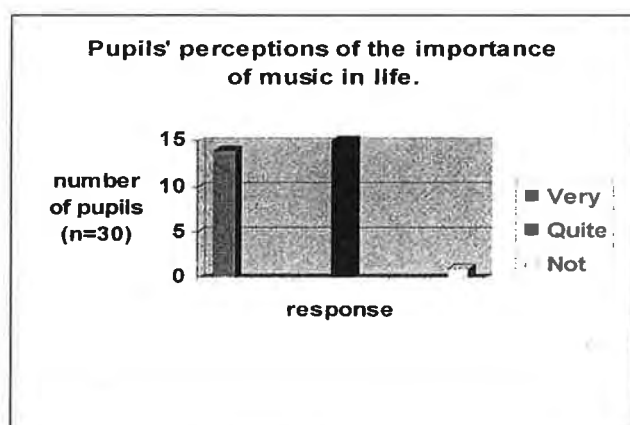
Very important	Quite important	Not important
4	9	17

Rather more than half of class 9C (17) said that Music was not important as a school subject, with 13 answering that it was very or quite important. The inversion between the

two sets of answers comparing pupils' attitudes to Music in school and their attitudes to music in their lives is quite marked as indicated in Figures 7.1 and 7.2.



**Fig. 7.1**



**Fig. 7.2**

Table 7.8 indicates what pupils gave as reasons for their answers about the importance of school music.

**Table 7. 8 Responses to question B2 Why do you say this?**

Category of response	Number of comments	Examples of comments
Explanations of 'very or quite important' responses.		
Enjoy playing instruments	1	Because I like to play an instrument

Playing instruments and skills development	3	Because I play violin but I said quite because I am not taking GCSE music because it was in the wrong box.
		Because I have flute lessons at school.
		Because music in schools can teach you how to play some instruments
Career aspirations/further study	1	Because some kids would want to take it for GCSE or take music as a job.
Development of musical understanding	3	Because I play the violin and it would help with my understanding with all types of musical pieces
		It gives you an idea of how it should be known and represented as.
		Because music in schools can teach you how to play some instruments
Importance of music as a life ingredient	1	I say this because music is important in everyone's life so music is very important in school. It gives us the chance to express ourselves.
Enjoyment of music lessons.	2	I enjoy our music lesson
		I love it.
Personal development/achievement	2	Because it helps you discover what you can play and achieve in music.
		Because it will get me a good grade if I am good at it.
Reasons for 'not important' responses		
Career aspirations/usefulness	5	Because not many people will need it in near future
		It involves nothing I want to do in my career.

		<p>Because I don't want a job to do with music.</p> <p>Because I am not taking it for GCSE and it is not going to be involved in the job I want to do.</p> <p>Because its not really important unless you want a job in music,</p>
Lesson content/materials	4	Because its dull and long, and you don't get the chance to change instruments for different pieces of music
Enjoy listening but not playing	3	I like listening but I don't like to play.
Not interesting	1	<p>Because I don't find it interesting</p> <p>Because we do nothing.</p> <p>Because we play the same boring stuff.</p> <p>Its boring</p>
Lack of autonomy in lessons	3	<p>Doesn't offer the instruments I want to play/hear, you are not able to play the music you like.</p> <p>Because its dull and long, and you don't get the chance to change instruments for different pieces of music</p> <p>Nothing I want to do.</p>
Type of activity in lessons	2	<p>Because they only focus on playing instruments and don't really look at more pop music.</p> <p>Because they only focus on playing</p>
Instruments available in lessons	1	Doesn't offer the instruments I want to play/hear, you are not able to play the music you like.
Relationship with teacher	1	Because in school you don't get to do much and if you can't do it the teachers have a go at you.

Type of music studied	1	Because they only focus on playing instruments and don't really look at more pop music.
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Of the 34 responses (more than one allowed, average 1, range 1-2) 13 rated 'Music as a subject' to be important and six of these directly linked its importance with learning to play instruments or developing instrumental skills. Of the 21 responses given for deeming Music 'not important', irrelevance to future career was mentioned five times, while most of the remaining responses mentioned various sorts of lack of fit with pupils' tastes, ranging from wrong music, wrong instruments, wrong emphasis on performing/listening, boredom and perceptions of a lack of pupil autonomy in music lessons. In this context, Bernstein's (1996, 2000) concept of education morphing into training for work and life appears relevant. Certainly, 9C were already assessing their school subjects against their embryonic career plans and allocating weighting to subjects either according to the extent to which they were 'required' or the putative needs of their chosen career path.

**Table 7.9 Responses to question B3 What do you enjoy in music lessons at school?**

Category of response	Number of comments	Examples of comments
The final piece	3	The final piece of work
		Listening to the piece when it is composed.
Playing instruments	13	I enjoy playing the instruments
		I get the chance to play an instrument.
		Playing the bass or the drums.
		The keyboard it is cool.
Everything	1	Everything
Singing	1	Singing Playing instruments
Composing	3	Composing our own music, improvising
Improvising	1	Composing our own music, improvising
		I enjoy playing as a group/class and doing solo compositions.

Social aspect	1	Talking to my friends
Learning traditional tunes	2	Learning some traditional tunes.
		It can be fun coming up to Christmas and other national holidays because you can play traditional songs we all know.
Doing good music	3	The drumming and the funky tunes we play.
		Because we do good music.
Not writing	2	You don't do much writing work.
Computers	1	Making music on the computers in the school.
Nothing	2	Nothing

The responses above were grouped by themes and exemplified by comments for each. One might take a rather different impression from those engendered by Question B2 of the appeal of Music to these students from these 33 responses to B3 (more than one allowed, average 1, range 1-2). There is little that is negative, playing instruments (13) regarded as the most enjoyed aspect of music lessons, while 'the final piece', composing and 'doing good music' were each mentioned three times. There are interesting procedural questions to be asked here as to how far not electing to take Music as an option for Year 10 acted retrospectively on responses to 'importance as a subject', although these responses are much in accordance with the results of the same question posed to 120 Year 8 pupils from schools across South Wales in a previous study (Wright and Thomas, 2003).

**Table 7.10 Responses to question B4. Do you think of the music you do in class lessons as 'real' music?**

Yes	No
11	19

**Table 7.11 Responses to question B5. Why do you say this?**

Category of Response	Number of Responses	Examples of Comments
<b>Reasons for Yes response</b>		
Variety of genres covered	3	Because we play different types of music: Classical, jazz, hip-hop etc.



		Because there all different types and varieties of music
Sounds real	1	Because the tunes and notes sound really realistic.
Any music is real music	1	Any music is real music but I don't really like the music we do in class.
Its played by instruments	1	Its played by instruments so its music
Because we made it and we played it	2	Because it is something we have made up and played together.
It's old	1	It's old
<b>Reasons for No Response</b>		
Not chosen by pupil	1	Because it's what the teacher wants to do, not what I want to do.
Type of music covered	9	It isn't modern music it isn't any good music, you can't have fun with it.
		Because we play dull songs. Because its just stuff the teacher made up that is not good.
		Because it's old music.
		Its boring and old-fashioned
Too easy	1	Because it's as easy as pie.
No lyrics	2	Because the music we play in class doesn't have any lyrics
		You can only hear the instruments; you don't know what the real meaning of the song is.
Not what we listen to at home	4	Because we don't listen to that type of music out of school so we don't try to get involved with it.
		Because we don't listen to that type of music at home.

The eleven pupils who thought that school music was real gave nine reasons for why this was the case and not all were approbatory while, of the 19 who gave 17 reasons for why school music was not real music, most centred around the genres studied, nine saying that the music was 'old' or 'not modern' and most others referring to it being teacher's music, rather than that which was relevant to their listening at home. This resonated interestingly with Finney's (2003a) study of music lessons for a class of Year 8 pupils in a secondary school in East Anglia where one pupil commented to the effect that music lessons wouldn't work if you just studied modern music. One has to bear in mind, of course, that what is modern to a 14 year old may be quite different to that perceived to be modern by a person of more mature years. It is a sobering thought that one's favourite bands of the 1990s may have recorded their albums before current Year 9 pupils had even left KS1 or, in the case of some recordings, were even born.

### 7.1.3 Section C

**Table 7.12 Responses to question C1 If you could make up your own music course for pupils in years 7 to 9, which of the following would it include?**

Possible answers	Number of responses
Using computers for music	21
Singing	14
Playing instruments	23
Listening to music	25
Composing music	18
Deejaying	19
Using decks	15

Respondents were free to check as many of these categories as they wished. 25 out of 30 would have included listening in their own course, closely, followed by playing instruments (23), using computers (21) and composing (18), which might be taken as signifying that they were well socialised into Aberquaver Music as it was, though the form of the question did not permit them to say or for us to infer in what mix or balance they would choose to have these elements, alongside deejaying (19), using decks and singing. The strength of support for playing instruments is particularly noteworthy in the light of discussion above concerning the relationship between playing an instrument and self-perception of musicality. This appears to be another reinforcement of this point by pupils. The almost equally strong support for the use of computers suggests that this 'instrumental alternative' is also viewed positively by pupils. It is perhaps unsurprising

given the strength of attachment to listening to music out of school shown by pupils in their earlier responses to question A2, that listening should be so strongly supported by pupils here. It does lend some support to Green's (2001) assertion that we are becoming a nation of listeners rather than musickers though these pupils also offer us hope in that they seem quite eager to be doing as well as listening.

**Table 7.13 Responses to question C2 What else would you include?**

Category of response	Number of responses	Examples of comments
Using a wide range of instruments	7	More of a range of instruments like lead guitar, trumpet, sax
		Playing banjo ucalally
		A wider variety of instruments Being allowed to use a range of instruments.
		Being able to play all the instruments
Pupil choice	5	Dancing, own choice of music.
		Instruments that the kids want to play.
		Anything what they would like to do.
Up to date music	4	Playing more up to date songs
		Modern music.
Dancing	4	Dancing, own choice of music.
		Dancing, singing and making your own song in a group.
Singing	2	Dancing, singing and making your own song in a group.
Composing	2	Dancing, singing and making your own song in a group.
Lyric content	1	Discussions on the aim of the music, lyrics etc.
Listening to your favourite music	1	Listening to your favourite music and writing about it.
A variety of styles	1	Listening to lots of different music

Only 27 of the 30 pupils answered this question, although we cannot infer that the three who did not reply imagined that their existing course was perfect. The things that responses centred upon were strongly flavoured with desire for more autonomy and choice that accorded with their own tastes, qua instruments, musical genres and forms of expression, such as dancing and lyric writing. This sits well with current work on pupil voice in education (Rudduck and Flutter, 2004; Finney, 2003b) and suggests that following this route in the field of music education might yield answers to some of the problems at present plaguing the subject. It calls to mind once again Swanwick's (1999, 68) injunction that '(W)e have to be aware of student achievement and autonomy.'

**Table 7.14 Responses to question C3 What types of music would you like to study?**

Category of response	Number of responses
Rock	8
Pop	7
A variety	6
Jazz	5
Modern music	4
Hip Hop	3
Classical	2
Heavy Metal	2
Techno/dance	2
Punk	2
Opera	1
Reggae	1
Ska	1
RnB	1

The most striking thing about these 49 responses is the variety of musics pupils wished to study, from opera to heavy metal, though heavily weighted in favour of the popular music genres, Rock, Pop, 'Modern music' and Hip Hop, which account for 21 responses. There is certainly more than enough diversity represented in the genres chosen by pupils from which to compose a broad curriculum. The question of balance and distribution of weightings between popular music and Western Art Music genres, as presently necessitated by the national curriculum's insistence that pupils learn about the history of the European classical tradition from its earliest roots to the present day, seems badly out of line with the weighting attached to classical music by these pupils.

One would not wish to see a music curriculum based solely on popular music anymore than one would wish to see one based solely on Western Art Music but the question of balance in many curricula is one of many that need to be addressed to secure a better reception of school music by its consumers. While we cannot generalise to the population at large from a small scale study such as this, these findings are consistent with the previous two studies which I had earlier conducted in South Wales (Wright, 2001; Wright and Thomas, 2003) and suggest a measure of concurrence among pupils in Wales.

**Table 7.15 Responses to question C4 What instruments would you like to play?**

Category of response	Number of responses
Guitar	7
Drums	6
Flute	6
Lots	3
Bass	3
Cello	3
Piano	3
Saxophone	2
Trumpet	2
Decks	2
Horn	1
Tuned Percussion	1
Banjo/Ukulele	1

The 40 responses again referred to a wide variety of aspiration (while no doubt also reflecting existing opportunities) with guitar, drums and flute accounting for almost half (19). This echoed Finney's (2003a:13) respondent's comment that: 'I don't really want to play the keyboard and I don't really want to play the xylophone. I only want to learn the drums and guitar'. For many of this generation, drums and guitar are the musical cultural symbols of a genre that allows them to 'portray an image to the outside world' (North, Hargreaves and O'Neill, 2000: 75). For these pupils, many of them male, skill with these instruments is an important part of establishing status within their peer group. The music curriculum as presently conceived only questionably allows these skills to be developed by any number of pupils. It is little wonder, therefore, that music in schools is still a feminised subject. (Green, 1997; Bray, 2000; Wright, 2001)

## 7.4 Section D

**Table 7.16 Responses to question D1 Are you taking GCSE/COEA music next year?**

Yes	No
6	24

Six (20%) of the class were planning to take GCSE/COEA Music in Year 10, in line with previous uptake statistics for the school. Subsequent information obtained from the school indicated that 7 pupils from 9C eventually took KS4 Music and that 25 pupils in the entire year group (25% of the cohort) opted for the subject. This is considerably in excess of the 8% national uptake.

**Table 7.17 Responses to question D2 Why did you make this decision?**

Category of response	Number of responses	Examples of comments
<b>Reasons for yes response</b>		
Like music	4	Because I like music
Play an instrument	1	Because I play the violin and enjoy the music lessons
Will get a good grade	1	Because I will get a reasonable grade.
<b>Reasons for No response</b>		
Don't like music lessons	7	Because music is boring
		Because I don't (like?) music in school.
		Because I don't really enjoy music lessons when we have to play old and classical music.
		Because I don't enjoy the things we do in lessons.
Option choices available	6	I wanted to it was just that I had no more choices to take it in.
		I wanted to choose a different subject in the same box.
		It's my second option but I would still like to do music.
Lack of interest in the subject	5	Because music in school doesn't

		interest me.
		It doesn't interest me in any way.
		Because I don't find it interesting.
Not related to career plans	3	Because it s not important for the job I want.
		Because I don't feel it can help me in life.
		Because I mostly base my GCSE with what I want to be.
Lack of ability in music	2	Because I'm not good at it
Don' like the instruments available	1	The instruments aren't that good.
Don't like playing	1	Because I don't want to play.

Of the six respondents choosing the subject four gave their reason as 'liking music' (13%), one as playing an instrument and another because they thought they would get a good grade. Seven of the 24 not choosing Music disliked it, while 9 responses registered lack of interest or ability and 3 incompatibilities with career plans. Six responses alleged problems with taking Music because of the option choices available, a matter somewhat at odds with the belief of the staff member responsible for the option system that arrangements were virtually free of such impediments. It is interesting to note that, had the option system not in one way or another hindered Music being chosen, the cohort opting for Music in 9C would have been double its actual size. Curriculum pressure, therefore, particularly as it impinged upon option choices, appeared to be a considerable problem for students wishing to study KS4 Music at Aberquaver. In any event, the fact that 12 students out of a group of 30 had a desire to study Music after KS3 was a very positive affirmation of Mrs. Metronome's pedagogy.

**Table 7.18 Responses to question D3 Have the option choices affected your decision?**

Yes	No
5	24

Only five pupils indicated that option choices had affected their decision about whether or not to study Music, one less than had claimed this to be the case in response to Question D.1 The discrepancy arose because one pupil did not answer this question.

**Table 7.19 Responses to question D4 If yes why? (4 responses)**

‘Because the box music was in, there was nothing else I wanted to take.’  
‘Music clashed with other subjects that I would like to take’  
‘Because I feel I can do well in music and could do well - but that’s life.’  
‘Because I want to do certain things but I can’t’

There is evidently a whole world of consideration here which, as has been implied, schools tend to gloss over and to which they would respond, no doubt, by avowing that limited resources invariably temper the best of intentions. However, we ought to remember that, while there may be a certain irremediable fluidity about adolescent subject choices, their shaping is distinctly culturally and organisationally, as well as policy related. The status of Music as a curriculum subject is reflected in Aberquaver by timetabling at KS3, with it and art receiving the least curriculum time of all subjects. This status was mirrored at KS4 with Music being available in only one option block. The messages this relayed to pupils and parents about its importance of Music as a subject were not difficult to read.

**Table 7.20 Responses to question D5 Were there any other factors you would like to tell me about that affected your decision? (6 responses)**

‘Music is more physical so it good to do’  
‘Maby music should be in more than one box?’  
‘It’s not interesting enough.’  
‘My parents wanted me to take it, but I don’t like it enough to choose it for my career.’  
‘It isn’t really important to many jobs, so if you want to be in the music industrie then take it, but if not don’t take it.’  
‘Yes, we haven’t had many lessons this year, we don’t all get to play different things like drums and we are playing the same kind of things.’

A similar range of possibilities is evinced here, in a mixture of considerations that privilege job considerations and judgements intrinsic to the experience of doing Music. The disruption to 9C’s KS3 Monday music lessons caused by SAT tests, Bank Holidays and outings appeared to have negatively affected at least one pupil’s perception of the subject as can be seen from the final comment in table 7.20 above. The Year 9 statutory assessments may well play a disruptive factor in other subjects but the comment above is evidence of the extent to which ‘important’ core subjects such as



Maths, English and Science may 'steal' curriculum time from subjects viewed as less important for 'work and life' (Bernstein 1996) and therefore further disadvantage them in the fight for curriculum time.

### 7.1.5 Section E

**Table 7.21 Responses to question E1 Which of these describes you?**

Male	Female
11	19

Class membership was nearly two to one girls to boys and was atypical of the school and no doubt influential on the data collected. It reflected a gender imbalance in this particular year group that necessitated one gender imbalanced class (see section 5.9.2). It might also be borne in mind that Mrs Metronome and test evidence indicated that this was certainly not the 'best' Year 9 class at Music.

**Table 7.22 Responses to question E2 Are you involved in music in school apart from in music lessons?**

Yes	No
5	25

Five pupils in 9C were involved in the extra-curricular musical activities provided or supported by Mrs Metronome. As we shall see in Sections 7.6 and 7.7 there were correlations between gender and involvement in extra-curricular musical activity and also between access to instrumental tuition outside the music classroom and extra-curricular musical involvement in the school.

**Table 7.23 Responses to question E3 If yes, what type of music?**

Band	1
School Orchestra	4

One pupil played in a rock band allowed to rehearse in the Music Department at lunch times (one of ten such bands involving pupils from year 7 to year 13), while 4 pupils played in the school orchestra (in which 50 pupils in total were involved from Years 7 to 13).

**Table 7.24 Responses to question E4 Are you involved in any sort of music outside of school?**

Yes	No
8	22

**Table 7.25 Responses to question E5 If yes, where and what type of music?**

Band	3
County Orchestra	1
Karaoke	1
Listening to music at home	1
Playing the flute at church	1
Piano lessons	1

More were involved in music outside than within school but such musically active pupils were in a minority of roughly one in four and one of which, as is clear from these responses described involvement as consisting of listening to music at home. Green's (2001) concern that we are not musically active as a nation appears to be somewhat borne out in 9C at Aberquaver.

**Table 7.26 Responses to question E6. Do you play an instrument (it doesn't matter to what standard?)**

Yes	No
15	15

These responses are interesting when compared with the responses to Question A.3 concerning pupils' perceptions of their own musicality, where the numbers are identical. Such a concurrence indicates a strong connection between pupils' perceptions of their own musicality and their ability to play an instrument.

**Table 7.27 Responses to question E7. If yes, which instrument?**

Guitar	5
Violin	5
Piano	4
Drums	3
Keyboard	2
Used to play	2
Flute	1
Tin Whistle	1
Recorder	1

Harp	1
Clarinet	1
Bass guitar	1

The average number of instruments played was virtually two (14 players:27 instruments). It cannot be deduced whether or not respondents were 'claiming' class instruments in addition to those played out of school. Guitar, violin and drums account for half the total.

