



**Exploring primary school teachers' motivation  
for music: An investigation into the impact of  
personal and social factors**

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## **Declaration of academic integrity**

I confirm that this thesis results entirely from my own work and has not been offered for any other degree or diploma. The work is submitted in accordance with the faculty's Ethical Guidance and gained approval from Lancaster University. All sources that I have drawn upon have been fully acknowledged. I confirm that I have acted professionally and ethically throughout this research.

Signature: *Bethan Garrett*

Date: *July 2014*

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# Abstract

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Music in the primary school has long been a subject of debate. Advocates from the fields of research and policy-making have frequently stressed its importance, campaigning for time and resources within the packed primary curriculum. However, for individual teachers, music continues to create divisions: whilst some educators are extremely passionate about ensuring regular, inclusive delivery of the subject, there are others who find it anxiety-inducing and question the ability of generalist practitioners to even attempt to engage with it. Investigating the perceptions and beliefs of current teachers, who are actually involved in the day-to-day delivery of music becomes vital, in order to add their often-ignored perspectives to the debates surrounding music's place in primary education.

This thesis explores the issues surrounding primary school teachers' responses to music, through the lens of motivational theories, in particular self-efficacy theories and value judgements. In particular, I examine how teachers' engagement with the subject stems from a complex interaction of both personal and social factors, considering the relative and inter-dependent impact of these. Through the use of an exploratory pilot survey and extensive narrative interviews, an eight-point model of motivation is proposed. The complex nature of these eight dimensions, which span both personal-cognitive elements and socially-situated elements, suggests that it may well be possible for schools to impact positively on the ostensibly personal motivation of teachers; an in-depth investigation of one case-study school demonstrated this could occur even when the practitioners themselves may have had negative experiences with music in the past. Through engagement with this institution, I make explicit the circumstances through which this was made possible, highlighting their whole school approach which encouraged dialogue, reflection, autonomy and collaboration. In this way, the theoretical understanding of teachers' motivation for music can be linked to the potential to improve real-life practice.

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# 1. Introduction

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Across the world, individuals are enjoying music, and striving to learn and to share the power and uniqueness of music with others. Music education has the power to allow us all to reach our musical potential and maximise our birthright. (McPherson & Welch, 2012a, p. 2)

Music in the primary school occupies a complex and contested position in education. Within this research field, there are many passionate advocates of the subject who have repeatedly strived to communicate its importance and value, such as McPherson and Welch from whose seminal handbook the above quote was taken. The subject has been labelled inspirational, enriching and even magical by some policy-makers, who are keen to ensure its continuing place in the National Curriculum (DfE, 2011; DfES, 2004; Ofsted, 2012). However, their cause is often subject to challenge, in light of increased emphasis on factual knowledge within the core subjects; in this context, music is often likely to become marginalised and neglected in favour of other, ostensibly more important, areas of learning (Bowman, 2012). It can be a struggle within schools to find the time and space to teach music and many practitioners themselves experience anxiety over their delivery of the subject. Clearly music has the potential to invoke strong responses from practitioners, both positive and negative. This research project stems initially from my own experiences of this unusual duality. When reflecting on my own education, music stands out above all else; my school experiences inspired me to be involved in music in many ways throughout my life. However, when commencing my teaching career, I found myself failing to teach the subject regularly, experiencing anxiety over its delivery and feeling at a loss as to how to encourage others to become involved. How could this be, when music was such a vital part of my life beyond the classroom?

My career as a researcher began, therefore, with the question **why**. Underpinning my work was a desire to fully understand why music should cause such difficulty in schools: why were many teachers so reluctant to engage with the subject when they were confident and outstanding practitioners in all other areas? The context of my own institution also intrigued me, where music occupied confusing and contradictory roles; whilst it was considered a vital part of communal celebrations, it had almost no place within classroom teaching. I started to realise that my colleagues were simply not motivated to include music themselves, despite its ostensibly high status within the broader school context (Evans, 2010).

Although the research questions posed in this thesis have been refined over time, the issues that prompted me to ask these questions remain of fundamental interest, and will be explored here. Whilst my work attempts to unpick and understand motivation as a complex theoretical construct, an underlying aim throughout is to provide some recommendations that can be of use by teachers in real-life situations. The divide between the ivory towers and the more complex world of real life is never an easy one to bridge but it has been an important personal aim that this work should attempt to do so.

This opening chapter to the thesis sets the scene for the current project. Firstly, I make the case as to why music teaching in the primary school is worthy of research (section 1.1), citing its peripheral status within the curriculum and provision in schools which is often far from consistent. Whilst my own experience is one tenet upon which the justification for the project rests, there has been much literature surrounding its place within the school setting and it is important to acknowledge this context.

I then explain briefly how this research fits in with the wider policy context and the current educational situation (section 1.2). The period of data collection proved to be a time of

change and uncertainty for music and, indeed, for the whole curriculum. Although many of the teachers involved in this research questioned the impact of higher level policy shifts on their daily practice, this broader context is important to acknowledge, in terms of how schools are regulated and organised, and how their priorities are to an extent determined by broader societal and political forces. However, the voices of real teachers can often be conspicuously absent from policy documents, an issue which is addressed in the following section (1.3) where I consider the divide between research and practice.

Finally, section 1.4 sets out the structure for the thesis, briefly outlining the content of the forthcoming chapters. Whilst the overall organisation inevitably appears to present a straightforward, linear view of the research process, the journey upon which this project has taken me has been a complex and winding path, which at times has led me to question my own assumptions. The intensive period of engagement with this topic has been an illuminating and involving experience, which I envisage to be an important first step in my involvement with music education research.

## **1.1 Music in the primary school – Why bother?**

Music can be magic. It calls for and calls forth all human virtues: imagination, discipline, teamwork, determination. It enriches and inspires... music has a unique contribution to make to education. (DfES, 2004)

Music is very intimidating, embarrassing and downright scary. I do not like performing and singing in public and I have not overcome these fears. (Rogers, Hallam, Creech & Preti, 2008)

Music's position in the primary school has long been a topic of debate amongst teachers, educators and researchers (Mark, 2002). As the above quotes demonstrate, the subject has the power to trigger extreme reactions, both positive and negative. From one perspective, music is a fundamental part of everyday life and a musical education can provide pupils with

lifelong skills in cognitive, social and personal domains (Henley, 2011; Ball, 2010). It has the power to influence mood and emotion (Storr, 1992) and participation in musical activities can lead to rewarding personal and social experiences (Jensen, 2000), engendering skills such as teamwork, cooperation and self-discipline (Ofsted, 2012; Henley, 2011).

However, the prospect of engaging in music in the classroom, particularly for generalist primary teachers, can be far removed from this positive vision. Whilst music as a curriculum subject has many avid supporters, there are also those who question its legitimacy and value, for example by failing to see how it can be useful in the future lives of pupils. This is underscored with the debate over whether it should actually be taught by generalist teachers at all (Mills, 2005), leading some practitioners to engage with the subject to a lesser extent than other areas, or even omit music completely if opportunity allows. As the second quote, taken from Rogers *et al* (2008) illustrates, for some primary school practitioners the teaching of music is perceived as intimidating and anxiety-inducing, with many believing themselves to lack the appropriate level of skills (Abril, 2007).

Whilst still highly relevant today, such issues surrounding the teaching of music are far from new. There have long been questions over music's place within general education, with many advocates of the subject feeling the need to put forward the case for its inclusion in the curriculum (McPherson, 2007; Mark, 2002; Pitts, 2000). Even within these circles however, there remains disagreement: should music be studied because it is valuable in its own right (Koopman, 1996), or because it can have a positive impact on other areas of learning and development (Jensen, 2000)? Is the aim of including music in schools linked to a way of increasing academic achievement (Catterall, Chapleau & Iwanaga, 1999)? Or is its

purpose the personal and social development of pupils, for example by instilling self-discipline and commitment (Seith, 2013)?

Paynter (2002) attempted to answer the critics in his article 'Music in the school curriculum: Why bother?', upon which the title of this section is based. It is hard to imagine the response that would greet this phrase were one to replace 'music' with an alternative subject; one would not expect to see, for example, 'Maths in the school curriculum: Why bother?' and yet there are many elements of the mathematics curriculum which can seem equally, if not further removed from day-to-day life<sup>1</sup>. Regardless of whether one has engaged in its formal study, music clearly does permeate society (Ball, 2010), with huge amounts being easily available to all. Technology has led to exponential increases in the number of young people engaging with music regularly, for example through i-Tunes, Spotify and other e-music outlets; indeed, recent research suggested that more people are listening to music regularly now than ever before (McPherson, 2013). It is unlikely that these children would be voluntarily engaging in other subject areas to such an extent, yet in schools it is music whose place is questioned.

I am not, of course, arguing here that maths or other core subjects should not be part of the curriculum; rather I am making the point that their place in the curriculum is rarely questioned, particularly at primary level. To some extent, this completely shuts the door on any debate over its legitimacy because teachers know they *must* deliver the subject, meaning any flexibility over its inclusion is completely curtailed. For subjects such as music, however, which finds itself competing for both time and funding on the periphery of a

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<sup>1</sup> Although I have contrasted the way in which the two subjects are perceived, there are, in fact, many parallels between the teaching of maths and music, with many practitioners feeling similar levels of anxiety towards them. This issue will be discussed further in Chapter 2.

crowded curriculum, such debates as to its importance are rife and its position is frequently perceived as being under threat (Walters, 2012).

Indeed, the importance of these debates is currently heightened, as the arts seem to be increasingly squeezed out by 'back-to-basics' conceptions of education (Walker, 2013).

Despite previous assurances to the contrary, the arts were completely excluded from the core group of GCSE subjects which the Secretary of State for Education attempted to promote as the prestigious English Baccalaureate, leading to claims that they were thus perceived as inferior. Debates about music's place are therefore essential and permeate music education literature more extensively now than perhaps at any other time (McPherson, 2013).

This research is therefore positioned within these debates and, to an extent, addresses some key questions: what is the value of music and why should pupils study it? Should it remain compulsory for all? Is there an argument for an alternative kind of provision? In particular I am keen to add the teachers' own voices to the debates on these issues, and I explore their perspectives in detail within the discussion chapters of this thesis (Chapters 6-9). The fact that there is current debate surrounding music actually allows for the exploration of teachers' motivation for the subject precisely because there is not one, true fixed idea about its role. As long as music is marginalised and its position questioned, there is space for variety and contradiction in teachers' approaches, attitudes and beliefs; exploring teachers' responses to music thus forms my key area of exploration.

## 1.2 Policy context

The data collection process took place between January 2011 and June 2012, which is important to recognise when situating the research within the policy context of the time. Although the teachers themselves often decried the influence of government policy shifts, emphatically citing the disconnect between themselves and educational leaders, all practitioners remain necessarily constrained, at least to some degree, by the National Agenda and the expectations to which schools must conform<sup>2</sup>. These relate both to the coverage of different curriculum subjects, as well as the criteria by which institutions will themselves be judged successful, with the actions of all teachers being inextricably linked to the targets for which each school must strive. For this reason, the broader political climate remains important to examine and to bear in mind throughout this thesis.

As mentioned above, the period at which the research took place was a somewhat turbulent time for music education, with a number of significant initiatives occurring. A key development was that control of provision was shifting away from the traditional format of music services controlled by each Local Education Authority (LEA). The creation of a series of music 'hubs' was taking place during the data collection period, with the bidding process for these occurring whilst I was working with my sample schools. These bids emerged from a range of sources, including the previous music services, other collaborations from Local Authorities or specialised private companies.

The new structure of music education hubs was linked to the publication of the National Plan for Music Education (DfE, 2011). This was an extensive document which set out the future for music in schools, crucially ensuring that although funding would gradually be

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<sup>2</sup> Recent developments in terms of academies and free schools may have added to this sense of disconnect, whereby schools could develop greater autonomy than was previously possible. However, such institutions and the further issues associated with them are not covered in this thesis.

reduced, a certain amount of financial support for music would be protected during its early stages of operation. This was generally received positively within the field as there had previously been fears of much more substantial budget cuts in music (Spruce, 2012).

The rhetoric of the National Plan can be viewed as highly positive in terms of the importance of music education, and particularly stresses its aim to ensure that *all* pupils receive quality opportunities throughout their time at school (DfE, 2011). However, there are some who question its underlying values. The model of teaching and learning it presents is very traditional, based on the importance of Britain's musical heritage<sup>3</sup> (Shirley, 2013); there are thus fears that this may exclude some pupils (and possibly teachers) whose ideas and interests in music do not correspond to such an understanding of what should be taught and how it should be delivered (Spruce, 2012).

At the time of the data collection therefore, music education in primary schools was in something of a state of limbo; the bidding process was underway but the hubs themselves would not be established until September 2012. However, what constituted a major policy development on a government level had surprisingly less impact in schools than I had originally anticipated. The local authorities with whom I worked tended to have secured some form of continuity for their schools during this transition year, with many of the teachers not having noticed any observable change. Equally, although the National Plan represented a major development in the field of music education, teachers working in the schools involved were almost all entirely unaware of it. The policy context in terms of the National Plan is therefore important to recognise, whilst acknowledging that for teachers

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<sup>3</sup> This would go on to feed into the new National Curriculum for music, where the ideology moves from a creative, learner-centred approach to a focus on the acquisition of knowledge, in particular related to the composers from the classical, Western canon.

themselves, there was an element of distance from this and the Plan itself was not directly impacting on their daily practice at this stage.

Perhaps of greater relevance to the practitioners were the judgements from OFSTED as to the standard of provision for music in the primary school. The previous Labour government had provided extensive funding for specialist instrumental tuition, for example, through Wider Opportunities schemes (generally termed 'Wider Opps') where whole classes would learn to play an instrument, usually for up to one year. However, in terms of classroom music teaching, which is the main focus of this study, the initiatives did not always have the desired impact on pupil learning. Whilst performance and singing had been thriving, the standard of actual teaching in schools remained questionable and inconsistent, with almost half failing to receive a rating of 'good' with a worryingly high number of pupils failing to make the required amount of progress, especially in Key Stage 2 (Ofsted, 2009).

A further report in 2012 echoed some of these criticisms, claiming that many of the same problems persisted three years on and highlighting the fact that too many 'music' lessons were actually failing to include sufficient music (Ofsted, 2012). The key problem was that the teaching focus itself was not always musical, with learning objectives being directed towards other, non-musical skills. Many of the observed activities also comprised basic, surface approaches to music learning that would be of questionable educational value, such as simply playing a CD and assuming this to be sufficient (Ofsted, 2012).

In the current economic climate, such assertions provide cause for concern, given that the funding for specialist musicians is inevitably decreasing and more schools are finding themselves having to rely on generalist teachers to deliver music; many of these practitioners may not feel confident with the subject or may not have been in the habit of

teaching it for an extended period (Ardzejewska, McMaugh, & Coutts, 2010). It is estimated that approximately 90% of primary music lessons in the UK are taught by non-specialists (Biasutti, 2012) and if the funding for 'Wider Opps' is reduced, then this figure could increase further. In this research, therefore, I intend to examine the challenges which generalist teachers face when attempting to teach music. This involves gaining a deeper understanding of how practitioners actually perceive music, which elements of the subject may prove problematic to them and how the wider school environment might influence or interact with the individual teachers' interpretations and beliefs.

In order to gain a broader picture of teachers' perceptions, it will be necessary to explore both schools in which music may prove problematic, as well as those in which the subject is being delivered successfully. In addition to the criticisms outlined above, the initial Ofsted (2009) report did highlight certain schools in which provision for music was outstanding; by investigating what is significant about the practitioners within such institutions it may be possible to highlight examples of good practice that can serve as models to other schools. The comparison of how the subject is delivered will therefore prove a useful avenue for exploring how schools can create a successful learning environment for music, and what conditions may be necessary to achieve this.

Although the focus of this project is individual teachers and institutions, it is important to remember the impact that wider policy context and the broader educational priorities will have upon the practices taking place in schools (Moore & Young, 2010). Whilst teachers themselves may consider this an area of disconnect, the reality is that the school's own culture and ethos develops *within* the context of the National Agenda, and is thus constrained by this. Music struggles for power and legitimacy within the curriculum,

because of the various structures that guide the actions and practices of institutions; these are inevitably intertwined with national priorities and structures, meaning such higher level concerns will continue to infiltrate the minutiae of teachers' lives and practices (Paechter, 2000).

### **1.3 Reaching for the dream: attempting to bridge the gap between research and practice**

In many of the claims for advocacy, which have come from both researchers and policy makers, I was struck by the fact that the voices of teachers themselves are too often absent. This point was reinforced to me at a recent conference (Music Learning Live, 2012), during which a primary practitioner stood up in a room of several hundred individuals to ask how many teachers were present and participating in this debate. The answer? Fewer than five. As she emphatically pointed out, what is the use in discussing the future of music education when the voices of the teachers themselves, who are responsible for the delivery of the subject, are completely absent?

A crucial desire for this research was therefore to give priority to practitioners themselves in this debate. All too often the chasm between research and practice is too wide to breach, meaning that the potential impact of the research remains limited. As Jorgensen (2012, p.639) points out, "There is an ethical imperative for scholarship to benefit practice, be it immediately or over the longer term". By ignoring the voices of practitioners themselves and failing to focus on how research might actually improve practice, educational researchers risk perpetuating this divide.

Indeed, educational research as a discipline has often been criticised for existing in isolation from actual classrooms and practising teachers. The oft-repeated claim is that research finds itself caught up in the intricacies of theory but remains ignorant of and separated from the real concerns of teachers (Hammersley, 2002). Whilst one might expect research into education to be clearly linked to policy and practice, there is often a divide between them, whereby research is solely concerned with improving on existing theories rather than practices; as Bennett Reimer notes, most research is likely to be a “drop in the ocean”, whose influence is negligible and will never reach practising teachers (Reimer, 2012, p.680).

There are certainly many potential problems between translating research to practice and this has been raised as one of the greatest challenges faced by music education research in the present time (McPherson & Welch, 2012b). One particular concern is that there has been a huge amount of research conducted recently into the question of musicality with very little evidence of a change in attitudes. The aim has been to dispel the ‘myth’ that being musical is something unattainable, only accessible to a select talented few (Burnard, 2003; Hallam, 2006). However, despite many decades’ work, this belief is still prevalent in most classrooms and can present problems to the delivery of music (McPherson, 2013). Indeed, this understanding certainly manifested itself throughout my interviews and had the potential to impact upon practice (see Chapter 6).

The problem of academic research failing to impact upon practice was actually highlighted directly by the teachers involved in my own study, who explicitly questioned the relevance of both research and policy with reference to their own teaching. As one practitioner commented:

It's like when you hear they've done this survey or that survey, well they didn't ask me, they didn't ask anyone I know, so like- who are they asking? And I think with things like education, it's just the most frustrating feeling that they don't ask the people who are actually there in the classroom with the kids every day, that's why I think that a lot of things they come up with are so unrealistic. (Bella, Upper Key Stage 2 teacher in Bramley Primary<sup>4</sup>)

Despite the fact that these teachers had themselves volunteered to participate in my research, this view was common across the interviews, with practitioners frequently dismissing research as being irrelevant to their daily practice. As one teacher pointed out, if it is something important it might "eventually get through" but most of the time it has little impact or use (Amy, UKS2). This is particularly disheartening, considering that voluntary participants in research might be expected to show a greater interest and enthusiasm for its outcomes and value. It presents something of an anomaly, therefore, that individuals might actively participate in research but also be so completely dismissive of its impact.

As someone who frequently crosses between both sides of the researcher-practitioner divide, I feel there is a genuine need for research to provide something which may be of concrete use to teachers working in the field. In this way, it is a crucial goal of this project that I should be able to draw some conclusions or provide advice which could be applicable to real-life situations. Although the specific cases I will discuss in this project will inevitably comprise a unique combination of individuals and shared, cultural values, there is the potential for people to recognise aspects of their own circumstances in those of others so that they might provide impact upon a wider context (Johnson, 2012). In this way, presenting data and real-life examples of the issues which teachers currently face can actually move beyond unique cases and can provide knowledge that may prove relevant to

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<sup>4</sup> See Chapter 5 for full details of the schools involved in the narrative interviews. All names have been changed.

other situations. It is hoped that through dissemination, potential readers may be able to recognise some comparable features and thus be able to draw on these recommendations in their own practice (Stake, 2010).

## **1.4 Overview of the thesis**

The structure of this thesis is now described in order to provide an overview of the whole project. Chapter 2, which follows, opens with a review of the literature and is split into four sections. I am exploring and synthesising somewhat diverse fields, i.e. psychological theories of motivation on one hand, and music education literature on the other, and it is important to be clear about the different influences on my work. The opening sections of this chapter therefore cover a range of motivation theories, considering how these may potentially translate to both teachers and to music as a particular discipline.

The main body of the literature review concerns the potential barriers to teacher motivation which music may cause. In this section, I connect theoretical constructs to real life problems faced by teachers in order to bring together the two fields of literature and make potential connections between the two. In particular I focus upon: beliefs about ability, self-efficacy judgements, performance anxieties and values. This then links into the presentation of the initial research questions, which were the starting points for this investigation.

Due to the sequential nature of the research design, I took the decision to split the methodological rationale, with strategic details being included in both Chapters 3 and 5. In Chapter 3, the quantitative methods will be outlined, whilst the qualitative strategies will be detailed in Chapter 5. This decision was taken to preserve the sequential research design, whereby the specific details of the qualitative research were, in part, determined by the

preliminary findings from the quantitative questionnaire. It thus seemed logical to present these findings before describing precisely how the qualitative phase would be operationalised.

The third chapter of the thesis therefore comprises the majority of what would be traditionally included within a methodology chapter. This includes a discussion of the philosophical foundations upon which the study is constructed, as well as a justification for the use of a dual-phase design, before delving into the specific details of the quantitative phase of the research. Although the design contains both quantitative and qualitative elements, it cannot be considered truly mixed methods; the overall strategy is heavily weighted towards the second, qualitative phase, with the survey research being primarily employed as an exploratory pilot phase.

Despite this, details of the design and implementation of the survey are also included in Chapter 3, as a precursor to the presentation of these findings in Chapter 4. Whilst the open, exploratory nature of the survey provided the opportunity for a number of different avenues of inquiry, time and space dictated a selective approach. The fourth chapter therefore comprises an examination of two key aspects of the data:

- The perceived value judgements of music in relation to other subjects
- Teachers' self-efficacy judgements regarding specific aspects of teaching music

The discussion of these quantitative findings provides the foundations for the qualitative phase, and underpins the revision and refining of the research questions. This leads into Chapter 5, which comprises the second section dedicated to research design, this time incorporating a description and justification of the qualitative methods. Information is included about both the participants and schools involved in the main project, which can

serve as a reference guide for the reader. This is particularly important given the significance placed upon socio-contextual factors throughout the research.

Whilst Chapter 5 provides key details of the qualitative methods, this is not its exclusive role. In addition to the methodological information, I demonstrate the ways in which the analysis was conducted and how the potential findings emerged from the data. In this way, the chapter begins to blend the description of the analytical processes with actual findings from the data. This involves presentation of the eight key themes which will be taken forward to the discussion.

A bridging section is provided prior to the discussion chapters, in order to explain the structure of these. Due to the complex nature of the data, it was important to outline why certain aspects were chosen to explore above others. However, a key point made throughout is that the separation of a single individual theme proved near impossible and there was inevitably interweaving and interdependence across the four chapters.

Chapter 6 focuses on perhaps the most discrete area, which comprises teachers' understandings of themselves and the nature of musical ability. These proved fundamental to any further discussion of their motivation and were prevalent across the accounts. In particular, the notion of being 'musical' as an 'either/or' dichotomy led many individuals to make fixed categorical judgements about themselves, which in some cases proved highly resistant to change. By looking at how these judgements are formed, through past experiences and social interactions, it is possible to question the extent to which they are quite as naturally embedded as many of the teachers may believe.

The following chapter (7) builds on this to examine teachers' more specific understandings of music in the primary school and the theories and beliefs they hold in relation to this. A range of different conceptions emerged, which could be positioned along various continua, although again these were often underpinned by fixed, unhelpful dichotomies. These included understandings relating to what music should provide (basic skills training or opportunities for creative expressions), what the model of teaching should be (traditional or progressive) and where authority should be positioned (teacher-led or pupil-led).

In addition to presenting the different understandings of the teachers in my sample, it is important to link these back to the self theories discussed in the previous chapter. This allows exploration of some of the specific self-efficacy issues which emerged from the questionnaire, and allows me to question *why* certain elements of the subject may prove problematic. I also consider the extent to which the different conceptions of music teaching may be educationally valuable. Although the aim is to investigate the data from the accounts, it is also important to make judgements about how practice might be improved. I suggest that an approach which is positioned towards the middle of the continua, and includes elements from both ends may be the most effective in terms of provision for music.

Chapter 8 tackles the question of value judgements, which has already infiltrated the previous discussion but now takes centre stage. Although personal value judgements are considered, I also start to extend the focus to include the potential impact of schools and the institutional values that exist collectively. This involves exploring the different purposes which music may fulfil within the school, some of which could be positioned externally to the curriculum itself. Judging from the contextually-situated judgements of the teachers regarding the place of music in their schools, I start to make the case for institutions to

develop their own, personalised approaches to music, which focus on the perceived needs of their pupils and take account of both the socio-contextual characteristics of the school and the teachers' own understandings.

Chapter 9 moves from the more theoretical discussion to offer some practical recommendations, considering specific strategies which might be used to enhance teachers' motivation for music. I examine a case study of one institution, which has developed a particularly successful approach, and explore how this has been achieved. Throughout the chapter, I build the argument that it is possible to enhance motivation on an individual level through various institutional-level processes. These include:

- Institutional expectations and obligations
- Leadership and support
- Autonomy and the development of simplified resources
- Collaboration and training

The decision to use an in-depth case study was one which emerged from the data, as I had not been expecting to focus so exclusively on one institution. However, the opportunity to explore their highly successful approach to music was one which could not be missed and helped to illuminate some of the previous findings with real-life examples. It is hoped that by highlighting the ways in which the practitioners approach music in this school, it may inform other institutions of how their own provision of the subject could be improved and redesigned to suit the needs of their staff and pupils.

The final chapter of the thesis includes some of my own reflections on the research process, as well as an indication of the potential directions for future research. This is particularly important to highlight as I do not view this thesis as the end of my research career in this

area. The ideas and theories explored throughout the coming pages may well stimulate further investigation, but it is hoped they will provide a useful foundation upon which to build.

## 2. Literature Review

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The key area of exploration for this project is teachers' **motivation** to engage with **music**.

The aim is that by using theories of motivation, and exploring how these can be specifically related to the teaching of music, it should be possible to better understand the ways in which practitioners respond to the subject in the primary school. This could assist in the future delivery of music, for example by suggesting ways in which schools may support practitioners and increase engagement. In particular, I am concerned that generalist teachers may face specific barriers to the delivery of the subject, which in some cases can prevent them from engaging with music at all. A greater understanding of these issues is the first step to finding and exploring solutions to this problem.

This literature review involves two broad bodies of research publications, which are brought together through these aims. The first is concerned with theories of motivation and incorporates both psychological and sociological approaches to the study of this complex construct. The key point made in more recent attempts to define motivation is that any comprehensive study must include *both* personal, cognitive elements and socially situated elements; it is upon this premise that the current project is built (Järvelä, Volet, & Jarvenoja, 2010).

The second body of literature concerns the field of music education research, which also comprises a broad spectrum of studies. This includes a range of diverse subdivisions such as psychology, creativity, performance, technology, history and neuroscience, to name but a few. The field as a whole has also grown considerably over the past two decades, as shown by the recent publication of an extensive, two-volume Handbook of Music Education

(McPherson & Welch, 2012a). This collection of articles demonstrates the plurality of foci within the field, although a prominent issue running throughout is the desire for advocacy and a passion for increasing the prevalence and quality of music within education. The aim is to ensure the consistent and effective delivery of music in schools, which echoes my own desire when starting this research.

The current chapter draws upon both sets of literature, as well as the work of those researchers who have effectively married the two areas together (for example, Hallam 2006; Austin, Renwick & McPherson, 2006). My specific focus, however, is placed upon the teachers, and I structure this literature review around the potential barriers to motivation which *they* may face when confronted with the delivery of music in the primary school. By unpicking the reasons as to why the subject has the potential to cause difficulty for generalist teachers, it may be possible to develop ways to enhance their motivation by overcoming these problems.

## **2.1 Motivation in the school context**

Motivation is a complex and contested term which refers to the processes that initiate, guide and maintain the goal-directed actions of individuals (Elliot & Dweck, 2005). There are several dimensions to this, all of which can be considered part of the overall construct of motivation (Maehr, Pintrich, & Linnenbrink, 2002):

- The initial choice to engage with, or avoid, a particular course of action
- The intensity, or passivity, with which this engagement occurs
- The persistence shown by individuals, especially when faced with adversity
- The actual quality of the engagement

This project will focus primarily on the first and third elements, i.e. whether teachers choose to engage with music at all, and then whether they persist with the subject in the face of adversity. However, an understanding and appreciation of all four aspects is essential for the literature review. Various researchers, for example, have concentrated their work solely on specific elements and have also approached these from different perspectives. A greater understanding of the complexities of the field is therefore an essential first step to becoming familiar with how motivation has been conceptualised in the literature.

This section will commence with a brief history of motivational studies, providing an overview of the key ideas and concepts which have been developed across the field.

Although there has been additional research which has focused upon, say, biological needs as motivational drivers, the focus here is on motivation and engagement in an educational setting, thus my work is largely limited to the psychological and social approaches.

This initial general mapping is important for setting the scene, and points towards the emergence of a key theory which underpins the whole thesis. This relates to how teachers' motivation develops, not just in isolation within the individual, but equally through the socially situated interactions and structures present in the school. Motivation is not therefore positioned as entirely resident within the individual teacher nor is it situated wholly in society; it involves a complex negotiation between both individual and social factors.

### **2.1.1 Motivational dissonances**

Motivation is an area of research that has inspired a wide range of theoretical conceptions, spanning behavioural, cognitive and socially constructed perspectives. Some of the key developments in the field are briefly summarised in Table 2.1 below and a further discussion

follows; this is not intended to provide a detailed analysis of all theories of motivation as such a task would prove impossible within such a short space. Instead the aim is to demonstrate how research has evolved to incorporate a wider range of both psychological *and* sociological elements.

<b>Behaviourist</b>	<b>(Socio)Cognitive</b>	<b>Socially constructed</b>	<b>Cognitive-situative</b>
Individuals are motivated by positive and negative reinforcements from the external environment and will respond to these in reasonably predictable ways. (Skinner, 1953)	Individuals develop motivation through internalisation and interpretation of experiences. Decisions to engage with certain areas are dependent on their beliefs, judgements and appraisals, which have developed over time. (Covington, 1992)	Motivation is a social phenomenon that develops through collaborative interactions and is situated within the specific present context. It is thus variable dependent on the social make-up of this context. (Boekaerts, 2001)	The impact of contextually situated social interactions and group processes <i>interact</i> with the individual cognitive interpretations, thus bridging the psycho-social divide. (S Järvelä <i>et al.</i> , 2010)

**Table 2.1: Theoretical standpoints for researching motivation**

In the mid twentieth-century, motivation was initially construed in behaviourist terms, based upon the assumption that individuals were motivated by positive or negative reinforcement from the external environment (see discussion in Maehr, *et al.*, 2002). The psychological angle of this (as opposed to a purely biological perspective) stems from the work of Skinner (1953) and reflects the reliance on behaviourist theories in educational and sociological research at the time (Elliott, 2002). Since then however, it has been criticised for providing too simplistic a view and failing to provide individuals with an actual intrinsic desire to engage fully (Maehr *et al.*, 2002). Referring to the four elements discussed in the

introduction, a purely behaviourist approach may well force individuals to 'engage' to some extent but this may lack intensity, persistence and quality.

A crucial problem with the behaviourist theories is that they position motivation as a phenomenon that is external to and separate from the individual, which is now counter-intuitive to our current understanding of the term (McCombs, 1997). Assuming that individuals would all react in pre-determined ways to stimuli or reward and punishments ignores the inherent human capacities for autonomy, reflection and choice (Bandura, 1997).

It is unsurprising therefore that such simplistic behaviourist principles have been usurped by more in-depth cognitive and sociological theories, following similar trends across the field of educational research (Elliott, 2002). The most common of these frameworks has been the socio-cognitive approach, which is based largely upon psychological principles (Wentzel & Wigfield, 2009). The emphasis here is upon the cognitive capacities of the individual and, whilst the influence of social context is recognised, the main premise is that motivation develops and is maintained primarily on a psychological, personal basis.