**Table 7.28 Responses to question E8 Do you have lessons on an instrument?**

Yes	No
7	23

Seven pupils had access to instrumental tuition. It is interesting to note, however, that 15 pupils saw themselves as playing an instrument. There is an obvious discrepancy here which suggests that some pupils were counting either school instrumental experience or informal learning out of school as giving them the ability to play. The relationship between this factor and the number of pupils studying Music in KS4 is of relevance to the literature reviewed (Philpott, 2001; Green, 2000; Wright and Thomas, 2003) and the aims of the study and will therefore be explored in more detail in Section 7.7

**Table 7.29 Responses to question E9 If yes, where do you have lessons?**

In school	Out of school
4	3

The distribution between in school and out of school tuition was fairly even.

**Table 7.30 Responses to question E10 Do you like singing?**

Yes	No
16	14

The class were quite evenly divided regarding their enjoyment of singing. Further gender based analysis in Section 7.6 reveals other patterns of response here.

**Table 7.31 Responses to Question E 11 Do you have singing lessons?**

Yes	No
1	29

Given the age of this class, it is not altogether surprising that only one pupil was taking singing lessons. Many singing teachers will not begin working with pupils until they are aged at least 16, due to the immaturity of the voice prior to this age. This is also a notoriously unstable period for boys' voices and not one in which vocal training would be recommended.

**Table 7.32 Responses to question E12 If yes, where do you have lessons?**

In school	Out of school
0	1

Voice was not offered for peripatetic tuition in this school.

### 7.1.6 Section F

**Table 7.33 Responses to question F1 Are you interested in a career in music or the music industry?**

Yes	No
8	22

Eight pupils indicated that they were interested in careers in music and yet only six were intending to take Music as a KS4 option, some obviously not considering it to be prerequisite to work in the music industry.

**Table 7.34 Responses to question F2 If yes what sort of career?**

Teaching	1
Dancing	1
Not sure	1
Punk band	1
Famous drummer	1
'I'd like to go touring with a band or performer and do sound checks and things like that behind the scenes.'	1

Open a shop	1
'Making music videos or something like that'	1

Half of these eight responses were related to careers in the popular music genre while the remainder were less specific.

**Table 7.35 Responses to question F3 Have you had any information about careers in music given to you in school?**

Yes	No
8	22

While the similarity between responses to questions F1 and F3 suggested that only those who indicated that they were interested in a career in music may have received advice about careers in the music industry this can only be a matter of conjecture.

**Table 7.36 Responses to question F4 Which of the following do you think are important to success in the music business?**

Hard work	25
Talent	21
Skill	20
Good teaching	19
GCSE music	14
Luck	9
Other (Please specify)	0

The 108 responses engendered are no doubt more testament to the images of necessity that our schooling lays down in pupil identities than anything to do with Music, as such. Almost everyone acknowledged the importance of hard work, virtually two in three acceding to the accompanying virtues of talent, skill and good teaching. As many thought GCSE Music important as not, an estimation difficult to interpret without accompanying measures of other subjects and careers, Whether 'luck' is undervalued is an interesting question, while the nil response to 'other' might just as well indicate response fatigue as the deep conventionality of respondents' images of their vocational futures.

## 7.2 Data analysis by gender

**Table 7.37 Gender distribution of sample**

Number of boys
11
Number of girls
19

There were 11 boys and 19 girls in 9C, itself presenting some interesting questions regarding the data presented above. To what extent was the music education experience of the group affected by having such an imbalance of gender representation? Could some boys' responses concerning their music teacher be attributed to it, compounded or possibly surmounted by having a female teacher for the subject? It is difficult to answer these questions without comparative data from 9C's behaviour in other subjects with both male and female teachers, or from other, more gender-balanced classes taught by Mrs. Metronome. However, the facts were that only one of these boys opted to study Music at KS4.

**Table 7.38 Responses to question A1 'How Important is Music in Your Life?' by gender (Percentages equal proportion of sample by gender i.e. 2=18% of the 11 boys sampled.)**

	Very important	Quite important	Not important
Boys' responses	2 (18%)	8 (72%)	1 (9%)
Girls' responses	12 (63%)	7 (36%)	0

We can see from these responses that these girls were much more likely to consider music very important in their lives than boys, though only one of the latter rated it 'not important'. If there was a little of the pervasive 'macho cool' about it appeared to be no worse than lukewarm.

The reasons given by boys for their ratings of music in their lives (See Q2 Table 7.39 below) were exclusively related to 'liking music' and its effect in 'emotional self-regulation' (Sloboda 2001: 1), primarily for relaxation. For these young men in the throes of the hormonal turbulence of adolescence, music could be seen to be a key tool

in their armoury of coping strategies for everyday life. The responses of the girls are much more varied and mention a wider range of affective uses including problem – solving and empathising with situations.

In response to question A3 'Are you musical?' only one boy replied that he was and, not surprisingly, was the only one of the 11 in the class who had opted to study Music at KS4. In contrast, of 13 girls who replied that they considered themselves musical, five were opting to take Music in KS4. No pupil opted to take Music at KS4 unless they had answered that they considered themselves musical implying strong connection in this class between self-perceptions of musicality and choice of the subject as an option post-KS3. Boys' responses (Q4, table 7.39 below) show a very close relationship between the ability to play an instrument and self-perception of musicality. These boys did not appear to evaluate their playing in school as qualifying them to say that they 'played an instrument'. However, perhaps more interestingly still, they did not count the informal musical learning they undertook out of school as qualifying them to say that they were musical, either (see responses to questionnaire Section B below).

In contrast however, five of the boys answered in the affirmative to question A5 'Would you like to be involved in music in any sort of way when you leave school?' (Table 7.39) and 13 of the girls (Table 7.40) answered positively, although not an identical 13 to those perceiving themselves as musical for, in two instances, girls who perceived themselves as musical did not express a desire to be involved in music after they left school and in another two cases the reverse was true. Whether this reflects on the nature of self-perception of musicality is hard to tell from such limited evidence but poses some interesting questions as to possible contrasts between those whose self-perception of musicality was low because of not being able to play an instrument and those who, despite that, had either the sense of enjoyment or desire to be involved with music-making. Significantly there were more boys than girls in this situation, in a ratio of 2:1, one of whom wanted to learn an instrument in future, while three wanted to play in a band, of who one wishing to sell music by opening a shop .

**Table 7.39 Boys' responses to Section A of the questionnaire. (Numbers = pupil response no. allocated to questionnaire.)**

Q1 How important to you is music in your life?

Q2 Why do you say this?

Q3 Do you think you are musical?

Q4 Why do you say this?

Q5 Would you like to be involved in music in some way after you leave school?

Q6 In what way?

Response	A Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6
8	Quite	Because I like music but I am not into music a lot.	No	I say this cause I like music but I don't like a lot of music.	No	
9	Very	I like to listen to music. It puts me in a good mood.	Yes	I can play the keyboard.	Yes	In a band
10	Quite	Because music helps me to relax.	NO	Because I like music but I can't play that well.	Yes	In a band
16	Quite	Because it helps me relax	No	Because I don't play anything	Yes	Learn an instrument
24	Quite	Don't know	No	Don't know		
25	Quite	Because I like listening to music and I enjoy it. I also love my CDs.	No	Because I don't like singing and I don't play an instrument.	Yes	In a band
26	Quite	Because music helps me relax and I like listening to it.	No	Because I don't like playing any musical instrument.	No	
27	Quite	Because I listen to it everyday.	No	Because I'm a terrible instrument player.	Yes	Open a music shop
28	Very	Because I like music and listen to it all the time.	No	Don't know	No	
29	Quite	Because it helps me relax.	No	No because I do not play anything.	No	
30	Not	Nil	No	nil	No	



**Table 7.40 Girls' responses to Section A of the questionnaire. (Numbers = pupil response no. allocated to questionnaire.)**

Q1 How important to you is music in your life?

Q2 Why do you say this?

Q3 Do you think you are musical?

Q4 Why do you say this?

Q5 Would you like to be involved in music in some way after you leave school?

Q6 In what way?

Response	A Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
1	Very important	'Because I always listen to music, it makes me feel better.'	No	Because I can't do music, I can't sing or do any instruments, I have no skill in music whatsoever.
2	Quite important	Because music is nice to listen to when you get home from school.	Yes	I like it and I like to listen to it.
3	Very important	Because music can relate to the way I feel and emotions.	No	Because I don't play any musical instruments.
4	Very	Because I love listening to music all the time if I am not doing anything else. I also really enjoy playing the violin, not only as a hobby but for my GCSE music level.	Yes	Because I play the violin every week and would love to start a new instrument, maybe the cello.
5	Very	Because I like to listen to music a lot to help me relax. Also I practice music a lot because I play violin and piano.	Yes	Because I play violin and piano.
6	Very	Music makes people feel good. Music can also make you express yourself. Music can make you very angry.	Yes	I love singing and playing instruments but I can't really sing or play instruments.
7	Quite	Because although I enjoy listening to all different types of music and I play the flute and piano, I don't think it's important in my everyday life.	Yes	Because I play the flute and the piano and the tin whistle, I listen to lots of different types of music and also my dad's a composer. I suppose it's in my genes.
11	Quite	Helps me to relax when I get home, and	No	I'm not interested in learning to play an instrument and I find it difficult to write

		it can help you solve problems.		music.
12	Very	I'm instrumental	Yes	I like music.
13	Quite	Sometimes it can help you with problems. It can soothe you if your angry. If your down it can cheer you up. If your sad it can show you we're all suffering in some way.	No	Because I cant play anything on the other hand I have a good rhythm and can listen/feel anything.
14	Very important	Because people listen to music a lot even if its pop music.	No	Because I don't really get involved with musical things such as choir orchestra. I don't listen to all different types of music either only pop music.
15	Very	Because people listen to music a lot even if its pop music.	No	Because I don't really get involved with things like orchestra I listen to pop.
17	Very	Because I want to be a drummer.	Yes.	Because I play an instrument.
18	Very	Because music sometimes shows issues, real life traumas and can help you with many items in life.	Yes	I think I am musical because I can read music and play several instruments.
19	Very	Because I listen to music everyday.	Yes	Because I play the piano and I am interested in taking up guitar and drum lessons.
20	Quite	Cause I like to dance to it and listen to it.	Yes	I like dancing to it.
21	Quite	Because I like to dance to it and without it things would be boring.	Yes	I like to dance, sing and play my own music.
22	Quite	Because I like to listen to it whilst doing other things which then keeps me going.	Yes	Because I like to dance to it but not musical in a way where you play instruments.
23	Very	Because it helps me relax. I listen to it when I am working, when I am bored, so I need it a lot.	Yes	I play many instruments and I have a musical background.

The gender distribution of answers to Question B1 'how important is Music to you as a school subject' showed double the number of boys compared to girls rating it as of no importance. No boys rated it as very important whereas 21% of girls did so. Of the two boys who rated it as quite important, one was proceeding to study Music at KS4 and reported this and job related considerations in his reasons for doing so, in answer to Section B, Q2 ( see response 8, Table 7.43). The other indicated enjoyment of school music lessons as his reason. Of the negative responses from boys, two averred music's lack of importance to their career plans and the remainder (7) lack of enjoyment of music lessons. There were two nil responses from the boys.

**Table 7.41 Responses to question B1 'How important to you is music as a school subject?'**

	Very important	Quite important	Not important
Boys' responses	0	2 (18%)	9 (81%)
Girls' responses	4 (21%)	7 (36%)	8 (42%)

Responses to question B3, asking boys what they enjoyed about school music, were more varied. One mentioned enjoyment of the computer work, three playing instruments, two lack of written work and one the chance to chat to friends. Three said that there was nothing they enjoyed about school music. However gender comparison of responses to question B4 'Do you think of the music you do in class lessons as 'real' music?' showed a fairly even distribution of answers among boys with a much greater variation in answers from girls. Obviously the larger number of girl respondents had a large part to play in this, though the higher incidence among them of instrumental tuition, to be examined in Section 7.7 below, was also almost certainly leavening their response. One boy gave a yes/no answer, qualifying this by saying that sometimes it was real music and sometimes it was not.

**Table 7.42 Responses to Question B4 Do you think of the music you do in school as 'real' music?**

	Yes	No
Boys' responses	5	7
Girls' responses	6	13

**Table 7.43 Boys' responses to Section B of the questionnaire. (Numbers = pupil response no. allocated to questionnaire.)**

*B1 How important to you is music as a school subject?*

*B2 Why do you say this?*

*B3 What do you enjoy about school music lessons?*

*B4 Do you think of the music you do in school as 'real' music?*

*B5 Why do you say this?*

Response	BQ1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5
8	Quite important	Because some kids would want to take it for GCSE or take music as a job.	I enjoy playing the instruments.	Yes	Because the tunes and notes sound really realistic.
9	Quite	I enjoy our music lesson	I get the chance to play an instrument.	Yes	Any music is real music but I don't really like the music we do in class.
10	Not	Because I enjoy listening to music but not playing it.	Talking to my friends.	Yes	Because it is something we have made up and played together.
16	Not	Because I don't find it interesting	You don't do much writing work.	No	Because I don't like the music we play.
24	Not	Because I am not taking it for GCSE and it is not going to be involved in the job I want to do.	The keyboard it is cool.	Yes	Because Miss has put a tape on and we try to play.
25	Not	Because its not really important unless you want a job in music,	Making music on the computers in the school.	No	Because its just stuff the teacher made up that is not good.
26	Not	Because we do nothing.	Nothing	Yes/no	Sometimes it is and sometimes it is not.
27	Not	Because we play the same boring stuff.	Messing about with instruments	No	Because we play dull songs.
28	Not	Its boring	You don't do any writing	No	nil
29	Not	Nil	Nothing	No	It sounds bad.
30	Not	Nil	Nothing	No	nil

**Table 7.44 Girls' responses to Section B of the questionnaire. (Numbers = pupil response no. allocated to questionnaire.)**

*B1 How important to you is music as a school subject?*

*B2 Why do you say this?*

*B3 What do you enjoy about school music lessons?*

*B4 Do you think of the music you do in school as 'real' music?*

*B5 Why do you say this?*

Response	BQ1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5
1	not important	Because in school you don't get to do much and if you can't do it the teachers have a go at you.	The final piece of work	No.	It isn't modern music it isn't any good music, you can't have fun with it.
2	Quite important	Because I like to play an instrument	Playing	No	Because its like older songs to do in class
3	Quite important	Because not many people will need it in near future	Learning to play different instruments.	Nil	Nil
4	Quite	Because I play the violin and it would help with my understanding with all types of musical pieces.	Everything	Yes	Because there all different types and varieties of music
5	Quite	Because I play violin but I said quite because I am not taking GCSE music because it was in the wrong box.	Getting to play different instruments.	Yes	Because we play different types of music: Classical, jazz, hip-hop etc.
6	Very	I say this because music is important in everyone's life so music is very important in school. It gives us the chance to express ourselves.	Singing Playing instruments.	Yes	Nil
7	Quite	Because I have flute lessons at school.	Composing our own music, improvising.	No	Because its as easy as pie.
11	Not	Doesn't offer the instruments I want to play/hear, you are not able to play the music you like.	Learning some traditional tunes.	No	You can only hear the instruments; you don't know what the real meaning of the song is.
12	Very	I love it.	Because we do good music.	Yes	It's old.

13	Not	Because its dull and long, and you don't get the chance to change instruments for different pieces of music.	It can be fun coming up to Christmas and other national holidays because you can play traditional songs we all know.	No	Because the music we play in class doesn't have any lyrics.
14	Not	Because they only focus on playing instruments and don't really look at more pop music.	Listening to the piece when it is composed.	No	Because we don't listen to that type of music out of school so we don't try to get involved with it.
15	Not	Because they only focus on playing	Listening to the piece when it is composed.	No	Because we don't listen to that type of music at home.
17	Very	Because it helps you discover what you can play and achieve in music.	The drumming and the funky tunes we play.	Yes	Its played by instruments so its music.
18	Very	It gives you an idea of how it should be known and represented as.	I enjoy playing as a group/class and doing solo compositions.	Yes	Because its music from ages ago to today's day and age.
19	Quite	Because music in schools can teach you how to play some instruments.	Playing new pieces.	No	Because its what the teacher wants to do, not what I want to do.
20	Not	Nothing I want to do.	Playing the keyboard.	No	Its old and boring.
21	Not	It involves nothing I want to do in my career.	Playing the instruments.	No	Its boring and old-fashioned.
22	Not	Because I don't want a job to do with music.	Playing the instruments.	No	Because its not the sort of music I listen to e.g. dance.
23	Quite	Because it will get me a good grade if I am good at it.	Playing the bass or the drums.	No	Because it isn't the music I listen to in everyday life.

Pupils responses by gender to question C1 concerning the desired components of a pupil-devised music curriculum showed some interesting features, most strikingly that boys had very little interest in singing as part of it. Playing instruments and listening to music were strongly supported by both sexes, while deejaying and decks were also as strongly or more strongly supported by girls and boys, somewhat surprising in what tends to be seen as a male-dominated activity. Equally surprising was the far greater proportion of girls interested in using computers in music and in composing, Greens (1997) research having indicated such activity to be preferred by boys. Perhaps the excellent role model of the female music teacher in this respect had positive influence upon her female pupils. Equally possible is that, in such a female dominated environment, girls were just 'having a better time' in Music and responding accordingly.

**Table 7.45 Responses to question C1 (Percentages by gender)**

Components of a pupil devised music curriculum.

	Boys' responses	Girls' Responses
Using computers	6 55%	17 89%
Singing	1 9%	13 68%
Playing instruments	7 63%	15 78%
Listening to music	7 63%	17 89%
Composing	4 36%	15 78%
Deejaying	5 45%	13 68%
Using decks	5 45%	9 47%

Boys responses to questions C2-4 indicated, on the one hand, an attachment to popular music, rock, heavy metal and techno being mentioned specifically, with only one mention of classical music and, on the other, a fair amount of lethargy and one indication of antipathy concerning the current music curriculum (5:11 nil responses to QC4 and respondent 27's negative response).

**Table 7.46 Boys' responses to section C2-4 of the questionnaire**

*C1 What else would you include?*

*C2 What types of music would you like to study?*

*C3 What instruments would you include?*

Response	CQ2	Q3	Q4
8	I wouldn't want to include anything else.	I would like to study rock, heavy metal, techno and classical music.	I would like to play the electric guitar.
9	Nil	Rock, heavy metal.	Any
10	Nil	Rock music.	Bass
16	Nothing	Popular music	None
24	Nil	Nil	Nil
25	Nil	Nil	Nil
26	Listening to your favourite music and writing about it.	Blues	Guitar
27	Nothing	Anything except what were doing now	Anything except the instruments were playing now.
28	Different styles	All types	All instruments
29	Nothing	Music that is popular	none
30	Playing banjo ucalally	Nil	Banjo ucallaly

**Table 7.47 Girls' responses to section C2-4 of the questionnaire**

*C1 What else would you include?*

*C2 What types of music would you like to study?*

*C3 What instruments would you include?*

Response	CQ2	Q3	Q4
1	Being allowed to use a range of instruments.	Lots of different types of music-modern ones	Lots of different instruments
2	Anything what they would like to do.	Any types, mostly modern	Tuned percussion and piano
3	Being able to play all the instruments.	All types of music.	The drums, the bass, the piano, the flute, the saxophone.
4	Playing more up to date songs, playing different variety of instruments.	Pop, hip-hop.	Cello
5	Playing more up to date songs, playing ore instruments other than keyboards, guitars, drums and tuned percussion.	Jazz, hip-hop etc.	Cello horn.
6	Nil	Rock, Opera.	Piano, guitar, drums.
7	Modern music.	Jazz, pop, reggae, rock, classical.	Trumpet
11	Instruments that the kids want to play.	More modern music.	More drum kits and guitars less tuned percussion.



12	Nil	Nil	Nil
13	A wider variety of instruments.	More common/popular music.	Cellos, flutes, more woodwind instruments.
14	Dancing, singing and making your own song in a group.	Pop	Flute.
15	Dancing, singing and making your own song in a group.	Pop	Flute
17	Nil	Punk, ska, rock and jazz.	Drums
18	Discussions on the aim of the music, lyrics etc.	I would like to study all types of music.	I play the clarinet and can sort of play the keyboard but I would like to play the guitar.
19	Playing along to music the pupils would like to play along to.	Rock	Guitar and drums.
20	Dancing	Any	Nil
21	Dancing, own choice of music.	RnB, Rave (dance) hip hop.	Decks.
22	Dancing	All kinds for variety	Flute drums decks.
23	More of a range of instruments like lead guitar, trumpet, sax.	Punk, punk-rock, rock blues (modern)	Bass guitar, lead guitar, saxophone, trumpet flute.

Examination of responses to question D1 provided more detail concerning the one boy (respondent 9) and 5 girls who were proposing to study Music at KS4 from this class of 30 pupils. The boy (respondent 9) had placed Music as second choice in this option box but was still hoping to be able to take the subject. The girls were taking GCSE Music either because they liked the subject, (respondents 2, 4 and 17) played an instrument (respondent 4) or thought they would obtain a good grade in it (respondent 23). One other boy (respondent 8) would have liked to study Music but was prevented from doing so by the option arrangements. Five further male responses indicated boredom/lack of enjoyment of school music and one not wanting to play instruments. Five girls were restricted by the option choices available and this had prevented them from taking Music, seven girls indicated a lack of enjoyment or interest in school music, a further two girls indicated that Music was not relevant to their career/life plans.

**Table 7.48 Boys' responses to section D of the questionnaire**

*D1 Are you going to take GCSE/COEA music in year 10?*

*D2 Why?*

*D5 (in response to D3) Have the options affected your choices? Please explain?*

Response	DQ1	DQ2	Q5	E GENERAL INFO
8	No	Because I mostly base my GCSE with what I want to be.	I want to do certain things but can't (options)	Plays electric guitar. Doesn't like singing.
9	Yes	Its my second option but I would still like to do music.	Not really.	Plays keyboard. Likes singing
10	No	Because I don't want to play.	Nil	No instruments no to singing.
16	No	Because I don't like it.	No	No instrument. No singing.
24	NO	Because I don't (like?) music in school.	Nil	Yes singing.
25	Nil	Nil	Nil	
26	No	Because I don't enjoy it.	Nil	
27	No	Because music is boring	No	Drums and guitar
28	No	Don't want to	No	Band punk guitar
29	No	Because music in school doesn't interest me.	No	
30	No	I don't like it.	No	

**Table 7.49 Girls' responses to section D of the questionnaire**

*D1 Are you going to take GCSE/COEA music in year 10?*

*D2 Why?*

*D5 (in response to D3) Have the options affected your choices? Please explain?*

Response	DQ1	DQ2	Q5	E GENERAL INFO
1	No	Because I'm not good at it and the instruments arnt that good.		Likes singing. Plays guitar, violin and keyboard-self-taught.
2	Yes	I like music.	Music is more physical so it is good to do.	No to instrument, No to singing.
3	No	Because I don't have a big interest in GCSE music.	Nil	No to instrument-used to play clarinet. Yes to singing.
4	Yes	Because I play the violin and enjoy the music lessons.	No	Plays in orchestra violinist yes to singing.
5	No	Because music was in the wrong box it was in the same box as history which I really enjoy. Otherwise I would have taken music because I also enjoy it.	Maybe music should be in more than one box.	Plays in orchestra. Violin and piano. Yes to singing.
6	No	I've put it down as a seconds choice. I'm not really good at music I just love it.		Karaoke performer. Used to play the violin. Likes singing.
7	No	Because there was something else in the same box that I wanted to take more.	My parents wanted me to take it but I don't like it enough to choose it for my career.	Orchestra. Flute piano tin whistle recorder. Likes singing.
11	No	I wanted to choose a different subject in the same box.	Nil	No instrument. No singing.
12	Yes	Nil	Nil	Plays in a band. Plays harp. Has lessons out of

				school. Likes singing has lessons.
13	No	Because I don't enjoy the things we do in lessons.	Nil	No instrument. Yes to singing.
14	No	Because I don't feel it can help me in life.	Nil	Violin. Yes singing.
15	No	Because I don't find it interesting.	No	Violin, Yes singing.
17	Yes	Because I like music.	No	Drums. No singing.
18	No	I wanted to it was just that I had no more choices to take it in.	I feel that I could do well in music but that's life.	Orchestra. County orchestra Clarinet No singing.
19	No	Because I don't really enjoy music lessons when we have to play old and classical music.	Music clashed with other subjects that I would like to take.	Piano lessons Yes singing.
20	No	Cause I don't like it. I find it boring.	No Doesn't interest me.	Yes singing.
21	No	It doesn't interest me in any way.	Its not interesting enough.	Yes singing.
22	No	Because it's not important for the job I want.	It isn't really important to many jobs, so if you want to be in the music industry then take it but if not don't take it.	NO. Yes singing.
23	Yes	Because I will get a reasonable grade.	Nothing else was in the box with music I wanted to take.	In a band, Drums bass lead piano. Lessons out of school No singing.

Responses to question E2, 'Are you involved in music in school apart from in music lessons?' showed that five girls took part in extra-curricular musical activities in the school, one in a band and four in the school orchestra but none of the boys. Responses to E4, 'Are you involved in any sort of music outside of school?' showed that two boys and six girls were. Moreover, when asked in question E4 'Do you play an

instrument ?' four boys and 11 girls responded affirmatively. But at the same time, in response to question E8 'Do you have lessons on an instrument?' none of the boys answered that they did compared to 7 of the girls, 4 of whom said their lessons took place in school. We must assume that these boys tended to be taught less formally, learning instruments, such as guitar and drum kit, as revealed in answer to question E7, 'if yes which instrument?', three boys claiming to be playing guitar, one also playing drum kit and one keyboard whereas, with two exceptions, girls played 'classical' instruments, such as clarinet, piano, violin, harp and flute. In the two exceptions (drumkit and bass guitar) these girls played interestingly, despite their lack of formal tuition. At the same time we should remember that boys' responses to section A3 and A4 indicated overwhelmingly that they still did not consider themselves as musical or as playing an instrument.

We noted in relation to question C1 about what pupils would include in a self-constructed curriculum, boys aversion to singing. Responses to question E10, 'Do you like singing?' showed enjoyment of singing to be the most noticeable gender disparity. Only two boys enjoyed this musical activity compared to 13 girls. Of course one has to take into account that, at the age of 14, puberty is taking its toll on the emerging male voice, to some degree explaining these boys' present lack of enjoyment of this activity. The only pupil in the class taking singing lessons was a girl.

In answer to the question F1, 'Are you interested in a career in the music industry?' only two boys, and six girls responded positively, though one boy and girl were not taking Music at KS4.

Table 7.50 below shows pupils' responses to question F4 by gender. It can be seen that girls' responses indicated solid support for talent, good teaching, skill and hard work as being important factors in success in the music business, with half of the 22 girls also believing that having GCSE Music would help. The boys were more divided in their opinions, although the largest number of male responses supported hard work in agreement with the girls. Boys were, however, far less positive about the usefulness of GCSE Music in a career in music.

**Table 7.50 Responses to question F4 Qualities important to success in the music business**

	Boys' Responses	Girls' Responses
Talent	7	15
Good teaching	4	13
Skill	6	13
Luck	5	4
Hard work	9	16
GCSE Music	3	11

### **7.3 Data analysis by access to extra-curricular instrumental tuition**

As contended in Section 7.1, it would have been preferable to collect data to allow direct analyses of responses in terms of the social class backgrounds of pupils, in terms of access to the music curriculum. At the same time, it is possible to argue that the major discriminator is whether pupils have access to instrumental tuition outside the music classroom and that this, in turn, is strongly class related. Philpott (2001) referred to the added advantage available to pupils in school music whose parents were able to afford to 'pay for them to play'. While it is not possible from the data I collected to positively ascribe access to extra-curricular musical tuition to social class, it is certainly indicative of the ability and willingness of parents to make a financial investment in their child's musical education outside the school music curriculum. For these reasons, analyses of possible relationships between access to instrumental tuition, something of a proxy for social class and other aspects of pupils' questionnaire responses, including gender, appeared to be justified.

The single most striking finding was that all seven pupils who had formal, extra-curricular instrumental tuition were female. All but one of them rated music as very important in their lives, the remaining one rating it as quite important and all considered themselves to be musical and wanted to be involved in music when they left school. Three rated Music in school as very important and the remaining 4 as quite important. Four of them perceived school music as 'real' music, three of who were intending to take music as a KS4 option. But a further three intending KS4 Music pupils came from

outside this group, of which three played bass guitar, drums and sang in a rock band, none of them having formal instrumental or vocal tuition outside the classroom. The one boy intending to take KS4 Music sang and played in a rock band outside school. At the same time, five girls having instrumental tuition would have taken GCSE Music had option choices allowed it with their other, chosen subjects, as was the case with one male pupil. All five pupils from this class who indicated that they were involved in extra-curricular music at school were girls who had extra-curricular instrumental tuition. They were all also involved in music making outside of the school and one was interested in a career in music, as were two boys and two girls who did not receive tuition on instruments, one of whom was our male, singing KS4 Music optee, the other three female pupils intending to take KS4 Music who played instruments from the rock genre. In this particular class, therefore, instrumental tuition did appear to positively affect pupils' attitudes towards school music and their likelihood to opt to study the subject after KS3 but, equally importantly, so did informal learning of musical instruments taking place outside the school for a small number of girls.

As we noted, option choices had played a decisive, negative role in preventing six pupils from choosing the subject at KS4. All six pupils indicated that they played an instrument and saw themselves as being musical. For three of these, musical affirmation appeared to come from less formal musical encounters taking place outside the school musical environment. These three pupils had a strong commitment to music in their lives, two of them rating it as very important and one as quite important. They perceived themselves as being musical, two of them rating Music in school as very important, one as quite important. Two thought that school music was 'real music', though none was involved in extra-curricular music in school. All three aspired to careers in music. For the group of 6 would be GCSE Music pupils, therefore, five of whom were female; the ability to play an instrument appeared to be key to their self-perception as musical. It did not appear to matter whether this derived from formal or informal musical learning outside the classroom. Why this factor did not extend to more of the boys is an interesting conundrum. One has to bear in mind the skewed gender balance in this particular sample and it would be interesting to establish whether this pattern is repeated in other contexts.

## 7.4 Pupil Interview Data

Interviews were conducted with senior management staff in the school, Mrs. Metronome the head of the Music Department, individual pupils from 9C and two focus groups of 15 pupils, each from 9C. Those conducted with Mrs. Metronome and senior management staff established factual information as to the organisational structure of the school and issues affecting Music as a school subject at Aberquaver. Mrs. Metronome also gave extended information on her pedagogic approach. Information from these interviews have been interwoven in Chapter Six to give as complete a picture of Aberquaver and the musical life of 9C as possible.

There remains, therefore, the data obtained from 9C as individuals and groups to present in this section. Pupils were interviewed individually to triangulate responses to the questionnaire. There was a remarkable pattern of consistency between their responses to the latter and the same questions posed at interview. This strengthened my belief that I had probably obtained valid and reliable data. Some of the pupils gave interesting responses when what they had said with respect of some open questionnaire items was put to them at interview. I shall present some of these from John (for the purpose of this report), the only boy from 9C who had elected to take GCSE Music in KS4, as a framework for discussion. They were interesting when I probed a little further into their suggestions for their own music curriculum, in response to Section C1 'If you could make up your own music course for pupils in years 7 to 9, which of the following would it include?'

### Extract 7.1 From interview with John. 24 March 2004.

John: 'Um...I'd like put them all in a class give them instruments and let them make up their own sort of music with their own choice of instruments and give them like an hour or something longer to make up their own piece of music.'

RW: 'Do you think time is a problem in music in school?'

John: 'Yes, I think it's too short.'

RW: 'You think the lessons are too short?'

John: 'Yes.'



John's response was interesting for a number of reasons. Firstly his expression of a desire for more autonomy in terms of allowing his 'pupils' to 'make up their own sort of music with their own choice of instruments' resonated with the responses of a number of the boys interviewed (n= 9). These responses also concur with the findings of Green (1997) that boys require autonomy in music lessons. Secondly, John's comment that time was 'too short' in school music represented a divide in the opinions of the class on this matter. The majority of girls interviewed agreed with John that music lessons were too short. (n=17) but John was one of only three boys of this opinion, others (n=8) being of the opinion that music lessons were 'long' or 'boring.' This class experienced Music in a very 'communal' way, Mrs. Metronome's pedagogic style involving musical whole-class interaction punctuated by periods of paired work on computers. Even the computer work occurred in a suite in which the whole class was accommodated together. In my judgment here are very obvious musical and pedagogic advantages to this style of curriculum and increasingly apparent disadvantages to group work curriculum approaches adopted in many other departments. It may be that the boys who voiced negative opinions about music lessons were resisting the very obvious control Mrs. Metronome held over the class. There were few opportunities for pupils to escape into cupboards and corners to wreak havoc with instruments, as can happen in some settings. Indeed, as we shall see later, when asked to describe their best music lesson in school, a number of these boys looked back nostalgically to the period in Year 7 when they had worked in this way. It is doubtful, however, in my experience of observing many music lessons taught in group work style in secondary schools across South Wales in my capacity as a tutor and mentor to secondary school music trainee teachers, whether the autonomy these boys appeared to desire would have resulted in such high standards of musical achievement as those displayed in 9C's lessons. Striking the right balance between musical autonomy and progression and achievement, with attendant issues of classroom management and control is, however, emerging as one of the issues with which music educators will have to grapple in taking music forward as a curriculum subject.

John and I then went on to discuss further aspects of the music curriculum which he would devise for KS3, raising further interesting points:

### **Extract 7.2 Interview with John. 24 March 2004**

- RW: 'What sort of instruments do you think you'd give them?'
- John: 'Drums, bass and like a piano and trumpets because I also like Ska as well.'
- RW: 'Would you keep using computers with them?'
- John: 'No'
- RW: 'No?'
- John: 'Not really, no.'
- RW: 'What do you think about that? Do you think the actual live playing is more important?'
- John: 'Yes.'
- RW: 'That's interesting. What types of music do you think you'd get them to work on?'
- John: 'Um jazz and I think I'd do a little bit of punk''
- RW: 'Yes?'
- John: 'Yes, jazz and stuff like that and blues because that's OK.'
- RW: 'What instruments would you like to play?'
- John: 'Um...well I've played the bass guitar, I've had a guitar before and I'd like to play just bass guitar and drums. I've got my own drum kit now.'
- RW: 'Have you?'
- John: 'As well, yes. And I have my own guitar but I gave it to my step-dad.'

John did not mention any of the 'school' musical instruments with which he would be familiar from his own KS3 music lessons, no keyboards or tuned percussion. He did, however, mention 'real' instruments, such as piano and trumpet and the favourites drums and (bass) guitar. Other pupils concurred with John in this respect (n=15), also mentioning other, 'real' instruments, such as saxophone, clarinet, flute and new techno-instruments, such as decks. Although the class had composed so successfully with ICT in their own lessons, there was a strange gender divide concerning whether or not they would include computer composition in a pupil-devised music curriculum. Girls were very supportive of this idea (n=17) but boys interviewed, like John, were less supportive (n=5). This was in marked contrast to Green's (1997) findings that boys enjoy computer based composition work more than girls and tend to wish to work in this way. Obviously, there are difficulties in drawing many conclusions from findings involving a sample of 11 male

pupils but a number of possible reasons for this state of affairs suggest themselves. It is possible that ICT in Music has become less male-dominated in the interim between Green's research and my own. Girls could be becoming more familiar with the use of ICT in education in general, such that it appeared less foreign to them in music lessons. Perhaps the provision of the opportunity for all pupils to work with ICT in music lessons strengthened confidence in their ability to do so. Possibly girls also enjoyed the relaxed community workshopping approach to ICT based composing adopted by their teacher in lessons. Boys, on the other hand, might have felt that a previous area of male specialism had been eroded and experience greater negativity towards it. Another possible reading might be that boys used to enjoy the solitary nature of computer work and the degree of autonomy it afforded them in music lessons, whereas a structured, whole-class approach to composing was experienced as less suited their more solitary working preferences.

John and I continued to work our way through the questionnaire, using it as an interview schedule. When we came to question D1 'Are you taking GCSE/COEA Music next year?' John's responses were again interesting:

#### **Extract 7.3 Interview with John 24 March 2004**

RW: 'Do you think you're going to take GCSE?'

John: 'Yes.'

RW: 'And why do you think that?'

John: 'Because I want to get high in my in my like marks and stuff. I want to get a good job, I want to do mechanics.'

RW: 'And do you think music will help with that?'

John: 'Well its like a job thing that I'd enjoy after work.'

RW: 'Right, yes.'

John: 'And stuff like that. You can't just live on a band; you need to have an outside job as well'

RW: 'That's very realistic.'

As John was the only boy in 9C proposing to continue Music at KS4 I was particularly interested to find out why he had made this decision. His reasons turned out to be a blend of pragmatism and musical ambition. I thought that I could detect the voice of his

parents in 'you can't just live on a band', although this is obviously conjecture. Another significant utterance was that he had chosen the subject because he was selecting subjects in which he thought he would get high marks. His ability to play a number of instruments and his involvement with music outside of school gave him the confidence to select Music, as the following extract showed:

**Extract 7.4 Interview with John. 24 March 2004**

RW: So remind me, how are you involved in Music?

John: 'Well...I play some instruments, bass guitar, drums and play in a band.'

RW: What sort of band?

John: 'A punk band'

RW: 'Do you have lessons on any instrument?'

John: 'Um...no but very soon I'm getting lessons off a guy in school called xx.'

RW: 'What instrument will that be?'

John: 'Drums.'

RW: 'Drums, good'.

RW: 'Would you be interested in a career in the music industry if you'

John: 'Yes.'

RW: 'found out things that you could do?'

John: 'I'd like to be a music teacher as well.'

RW: 'I think you'd be a very good music teacher actually.'

For John the fact that much of his musical experience had been in an informal music making sphere with a band outside the school music environment was not a deterrent to him seeing himself as equipped to study GCSE Music. At the same time, he was now seeking some more formal tuition prior to commencing his GCSE studies. He was also considering crossing over the line into the more formal world of school music teaching. This is a hopeful message for those of us involved in music education in secondary schools. It suggests that what is important is that children receive music that counts to them as 'real music' somewhere, not necessarily exclusively in schools. If music teachers can work in tandem with pupils' out of school musical experiences it would

appear that many pupils could be supported in learning music throughout their secondary school careers.

Focus group interviews were equally interesting because they allowed pupils to talk more freely. Pupils who had been very tongue-tied in individual interviews became bolder when talking among their friends. One has to be aware, however, that it was easy for negative comments to dominate such discussions and that those who were quite content with the *status quo* tended to indicate this by silence. A strong link between the ability to play an instrument fluently and enjoyment of school music emerged, as the following extract demonstrated:

**Extract 7.5 Focus Group 1, 9C 31 March 2004**

RW: I'm looking into the way pupils feel about music at KS3 and the fact that GCSE Music is a problem in schools. Have you got any ideas why that might be?

Mike: 'Because its boring.'

RW: 'As a subject?'

Mike: 'Yes.'

RW: 'Is that you think GCSE will be or you think that music?'

Ryan: 'Music.'

RW: 'So why do you say that?'

Ryan: 'Because I'm not very good at playing stuff so I find it boring.'

[Nods and 'yeahs' from some of the other pupils]

For these pupils, their inability to play classroom instruments successfully coloured their view of the music lesson and lack of instrumental skill was experienced as a barrier to their enjoyment of KS3 Music, leading them to predict that GCSE would be more of the same and opting out of the subject at the end of KS3 was the right course of action.

Focus Group 2, with a male contingent of five boys, gave similar responses to this question. When I asked them whether they thought there were other instruments that they might be able to play more successfully, this was their response:

### **Extract 7.6 Interview with focus group 31 March 2004**

RW: 'Are there instruments you think you might be better at playing?'

Rhodri: 'Ah... no'.

RW: 'What would you do then?'

Andy: 'Decks, DJ.'

RW: 'You'd like to do that would you?'

Andy: 'Yes.' [chorus of 'yes' from the boys]

RW: 'Why is that then?'

Andy: 'It would be like, make it more interesting like more like proper music'

These boys had indicated earlier in the interview that they were dance music aficionados. Within their particular cultural or sub-cultural realm the use of decks and the art of mixing are of prime importance. They appeared to feel that bringing this music from outside school into their school music would add to the interest and relevance of their music curriculum. This appeared to echo similar responses from Finney's (2003a) research participants and their teacher, although at Aberquaver it appeared to be a less dominant interest than in Finney's school. I explored this further with this focus group, as the following passage shows:

### **Extract 7.7 9C Discussing DJ-ing Focus Group 2 31 March 2004**

RW: 'If somebody was to bring that sort of the sort of dance stuff into school what would you think about that?'