This perspective thus conceptualises motivation primarily as an internal construct, where the individual's engagement is dependent on their own personal interpretations (Covington, 1992). Although the approach can be considered as broadly socio-cognitive, various different dimensions emerged within this. These include classic expectancy-value theories (Eccles & Wigfield, 2009; Atkinson, 1964), the causes attributed to successes and failures (Weiner, 1974), the subjective values attached to certain tasks (Eccles, 2005), individuals' self-efficacy judgements (Bandura, 1997), beliefs relating to intelligence and ability (Dweck, 1999), self-determination theory and the contrast between intrinsic and extrinsic motivational structures (Deci and Ryan, 2012), the setting of appropriate goals

(Vansteenkiste *et al.*, 2010) and the desire to preserve self-worth (Covington, 1992). Whilst this list represents just a selection of motivational theories, its length serves to indicate the rich and extensive range of approaches that have been taken towards the topic.

The emphasis in many of these motivational theories is placed on individual cognitions, in particular focusing on the beliefs that people hold about external constructs (e.g. Dweck, 1999) or the self-judgements they make (e.g. Bandura, 1997). However, it is also recognised that the social environment in which the individual operates will play a role in the extent to which individuals develop motivation (Järvelä & Niemivirta, 2001). The social situations themselves cannot be ignored, but the impact of this is mediated by the individual interpretations and meta-cognitions, often resulting in a uni-directional influence of social factors upon a 'controlling' cognition (Järvelä, 2001). This has been labelled the "socially influenced" conception of motivation, where personal cognitions provide the key to understanding (Nolen and Ward, 2008).

An alternative view of motivation, which has gained prominence over the last two decades, is the "socially constructed" perspective. This conception assumes that motivation develops through "participation in social practices", where group interactions are the fundamental factor, rather than solely internal cognitions (Hickey & McCaslin, 2001, p.41). Motivation here is understood as a social phenomenon, rather than a psychological construct, and will vary between situations, depending on the specific context and the make-up of the social group.

A major difference between the two perspectives described above relates to the level of consistency ascribed to 'motivation'. Earlier attempts to explore this as a psychological construct have been criticised for assuming motivation to be a stable, individual-differences

personality trait (Turner & Patrick, 2008). Although later research within the cognitive field has addressed this by extending to contextual factors, there remained a widespread assumption that motivation will be reasonably stable across context (Turner, 2001).

Methodologically, this implies that motivation can be *measured*, which has comprised the aim of much previous research. One such example being the Intrinsic Motivation Inventory, a self-report scale used to measure various subjective factors involved in the development of intrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2012).

In contrast to this, the socially constructed conception of motivation is that individuals are actively involved in the social process of building motivation as part of a group. This occurs on a day-to-day basis and is dependent on social interactions and the responses of those around us (Turner, 2001). In this way, motivation is constructed through real-life interactions and can thus only be studied through ethnographic methods observing context-specific situations (Turner & Patrick, 2008). It is not a constant that can be measured as part of an individual's internal cognitive capabilities, but is instead variable across time and place, depending on the particular features of the social situation.

These two conceptions of motivation have both proved influential and provided valuable insights into the various structures that are in place to develop and determine motivation. However, there are clear tensions between the two and neither seems to offer a full explanation of the complex issue of motivation. Järvelä *et al* (2010) address this issue, noting how both have their limitations, which future research must attempt to transcend. Their key point is that the practice of restricting research to one area carries a risk of research being either over-individualised, i.e. ignoring contextual features, or over-

socialised, i.e. ignoring the autonomy, interpretations and characteristics of the individual (Kashima, 1997).

Motivation theorists are thus examining ways of moving beyond the restraints of these two perspectives and drawing equally on *both* internal psychological and socially constructed understandings. In this way, it is hoped the gap between the two perspectives can be bridged, and both elements can be explored on an equal footing, no longer as two distinct areas but as interacting elements of a complex system (Turner, 2001). As Wentzel and Wigfield (2009) point out, if motivation research is to progress, it needs to develop a more sophisticated understanding of the field as a whole, examining the interacting psycho-social processes and the multiple levels of influence that have been identified; in this way, research can address real life issues in the classroom more effectively and lead not only to a deeper theoretical understanding but equally to positive and practical educational improvements.

For the current project, a joint approach has proved necessary due to the two key objects of study: the individual teachers themselves and the specific subject area of music in the primary school. The focus on teachers involves the personal, cognitive dimension, for example, how individual teachers respond to the delivery of music, how they have developed their understandings and beliefs about the subject, and the ways in which they choose to either approach or avoid the teaching of it. However, the specific context of the subject area, together with the impact of the school's institutional culture and social make-up, are equally important to explore. It will thus be vital to situate the individual *within* the social context and look at both aspects concurrently (Turner, 2001). This involves drawing on both relatively stable aspects of teachers' cognitive beliefs, as well as the more variable

factors within the specific context of the school, in order to gain a fuller understanding of what contributes to the teachers' eventual engagement (Järvelä *et al.*, 2010).

### **2.1.2 Situating the research in context**

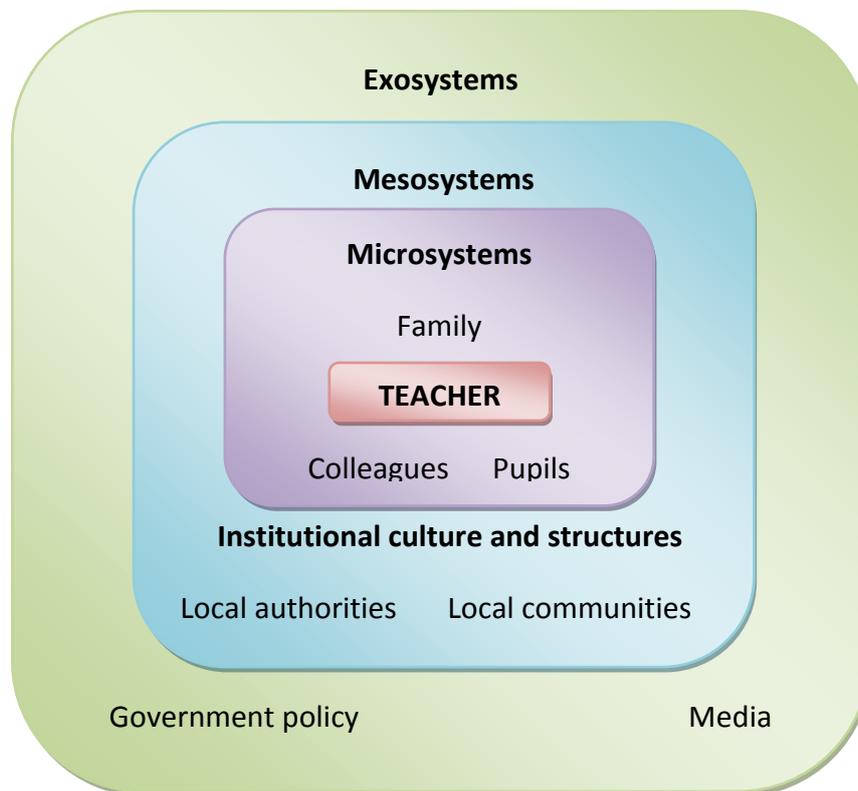
A major assumption underpinning this research, therefore, is that both individual-cognitive and socially-situated elements must be investigated resulting in a need to fully define my understanding of these terms. The following section explores the two dimensions, demonstrating both their distinctive features but also the ways in which they interact. This section will begin by clearly identifying the different contextual 'levels', upon which this investigation is based (Wentzel and Wigfield, 2009), before defining in more detail the two key dimensions, psychological and social, which will provide the focus of the research.

#### **Levels of inquiry**

Educational research is a broad area which covers many different sociological concepts, ranging from the concerns of individual pupils and teachers, to national and international policy issues. Bronfenbrenner's (1979) model of ecological systems can help to "disentangle" these different levels of context and, for the present research, can position the individual teacher within this series of social systems (Järvelä, 2001, p.10). Whilst each individual retains a degree of power to make autonomous, subjective interpretations (Bandura, 1997), these will inevitably be influenced by the social contexts in which they operate (Lamont, 2002). A modified version of Bronfenbrenner's model is thus presented in Figure 2.1 which presents the different social systems.

Although a somewhat simplistic representation, the diagram demonstrates how there are a number of levels on which researchers can choose to operate. Taking the current focus of primary music education therefore, it would be possible to explore this through a range of

different 'lenses', for example, one could take the inner sections, for example an individual teacher, and examine their own specific circumstances and concerns with the subject, or one could explore the outer sections, such as government policy relating to music and how this has been constructed and implemented.



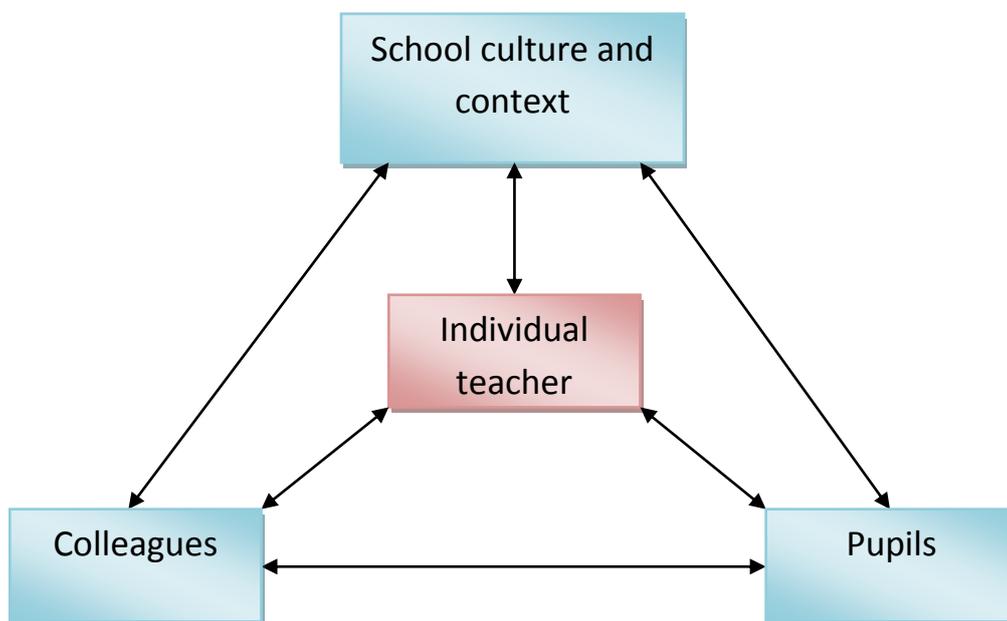
**Figure 2.1: Model of social influences, based upon Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Ecological Systems theory**

The point here is that research can approach problems from different perspectives, each of which may lead to a different set of conclusions, depending on where one's priorities lie. As Munro (1998) points out, recognition of these different levels means that a single phenomenon can be investigated and explained in highly contrasting ways.

Epistemologically therefore, there is not just one single truth that the researcher can discover but rather there are a variety of perspectives through which to investigate, each of which has the potential to elicit a different picture, dependent on the perspectival lens

through which it is studied. It is therefore important to be clear and focused as to which elements form the subject of the current investigation and where the priorities will lie.

This work is situated primarily in the inner sections of the systems model described above, focusing on individual teachers within their school context. A key point is that there will be an interaction between the different levels, meaning that each one is not studied in isolation but instead forms part of a complex interacting system. I will thus focus upon the following sections but within a dynamic, interactive model as shown in Figure 2.2 below.



**Figure 2.2: Situating teacher motivation in the school context**

Although the research will focus primarily on the school-based contextual areas, this does not mean that other sections of Bronfenbrenner's systems model will be ignored completely. The influence of family experiences, for instance, may become relevant through the ways in which teachers developed their perceptions of music by drawing on their memories of early childhood (Burnard, 2003). Equally, Chapter 1 has already included discussion of policy concerns, and these too will be referenced when appropriate. By situating the actions and perceptions of teachers within the context of a national agenda in

which music is increasingly neglected, it may be possible to understand how their ideas and beliefs are informed and constrained by these exo-system level influences.

### **The individual level**

The inner areas of Figures 2.1 and 2.2 refers to the individual teacher themselves, and are more closely aligned with the socio-cognitive theories mentioned above. Although I have emphasised the importance of a multi-layered approach, this does not mean a rejection of individual concerns and psychological cognitions and interpretations; a key aim of the project is to explore the perceptions of teachers, thus the individuals themselves remain at the heart of the model. Despite the inevitable impact of social context (Kaplan, Karabenick, & Groot, 2009), it is impossible to ignore the individual capacity for autonomy and human agency; individuals, at least to an extent, have the ability to determine their own actions and their personal perspectives must be considered (Schunk and Pajares, 2009).

Bandura (1997) emphasises the importance of using “self-reflection” to explore motivation, stressing that individuals will draw on various cognitive strategies to make sense of their own experiences. This involves examination of teachers’ own beliefs, understandings and values which will underpin their actions and behaviours. The ways in which individuals interpret situations and develop beliefs about themselves can therefore be seen as both rooted in their past experiences, and an indication of how they may act in the future (Kaplan, Flum, & Kemelman, 2009). This is a crucial part of the current research, in that it is essential to unpick how individuals may draw on their own past experiences when choosing particular courses of action. The subjective appraisals which one makes as part of the motivational processes are therefore inevitably a product of one’s previous experiences, current perceptions and future hopes (Järvelä & Niemivirta, 2001).

A key assumption within this individual-level research, therefore, is that the motivation to engage with a specific discipline is generated through the *meanings* that individuals construct with regards both themselves and the task (Maehr, Karabenick, & Urdan, 2008). The actions which teachers choose regarding the delivery of music in their classrooms will be dependent upon the meanings they assign to the subject, and the relationship of these meanings to their own perceptions of self. This is important to note, as it suggests that teachers' motivation may vary between curriculum domains, depending on *how* they understand the demands and characteristics of the subject. To take an example, if one assumes that the successful teaching of music relies on one's expertise in specialist skills, such as the ability to play an instrument, this could significantly reduce any expectation of success; teachers' specific self-efficacy judgements regarding music will thus be reduced because of how they interpret the subject itself in relation to their own self-beliefs (Bandura, 1997). In order to understand the engagement of individuals, therefore, it is important to unpick the various meaning which they assign to music teaching and how they relate these to themselves. This will involve a specific focus upon teachers' self-efficacy beliefs in music, which will be covered in more detail in section 2.3.

### **The contextual level**

The second dimension of this research relates to the level of the school context, including both the interactions between teachers, colleagues and pupils, and the overall institutional culture of the school. These can be rather complex to unravel and can thus present quite a challenge to research. School culture, for instance has been described as an "all-encompassing tapestry of meaning" and is a difficult concept to grasp (Deal, 1993, p. 6). However, an awareness of this is crucial to any investigation into a psycho-social construct such as motivation (Volet & Järvelä, 2001).

Most research acknowledges the importance of social context, but as Kaplan *et al.* (2009) point out, it is now important to examine *how* the cultural, contextual and situational factors *combine* with the individual self-processes. It is insufficient simply to recognise that they are influential, rather it is necessary to develop a more in-depth understanding of how these processes work. In order to link motivation and school culture, therefore, it is vital to make clear what is meant by both terms, as these are complex concepts that have been construed in different ways by different researchers (Munro, 1997).

Matos *et al* (2009) define school culture as the “values, beliefs and traditions that have formed over its history, commonly held beliefs of heads, teachers and pupils, and how these are perceived in the school” (p.163). This includes the patterns of thinking, feeling and acting that are shared by members of the group, as well as everyday practices, shared symbols and rituals (Schwartz, 1997). Clearly culture is constructed through many complex elements and it is too simplistic to view it as a straightforward accumulation of individuals (Munro, 1997); rather, shared beliefs will *interact* with the group members’ individual characteristics and attitudes, and this combination of processes will in turn react back upon those individuals. This is not to denigrate the importance of the experiences that individuals bring with them, but rather to emphasise that even these personal experiences themselves involve shared understandings and the influence of others (Schwartz, 1997).

School culture therefore becomes both the cumulative product of individuals *and* an influential force upon these individuals. Classic sociological theories, for instance, suggests that individuals are motivated by a desire to fit in with dominant groups (see, for instance, Tajfel, 1974). People are thus influenced by the cultural norms and the desire to conform to these. Such processes are inherently individual *and* social, reflecting the difficulty in

separating these out. Indeed, the main criticism of research which focuses on one or the other is that it fails to grasp the inherently inter-connected relationship between the two.

Whilst individual interpretations are clearly important, therefore, school culture has also been shown to have a great impact on motivation and learning, with some arguing that it is the most fundamental precursor to action (Matos *et al*, 2009). This supports Turner and Patrick's (2008) claim that there has been a tendency to over-emphasise the power of individual beliefs and neglect the influence of the all-important social factors. Matos *et al*. (2009) support their emphasis on social influence with reference to goal theory, claiming how in schools where the head teacher emphasises performance and competition among staff, this is likely to result in performance-based teaching and thus the development of performance goals in the pupils. Whilst the situation is inevitably more complex than this claim suggests, the high positive correlation between overarching school goals and the teachers' and pupils' perceptions of their own goals seems to suggest that 'school culture' and shared understandings may well have an important impact.

However, the situation is not quite so conclusive, with researchers such as Munro (1997) criticising the tendency to focus exclusively on social interactions; this, he believes, can prove equally as restrictive as the more typical focus on solely personal interpretations. Kashima (1997) concurs and succinctly summarises the situation by warning researchers to avoid both 'over-socialising' the individual and 'over-individualising' society. This is important to bear in mind throughout, as researchers are realising that focusing exclusively on either area inevitably limits any knowledge generated to a single perspective, thus fails to examine the whole picture (Järvelä *et al.*, 2010). Rather than taking this single perspective

approach therefore, research should examine different levels of the system and think about *reciprocal* rather than *uni-directional* influences.

This clearly relates back to Bronfenbrenner's systems model which was presented above, although there are some differences in how a multi-layered approach should be conceptualised. Munro (1997) suggests that examining and describing what is happening at different levels of the system can do little more than provide a snapshot of the current situation. To move beyond this, he suggests concentrating on "action" within this system; this involves examining the individual person level and exploring how this both affects and is affected by the "set of dynamic processes called culture" (Munro, 1997, p.5). To achieve a deeper understanding, it is necessary to identify the range of levels, and to investigate the links between these, looking for correspondences and relationships. The researcher's role is thus redefined and the challenge is to "map comprehensively the myriad linkages within and between levels of understanding of both motivational and cultural phenomena" (ibid, p.14).

Munro's work is particularly useful here as it is these interactions between individuals and school culture that are crucial for motivation. His conception of culture and motivation are linked within an interactive cycle, where 'culture' develops through collective human action, actions are initiated by individual motivations and these motivations are influenced by various factors, including institutional culture. There is thus a complex interacting system here in which individuals will act depending on both personal factors and socio-cultural factors; the individual will be influenced by the values and norms of the institution, whilst simultaneously influencing the core values of that context (Olsson, 2007). It could be argued that this is particularly important in a primary school setting, where the small size of the

staff can result in individual teachers being able to exert a greater influence on the values and expectations of the group as a whole.

The key point made throughout this section therefore is that whilst social factors are often recognised as important, this in itself is insufficient and research needs to explicitly plan for how these situational elements can be investigated (Turner, 2001). In contrast to the individual factors however, these socially-situated influences can be much more elusive and require considerable clarification, as a range of approaches could be taken which correspond to the different systems level priorities. Is the focus of study the social interactions within specific situations, i.e. a micro level approach? Is it the potential judgements of others within the social sphere, i.e. a socio-emotional dimension? Is it the broader structures present in the institution, such as the expectations and demands, i.e. the meso-level systems? Or is it the socially shared beliefs, norms and values that are formed within the institution over time, i.e. the socio-cultural aspects? Throughout the methodology and analysis that follows therefore, recognition of these different dimensions will be important to define.

## **2.2 Why study teachers' motivation for music?**

Thus far, the main aim of this literature review has been to provide an overview of motivation theories in general and to consider the key assumptions made in relation to these. It is now important to move towards the more specific elements of this project, namely the reasons why motivation for music should be considered important, and why I have focused particularly on primary school teachers. This inevitably involves the impact of my own personal experiences, as discussed in Chapter 1, but also relates to what I perceive to be potential areas for exploration within the literature:

- There is a need to develop further motivational research that takes into account subject-specific factors (Turner & Meyer, 2009)
- There is a need to focus on teachers' own motivations for certain subject areas in order to balance the vast amount of research based on pupils' motives (Matos, *et al.*, 2009)

Both these are particularly relevant to primary music education and the following discussion explores the reasons why research in these areas is worthwhile.

### **2.2.1 Why music?**

When studying motivation, the focus has often been on individuals' level of persistence and choice of actions across a *range* of situations. Indeed, one of the major criticisms that have been levelled against research in this area is that it assumes a degree of consistency of individuals' motivation across different subject domains (Turner & Patrick, 2008). Turner and Meyer (2009) suggest that this separation of subject-specific factors and motivational factors has been detrimental to research and that it is important now to integrate the two together.

In recent years, a greater number of researchers have attempted to examine motivation for specific subjects, for instance mathematics (Bibby, 2002; Hodgen & Askew, 2007; Turner & Meyer, 2009), literacy and reading (Guthrie & Coddington, 2009; Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000) and Physical Education (Chen & Ennis, 2009; Roberts, 2001). However, there is still much potential to examine how motivation may be related to specific disciplines and some areas have attracted much more attention than others; there has been, for example, much more motivational research on maths than there has been in relation to arts-based subjects.

One of the aims of this project therefore is to explore how motivational theories can be related to, and enhance the understanding of, specific issues within primary music teaching.

Attempting to integrate these two fields is not a straightforward task but is necessary in order to develop a more sophisticated understanding of how individuals both develop and maintain their involvement with the subject (Hallam, 2006).

In relation to the fields of music education and motivation, a number of researchers have attempted to bring the two areas together. Austin, Renwick & MacPherson (2006), Hallam (2002) and Maehr, Pintrich & Linnenbrink (2002) all provide reviews of motivation theories which have been published in key music education handbooks and journals. However, the explicit links between the two areas (motivation and music) are less extensive, with the reviews serving more to introduce music educators to a range of motivational theories that may help inform their work. Motivational theories are therefore assessed and summarised, but the links to music are less in-depth, with the focus remaining on providing an overview of key motivational research. Hallam (2006) goes beyond this, as she develops a conception of motivation for music that incorporates both individual and socially-situated factors, each of which are related specifically to aspects of music. Her complex model has proved useful in situating my own understandings and underpins my discussion in section 2.3 below.

As noted in the introduction to this thesis, the impetus for the current research relates in part to my own school experiences, where, as a teacher, I observed a distinct lack of music teaching taking place, particularly in Key Stage 2. There certainly appeared to be something distinctive about music as a subject, which could lead to it being marginalised more often than other areas, and this is reflected in the literature (for example, Hennessy, 2000; Holden & Button, 2006). The general consensus is that music is a subject in which generalist primary school teachers lack confidence and find difficult to deliver effectively (Mills, 2005). This has been replicated across many countries (Russell-Bowie, 2009) and thus contributes to the

assumption that music is in some way different, and perhaps more challenging, than other curriculum areas.

It is possibly not surprising that the performance-based aspects of the subject, the perceived nature of musical ability as an innate gift and the ways its perceived reliance on specialist skills all contribute to this view. As noted in Chapter 1, these problems are then compounded by music's marginal status within education generally, together with questions over its educational and future value. Certainly, there have been debates over music's place within the primary school and it is possible to position the subject as an enjoyable, extra-curricular activity, rather than as something that should be studied on an equal footing with more 'academic' domains (Burnard, 2006a).

However, although there are certain features which may well be specific to music, such as the particular technicalities of performing, the research also has the potential to highlight whether there may be links between teachers' motivation for music in comparison with other subject areas. Certainly the literature has suggested that there is a possibility of finding connections here, as shown below:

- **Maths:** Both music and maths have been described as subjects in which people are likely to hold entity beliefs about the fixed nature of their own ability (see discussion of Dweck below). They have also both inspired a great deal of literature about the fact that teachers may struggle to develop positive self-perceptions in relation to the subject and may feel anxiety about engaging with it (Hodgen & Askew, 2007). Additionally, there have been connections between the cognitive demands of the two subjects, with the assumption being that those who have high ability in one may demonstrate similar, transferable skills for the other (Jensen, 2000).
- **Science:** Research has suggested that music and science were identified as being the two subjects about which teachers were most worried at the time of the National

Curriculum's introduction; the claim was that these two domains were perceived as demanding the highest level of specialist skills from all those within the curriculum (Barnes & Shinn-Taylor, 1988)

- **PE:** Ardzejewska, McMaugh and Coutts (2010) found a link between music and PE in their interviews of primary head teachers. The dominant discourse to emerge from the conversations was that generalist teachers could not be expected to teach music or sports because clearly they would not possess sufficient skills and expertise in these areas; this appeared to be a reasonably engrained assumption. Equally, the notion of sporting talent can be linked to that of musical talent; this belief that there are certain individuals who are in possession of great skill whilst the majority have very little skill at all seems to be a parallel across both fields and will form part of the discussion below.
- **'The Arts':** Music comprises one of the creative arts subjects, which also includes visual arts, design, drama and dance. These subjects are often discussed as being under threat in comparison with the core subjects, and many of the domains in this sphere face similar criticisms of being specialised, inaccessible and risky to teach in schools (Bresler, 2007).

Although this represents just a small proportion of the literature, there does appear to be some clear parallels between teachers' motivation for music and that of other subject areas. These connections may well prove useful to bear in mind throughout this project. In particular, it is important to consider whether there are factors which are unique to music specifically, or whether in fact, the issues which teachers face are more likely to be related to other, more fundamental concepts that could apply to several subject domains. In this case, the outcomes could have wider implications than solely for the world of music.

I would contend that some of the overall themes within motivational research could prove applicable across various areas, even though they may operate differently for different subject areas. This research therefore has the potential to provide insights which could

demonstrate both the specificities of music itself, but which may prove useful in other domains that may share certain characteristics.

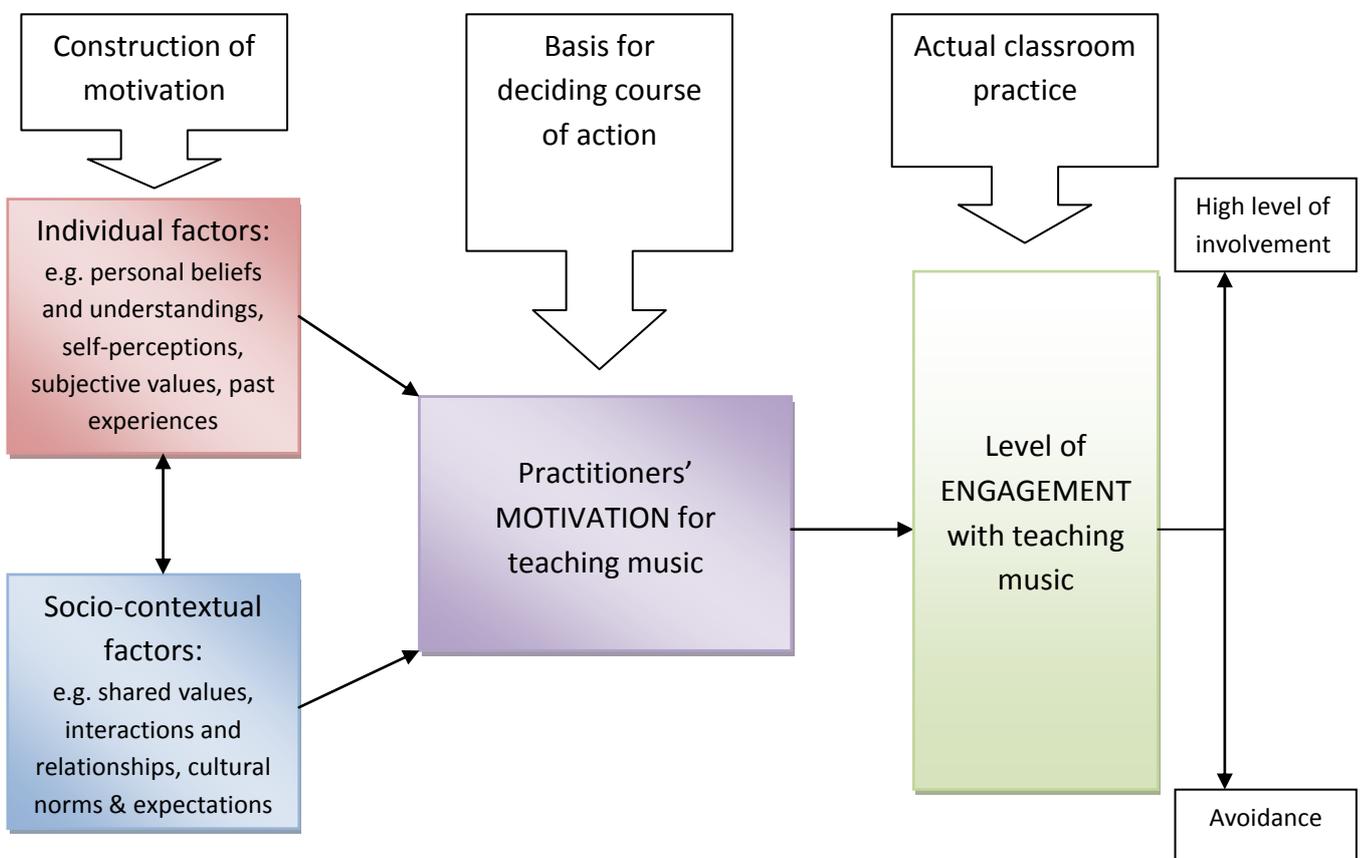
### **2.2.2 Why teachers?**

The previous discussion has explored the importance of investigating motivation for primary school music as a specific subject area. However, within this field, my focus is on the motivation of teachers, rather than the more typical emphasis on pupil motivation. This addresses the second potential gap in the literature, where too much motivation research has ignored the perceptions and drives of the teachers (Matos, *et al.*, 2009).

Whilst a number of researchers have examined pupil motivation in relation to music (for instance, Hallam, 2006; Mills, 2005), the issue of teacher motivation has received less attention, a trend which can be found across most motivational theories in general (Matos *et al.*, 2009). In part this has been justifiable and has led to much valuable research taking place, the aim of which has been to raise achievement and increase learning. However, it also means that a significant contribution can still be made to the field of teacher motivation, where further research is still required.

One reason for this continual focus on pupils is the belief that the motivation of teachers does not guarantee either the desired level of motivation in the pupils or successful learning outcomes (Maehr & Buck, 1993). However, the assumption underpinning this claim is that the focus of the research would look at the extent to which teachers behave in 'motivated' ways, rather than in their desire to actually engage with specific areas in the first place. Referring back to the four dimensions presented at the start, research into teacher motivation appears to have focused on the quality and intensity of the practitioners'

actions. This, however, is a somewhat different notion to the ways in which I am employing the term. Rather than looking at whether teachers are engaging with music in a ‘motivated’ way within the classroom, I am focusing upon the precursors to their actions, such as whether they will engage at all, in addition to whether they are likely to persist when faced with difficulty. In order to make clear this distinction, the following diagram in Figure 2.3 demonstrates the understanding of motivation which underpins this research.



**Figure 2.3: The conceptual model of teacher motivation**

Teachers' motivation here is conceptualised as the basis on which they will make their decision to engage with or avoid teaching music. If they have a high level of motivation for the subject, they will be more likely to involve themselves in the subject in class, teaching lessons both fully and regularly. By contrast, if their motivation to engage is low, this may

lead to avoidance strategies, with the subject being taught less frequently, if at all.

‘Motivation’ thus provides the basis for teachers’ decision-making, with ‘engagement’ representing the actions themselves.

As shown by Figure 2.3, motivation is not assumed to be an internal stable concept, but is instead constructed through the interaction between both individual and social factors, as discussed in section 2.1. In this way, there is scope for individual motivation to vary, depending on the combination and interaction of these elements. The joint approach also allows for the contradictions which can occur for practitioners in real-life situations, for example, one may personally value music highly and feel capable of teaching it (both associated with positive expectancy-value and self-efficacy beliefs) but if the structures of the school enforce other priorities and pressures, then the overall motivation to deliver the subject could well decrease.