Rob: 'It'd be great.'

Andy: 'It would be good.'

Rhodri: 'Much better.'

RW: 'What bits of that would you like to learn how to do?'

Andy: 'DJ-ing.'

[Nods from others around the group]

RW: 'DJ-ing, and when you say DJ-ing what do you mean? Mixing?'

Andy 'Yes.'

Rob: 'How to do it.'

Andy: 'On the deck.'

RW: 'How to do the deck?'

Boys: 'Yes.'

There was a strong call from both boys and girls within this class to bring this new musical technology and musical genre into schools. The effects on GCSE Music's popularity if we did might be interesting to observe. Certainly, for some of these pupils, mixing decks were being seen as contemporary musical instruments.

The girls were generally uncritical of (or content with) their existing music curriculum apart from some requests (n=3) for dancing to become part of music lessons. This, again, resonated with Finney's (2003b) work in which he reported upon some pupils designing and delivering their own series of music lessons to their peers. Several of these pupils taught movement, such as majoretting or break dancing to music. The need to be able to move to music in lessons appears to be quite strong among pupils and artificial separation of movement from music in schools appears to be regretted by pupils. When it came to reasons for choosing KS4 options, both groups were strongly pragmatic, relating KS4 options to career aspirations. Given the number of times my own older children, now 18 and 21, have changed their minds about 'what they wanted to be when they grew up' I find this saddening and not a little worrying.

#### **Extract 7.8 Focus Group 2 Interview 31 March 2004**

RW: 'What about you Gill, are you thinking of taking GCSE?'

Gill: 'I don't know.'

RW: 'You don't know? You haven't made up your mind about your options?'

Gill: 'No.'

RW: 'No?'

Gill: 'No.'

RW: 'What are the sort of things that you think you're going to make your decisions based on when it comes to choosing which subjects you'd like to do?'

Anna: 'It depends what you want to be.'

Fiona: 'Yes, what you want to do in the future.'

RW: 'Yes?'

Rob: 'A career.'

RW: 'You think career is really important? Would you choose a subject that doesn't have a career at the end for fun or something?'

Gill: 'No, because you might take it and you might not go no further than GCSE and if you've done it you've missed out on another option which could have got you a better job.'

In terms of Bernstein's (1996) observations on 'trainability' this passage rings hollowly.

## 7.4 Summary

It might be useful to attempt to summarise the more important elements of this rather lengthy chapter. What has this data told us? It appears that the pupils of 9C attached great importance to music in their lives, with use of music for emotional regulation and enjoyment of listening and, for some, singing and dancing to music, as key factors. Roughly half of the class perceived themselves as being musical, the other not. Self perception of musicality appeared to be strongly connected to whether pupils perceived themselves as 'playing an instrument'. Pupils who played tuned percussion instruments in school did not perceive skill with these as allowing themselves to say they played an instrument, whereas some pupils who played keyboards in school appeared to believe it did. Eighteen pupils were interested in being involved in music in some way when they left school, 12 were not, while 13 members of 9C believed Music was very or quite important as a school subject, whereas 17 did not. Career aspirations were strongly linked to pupil estimation of the importance of subjects and there was some degree of male ennui with the school curriculum.

Pupils mentioned enjoyment of playing instruments, composing and 'doing good music' as things they enjoyed about school music. Eleven of 9C thought that the music they did in school was 'real'. For the 19 pupils who thought otherwise, the genres studied appeared important, 'old' and 'classical' being mentioned by some as derogatory terms. When pupils were asked to devise their own music curriculum, they wished to include, in



order of strength of support, listening to music, playing instruments, using computers to make music, composing, deejaying, using mixing decks and singing and dancing. In addition they suggested using a wide range of instruments, all suggesting 'real' instruments, with guitar and drums being most strongly supported, followed by the flute, then a wide range of orchestral instruments and keyboard. Pupils wished to teach a wide variety of musics, with pop/rock genres predominating, though also mentioning jazz, blues and classical musics.

The six members of 9C intending to study Music at KS4 gave as their reasons for choosing the option liking the subject, playing an instrument, believing themselves to be musical and the likelihood of receiving a good grade. Option choice arrangements at Aberquaver played a significant role in the numbers of pupils able to pursue Music at KS4. The cohort was effectively halved by the restrictions they placed upon pupil choice. The majority of pupils opting for Music from 9C were female, although subsequent information from the school indicated that this was not representative of the final year 10 cohort for KS4 Music, the majority of which were male. Three pupils opting to study Music at KS4 had had no formal tuition in music outside of school but still perceived themselves to be musical and as playing an instrument and were interested in careers in the rock/pop side of the music industry.

Analysis of the data by gender indicated that girls in 9C attached greater importance to music in their lives than boys who used it predominantly to relax, whereas girls used it for more complex purposes of emotional self management and empathy. The girls in 9C were generally more positive about school music than the boys. There was no data to indicate whether this was also true of other subjects throughout the school. Both girls and boys equally strongly supported the introduction of mixing decks, deejaying and the use of computers in school music. Boys' musical learning outside of school was carried out exclusively through informal learning and teaching, though they did not class themselves as being musical. The girls who learnt instruments informally out of school, however, did see themselves as being musical. Whether this related to the image of female musicality portrayed by their teacher is not possible to ascertain.

There was a high degree of contentment in 9C concerning their school music lessons, with strong support for playing instruments and composing with computers.

There was a small cadre of discontent from a group of boys who expressed a desire to be able to play guitar and drums in lessons and who wished for more autonomy in music lessons. They and others also suggested that improvements to their music curriculum would include the introduction of mixing decks, deejaying, dancing and more singing.

## **Chapter 8**

### **Discussion and conclusions**

#### **8.1 Reconstituting the research questions**

The findings described in the preceding chapters will be discussed under the headings of the research questions identified in Chapter One, sharpened and refocused through the theoretical discussions presented in Chapter Four. It would be naive to pretend, therefore, that the questions are the same as those which appeared in Chapter One. The meeting of orienting research questions and the theoretical-conceptual literature, crucial parts of which I came across some way into this project, was transformative, so that it appears that they are now better expressed as follows:

- i. To what extent have power and culture acted within the official and pedagogic recontextualising fields of music education to shape the official music curriculum-the pedagogic discourse of Music? Does code have a part to play in this?
- ii. How far has the National Curriculum for Music in the case study school been recontextualised by the teacher for transmission to pupils?
- iii. How have power and control acted through classification and framing to affect the music curriculum in the case study school, the teacher and the music education experience of pupils?
- iv. Did habitus and affiliation to varying forms of cultural or subcultural capital affect teacher and pupils' evaluation of KS3 music education?
- v. How do Bernstein's concepts of 'trainability' and the Totally Pedagogised Society (TPS) affect students' choices concerning further study of Music in school at the end of Key Stage 3?
- vi. To what extent did democracy operate within the school music curriculum with particular reference to the rights of enhancement, inclusion and participation?
- vii. How did the factors above affect pupils' considerations and decisions concerning further study of Music at the end of key stage three?

## 8.2. To what extent have power and culture acted within the official and pedagogic recontextualising fields of music education to shape the official music curriculum?

Consideration of this central issue takes us into some of the most persistent questions in the field of music education. Bernstein's way into it was through an understanding of:

'The pedagogic device, the condition for the materialising of symbolic control [...] the object of a struggle for domination, for the group who appropriates the device has access to a ruler and distributor of consciousness, desire and identity. The question is whose ruler, in whose interests or for what consciousness, desire and identity'. (Bernstein and Solomon, 1999: 269)

As Bernstein (2000: 33) explained, using a description of the process whereby over three years at school he transformed a block of wood into a pile of wood shavings as large as the bench he worked at, the question was : 'what was I doing? Well, what I was doing was this: *outside* pedagogy there was carpentry, but *inside* pedagogy there was woodwork.' He used this to exemplify the manner in which the official recontextualising field (ORF) and pedagogic recontextualising field (PRF) transform knowledge to produce something else - a pedagogic form of that knowledge:

*'pedagogic discourse is a recontextualising principle. Pedagogic discourse is constructed by a recontextualising principle which selectively appropriates, relocates, refocuses and relates other discourses to constitute its own order. In this sense, pedagogic discourse can never be identified with any of the discourses it has recontextualised.'* (Bernstein, 2000: 33, italics in original)

One of the things we are attempting to unravel here is how the numerous discourses of music have become *the* pedagogic discourse or school subject Music and the extent to which power and culture have acted to produce this official text. Understanding this may provide some of the answers to some current problems facing music education in England and Wales.

The data source from which this information can best be derived is the literature examined in Chapters Two and Three. Although it might be somewhat unorthodox to

begin an analysis of results by revisiting the literature, the issues that arise here do so from a dialogic conversation between the evolving theory used in this project and larger issues of curriculum and subject formation deriving from the collection of data. The ensuing discussion arguably ranks, therefore, as one of the 'results' of the study. Firstly, let us look at power issues in the formulation of the school music curriculum. A sensible starting point for our purposes appears to be the Schools' Council Project *Music in the Secondary School Curriculum* run by Swanwick and Paynter and conducted from the University of York between 1973 and 1980. This project attempted to examine the role of the music curriculum in the context of the many approaches to teaching music then in existence and influenced the seminal work, *A Basis for Music Education* (Swanwick, 1979), which was to become the foundation for the first GCSE Music syllabi in 1986, representing a long felt need to unify 16+ examining by bringing together CSE and O level systems into one that would cover 90 per cent of the cohort. The Labour government that fell in 1979 had intended to introduce it and its Conservative successors, initially hostile to the notion under the shifting influence of its traditionalist and new vocationalist elements, eventually did so, impelled by Secretary of State Keith Joseph, among whose intensely held beliefs was the need for thoroughgoing differentiation in such a system, to be achieved by examination boards adhering to national criteria as the basis for content and grading. These were required to pass official scrutiny in which Ministers, including himself, took great interest. Although Joseph has been widely regarded as the main force behind Thatcher's attack on 'producer interest' in education, this reform, including the introduction of course work as a major element in the new examinations, was regarded with the greatest suspicion by traditionalists. However, the form and structure of the new examinations were not necessarily to be confused with the substantive content of the school subjects which they measured. In the case of Music, the latter went on to form the basis of the National Curriculum for Music in 1992. What sort of power relations were influential in the development of this curriculum and how did they operate?

Let us look at the way in which these versions of the music curriculum came about, recognising that immediately we have a problem in considering the PRF in relation to the ORF. The project most influential in the development of this curriculum was commissioned by a body, the Schools' Council, which has been generally regarded as an archetypally British agency in the PRF. It was established in 1964 by the Secretary

of State for Education to take over responsibility for curriculum and examinations previously undertaken by the Secondary Schools Examination Council and the Curriculum Study Group. In 1969, with a revised constitution, it became a registered charity and, in 1970, an independent body financed in equal parts by government and local education authorities. A wide range of educational bodies, including teachers' organisations, were represented on the Council and a senior member of HMI was seconded to it from its inception. In 1983-1984 its work was taken over by the Schools Curriculum Development Committee and the Secondary Schools Examination Council and in 1984 it went into voluntary liquidation. It had been a non-directive body intended to provide leadership in curriculum, examination and assessment development, its work undertaken by committees and working parties responsible for different programmes for which individual or groups of academics made bids. It also commissioned research into these areas, including that of Gough and McGhee (1976), into the relative failure of its own 'projects' to secure adoption in schools and published a large quantity of reports. Indeed, projects were very differentially successful in these terms and some, like Stenhouse's *Humanities Curriculum Project* (HCP), with its invocation of teacher as neutral chairman and an evidence-based approach to topics of historic and contemporaneous importance, became storm centres of ideological controversy, in this case becoming a *bete-noire* of Right wing knowledge traditionalists.

By and large, there was little Council funding for 'the basics', English, Maths and Science, in which curricular renewal tended to be in the hands of subject associations (such as the National Association for the Teaching of English (NATE) and the School Science Association (SSA), charitable trusts (such as Nuffield and Shell) and complex collaborations between them and universities and commercial publishers (such as the School Mathematics Project (SMP), developed as a research project by the University of Southampton, now with charitable trust status, its curriculum materials published by Cambridge University Press, just as with Nuffield Science, have continued in a variety of modes, through more than one publisher. Indeed, most Schools' Council Projects were focussed upon the relative curricular periphery and, among the more successful, were those concerned with thrusting curricular *parvenus*, such as Geography and those looking for new purchase in the messy change to 'comprehensivisation' going on in British schools, such as Drama, Modern Languages, Music and other 'creative' subjects. Their focus was always on the middle or compulsory secondary school curriculum and

much of the impetus in project specification lay in uncovering pedagogic forms that would embrace the needs of pupils across the range of ability and attainment. The Council's existence roughly coincided with, indeed was somewhat formative of, the period which Bernstein (1996) described as the heyday of PRF, in relation to ORF, power and influence. Its demise symptomatised a sustained (and continuing) policy change on the part of central government to extend and tighten control over curriculum content and, when it became aware of their indissolubility, the means of its transmission and assessment. This required proliferation of quangos, agencies within the ORF subject to direct official appointment and mandate, explicitly populated not by 'representatives' but by experts deemed suited to task. Their growth and unnatural selection has continued since the run up to the Education Act, 1988, with its creation of a National Curriculum and assessment apparatus. While, for example, the NUT had a distinctive voice in Schools' Council it, and its like, were no longer invited, particularly after Thatcher, to any consultative, let alone decision-making, tables, even including those where pay and conditions or work were determined.

It is important, then, to try to grasp what sort of an institution the Schools' Council was that funded the initial Swanwick and Paynter project. It was not in Bernstein's sense part of the ORF, though like many agencies in public life, it depended on central and local state funding. It was not a quango, though toward the end of its life some of its senior members might have been said to be closer to government than had earlier been the case. Most importantly, it had representatives from discrete, relevant education related bodies but, perhaps even more importantly; it belonged to an era when British governments had forgotten that they might, if they wished, exercise more or direct curriculum control. Most importantly, take up of its products was entirely voluntary and rather poor, attested by the fact that, toward the end of its life, project bidders had to devote increasing amounts of their planned resources to dissemination and its evaluation. Projects congenial to official views might or might not be funded, their character mediated by the shadowy figures of HMI, independent but also advisory eyes and ears to the Department of Education (under its successive nomenclatures), just as the tenor of those completed might chime in or jar with the views of its senior figures. But what tended to be adopted by local authorities, teachers and schools had more to do with their own cultures and definitions of needs than official decree.

Indeed, the Council's Music Committee's first report (Schools' Council, 1971) cited as an example of good practice in secondary school music teaching the work of the music panel of the North-West Regional Curriculum Development Project (NWRCDP) between 1967 and 1970. This large-scale project, which the Council had supported, published a report entitled *Creative Music and the Young School Leaver* (NWRCDP, 1974), describing creative musical work based around the use of simple classroom instruments, the approach developed by Paynter and Aston (1970) in the highly influential work *Sound and Silence*. The North-West Project was almost certainly the most devotedly teacher-centred enterprise in the Schools' Council's history, based very much on the virtues of grass-roots curriculum change articulated through the network of Teachers' Centres that had mushroomed in that region, as elsewhere in England and, in lesser fashion, in Wales. As a possible new approach to music teaching in secondary schools, this has to be seen as emerging firmly from the PRF in the period before Bernstein (2000: 33) saw government as 'attempting to weaken the PRF through its ORF and, thus, to attempt to reduce the relative autonomy over the construction of pedagogic discourse and over its social contexts' Whether it was congenial to future governments taking further control of curriculum was to emerge.

As Ball (1990) has contended, it was Secretary of State Keith Joseph's discovery, even in well-defended Science, where the Association for Science Education (ASE) was undoubtedly the most powerful and well organised of its type, he could refer back politically unpalatable criteria for the new GCSE in physics, that opened Pandora's Box; ministers might successfully engender curricular second thoughts. As exemplified in Music, what had formerly constituted the best that key members of the PRF, predominantly in teacher education, could devise as curriculum development met initially with state approval of a somewhat fledgling kind, as witnessed by the incorporation of the Swanwick/Paynter creative ethos as the core of the GCSE music subject criteria, when these examinations were developed. Friction began to arise, however, as the emergent National Curriculum for Music showed signs of straying away from the view that these entailed of music education. Gammon (1999: 1) recounted events related to the 1991 report by the National Curriculum Music Working Group, composed predominantly, like others, of experts appointed from the PRF:



'which reflected the best practice of music teachers as it had developed since the 1970s [...] they made a number of references to different musical styles including Bhangra beat, pop-flamenco, penillion singing, Gamelan, and Scottish Gaelic psalm singing (DES, Welsh Office, 1991a, pp.26, 51, 40, 41). In mentioning these musical styles they were reflecting an increased diversity in practice in schools, with steel bands and samba bands being equipped and organised and some LEAs even providing lessons on such instruments as the tabla, the Indian harmonium and the Northumbrian bagpipes. A significant list of publications dealing with the teaching of "ethnic" music in school emerged since the 1970s.'

Such Working Group recommendations required explicit official endorsement and, as we saw in discussion of this issue in Chapter Two, the cultural inclusivity of the music curriculum suggested by the list of activities above did not meet with approval from all. David Pascall (1992: 5), seconded from British Petroleum, chairman of the National Curriculum Council, through whose scrutiny all subject group reports went, having already received Secretary of State and DES committee consideration, and before drafting as statutory orders, declared that : '(A)ny domination of popular and temporary cultural movements in our approach to the curriculum will only serve to separate our children from their inheritance which has shaped society today' The idea of a curriculum that did not foreground the seminal importance of Western Art Music provoked a storm of controversy, not least from the pro-Conservative government media, fuelled by neo-conservative philosophers, such as Roger Scruton (1991) and Anthony O'Hear (1991), the latter contending that:

'On this curriculum, pupils will be able to study music for 10 years without gaining a sound knowledge of either the history or the techniques of Western classical music, which is surely one of the greatest achievements of our civilisation.' (O'Hear 1991)

These statements were witness to a habitus so deeply entrenched that they implied both a complete confidence in the form of cultural capital embodied within it as superior, represented by ingrained belief by O'Hear that the conception of 'our civilisation' or, in the case of Pascall, 'our society', was commonly held, and an inability to comprehend that other races' or classes' habitus might require different views of these institutions.

After an embarrassing media battle for the Government, with exchanges of letters in the Press from the great and the good of the classical music world defending the more liberal curriculum proposed by the Music Working Group, Kenneth Clarke, the

Secretary of State for Education, capitulated to reactionary pressure and eventually a much more prescriptive English National Curriculum for Music was produced, detailing historical periods and genres of Western Art Music, with suggested composers and works with which pupils must become familiar. This was greeted with despondency by many, such as Sir Simon Rattle as being a retrogressive step for music education.

However, we would do well to bear in mind that, by the time of the utterance of such statements by individuals whose views were known to be notably congenial to Downing St, Margaret Thatcher had learned, across a range of National Curriculum subjects that members of the PRF did not easily go quietly. Only the Science Working Party ran like a well oiled machine, instating views that the ASE made known in advance and which unambiguously represented best practice as recognised by the PRF. English had needed one and Maths two changes of Chair and extra implantation of traditionalists, plus the extraordinary requirement that members of the latter signed the Official Secrets Act, before both came out with versions of the subject that, again, celebrated their respective, best practice, high watermarks, the Bullock and Cockcroft Reports. Even when these core subjects had been settled, 'trouble' continued to break out. History, even chaired by a carefully selected Admiral, mutinied and PE seduced its public school games player Head into the pleasures of Dance, fitness for all and games for understanding. If the curriculum had been 'nationalised' it had also been confirmed more or less as versions of the best that liberal expertise could devise, albeit overloaded, imperfect and still in problematic fit with the complete range of secondary students' putative 'needs'. It was much more obviously an act of imposition on primary school teachers, although more in the sense of a new insistence upon subjects formerly little or not at all taught and particularly in terms of the weight of assessment successively implemented through the key stages.

The battle for the music curriculum had somewhat differing outcomes in England and Wales. Daugherty and Elfed-Owens (2003: 251) described how:

'During 1992 and 1993, separate Orders for Wales for art and music only came about when a stand off between Education Ministers in London and professional opinion in those subjects offered WOED (Welsh Office Education Division) an opportunity to devise Orders that acknowledged the distinctiveness of the Welsh experience.'