I would contend that in primary schools in particular, the motivation of the teacher to include and engage with all subject areas is of the utmost importance and for certain domains may prove a more important object of study than simply looking at pupils in isolation. This is particularly the case for peripheral subjects such as music, where the extent to which the subject is delivered is largely determined by the teacher. As Covington (2009, p.161) notes, the teacher remains responsible for the “structure, climate and context” of pupils’ learning, thus their choices and actions will have a huge impact on the whole education process. Whilst initiatives that advocate collaborative and independent learning have been encouraged by both researchers and policy makers alike, the primary classroom remains an arena in which many decisions concerning what specifically is taught are taken

by the teacher. For music, it is thus vital to understand the practitioners' motivation to engage with, or avoid specific subject areas.

### **2.3 Motivational barriers to the teaching of music**

Thus far, I have considered some of the key theoretical assumptions which underpin this research, providing an essential foregrounding to the study. The main points to take from the previous discussions can be summarised as follows:

- Motivation is a complex psycho-social phenomenon which underpins the actions which individuals choose to take
- Motivation relies on both individual cognitive factors and socially situated factors working in interaction with each other.
- Research is needed to identify the possible range of competing individual and social factors related to the teaching of music and the ways in which they interact with each other on various levels.
- Music in the primary school can be problematic for some generalist teachers and it is important to understand how their motivation (or lack of motivation) for the subject is constructed and maintained.
- Although it is helpful to commence with subject-specific inquiry, the research can potentially provide findings that may relate to other educational domains with similar characteristics

Whilst motivation has been considered in largely general terms in the above discussion, I now focus more specifically upon primary music. The following section is therefore structured according to the identification of particular barriers to the teaching of music in the primary school. Although it could be argued that stating these connections in the literature review makes some assumptions about the eventual findings of the research, I do not begin this research with an entirely blank slate, having already completed what could be considered a pilot study for the current work (Evans, 2010). This small-scale, single-case

project provided me with some initial insights into the kind of issues which arose for the teachers of one institution in relation to music, and thus allowed me to make some tentative predictions as to what may emerge. This does not, in any way, preclude the emergence of other, alternative factors which may prove relevant, but does form part of the foundations upon which this research is built, i.e. my previous research, knowledge of the literature and personal experiences.

Although there were a great many motivational theories which this section could have explored, the overarching theme is loosely based upon a somewhat traditional model of expectancy-value theories (Wigfield, Tonks, & Klauda, 2009). This dates back to the work of Atkinson (1964) and assumes that one's motivation to engage with a certain action is dependent upon the likelihood of success (one's perceived ability to deliver a lesson effectively), and the value placed upon this (the perceived importance of engaging with music). The exploration of the individual and social processes involved will therefore be related to both issues of the self as a teacher and music as a specific discipline within education.

Additionally, it is important to note that in the interests of preserving the narrative sequence of the PhD journey, this section covers the potential links explored *before* the commencement of fieldwork. When it came to drawing conclusions from the data, some of these theoretical constructs proved more important than others, whilst additional, unforeseen factors also emerged; additional literature will therefore be referred to when appropriate in the forthcoming chapters.

### **2.3.1 Beliefs about musical ability**

The beliefs one holds about the nature of ability represent one of the most important ways in which individuals construct their understandings of self. Dweck's work has been particularly influential in this field, taking the implicit theories which individuals hold about the nature of intelligence and connecting these with previous ideas about adaptive practices, goal setting and the development of positive self-perceptions (Dweck & Leggett, 1988). Her model suggests that the holding of either entity or incremental theories of intelligence is an important contributory factor in the development of motivation (Dweck, 1999). However, an equally crucial point is that such beliefs are not universally held but are both specific to particular domains and have the potential to be changed. This suggests it is possible to explore the beliefs of individuals concerning musical ability specifically, and also that there is a chance that such beliefs could be altered through specific interventions or practices.

Over the years there have been numerous different conceptions of "musical ability", or "musicality", and these are tracked in detail by Hallam (2010). She notes the wide variety in how the terms have historically been understood, ranging from an aesthetic appreciation of music to specific sensory detection skills. In terms of a typical, widespread understanding, Hallam and Prince (2003) found that 71% of people they surveyed defined musical ability as being able to play an instrument or sing. Subsequent factor analysis in a later study again replicated the finding that performance was a crucial element, with three of the top four factors being largely focused on this (Hallam, 2010).

It was particularly interesting to note that those who described themselves as non-musicians, were more likely to focus exclusively on the ability to play an instrument or sing

(Hallam & Prince, 2003). This in itself could prove a potential barrier to involvement with music for generalist teachers. If an individual understands musical ability in this way, but does not believe they possess these specialised performance skills, it is likely that negative self-judgements will ensue, which could potentially threaten their motivation to teach it. A teacher who believes they do not have the requisite skill levels will clearly be less likely to have the confidence to engage with the subject, especially when combined with a perception of music as an optional extra (Hennessy, 2000).

One of the key assumptions often made in relation to music is that it is viewed as an innate skill (Austin, Renwick & MacPherson, 2006), which people either have in abundance or lack completely (Maehr, Pintrich & Linnenbrink, 2002). Davis (1994) certainly found this view to be commonplace, with 75% of participants believing that music was an innate gift. The apocryphal accounts of Mozart's genius (Storr, 1992), combined with the general perceptions of 'musicians' as having skills which originate *within* themselves, both contribute to the widespread notion that certain people have a natural talent in music whilst others simply do not (Lamont, 2002). In terms of education, if teachers expect this innate talent to be identifiable from a young age, such beliefs could restrict them to providing opportunities which are only directed towards the select 'talented' few, leading others to miss out completely (Howe, Davidson, & Sloboda, 1998). This is clearly a situation which advocates would seek to avoid.

In general, there is an agreed consensus that educators should promote attributions of effort over attributions of ability, stressing that success is often due to effort rather than solely dependent on ability (Dweck, 1986). This is important for music, where the ostensibly effortless quality of performances is actually the product of intensive effort and practice;

what may be perceived as an innate gift is therefore often the outcome of many hours of practice (McPherson, 2013). However, the promotion of effort attributions is not quite so simple and an interesting counter-point is made by both Covington (2009) and Legrette (2002). They suggest that if pupils do make a concerted effort, especially on repeated occasions, and still do not succeed, then to attribute this failure to a lack of effort can be extremely de-motivating and frustrating. Covington (2009) claims that in this situation individuals will inevitably resort to devaluing their own ability, meaning that any promotion of effort attributions could actually prove counter-productive.

Legrette (2002) suggests that the solution to this problem should be to develop more “thoughtful and discriminating” strategies for dealing with one’s causal attributions. This may be easier said than done, however, as music is a subject in which individuals may be completely discouraged by failure and use this as evidence of their complete lack of ability (Dweck & Leggett, 1988). Although intermittent failure is a part of any normal learning process and can, in fact help with the development of skills (Rogers, 2002), problems will arise if people attribute these failures to a *complete* lack of ability, seeing no hope in ever achieving in the subject and thus using this as justification for avoiding future involvement (Covington, 2009).

The fact that the term ‘musical’ implies an either/or dichotomy can thus result in any ‘normal’ failure being associated with a complete lack of musical ability. One way, for example, in which people reinforce their constructed notions of being ‘unmusical’ is through the temporary experience of learning to play an instrument but failing to continue with this (Sloboda, 2001). Indeed, Hennessy (2000) found that when assessing levels of musical confidence amongst teacher trainees, 70% of them actually had some experience of playing

an instrument but most had failed to persist with this; their negative experiences led many of them to conclude that they were lacking in musical ability, resulting in lower levels of confidence when faced with teaching the subject. The point here is that if one believes in the existence of a division between 'musical' and 'unmusical' people, and then attributes one's own experience of failure to a lack of this ability, this can lead to the assumption that one is completely unmusical.

Certainly there appears to be something distinctive about music, which distances it from other areas of the curriculum such as geography or history, and which can lead some teachers to be reluctant about teaching it regularly (Holden & Button, 2006). However, this avoidance of school music seems somewhat paradoxical considering music's place in society (Ball, 2010). On the one hand, music is a fundamental part of everyday life and it is virtually impossible to survive a day without some sort of exposure to music, however informal (Storr, 1992). Conversely, there is a widely accepted belief that music as a school subject is not accessible to all, with a commonly held notion being that it is the domain solely of elite, talented performers (Paynter, 2002). As Blacking (1976) famously questioned, why must the majority be made unmusical so that a select few can become more musical? As recent policy suggests, the ideal should be in promoting music for all rather than solely focusing on the select talented few (DfE, 2011).

Yet despite the vehemence and frequency with which this widespread view has been questioned in the literature, the idea of the musical-unmusical divide still persists across society (Burnard, 2003). This construction inevitably implies two discrete categories of people, who are either musically gifted or have no chance of ever becoming so (Austin, Renwick, & McPherson, 2006). Burnard (2003, p.29) claims these two terms form part of a

“discourse of derision”, which prevents people from engaging with the subject if they believe themselves to belong to the unmusical category. The main point is that for some, success in music is deemed impossible because they consider themselves unmusical; the obvious strategy therefore is to avoid the subject altogether, as this negates the fear of any kind of failure (Covington, 2000).

In terms of educational strategies, the questioning of terms such as ‘musical’ and ‘unmusical’ can clearly be linked with the way in which Dweck (1999) advises against the praising of ‘intelligence’. If certain individuals are praised for being musical at an early age, this could result in the reinforcement of categorical judgements, based on the idea that being musical is only available to this select few. This is important to bear in mind not just for the practice of teachers, when delivering the subject to others, but also for the ways in which they themselves formed their own self-perceptions of ability in music. Part of this research involves looking at how individual teachers may have constructed their own self-beliefs and starting to question the legitimacy of these; it is possible that social experiences in early childhood may play a part in this and reflection on these may be a crucial way of enhancing motivation (Seddon & Biasutti, 2008).

In terms of researching teachers’ motivation therefore, it is important to be aware of the existence of “entity” beliefs about the nature of musical ability, i.e. people believe their ability in the subject is both categorical and fixed, thus cannot be improved by increased effort. Although Dweck (1999) suggests that it is possible to change entity beliefs through the administration of specific interventions, this could prove more difficult in music, where such categorical judgements are often established at an early age (Lamont, 2002) and quickly become resistant to change (O’Neill, 2002). Additionally, if teachers themselves hold

firm entity views about music and continue to reinforce the idea that only certain children are musical, then it is easy to become caught in a cycle of negativity (Hennessy, 2012). It is therefore worth exploring the beliefs teachers hold and, as noted above, attempting to reflect on these in order to explore *how* they were constructed. By making explicit the often socially-constructed development of musical ability, it may be possible to encourage teachers to reflect both on their own beliefs and future practices.

### **2.3.2 Self-efficacy beliefs in music teaching**

The previous section has taken research into individuals' conceptions of ability and linked this to music specifically. This involves thinking about the overall judgements that individuals make regarding themselves and music, the general nature of which could be equated with the idea of a musical 'self-concept'; this refers to the relatively stable overall beliefs about one's ability in any broad domain (Bong & Skaalvik, 2003).

In contrast to general beliefs about oneself relating to musical ability, another influential school of thought is Bandura's work on self-efficacy judgements (1997). This is equally crucial to consider in the current project as it relates to the expected performance of individuals in relation to specific tasks. Although there has been some confusion between the terms 'self-efficacy' and 'self-concept', both are relevant to my research and are certainly not divorced from one another (Bong & Skaalvik, 2003). However, because the skills required to teach music in the primary school can be considered distinct from the skills required to be a 'musician', or even perhaps to be 'musical', it is possible that a more intricate analysis could unearth discrepancies between the two, despite the potential for

overlapping beliefs. In this way, it may be possible for individuals to hold, for example, negative self-concept judgements about their ability in music generally, but still retain positive self-efficacy judgements related specifically to the teaching of music.

Self-efficacy therefore provides a useful framework for exploring exactly which aspects of music teaching may present barriers to practitioners' regular delivery of the subject. By breaking down the teaching of music into specific tasks, the research will be able to explore which aspects may prove most problematic. This could involve contrasting judgements *within* individual teachers' understandings, which a more general exploration of musical self-concept may not reveal.

With regards to the potential activities which may take place within a primary music classroom, there is a broad scope for variation. When thinking about performing, for instance, the singing of an action song in a classroom could be considered quite distinct from having to prepare a group of pupils for a public performance. Likewise, allowing children the opportunity to explore sounds on a set of percussion instruments presents a different prospect to composing and notating a melody. It is therefore important to explore just what features of music may enable or constrain teachers' motivation to engage with the subject.

Bandura (1997) identifies four main areas upon which self-efficacy judgements are based, and these all have implications for primary music. The following table summarises these, and shows how they may be related more specifically to music.

<b>Factor</b>	<b>Explanation</b>	<b>Links to music</b>
1. Actual performances and mastery of skills	How do individuals interpret and judge their own successes and failures?	This factor will be dependent on what individuals deem success or failure to be. In music this can be somewhat problematic, as in society we are saturated by highly polished performances and so the criteria for success may be deemed higher than in other subjects, for example in terms of singing ability. Expectations of replicating these are more likely to result in failure.
2. Vicarious experiences	How do individuals interpret other models of behaviour and compare themselves to these?	The performative nature of music means that it is possible to listen and appraise the skills of others, and compare their performances to themselves. These social comparisons can prove problematic in music, particularly if unfavourable comparisons are made.
3. Social persuasions	How much encouragement or discouragement do individuals receive from others in the social environment?	This is particularly crucial in terms of ensuring continued motivation with music (Davidson, Faulkner, & McPherson, 2009). There has been much research that has shown how people have often internalised the judgements of others regarding their musical abilities (Burnard, 2003).
4. Physiological indexes	To what extent does the task provoke particular physiological states, for example, stress or anxiety?	Performing in public can produce feelings of anxiety in many people (Abril, 2007). This can lead to detrimental effects on their performance which will lead to negative self-efficacy judgements (Covington, 2009).

**Table 2.2: Factors contributing to the formation of self-efficacy beliefs**

Clearly the four dimensions through which self-efficacy judgements are formed can have several potential links to music, as shown by the above table. This can therefore provide a useful framework to bear in mind during the data collection process, as teachers are likely to construct beliefs about their chances of delivering successful music teaching through a complex combination of the different elements. Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2007) explored the ways in which teachers might draw upon different aspects from the model, depending

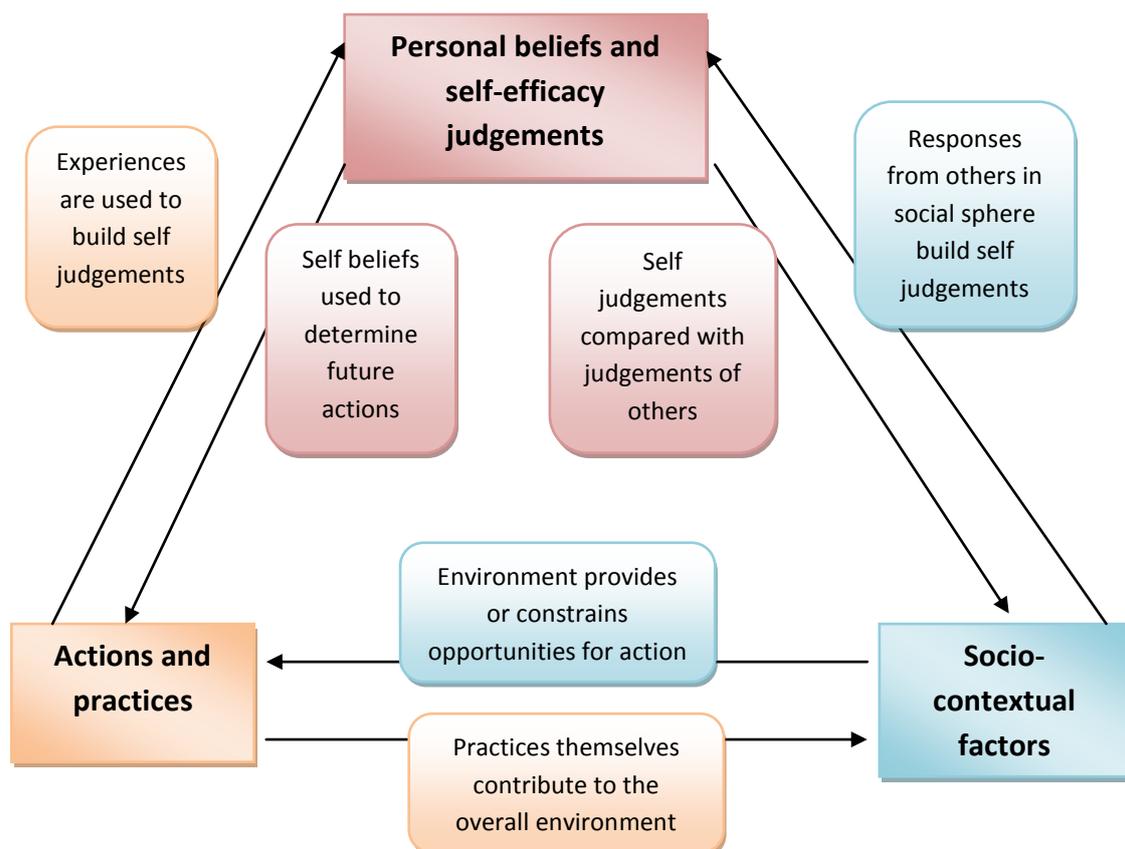
on their levels of expertise. They concluded that more experienced teachers, with a potential wealth of mastery experiences, were more likely to base their self-judgements on these positive past experiences of success, whilst novice practitioners would be more likely to rely upon contextual factors, such as school resources and social support networks, when considering their chances of success.

This is important to note for music specifically, in particular given the reliance on contextual factors by those teachers who lack mastery experiences. For those who approach the teaching of music early on in their careers, their expectation of success in the subject may well be formed not only through the examination of their previous experiences, which may well prove negative (Hennessy, 2000), but also through the socio-contextual factors within the school environment, such as the resources and interpersonal support available (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2007). For positive self-efficacy beliefs to be formed, therefore, it may well be necessary to have support from the school to enable this. This therefore provides further justification for the potential impact of institutional factors upon the formation of positive self-efficacy judgements and the necessity to include these within any consideration of teacher motivation.

Bandura's key dimensions are therefore important in that they incorporate *both* individual and social processes in the development of self-judgements. Whilst self-efficacy beliefs are typically located in the individual level section of the diagram in Figure 2.1, these are not formed in isolation, and are necessarily constructed within a complex social system. It is very easy to over-individualise such beliefs, thus the above framework includes the importance of social judgements and contextual structures. As Bandura (1997) recognises,

self-beliefs are formed within a tripartite system that includes personal understandings, actions and practices, and socially situated elements in the environment.

This can be shown in the following diagram in Figure 2.4 and is useful in starting to demonstrate the importance of taking account of both individual and social factors when attempting to explore motivation. The outcome of the diagram is the construction of personal self-efficacy beliefs, showing that even something which appears ostensibly situated within the individual level of the systems model, is actually constructed through a complex interaction of different factors.



**Figure 2.4: Tripartite system for the development of self-efficacy beliefs (based on Bandura, 1997)**

Self-efficacy beliefs can therefore provide an important approach to the study of individual motivational, as the judgements which one makes are likely to affect the amount of effort, perseverance and resilience that people will show in the face of adversity (Schunk and Pajares, 2009). These three factors fit in well with my own conception of motivation (see Figure 2.3), as they represent part of the processes that occur when deciding upon their future actions i.e. will individuals make the effort to become involved in music teaching, and will they persevere and show resilience if difficulties are encountered? Low self-efficacy judgements may therefore pose problems to the teachers' involvement with music because it would prove difficult to justify the additional effort if success is deemed unlikely. Although the self-efficacy beliefs are not the *sole* factor to explore therefore, they will most likely form a crucial part of the individuals' motivation.

Whilst methodological issues will be discussed in the following chapter, it is worth noting at this point how self-efficacy beliefs are generally studied. The primary research method within this field is the use of self-efficacy scales, which are designed to measure one's self efficacy. Such instruments have, however, been criticised for their failure to recognise the context-dependent nature of any task (Woolfolk Hoy, Hoy, & Davies, 2009). To take an example from the field of teacher efficacy scales, if a teacher is asked to respond to the question, "how much can you do to calm a student who is disruptive or noisy?", the answer could vary greatly depending on the context to which they believe the question refers.

However, this does not negate their use completely and self-efficacy scales have proved important to explore for my project, particularly the quantitative phase. Rather than using scale items in order to *measure* an individual's level of self-efficacy, some of the same survey techniques could be employed in order to actually *explore* different elements of the

subject itself. Whilst more traditional self-efficacy research would use scale items to produce an overall score for individuals, which could then be analysed, the individual items themselves could equally be used to look at patterns based around specific skills required when teaching music. Instead of seeking an overall self-efficacy score therefore, I would be more interested in the different items on the scale and how the respondents' answers clustered around certain areas. For these reasons Bandura's (2006) work will provide a useful foundation for the first quantitative phase of the study (see further discussion in section 3.3).

### **2.3.3 Performance anxiety and self-worth**

As discussed above, music itself can sometimes prove more problematic than other subjects for the development of positive self-efficacy beliefs. In an extension to these negative self-judgements, Kaplan *et al.* (2009) point out that when individuals perceive a situation to be evaluative of their ability, this can pose problems for both motivation and self-worth, especially when this evaluation extends to a social comparison between themselves and others. This forms one section of the three-part diagram in Figure 2.4 but it is also worth considering this in its own right. The main point stressed in the literature is that individuals are motivated on two joint counts; firstly there is the desire to present a positive self-image to others and secondly there is the desire to avoid negative evaluation (Geen and Shea, 1997). Covington (1992) describes this concept as the "self-worth motive" and it can complicate ostensibly simple goals and ambitions which individuals hold. The desire to present favourable self-images, for example, may alter or distort the meanings of success and failure, because the individual's priority shifts from what might be termed 'objective' success in the particular domain, to success in projecting a positive self-image to others.

This concept seems particularly pertinent to music, where public performance is integral to the subject. The ways in which both teachers and pupils are required to perform music in front of others can evoke feelings of “evaluation apprehension”, which can be heightened dramatically by low self-perceptions of ability and a lack of confidence in the subject (Geen & Shea, 1997). This is enhanced by the fact that it is possible from a young age to be able to listen reasonably critically to music and make an instant judgement as to whether this is “musical” or not (Hargreaves, 1986). Whenever we perform music in front of others, there is therefore *always* a potential threat of evaluation, as it is inevitable that some kind of judgement will be made.

In terms of teaching this could pose problems, particularly if one lacks confidence in performing. Many teachers experience anxiety at the thought of having to sing or play an instrument and this could affect their decisions as to whether they will engage with music (Abril, 2007). As Covington (1992) points out, individuals are less likely to engage with a subject if they are overly concerned about the prospect of demonstrating low ability; for music it is very easy for this concern to lead into a cycle of avoidance.

The desire to preserve self-worth can therefore conflict with the perceived demands of teaching music, because the level of skills required is often assumed to be excessively high (Hennessy, 2000). The focus in the subject is often placed upon instrumental and vocal performance skills, which can be perceived as inaccessible by generalist practitioners. In this way, the assumptions related to musical ability, which were discussed in section 2.3.1, can therefore combine with a desire to avoid failure to produce a serious barrier to motivation.

Indeed, an important consequence could be that teachers fail to engage with music *at all* through fear of the risk of public failure. Importantly, it is this social dimension which can

lead to the perception that music is therefore more threatening than perhaps other subjects. The risk here is not related to the inherent performance itself, but rather to the potential for negative responses and judgements to occur within the social sphere.

Drawing on a different theoretical framework, the level of musical performance which the subject can (or appear to) demand may also threaten one's sense of competence as a practitioner. As part of their theory of self-determination, Ryan and Deci (2000; 2002) identify personal competence beliefs as part of a system which can support and encourage motivation. If individuals feel themselves to be competent within their particular environment, then they will be more likely to engage with the subject. In contrast to other subject areas, therefore, the performative aspects of music could be seen to challenge this notion of competency, resulting in teachers believing themselves to be deficient in musical skills.

Holden and Button (2006) discuss some of the reasons as to why music specifically could provide a challenge to teachers' sense of competency, despite them maintaining high levels of confidence in other areas. These include a lack of knowledge and skills, insufficient time and resources, and a perceived inadequacy in relation to one's performance ability, particularly when teaching older children. Again therefore, this final point includes the all-important social dimension, whereby practitioners are concerned by the risk of negative judgements from others; here older children present a greater problem because they are perceived as being more capable of judging the accuracy and musicality of the teacher's performance.

A further point highlighted by Holden and Button (2006) is the assumption that to teach music effectively, one must be able to read music notation, a skill which is further

referenced in the new National Curriculum (2014). As with the emphasis on performance described above, this could again challenge one's notion of competency, this time related to the fact that the teacher is often assumed to have an authoritative knowledge of the subject one is teaching. A failure to read musical notation could thus prohibit notions of competency, especially if this was considered a fundamental skill necessary for the delivery of music. A lack of this skill could thus undermine the teacher's sense of authority and could again result in avoidance strategies.

#### **2.3.4 Value judgements of music and its place in the curriculum**

On the whole, the previous three sections have covered issues relating to the individual and their perceptions, albeit situated in their social environment. The focus has largely been on the teachers' beliefs about ability and the ways in which they considered *themselves* in relation to music. However, an equally important factor to consider in terms of motivation is the extent to which one values the particular subject area. The focus therefore moves away from inward-looking theories of self, to thinking about the subject of music as the object of interest. This involves consideration of all-important issues of advocacy and how music's place can be both conceptualised and supported within education more generally.

The impact of values as an influence on motivation dates back to the work of psychologist Kurt Lewin, who noted how the perceived importance of a task will be determined by its value to the individual. Since then, values have formed a crucial part in the work of many researchers including Atkinson, Eccles and Wigfield, and have been defined in increasingly more complex terms. Higgins (2007) for example, claimed that the notion of value incorporates:

- The comparative judgements of different tasks in relation to each other
- The psychological experience of being attracted to a task and developing interest
- The drive to attain high outcomes in the task, related to individual and social goals

In her work on “Subjective Task Value”, Eccles (2005) identifies four key areas which contribute to the development of value judgements and these provide a useful starting point for this investigation. The following table demonstrates these factors and the ways in which they can be linked to the teaching of music. Whilst these were originally generated with learners in mind, the concepts can also be translated to the motivation of teachers, considering practitioners understand music within the curriculum.

Both Eccles (2005) and Higgins (2007) stress the fact that value judgements in education are complex and do not comprise simple, fixed judgements. Instead they involve various components, contradictions and compromises. It is possible, for instance, to value a subject particularly highly on one count, but fail to see its importance on another. In this way, overall value judgements are constructed through a complex amalgam of various competing factors, as the table overleaf demonstrates.

In terms of music education, teachers need to consider music itself as a discipline, as well as its place within the curriculum. One’s perceptions therefore need to be situated in terms of how music relates to the self as a teacher, but also the pupils, the institutional priorities of the school and the relative judgements of other subjects. Whilst an individual might ostensibly value music highly across, say, the first three of Eccles’ dimensions, if this does not match the judgements of other disciplines, the subject may be considered inferior and other domains will assume precedence (Higgins, 2007). Value judgements therefore involve thinking beyond the confines of music itself to incorporate broader educational visions.

<b>Aspect of subjective task value</b>	<b>Meaning</b>	<b>Explanation and potential relationship to music education</b>
Attainment value	Is it important for me personally to succeed in this task?	This first area links the importance of the task to one's sense of self. If it is important to one's identity as a practitioner that music should be taught, for example, if it features as a crucial part of one's educational philosophies and goals, then the subject will be highly valued.
Utility value	Is it useful for me to succeed in this task in terms of my future prospects?	When thinking about the teaching of music there are two dimensions here. The first is an outward-looking judgement, relating to whether engaging in music will be considered a useful activity for the pupils. If this is deemed irrelevant for their futures then they will be less motivated to include it. The second dimension refers to the teacher herself, and whether music can help to achieve her own goals in her career. If music is not a necessary obligation or if there are no tangible rewards for the engagement with it, motivation is less likely to develop.
Interest	Do I enjoy the task itself and am I interested in pursuing this?	In terms of pupil motivation, interest and enjoyment tend to be rated very highly for music, even though it may prove problematic when judged on other criteria (Wright, 2008). For teachers, this aspect may prove more complex. Again there is the joint consideration between pupils and self; on the one hand music might be valued because it is perceived as interesting and enjoyable for the pupils to be involved with. However, the actual task of teaching the subject may not necessarily align with the teachers' own interests. Equally, if one doubts one's own capabilities to teach it, the experience may not be considered enjoyable.
Perceived cost	Does this task require other sacrifices to be made and is it worth this cost?	This is a crucial element when thinking about both the place of music in the curriculum and the amount of effort the subject is perceived to demand. Throughout the previous sections I have discussed how music can be considered a threat or a challenge to one's sense of competency and if this is too great, then the cost of attempting to deliver the subject may outweigh its value. Equally, this aspect can be considered in relation to other subject areas; if the teaching of music is considered to demand too much time and effort, which could be used for additional work on areas of greater perceived importance, this too could undermine the value of music.

**Table 2.3: Eccles' subjective task value in relation to music**

Eccles' framework proves useful for identifying areas which can be investigated in relation to value judgements, as it highlights the contributory factors that lead to the formation of these judgements. However, there are a number of issues to bear in mind when drawing upon this. The label "Subjective Task Value" itself, for instance, could prove problematic. Although this rightly implies that different individuals will hold different personal values, depending on their subjective interpretations, these judgements are not formed in isolation. By employing the term "subjective", it could be argued that too great an emphasis is placed upon the individual, implying that values are necessarily private, personal constructions. Whilst individual interpretations may mediate the ways in which value judgements are made (Järvelä, 2001), teachers and pupils do not operate within a vacuum and again, social context and cultural factors will always play a part (Welch, 2001). The influence of the social context of the school is thus important again here, for example, through shared institutional values and collective priorities.

There is thus a social aspect to value judgements that extends beyond the notion of subjectivity, as is duly noted in more recent work by Eccles and Wigfield (2009). Rather than being based solely upon autonomous interpretations, value judgements are also constructed and reinforced through interactions, social influences and socially shared beliefs (Turner, 2001). Indeed, a crucial part of the culture of an institution is the way in which certain curriculum areas are valued above others and this is likely to be reflected back through the individual, within their apparently subjective judgements (Matos *et al.*, 2009).

Social identity theory may also prove relevant here, as there is much evidence that individuals tend to follow the collective norms of the groups to which they belong for fear of rejection (Tajfel, 1974). As Duveen (1997) points out, there is a tendency to conform to

socially accepted norms, *even if* this contradicts their original personal beliefs. This means that simply asking teachers for their personal judgements as to the value of music may be insufficient, as in practice, these could be altered or even subverted by the culture of the institution.

Despite the ostensible autonomy which teachers retain in the classroom, schools provide the backdrop for one's practices. For motivation to be encouraged, music must therefore be valued along two dimensions: subjectively and socially. This inevitably leads the discussion back to the issue of school culture. For Schwartz (1997), values are an inherent part of this and are conceptualised in a much more social manner than has typically been described. Within institutions, there will be present a (perhaps tacit) hierarchy of shared values that will guide the selection of group and, to an extent, individual actions. This means that a teacher's behaviours in the classroom are legitimised not only through their own, personal ideas about the purposes of education, but also through those which are prioritised within the institution (ibid, 1997).

Although Schwartz's ideas are certainly convincing, he does claim that shared values can be viewed as "determinants" of behaviour (1997, p.72). I would question the implications of this term, which seems to suggest too straightforward a causal link between the commonly-held values in an institution and the actions of individuals, which fails to account for the issues of personal interpretation, free will and autonomy (Bandura, 1997). It also implies that individuals will all automatically conform to the ideals of an institution, which from personal experience I would also question. Whilst one might alter certain practices to an extent in order to fit with institutional expectations, this does not necessarily mean that upon entering a new setting, any individual will inevitably assume and subscribe to all the

values of that culture. Indeed, as noted above, the individuals themselves will inevitably contribute to the shaping of these shared understandings, meaning that they themselves can exert a positive influence on the social environment; the influence of context on individuals is thus not a uni-directional relationship(Munro, 1997).

Values thus require a complex negotiation between individual and social priorities and beliefs. Any explanation of these is thus far from straightforward, providing plenty of scope for investigation. Whilst I agree that *participation* in the laws, customs, norms, scripts and practices *can* be shaped by cultural and social values, the practices of the individuals within this can also shape the culture of the institution, resulting in a two-way, reciprocal relationship (Kaplan *et al.*, 2009). In order to consider teachers' motivation within a particular context, it will be necessary to explore both the individual subjective values *and* the socially shared values. As Bruner (1996) notes, thinking and learning will always be situated in a cultural setting, and "dependent on the utilisation of cultural resources" (p.4); uncovering these is one way of developing a more in-depth understanding and exploring how shared practices can impact upon teacher motivation.

## **2.4 Devising the Initial Research Questions**

The above sections have outlined various motivational theories and their connection to teachers' engagement with music in the primary school, although with two such broad fields of literature, it is inevitable that this review has merely covered a fraction of the current body of work. It is clear from the diversity of the fields that a study into teachers' perceptions and actions could potentially be underpinned a number of perspectives. The key point highlighted for the current research is how both individual and social structures impact on motivation and potentially interact with each other; through in-depth exploration

of this, it may be possible to enhance understanding of the processes involved, with the eventual aim of investigating how teachers' motivation could be enhanced. This involves crossing the individual-social divides and developing a more comprehensive way of conceptualising teacher motivation (Järvelä, *et al*, 2010). Rather than viewing the problem from either a psychological or sociological perspective, it is necessary to employ and combine elements of both.

When thinking about the focus of the project, there were several stages to the development of the research questions. This was partially due to the progressive and sequential nature of the research design, whereby the initial quantitative phase was planned to provide the background exploration required to undertake the more intensive qualitative investigation. The original questions, presented below, were therefore reasonably open, so that the finalised, qualitative research questions could be fully formulated on the basis of these initial survey findings.

1. **How do teachers perceive music in the primary school, in comparison with other curriculum subjects?** Given that motivation to engage with music relies, at least partially, on music being judged positively in comparison with other subjects, I was interested to explore the relative judgements which teachers made concerning subjects' value and importance. This question was perhaps the most strongly rooted in my own experiences, whereby my former colleagues consistently failed to see the importance of engaging in music lessons in their classrooms. I was therefore concerned as to whether such issues might prove prevalent across institutions, and indeed whether there was something inherently problematic with the subject itself.

The comparative nature of the investigation would also allow me to identify if there were other subjects which might evoke similar responses.

**2. Are there specific aspects of music teaching which are interpreted as barriers to teacher involvement with the subject?**

This question mainly relates to the discussion surrounding self-efficacy judgements (section 2.3.2). In particular I was interested in identifying the specific aspects of music teaching which may pose the greatest problems for teachers, and the impact which one's perceptions of these might have upon motivation more generally. Although this would be investigated through the use of self-efficacy scale items, the ultimate aim was not in generating an overall measure but in laying the foundations for the qualitative interviews. Identification of potentially problematic aspects of the subject would allow me to explore the underlying reasons behind these within the second phase.

**3. When thinking about teachers' motivation, in what ways do personal**

**interpretations interact with the contextual factors within the school?** The final, and most complex, research question links to the most fundamental aim of the study, which was to explore teachers' motivation through an approach which jointly privileges both individual cognitive and socially-situated elements. This question is presented here because it was part of my initial aims; however, unlike the previous two, this proved difficult to explore through quantitative methods alone and would thus be taken forward into the qualitative phase.

To reiterate therefore, these research questions were designed in order to structure the opening quantitative investigation, and would be further refined and developed in preparation for the qualitative phase. They represent the starting points for the project and,

rather than being an end in themselves, would eventually lead to a more focused set of research questions prior to the commencement of the qualitative research phase. These will be presented at the end of Chapter 4, following the discussion of the quantitative phase.

# 3. Methodology and Research Design 1

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Methodological questions are crucial to consider if the outcomes of research are to be considered valuable in the field of educational research. For investigations to be considered effective, Burnard (2006a) claims it is necessary to make explicit three levels of the design of the project:

- The **theoretical perspective** and philosophical stance which informs the research design
- The **methodology**, which refers to the overall design and plan of action
- The specific **methods** used to collect and analyse the data

Each stage, therefore, needs to be described explicitly with justification provided for all choices made; without this the conclusions drawn from the process cannot be fully substantiated and questions may remain about their rigour (Burnard, 2006a).

For the current project this is particularly important, given the assumptions made concerning the complex nature of motivation and the ways in which it develops. These are rooted in a way of seeing the world that is at its heart constructivist: motivation is a complex construct which develops jointly through both individual and social processes and is not necessarily something objective that can be measured or easily grasped. The methods used to explore this concept therefore take on increased importance and need to be described fully.

This chapter provides information regarding the research process and includes detailed descriptions of the three methodological dimensions described above. It is therefore split into the following sections, the content of which is outlined briefly below:

- Section 3.1: A discussion concerning the ontological and epistemological foundations on which this research is built. These comprise an approach which is borne out of social-constructionism, but which also incorporates elements of social realism in an attempt to provide legitimate judgements, rather than purely descriptive findings.
- Section 3.2: An overview of the research methodology, including the rationale for using mixed methods and a brief mention of potential ethical concerns.
- Section 3.3: A description of the methods chosen for the initial, quantitative phase of the project, including details about the development of the questionnaire.

Due to the sequential nature of this study, I have split the sections describing the research design into two parts, hence a description of the qualitative methods will not be presented until after the quantitative discussion. Since the findings from the survey served to shape the design of the interviews, it seems more logical to present the quantitative section *before* discussing the details of the second research stage. The more detailed description of the qualitative methods will thus be provided in Chapter 5.

### **3.1 Philosophical underpinning**

Although sometimes given less attention than they deserve, ontological and epistemological issues are fundamental to all research projects and a sound understanding of these is essential to the eventual success of such undertakings (Burnard, 2006a). This section will describe some of the inevitable dilemmas which I faced when attempting to situate the research within a particular philosophical paradigm and comprises a discussion of the two key approaches which underpin this work. Firstly I consider ‘constructionism’, which can be split into an individual-focused ‘constructivism’ and a more cultural-interactional and institutional-focused ‘social-constructionism’. Secondly, I discuss ‘social realism’ which incorporates a more critical stance, allowing value judgements to be made about these seemingly ‘natural’ understandings. The terms used throughout these debates are

contested and complex, hence the need for a thorough exploration within the methodological discussion.

It may perhaps seem odd to be attempting to integrate two, potentially incompatible, philosophical positions; indeed, social realists are extremely critical of constructionist approaches and make the case for a new paradigm shift away from the traditional positivist-interpretivist divide (Young, 2008). However, the relationship between the two areas can be seen as reflective of the journey of understanding which has accompanied the research process. Whilst the project initially emerged from constructionist roots and concerns, as the analysis progressed it proved imperative to move beyond simply the presentation of multiple standpoints and to relate these much more clearly to the real world of improving practice. Social realism provides a legitimate platform from which to do this and helped to negate the potential threat of descending into any kind of naive relativism, whereby all perspectives are considered equally possible and *any* conclusion could potentially be assumed valid (Scott, 2000). Social realism therefore provides an alternative conception of knowledge to the constructionist beliefs about multiple perspectives. Instead of all viewpoints being equally valid, certain knowledge can be legitimised through the traditions and practices of the field (Young, 2008).

### **3.1.1 A joint constructionist approach: Prioritising both self and social processes**

When commencing this research, it appeared reasonably clear that the project drew largely upon the constructionist tradition. The research focuses on the ways in which individual motivation for music is *constructed* through various processes, thus the interpretivist paradigm proved a logical starting point from which to situate the work. Whilst there is

much debate over the various contested and ambiguous terms used, the definitions I employ here are those provided by Koro-Ljungberg *et al* (2009), who distinguish two dimensions within a more general 'constructionist' philosophy: constructivism and social-constructionism. The divide between these two reflects some of the debates between individual and social influences which were discussed in the previous chapter, thus both perspectives are important to consider.

The focus on the individual self, as described in section 2.1.2 clearly links to Koro-Ljungberg *et al*'s (2009) definition of 'constructivism', which they explain as the study of how individuals make sense of their world and develop understandings based on their previous experiences. They cite the aim of such research as being to present "individuals' perspectives, experiences, meaning-making processes, values and beliefs" (Koro-Ljungberg *et al*, 2009, p.689), seeking to represent and put forward the voice of the individual rather than that of the collective (see also, Janesick, 2000). Indeed, in constructivist research, the voice of the individual should be prioritised and must not become lost in the search for commonalities and patterns (Nias & Aspinall, 1995).

This certainly aligns with a number of the aims of my project, for example, giving priority to the voices of individual teachers, looking at how meaning-making processes are constructed through previous experiences and exploring personal understandings in an in-depth manner. Although this perspective links most closely to the notion of individual interviews and the qualitative phase, the self-report data from the questionnaire also fits with this focus on a set of individual perceptions related to both the self and music.

'Constructivism', as previously defined, therefore provides a useful starting point for the philosophical foundations of this research. However, taken in isolation, it fails to fully

account for the inherently social nature of teaching and motivation. Whilst this perspective does recognise that individuals will be influenced by society (Koro-Ljungberg *et al.*, 2009), the responsibility for developing beliefs and understandings is placed firmly in the cognitive interpretations of the individual, with constructions being situated within the personal domain. Whilst this certainly comprises an important part of the overall project, there are further socially-situated dimensions which extend beyond the boundaries of an individual, cognitive exploration. It seems logical, therefore, to consider some of the more socially constructed forms of knowledge, including cultural resources, social processes, shared beliefs and the role of language, which may equally impact upon motivation (Burr, 1995).

Social-constructionism provides an additional framework for this, with its key premise being that knowledge develops and is sustained through social processes (Holstein & Gubrium, 2008). This notion, which has gained prominence since the 'interpretive turn' (Elliott, 2002), is generally associated with postmodernist notions of historical and cultural specificity as well as a critical stance towards the 'taken-for-granted' and common sense understandings by which we live our lives (Holstein & Gubrium, 2008). Indeed, a crucial aim of researchers working within this field is often to explore the power relationships which lead to the construction of certain forms of knowledge prioritised by dominant groups, in particular knowledge which replicates inequalities (Burr, 1995). Traditionally this has focused on issues of social justice but there is no reason why the dominant educational ideologies could not be examined themselves, in a similarly critical, way in order to explore the reasons why music might find itself a marginalised subject in the curriculum. Indeed, issues of power

between curriculum areas have been highlighted through previous research (Paechter, 2000)<sup>5</sup>.

Knowledge of this field is clearly useful for the current project when considering how music is positioned in relation to other curriculum subjects, both in terms of broader policy concerns as well as within institutions. This is useful for exploring how music may be given time, resources, priority and thus power, within the school (Paetcher, 2000). Additionally, the notion of taken-for-granted assumptions within music education, such as the fact that most people believe themselves to be lacking in musical ability, can be questioned when they are exposed as socially constructed notions, rather than as natural and inevitable 'facts'. The understandings and perceptions which underpin individuals' actions within a school can be explored in terms of how they have been produced, reproduced and shared within this specific socio-cultural setting (Matos *et al.*, 2009). Individuals do not operate in a cultural vacuum and it is highly likely there will be influential forces and structures at work within institutions; social constructionist research prioritises investigation of these.

Social-constructionism therefore proves useful in thinking about how understandings and shared beliefs are constructed through both societal and institutional processes, and recognition of this can enhance a solely cognitive approach. Additionally, social-constructionism can also be employed at a more micro-level, to look at interactions and group processes. In terms of motivation research, this clearly links to the work of Turner (2001) whose research has consistently challenged the traditional psychological notion that motivation is located within the individual, suggesting it is much more fluid and can change depending on the particular social situation.

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<sup>5</sup> It should be noted that there is a certain degree of overlap between research which is classified as 'critical', seeking to explore and redress inequalities, and 'social-constructionist' research as defined by Burr (1995).

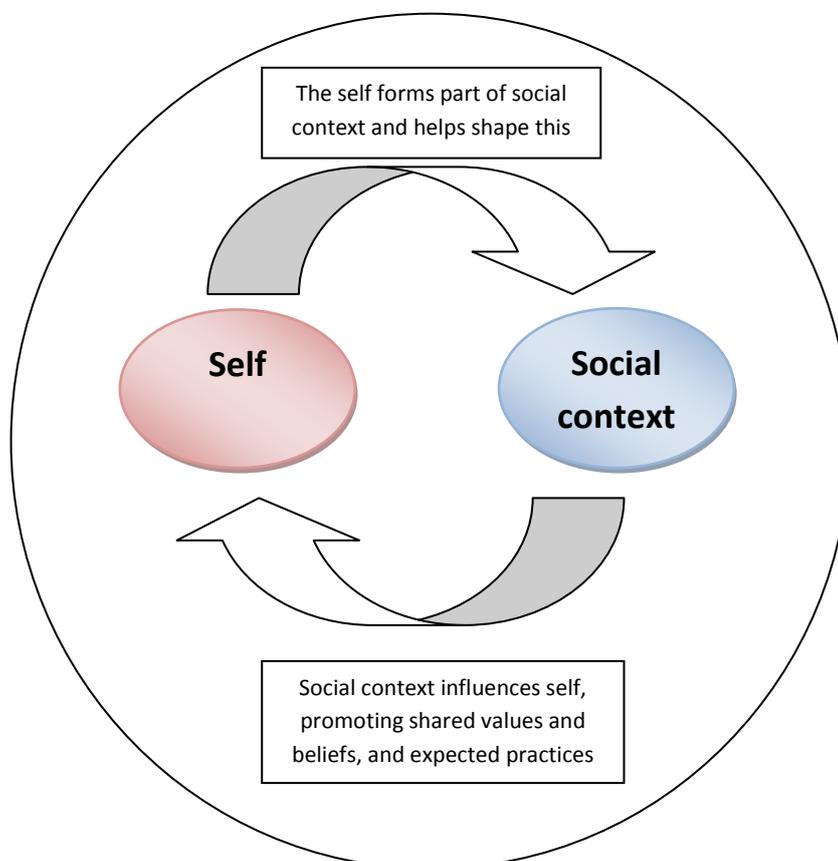
Clearly both constructivism and social-constructionism have the scope to underpin this study and an argument can be made for drawing upon both in order to research such a complex concept as teacher motivation. Järvelä *et al* (2010) make a case for this, labelling their research *both* 'socially influenced' (i.e. placing the individual at the heart of the study whilst recognising that their interpretations may be influenced by context) and 'socially constructed' (i.e. prioritising socio-contextual processes and attributing individual understandings to such interactions, relationships and shared knowledge). A joint constructivist – social-constructionist approach therefore seems to fit well with the current aims.

However, to what extent is it possible to integrate these two perspectives? Are they in any way mutually exclusive, where an alignment with one would preclude acceptance of the other? Certainly there are some elements of concurrence between the two, but at the heart of each is a fundamentally different epistemological position: either knowledge is constructed through individual interpretations and cognitive constructions, or knowledge is constructed through social processes, language and dominant cultural beliefs (Koro-Ljungberg *et al*, 2009). This contradiction itself seems to mirror the debates within motivation literature, which has traditionally been rooted in one approach or the other (psychological or social) and to attempt to transcend this is no easy task.

However, I do believe it is possible to employ elements from both traditions and indeed to recognise that knowledge can be constructed *both* through individual and social means. A clear recognition of the value of both perspectives provides the flexibility to shift the focus between the two, depending on the ever-changing priorities of the research. At various occasions within the research process, therefore, it may be necessary to focus primarily on

the individual, whilst at other points the institutional aspects will be given priority. The point here is that a greater understanding and recognition of both is important if this research is to provide in-depth knowledge of teachers' motivation; as argued throughout the literature review, this duality is at the heart of motivation research and any attempt to focus solely on one aspect is likely to prove unsuccessful (Järvelä, 2001).

The following diagram demonstrates the ways in which this understanding will operate within the research. Knowledge will be explored which is constructed on both an individual level and on an institutional level, with each one influencing the other. The broader outer circle here is indicative of the wider society in which all concepts are necessarily situated, whilst the term social context primarily refers to the meso-level systems, which for this study comprises the school.



**Figure 3.1: The reciprocal nature of self and social processes**

The diagram, which is underpinned by the conceptual levels model displayed in the literature review, demonstrates how both personal and social level influences will be given joint priority in my work. At different stages it will thus be possible to explore various factors:

- The individual self and how knowledge is constructed cognitively through one's own experiences and interpretations
- The self as having the power (or not) to contribute to shared understandings within the institutions
- The institutional values, shared beliefs and culture, and the knowledge produced within this social system
- The impact of the institution upon the individual's own understandings and values

One final point here is that whilst the two aspects will be given priority at different points in the research process, a full understanding will not be complete without recognition of both, including how they might interact. The research questions themselves are therefore designed so that each area can be investigated but also that the relative impact of the two can be compared and explored. In particular, I am interested in whether the schools themselves have the potential to impact upon the motivation of those teachers who may bring with them negative personal perceptions of music and themselves as teachers of music. Is it possible to effect change on an individual by altering practices and structures on an institutional level? If this is the case, are there specific circumstances in which this would prove more or less successful? By focusing on how motivation might be enhanced, I will inevitably explore the ways in which the two strands themselves interact, thus it is vital to ensure that my research allows the chance to explore both.

### 3.1.2 Social realism

Thus far the work has been situated in relation to a broadly constructionist epistemology, which recognises how knowledge can be constructed through both individual and social means, and thus supports the joint cognitive-situative foundations of my project. Both a socially influenced, self-focused ‘constructivism’ and a socially situated, context-focused ‘social-constructionism’ have underpinned the development of my research questions and both will remain core areas throughout the thesis.

However, to situate the project within a purely constructionist epistemology does pose some problems. Despite the prevalence of such works in recent years, ‘constructionism’ as a paradigm is starting to be questioned, with alternatives being proposed that may allow us to move beyond the longstanding positivist–interpretive duality (Maton & Moore, 2010).

Indeed, there has been talk of a complete paradigm shift, with researchers such as Young (2008) calling for a rejection of both positivism and constructionism in favour of what he terms a ‘social realist’ position<sup>6</sup>. His argument stresses that if all knowledge is reduced to the experiences and interpretations of certain groups or individuals, as is often the case with constructionist projects, then what is the point of research? Whilst we may want to give a voice to the participants and to explore their perspectives, research really needs to go beyond just the presentation of different viewpoints to actually make conclusions and recommendations which can *improve* and change the educational prospects in schools. In particular, the argument is to raise the profile of knowledge itself, which he feels should not

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<sup>6</sup> Although I have chosen to employ the term ‘social realism’, after Young (2008) and Maton & Moore (2010), this section is also influenced by both Sayer’s (2000) ‘critical realism’ and Scott’s (2000) ‘transcendental realism’.

be simply reducible to the perspectives of the 'knowers' and cannot be constructed freely to suit the purposes of any specific group (Young, 2008).

Social realism therefore offers a more sophisticated way of understanding the nature of knowledge in that it rejects both positivist absolutism and constructionist relativism; "knowledge is *emergent from but not reducible to* the practices and contexts of its production" (Maton & Moore, 2010, p. 5). In this way, knowledge is still considered social in that it is produced through social processes, but it is also real and, to an extent, 'objective' in that it has actual consequences to the world. Knowledge thus has the power to transcend the social conditions which produced it and react back *upon* the world, in a similar way in which school culture is in part dependent on the individuals who form part of it, but equally reacts back upon these individuals.

This notion is particularly important, as although I retain a constructionist focus upon the 'knowers' and their perspectives, I am also concerned with the 'knowledge' that has been produced with regards music education and the consequences that this has for real-life practice. As well as presenting a range of ways in which individuals and groups understand music teaching, it is important to examine the processes and structures which enable the production of this knowledge and look at whether certain forms of knowledge should be privileged above others; not all knowledge will have a positive impact on educational practices (Young, 2008). Rather than seeing knowledge as entirely subjective and built solely from personal experiences, social realism recognises that there are external structures that guide and regulate this and it is through an appreciation of these that value judgements can be made about the relative worth of different theories (Maton & Moore, 2010).

The key point here is that by focusing on the specifics of each individual's viewpoint, and reducing knowledge to a series of equally valid perspectives, purely constructionist research runs the risk of a descent into what has been labelled as "radical relativism" (Scott, 2000). Young (2008) goes further, describing purely constructionist philosophies as self-defeating; if all knowledge is constructed through one's own experiences of the world, this denies the production of any valuable or worthwhile knowledge at all, even that of the constructionist researchers themselves. What can research tell us if it is one of simply endless interpretations, none of which contains more 'truth' than any other and none of which can claim any kind of credibility or validity?

Whilst one of the aims of my project is to put forward the voices of real teachers, this in itself could be considered questionable if the end result is simply to present and describe these perspectives. This was an important problem to confront, especially since I accept the constructionist stance that multiple interpretations are possible and that each teacher may have different understandings and beliefs about music based on their own unique experiences within particular contexts. However, I also seek to *explain* the ways in which the particular phenomenon of motivation is constructed and to start to look at which perspectives might be considered most effective and valuable in terms of primary school teaching. Certain constructions of knowledge can thus be questioned and disputed, by drawing on the accepted shared understandings of the academic field. This therefore allows my research to go beyond simply presenting a multiplicity of interpretations which the teachers themselves provide, in order to offer a higher level of understanding (Sayer, 2000). If research is to improve education, this requires a degree of critical analysis and social realism provides a framework for this to occur (Young, 2008).

It is possible to understand the use of the two approaches, i.e. constructionism and social realism, by making a distinction between the data collected and the analysis. The data, particularly from the narrative interviews, will comprise teachers' own understandings imbued with social influences. This in itself was generated through traditional constructionist means, where participants were encouraged to re-tell their own stories and to direct the discussion towards their personal priorities, selecting those incidents which they believed to be most significant in the construction of their understandings with regards music (see Chapter 5).

However, through the analysis phase, it was possible to look at the knowledge itself as an object, which would have real consequences upon practice (Maton & Moore, 2010). Whilst each person's story may be unique and rooted in their own experiences, this is not the sole factor through which knowledge is produced, developed, maintained and negotiated.

Knowledge production is essentially a social process, where different groups will develop different forms of knowledge; however, it can still be objectified and examined itself and does not solely comprise the perspectives of the knowers (Moore & Young, 2010). In this way, my analysis techniques, which can be seen to gain validity in the field of educational research, can thus provide a structure to these individual interpretations, allowing exploration of the concrete implications of these.

An important question to ask therefore, is to what extent I am claiming 'objective' knowledge. As noted above, the aim of this work is to provide knowledge that can be used to help improve practice; does this mean it is necessarily designated as 'objective'? Young (2008) writes extensively on the possibility of claiming objectivity within a social theory of knowledge and his argument is relevant here. It is precisely because of the social nature of

knowledge, that it becomes possible to accept the notion that there may be some knowledge that transcends the experiences and standpoints of individuals. He claims that such knowledge can gain a “social objectivity” due to its legitimisation by groups of experts within intellectual communities and it is this form of objectivity for which we should strive; rather than producing a series of grand ‘truths’, the aim should be to produce knowledge that is granted legitimacy within the “social networks, institutions and codes of practice built up by knowledge producers over time” (Young, 2008, p.31). Knowledge can therefore be considered objective if it is placed *in context* on an “epistemic, cultural, historical, personal and methodological ground” (Scott, 2000, p.25). By being clear on these factors, it is possible to produce research conclusions that can be considered socially ‘objective’, in that they are established as reliable and valid within the field. The conclusions drawn from the research can thus gain social objectivity by building on the traditions and methodologies of previously validated research.

Social realism also offers specific guidance to unpicking some of the assumptions which individuals make. One of its key tenets, as described by Young (2008), is that it questions knowledge which is based solely on experience, claiming this in itself is an unreliable way of deciding whether or not something is true. This is particularly relevant for the ways in which individuals construct their own self-perceptions in relation to music, with the literature claiming that negative judgements are often formed at an early age but questioning the foundations upon which such judgements are based (McPherson, Davidson, & Faulkner, 2012). This therefore provides one way in which analysis of the interview accounts can critically question the extent to which individuals justify their own understandings, looking at the perceived causal links which individuals make and questioning the legitimacy of these.

Whilst I accept that for the teachers themselves, beliefs can impact upon their actions and practices *regardless* of how they were formed and whether or not they are justified, it may be possible to effect change by making explicit some of the ways in which self-judgements are made.

The social realist premise that constructed knowledge should be critically analysed rather than blindly accepted can be linked to music education literature, which in some cases, seems to assume an unquestioning value of the subject for everyone, regardless of the form of the product or the outcomes of this (Bowyer, 2012). By taking a more critical stance towards music education, and actually exploring the nature of different types of teaching and learning, it may be possible to investigate what types of music may prove valuable for schools to deliver. It is important to explore what may allow it to gain power, and thus time, within schools; this may not be possible with music in *any* form and it is necessary to assess where exactly the subject stands within a broad curriculum of competing subjects (Maton & Young, 2010). Despite my own positive experiences and belief in the value of the subject, I agree with Bowyer's assertion that music should not just be blindly advocated in any form; there is certainly an 'objective' decision to be taken about what constitutes effective provision (Bowyer, 2012). By looking at the different conceptions of music which the teachers hold, it may well be possible to privilege some over others and this critical stance allows the opportunity to do this.

Clearly there is a case for moving beyond the constructionist foundations described above, to include a social realist element. As Young (2008) points out, if all knowledge is simply reducible to a series of standpoints and no objective judgements can be made, then it would be impossible to claim any kind of conclusion at all. Indeed, concepts such as social justice

would simply comprise one of many equally valid standpoints and could not transcend the experiences of individuals. In relation to the current research, it would thus be impossible to make judgements as to how educational institutions and practices could be improved. As one of my aims is to look at how teachers' motivation for music may be enhanced, there must *necessarily* be a critical element to the research which relies on privileging certain knowledge and judging different accounts and understandings against one another.

Research can therefore be proved valuable by showing that it provides the greatest understanding and knowledge formation within the current context. Whilst the specificities cannot be ignored, knowledge itself *can* transcend these contextual issues and be of use beyond the specifics. In order to achieve this, it is essential that throughout the process I make clear that the conclusions which I draw are: rooted in the words and worlds of the participants; connected to the literature and previous expert findings; and sufficiently relevant to the fields of practising teachers as to provide potential to improve future practice (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Whilst the traditional idea of objectivity may itself be flawed, the regulatory guidelines associated with the term will ensure my research is conducted in a rigorous and systematic manner, thus allowing the knowledge produced to gain social legitimacy.

### **3.2 Methodological rationale**

The methodology of the project comprises a two-stage research design. Although this was initially imagined as a fully mixed methods approach, this has since been revised and is now a primarily qualitative investigation but with an initial, exploratory quantitative phase. This decision was in part taken due to practical reasons; the qualitative research provided such a wealth of data that this became the primary focus of the thesis due to limitations of space.

It also provided the greater insights into the joint individual-social divide, as noted when detailing the third research question above. The following section therefore describes the broad methodological rationale, with the specific methods themselves being covered in sections 3.3 (quantitative) and 5.1 (qualitative).

Within social science research, there has traditionally been a divide between the two major fields of quantitative and qualitative research (Hammersley, 2006). This relates to the traditional paradigmatic dichotomy between positivist (associated with quantitative) and interpretive (associated with qualitative) research. Although the field is considerably more complex than this duality suggests, with the emergence of post-positivism, various forms of constructionism and newer, more participatory methods such as action research (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007), the debates continue, with many purists on either side of the divide failing to recognise the value of research from the 'opposing' tradition (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004).

From my own perspective, I have often found myself torn between the two and welcome a more open approach to research methods that can incorporate both. Perhaps as a result of my primary school background, I feel more drawn towards the interpretive paradigm, which privileges the voices of individuals and celebrates plurality and personal narratives rather than broad generalisations (Janesick, 2000). On the other hand, I do not reject the importance of statistics as used in psychology for drawing more general conclusions and making tentative predictions (Elliott, 2005); indeed the field of music psychology has offered much to my project and quantitative methods abound within this. Mixed methods research therefore proved appealing initially in that it provide a way of transcending some of these

fundamental differences and could “bridge the schism” between the two distinct fields (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p.15).

Breaking down divides becomes something of an on-running theme of this thesis, and employing multiple research phases assists in this. Whilst I recognised the need to explore the broader picture of music in schools and question the extent to which the subject might prove problematic on a more general level, I was (more importantly) concerned with unpicking the ways in which individuals interpreted and understood primary music. In this way, my scope focused primarily on the minutiae of individuals’ understandings, but recognised the broader educational context; the general mapping of issues in the quantitative phase would therefore lay the foundations for an in-depth, detailed study in a second qualitative phase.

Given my research interests, it seemed logical that the overview of potential issues should take place first, and then feed into the more intensive qualitative phase, with this section being given priority. Structuring the research in this way meant that particular issues which arose from the survey analysis could then be explored in more depth through ‘why’ and ‘how’ questions in the interviews. Figure 3.2 demonstrates the overall research design from start to finish, moving sequentially from the initial identification of the problem, through the quantitative survey, its links to the second phase, the development of the qualitative interviews and finally drawing conclusions from the whole process. Although the strategy is largely sequential, with the quantitative phase feeding into the qualitative interviews, there will inevitably be occasional iterative reflections between the two sets of findings. This will involve consideration of the ways in which the data from both support, contradict or enhance each other.

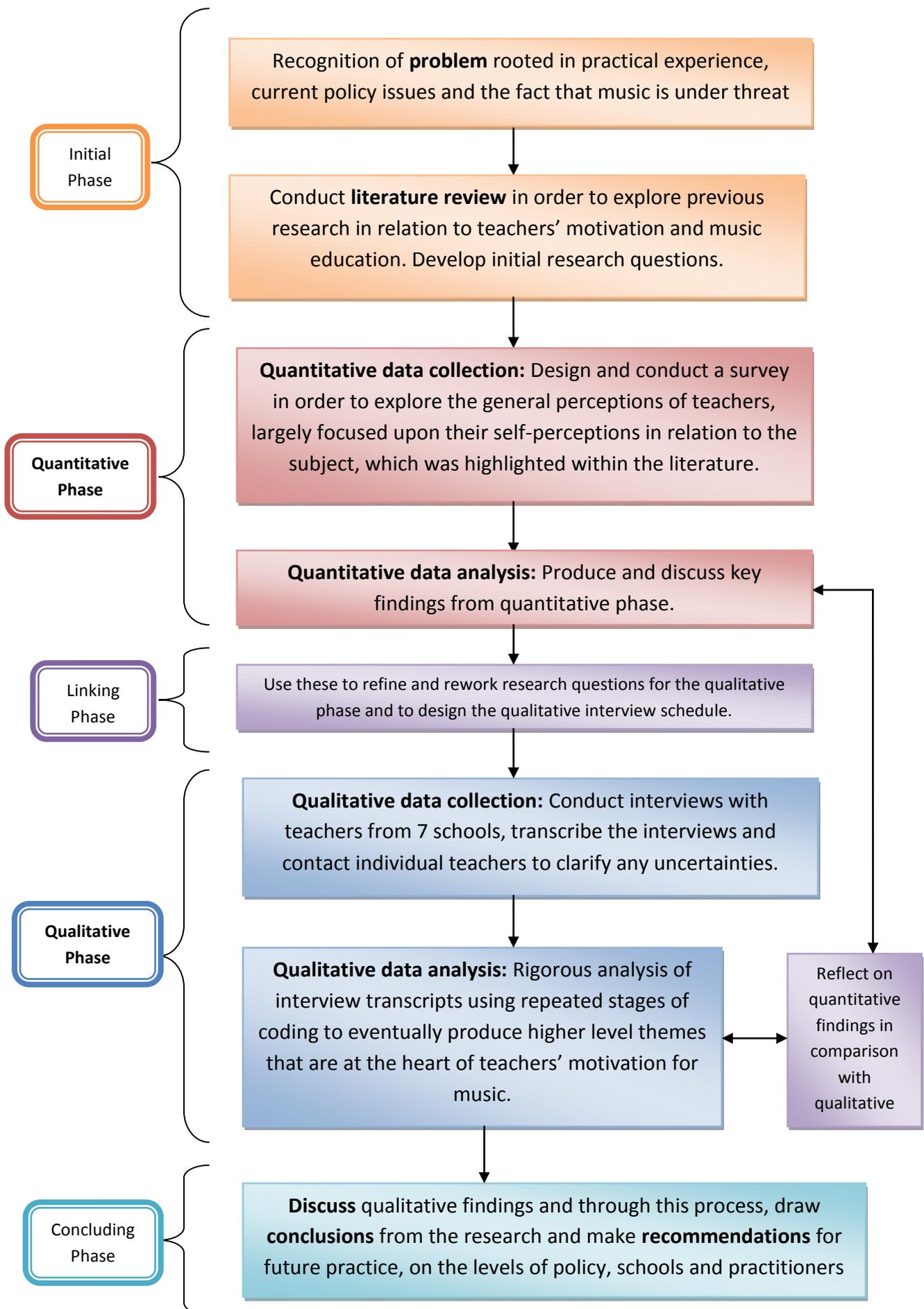


Figure 3.2 Overview of the research process

Although the links between the two sections were crucial to maintain, they did not operate in the straightforward way that I originally planned. A key problem was being unable to include exclusively the same participants and institutions in both stages of the project. Initially I had conceived the study as an “explanatory design” as described by Creswell and Plano Clark (2007). This would comprise a quantitative survey which would identify the key issues, which could then be explained by a qualitative phase.