As we noted in Chapter Two, the National Curriculum Council for Wales accepted the initial proposals of the Music Working Group in their entirety and thereby circumnavigated the furore surrounding the developments, as detailed there and briefly recapitulated above, of a much more prescriptive music curriculum in England. One could surmise, therefore, that the music curriculum in Wales was an exemplar of broad and liberal musical practice, given the enthusiasm with which these initial proposals were greeted by the music education profession (see Section 2.2). The Welsh curriculum was, without doubt, progressive in the extreme in comparison to the dinosaur produced in England, even though claims of liberality and breadth were tempered by the statement that: '(T)he repertoire chosen for performing and listening should include [...] examples taken from the European 'classical' tradition from its earliest roots to the present day' (CCW, 1992). Sir John Manduelli (1992), a member of the Working Group, had stated that 'We were quite clear that we wanted a strong emphasis on the Western classical tradition, but never felt it was helped by identifying a list of composers.' Indeed, as we saw in Section 2.2, Gammon (1999: 133) asserted that accusations of abandoning the Western classical tradition in proposals for the new curriculum were totally unjust as the Working Group 'consisted for the most part of establishment figures steeped in the Western tradition' and many aspects of the programmes of study that they proposed could only be taught through examples drawn from it. Manduelli's statement was produced to attempt to persuade critics that the Music Working Group had not thrown the Western Art Music 'baby' out with the bathwater in formulating their new proposals. However, this statement does cast an interesting light on the habitus pervading the formulation of the music curriculum proposals. Many music teachers have indeed found that it is impossible to teach a significant proportion of the National Curriculum for Music without using examples and, indeed, ways of working in music drawn from the Western Art Music tradition. This brings into question the extent to which the curriculum allows time and space for other musics and musical ways of working. As Apple (1995: 58) so appositely said, drawing together the language of Bourdieu and Bernstein in relation to claims he made about the role of the State and other agents (in his case specifically the publishers of school textbooks) in production of curricula:

'These points about the State and about how knowledge is altered by the politics of symbolic control may seem rather abstract, but although theoretical, their import is great. They do support my claim that curricula are rooted in differential power, in a set of social relationships that ultimately play a large part in

determining whose cultural capital is made available and 're-located' in our schools.'

It seems fairly clear from the discussions above, that the cultural capital of the middle class was placed at the centre of the national curriculum for music in England and Wales from its very inception, or from the inception of the Working Group formed to compose the curriculum. Even the much derided liberalism of the initial proposals, including those adopted in Wales, must be viewed within this overarching contextualisation. Wales went ahead and produced its National Curriculum for Music with three original attainment targets, performing; composing; and appraising, now subsumed into one combining all three areas as programmes of study. No doubt Spruce (1999: 103) had in mind the English National Curriculum for Music when he wrote: 'It is difficult to point to another subject within the National Curriculum where statutory imposition has legitimised to such an extent the perpetuation of the Western 'bourgeois aesthetic''. While it was doubtless true that this aesthetic was imposed in a somewhat draconian manner in England it is possible to question the extent to which curricular substance differed on the Welsh side of the River Severn.

In Bernsteinian terms it could be said, therefore, that 'knowledge is generated at the level of society and the State; the State then selects from that knowledge that which it will legitimise for transmission to others through the distribution of social power and control so that the dominant principles of society are expressed' (Bernstein, 1999: 59). With respect of the music curriculum, the case has been argued in earlier chapters as to the extent to which Western Art Music favours the children of families who can afford or are inclined to pay for tuition on an orchestral instrument and presently we shall also discuss other cultural factors that advantage middle class children in studies where Western Art Music predominates. It would seem, therefore, that the story of the production of the National Curriculum for Music provides empirical evidence supporting the claims of Bourdieu (1984) and Bernstein that external power relations act to produce hierarchies of knowledge, opportunity and value within schools. As Bernstein (2000, xxiii) suggested:

'I feel very confident that some social groups are aware that schooling is not neutral, that it presupposes familial power both material and discursive, and that such groups use this knowledge to improve their children's pedagogic progress.'

The evidence above appears to prove that in the case of the music curriculum this tends to be so, somewhat inevitably conclusion given its orientation towards a type of music advantaging the children of middle class families. The democracy of such a curriculum must, therefore, be called into question.

In considering the influence of power on the formulation of the music curriculum, we are inevitably drawn into its effects upon culture. For Shepherd and Vulliamy (1994), the very root of controversy surrounding the initial proposals of the National Curriculum Music Working Group was, indeed, 'the struggle for culture'. They viewed the Thatcher government as attempting to redefine central cultural values and, in particular, to 'relegate notions of relativism to the past.' (Cox and Hennessey, 2003) Perhaps the 'return to family values' ethos of the politics of the post-Thatcherite era also denoted a 'return to cultural values'. As we know, for Bourdieu, habitus was unified by its own internal logic which rendered the actions of individuals consistent with one another and allowed them to be replicated in new situations. Thus, position in social space conditioned habitus. (Bourdieu, 1984) Early childhood experience provides the initial basis for this conditioning, as parents' actions and behaviour toward their children is dependent upon their own habitus. Children will share the habitus of their parents which is then affirmed further in their experience in education (Waters, 1997). Habitus, therefore, becomes an accepted way of doing things for groups of people in similar social positions. Regarding culture and, in particular, 'taste', habitus will generate schema or internal referents by which cultural objects will be classified and evaluation expressed, characteristically, in terms of binaries, such as vulgar/tasteful, rich/poor, respectable/common. Bourdieu (1984) asserted that the points at which habituses intersect classify practices and cultural objects into a series of distinct, cultural lifestyles. Thus, position determines habitus which, in turn, determines lifestyle. Distinctions of taste become ascribed to social position and related to the ability to appreciate and differentiate. For Bernstein, such a concept, predicated on a view that behind knowledge structures there were merely further, structured structures, was insufficiently dynamic so that he expressed the relation of knowledge to power, control and identity in terms of codes having the same fundamental character of necessity and possibility as linguistic codes. Children's possession of an understanding of prevalent educational codes was necessarily intimately bound up with access to context-transcending elaborated code, ease and facility with which was somewhat class-related.

It may be fair to assume that the predominant habitus of those involved in government during the period of the formulation of the National Curriculum might well be denoted by an ability to appreciate the musical culture most identified with middle and upper middle class, British society, Western Art Music. If this was likely to be the habitus or culturally predetermined view in the ORF as to the 'right' cultural educational forms and the 'right' music curriculum, both allowing access to and perpetuating the values of the dominant social group, what did it 'meet' in terms of the habitus of those in the PRF, those music educators who worked to formulate the National Curriculum for Music? The National Curriculum Music Working group (NCMWG) comprised a number of experts in the field of music education, most 'establishment figures steeped in the Western tradition', (Gammon, 1999: 133) working in conjunction with regional working groups of music teachers to formulate the curriculum. Its ethos and approach to the body of the curriculum stemmed from Paynter and Aston's (1970) and Swanwick's (1979) work in devising a new approach based around creation of music using simple classroom instruments. The theory underpinning much of this work was Langer's (1941) philosophy suggesting that music was 'a way of knowing the life of feeling' (Elliot 1995: 28). This was expanded upon and affirmed (Swanwick, 1988: 57) in the view that music education should be concerned with 'the aesthetic raising of consciousness.' For Swanwick this became the essential role of music education. In attempting to unravel the nature of musical activity, Swanwick, (1974) had adopted an approach consistent with his habitus as an academic, drawing on the disciplines of music, philosophy, psychology and sociology which he pursued across many years and publications, later reflecting that:

'Many of us have been hard at work trying to establish a credible and serviceable philosophy of music education and have laboured to tease out the psychological and sociological characteristics of musical experience in order to evolve sound working principles for the classroom and the studio.' (Swanwick, 1999: 22)

This journey had led him to Langer's theory, the view that aesthetic response was at the heart of musical activity, concurring both with the work of other British academics working in the field of music education at the time and that of contemporary art music composers whose approaches to composition lent themselves to this particular educational approach. The dominant view of the PRF, which he had captured and around which consensus had formed, in this sense, clearly originated from elite, art

music culture that constituted the shared habitus of its originators. This view was not without its apparent contradiction, given that Swanwick was one of the main protagonists of argument for inclusion of popular musics within the curriculum. It could be argued, however, that the curriculum he proposed and the implied ways of working with music that it entailed were those least likely to lend themselves to successful use of popular musics in schools, stemming as they did from an approach to music creation based within a high art and, therefore, constituting a paradox for those seeking modalities suited to the creation of popular musics. Indeed this was specific subject of debate (Vulliamy, 1977a, b; Vulliamy and Lee, 1982) within the music education community at the time. Elliott (1995) criticised Swanwick's view claiming that it overemphasised composing and failed to take sufficient account of the importance of the development of musical *skills* gained through performing, among other activities. Elliott's (1995: 33) view of music education eschewed the raising of aesthetic consciousness as a goal of music education unless it was accompanied by the development of specific musical skills, arguing that:

'musical performing ought to be a central educational and musical end for all students [...] becoming a creative music maker involves a special kind of learning process that students can both engage in and learn how to deploy themselves [...] all forms of music making involve a multi dimensional form of thinking that is also a unique source of one of the most important kinds of knowledge human beings can gain.'

Green's (2000) work on the lessons that music education might learn from popular musicians and recent concerns about the failure of music in education to capture student interest and enthusiasm suggest that such critics may have had a point.

While, then, for most of the past two decades and particularly since the coming of the National Curriculum, the ORF in our system puts its stamp on school subjects, the work that it is happy to endorse (just as that which it may work to reject) may be done for it by agents and agencies within the PRF. Empirical work on Bernstein's theories concerning the PRF (for example, Al Ramahi and Davies, 2001; Thomas and Davies, in press) has suggested that school and higher education teachers also have a role to play in the recontextualisation of knowledge within individual establishments. They are not always simply to be regarded as reproducers of knowledge. If this is so, then the culture and habitus of music teachers, as well as those who educate them and who appear to

predetermine the form and content of their pedagogy also have potential roles to play in the recontextualisation of the music curriculum within each particular school.

The route taken by the majority into music education as a profession in state maintained secondary schools in the UK involves possession of an initial degree in music. Although the variety of music degrees available is beginning to widen, products of 'new' degree courses have only just begun to enter initial teacher training institutions. The vast majority of teachers at present working in school music are still products of a musical training firmly embedded within the Western Art Music tradition. In Bourdieu's terms, as Western Art Music tends to advantage children possessing middle class habitus, schooling's reproductive processes assure that many of these teachers are themselves from a middle class background. Moreover, working class students who achieve a place in higher education in music will have almost certainly be inculcated during their school and higher education into the dominant ideology or habitus, with its reinforcement of the superiority of high art music. While this is not some variation on the tired and rather pernicious tale that has haunted sociological (mis)understanding of school knowledge since *New Directions* (Young, 1971), that all school knowledge is middle class knowledge and that, for this reason, it is inevitably rejected by working class pupils, it is being argued that there are habitus/class code issues about recognition and acceptance of curriculum content, particularly in the creative domain, extending from the acceptability of the canon in literature to the standing of musical genres. This, it could be argued, is additional to even more general sources of attachment and rejection that arise from pedagogic forms and, particularly, their regulative principles and sociolinguistic features of student difference.

From his earliest work on language, the concept of code as a 'regulative principle which underlies various message systems, especially curriculum and pedagogy' (Atkinson, 1985:136) was central to Bernstein's sociology. Bernstein (1969) was able to show that there tended to be differences between the communication codes (or language) of lower working class and middle class children. He argued that these reflected distinctions in class and power relations related to social divisions of work, family and schooling. Bernstein showed that lower working class children tended to use relatively restricted codes, which tended to be context dependent and particularistic, as opposed to elaborated codes, even in pedagogic contexts where they were deemed to



be inappropriate, even symptomatic of inadequacy. While all had access to both, more aspirant working class and middle class families and their children were more likely to have greater access to and facility with the latter, which were more context independent and universal, across a wider repertoire and to be able to recognise and produce them in formal pedagogical circumstances. Moreover, and of vital importance for the identity of children as educands, he showed that codes denoted not only orientation to language and meaning but to control, to worlds of reasons and relations that tended to be, respectively, context dependent and independent. Thus, Bernstein (1973a) presented a theory linking social class and the use of language as social communication with identity and orientations to control, showing how the possession of universal 'restricted' and 'elaborated' language capabilities translated into differential perceptions and possession of the content and manner of school events that amounted to the genesis of educational inequalities. Whereas middle class children were likely to experience little disjunction between the linguistic, knowledge and control codes used in their education and those experienced at home, some working class children were disadvantaged at school as they moved from a context largely confined to restricted code use to one where access to elaboration was prerequisite to success. Schooling did not allow for the fact that all children did not come from similar, educationally appropriate, sociolinguistic backgrounds. Faced with the task, as all were, of recognising and realising both the regulative and instructional discourses of classrooms, the chances of many in getting to successful engagement with the latter foundered on the prior necessity of negotiating the former. Successful curriculum acquisition depended on appropriate acquisition and display of acceptable attitudinal and behavioural attributes, including, very mundanely, how work was to be done.

The evidence presented in the earlier review of literature in Section 3.7 would suggest that we have a professional body of music teachers many of whom are socially and evaluatively distanced both by the nature of their own musical education and their habitus, of which it would have been a latter day part, from the pupils whom they teach. This is confirmed by Sloboda's (2001:1) assertion that:

'(i) many school music educators have little respect for or understanding of the musical lives of those they teach; (ii) that the musical enthusiasms and aspirations of many young people are not addressed by the current curriculum'.

In Bernstein's terms they are operating within a substantially different code to that of many or, in some contexts, most of their pupils. .

Swanwick (1999, 46) proposed that: '(If) music is a form of discourse then it is in some ways analogous to, though not identical with, language.' I had toyed with proposing, using the analogy of music as a discourse or language, that such a notion might be extended to suggest that teachers use a different 'musical code' to many of their pupils, an 'elaborated' code drawn from, for the majority, a lifelong immersion in the sphere of Western Art Music, embedded in a habitus so deeply ingrained that it colours the perception and teaching of all other musics. Among the difficulties of such a claim, however, would be to establish whether musical genres are more like codes than dialects or, even more profoundly, differ in the way that different languages, for example, English, French, Swahili or Esperanto, do. Playing with such language analogies, we might note that it is in the nature of a language that it becomes our natural means of expression, both internally and externally. In Bernstein's terms, there are constitutive relationships between language, identity and social relation. Just as we use language to think with, to use Small's (1975) term, we use our musical language 'to musick' with. Many pupils seem to speak a different musical language to their teachers. Or is it that they operate within what we might call a vernacular code of their own popular musics, as deeply ingrained in their habitus as those of their teachers? How then can these two groups communicate? I think in English, my colleague thinks in French. Fortunately, my colleague has learnt English so that she can communicate her thoughts to me and understand my communication with her. We would be at an impasse if this were not the case, and sometimes one feels that this is, in fact, the case with much school music and some pupils' resistance to new tongues. At other times, to take the competing analogy with which we are playing one step further, one might suggest that the music curriculum has been written in elaborated musical code, based on an approach to musicking that does not translate well into the vernacular musical code of the pupils destined to receive it. This is seductive but would Bernstein-like code criteria fit the case? Is Western Art Music context independent while popular music merely celebrates locality? Is one the domain of reason, the other of group solidarity, marked by short, sharp sentences, sympathetic circularity, and the like, in contrast to clause-complex differentiation? Do they simply each have their own aesthetic, vigour and place? While such speculations are interesting, all that we can surely say is that genres are different and invidiously

ranked both by musical dominators and the dominated. Whatever the character of school music, and we can be clear what has been socio-historically rendered to us, it needs translators, people who speak both musical languages (if we hang on to the WAM-vernacular analogy) fluently or, probably more accurately, understand and value a variety of them.

The ways in which dominant social groups have succeeded in perpetuating the form of cultural capital considered most suited to their own interests may well, then, involve incorporation of congenial views of those professionally prominent and the cooperation of reproducers whose habitus has already been likewise formed. It may be contended that the political reshaping of the National Curriculum for Music exemplified such a process without greatly noticeable addition to that which preceded it. Power and culture intersected to insert into the National Curriculum for Music a compulsory consideration of Western Art Music irrespective of pupils' or teachers' musical interest or enculturation, so as to ensure that in England, in particular, but arguably no less so in Wales, pupils' continued to know and appreciate 'their own cultural heritage and traditions' (O'Hear 1991), a statement of effortless superiority of the cultural traditions and heritage of this particular, Right wing conceptual analyst in assigning those of his social group to all others. In contemporary Britain it is very hard to establish the nature of a common cultural heritage in many fields. My own experience as a music teacher in a variety of schools would attest, to the contrary, that Western art music did not form a large part of the cultural heritage of many of the children whom I taught. What its compulsory, dominating presence on the curriculum did, however, was affirm certain habituses as being those of value in education, even if this is no longer generally reflected in society. Music in schools has been left behind as society has changed, particularly in the closing years of the last millennium and the opening ones of the present era. This has to be considered in the light of the explicitly reproductive function of schooling and pedagogy; schools exist to 'do it over'. But, as Bourdieu showed in relation to the economic and class reproductive aspects of school processes, change within limits, social mobility within reproduction of class relations, is entailed. Where this leaves music teachers and, possibly, teachers in general, is questionable, if as I suggest in Chapter 4, Figure 2, teachers now occupy a lower position in the social field in terms of possession of the economic and cultural capital valued by society. Certainly, empirical evidence to support this would be the moves to vocationalise the post-14 curriculum

indicating a rejection of much of the 'academic' knowledge possessed by teachers (their cultural capital) in place of knowledge more useful to the world of 'work and life'. Another indicator might be the lack of respect shown to many teachers by their pupils in contemporary secondary schools, one reading of which would appear to indicate that teachers' status has fallen in their eyes during the latter half of the twentieth century. Bernstein, as we should show presently, refers to the inexorable press of changing social and economic relations on pedagogic discourse in pursuit of the identity formations requisite to labour processes and relations. The National Curriculum for Music was influenced by the dying throes of the Thatcher era and an attempt to cling to the vestiges of an education system governed by twentieth century, British, upper middle class values. Within this value system, the habitus of the dominant group was largely framed by public school education and musically by the Western art music canon. The curriculum is written in a code based in Western art music (a code a million miles away from the vernacular musical code most familiar to pupils). As Gammon (1999: 133) pointed out of the original proposals by the Working Group for the Music Curriculum (those adopted in Wales): 'many aspects of the programmes of study they proposed could only be taught through examples drawn from the Western classical tradition'. Questioning this is neither to reject Western Art Music nor to claim the superiority of other, including popular, genres. And it is certainly not to deny the irremediable task of education to enable students to recognise and realise decontextualised knowledge processes. What it celebrates is the necessity of doing what it takes to make the latter possible.

### **8.3 Has the National Curriculum for music in Aberquaver been recontextualised by Mrs Metronome for transmission to pupils?**

'At Key Stage 3 pupils should be given opportunities to build on the knowledge, understanding and skills acquired at Key Stage 2. They should be taught how to perform, compose and appraise, focusing their listening (in all activities) on musical elements. The repertoire chosen for performing and listening should include music of varied genres and styles, from different periods and cultures, composed for different media and for various purposes. It should extend pupils' musical experience and include examples taken from the European 'classical' tradition from its earliest roots to the present day, folk and popular music, the music of Wales and other musical traditions and cultures. The repertoire for performing should be progressively more demanding and chosen in the light of pupils' needs, backgrounds and stages of musical development [...] The activities of performing, composing and appraising should be interwoven so that the learning derived from each serves to reinforce learning in the others. The

term 'compositions' includes improvisations and arrangements.' (ACCAC, 2005: 3)

This statement indicates the statutory guidance for teachers on the curriculum for Music at Key Stage 3 in maintained schools in Wales. What is of concern in this section, however, is how the choices made by Mrs Metronome in the delivery of the subject further recontextualised the discourse music, embodied within the pedagogic subject Music to alter the experience of her pupils from that likely to be received in other secondary schools. Furthermore, I wished to discover the extent to which this reflected in pupils' views of Music as a school subject and their propensity to choose it as a GCSE option. In delivering their subject to their pupils at KS3, music teachers face a number of choices. Within the boundaries of the National Curriculum programme of study they are at liberty to choose the musical genres within which they work and the balance of attention given to each. Their choices are influenced by their habitus and the differential status which they accord to different types of music. Teachers who accord highest status to Western Art Music tend to give it greater curriculum weighting. Teachers also have a certain amount of freedom to choose the ways in which they work with pupils, including teaching methods, classroom organisation, ways in which order is maintained and control over the evaluation of knowledge. In the more precise terms of Bernstein's vocabulary, now instanced in a growing body of empirical work, they may exercise more than a little discretion over numerous aspects of regulative and instructional discourse and the classroom expression of distributive, recontextualising and evaluative rules. Taken together, these may represent a substantial impact on the nature of the classroom experience of pupils in music, as in other subjects.