However, the failure to recruit entirely the same sample of participants meant that it is thus not possible to claim that the qualitative phase directly *explains* the findings of the quantitative phase. As over half of the interviewees in the second phase had not been involved in the original survey, many of the broad issues highlighted in the statistics will have been experienced in different contexts. Clearly given my above discussion about the crucial role which the social context can play in the formation of motivation, this is vital to recognise.

When reflecting on the ways in which the two phases were connected, therefore, I attempted to subvert the problem by altering the role of the quantitative phase from the one described by Creswell and Plano Clark (2007). Instead of providing results which would *themselves* be explained through in-depth interviews, the quantitative analysis was instead used more as a pilot study designed to highlight *potential* areas for exploration within the second phase. It thus enabled me to design an interview schedule around particular issues, as well as giving a broad overview of how this particular group of teachers perceived their abilities in music teaching. In this way, I was able to produce some general findings which could suggest potential areas upon which to focus the second stage.

Although the quantitative phase is positioned here as a pilot study, the links between the two sections were crucial to maintain. The diagram in Figure 3.2 thus includes a reverse arrow between the analysis of both phases (see Purple sections). Rather than a simple unidirectional relationship, findings within the qualitative phase could thus be related back to the statistics produced in the quantitative survey and each could be explored in the light of the other. Instead of the quantitative phase producing the definitive findings, which were then explained by a qualitative phase, the quantitative elements of the study provided a general overview which would then prepare the ground for dialogue within the qualitative discussions.

### **3.2.1 Ethical concerns**

Whilst ethical considerations are an essential part of any research project, the current subject matter is not overly sensitive, meaning the process proved reasonably straightforward. The study fully adhered to the BERA guidelines (2011), in terms of provision of informed consent, the right to withdraw and ensuring participant anonymity; these precautions ensured that it gained ethical approval from Lancaster University and I provided all the necessary paperwork to complete this process prior to any data collection.

The issue of anonymity could have posed problems in the qualitative phase, as I needed to discuss key contextual features of the school. However, I also wanted to ensure that individual teachers would feel comfortable sharing their experiences and perceptions openly and so ensured they would not be specifically recognisable in the final report.

Pseudonyms were employed and any particularly unique identifiers were removed.

In both phases of the research, respondents were provided with information concerning their own rights and the purposes for which their data would be employed; this document

culminated with my own contact details should they wish to get in touch regarding further queries or to withdraw from the study. With complex interviews involving life histories there is always an element of trust involved, and by transcribing these myself I ensured their views were represented as faithfully as possible.

In addition to the adherence to the official guidelines, research must also address the commitments made to both the participants and the research community. This can be achieved through clear descriptions of the ways in which the data is collected and interpreted. Chapter 5 focuses on this, by situating the data contextually and describing explicitly the processes by which I was able to draw conclusions. By providing a clear path from data to findings, the research can be shown to have been conducted rigorously and systematically, whilst still being respectful of the individual stories and personal perspectives (Somekh & Lewin, 2005).

Indeed, as well as the contribution to knowledge, it was hoped that the teachers themselves might benefit from the experience of being involved in the research. Having the opportunity to reflect on one's own understandings and practice has been described as a potentially positive experience for teachers, because it offers such a rare occasion on which to take a step back from the pressures of the profession and consider one's own position, perceptions and beliefs (Nias & Aspinall, 1995). Judging from the post-interview comments, the majority of the participants seemed to enjoy the process of telling their own personal stories with regards music, and several confided that it was an interesting (and rare!) experience to take the time to think about music in their lives. The open nature of the interviews meant they were conducted through a negotiation of my own concerns and the priorities of the

participants, in order to ensure respect of their views throughout; this too aided the generally positive experience.

### **3.3 Research design 1: The quantitative survey**

The final section of this chapter will describe the research methods employed within the quantitative phase of the project. This comprised the use of a survey which was given to a broader sample of teachers than would be involved in the qualitative phase, in order to map out some potential issues.

#### **3.3.1 Development of the questionnaire**

The questionnaire for the quantitative phase was developed in conjunction with the literature review. This had suggested that self-efficacy judgements and the construction of beliefs related to one's own ability would prove crucial to teachers' motivation, in addition to the question of the perceived importance of music and the maintenance of a sense of self-worth. I thus designed questions which allowed me to address these issues, in particular by exploring specific aspects of music teaching and the judgements which teachers made in relation to each dimension. Including a comparative element was also crucial, since I was interested in whether music was considered more problematic than other curriculum areas, and, if so, whether these difficulties could be linked to specific aspects of the subject. The underlying reasons behind these issues could then be explored in more detail in the qualitative phase.

Although I had several key questions in mind when constructing the questionnaire, this process was not straightforward and the survey underwent several revisions. Initial versions were piloted and altered in response to the feedback received. A full copy of the questionnaire is included in Appendix A, and this section will briefly outline some of the key

decisions taken. Whilst the survey was designed in 6 parts, only the key areas will be discussed below, as the additional sections contained relatively straightforward demographic information.

### **Introductory section**

The questionnaire opens with a short introduction describing my research, its purpose and why the participant should take the time to respond. This was necessary in order to provide the respondents with information about the project as a whole and their ethical rights as participants, as well as attempting to persuade them that completing this survey would be a worthwhile use of their time (Walonik, 2000). The persuasive element was important considering the marginalised nature of music in the curriculum, as I was concerned that those who may not value the subject particularly highly would not take the time to complete the questionnaire. As such, I specifically requested that I was seeking responses from those who were not music specialists and the survey would provide the opportunity for them to express their views openly. After corresponding with those who completed the pilot test, I also decided to offer an incentive for taking part. This comprised entry into a prize draw for a nominal voucher, which could encourage participation but which would not provide any other unforeseen or detrimental consequences (BERA, 2011).

The introductory page concludes with a request for respondents to name the school in which they work. At the time of designing the survey, I deliberated over whether this should be mandatory but eventually decided to leave it to the discretion of the participants. My reasoning was that it would be possible to explore these patterns by examining relationships between different *types* of schools with specific characteristics, rather than between individual schools themselves. Since this first stage was a general mapping, the

point was to look for patterns and themes which could then be situated within specific institutions during the qualitative phase; I thus decided it was an ideal, rather than an essential, for teachers to specifically name their school in order to encourage participation and to potentially increase the number of respondents. In particular, I was concerned that asking teachers to align themselves to particular institutions may prove off-putting or result in a more guarded response.

Whilst the possibility of complete anonymity may well have helped to encourage more participants, it was not especially helpful for the analysis and restricted the ways in which I could address the third research question. In hindsight, I could have perhaps included this question on the final page of the survey and made it compulsory so that more 'within schools' analysis could have taken place; although this was possible in some institutions, the fact that 63% of the respondents did not name their school meant that for many it was impossible to explore how their responses were situated in relation to their colleagues, or whether there was evidence of within-school beliefs. This was something to reflect upon for future research.

### **Comparisons between subjects**

Following the personal information, the first main section of the questionnaire comprised the opportunity for teachers to make comparisons across different subjects on the basis of three areas:

- The extent to which they believe it is a priority to teach the subject every week
- Their perceived confidence in delivering effective lessons
- Their perceived confidence in their own subject knowledge

In terms of understanding whether there were potential issues specifically related to the teaching of music, this was an important section to include, as it would allow me to position

music within the broader curriculum. Does music pose specific challenges in terms of the two aspects of value and perceived confidence that cause it to stand out from the norm? By comparing judgements across different subjects it may be possible to see whether music does have the potential to cause specific problems for teachers.

The two areas of value judgements and confidence were selected through the literature review as crucial factors in the construction of motivation. These can be linked to classic expectancy-value theories, i.e. am I able to deliver this subject and is it important for me to do so? In this way, the opening questions would enable me to position music in terms of its rating against other subjects within the two domains, an important aim discussed in Chapter 2.

### **Importance**

The first item in this section focused on how important it is for teachers to ensure they include each subject in their weekly teaching. Compared with the other scales used within this survey, this one followed a different pattern and utilised five, ordinal categories. The reason for this was that I wanted to specify teachers' responses in terms of how their rating of importance is linked to their practice. From my Master's level research (Evans, 2010), I realised that when asked questions such as, "Do you think music is an important subject in the primary school?" the tendency is to reply in the affirmative; this proved to be the case even for those teachers who then went on to claim that they rarely taught the subject, thus more sophisticated questions proved necessary.

When designing this survey therefore, it was important to avoid questions which specifically compared surface level judgements about the importance of each subject area; it is, after all, very easy to claim that all curriculum subjects are important. Instead I wanted to delve

deeper in order to explore the relative importance of each subject and link this to the extent to which the teachers actually engaged with the subject. The responses were thus constructed dependent on the extent to which each subject was taught every week or whether it was likely to be missed out, and participants were provided with options from which they could select:

**1 = Low importance:** It is not a priority for me to teach this subject and I *usually* miss it out.

**2 = Quite low importance:** I *often* miss out this subject as I see others as a greater priority.

**3 = Moderate importance:** I try to include this subject but it may *sometimes* be missed during pressurised weeks.

**4 = Quite high importance:** This is an important subject that is *rarely* missed out, except when it is unavoidable.

**5 = High importance:** It is a top priority for me to teach this subject and I *never* miss this.

The ordering language here was therefore related to the extent to which one might miss out the subject within one's weekly teaching; having observed firsthand that music was often neglected, it was important to explore the extent to which this was replicated in the data.

### **Confidence and knowledge**

The following two questions in this section contain 6-point scales, which are now used throughout the remainder of the survey. Although I did initially experiment with 5 points, as with the opening question, this led to too many noncommittal, neutral answers on the pilot testing, meaning it was necessary to increase this to 6 in order to force the respondents to select either a positive or a negative category. This helped to generate useful, binary data in relation to their perceived confidence and knowledge.

In his guide to constructing efficacy scales, Bandura (2005) claimed that the larger the scale the more reliable this is. Although my rating scale may be considered too short according to

his criteria, I was wary of ensuring the questions were straightforward for teachers to answer; I thus chose simple categories which proved effective in the pilot testing. Although an 8 point scale could perhaps have been employed, even this was deemed slightly confusing by the pilot participants and they claimed to be unsure of what the difference was between, say, the terms “quite” and “slightly”. I thus decided to make clear three distinct levels on each side of the divide and the scale ran as follows:

<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>
Very low	Low	Slightly low	Slightly high	High	Very high

The six point scale was therefore appropriate as it proved more user-friendly to the participants than the 8 points, but still granted unambiguous differentiation between the responses. This allowed comparisons between different levels of confidence in different subjects and would provide the opportunity for relative judgements between subjects.

The final important point in relation to this section is the wording of the two questions relating to perceived confidence. This was quite complex, as I was interested in two areas that were definitely related but inherently distinct. The first was the “confidence to deliver effective lessons” in each subject, and links more to Bandura’s (2005) concept of teacher efficacy. This relates to how confident the individual feels that they can succeed in a particular action, in this case *teach* the various subjects.

In contrast to this specific judgement, I was also interested in a more general sense of one’s perceived level of knowledge in relation to each subject, i.e. how teachers rated their own personal knowledge and skills in each area. I felt it was important to include this as a separate question, because whilst the two (self-judgements in relation to teaching and those in relation to background knowledge) are obviously connected, they are not

necessarily identical. It could well be possible to have a low general self-concept in a certain domain, but yet still feel very confident to be able to deliver an effective lesson in this area. Conversely, one might perceive themselves to have a high level of knowledge in a subject but still lack confidence in being able to deliver a lesson in it.

### **The teaching of music**

The most extensive part of the questionnaire delves in more detail into the particular issues that may affect the teaching of music. This involved many items and was revised several times before reaching its current format. This process included comparisons with existing literature, extensive re-drafting and editing, as well as piloting and discussions with the testers.

The construction of the items in this section began with an examination of Bandura (2005), who offers advice for the generation of questions of this type. It was possible to modify certain aspects of his teacher efficacy scale to relate to music and I drew on this in the early stages of construction. However, Bandura (2005) focused solely on aspects related to the role of an effective teacher and whilst this is certainly important here, it is only one part of a more complex whole. A more relevant model was the scale employed by Campbell and Thompson (2007), who modified Borich's (2000) Teacher Concerns Checklist in order to explore issues related to music teaching. This consisted of 45 items based upon three broad factors, each of which related to Fuller's classic theory of teacher development:

- Self concerns: focused on personal feelings of adequacy and competence
- Task concerns: focused on specific aspects of teaching, time management and pedagogical knowledge
- Impact concerns: focused on pupil learning, development and achievement

This scale proved more compatible with the current study, as it focused on examining the complex factors that affect teachers' perceptions of music specifically. However, the fact that their study focused on secondary-level teachers meant that many questions still required modification and could not be simply translated to the current survey. In particular, a much higher level of musical knowledge was assumed, with teachers' subject knowledge much less likely to be an issue than with primary teachers. Some important questions about musical ability and self-efficacy judgements would thus need to be included.

A further consideration was the term "concern" itself, which was used in the instructions. Teachers were asked to consider each item and ask themselves the question, "when I think about music, how concerned am I about this?" When translated to my research interests this question could easily produce ambiguous results. Consider, for example, the following statement taken from the original survey and the problems that could ensue from this:

"The quality of resources available in the school."

If the respondent replies that they are "highly concerned" about this statement, what can be inferred from this? The teacher could be highly concerned because there are no quality resources available in the school, or simply because they believe that resources is an issue one should always be concerned with. Likewise, if the teacher replies that they are not at all concerned, does this mean they do not have any regard for what musical resources there are in the school, that they do not use them, or that they are concerned about the shortage of such resources? Even the wording of the statement is somewhat confusing, as it deals with two separate concepts: the quality of the resources and whether they are available.

I therefore decided to draw upon their scale for the items in my current survey, but to base these only loosely on their model. The opening question was reworded so that teachers could examine a series of statements and decide to what extent they felt these to be true for themselves. The 6-point rating scale as described above was therefore altered to six categories relating to the accuracy of the statement:

<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>
Very untrue	Mostly untrue	Slightly untrue	Slightly true	Mostly true	Very true

Although the six categories remained similar to those in section 2, the wording was altered. If something is considered “true”, it is difficult to separate this from “very true”. The wording above therefore allowed the sequential nature of the categories to remain intact and avoided confusion regarding the word true. It was also necessary to construct further statements in addition to those which focused upon self, task and pupil concerns. My conception of teacher motivation for music was different to the three levels of teacher competency described above and needed to include situated aspects of the school in addition to the more usual self-judgements. I therefore constructed a new group of factors, relating to contextual issues.

### **3.3.2 Sampling and distribution**

The sampling strategy was initially construed as a two-fold process, where the first stage would involve purposive sampling of specifically targeted schools, whilst a second stage could be used to increase the numbers if required. I firstly attempted to contact a wide range of schools within different local authorities, of different sizes, with contrasting socio-economic circumstances and with varying approaches to music. However, as the response rate proved low, I was forced to repeat three waves of sampling in order to increase

numbers. On reflection, attempting to be so selective in the first place was perhaps idealistic and a more blanket approach might have proved more effective.

In terms of distribution, I initially began with email contact to schools, including an invitation message and several follow-up reminders. However, although this was easy to facilitate, the response rate remained low. By the time I had collected approximately 80 responses, I was also concerned that a quarter of these were from music coordinators and realised that the data needed to include more generalist teachers for it to be of use; although I was interested in the views of music coordinators, there is clearly a greater chance that they would have specific expertise in the subject, so may not provide me with the information I required concerning potential barriers to the teaching of music.

This problem, coupled with the fact that emailing schools was not proving particularly fruitful, led me to design a new approach. I sent out letters containing paper copies of the questionnaires and requested that these be completed by two teachers in the school who taught music but were *not* the music coordinator. The letters were addressed to the music coordinator and I appealed to their interest in the subject to encourage and find two teachers who they believed constituted “typical generalist practitioners from their school”.

Despite the increased cost and effort, this approach proved more successful and I eventually succeeded in achieving a response rate of 126 teachers, 29 of whom were music coordinators. The return to a selective approach also allowed me to target those Local Authorities who were currently under-represented, thus ensuring a greater spread of respondents across the region. Indeed, the eventual sample, although relatively small for a quantitative mapping exercise, did produce a broad spread of teachers from schools of different sizes, denominations and socio-economic areas.

Across the teachers themselves, there was variation in terms of both years of experience and year group taught, which allowed comparisons across different groups. Gender, however, remained one area in which it would be difficult to explore from the questionnaire, since only 11 teachers who completed the survey were male. This is not a surprising statistic given the population of primary school teachers as a whole, but the small number of male teachers did not allow for any real exploration of gender differences within the data.

One final point to note is that the quantitative phase would produce a mapping of potential issues, as they appeared *for this sample of teachers*. There is no guarantee that the number of practitioners who responded to this questionnaire would prove representative of the population, despite the variety in the demographics. In particular, the selective sampling by music coordinators in the final phase may not necessarily have resulted in teachers whose views were particularly reflective of a broader picture, both in the school and in the wider field. The data, therefore, proved interesting to *explore*, and the findings that follow were used to plan for the qualitative phase, rather than to produce conclusions which would be generalisable in themselves to the full community.

## 4. Quantitative findings

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This chapter outlines some of the key findings from the questionnaire, following statistical analysis within SPSS. Although these will be presented in their own right, it is important to highlight the ways in which they will feed forward into the subsequent quantitative phase. Indeed the key purpose of including this section within this thesis is to identify areas of interest which could then be explored through the main qualitative phase; the discussion which follows is thus focused tightly upon the following two aspects:

- Section 4.1: Explorations of the importance of music
- Section 4.2: Teachers' self-perceptions of their ability within the subject

Although there were many other interesting avenues which I could have explored in this data set, space prohibits extended presentation of these. It is thus possible that the data-obtained may prove fruitful for further analysis in the future, although the potential limitations in terms of sampling must equally be acknowledged. Whilst the total sample size was 126, the characteristics were somewhat skewed, with a high percentage of respondents being responsible for coordinating music (27 out of 126). This proportion is clearly greater than one would expect within a typical primary school, meaning that this needed to be taken into consideration in my analysis.

### **4.1 The perceived value of music**

The question of value has proved an important issue throughout this thesis and comprised the first part of the survey. This question was slightly different from the 6-point Likert items that follow, in that it only employed five categories, each of which was assigned a definition

depending on the extent to which teachers felt it was important to teach the subject regularly (see section 3.3 above).

Although this question retains a categorical nature, the responses were also ordinal.

Exploring the mean values thus remains a useful starting point for showing the spread of the data and the selections around which most responses were clustered. The following table demonstrates how the teachers rated each subject, in rank order according to these means. It also provides the modal value and the variance in order to show the spread of responses; as might be expected, there was very little variance within the core subjects and the more interesting discrepancies were found across the foundation subjects, including music. The following table demonstrates the responses from the full dataset:

Rank order	Subject	Mean	Mode	Variance
1	English	4.95	5	0.047
2	Maths	4.93	5	0.069
3	Science	4.55	5	0.707
4	ICT	4.01	4	1.033
5	PE/Sport	3.96	4	0.949
6	Religious Education	3.72	5	1.217
7	History	3.60	4	0.689
8	Art	3.49	3	1.035
9	Geography	3.47	4	0.747
10	Music	3.26	3	1.224
11	Modern Foreign Languages	2.78	3	1.475

**Table 4.1 Rank order of subjects related to perceived importance (full sample)**

It is unsurprising that the core areas of English, maths and science all find themselves at the top, whilst Modern Foreign Languages (MFL), as a more recent addition to the curriculum, is positioned lowest. Another interesting point to note is the high modal value for Religious Education, which can be attributed to the fact that 53% of the total respondents came from

religious denomination schools. However, for those in non-denominational schools, RE is unlikely to be perceived as a priority, hence the high variation.

Music's rank in this table is clearly concerning, as on average it was rated as least important of the subjects, barring MFL<sup>7</sup>. According to the categorical definitions, this means it is more likely to be missed out by teachers than other subject areas. The modal value is also important, as for music, art and MFL, the most common category was 3: "I try to include this subject but it will *sometimes* be missed in pressurised times." As it is perhaps likely that most weeks could be considered pressurised, this increases the chances of music being left out of regular teaching.

Although music did not compare well with other subjects when examining the means, the high variance is important to recognise and the high frequency of top-rating scores produces a different picture. When taking the whole sample, almost a fifth of the respondents rated music as the top level of 'high' importance (17%). This was greater than those who rated art (16%), history (10%), geography (7%) or MFL (7%) as the highest priority, showing that music did elicit some highly positive judgements from teachers.

This positive finding, however, requires further clarification. Of the teachers who rated music as a top priority, two thirds were music coordinators, thus explaining the higher proportion of positive judgements than might have been expected. I therefore decided to split the data in order to explore the perceptions of those teachers who did not have a specialist interest in music. Indeed, when solely the music coordinators are excluded, the percentage of teachers who assigned music the highest score of 5 drops to 7%, placing it on

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<sup>7</sup> Whilst MFL is statutory as part of the new 2014 National Curriculum, its provision remained inconsistent at the time of the data collection.

a par with geography and MFL as one of the subjects which fewest teachers rated as being of vital importance.

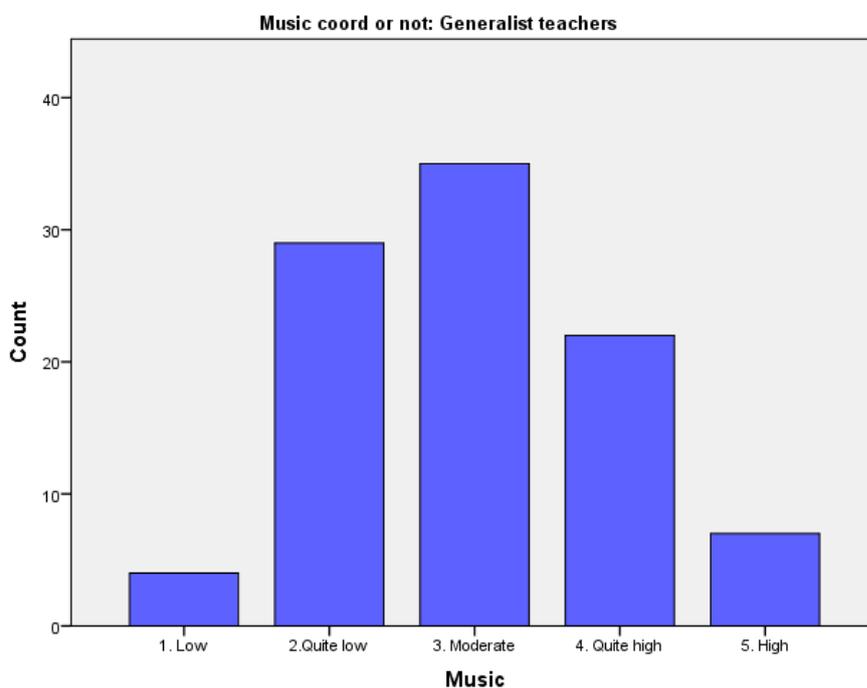
Although perhaps logical in this case, the process of splitting a dataset is always potentially problematic. A crucial drawback was that removing all music coordinators would result in a sample in which music was now *under*-represented. Since the full sample comprised teachers who coordinated every other curriculum subject, the exclusion of music leaders would simply produce another skewed set of results, this time negatively against music. If the primary aim was to gain a fully representative sample, the removal of music coordinators would fail to achieve this.

I did consider transferring a random selection of music coordinators back into the working sample, for instance by including a number which would be comparable with the other foundation subjects. However, the total to be transferred could prove difficult to determine, especially as there was variation between other supposedly comparable subjects; certain areas such as RE, art and ICT, for instance, had considerably more representation than the humanities.

To attempt to manipulate the sample to reduce such differences could therefore prove both difficult and potentially detrimental to the validity of the findings as a whole, especially as the purpose of this section was as an exploratory pilot. I thus decided to split the data to exclude the music coordinators, accepting that the remaining sample now comprised those teachers who did not coordinate music at all. When looking at the general mapping, I would now be able to examine the perspectives of those teachers who were not officially involved with leading music, so could gain a picture of how the subject is perceived and valued by generalist practitioners.

Returning to the current question, the sample alteration did not affect music’s position in the overall ranking and it remained 10<sup>th</sup>, although as expected, the mean reduced from 3.29 to 2.99. Interestingly, the judgements for art also reduced when the music coordinators were removed, meaning this now fell below geography in the overall ranking. Further analysis showed that there were indeed correlations between those teachers who valued music and art (Spearman’s rank correlation 0.519, with a significance level  $p < 0.001$ )<sup>8</sup>, indicating a potential connection between the two subjects which could be explored further.

It is helpful at this point to examine the spread of data for the generalist teachers with regards the question of importance. Figure 4.1 below shows how the responses tended to cluster around a rating of 3, although the high frequency for a rating of 2 is also important.



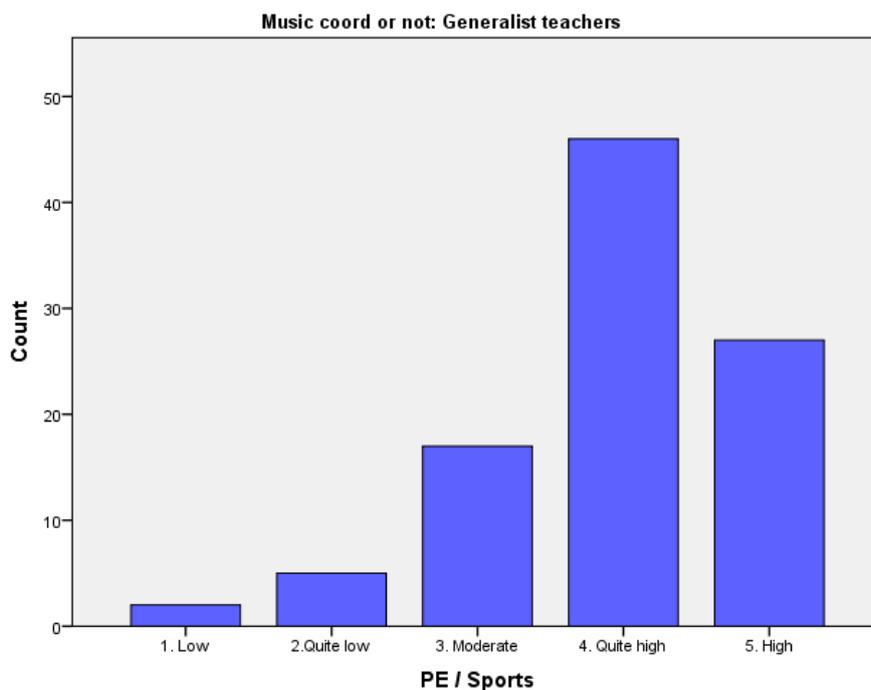
**Figure 4.1: Spread of the ratings for the importance of music**

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<sup>8</sup> Spearman’s Rank was chosen because the data could not satisfy the conditions for Pearson’s correlation, in particular the linear relationship. Whilst there does appear to be a monotonic relationship between the two variables, where one increases as the other increases, this was non-linear and thus the assumptions for the Pearson correlation could not be satisfied.

It is possible to contrast music with PE, a subject with whom music could be considered comparable and which was mentioned in the literature review as potentially having a similar specialist nature (Ardzejewska *et al.*, 2010). PE has also been highlighted in the music education literature as a positive example of a potentially difficult subject which has managed to construct a very coherent message as to its value. Advocates of sports education have, for example, promoted the message that regular participation in sports leads to healthier children, which has positive consequences for society as a whole; whilst music’s messages are contradictory and conflicted, PE has a very clear message as to its educational value (McPherson, 2013).

Certainly from this data, it appears that PE was considered much less likely to be missed out than music, with only 22.7% rating it as either 2 or 3 – a third of the number who rated music in these two categories. The following graph shows the spread of the data for PE and can be compared to that of music above.



**Figure 4.2: The spread of responses for the importance of PE**

In contrast to music therefore, the spread of data for PE is much weighted towards the positive judgements of 4 and 5, meaning that it is far more likely to be taught on a regular basis. For this sample of teachers, it appears that PE remained a priority regardless of other pressures, whilst music was one of the first subjects to be missed out.

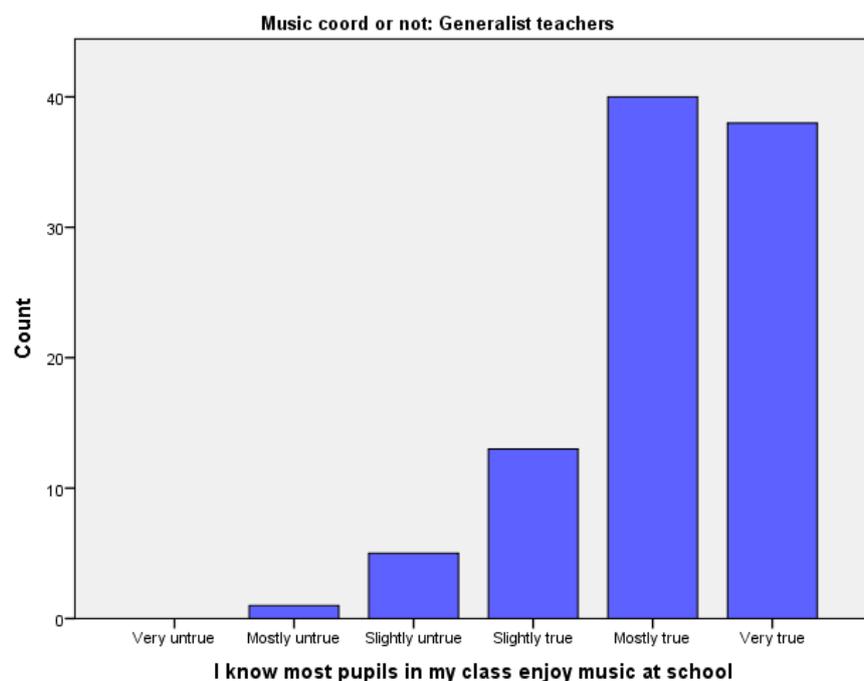
Although this question involved rating the importance of each subject, Chapter 2 demonstrated how the issue of music's value is more complex than this. It is thus worth comparing the results of this discussion with other value-related questions from the final section of the survey, where some interesting contradictions emerged. These later questions comprised 6-point responses, so did not include a middle, neutral answer; teachers could thus be positioned as either in agreement or disagreement with each statement, albeit to varying degrees.

When asked directly about the value of music, the answers here proved overwhelmingly positive. 92.8% of the generalist teachers agreed that "music education is valuable for my pupils", whilst 71.1% agreed that it was a "vital part of the primary school curriculum". Clearly these figures contrast with the minority of 29.9% who rated it as important in the earlier questions and it is important to consider why.

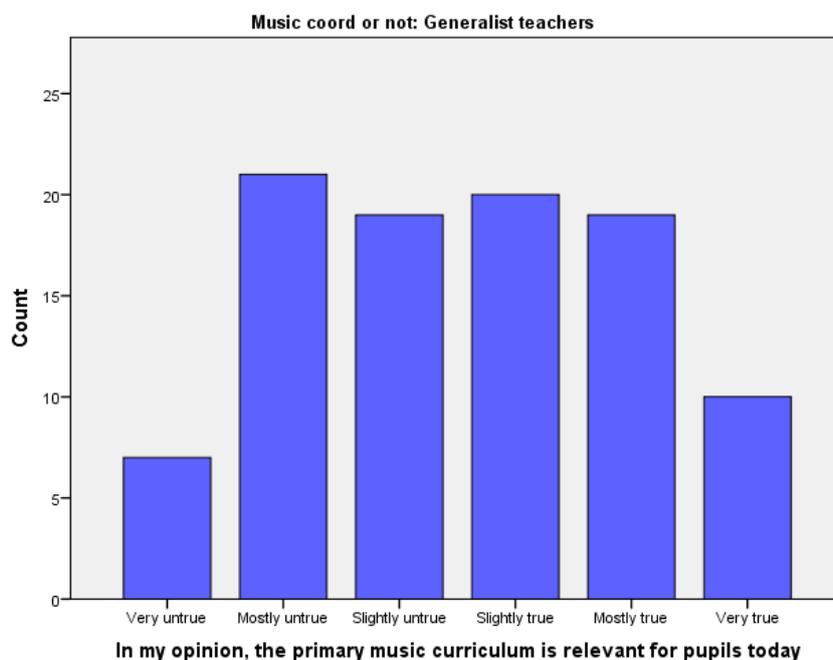
One possibility is a divide between teachers' perceptions of music as a subject in its own right and their perceptions of it in comparison with other subjects. When considering music in relation to other subjects, there appears to be a tendency to view these other domains as greater priority, thus resulting in music's low ranking position. However, when thinking about music in isolation, it appears that generalist teachers do value the subject and believe it is worthwhile for their pupils to study. This poses a dilemma in terms of their motivation;

on the one hand a teacher may believe that music is a valuable subject for the pupils to engage with, but it may not be considered a priority *when compared to other subject areas*<sup>9</sup>.