Green's (2001) research into styles of learning adopted by popular musicians has much to tell us about the modalities of learning favoured by young people when relating to their own musical culture. The 'informal music learning processes' (Green, 2001: 60) by which popular musicians acquire musical and technical skills, involving 'purposive' and 'distracted' listening and copying, group learning and peer teaching and learning may well be more effective modes of instruction in music than didactic approaches favoured in many music classrooms. Similarly, the acquisition of technical knowledge by trial and error or what sounds right may be a more helpful learning style. It appears from Green's research that these effective learning techniques may be rarely found in a

classroom, even when the teacher delivering the lesson is herself a popular musician. This asks a question about the styles of learning ratified by the music education community and particularly those transmitted to student music teachers as 'good practice'. It is possible that music education has tried to adopt the classroom pedagogic and organisational strategies of other subjects to its detriment. Perhaps music teachers need to examine the styles of learning best suited to the unique nature of music. If, as Green's research suggests, effective learning in popular music involves informal learning styles coupled with enjoyment, identification with the music being learned and a sense of relevance of the learning to the learner's interests, these strategies could easily be adopted in the secondary school music room. Certainly their absence could easily explain pupils' lack of enjoyment of secondary school music. (Harland *et al.*, 2000)

If we look at most pupils' musical enculturation, that is to say, the musical background in which they have grown up, the majority of influences upon them will be from popular music traditions. Yet this music is often represented as a mere fraction of the curriculum. (Bray, 2000). What would happen if we put pupils' own musics at the forefront of our teaching? What is the basis and what are the consequences of our imposition on pupils as educators of a Western art music tradition when they are already engaged with music with which they strongly identify? Should we be looking at less formal teaching strategies in music classrooms where pupils may be capable of using some of the self and peer teaching and learning strategies which Green identified? Would learning music by listening and copying be more successful than attempts at teaching elementary letter named or notated examples of it in which pupils have no particular cultural stake? As Hennessy (2001: 238-239) contended:

'We may learn a great deal by accident and very little by design...Music is learned and understood in the act of making music [...] rather than in only what we can notate, describe or explain.'

Put at its bluntest, are we teaching pupils to listen to music or forcing on them the musical culture of a group of people who are mainly music graduates from a Western Art Music tradition? (Spruce, 1999; Hennessy, 2001; Sloboda, 2001) This in turn raises questions about the backgrounds from which music teachers are drawn. Is a degree in Western Art Music the best preparation for becoming a school music teacher? Hennessy (2001: 239) referred to the tension experienced by school music teachers

when trying to integrate their own conservatoire model training with the generalist, whole-class approach required in our schools. Moreover, Spruce (1999) suggested that teachers' attitudes predispose them to encouraging pupil instrumentalists to study music at GCSE and A level, believing them to be most likely to succeed.

I am not defending the quality of all music teaching in schools which ranges from the wonderful to the appalling (cf. Gammon, 1996, *passim*). I am saying that for teachers to be fully effective, they must develop the ability to work out what constitutes a balanced programme of study for pupils. Mrs. Metronome had chosen to adopt a model of music teaching that differed quite substantially from that found in most other schools in Wales. This judgement is based on close scrutiny of many school inspection reports from the Welsh Inspectorate (Estyn) and my own experience of visiting numerous music departments as a supervisor and colleague of student teachers and their mentors. She appeared to have chosen to work as a master musician alongside her pupils and to centre her curriculum on whole class ensemble performing. This performing work then generated or supported composing stimuli and tasks, often featuring the use of ICT as pupils progressed to Years 8 and 9 of Key Stage 3. Appraising work was subsumed within it. This constituted a substantial recontextualisation of the music programme for her pupils in comparison with what we may regard as mainstream practice. In attempting, within the confines of the national curriculum, to spend a substantial amount of her curriculum time in developing performing skills, Mrs. Metronome appeared to have espoused Elliott's (1995) philosophy, placing high importance on the development of skills in music, rather than Swanwick's (1979) search, above all, for aesthetic response, with skills acquisition following behind. She had moved away from a pedagogic stance based on the practices of other, more academic subjects, within which rooms were organised with desks in rows or clusters, arranging her performing room as an ensemble rehearsal studio. Similarly, she had moved away from a formal pedagogy based around didactic instruction and questioning and instead adopted one within which pupils were organised as a musical ensemble and largely instructed through direct engagement with performing music. Within this model the teacher operated as a master musician and director and pupils as apprentices. Pupil learning operated within communities of learners *qua* instrumental sections, with pupils teaching each other informally, as well as learning from the master musician. Musical learning and teaching were foregrounded and extra-musical teaching and learning strategies, involving writing, reading, copying

into notebooks, group discussion and so on, were rarely, if ever, used. This can be seen via analysis of the amount of time apportioned to various activities within the lessons observed. Section 6.5., Table 6.6 showed that instruction giving constituted a very small percentage of each lesson, most teaching being accomplished through musical activities of performing, composing and appraising. In composing work there was emphasis upon direct involvement with music so that learning took place in direct contact with musical experience. The composing lessons which were observed were mainly centred on using technology, Mrs. Metronome again operating within them as an advising, master musician, discussing pupils' work with them, giving advice, as necessary. Again, pupils also worked within their instrumental community to support and develop each others' learning. This music-centred approach to learning had a number of effects upon the curriculum which they received. They developed a skills base within performing and composing throughout Key Stage 3, developing increasing instrumental skill throughout the three years, specialising in one instrument in Year 9, at the end of which some had become skilled players, even though in many instances they had received neither formal nor informal instrumental tuition. Pupils also acquired a range of individual composing techniques leading to self-directed, high quality work by the end of the key stage. The focus on pair and individual composing work was also substantially different to the emphasis on group composing found in a number of secondary schools in the area. Pupils also became musically computer literate throughout the key stage and capable of producing quite advanced musical products by the end of Year 9. Their appraisal work, closely linked to practical music making and focused upon the improvement of their products, engendered ability to listen to music and discuss it with some level of sophistication and to use a range of technical vocabulary accurately. The end result of this approach was that pupils were well-equipped, on the whole, to enter the GCSE or entry level phase of study and to engage successfully with their musical tasks.

While all this was the case, it was also clear that Mrs. Metronome was constrained to some extent by the requirements of the National Curriculum in terms of what and how she could teach her pupils. Her comment during interview regarding getting group work out of the way in Year 7, so that it was 'done', indicated that this was not a matter of choice for her but of constraint imposed by the National Curriculum and was not a pedagogic strategy she would otherwise have used:



### **Extract 8.1 Interview with Mrs. Metronome 7 May 2004**

RW: What about, do you do any group composing?

MM: Yes in Year 7 they do, all groups compose.

RW: Do they? I haven't seen very much...

MM: They compose a song and they do a sound picture in groups. We'll be starting that next term.

RW: And do you move away from that later on, because you think they've got the skills to work more individually?

MM: Well The reason I do it in Year 7 is its putting them in a small group in Year 7. It teaches them to listen to each other, talk about ideas and get on with working with others. When they get into Year 8 I think you put them into pairs or pairs on computer or we do whole class composing because if you put them into groups they're just going to waste time. You find yourself running around like a madman because they're all in groups in different places and they'll only work when you come into the room and then as soon as you've left the room they do nothing.

RW: I absolutely agree.

MM: But yes we have to do it in Year 7 and get it out of the way.

Time constraints also seemed to have fairly substantial effects upon her teaching, particularly when it came to the instruments with which she was able to work with pupils. The main negative factor, to which she referred on several occasions in our discussions about the use of guitars in her classroom ensemble work, was time. In one fifty-five minute lesson per week she did not have time to teach pupils to play guitar chords, so that they were only able to use guitars in class once they had managed to acquire some skill outside lesson time. As will be discussed in more detail when we consider pupils' evaluation of their music lessons, the availability to all pupils of the most popular instruments, guitar and drum kit, was the focus of differing perceptions and a source of contention between teacher and pupils. There was some ill feeling among pupils who were not able to specialise in playing guitar and drums in Year 9, particularly among those specialising in tuned percussion and especially the boys in this group.

As Swanwick (1988) asserted, the language of music is learned in very similar ways to other languages. In achieving proficiency it requires regular contact with subject matter to reinforce and develop concepts and is best taught orally. One of the problems for Mrs Metronome and, in different ways, for other music teachers, was that she had

recontextualised her music curriculum to focus around the development of performing skills. However, the disparity between curriculum time allocated to Music in Aberquaver compared, for example, to that given to second language subjects, disadvantaged the musical teaching of the subject and the skill development of the pupils studying it. As Section 6.2, Table 6.1 showed, music received half the curriculum time allocated to French and Welsh.

Mrs. Metronome had made some substantial recontextualisation in her modes of delivery as well as in curriculum content. As we saw in Section 6.4.1.1 she had distributed her attention between musical genres, with strong emphasis on pop and blues music in Year 9, giving much less attention to Western Art Music. She had really tried to speak the musical language of her pupils, substantially reshaping the curriculum that they experienced to send out messages about the relative values of different musical genres and her sympathy for the musical cultures most identified with by pupils. As we have seen, pedagogic discourse was defined by Bernstein (2000) as the rule whereby regulative discourse is embedded within instructional discourse to create one, making no distinction between the transmission of skills and what he reports educators as calling 'the transmission of values'; the 'secret voice' of pedagogic discourse disguises the fact there is in fact no separation between these two elements. Whether and how this message was received and read by pupils in Mrs Metronome's class is the question that we must next address. In a teacherly frame of mind we would anticipate discovering that classroom messages 'out' do not neatly coincide with messages 'in'. Transmission and reception of teachers' musical intentions depend not only on the skill and quality of their embodiment but pupils' relation to the regulative discourse in which they are embedded.

#### **8.4 How did power and control act through classification and framing to affect the music curriculum in Aberquaver, Mrs Metronome and the music education experience of her pupils?**

For Bernstein (1973b: 85) there were three crucial educational message systems; curriculum, pedagogy and evaluation, where:

'Curriculum defines what counts as valid knowledge, pedagogy defines what counts as valid transmission of knowledge, and evaluation defines what counts as a valid realisation of the knowledge on the part of the taught.'

The school curriculum provides the secondary context for the distribution of officially legitimated knowledge to pupils. Its 'purpose', though not necessarily its achievement with respect of particular pupils, is not only to transmit appropriate recognition rules but to accompany them with realisation rules that enable them not only to reproduce but to generate valued text. Curriculum types, viewed as either broadly performance or competence oriented, differ in their strength of orientation to recognition and realisation. Mrs Metronome controlled recognition rules and gave strong indication to pupils as to what outcomes were valued and what were not, in keeping with the performance orientation of the curriculum developed from the National Curriculum. Introduction of levels of attainment for Music (ACCAC, 2000) increased performance orientation in the music curriculum. State imposed measurement of outcomes in Music might be expected to impel teachers toward training pupils to fulfil identified criteria, accompanied by clear guidance as to the progress of their work towards meeting them. This would imply that framing in respect of recognition and realisation rules became stronger, with less pupil voice as to the nature of outcomes to be valued and more teacher dictation of these outcomes.

For Bernstein (1990:100) classification related to the organisation of knowledge into curriculum and framing described the ways in which knowledge was transmitted through learning and teaching or pedagogic practice. Framing described power distribution in terms of rules of transmission: 'if classification regulates the voice of a category then framing regulates the form of its legitimate message.' (Bernstein, 1990: 100) Moreover, 'frame refers to the degree of control teacher and pupil possess over the selection, organization and timing of the knowledge transmitted and received in the pedagogical relationship' (1973b: 88). Strong framing allowed a low degree of freedom of choice between teacher and pupils, whereas weak framing allowed greater liberty to students.

Using these concepts, we can see from the data presented in previous chapters how Aberquaver operated a strongly classified curriculum operating within a collection code (Bernstein, 1973a, 1973b). There were strong divisions or boundaries between

individual subjects with curriculum divided into traditional subjects or 'singulars' (Bernstein, 1996). There was little blurring of boundaries between Music within the school and any other subjects, with the possible exception of ICT. Each was taught as a discrete discipline and stayed within its own domain. This had both positive and negative effects for the music curriculum. The strong classification of subjects meant that Mrs Metronome had sufficient autonomy to recontextualise her discourse within the discrete subject of music, as opposed to having to operate within an expressive arts faculty. On the other hand, the separation of the curriculum into subjects then allowed power relations transmitted from outside the school to come into play in the apportionment of time for each subject within the school curriculum. The relative weakness of the arts as players in the field of 'work and life', resulted in them receiving lesser amounts of curriculum time, indeed, the minimum permissible within the state imposed curriculum framework. This had multiple effects, most notably that the outcomes achievable and progress made by pupils tended to be more restricted than in other subjects. The ways in which Mrs Metronome could work with them were constrained by the need to produce rapid results on the basis of minimum input. It was such time constraint, often the most difficult and problematic resource confronting teachers, that led, for example, to problems of using guitars in class with pupils who no had tuition in their use outside of school. The operation of a firm collection code curriculum within the school also meant that pupils were less likely to experience music within the context of other art forms or curriculum subjects. Again, this lessened their exposure to it as a way of learning or as a way of expressing themselves. It also transmitted the message that Music was a self-contained, secondary discourse unrelated to the serious world of work and life. On the other hand, as a singular, Music in Aberquaver neither had to fight battles, common among subjects included in curricular regions, for relative dominance, nor subserve whatever the dominant principle might be of a generic code. Strong classification denoted potential power to the parts.

Extra-curricular music within the school was also strongly classified and separated from curricular or classroom music. I did not observe any relationship between the content of class music lessons and extra-curricular work going on in the department. There was no mention of extra-curricular music within the music lessons observed with 9C which appeared to be a discrete area of the musical life of the department and school. In terms of tacit (unintended or unconscious) but not so hidden

messages being sent to pupils as to images and values of music it was possible that this signified that participation in these activities was for an 'elite' group within the school, those who were 'musicians'. I do not believe that Mrs Metronome intended any such message to be sent. In fact, everything she did and said in classes was aimed at the opposite effect. However, the status of extra-curricular music within the school seems to present one possible fragment of an answer to why the perceptions of many pupils were that they were not 'musical' and that they did not 'play an instrument'. For those wishing to sing in the choir, this tended to be further compounded by the fact that the focus on performing skills in classroom ensemble playing necessarily meant that there was little time for singing in class lessons, so that the choir was not a natural extension of work done in class. Within the music curriculum, classifications were less clearly defined, shifting between strong and weak as Mrs Metronome moved across musical disciplines, incorporating appraising activity into performing or composing work, as she felt appropriate, and moving between composing and performing activity, as she considered them helpful to pupils. Framing within music lessons also varied according to the musical activity being undertaken. In performing lessons, framing was almost always strong, with teacher remaining firmly in control of the pace and sequence of activities, a natural musical consequence of the ensemble mode of working. There were, however, some interesting variations in terms of teacher/pupil interaction and pupil/pupil interaction concerning specialisation of teacher voice and modes of working. Unconsciously and consciously, Mrs Metronome interacted differently with different 'sections' of the ensemble. This involved weakened frames in terms of varying patterns of working with different sections and variations in language. The extract below from my field notes shows patterns of working during the performing lessons:

**Extract 8.2 Mrs. Metronome teaching classroom performing. (Extract from field notes, 22 March 2004)**

'She [the teacher] worked with sections of the classroom ensemble at a time, giving those she was not engaged with a practice task to do whilst she worked with other sections. This translated in reality into her working with the electronic keyboard players first as they could then practise with their headphones on while she rehearsed the tuned percussion, bass guitars and drummer. If an individual pupil was having a particular problem she would interact with them briefly on a one to one basis but she tended to work with sections or groups of pupils as much as possible. The exception to this was the drummer whose role was considered so integral to the rhythmic steadiness of the performance that the teacher quite often interacted with her alone, albeit briefly.'

To a certain extent performing work was differentiated in terms of skills required and musical complexity according to section of the ensemble. The keyboards, carrying the

main melody, required fairly highly developed motor skills to perform their part and were most frequently introduced to it, then left to practise with headphones. The bass guitarists and drummer worked very closely with teacher and tended to play throughout practice sessions with the tuned percussion. Tuned percussion tended to have a part which carried the supporting harmonies, though Mrs Metronome made sure that they always had a solo section or counter-melody at some point in the piece. This was taught and rehearsed more than the keyboard part. A number of pupils playing tuned percussion had evidently 'twigged' the fact that their part was, firstly, the least demanding and, secondly, the most supported by the teacher. They had also noticed the special musical relationship between the 'rhythm section' and the teacher, with whom she interacted on an even more individual and less formal basis than the bass guitarists, as can be seen clearly in the extract from my field notes given below:

**Extract 8.3 9C performing (extract from field notes, 15 March 2004)**

[The teacher distributes the music for the ensemble piece that the pupils had begun to learn last lesson. Everybody has the power on if required. There is a mixture of bass guitars, tuned percussion, keyboards and drum kit. The teacher leads from the piano]

MM: 'Right, let's see how much we've got to revise since last week. From the top and 1.2.3.4.'

[Pupils begin to play. They perform the piece through to the end]

MM: 'Not bad. Just a little bit of polishing to do. Right, Keyboards make sure you can do that jump.'

[Teacher demonstrates an awkward leap in the melody; she sings the note names as she plays]

MM: 'If you're not sure of the notes, write them in. Right, headphones on.'

[The pupils playing keyboards begin to practise]

MM: 'tuned percussion-remember we were going to use the D as our anchor with the left beater. D - FG Left - Right - Right

(Demonstrates holding imaginary beaters]

MM: 'OK let's try it.'

[All the tuned percussion play accompanied by the teacher on piano, the drums and bass guitars]

MM: 'Right, first time round it was really good, Second time it was out of time. It's the same thing. Let's try it again.'

[All play]

MM: 'That's better. Good. Right, let's try the middle 8.'

[All play]

MM: 'Right, that last one should have been with the left hand. Again.'

[Tuned percussion plays again]

MM: 'OK'

[This time the drummer (female!) plays her fill slightly out of time. Teacher stops]

Sam: (drummer): 'that wasn't good was it?'

MM: 'It's fine. Relax.'

[She shows some fill ideas on the drum kit]

MM: 'Keep it simple'

[Shows a simple rim shot and cymbal pattern]

MM: 'OK?'

[Pupil tries and then nods]

MM: [to drummer] 'So, when I say middle 8 Sam that's your chance to drop your feet out and do some extra with the sticks. OK? If you want, you can keep your feet going all the way through. Right, everybody, from the top.'

It is possible that pupils were receiving a number of hidden messages about the differential musical hierarchy within the ensemble itself and the respective value of each section. In terms of messages from Mrs Metronome about the musical roles which she most valued, her unconscious and somewhat necessarily differential patterns of interaction with various groups and individuals might send clear indicators to pupils suggesting greater value in roles, such as drumming. This could be one explanation for some pupils' perceptions of themselves as being not musical and for the desire expressed by a number of tuned percussion players to be playing guitar or drums. There is, however, a possibly even more plausible prior, cultural explanation for this fact; these tended to be instruments most commonly associated with popular musical culture and most popular with adolescents.

Framing in composing lessons in the ICT room became much weaker once pupils were engaged in the task, Mrs Metronome being much more open to suggestions from

them as to the conduct of activities, letting them explore their own creative ideas and dictate, to a greater extent, the pace and sequence of their learning. The organisation of pupils in pairs also allowed her to interact more closely on an individual basis with more of the class. She made great efforts to impart equal status to work from a wide variety of pupils and within a wide variety of genres, no doubt explaining why there were very few negative responses in pupil questionnaires about the composing work undertaken. But to judge by responses to both questionnaire and interview, particularly by boys, it was within framing aspects of lessons that most problems appeared to occur. They appeared to request a much higher degree of autonomy than girls in terms of choice of curriculum content, materials, instruments played and modes of working. They resented being restricted to one instrument in Year 9 and expressed a very strong desire to be able to play electric guitar and drums, as opposed to keyboard or tuned percussion. A number described their best ever music lesson as being one in which they had been allowed to work in a group and make up a song, where they relished the autonomy afforded and the opportunity to work with their friends. It has to be taken into account that this was not a method of working that Mrs Metronome used very frequently with this year group, so that its novelty value has to be considered in evaluating their responses. There was also the fact that pupils tend to be in a notoriously anti-education phase at the end of Year 9 and expression of approval for anything they are actually being required to do at that particular time is very difficult to obtain. The comment 'anything but what she makes us do' and other phrases along those lines occurred in several questionnaires when pupils were asked what they would like to do in music lessons. As mentioned in discussion of questionnaire results in Chapter Seven, autonomy and group work could also allow for an increased amount of potential to engage in off-task activity and might have appeared attractive to pupils for these reasons.

It must be acknowledged, then, that a number of questionnaire responses indicated that there were differences between teacher's recognition of valued outcomes and those of pupils, many of whom requested more choice, relevance to their own cultural interests and autonomy in their music lessons. This notwithstanding, there was a much larger degree of affirmation that school music was more like real music within this school than within other schools within which I had earlier asked the question (Wright and Thomas, 2003). In terms of the image of music presented to pupils by Mrs Metronome and the recognition rules she was attempting to impart, I found the following



passage from my field notes in which she discussed the nature of GCSE Music, should pupils opt to study the subject in Year 10, to be of particular interest:

#### **Extract 8.4 Prospecting Music with 9C 8 March 2004**

[The teacher then announced to the class that she needed to talk to them about GCSE music as several people had asked her about it following the release of the option booklets. She emphasised that pupils don't need to play an orchestral instrument to take GCSE music]

MM: '...everyone in this school plays an instrument'

[The teacher gave as examples the names of pieces the class had learnt recently as ensembles and told the class that these pieces would be acceptable for GCSE performing. She said that pupils could also play drum kit or guitar if they wished and mentioned that most of this year's boys are doing just that]

MM: 'If you play in a band that's good, you can tape yourselves playing and submit that'

MM: '...you have plenty of time to produce the work-two years for one solo and one ensemble.'

MM: 'One of the advantages of doing GCSE music in this school is the access to technology you will have. Not many other schools in this area have access to the sort of technology you have here - one machine to each pupil.'

[The teacher emphasised that there was hardly any writing in response to a question from a pupil. She talked about the listening exam and indicated that only short word answers were mainly required there emphasising that the GCSE course is 75% coursework and that pupils need to be able to work independently]

Her statement that pupils did not need to play an orchestral instrument to take GCSE music posed some interesting questions. Firstly, it constituted a response to queries from pupils and showed that a number of them were under the impression that skill on an orchestral instrument was prerequisite of studying music at GCSE. Secondly, the statement that 'everyone in this school plays an instrument' underpinned Mrs Metronome's whole philosophy of music education. However, the question arose of whether everyone in the school recognised themselves as playing an instrument. In the context of the discussion above about differential teacher voice and pupil evaluation in performing lessons, pupils might perhaps be receiving or attaching messages that indicated that they did not play an instrument in the sense accepted by themselves. How far had pupils detected a pattern in the selection and evaluation of those who played tuned percussion and not keyboard, guitar or drums?

Mrs. Metronome's statement that pupils could use pieces learned in class for their performing repertoire at GCSE also raised the question of whether they recognised pieces played in class as being of sufficient status to present for such course work. Some questionnaire responses would indicate that they did, others not. A number of Mrs. Metronome's statements, concerning time (two years for performing coursework consisting of one solo and one ensemble), that there was no writing involved in the course and only short answers were required for the written paper, were obviously intended to encourage boys to take the subject. While Mrs Metronome tried hard to send inclusive messages as to the types of music valued, for instance indicating that 'if you play in a rock band can tape yourselves', this may have been a double edged sword in helping to cut option decisional knots in the hands of parents and teachers imbued with vocational 'realism'. While also accurately highlighting the technology available, she also emphasised the degree of autonomy given to pupils during GCSE where assessment was 75% coursework and pupils must be able to work independently. They may have read this a little sceptically in the light of their perceptions that they had been given relatively little opportunity to do this at KS3.

### **8.5 Did habitus and affiliation to varying forms of cultural or subcultural capital affect teacher and pupils' evaluation of KS3 music education?**

Bourdieu viewed culture as a social product, subject to conflicts of an ideational and material nature, evolving or reproducing as collective patterns of preference were mobilised by social groups to preserve or enhance their interests. These collective patterns of preference solidified around norms of behaviour and evaluative schema termed 'habitus'. Mrs. Metronome was attempting to recontextualise the pedagogic discourse of music to produce a culturally relevant, enabling, enjoyable and motivating curriculum for her pupils and, in terms of her own evaluative schema and the evaluation of the majority of her pupils, could be judged to be so doing. Roughly three times the number of her pupils, in comparison with the national average, was opting to take her subject at Key Stage 4 and results were good. These pupils were receiving certainly what open-minded professional judges would have regarded as one of the best examples of music education to be found in Wales. Roughly half the class described themselves as 'musical' and this, to anyone engaged in school music, was encouraging.

The success of this curriculum appeared to lie in the focus on repeated, progressive, whole class performing, developing instrumental skill and a strong sense of ensemble within classes at KS3. Pupils rated this positively in questionnaires and interviews. The use of computers for composing was enabling and allowed pupils to produce imaginative, complex composition work of very high quality. Pupils evaluated the activity of composing and the use of computers equally highly. Within the confines of what works within a school ensemble, pupils experienced a wide range of musical styles including an emphasis in Year 9 on styles related to popular music genres. Doubtless, this enabling and culturally relevant curriculum was a key factor in the success of KS4 music at Aberquaver.

At the same time, there were still those in the class considering themselves 'not musical'. The key factor here appeared to be not being able to play an instrument, where justification for considering oneself musical required that one did. From lesson observation and my lengthy interview with Mrs Metronome, discussed in Chapter Six, it was clear that all these pupils did, indeed, 'play an instrument'; but their evaluation of what constituted doing so, some of those used in classroom performing did not count as 'real', particularly tuned percussion, while those who played drum kit and guitar in class ensembles did consider themselves to be musical and labelled themselves as 'able to play an instrument'. The fact that pupil and teacher evaluative schemas differed in this respect was likely to be rooted in habitus and code. Mrs Metronome's habitus as a Western Art Music trained music educator gave her understanding of tuned percussion as part of the orchestra and 'valid' instruments. But this was not met by pupil cultural habitus immersed in the popular music field where tuned percussion does not feature as a 'real' instrument likely to be encountered in 'real' music. This caused problems for pupil percussionists in recognising themselves as having acquired technical skill in music. The logistical problems of allowing more than one drummer and more than three guitarists caused resentment and a feeling of lack of relevance in their music making for a small number of pupils. It appears, then, that for pupils to recognise their school music as 'real' they must also feel that school music involves 'real' instruments, attesting to Swanwick's (1979) statement that what counts as music is determined by what counts as a musical instrument.

Cultural products are viewed by Bourdieu as a form of symbolic capital capable of use in social domination of one group over another. Affiliation to a particular cultural milieu provides a badge of membership of a social group and helps to denote differential positioning within the social field. Macdonald, Hargreaves and Miell's (2003) concepts of 'Identities in Music' and 'Music in Identity' amplify this Bourdieuan concept helpfully for us in music education, illuminating the twofold nature of our pupils' relationship with music. Musical habitus for adolescents tends to signify their affiliation to a particular social sub-culture, of which there are a multitude, including pop, rap, R'n'B, dance, heavy metal, and so on, but is an integral part of their personal identity - I am a dancer, I am a listener, I am musical/not musical, I am a cellist, I am an electric guitar player. We are dealing here with a very complex set of relationships which strike at the heart of adolescent identity. Alongside each of these identities is a highly complex and specialised vocabulary, arguably very different from the vocabulary of music as pedagogic discourse or of music teachers operating within the specialised world of education. Some of these pupils' musical vocabularies will obviously be more appropriate than others to an understanding of pedagogic musical discourse and will tend, therefore, to advantage their owners in approaching school music. Others may well be less amenable to school music pedagogy and will give their owners a less advantageous relationship with school music. In these terms, the National Curriculum, as it is currently shaped and with the amount of time commonly allowed it, despite the best efforts of very able music teachers, is still biased to 'act selectively on those who can successfully acquire it' (Bernstein, 1990: 63). At the root of this may be the difference between the musical codes within which teachers and a large number of their pupils are operating. Code, in this sense, implies much more than verbal language but extends to evaluative schema, approaches to acquiring and retaining musical concepts and material and recognition rules. Language itself may be an initial indicator of the different codes of teacher and pupil. The language of the National Curriculum, for example, is based entirely in the Western Art Music world. 'Composing', for example, is a term drawn from its canon; within popular or jazz spheres musicians are more likely to term this activity 'writing' or 'working on'. Similarly, 'performing' has classical connotations; popular musicians 'play' or 'gig'. And not many people would say that they 'appraise' music; they may listen discriminately to it on the radio or other medium. The terminology of the official curriculum, therefore, immediately marks out music as pedagogic discourse from music as we relate to it outside school. Pursuing our earlier,

analogical use of Bernstein who suggested that the elaborated code of the curriculum disadvantaged working class pupils who were not encultured to receive it, it is possible that the elaborated musical code of the National Curriculum also disadvantages pupils whose enculturation within a predominantly vernacular musical code, that of popular music genres, does not enculture them to access this curriculum. Add to this the additional 'keys' to this elaborated musical code given by instrumental tuition and we begin to see a picture of an extremely unequal access. Mrs. Metronome's curriculum model offered a possible solution to some of these inequalities. A curriculum based around enabling pupils to participate meaningfully in performing in their music lessons and to compose unfettered by the restrictions of instrumental resource or manual dexterity empowered a number of her pupils to feel equal to the study of KS4 music. The predominance of popular music genres and terminology and the 'reality' in musical terms of the weekly music lesson were also important in this respect. These pupils were placed on a more equal footing with their middle class peers to decontextualise their music curriculum and to acquire cognitive perspective. The main restriction on Mrs. Metronome's curriculum practice could be seen as time and this lay at the root of the grumblings of some of her male pupils. To acquire instrumental skill on a 'real' instrument requires 'real' time. Instruments of the tuned percussion variety are popular in schools for many reasons, among them that they are 'quick fix' solutions to the problem of how to have children performing music when there is not time to teach them other instruments. While neither demeaning the skill and dexterity evinced by tuned percussion artists, nor the contribution made to music education by Orff's *Schulwerk*, the cultural relevance of these instruments to the majority of today's teenagers has to be called into question. If music were to be given comparable curriculum time to other subjects, such as languages which also develop through repeated and frequent exposure, the requests of 9C for real instruments to play might be much more possible,

### **8.6 Does Bernstein's (1996) concept of 'trainability' and his identification of a prevalent generic performance modality of pedagogy affect students' choices concerning further study of music in school at the end of Key Stage 3?**

One of the last concepts developed by Bernstein was that of the Totally Pedagogised Society (TPS). Following his lifelong interest in uncovering the sociological basis of education, Bernstein saw in the latter years of the twentieth century the

emergence of a society that introduced pedagogy in all possible areas of human agency and outlined possible connections between changes in capitalism and the rise and fall of dominant pedagogic modalities, not least a change from competence to performance models of pedagogic practice. He further identified a new modality emergent within performance models which he termed 'generic performance'. Generic performance models have arisen out of direct involvement of state agencies in recontextualisation of knowledge, shifting the focus of education towards preparation for work and life, in pursuit of 'endless trainability'. The concept of trainability neatly encapsulates the ongoing and open-ended process of education and re-education in a shifting world of employment. A competence pedagogic modality, distanced from 'work and life', having reliance on habitus rather than marketable knowledge, is not well-suited to the demands of a market-driven knowledge economy. A generic performance pedagogic modality, on the other hand, is pictured as adapting itself well to rapid transformation of knowledge and its economic applications necessitated in an ever-changing world of work. The key characteristic here becomes 'trainability' or the ability to learn. Bernstein warned of the social consequences of what he referred to as this 'short-termism'. The concept of 'trainability', he claimed, 'erodes commitment, dedication, coherent time, and it is therefore socially empty.' (Bernstein, 1996: 59)

Though the curriculum at Aberquaver remained firmly rooted in subjects as singulars, lurking throughout the data that I gathered from pupils in this study at the age of fourteen was the reality that these young people had their eyes firmly fixed on the world of employment and were making the decisions about the subjects they wished to study for Key Stage 4 with employability at the forefront of their minds. Their typical responses to 'carrying on with Music', as identified in Section 7.4, tended to be:

'My parents wanted me to take it, but I don't like it enough to choose it for my career.'

'It isn't really important to many jobs, so if you want to be in the music industrie then take it, but if not don't take it.'

Such comments were further amplified when I asked one of the pupil focus groups how they would choose their GCSE subjects:

### **Extract 8.5 9C talking about career choices. 31 March 2004**

RW: What are the sort of things that you think you're going to make your decisions based on when it comes to choosing which subjects you'd like to do?

P: It depends what you want to be.

P: Yes, what you want to do in the future.

RW: Yes?

P: A career.

RW: You think career is really important? Do you think that the fact that you can't see a career at the end if you take music might be a factor?

P: Yes because you might take it and you might not go no further than GCSE and if you've done it you've missed out on another option which could have got you a better job.

Similarly, the most common reason given by pupils for not rating music as an important school subject was that it did not have an employment outcome for many people. This was further amplified by the following comments in response to question D2 when pupils were asked why they were not choosing Music as a GCSE subject:

'It involves nothing I want to do in my career.'

'Because I don't want a job to do with music.'

'Because I am not taking it for GCSE and it is not going to be involved in the job I want to do.'

This has to be set in the context of 29 out of the 30 members of 9C saying that music was either very or quite important to them in their lives and 18 that they hoped to continue to be involved in music after they left school. Similarly, there were a further six pupils who indicated that they would have liked to take music for GCSE if it had not been in the same option box as another subject that they wished to take. Further investigation at interview revealed that the competing subject was one which, in the majority of cases, linked to their career aspirations, so that pupils or their parents felt that it had to be given priority. Even among pupils who had decided that they would study music at Key Stage 4, there was a gritty realism about their view of their future that indicated a very functional view of education, as the following passage from an interview with a focus group from 9C on 31 March 2004 indicated:

RW: do you think you're going to take GCSE?

A: Yes.

RW: and why do you think that?

A: Because I want to get high in my in my like marks and stuff. I want to get a good job, I want to do mechanics.

RW: And do you think music will help with that?

A: Well its like a job thing that I'd enjoy after work.

RW: Right, yes.

A: And stuff like that. You can't just live on a band, you need to have an outside job as well.

### **8.7 To what extent does democracy operate within the school music curriculum with particular reference to the rights of enhancement, inclusion and participation?**

'Education is central to the knowledge base of society, groups and individuals. Yet education also, like health, is a public institution, central to the production and reproduction of distributive injustices' (Bernstein, 2000: xix)

Bernstein suggests that there is a direct relationship between social group and acquisition of knowledge in that unequal distribution of images, knowledges, possibilities and resources affects the rights of participation, inclusion and individual enhancement. Bernstein saw individual enhancement as the right to experience boundaries as 'tension points between the past and possible futures [...] it is the right to the means of critical understanding and to new possibilities' (Bernstein, 2000: xix). Let us look at the equality of distribution of images, knowledges, possibilities and resources as they affected rights of participation, inclusion and individual enhancement in music education, with reference to Aberquaver as illustrative material.

Regarding images, North, Hargreaves and O'Neill, (2000:75) have told us that their research showed that: 'music is important to adolescents, this is because it allows them to (a) portray an 'image' to the outside world and (b) satisfy their emotional needs.' O'Neill and Green (2000: 27) elaborated on this view as follows:

'Not only is music a 'mirror' that enables us to recognise aspects of the self, but the specific properties of music also come to represent or transform the image reflected in and through its structures. This contributes to the processes by which



individuals are actively involved in constructing and defining the social groups with which they identify themselves.'

We have here the concept of music as a two-way mirror reflecting and constructing individual identities and social groups. The problem with school music may be that it is holding a mirror to this mirror and the image reflected back is fractured and distorted by pedagogic constraints. It is little wonder that the subject of curriculum content is a thorny one in the light of the variety of changing musical images and interests that it is required to reflect and the restrictions of the curriculum framework within which it is allowed to do so. One clear message appeared to come from 9C; they would like their curriculum to be broad and inclusive but they would also like it to reflect the image of their musical worlds, not just in genres but in new 'instruments', such as mixing decks and musical skills such as deejaying. It could be argued that mainstream curricular musical practice reflects the image of a relatively small number of middle class pupils in many schools who have already been encultured into the world of classical music and very few others. Mrs. Metronome showed us the kernel of a curriculum model that could alter this.

Bernstein has also described school as a mirror. As we saw in Chapter Four, according to Bernstein, (2000: xxi) the school may act as a mirror in which an image is reflected. The image may be positive or negative. The ideology of the school may be viewed as a device within the mirror through which such reflection takes place. As Bernstein perceptively put it: '(T)he question is: who recognises themselves as of value? What other images are excluded by the dominant image of value so that some students are unable to recognise themselves?', concluding that the images reflected by the school are 'projections of a hierarchy of values, of class values'. What images does school music project to pupils as to who is of value? Pupils at Aberquaver seemed to give us pretty clear answers to this question; 'musical' people were those who played an instrument, though neither necessarily an orchestral instrument nor those who had been formally taught to play, but it did have to be a 'real' instrument. School tuned percussion instruments were not real instruments. This asks big questions about curriculum time for music and capital investment in instrumental provision. It appears that the Government may have come to similar conclusions with the introduction of the *Music Manifesto* in England and provision of instruments and tuition to all children in UK primary schools. Without a similar initiative in Wales, or a complete rethinking of the amount of curriculum

time devoted to music in schools to allow for skill development to take place in lessons, our less affluent pupils are badly disadvantaged.

There is a further level on which this analogy of a mirror may function in terms of the images of subjects and their value that schools reflect to their pupils. Despite the excellence of its curriculum, ICT resourcing and teaching, Music as a subject did not appear too flatteringly in the mirror of Aberquaver. Its KS3 timetabling placed it at the bottom of the curricular pile, alongside Art. In comparison with other subjects where a discourse or language was to be developed, such as modern foreign languages, Music received one third of the curriculum time. This situation was by no means peculiar to Aberquaver and has become, indeed, the standard curriculum model in most secondary schools. Such a timetable differential was again reflected in arrangements for GCSE option choices, where Music appeared only once compared to all other subjects' double placement. This left it disadvantaged as a subject across the curriculum. The image this reflected to pupils could not have been positive. In addition, pupils had a very clear conception of KS4 education as being preparation for work and life. Within this vision, music had no place unless one belonged to a minority interested in a career in the music industry.

What did Bernstein mean by the distribution of knowledges? He claimed that knowledge is differentially distributed within the school according to social group, carrying inequalities of value, power and potential. Was this true of musical knowledge and was it differentially distributed throughout Aberquaver according to social group? Certainly pupils entering school in Year 7 brought with them the distributive benefits and injustices of their social background and previous formal educational experiences. Pupils whose families could not afford to go to concerts, pay for instrumental tuition or, for reasons of enculturation, did not evaluate these as of value found the National Curriculum for Music here, in many schools, more difficult to access than their more privileged peers. The extent to which this was so in Aberquaver was mitigated by Mrs. Metronome's curriculum model. She attempted to give every pupil the skills required for them to access the curriculum and to reduce the differential between those who were able to 'pay to play' and those who were not. To an extent this levelled the playing field and allowed all pupils to access the knowledge being transmitted. The school's very positive KS4 music uptake would appear to indicate that this was successful.

Regarding possibilities, Mrs. Metronome's curricular approach aimed to make KS4 music a possibility for as many pupils as she could. Her 'pitch' to prospective KS4 music candidates made this clear. Her approach seemed to be working as 12 out of 30 pupils in 9C would have opted for Music in KS4 had option choices and their 'work life' priorities permitted it. Again, the issue of playing an instrument figured largely in pupils' minds concerning the possibility for them of Music. School tuned percussion players, in particular, did not evaluate their instrumental playing in class as making Music a possibility for them at KS4. This returns us once again to issues of time, money and resourcing required to provide these pupils with real alternatives to these instruments. There was also Mrs. Metronome's pedagogic point to consider about the extent to which all pupils are physically or temperamentally suited to playing the guitars and drums for which they clamour. What other instruments could we provide for pupils to play in class music?