Whilst this contradiction could be explored further through qualitative methods, it is possible to speculate further from the questionnaire data, with other items providing additional insight. One possibility is that the value of music could be linked primarily to pupil enjoyment. There was certainly a strong association between those who believed music to be “valuable for my pupils” and those who believed “most of my pupils enjoy music at school” (Spearman’s rank correlation coefficient of 0.557 with a significance of  $p < 0.001$ ). This could suggest that teachers considered music to be valuable on the basis that it was assumed the pupils would enjoy it. By contrast, there was a much more mixed response in relation to the item, “In my opinion, the music curriculum is relevant for pupils today”, with 49% of the teachers disagreeing with this statement. The following graphs demonstrate this difference between perceptions of “enjoyment” and perceptions of “relevance”.



<sup>9</sup> This links back to previous discussions in the literature review.



**Figure 4.3 Comparison of perceived enjoyment and perceived relevance**

It is clear from the graphs that whilst teachers generally agreed music was enjoyable, there were questions over its relevance. This difference could help to explain some of the low judgements when comparing music with other subjects. If one believes a subject to be fun but not useful, this may cause problems when attempting to compare its relative worth with other areas, particularly when considering its utility value for the pupils' futures (Eccles, 2005). It is therefore possible for teachers to consider the subject in some way "valuable", such as through its enjoyment factors, but not necessarily as "important" within the curriculum as a whole.

## **4.2 Self-perceptions and potential barriers**

In addition to questions of value, one of the major barriers noted in Chapter 2 was the teachers' perceived level of skills. The subject was considered one which could cause anxiety, thus leading to a lack of confidence in their ability to deliver effective lessons (see

Chapter 2). The questionnaire was therefore designed to explore the teachers' self-perceptions, firstly when considering music in comparison with other subjects, and secondly focusing on more specific aspects of the subject itself. The following section replicates the previous discussion in that it firstly considers music's place within the wider curriculum (4.2.1.) and secondly as an independent subject (4.2.2).

#### **4.2.1 Exploring self-perceptions across subjects**

When comparing the different subject areas, the questionnaire allowed for two dimensions to be explored: the perceived "confidence to teach an effective lesson" and one's "background knowledge and ability" in each area. This second aspect was further defined by explaining that the respondent needed to think about where one's own knowledge and expertise lies, rather than whether one is able to teach the subject.

Taking firstly the confidence to deliver an effective lesson, the ranking of means shows a similar pattern to that of perceived importance above, with music finding itself rated 10<sup>th</sup> out of 11 subjects (for generalist teachers). Again there was only MFL which scored lower, most likely due to its recent addition into the curriculum. Music's position here reflects similar findings in the research literature, where comparative studies have also found that music was ranked lower than most other subjects in terms of teacher confidence (Holden & Button, 2006). Indeed, the low modal value indicates that a high proportion of teachers may find the subject difficult to deliver. However, the high variance for music indicates that there were a broad range of responses, which were not necessarily clustered around a specific point. It therefore appears that whilst many of the teachers rated their confidence to deliver effective lessons in music as low, there were also a significant number of others who rated themselves very highly, even within solely the generalist teachers.

Rank order	Subject	Mean	Mode	Variance
1	English	5.52	6	0.377
2	Maths	5.38	6	0.530
3	Science	5.08	6	0.972
4	History	4.84	5	0.868
5	RE	4.60	6	1.618
6	Geography	4.59	5	0.932
7	ICT	4.57	5	1.498
8	Art	4.16	4	1.723
9	PE/Sport	4.10	5	1.573
10	Music	3.33	2 and 3	2.328
11	MFL	3.15	3	2.278

**Table 4.2 Ranking of subjects in order of perceived confidence to deliver effective lessons (Generalist teachers)**

It is possible to speculate about a connection between these two sets of findings in tables 4.1 and 4.2. For areas such as music, art and MFL, which also scored lower on the importance ranking, an explanation for the teachers' lack of confidence could be the fact that previous results indicate these subjects were much more likely to be missed out, resulting in less chance to *develop* confidence through regular teaching. If one is only occasionally teaching the subject, then confidence is likely to be lower due to a lack of regular engagement. This point would later be suggested to me by teachers themselves in the qualitative phase, who cited their lack of involvement in music as one of the reasons for their low confidence.

However, for subjects such as PE, which was discussed above as being rarely missed out, this argument can be questioned, as PE was also a subject in which teachers felt less confident. When analysed together, those subjects with the lowest rating judgements all comprise a certain element of performance, which could in itself be a reason for their position. ICT could potentially be included in this list too, as despite the extremely high

value judgements, this also gains a surprisingly low place in the ranking order of teacher confidence.

One interpretation is therefore that the teachers' confidence in their ability to deliver effective lessons is related to the perceived level of performance and demonstration that is required, and potentially the threat of failure associated with this (see literature review). It is possible to consider the top six subjects in the table as being domains in which practitioners might deliver a 'standard' lesson, i.e. following a traditional format of perhaps class discussion followed by written activities. The skills involved are generally 'academic', in that the main activities would involve the children engaging in written tasks related to that discipline; typically, there is less of a requirement for practical demonstration by the teacher and the knowledge which teachers would require could easily be sought through the internet or other resources.

Although science and maths could potentially be seen to subvert this claim, the fact that both *have* to be taught regularly (every day in the case of maths) could help to account for the higher levels of confidence. Equally, it is also perhaps possible to teach both maths and science within the typical format of discussion followed by written work; by contrast, one would be less likely to teach music or art without some kind of practical element. The question of teacher modelling could thus be an important determining factor, and is a theme to which I will return in the qualitative chapters.

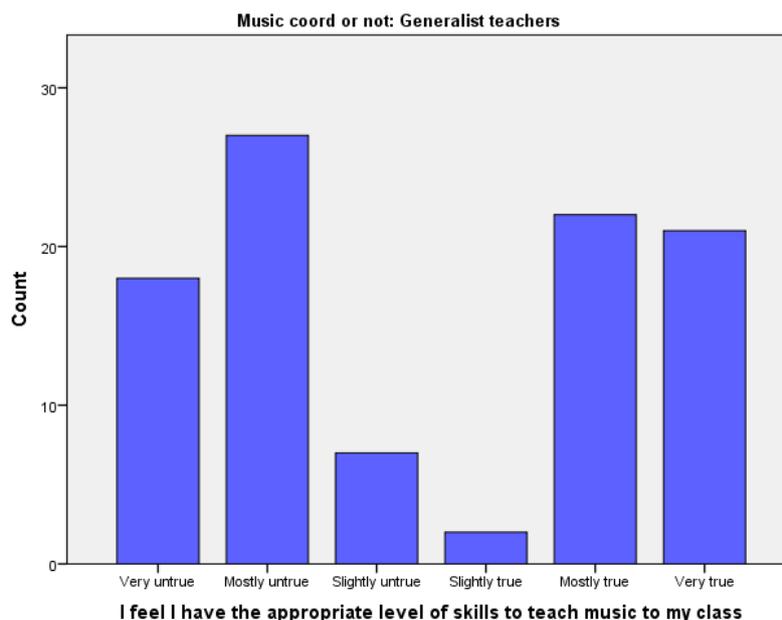
Whilst the above discussion presents a somewhat simplified view of education, there does seem to be something distinctive about the five subjects which are positioned as lowest in terms of confidence (in Table 4.2). In contrast to the core areas, the lower five subjects require skills that could be considered specialist and/or practical. This is an important

distinction and could affect the perceived potential for lessons to be successful; if one considers the requisite level of skills to be high and does not feel confident in being able to demonstrate these, then the belief in one's ability to deliver a successful lesson will necessarily be lower. This could result in reduced self-efficacy judgements, and could thus be detrimental to motivation.

Further data from the survey appears to confirm this, where 60.8% of teachers agreed that, "The music curriculum demands too many specialised skills for me to feel comfortable teaching it". Additionally, 53.6% claimed that they did not have the "appropriate level of skills necessary to teach music to my class". These are thus clear indications that the skills teachers perceived to be required may be crucial to explore in the qualitative phase. Whilst the data here can indicate the potential issue, it cannot expand upon the ways in which teachers understand what is required of them, thus highlighting the importance of the qualitative phase in moving beyond such conjecture to a more in-depth exploration.

Returning to the quantitative data, the distribution of how teachers rated their own musical skills is interesting to explore. Figure 4.4 demonstrates the ways in which teachers responded to this question and it is clear that these are clustered around either end of the scale with very few answers in the middle ground.

This is interesting because it is unusual to find so few answers in the middle sections, with teachers clearly believing themselves to either have, or lack, the appropriate level of skills. Making such clear-cut judgements may prove problematic, if linked to the assumption discussed above that teaching music demands too many specialised skills. For those at the lower end of the scale, such categorical judgements may prove a further barrier to engagement.



**Figure 4.4 Perceived levels of skills in music**

It is possible to relate this finding to the idea of a musical-unmusical divide which was discussed in the literature review. In response to the item, “I consider myself to be a musical person,” 46.4% of respondents rated themselves at the extreme ends of the scale (either 1 or 6), suggesting that there were some categorical judgements as to whether participants believed themselves either wholly musical or wholly unmusical.

It is possible to analyse this finding further by looking at the perceived level of background knowledge and skills which teachers believed themselves to possess in each subject. This time music proved to be lower than all the other subject areas including MFL. However, this could be explained by the fact that although the practitioners may not be confident in *teaching* languages due to its recent addition to the curriculum, the majority were educated pre-2004, when it remained compulsory to take a foreign language to at least GCSE. As such it was possible that they would have greater knowledge in this than music, which has always been optional post Key Stage 3.

The fact that the teachers rated their own background knowledge as low, therefore, provides further support for the fact that the level of skills which teachers believe music to require may be too great and that they would not be able to develop them in the future. 69.1% of teachers, for instance, claimed they had “missed out on the opportunity to develop musical skills” in early life, suggesting perhaps a link to their early experiences in relation to their current self-perceptions. In terms of specifically being able to teach, this problem could be exacerbated when combined with the fact that 70.1% did not consider themselves to have received appropriate training to be able to deliver the subject<sup>10</sup>. A lack of musical opportunities, coupled with a lack of pre-service training, may thus provide an insight into the reasons behind such low confidence judgements.

#### **4.2.2 Exploring self-perceptions within music**

In order to explore issues related to teacher efficacy, the main part of the survey was designed to assess which specific aspects of music might prove particularly problematic for teachers. A number of items were therefore included in order to explore the respondents’ judgements in relation to their perceived ability to deliver specific aspects of the subject. One of the most prominent areas to emerge here was being able to, “differentiate for varying levels of skill in music”, with 67% believing they were unable to do this. At a similar level, 64.9% also felt they were unable to, “offer pupils appropriate guidance to move them to the next level of their learning in music”. These two teaching skills (differentiation and scaffolding learning), which would form part of day-to-day practice in all other subjects, were thus considered particularly difficult in music. This therefore highlights two potential areas which could be further investigated in the qualitative phase.

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<sup>10</sup> Interestingly, over a third (37.9%) of the music coordinators also claimed they had received insufficient training, meaning that this may be an issue affecting both specialists and generalists.

A further (and perhaps more speculative) finding was that there was a difference between elements of teaching which asked teachers to focus upon solely themselves as teachers, in comparison with those which focused upon the pupils. 54.6% of the practitioners, for instance, did not feel “comfortable playing school instruments”, reflecting perhaps the threat of performing discussed previously. However, when the focus moved to the pupils, the responses were much more positive. 94% of the teachers believed that their pupils enjoyed music, whilst 86.9% claimed they were able to “motivate their pupils to engage with music”; a somewhat paradoxical finding perhaps, given that 38.9% of my sample taught music for less than half an hour per week, so were perhaps not very motivated to engage with it themselves! However, the point here is that when reflecting on their pupils and *their* responses to music, the teachers were much more positive than when they focused upon themselves as practitioners; this again provides an avenue for investigation in the qualitative discussion.

Although certain aspects of teaching did appear to cause problems in music, there were other areas in which the teachers appeared to feel more confident. Somewhat surprisingly, given the literature, maintaining classroom control was not considered an issue by this sample of teachers, with 85.9% agreeing that they were confident in keeping control of the children when teaching music. Perhaps, however, the wording of the question was important here, with teachers being asked to respond to how much they were able to “maintain the relevant degree of classroom control”. This high rating could therefore be connected to the fact that this question was perceived as being related more to a teaching skill, rather than an intrinsic musical skill. When considering the more problematic areas discussed above, being able to offer musical guidance requires specialist knowledge and

skills, which may be considered more difficult. However, being able to control the class could well be perceived as separate from subject knowledge, related more to their competence as a teacher rather than their competence in music.

The same principle could also apply to the item, “I am able to organise opportunities for whole class performance”. The emphasis here is placed on organisation, rather than on the teachers having to perform themselves, thus 67% of teachers felt confident they were able to do this. An important issue to explore in the qualitative phase is thus the ways in which skills such as differentiation and scaffolding learning are considered more difficult when specifically related to music, whilst other areas of teaching might be more easily transferred. Is this, as I have suggested, because these aspects demand a greater degree of knowledge and skills, meaning that the teachers’ perceived level of skills would be in fact the crucial barrier to the teaching of music? There is clearly some evidence here that certain aspects of music can be considered more challenging than in other areas of the curriculum, and the tentative suggestions I have offered here can be further explored within the qualitative interviews.

### **4.3 Linking quantitative to qualitative**

The above discussions have outlined a small selection of findings from the exploratory analysis, considering how this might link to the next phase of the project. Whilst the questionnaire provided some indications as to the complex construction of teacher motivation, it also led to further questions and I found myself continually asking “why”. In particular, when exploring the self-judgements of teachers in response to the extended items, it was not always clear as to why certain factors might have proved more problematic than others, and there remain questions to which the survey could not provide answers.

Take, for instance, the fact that many teachers rated their confidence to deliver an effective lesson as low; this information may be indicative of a potential problem with music but in itself, it does not allow access to the full understanding and leaves many questions unanswered. Most crucially, what does this teacher consider an effective lesson in music to entail? Which aspects prevent her from feeling confident? How have her self-perceptions developed in a negative trajectory? Is there anything which can be done to reverse this process, for example, can the school itself put structure in place which could effect change on an individual level? These were the type of dilemmas which emerged from this phase of the research and which could now be addressed through qualitative means.

I therefore needed to revise the research questions in order to reflect my new understandings and priorities, and also to consider the key question of contextual factors, which proved difficult from the survey. These spanned two main aims, the first of which was to generate greater knowledge of how teachers actually understood music as a subject and how these beliefs contributed to their decision making process with regards their own actions in the discipline (covered by questions 1-3 below). This involves analysing in-depth interview data in order to unpick both the actual understandings themselves and the ways in which they are constructed. Secondly, it was also important to consider how motivation could be enhanced (question 4 below). This is a more practical aim and relate to the overarching desire to effect some kind of change in practice. The new questions were therefore constructed as follows:

1. How do primary school teachers understand music and its place in the curriculum?
2. How are those understandings constructed, through a combination of both individual and social factors?

3. What impact do these understandings have upon teachers' motivation to engage with the teaching of music?
4. How might an understanding of individual and social processes help to enhance teachers' motivation to engage with music?

These questions now remain at the heart of this study for the remainder of the thesis, with their findings being discussed during Chapters 6 to 9. Before this however it is important to outline in more detail the qualitative research design, which has been alluded to above.

Chapter 5 therefore provides a link between the two phases of the research design as well as explaining how the qualitative phase was designed and operationalised. Although the qualitative phase now takes priority for the remainder of the thesis, I will return to some of the findings discussed here in order to further clarify these through the use of qualitative interviews.

## 5. The qualitative phase: Research design 2 and initial findings

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Whilst the quantitative phase had produced some interesting, if tentative findings, the survey had also thrown up unanswered questions which now needed to be explored in a more in-depth way through qualitative methods. Taking the revised research questions, the qualitative phase was now designed to allow investigation of some of the more elusive lines of inquiry. In particular, I was interested in teachers' own personal understandings of what music should actually entail, and the ways in which these had been constructed. These in-depth beliefs and theories could not be accessed through questionnaires, which typically assume uniformity of interpretation. It was thus important now to focus on the more complex personal constructions and to start to unpick some of the webs of understandings which underpin teachers' practices and actions. Through this, the connections between cognitive and social constructions could be explored.

This chapter outlines the key methodological features of the qualitative phase, including a description of how the data analysis was undertaken. I commence with a rationale behind the use of narrative interviews, considering the benefits which this method afforded but also noting its limitations. This is situated within the epistemological framework which was described previously in Chapter 3, where it was made clear that the qualitative phase was to provide the in-depth exploration of individual teachers within their particular contexts.

I then describe the schools which were involved in this research, giving key details of each institution and a brief outline of the characteristics of those teachers who participated. As noted in section 3.2.1, all names have been changed and specific identifying features have

been omitted to preserve anonymity. However, this section is important for providing the research context and can be used as a useful frame of reference during the discussion chapters which follow.

The main body of this chapter comprises section 5.3, where I discuss the analysis that was undertaken and the ways in which conclusions were reached. The coding process is demonstrated, as this underpins the development of findings and conclusions related to both individual and social issues. With interview data, it can be very easy to “over-individualise” themes which can be shaped as much by contextual factors as by subjective interpretations. It was through the processes of coding therefore, that I produced the models which allowed me to start to develop my own understanding of how individual and institutional factors might combine together and become jointly prioritised, a key research focus throughout the project. Eight different factors are specifically identified which will eventually form the basis of the discussion chapters which follow.

## **5.1 The use of qualitative interviews**

The principle research method in this qualitative phase comprised extensive, narrative interviews with teachers. Following the survey, interviews proved the logical way of exploring and extending the findings which were produced, and delving deeper into some of the key issues. In particular, in-depth questions about the nature of teachers’ understandings, and the ways in which these were constructed, remained areas to explore. This section provides the rationale for the use of interview methods (5.1.1), as well as a discussion of how they were structured (5.1.2) and their potential limitations (5.1.3).

### **5.1.1 Narrative inquiry and its focus on understandings**

Narrative is universal to all cultures and is a primary function of our minds (Kashima, 1997). It addresses the profound need to hear and tell stories and is the “social cement” that creates both group cohesion and personal meaning-making; narratives have the power to communicate, interpret and give meaning to our experiences, making them highly relevant for this project (Thomas, 1995, p.3).

One of the key aims of this qualitative phase was to investigate the ways in which teachers constructed their understandings of music teaching, and how these might in turn affect their practices regarding the subject. The use of extensive, qualitative interviews, allowed a focus upon the narratives that individuals develop about their experiences throughout their personal and professional lives, exposing the connections and theories which individuals construct. Importantly, this approach focuses on the ways in which individuals are involved in acts of meaning-making “within their social and cultural environment” (Thomas, 1995, p.2). It thus allows exploration of both individual understandings and the social situations within which these are produced, making it an appropriate method for the overarching aim of exploring these two dimensions. Narratives neither over-individualise nor over-socialise (Kashima, 1997).

A crucial part of exploring the teachers’ understandings involves looking at individuals’ past experiences with music, or their ‘musical histories’, and considering the ways in which these have impacted upon their current judgements. Narrative inquiry makes this possible by offering the space to reflect on these past experiences and bring them together with one’s present understandings and anticipated futures (Nias & Aspinall, 1995). In this way, they allow both the researcher and the participant to interpret and give meaning to particular

events (Thomas, 1995). They also help to illuminate the lenses through which people perceive the world and understand specific concepts, helping to provide greater access to how beliefs, theories and understandings are constructed (Warin, 2010).

The main purpose behind using narrative interviews is therefore to explore the thoughts and perceptions which would otherwise be inaccessible through either survey research or observational methods. This is an important distinction, as it could be argued that an ethnographic approach might be more suited to a study of teachers' motivation, exploring how it is constructed on a moment-to-moment basis. However, as shown in Figure 2.3, the key focus was not necessarily whether the teachers were "motivated" in the sense of being fully committed and involved whilst teaching; instead it was important to explore the ways in which they *choose* to involve themselves in music and upon what understandings they were basing these decisions.

With reference to the 4 tenets of motivation outlined in section 2.1, therefore, the crucial factors for this research are the impetus of teachers to become involved in music and their persistence in doing so. The fact that music finds itself on the periphery of the curriculum in many schools led some teachers to perceive the subject as an optional extra. Thinking back to the quantitative data, for example, 12% of the respondents failed to teach music at all, with a further 27% devoting less than half an hour per week to the subject. The narrative interviews allowed me to question *why* this should be the case, with a focus on how the teachers constructed their own understandings and meanings associated with the subject. Interviews were therefore selected because they could provide insights into the teachers' personal thoughts and perspectives that would otherwise have been inaccessible.

In addition to looking at teachers' understandings of music specifically, the interviews also allowed exploration of their general beliefs about teaching and the broader purposes of education, which could again have remained invisible through other methods. In particular, it was necessary to take a more sophisticated view of teachers' understandings than that of the survey, in which the teachers responded to questions regarding the "teaching of music in the primary school". Qualitative interviews allowed exploration of what teachers actually understood this term to *mean*.

Finally it is worth relating the use of interviews back to the epistemological position outlined in Chapter 3. In terms of the knowledge being produced, the aim is not to develop a fundamental and consistent account of the 'truth' of what constitutes music teaching in the primary school. Indeed, Thomas (1995) warns how the endless search for consensus across accounts can serve to dampen and undermine the individual voices. Instead, the research intends to explore the ways in which teachers have constructed their own beliefs about music within the various contexts in which they have interacted. The project has therefore been designed in order to provide insight into the meanings that teachers construct and "how these constructions have evolved within the life worlds of a particular community of knowers" (Scott, 2000, p. 5). The focus here is therefore on how this construction is made jointly between the individual and the social groups to which they belong; all knowledge associated with teaching is not solely personal but is rooted in the specifics of individual schools and educational systems, meaning it needs to be considered as jointly personal and social (Thomas, 1995).

Whilst I have questioned the notion of providing universal truths from this research, it is also important that research links to practice and does not provide simply an 'anything goes'

philosophy in relation to the various understandings which emerge (Young, 2008). As will be discussed in the following chapters, there was no single common consensus as to what the purpose and place of music was within the primary school curriculum, with a number of different (often dichotomous) beliefs prevalent across the interviews. The discussion which follows does not simply present these uncritically, but instead seeks to examine the ways in which beliefs and understandings have the potential to affect practitioners' decision-making, actions and motivation to engage with music. The point here is that certain perspectives can prove either helpful or detrimental to teachers' involvement with the subject and by looking at how these have developed it is possible to explore whether change might be possible. The overall aim of the project is to look at how motivation for a peripheral subject such as music might be enhanced, thus simply providing a description of the different understandings in itself is insufficient and it is necessary to constantly question the ways in which these beliefs will impact on practice.

### **5.1.2 Using critical incidents**

Since the interview phase evolved from both the quantitative findings and the literature review, there were several key areas which it was essential to cover during the conversations. The result was that a semi-structured interview schedule was developed, which covered the key areas identified in the quantitative data but also allowed for a high degree of flexibility. It was important to allow the participants to retain a degree of ownership over the content of the discussion, thus it was essential to permit them the space to draw upon those events which *they* perceived as being most significant (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). The choices, selections and emphases which participants made were themselves important to examine, meaning freedom was permitted.

The opening sections of the interview were therefore designed so that the practitioners could talk freely about their lives and select the instances which were most important to them. Although I indicated that the teachers needed to reflect on their own experiences whilst at primary school, secondary school, during their training and finally in their teaching career, this was the only structure provided. The aim here was for teachers themselves to make choices about those events which could themselves be analysed.

In this way, the interviews allowed recollection of 'critical incidents' from the individual's musical histories. Although Critical Incident Technique has largely been associated with looking for patterns and commonalities (Kain, 2004), I employed it here in a more exploratory fashion. It was important to discover which events and memories the participants themselves would prioritise when given the freedom to tell their own story, and it was therefore important to retain an element of free choice.

When looking across these stories, I was particularly interested in those teachers who had had negative experiences with music in the past, and the extent to which these continued to affect them today. Were the teachers' formative musical experiences indicative of their current attitudes and, if so, were these fixed? The use of narrative proved a useful ground for exploring this possibility of *change*; it allowed teachers the chance to reflect on periods in which they believed their perceptions had altered and question the reasons behind this. Again a key question is to explore whether there were specific incidents which had triggered change and if so how were these interpreted by the individuals. Literature suggests that negative incidents in childhood can be the catalyst for the cessation of all involvement in music but could the reverse be true? Is it possible for there to be positive change in one's perceptions of music later in life, if the appropriate circumstances allowed for this?

Following from the largely unstructured opening to the interview, the remainder of the conversation was directed towards the key areas identified in the literature review: self-perceptions and efficacy beliefs; beliefs about the nature of musical ability; issues of anxiety, threat and the preservation of self worth; and value judgements, including comparisons with other subjects. However, even within this, it was essential to be flexible, rather than rigidly adhere to a set of pre-prepared questions (Rubin & Rubin, 2005), particularly because of the unpredictable nature of the responses to the first section. In some cases, the largely unstructured, narrative discussion actually comprised almost the entire interview, as participants explicitly related their early experiences to their current understandings and the conversation naturally flowed between past experiences and current beliefs. However, in other cases, the discussion of early experiences was completed very quickly and instead the interview followed a more traditional structure. The actual content and structure of the interviews therefore varied between participants, although the opening instructions and the topics covered did retain a level of consistency<sup>11</sup>.

### **5.1.3 Potential limitations of method**

Although interviewing proved suitably compatible with the aims of the project, it is not a problem-free method and it is important to be aware of its limitations. It can, for instance, be easy to over-claim from the personal accounts this method generates. Whilst individual narratives can provide some important insights into how specific teachers understand music, taking these subjective beliefs as evidence of a whole school approach can be slightly more problematic. Although I tried to subvert this to an extent by interviewing several teachers from each school and gaining insight into music's place within the institution, a

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<sup>11</sup> All interview transcripts retain a record of the way in which questions were structured, although space prohibits the inclusion of these here.

more ethnographic and longitudinal approach could perhaps have enabled a greater insider understanding of how the school's approach extended beyond shared discourses to actual shared practices.

A further problem with interviews as a research tool is that what teachers do, and what they say they do, are not necessarily identical (Scott, 2000). Inconsistencies and contradictions may occur due to misconceptions, misattributions or indeed may be evidence of structures of which the respondents may themselves be unaware (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). It is inevitable that the focus on individuals' perceptions can be restraining as well as illuminating, as the interview provides information from the perspective of the respondent.

Equally, what occurs in the interviews is very much a time-bounded text, and a different interview conducted at a different time could have the potential to produce very different responses (Scott, 2000). It is thus important to understand that this method provides a 'snapshot' of data, rather than necessarily an enduring picture. Whilst many of the events which the teachers discussed had proved relatively resistant to change over time, it is impossible to ignore the context of the interview and the fact that in different circumstances, or at a different time, alternative outcomes could well have ensued. This point is particularly important to make with regards Chapter 9, in which I discuss a whole school approach to music. In this, my focus is on how the school's developments have contributed to the state of the institution as it is *now*; there is thus no guarantee of the longevity of the strategies described and future research may prove necessary.

A further extension to this problem is that the ways in which teachers understand different concepts are produced not only through conscious links to their previous experiences and interpretations of these, but through unconscious factors and inaccessible structures. In

particular, there are influences which extend beyond the confines of the school and are include societal level issues with regards both teaching and music (Burr, 1995). A relatively small-scale study such as the one I am conducting cannot claim to expose all of these macro-level problems, meaning that much of the knowledge produced will be situated within its local context.

However, although this could be considered a problem, it has also served to make the study more bounded. By focusing closely on individuals and institutions, it is possible to explore the ways in which understandings are negotiated on personal, interactional and institutional levels, whilst still accepting that there may be broader structures present within these. My own exploration of more 'structural' issues was therefore conducted at the level of schools themselves, as institutions with their own specific culture. Within this, there would be certain 'rules', which are part of the norms and traditions of the institution and which may be followed or subverted by the members of this group. Any institution will have its own specific structures in terms of power and responsibility, and thus it is important to consider to what extent the personal understandings of the teacher are influenced by, and in turn construct, the shared understandings within the school. Again, this issue will become particularly prevalent within Chapter 9, which discusses the potential impact of schools, but it is important to highlight here.

By looking across the different accounts from *within* the institution, therefore, it may be possible to look beyond the lens of the individual to explore the broader culture and the place of each teacher within this. As Scott (2000) notes, the roles which each person will play in an institution are not fixed or automatic but instead will be negotiated in relation to the traditions, values and position of the individual within a wider group:

Each role is characterised by a set of responsibilities, an accepted way of behaving in that role, expected outcomes and fundamentally different amounts of power in relation to other people playing different roles. (Scott, 2000, p.26)

This is important to analyse, as it positions the role which teachers play within the institution not as uniformly identical to one another, but rather as something which is constructed through the expectations within the institution. In this way, one's own personal understandings may evolve to become merged with the priorities and expectations of the institution. Alternatively, the opposite may equally occur, where the individual's beliefs conflict with those prevalent within the institution. Both scenarios will be useful to explore, and will provide insights into the role which schools may potentially be able to play in shaping the understandings and motivation of teachers.

## **5.2 Sampling**

The sampling of schools for the qualitative phase was undertaken in several stages, some of which were more opportunistic than strategic, although the end result was that an appropriate range of schools was achieved. Firstly, I contacted schools who had been involved in the quantitative stage of the project, with the aim of trying to follow on from this. However, the option of remaining completely anonymous which was included on the questionnaire made this difficult, as some of the teachers had failed to indicate their institution and had not left their contact details.

Pursuing the respondents of the questionnaire had some success, and three schools chose to participate further from this. However, perhaps unsurprisingly, all had made at least some commitment to music, each having received some kind of external award such as a Sing Up or Arts Mark accreditation. This therefore gave me three schools in which music was likely to be considered important, one of which was a lead school in the subject and another

of which had recently undergone an Ofsted subject inspection in music. It was therefore necessary to look for contrasting schools in order to provide a broader picture. Finding schools in which music was less of a priority proved more challenging, as schools were unlikely to publicise the fact that music was not especially important. Indeed, if the subject was on the periphery of school life, they would clearly be less likely to participate in research whose focus was music.

Eventually, I resorted to two alternative methods to recruit schools. The first was to attend music coordinator meetings during which I publicised the research. This added two further institutions, both where the music coordinators were experiencing specific problems in leading the subject. The first was struggling to cope with coordinating both music and science, and was facing problems in trying to juggle the competing demands of the head and her staff; she therefore provided a useful link to the quantitative phase, where those individuals who coordinated music in addition to another subject were more likely to find their task challenging. Conversely in the second school, the music coordinator had originally been employed as a music specialist but had been reassigned to classroom duties and now felt that music was suffering because of this; she was therefore looking for ways in which she could rectify this situation and reinstate music as an important subject in the school.

The final two schools were recruited primarily through my own contacts, and through anecdotal accounts of music in their schools. This proved a useful strategy, as it was highly unlikely that either school would have participated in the research without the personal connection. It was, of course, important to retain a similar relationship with all schools, thus I did not include my own contacts in the interviews in order to avoid any kind of explicit personal bias.

In the end, seven schools participated in the research, with between four and six teachers from each school taking part in the interview process. The amount of time I was able to spend in each school varied, with two of the schools (C and D below) allowing a much more extended period, including the chance to observe events and chat informally to staff and pupils. For other institutions, time was more pressed and I simply entered the school, conducted the interviews and then left. However, I ensured that I collected email contact from the teachers so that further conversations could take place in order to clarify information or ask additional questions.