In the case of the school music curriculum we have seen how this can be recontextualised, as in Aberquaver, to enable some pupils who might not previously have done so to believe themselves capable of possible futures with music, three times as many as in most other schools choosing to pursue its study at KS4 twice as many again proposing to be involved in music in some way after they left school, including having plans to learn to play an instrument. The extent to which school music alone had opened this door to musical participation to these pupils is strongly indexed by the interest evinced by these pupils. Green (2001) has expressed concern that amateur music making is dying out in Great Britain, suggesting a number of reasons for this sorry state of affairs, including the highly specialised nature of musical production necessary to recreate the types of music listened to out of school and fear and embarrassment experienced by many when faced with the thought of performing music to others, given the pervasive culture of excellence delivered through the media. It could be argued that music in schools needs to make a 'sea change' in public opinion, in conjunction with moves in the media embodied in programmes, such as *The X factor* and *Pop Idol*, so as to show that ordinary people can make good music. Mrs. Metronome's recontextualisation of the music performing curriculum in Aberquaver appeared to be particularly successful in this respect. Her pupils were confident performers and were unafraid to share their performances with their teacher and peers for help and advice.

According to Green society needs to make a cultural shift away from the idea that the only measure, or goal, of success in music is to achieve fame and wealth. It is possible that music education could do much to assist with this. For the pupils in Aberquaver, it appeared that their music education in school was accustoming them to 'amateur' collaborative music-making, such that a substantial number of 9C believed that they made 'real' music in class; their plans to continue with making music after they left school were encouraging indicators of possible longer term effects.

The question of equal distribution of resources remains vital. While, as we have shown, access to a musical instruments outside school and, even more importantly, the knowledge of what to do with it to make music, are differentially distributed to pupils according to social class (Vulliamy, 1977a; 1977b; Green, 1988), schooling frequently does very little to redress this distributive injustice. Mrs. Metronome developed an approach to her music curriculum that did as much as possible within the constraints of her situation to do so, with significant positive effects. What was needed for her approach to produce yet better results lay outside her control and revolved around both curriculum time afforded to the subject and resourcing of the instrumental tuition infrastructure in schools in South Wales. If all Mrs. Metronome's pupils had been given instruments and lessons in primary school one wonders what the results would have been. There is, however, a further factor to be taken into consideration here. Giving a child an instrument and tuition is one thing, as my experience as an instrumental and classroom teacher suggests but children are unlikely to succeed in learning to play unless their learning is supported in regular, supervised, practice sessions, at least in the early stages. The Suzuki violin teaching method grasped this necessity long ago in their requirement that parents learn to play alongside their child, thus ensuring informed practice supervision. Without such support outside instrumental lessons, progress is likely to falter and enthusiasm wane. It appears to me that the only way to ensure that all children, regardless of background, have a chance to succeed in musical instrument learning is to provide supervised practice sessions in school alongside the tuition, leaving the 'wild card' factor of parental support and enthusiasm for the enterprise out of the picture. There is a great difference between asking a parent to help a child practice reading, which the majority of the population can manage and asking them to supervise the learning of staff notation, if required, and practice of a musical instrument, which the majority cannot. We can hazard the guess, *pace* Green (1988), that middle class parents

will be better encultured to help their children with this undertaking if schooling does not 'level the playing field' in terms of practice supervision, so that we will merely continue to perpetuate distributive injustice by providing instruments and tuition, without further practice supervision in schools.

### **8.8 How did such factors affect pupils' considerations and decisions concerning further study of music at the end of Key Stage Three?**

As we have seen in the preceding section there are substantial inequalities of access to the present, official music curriculum, written as it is within an elaborated musical code which favours children encultured to read it. These children are also more likely to be given the additional advantage of orchestral instrumental tuition, including staff notation and providing additional keys to a code not possessed by many of their peers. These factors are all likely to send negative messages to many pupils about the images of music and musicians valued within their schools and the appropriateness of Music as a GCSE subject for themselves. This was reflected in the negative image of their own musicality avowed by many pupils. As John Sloboda (2001:1) has said, music remains central to the lives of many who themselves as not musical. We have seen from the data already presented that musicality for these pupils is strongly connected to the ability to play a 'proper' instrument. Those pupils who supported music as a subject did so because they enjoyed playing instruments and developing 'real' instrumental skills. We have also seen that there was insufficient curriculum time for teacher to help many pupils to acquire the instrumental skills necessary to play instruments other than tuned percussion in class lessons.

The bias of the National Curriculum for KS3 in totality towards 'academic' subjects and away from the arts means that even highly accomplished teachers like Mrs Metronome, in common with music teachers elsewhere, are set up to fail with a number of pupils, as they simply do not have the curriculum time necessary to help them develop the skills needed for them to perceive themselves as musical. While school curricula, such as Aberquaver's remain essentially collection codes composed of subjects operating as singulars, the ethos of generic performance modalities of education, now dominant in training and bridgeheaded in schools in vocational courses, generates outlooks where pupils and their parents see themselves as notching up skills to transfer to the world of work. Subjects where progress is slow, success elusive or involving

culturally unknown territory are going to remain weak in the market economy of GCSE option choices. Subjects that lead to low risk career and employability choices become prime, leaving the arts and Music, in particular, in marginal positions, likely only to be chosen by those wishing to pursue a career directly in them or sufficiently advantaged in access to the curriculum to be relatively assured of high grades at GCSE.

Pupil choice and autonomy within lessons are also key themes arising from the data. Enjoyment for a number of pupils, especially boys, was closely linked to perceptions of autonomy and the ability to have control over their own learning. Pupils who did not enjoy class music did not choose it as a GCSE subject. The most frequent response for choosing the subject among the 30 pupils of 9C was that they liked music (13%), followed by the fact that they played an instrument (3%) or thought they would get a good grade in the subject (3%). Negative responses were dominated by pupils dislike of music lessons (23%), problems with taking Music because of the option choices available (20%) and pupils not being interested in the subject (17%). Those who rejected class music mentioned lack of interest or relevance of curriculum materials and perceptions of a lack of pupil autonomy in music lessons. When I asked pupils to describe their best ever music lesson in school a number of boys in particular described when they were allowed freedom to create a song working collaboratively in groups, not a common working pattern in the department and, therefore, of high novelty value (see Section 6.4) Notwithstanding, this finding posed some interesting questions regarding possible ways of working in Music. Lucy Green has shown that we have much to learn in schools from popular musicians. Higher degrees of pupil autonomy or control over learning in music classrooms, or weaker framing of pacing, combined with highly explicit evaluation criteria in Bernsteinian terms, might increase enjoyment of and attainment in the subject defined in high level cognitive terms, much as demonstrated by Morais and her associates, in fourth year science in Portuguese schools as being successful across abilities and class groups (Morais, Neves and Pires, 2004). If pupils feel they have more control over learning that has clear, high level outcomes in which they are complicit, they might be more inclined to pursue the subject for longer.

Relevance was also seen as a key factor in pupil enjoyment. There were many calls for 'modern' or 'up to date' music in the curriculum, 30% (n=9) of 9C saying that the music curriculum was 'old' or 'not modern'. An additional 13% referred to their school

music's lack of relevance to their listening at home. Listening was the most strongly cited activity when pupils were asked to devise their own music curriculum, with 83% of pupils indicating that this would be part their curriculum, followed by playing instruments (77%), using computers (70%), deejaying (63%) and composing (60%). Listening to music appears as a seminal musical activity for these pupils, where one of the most striking things about their responses was the variety of musics they wished to study, requesting everything from opera to heavy metal. This provides a defence to potential critics of pupil voice who might be fearful that pupils would request a diet of solid 'candy', for they appear to be more discerning than that. This may be of more than passing interest when Music as a subject has to compete for space in an increasingly pressurised option context. Perhaps, we should take some time to listen to the pupils on the subject of their music education.

There is no evidence to suggest that music teachers are unaware that they are, in virtue of their education and training, encultured in a substantially different musical habitus or code to that of very many of their pupils. As a subject group they are far from alone in this respect, though their need to not to turn it into an irremediable, 'in the nature of things' problem is almost certainly uniquely acute, given the valence of classical music among their pupils. Efforts need to be made to draw more teachers into the profession who speak the vernacular musical code of their pupils and for others to learn or relearn it. Code switching ought not to be simply the province of the well educated working class. The curriculum needs to be re-drawn to be more accessible to pupils not encultured in the Western Art Music tradition, lending itself more readily to ways of working drawn from popular music genres. If this does not happen we are likely to find ourselves in the position of other dead languages, no longer part of the curriculum of the mainstream, state school curriculum.

School organisation of the post-14 timetable also has a measurable impact on students' ability to pursue music as a GCSE subject. Given the pressures of the ideology of trainability and preparation for work, subjects signifying to employers a high degree of 'usefulness' or trainability or related to the world of work are bound to be winners in the market economy of GCSE option choices. This is further reflected and compounded by the school option arrangements which presented Music as an option only once when other subjects are presented twice. This had a substantial impact on the number of

students able to take the subject. It also confirms pupil views of Music as a less important curriculum subject.

It appears to me that the discussion points to lack of democracy in the curriculum relating to music education, undemocratic both with regard to pupils' music education in terms of Music's position in the national and school curriculum where, in George Orwell's terms it continues to be that 'all subjects are equal but some are more equal than others.'

## **8.9 Conclusions**

I hope that I have already offered in this chapter what normally passes for a dissertation's concluding remarks as to its substantive achievements. I would repeat that the fact that I have done so in this way reflects my experience of coming to this project as a music professional and teacher educator and leaving it with a commitment to the necessity to work from appropriate theory - in my case that of Bernstein and, subsidiarily, Bourdieu - through adequate empirical means. I do not for one moment regret focussing my analyses in this way in seeking to understand 9C pupils' intentions to carry on with Music at Key Stage 4. It required a conceptual apparatus with reach that carried from consideration of how knowledge and policy in the primary context originated and was shaped or recontextualised through a variety of official and pedagogic agencies so that it became the text - in this case the programme of study that constitutes Key Stage 3 National Curriculum Music - from which schools and teachers read - in this case Aberquaver and Mrs Metronome. I know of no other theoretical approach that does this as well as Bernstein's. Moreover, although his moving spirit was exploration of 'class inscription and symbolic control' (Fitz, Davies and Evans, 2005), a banner which has led many sociologies into arid overdetermination, his injunction was to see theoretical and empirical realities as interactive and interdependent. It opens up a world in which there is play, where change is possible within existing relations of power and control.

Specifically, the one conception that I hope that I have 'stretched' in this study is the boundary between recontextualisation and reproduction, empirically relatively unexplored at the time of Bernstein's last publications. The case that I have explored suggested that there is no sharp line between those who shape subjects and deliver



them. Mrs Metronome allowed, as teachers are by schools in our system, to impose her own judgements on her small department's work, brought a professional dynamic to its pedagogy that could not simply be 'read' from officially required Music in Wales. While many, even most, teachers may mundanely feel constrained to do what is wanted of them, in a spirit of reproduction, there is always a degree of 'play' at classroom level where, as ever, the devil is in the detail. Mrs Metronome was, like almost all other specialist, secondary school Music teachers, product of the Western Art Music tradition and teacher education but valued other musics. Although constrained, one might judge, with little merit, by school organisational imperatives, themselves upshots of National Curriculum and assessment requirements, as to time, everywhere teachers' enemy and, in the case of KS3 Music (and Art) in Aberquaver, a mere 55 minute period with each class, her long service, personal acumen and subject success had allowed her to accumulate relatively substantial resource riches in terms of instruments and ICT facilities. These were the basis for her characteristic rejigging of more conventional group based classroom music, coupled with the skill and desire to imbue each pupil with instrumental skills in a pedagogy strongly centred on music performance and its evaluation, as described in Chapter Six. Such an approach still appeared to have differential gender and social class effects, though the latter could only be indexed by incidence of instrumental tuition, in a prevailing peer and wider cultural climate of popular and other non classical musical forms. Despite the variety of musical genres included in her curriculum and her department's resource wealth, for some pupils, particularly boys, it was not sufficiently 'real music', especially for those denied access to 'real' instruments. Notwithstanding the importance that most young people avow, both as reported by the music education literature (see Chapters Two and Three) and our survey and case study respondents, in a prevailing climate of the 'usefulness' and vocational significance of school subjects, choice of subjects was further constrained by an option system, officially glossed at Aberquaver as unproblematic but belied by Mrs Metronome and pupils in questionnaire and interview responses (see Chapter Seven). Nonetheless, Music at the school still managed to engage disproportionate numbers across the ability range at GCSE in comparison with other Welsh secondaries and achieve good standards. It is argued that these were a function of Mrs Metronome's recontextualised pedagogic discourse and practice.

One has to ask, of course, what else might have been at stake. This is merely a case study and its strength does not lie in sampling from and assessing the likelihood of what is happening in a wider population. Its claim is to conceptual exploration of pedagogic discourse in Music in a particular site chosen precisely because it was not unique but 'different' in virtue of the very success of the subject. This is rationalised in Chapter Five where it is also made clear that Aberquaver was a faith-based school with an intake socially superior in terms of its LEA and many 'comprehensives' nationally, as measured by uptake of free school meals. At the same time, by the same measure and in the view of school and outside professional judges, it would be fair to see the school as having a 'balanced entry', albeit with a small excess of girls. In many senses, then, it was what many of us would like to think of as a perfectly ordinary secondary school, made different in the respects which we have studied by the extraordinary talents of and circumstances engendered by particular staff members and their pupils. I do not believe that what has been described can be attributed to intake factors.

The rules for selecting case study sites must be ones of professional and practical relevance which one hopes have been subserved. I have explained how my final design emerged from earlier multi-school questionnaire data collection and moved on from a more conventionally planned 2x2 (high/low class by high/low achievement in Music) study. My justification, again given in Chapter Five, was that to achieve the depth of analysis of pedagogic discourse and practice that I sought as a single-handed, part-time researcher, only a single site, cleared of obvious impediments of regulative warfare, could be properly managed. The ethnographic approach that I followed, using predominantly classroom observation supported by interview and questionnaire, set against the combination of survey and case study approaches to be found in the literature, have been, I hope, both theory infused and fit for purpose. I believe that my findings are interesting enough to have vindicated these judgements.

As to 'lessons to be learned' I have to claim that this study is about policy as a complex series of events and understandings in need of theoretical elaboration rather than evaluation tinged, evidence base for policy change; it is about rather than for policy. I have not hidden my judgements, when appropriate, as to why I think that Music is in the state that it is. I think that there *are* messages here for teaching colleagues, school administrators, teacher educators and other conventionally defined official and

pedagogic recontextualisers, as well as national policy makers, about what makes better Music that more pupils wish to persevere with for longer. But I am under no illusion as to how congenial they would find the classroom modalities described here or how one would proceed to apprise them of their possibilities, let alone see them into effect. This would require other studies at other times, as well patient, personal endeavour.

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## APPENDIX 1

## YEAR 9 MUSIC QUESTIONNAIRE

**This questionnaire is finding out about music in schools. In this questionnaire you will be asked either to tick boxes or to give answers in words. Please tell me as much as you can in the 'word' answers.**

**A This first set of questions is to find out how you feel about music.**

1. How important to you is music in your everyday life? (Tick one box)

Very important ☐ Quite important ☐ Not important ☐

2. Why do you say this?

3. Would you say that you are musical?

Yes ☐ No ☐

4. Why do you say this?

5. Would you like to be involved in music in any sort of way when you leave school (for fun or work)?

Yes ☐ No ☐

6. If you said yes to question 5, in what way would you like to be involved in music?

**B The next set of questions is to find out how you feel about school music.**

1. How important to you is music as a school subject? (Tick one box)

Very important ☐ Quite important ☐ Not important ☐

2. Why do you say this?

3. What do you enjoy in music lessons at school?

4. Do you think of the music you do in class lessons as 'real' music?

Yes ☐ No ☐

5. Why do you say this?

**C This next set of questions gives you the chance to say what you would like to study in school music lessons.**

1. If you could make up your own music course for pupils in Years 7 to 9, which of the following would it include?

Using computers for music ☐ Singing ☐ Playing instruments ☐

Listening to music ☐ Composing music ☐ DeeJaying ☐

Using decks ☐



2. What else would you include?

3. What types of music would you like to study?

4. What instruments would you like to play?

**D The next set of questions is about your GCSE option choices.**

1. Are you taking GCSE Music next year?

Yes ☐ No ☐

2. Why did you make this decision?

3. Have the option choices affected your decision?

Yes ☐ No ☐

4. If yes, why?

5. Were there any other factors you would like to tell me about that affected your decision?

**E These questions find out a bit about you.**

1. Which of these describes you?      Male ☐      Female ☐

2. Are you involved in music in school apart from in music lessons?

Yes ☐      No ☐

3. If yes, what type of music? (Orchestra, choir, rock group etc.)

4. Are you involved in any sort of music outside school?

Yes ☐      No ☐

5. If yes, where and what type of music?

6. Do you play an instrument (It doesn't matter to what standard)?

Yes ☐      No ☐

7. If yes, which instrument?

8. Do you have lessons on your instrument?

Yes ☐      No ☐

9. If yes, where do you have lessons?

In school ☐      Out of school ☐

10. Do you like singing?

Yes ☐      No ☐

11. Do you have singing lessons?

Yes ☐      No ☐

12. If yes, where do you have lessons?

In school ☐

Out of school ☐

**F The next set of questions is about how music fits into your plans for the future.**

1. Are you interested in a career in music or the music industry?

Yes ☐

No ☐

2. If yes, what sort of career?

3. Have you had any information about careers in music given to you in school?

Yes ☐

No ☐

4. Which of the following do you think are important to success in the music business?

Talent ☐

Good teaching ☐

Skill (on an instrument or singing) ☐

Luck ☐

Hard work ☐

Having GCSE music ☐

Other (please tell me what)

Thank you for completing this questionnaire. Your answers will be very useful for my research.

Were there any parts of this questionnaire that you found difficult to understand or to fill in? If so please use the back of this sheet to tell me about them so that I can put them right.

## APPENDIX 2

# INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

## A

A1. How important to you is music in everyday life?

Very important 3

Quite important 2

Not important 1

2. Why do you say this?

3. Would you say that you are musical?

Yes 1

No 0

4. Why do you say this?

5. Would you like to be involved in music in any sort of way when you leave school? (for fun or work)

Yes 1

No 0

6. If you said yes to question 5, in what way would you like to be involved in music?

## B

B. 1 How important to you is music as a school subject?

Very important 3

Quite important 2

Not important 1

2. Why do you say this?

3. What do you enjoy in music lessons at school?

4. Do you think of the music you do in class lessons as 'real' music?

Yes 1

No 0

5. Why do you say this?

## C

C. 1 If you could make up your own music course for pupils in years 7 to 9, which of the following would it include?

Using computers for music 1

Singing 2

Playing instruments 3

Yes 1

No 0

7. If yes, which instrument?

8. Do you have lessons on an instrument?

Yes 1

No 0

9. If yes, where do you have lessons

In school 1

Out of school 0

10 Do you like singing?

Yes 1

No 0

11 Do you have singing lessons?

Yes 1

No 0

12. If yes, where do you have lessons?

In school 1

Out of school 0

F

F 1 Are you interested in a career in music or the music industry?

Yes 1

No 0

2 If yes what sort of career?

3 Have you had any information about careers in music given to you in school?

Yes 1

No 0

4 Which of the following do you think are important to success in the music business?

Talent 1

Good teaching 2

Skill 3

Luck 4

Hard work 5

GCSE music 6

Other

## APPENDIX 3

**Option 1**

**GCSE**

Technology: Systems and Control  
Technology: Resistant Materials  
Food and Nutrition  
Geography  
Media Studies  
Welsh

**Entry Level**

PE (Sport and Recreation)  
Key Skill - Improving Our  
Learning and Performance

**Option 3**

**GCSE**

Art  
French  
Information Technology  
Geography  
PE

**Entry Level**

Media Studies  
Or  
Music  
Key Skill - Working With Others

**Option 2**

**GCSE**

Business Studies  
Technology: Systems and Control  
French  
Food and Nutrition  
History  
Music

**Entry Level**

Technology  
Or  
~~Art (Textiles)~~  
Key Skill - Problem Solving,  
Through an enterprise activity.

**Option 4**

**GCSE**

Art  
Child Development 1  
History  
Italian  
Media Studies  
Welsh

**Entry Level**

Key Skill -  
• Communication  
• Application of Number  
• ICT

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