In order to protect their anonymity, teachers were reassured that their identities would not be disclosed. However, because of the focus on the impact of schools and shared understandings, it is important that the key characteristics of each school should be identified, to assist the reader in gaining an understanding of context. The following tables summarise this information, and can be considered a reference guide to be used in relation to the quotations and comments. The names of the institutions have been randomly selected, although this has been used to indicate the religious character of certain institutions, where appropriate.

As will become apparent, I have used the same initial letter for each school and all the teachers within this. This enables the reader to rapidly observe if teachers who are quoted were from the same or different institutions. During the discussion chapters, quotations will be followed by the pseudonym of the teacher and an indication of the year group taught, for example, "Amy, UKS2" would refer to Amy, in school A, who teaches in Upper Key Stage 2. If further information is required, for example the teachers' level of experience and their subject specialism, the tables that follow can be consulted. There is one further addition to

this, in that those teachers who are music coordinators will also be demarcated with the letters MC, for example, “Cecilia, LKS2, MC” would be Cecilia, of school C, who teaches in lower Key Stage 2 and is the music coordinator.

### 5.2.1 List of schools and their characteristics

#### School A: All Saints RC Primary School

All Saints is a one-form entry Catholic primary school situated in an area of reasonably low socio-economic circumstances. Free school meals data shows that 38% of pupils are eligible for this, twice the national average in primary schools. Music has traditionally been a forgotten subject in this school, with very little taking place in terms of both classroom lessons and extra-curricular activity. Although the head teacher wishes to change this situation, the music coordinator has little time or resources and is finding the staff resistant to any increased involvement. She also has to juggle the responsibility of coordinating science and does not feel she has time for music herself. At the time in which I was in this school, a visit from Ofsted was perceived as imminent, with a nearby (and comparable) school having recently been placed in special measures.

Teacher	Key Stage taught	Subject coordinator / role	Total years' experience	Years in current school
Abigail	Lower Key Stage 2	Science and Music	5	2
Anna	Key Stage 1	History and Geography	9	9
Alison	Key Stage 1	Head of Key Stage 1	14	13
Amy	Upper Key Stage 2	Maths	24	16
Adele	Lower Key Stage 2	ICT	8	6

### **School B: Bramley Primary School**

Bramley Primary School is a high achieving institution, in which over 50% of Year 6 children typically gain Level 5 in their SATS. In terms of intake, it has the lowest percentage of free school meals of all the schools with whom I worked (6%). Before 2006, music had been delivered by a specialist teacher, which ensured consistency and continuity throughout the school. However, since this time, the subject had gradually become more and more neglected by many of the teachers. The music coordinator is now looking to increase music to its previous level of importance, and has started to introduce initiatives to support school singing; she works in Early Years, where music provision is particularly strong, but she is now trying to negotiate ways in which to bring it back to the higher year groups.

<b>Teacher</b>	<b>Key Stage taught</b>	<b>Subject coordinator / role</b>	<b>Total years' experience</b>	<b>Years in current school</b>
Barbara	Foundation Stage	Music	19	11
Beatrice	Lower Key Stage 2	Science	16	9
Bella	Upper Key stage 2	Advanced skills teacher in Creative Arts	5	1
Briony	Foundation Stage	Healthy Schools	3	3
Beverley	Upper Key Stage 2	N/A	4	1

### **School C: Christ the King RC School**

Christ the King is a large, three-form entry school situated in the middle of an estate in which unemployment is rife. 42% of children are eligible for free school meals, which is more than twice the national average. However, pupil results here are higher than those of the neighbouring schools and the institution is well respected in the community. The school has been awarded the Arts Mark Gold award and the head teacher has allocated significant funding for the provision of extra-curricular instrumental tuition. Although the majority of

the staff are well established in the school, with many of them approaching the end of their careers, the music coordinator is relatively new to the role and feels there has been little focus on classroom music teaching since an INSET programme approximately ten years ago.

<b>Teacher</b>	<b>Key Stage taught</b>	<b>Subject coordinator / role</b>	<b>Total years' experience</b>	<b>Years in current school</b>
Christopher	Upper Key Stage 2	Deputy head	35	22
Christine	Lower Key Stage 2	Science	20	20
Claire	Lower Key Stage 2	Assessment	33	33
Catherine	Lower Key Stage 2	Gifted and talented	3	3
Cecilia	Lower Key Stage 2	Music	4	4
Catrina	Upper Key Stage 2	RE and drama / assistant head	29	18

#### **School D: Dalton Primary School**

Dalton Primary School is a music leader, having gained national recognition for its achievement. They have achieved both Arts Mark Gold and the Platinum Sing Up award, and are also involved in a number of initiatives involving regional theatres, as well as highly regarded orchestras and choirs. In terms of intake, the number eligible for free school meals is above average, at 28%, and the number of pupils with English as an Additional Language is also high, at over 90%. The school has been rated 'Outstanding' by Ofsted on the past three visits.

<b>Teacher</b>	<b>Key Stage taught</b>	<b>Subject coordinator</b>	<b>Total years' experience</b>	<b>Years in current school</b>
Dawn	Upper Key Stage 2	Music	11	11
Debbie	Foundation Stage	Head of Early Years	7	4
Diana	Lower Key Stage 2	History	16	11
Danielle	Upper Key Stage 2	Modern Foreign Languages	2	2
Daisy	Key Stage 1	Geography	3	2

### **School E: Emmanuel Church of England Primary School**

Emmanuel CE school is a one-form entry religious institution with a long history of success. It is situated in a reasonably affluent area, with just 11% of pupils being eligible for free school meals. Emmanuel was considered a beacon school in the mid 2000s, a title which was only given to the top 1,150 schools in the country. It has also gained 'Outstanding' in its most recent Ofsted, as well as both the Silver Arts Mark award and the Platinum Sing Up award.

<b>Teacher</b>	<b>Key Stage taught</b>	<b>Subject coordinator</b>	<b>Total years' experience</b>	<b>Years in current school</b>
Ethan	Upper Key Stage 2	ICT	4	4
Ellen	Lower Key Stage 2	Maths and Music	23	17
Eddy	Key Stage 1	English	22	22
Elizabeth	Upper Key Stage 2	RE	8	6
Ellie	Lower Key Stage 2	Art	12	6

### **School F: Fairfield Primary School**

Fairfield Primary School is a two-form entry school situated in a socially deprived area, in which unemployment and poverty are rife. Over 60% of pupils are eligible for free school meals and there is a high turnover of staff, many of whom are young and recently qualified. Music has not been a particular priority in the school, as the practitioners are much more concerned with behaviour and improving literacy levels, both of which were criticised in their most recent Ofsted report, leading to a drive to raise standards in this area. Indeed, music was considered such a peripheral subject that some of the teachers were unaware of who the music coordinator was.

Teacher	Key Stage taught	Subject coordinator	Total years' experience	Years in current school
Faye	Key Stage 1	ICT	4	4
Fiona	Lower Key Stage 2	N/A	1	1
Frederick	Key Stage 1	Advanced Skills Teacher for English and drama	5	5
Fleur	Upper Key Stage 2	Music	2	2

### School G: Greengate Primary School

Greengate is a one-form entry school located in an inner-city area. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is 45%, which is over twice the national average. Music has not traditionally been considered a priority in the school, but there has been significant investment in ICT in the past few years, which has included the subscription to a number of music technology resources. Although some teachers have embraced this, it has not yet been universally adopted, with a number of practitioners expressing reluctance at the amount of time it was taking to become familiar with the programs.

Teacher	Key Stage taught	Subject coordinator	Total years' experience	Years in current school
Gabrielle	Lower Key Stage 2	Literacy	15	15
Gemma	Key Stage 1	History	3	3
Gareth	Upper Key Stage 2	Science	9	6
Geoff	Upper Key Stage 2	Deputy Head	22	7
Georgia	Lower Key Stage 2	Modern foreign languages	5	3

### 5.3 From data to theory: The development of 8 contributory factors

The third section of this chapter describes the ways in which the data was analysed and how this led me to conceptualise the two main areas of investigation. It is important to recognise how these are rooted in the data itself, and I will demonstrate the complexities of some of

these factors. Although an ostensible divide emerged between those factors which were primarily individual (i.e. personal/cognitive) and those which were primarily social (i.e. institutional/socially situated), each of the eight areas comprised elements of both. In order to fully explore the two dimensions, it was therefore necessary to split the data apart during the analysis phase and examine how each was constructed, with the eventual aim being to explore how they fit together into a dynamic and interactive process (see Figure 6.2). In this way, the categories that emerge throughout this section comprise the initial findings, which will eventually form the basis of the more complex and holistic model, presented in the opening of Chapter 6.

### **5.3.1 Open Coding**

The first stage of coding was largely unrestricted open coding, where each section was assigned labels based on my initial thoughts and assumptions. The aim was to be receptive to any ideas which were triggered by the transcript and in this initial stage, to include all codes without editing or refining. However, it should be noted that the term 'Open' is used with certain provisos and does not refer to a fully grounded approach. As the previous chapters of this thesis have shown, my own understanding had already been increased through both the literature review and the quantitative phase, and to ignore the insights gained from these in an attempt to assume a completely neutral position would undermine the methodology of the project. The aim was thus to remain faithful to the content of the data, whilst being guided by both the research questions and the preliminary findings. The quantitative phase had already suggested potential avenues of enquiry and from the start the coding was necessarily informed by these.

During this first phase of analysis, 107 codes were generated from my own engagement with the data. At this early stage, these could broadly be split into four sections: memories of past experiences with music; judgements and comments regarding the current school; the teachers' judgements about themselves and their abilities; and the teachers' understandings about music and music teaching. There was also a distinction between codes which were more concerned with 'factual' information, for example the actual experiences, and the more 'interpretive' personal perspectives. It was therefore possible to distinguish between perceptions, beliefs and judgements, in contrast with accounts of actual events and opportunities.

### **5.3.2 Development of the codes**

The 107 initial codes proved extremely helpful in improving my own understanding of the content of the transcripts, and in interrogating some of the themes of the narratives. However, the open nature of the process meant that the codes required further revisions in order to move towards more developed categories. By working closely with the data and examining both the code frequencies and my own notes and memos, it was possible to assess each code and decide if further action was necessary, for example, some needed breaking down into more specific strands whilst others required revising and rewording. A full list of the codes and their revisions can be found in Appendix B but an example will now be presented in order to demonstrate the processes that were involved in developing a new coding framework.

One of the main purposes of revising the first set of codes was for clarification of specific concepts. It is possible to demonstrate this with the original code of 'Anxieties', which occurred in 23 of the interviews. Anxiety can certainly be an important factor when

considering teachers' attitudes towards music teaching but this original code did little to explain the causes of the anxiety or how it would affect the teachers' actions and attitudes. However, to simply make the claim that the respondents felt anxiety towards music was insufficient in itself and this code needed to be developed into more specific sub-codes. In order to decide how the code could be divided, I examined the instances of 'Anxieties' that had been highlighted through the initial open coding. From this it was possible to identify several ways in which teachers discussed anxieties; the code was therefore split into several sub-divisions, along with some example quotations to illustrate are given below:

Code Name	Illustrative example
Anxieties with music in general	"When I think about music – I just get worried about it all, I just feel it's beyond me."
Anxieties with lesson knowledge	"It can be hard for the teacher, I mean if the children want to know what's a – erm what's a semiquaver or something you can't just go 'oh I don't actually know, hang on a minute, I'll just go and look it up', because you can't do that, you just need to know it and that's why I find it so hard - I think sometimes it's that fear of not knowing."
Anxieties with performing	"I do still get nervous when I have to perform, I'm ok in the classroom but if I have to play in front of everyone, erm especially if it's an important occasion or something, then I still get very, very nervous and I have to spend so much time practising."
Anxieties with teaching skills	"We're having this big push on assessment at the minute and we had to try and do it with music but I just didn't have a clue... it really worried me, and I did find that very difficult... how do you judge things like pitch and rhythm when we're mainly just singing action songs and silly songs... I don't know."
Early anxieties	"I remember, we had to do Annie's Song on the xylophone for a Christmas concert and she chose me to play the lead part and I literally was physically sick and I couldn't go into school on the day of the concert because I was so scared of getting it wrong."
Teacher training anxieties	"It was my second placement, I had to teach music on my own [...] and the lunchtime before I had to teach music I was in absolute tears, no other lesson made me cry before I had to teach it but the music lesson made me cry."
Anxieties about social judgements	"I do distinctly remember that I was supposed to be teaching music on one of the days when my tutor was coming in, and I really, <i>really</i> didn't want him to watch me teach music... erm and I got really worried and I think – in the end we moved music to another day so I wouldn't have to do it for an observation."

**Table 5.1 Splitting codes**

Clearly the teachers in the above examples all experienced anxiety, some of which actually manifested itself in physical elements. However, by distinguishing between the causes, the revised codes could show the specific elements of music that were causing these teachers anxiety. This is helpful for exploring the potential ways in which music might cause problems for primary school teachers and thus allow speculation as to how these problems might be subverted. Additionally, by interrogating the data further it became possible to identify some broader themes, for instance, a perceived lack of personal knowledge, performance anxiety and a fear of negative judgement from others. This leads into the following section about considering which codes could then be connected to each other.

### **5.3.3 Linking codes and building families**

After reworking the codes, the next step was to start to connect these together into families, considering some of the broader themes which would incorporate several codes under one over-arching umbrella term. Due to the extremely high number of codes at this stage – 230 following the revisions – there would still be a wide range of families produced. However, grouping codes together was a necessary step in order to start to develop the most significant themes.

In total, 38 code ‘families’ were produced, each of which brought together between 2 and 13 different codes into a slightly broader theme. These can be found in Appendix B, where there is a detailed list of the code families, and the codes which comprise them. Reducing the high number of codes from 230 into the 38 ‘families’ was an important step, as it proved difficult to work with so many different codes. The reduction of categories therefore meant it was now possible to investigate some of the higher level links between the families, which would eventually contribute to the development of the thematic models.

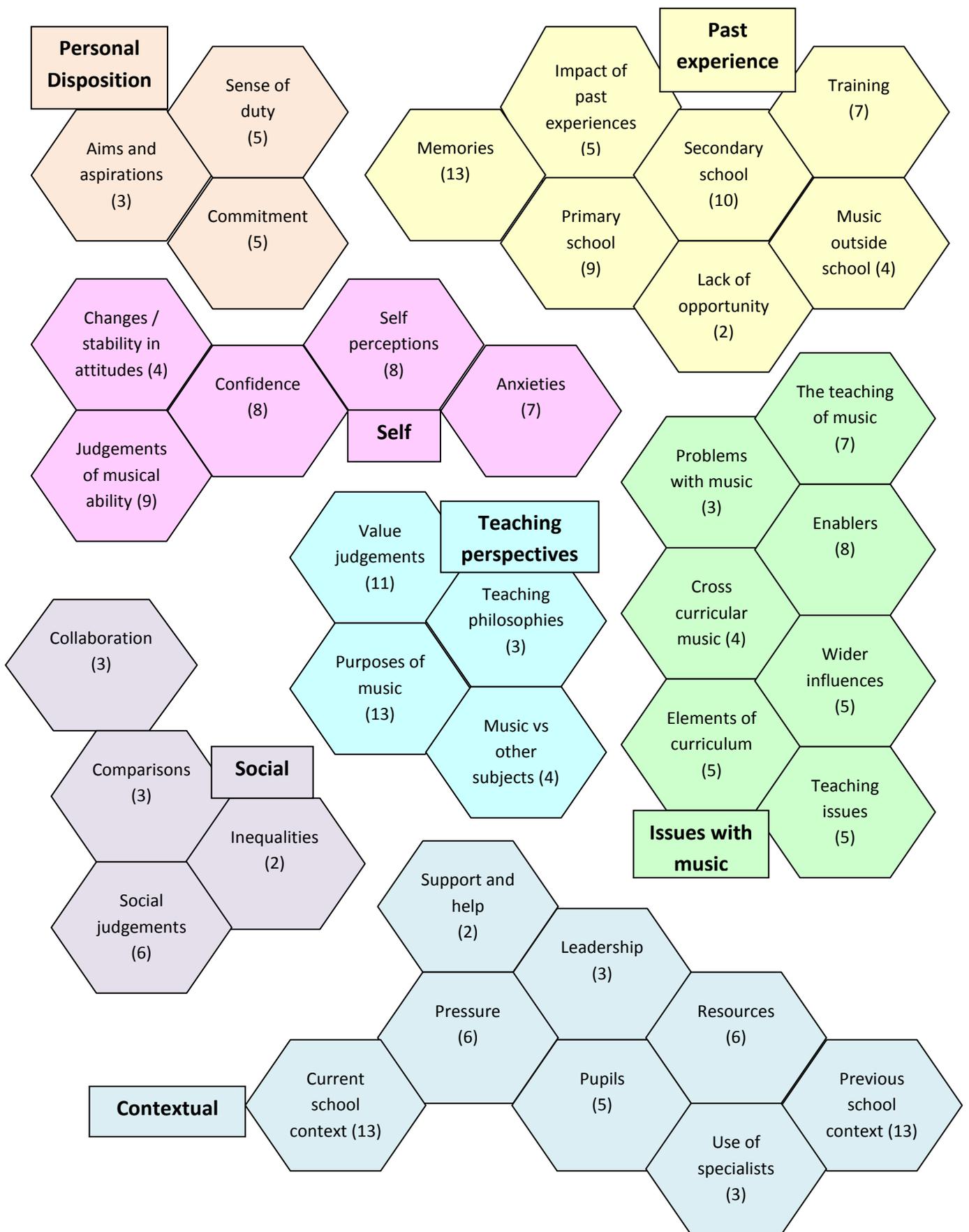


Figure 5.1: Coding families: names, numbers of codes and their possible links

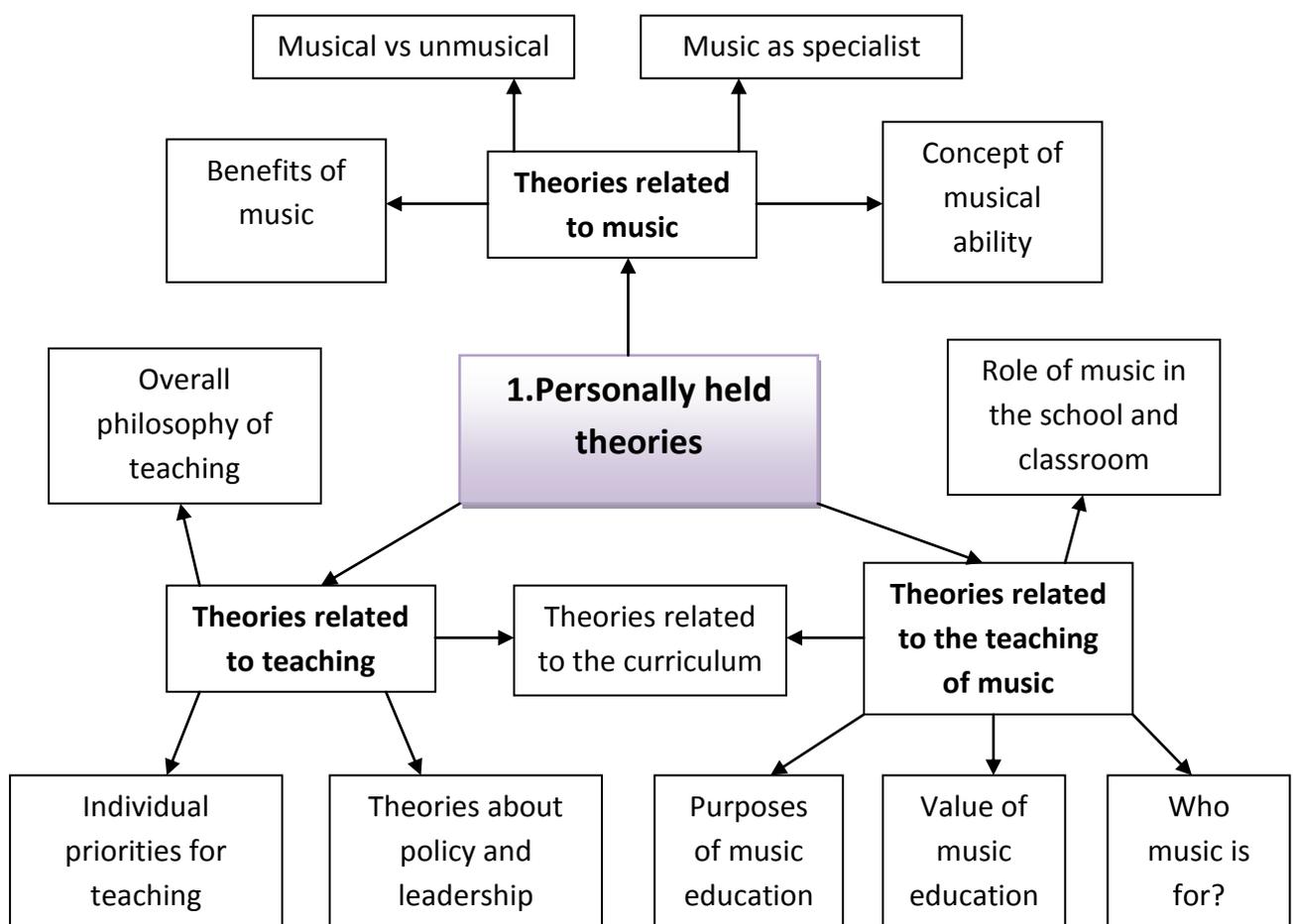
Figure 5.1 below shows the early stages of my thinking with regards to these connections. Although the groups themselves would need further consideration and modification, some clear categories were starting to form within the different families of codes and this would provide the basis for the forthcoming development of the analytical models.

#### **5.3.4 Higher Level Codes**

Moving forward from the model in Figure 5.1, the development of an in-depth understanding of teachers' motivation began with the formation of eight higher level codes, or categories; these form the key components of teachers' motivation and will prove essential to display before engaging within any kind of in-depth discussion. In order to fit the data accurately, these eight factors needed to account for the majority of the content of the interview transcripts, and were thus tested repeatedly on a series of sample transcripts. This allowed them to be revised, modified and retested where appropriate. The eight categories are presented below, together with a brief explanation and a diagram to demonstrate each construct. As will become clear, these different factors could also be split into two groups of four, one set which related to personal aspects and the other which focused more on socio-contextual issues. Recognition of this was important for exploring the divide and interactions between the two dimensions, although as noted above, such divisions were not as simple as first appeared and each factor in itself contained elements from both.

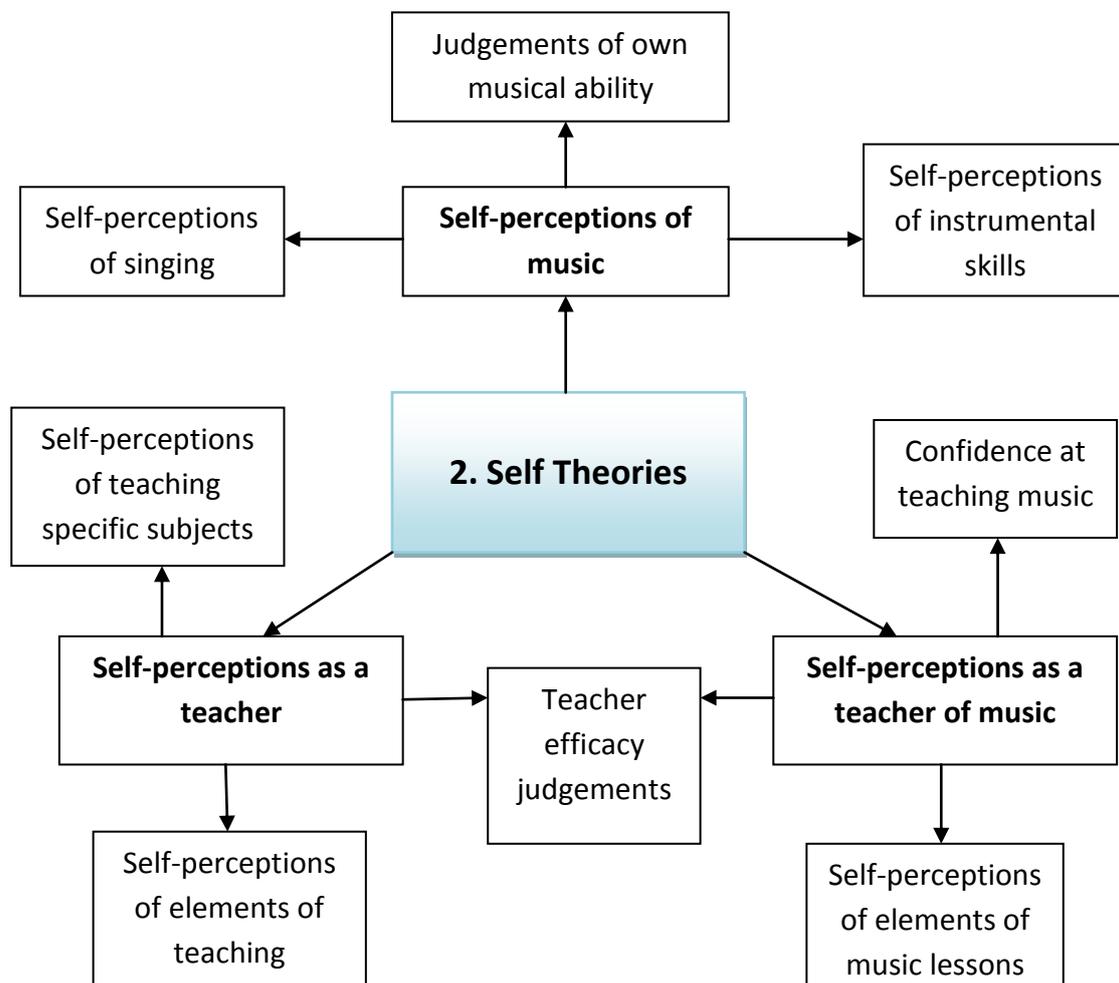
## 1. Personally Held theories

The first, and most prevalent, category refers to the outward looking theories and beliefs which teachers hold in relation to three important areas: music itself; teaching in general; and, most importantly, the teaching of music in the primary school. This was crucial to consider because it provided an important way in which the analysis could move beyond the confines of the survey research, as it allowed exploration of the three core, contested terms. In order to assess the ways in which teachers built up their motivation to engage with music, it is clearly necessary to know what they understand by the term, and the interviews allowed access to this.



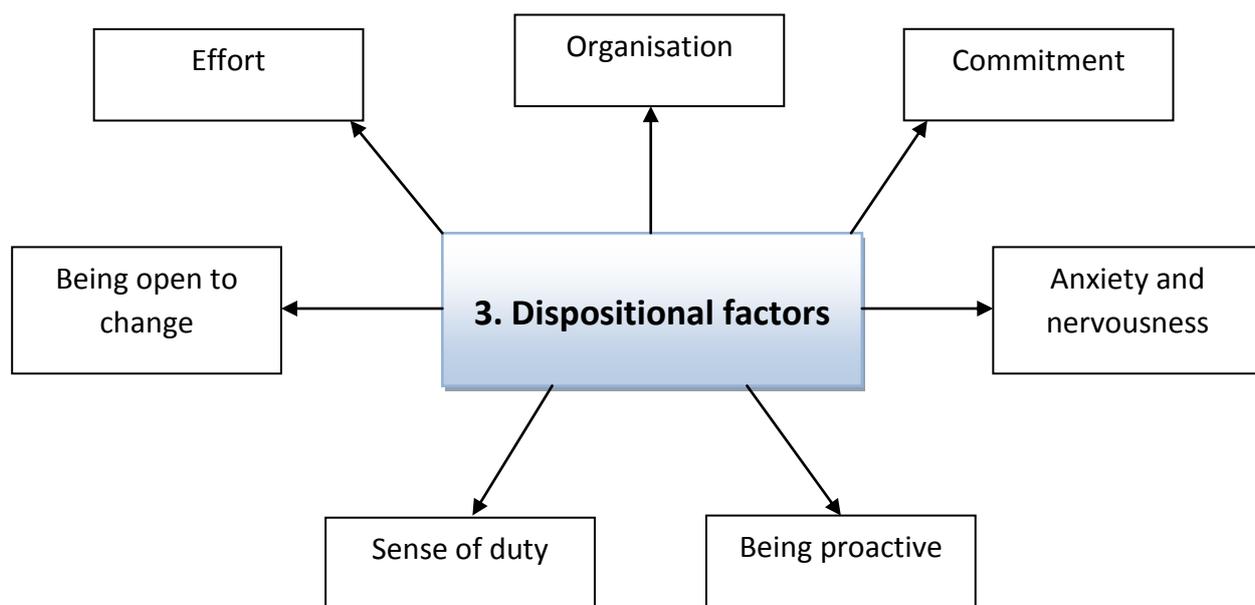
## 2. Self Theories

The second category, which was perhaps the most prominent within the literature review, focuses on the theories which individuals hold in relation to themselves. These are inward-looking theories, and refer to the judgements, perceptions and beliefs which teachers hold concerning themselves, their abilities and their limitations. In the literature, this clearly links to the self-efficacy judgements which people make in relation to themselves and particular tasks, as well as the more general self-concept beliefs which people hold. Parallel to the previous category, self theories could be seen as relating to three key aspects: the self in relation to music generally, the self in relation to teaching generally and the self in relation to the teaching of music.



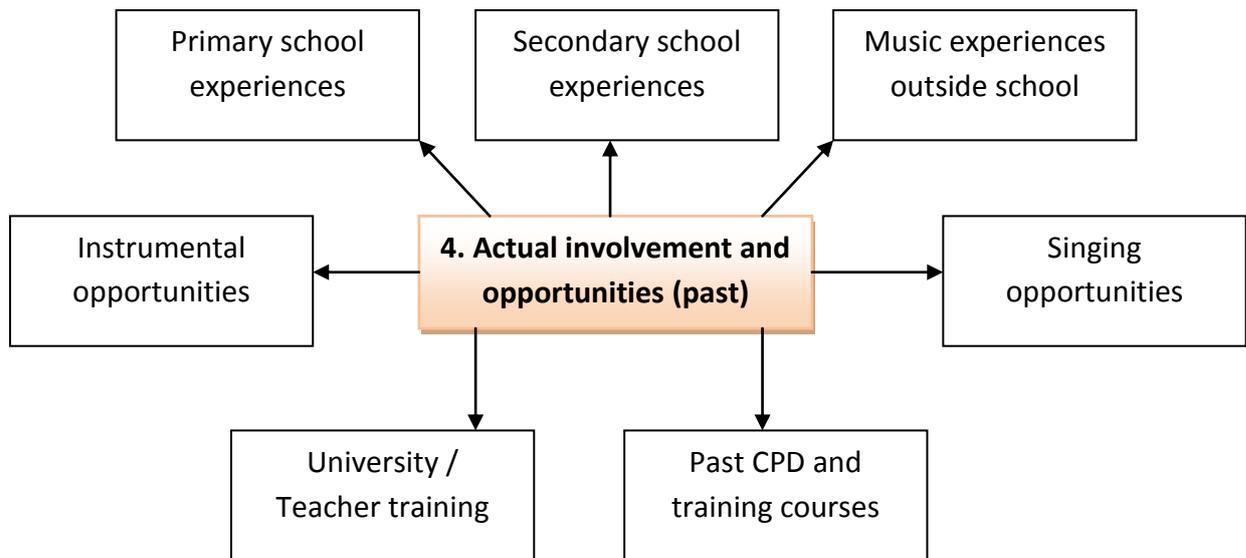
### **3. Dispositional factors**

The third area focuses upon “dispositional factors”, a label which refers to the relatively ‘fixed’ aspects of individuals’ personality traits. Carr and Claxton (2002) discuss dispositions as being separate from self-judgements regarding one’s own capabilities, defining them as the habitual ways in which individuals tend to act and respond to particular situations. The various dimensions shown in the diagram below all emerged through the coding process, although it should be noted they were not as prolifically evident as the self theories or personally held theories. Indeed, there were some accounts where dispositional factors proved difficult to identify, a fact which can perhaps be attributed to the methodology. When teachers were asked to explain their views and understandings of music education, they were more likely to draw on their own understandings and theories, rather than describe their own personality in finite terms. Not only does this fit with the questions asked, but it also provides a much safer and more comfortable ground for the discussion. It was therefore no surprise that this category proved less prevalent than the previous two, although it is still important to acknowledge within the current understandings related to teachers’ motivation; the ways in which individuals will habitually approach situations is inevitably interlinked with their previous experiences, thus this factor can bring together both the actions taken and the underlying reasons for these.



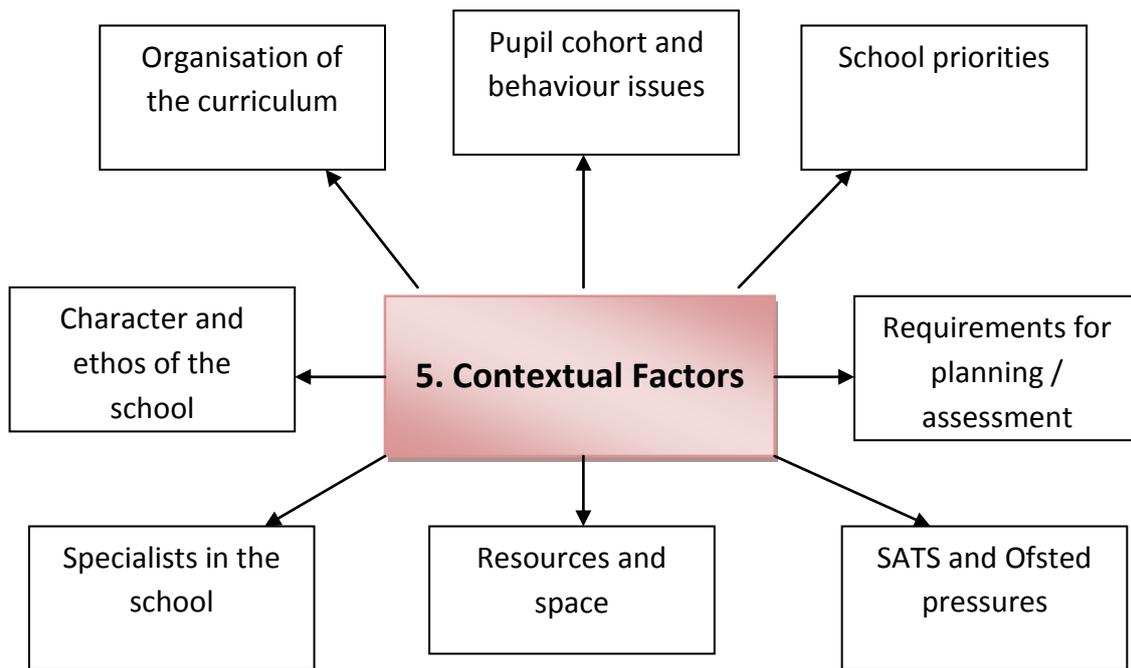
#### 4. Actual opportunities and involvement (past)

The fourth category here involves a more factual element of the actual opportunities which the teachers had experienced. The interview transcripts are permeated with information about how much the teachers have been involved with music, right from primary school to the present day. This is an important factor to consider, particularly when comparing with the teachers' perspectives and understanding of music. Clearly it is likely that one's current views and self-perceptions will have been influenced by the actual opportunities which the individuals have been afforded. Indeed, this led to one of the key themes for discussion, as to whether individuals attributed their own level of musical skills as dependent on opportunity or innate ability (see discussion in Chapter 6).



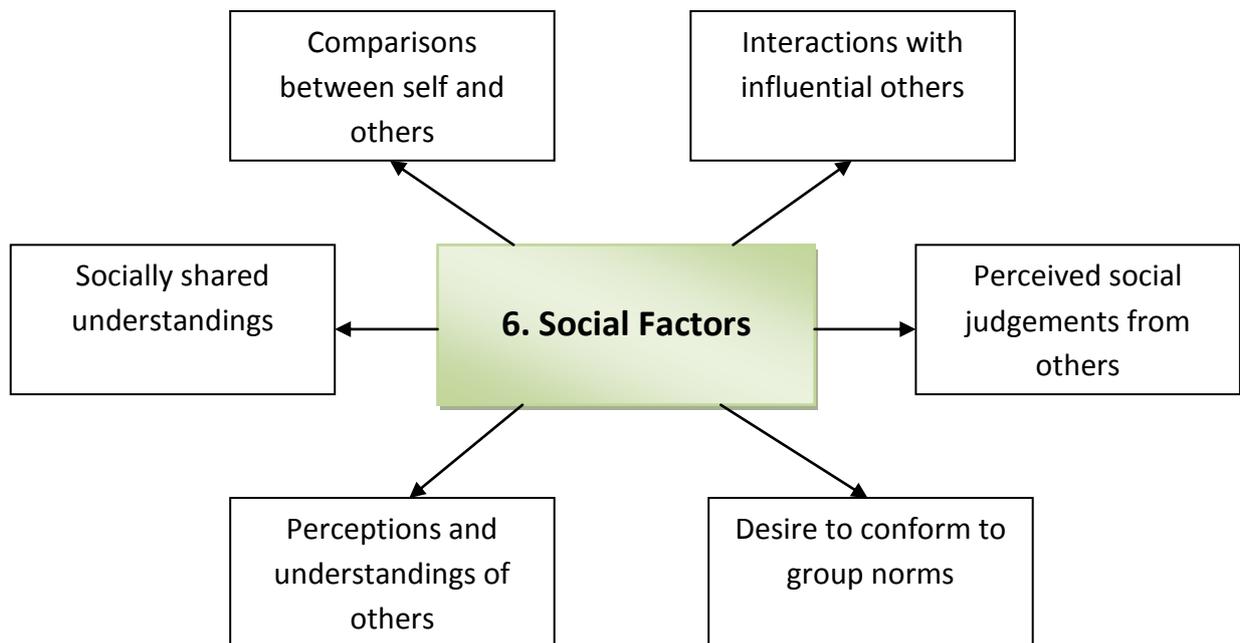
## 5. Contextual Factors

The contextual elements would inevitably prove vital to develop and included a wide range of aspects related to the current school. These generally referred to the ways in which the school structures operated, as well as the character, ethos and culture of the institution. In terms of their frequency, the contextual factors proved second only to the first category of personally held theories, thus demonstrating their prominence within the teachers' thinking.



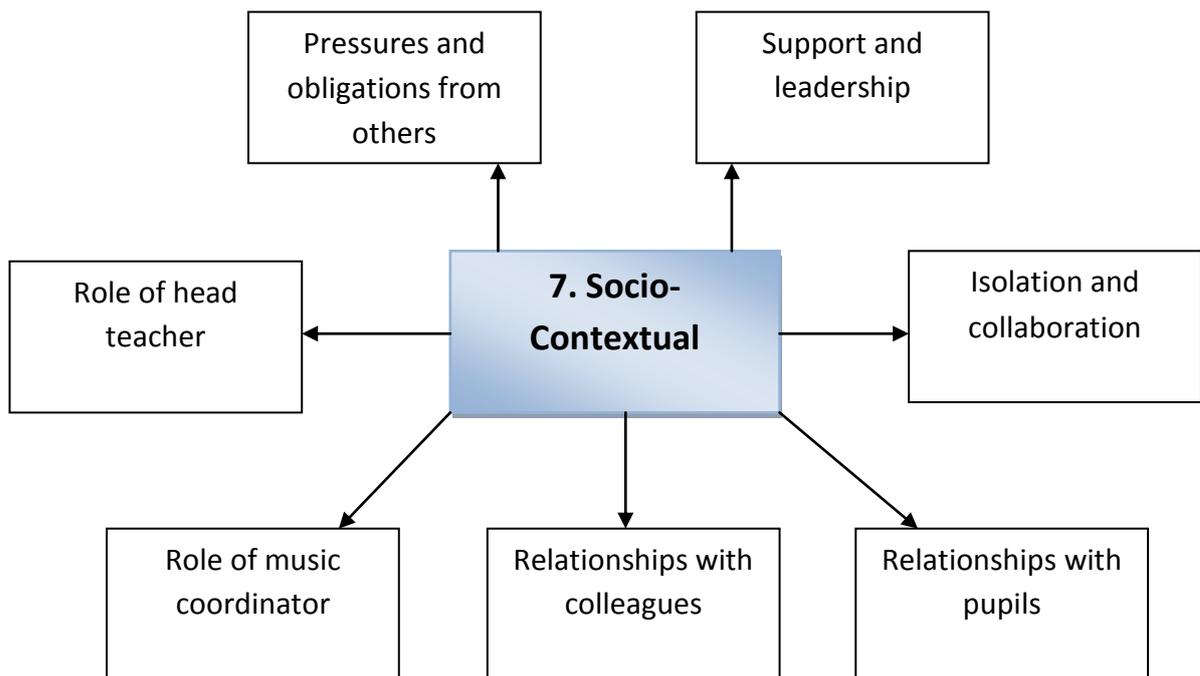
## 6. Social Factors

Following on from the previous theme, this category refers to the inter-personal aspects that are present between the teachers and other individuals within their social sphere. The factors here are situated more on an interactional level, where social relationships and the perceived judgements of others are both crucial factors. In addition, there are the traditional socio-psychological concepts such as desire to fit in with specific groups and conform to social norms.



### 7. Socio-contextual factors

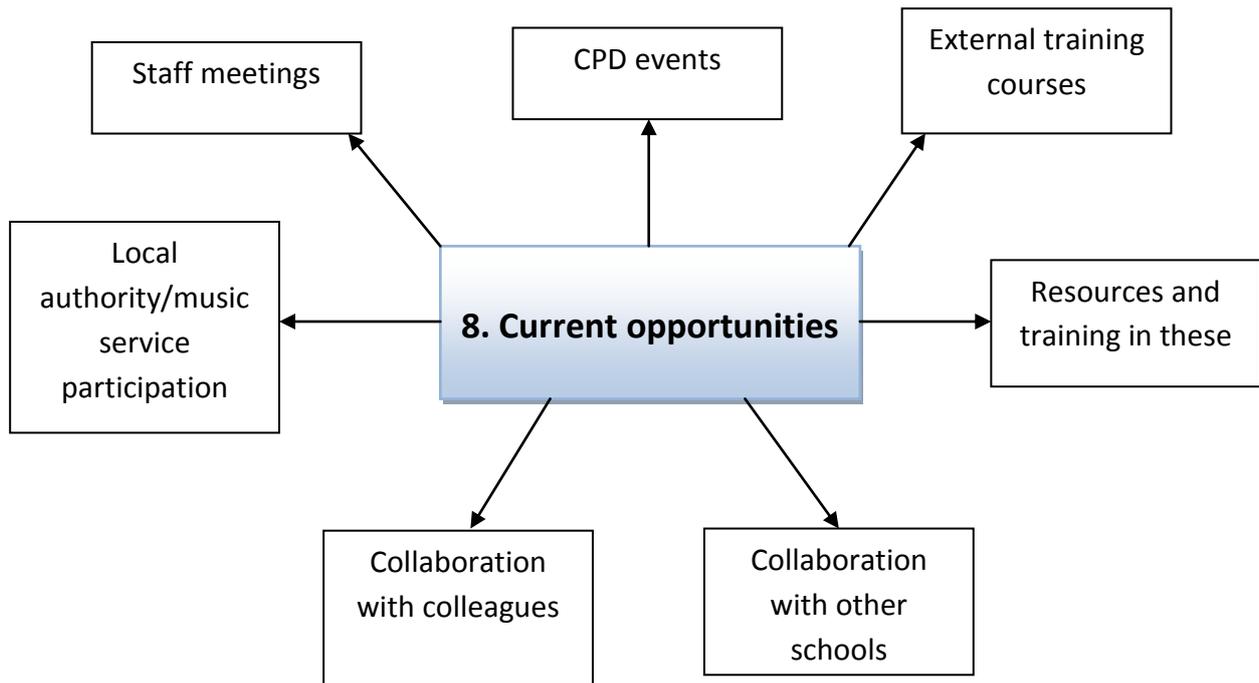
After finding it difficult to place certain aspects into either purely contextual or social categories, it was decided that a further category should be created. This could include aspects situated in the school context, but which were themselves inherently social, labelling this as Socio-Contextual factors. Although the boundaries between these three categories were inevitably blurred, this joint theme proved useful for categorising those codes which could neither be designated wholly social nor wholly contextual.



### 8. Actual opportunities and involvement (present)

The final category here mirrors Factor 4, in that it refers to the actual opportunities which are afforded to teachers, but this time those which are situated in their current school.

Again this therefore refers to more ‘factual’ aspects, such as the amount of CPD and training which is provided by the school. The distinction between the two, although it might appear minor, is important for the analysis. As I want to explore the impact of the current school context, it is important that the opportunities which this affords can be separated from one’s previous experiences, which have been internalised and interpreted.



The eight factors identified above, and their component elements, provide the key findings in relation to the construction of teachers' motivation to engage with music. These have emerged directly from the data and the ways in which they interact with each other will be discussed in the forthcoming chapters. These eight factors will thus be referred to throughout the following chapters, with their numbers providing a link back to this presentation of themes.

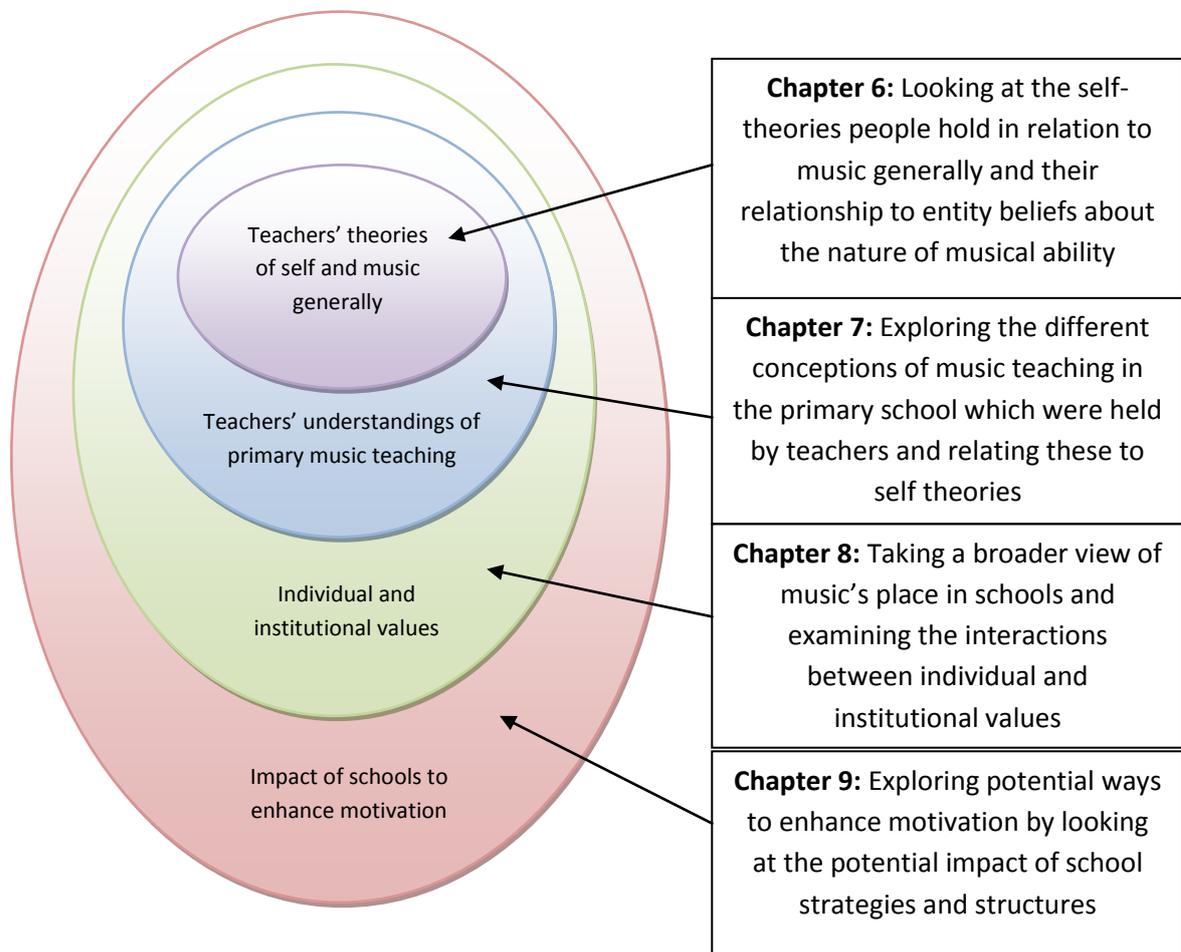
# Overview of Findings and Discussion

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The four chapters which follow comprise the findings and discussion drawn from the qualitative analysis; this short, bridging section provides an overview of these. The decision to integrate the findings and discussion together was taken largely because of the nature of the research and the complexity of motivation as a construct. The project has thus involved the investigation of an interwoven system full of interacting and competing factors. During analysis, it quickly became apparent that attempting to separate out the single specific elements would itself prove difficult, as each one comprised part of an interactive and interdependent system. Indeed, although eight key areas were identified through the analysis, even the seemingly clear divides between personal and social factors needed to be questioned.

With such an extensive amount of data and reasonably open research questions, many difficult decisions needed to be taken over what to include in the discussion; it has therefore been impossible to focus on every theme which emerged and certain elements have been allocated more attention than others. Through extensive, iterative engagement with the data, I developed a structure for the following chapters, starting with the theories which individuals hold about themselves and music, moving through their understandings of music teaching, the value judgements related to this, and finally concluding with a discussion of the potential impact of schools upon teacher engagement. This is based partially upon the layered approach to social research which was put forward in the literature review and is summarised in Figure 6.1 below.

The structure of the discussion can be described as moving from the internally focused judgements which individuals construct about themselves, through the outward-looking theories related to music and concluding with an exploration of the socio-contextual impact. Despite the distinctions made between these different 'levels', however, each comprises part of a full, complex motivational system and inevitably there will be links and interactions between them.



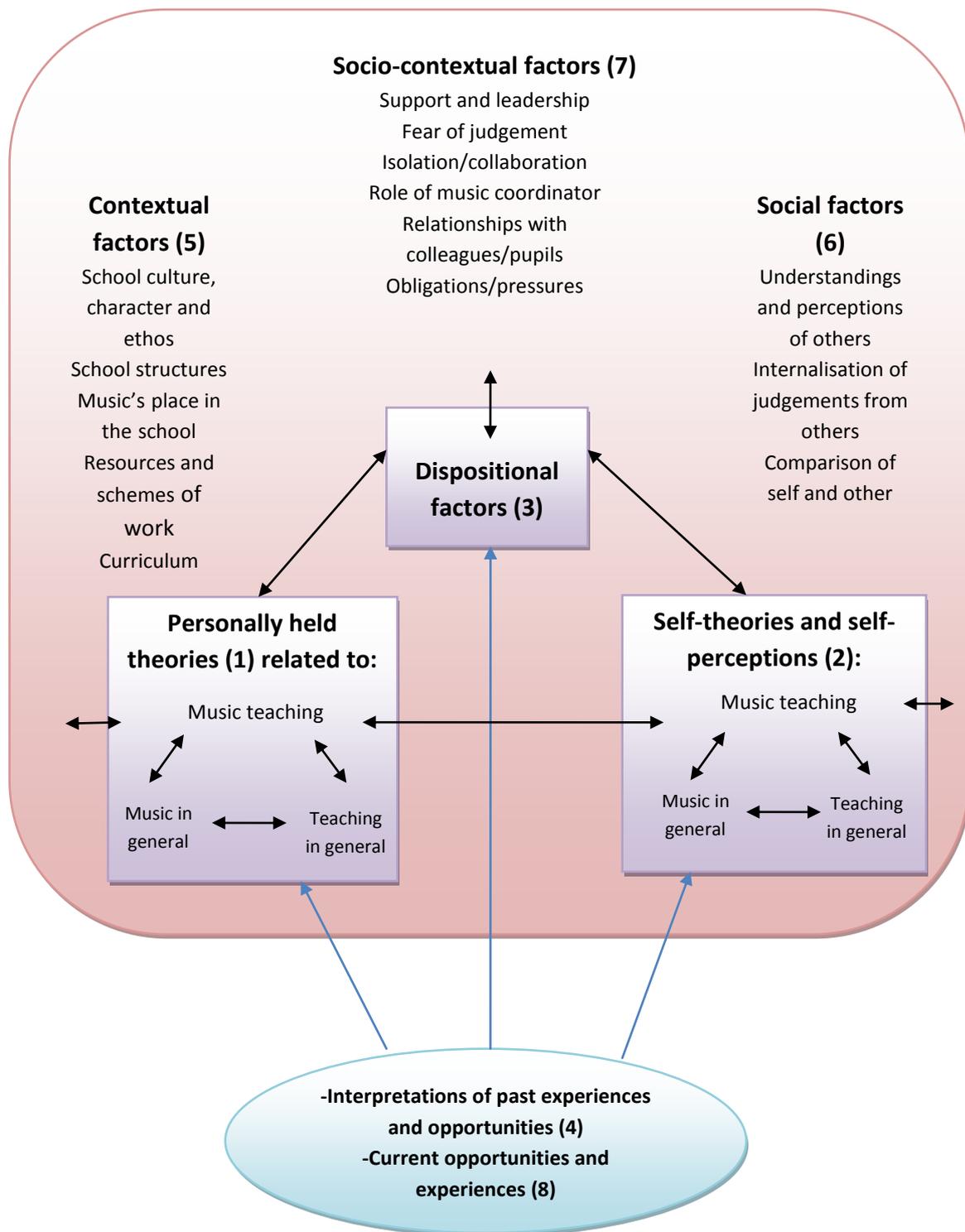
**Figure 6.1: A multi-layered approach to the discussion chapters**

Although this layered structure continues to suggest a split between personal and social factors, each of the areas to be discussed is in fact constructed through elements of both. This is important to note, as through the process of writing, I soon came to realise that it was almost impossible to discuss one angle without at least some reference to the others; it was impossible, for instance, to fully extract the themes relating to how teachers

understood music education (1) without acknowledging the impact of self theories (2), one's previous experiences (4) and the socio-contextual factors present in the school (5, 6, 7) in the construction of these. It is therefore important to note that the divides between the chapters do not designate discrete, separate areas of discussion and there is a degree of overlap between them. Indeed, this blurring of individual and social was evident throughout all factors, meaning that a divide between factors 1-4 (largely personal) and 5-8 (largely reliant on context) therefore was not quite so straightforward as might potentially have been conceived.

Interactions between personal-historical and socio-contextual processes were thus actually occurring *within* all the 8 different factors, rather than *between* two discrete sets, although the locus of control did shift depending on how these aspects were constructed. When looking at the impact of contextual structures in the school, for example, it would be impossible to negate the ways in which these would be interpreted by individuals, despite them originating within the setting. Equally, the ostensibly 'personal' theories were at least partially constructed through social processes and influenced by the cultural context.

It is thus helpful to combine the eight different factors identified in the previous chapter into one, all-encompassing model that could then be drawn upon to explore teachers' motivation for music in the primary school. This is presented below in Figure 6.2.



**Figure 6.2: An integrated model of teachers' motivation for music**

This conceptual framework, which was clearly derived from the thematic coding and data analysis processes, will now be explored and tested in the four chapters which follow, in order to demonstrate more fully how individual teachers base their judgements and

assertions on a combination of personal and social elements, and how these judgements can impact upon practice. Chapters 6-8 will deal with the central sections of this model, considering the teachers' self-perceptions and judgements in relation to: music in general (Chapter 6), music teaching in the primary school (Chapter 7) and the value of music education (Chapter 8). Chapter 9 will consider a more practical angle and unpick what has occurred within one specific school in relation to the teachers' motivation for music. The final chapter of the thesis will consider further applications of this theoretical framework, noting its potential worth beyond the current remit of music education.

## 6. Self theories in relation to music: Laying the foundations for motivation and involvement

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The first of the four discussion chapters focuses on the fundamental beliefs which teachers hold in relation to both music and themselves. With reference to the model of motivation presented in Figure 6.2 and the development of contributory factors in Chapter 5, I have extracted elements of **1** and **2** to explore, namely the individuals' personally-held theories related to music generally (**1**) and the self-theories and self-perceptions that are held in relation to this (**2**). I will also draw upon the ways in which these are constructed through reference to past experiences (**4**), from the base of the diagram.

From the interviews, it appears that almost all the teachers made explicit judgements concerning their own musical ability early on in their lives, many of which remained fixed from thereon in. These early experiences and self-classifications have had the power to affect their involvement and decisions to engage with music long before their teaching careers had begun and are thus important to consider first. These beliefs and judgements will thus underpin the future discussion in Chapter 7, which starts to focus more explicitly upon the teaching of music in the primary school.

### **6.1 Musical vs Unmusical: The prevalence of entity beliefs related to music**

The musical-unmusical divide was highlighted in Chapter 2 and manifests itself as one of the most prevalent themes within the data. Beliefs and understandings within this sphere, in particular the conception of musical ability as a discrete either-or dichotomy, have long

been criticised in music education literature (Austin *et al.*, 2006; Burnard, 2003). Welch and McPherson (2012, p.11) recently referred to this tendency to view people as musical or unmusical as “an erroneous bipolar conception” which pervades daily life; they lamented the fact that despite numerous attempts to counter this view, it still remains entrenched in western society.

The data collected in the current research certainly confirmed this, as a belief in the nature of the divide underpins many of the accounts. This can be clearly linked to the ways in which teachers choose whether or not to engage with music in schools, as one teacher commented:

That’s the problem with music, most people just aren’t musical so what can you do? They can’t be expected to teach it. (Abigail, LKS2, MC)

This dichotomy, between those deemed ‘musical’, in comparison with the vast ‘unmusical’ majority, was explicitly cited by many teachers as a way of explaining how they constructed understandings of both themselves and others in relation to music. In the account quoted above, Abigail cites this ‘fact’ to support her claim that it is almost impossible to encourage other teachers to engage with music because the majority are simply not ‘musical’.

However, it is important to understand the ways in which such terms themselves were actually understood by the individual teachers in order to fully unpick their beliefs about musical ability; what does it mean to be considered musical or unmusical and how might this affect their motivation in relation to teaching?

In a finding which replicates much previous research, the teachers in my sample generally associated being ‘musical’ with the ability to perform (Hallam, 2010). Although there is insufficient space to discuss this in great detail, particularly as it largely mirrors previous

findings, there was a clear belief that in order to be musical, it was necessary to play an instrument or sing, both of which were considered by many to be finite skills about which categorical judgements could be made, i.e. 'I can sing' or 'I cannot sing'.

For those teachers who believed they were entirely unable to perform, either instrumentally or vocally, there was a tendency to automatically classify oneself as 'unmusical' with a high degree of finality, even in cases where the individual did express interest in other areas of music. Catherine, for example, discusses how she frequently attends concerts and writes a regular music-related blog, but dismisses these as irrelevant in relation to teaching music. Her perceived lack of performing skills mean she constructs herself as unmusical and goes on to explain that this had led to a complete lack of engagement with music in her teaching. Her idea of being musical thus hinges on what she perceives as inaccessible performing skills, but, perhaps more importantly, her self-efficacy judgements regarding the teaching of music are *also* dependent on this. Her understanding of musicality and her self-judgement in relation to this are thus crucial factors in her motivation.

Although the notion of performance was most commonly associated with being 'musical', it was possible to identify a second dimension to the teachers' understandings of the term.

This related to being in possession of a set of specialist skills, including elements such as:

- Aural skills
- Notation
- Knowledge of concepts such as pitch or rhythm
- An ability to listen to music and understand it more fully

As with performance, these skills were often constructed as excessively difficult and only accessible to a select few, again leading many teachers to develop a clear judgement of themselves as being 'unmusical'. Both the ability to perform and the idea of a specialist skill-set were positioned as rare and unusual, which would be situated beyond the norm of the unmusical majority. Being 'musical' was thus constructed as something which should not be expected of 'typical' primary school teachers.

In terms of moving forward and enhancing motivation, it is important to encourage individuals to expand these definitions. When music is reduced to either performance, or specialist skills, it can be very difficult for generalist teachers to appreciate other abilities that they may have to offer.

Catherine is a case in point, where her enthusiasm for music outside of school contrasted with her reluctance to engage with the subject in school; this mirrors previous findings regarding the divide between engagement with music in and out of school (Lamont, Hargreaves, Marshall & Tarrant, 2003). In the current case, the skills she believed were needed to teach music did not fit with what she felt she could offer in the subject, thus a categorical judgement was made that excluded her from participation almost entirely. This connects to current concerns over the new National Curriculum, whereby its somewhat traditional conception of music education has led to questions over whether it automatically excludes individual teachers and pupils who may have interest and expertise in music but which does not necessarily reflect the typical image of 'school music' (Spruce, 2012). Catherine's account certainly seems to confirm this as a potential barrier, again suggesting that maintaining such a narrow vision of musicality could be potentially damaging to teachers' motivation.

### 6.1.1 Entity views of music

When exploring the ways in which teachers judged themselves in relation to music, there was a great deal of evidence of entity beliefs in relation to musical ability. This concept manifested itself in a number of ways, the most basic of which was as a simple categorical judgement, which classified individuals as either musical or unmusical. Crucially the nature of these judgements was often assumed to be fixed, with many participants believing there was little possibility of moving between either category once this judgement had been established. As was frequently commented, “You’re either musical or you’re not,” (Geoff, UKS2).

Across the interviews there were numerous references made regarding the teachers’ own levels of musical ability, with many quite happy to openly discuss how they did not consider themselves musical. The following brief extracts were typical of this, and demonstrate how there was a fundamental assumption that one would be either musical or unmusical, with little room for more sophisticated judgments; the simplistic nature of this divide was important to note.

It’s one of those things really, I don’t think I’ve ever been that musical at all. (Alison, KS1)

I’ve never really been involved in music that much, it’s not me, I’m not a musical person unfortunately. (Beverley, UKS2)

I know some people are really musical, they’ve got that skill and it’s amazing, but it’s something I’ve never had. (Claire, LKS2)

These extracts demonstrate the ways in which these teachers classified themselves as not musical, and were replicated in many of the other accounts. Such judgements often represent beliefs which have lasted many years (through reference to “never” having been musical) and which comprise a full and complete judgement (“not musical *at all*”). The third

extract from Claire is explicit in its comparison between musical and unmusical, expressing the view that having musical skills is something “amazing”, before positioning herself firmly on the opposite side of the divide.

The ways in which these teachers referred to themselves, and other ‘musical’ people, therefore reflected a judgement which was both engrained and automatic. Interestingly, a similar entity belief was also expressed by those on the positive side of the divide, who *did* consider themselves musical. Fiona, for example, makes similar assertions about herself as musical, in comparison with most others, who she expects to be unmusical. She discusses how she considered the provision of training insufficient for the majority of people, who “weren’t musical” and “wouldn’t be able to teach it at all”, but how she was different because, “I’m a teacher but really I’m a musician so obviously I’m ok”. As with Catherine above, the assumption is that if one is musical, according to the performance definition, then one can automatically teach music effectively; this represents a questionable belief to which I will return later in this chapter.

Whilst Fiona has had many musical experiences and considers herself a competent performer, the assumption throughout her interview is that this is unusual for a teacher, with, again, the vast majority assumed to be unmusical. Categorical judgements were thus made by those from both sides of the divide, meaning that having a teacher who considered themselves musical did not mean that the dichotomy could be broken down. The definition of being musical as a rarity therefore persisted, regardless of one’s personal self-concept beliefs.

A further understanding which the teachers expressed was the idea that musical ability was *fixed*, meaning once one’s category had been established there was little that could be done

to change this. In a similar way to Dweck's (1998) conclusions about intelligence (see Chapter 2), the belief that one's ability is fixed led to some of these practitioners to construe themselves as "unmusical" and assume that once their categorisation was established, this would remain the same henceforth.

Bella provides an interesting account of how musical ability was considered fixed when she discusses her early attempts to learn an instrument. This proved challenging and through comparisons with others, whom she perceived as progressing more quickly, she came to the conclusion that she was unable to go any further.

I think the problem was, I started going to a music group on a Saturday morning and everyone else seemed to be getting better and better but I was still stuck – most of the time I wasn't even playing, I was just miming and I just thought – you know what, I can't do this, I'm not going to get anywhere with it so what's the point in wasting my time. (Bella, UKS2)

Bella demonstrates how her own perceived lack of progress could be contrasted with her peers, leading her to the conclusion that she would never "get anywhere with it". Her final comments represent finite judgements that prohibit the chance of improvement, a realisation which led her to cease all involvement with music at that point. The way she has interpreted this previous experience with music has thus fed into her own self-perception and been the evidence to draw upon to support her assertions that she is not musical and should not engage with the subject.

Such strong reactions to negative experiences were common across accounts, where a perceived failure could lead to complete avoidance. A belief in this fixed view of musical ability therefore, led many people to cease their involvement with music at an early stage, due to a belief that if they did not instantly succeed there was no point in continuing. By positioning themselves separate from other 'musical' individuals, the chance of success was

considered completely unattainable. Rather than believing that their ability could be changed and improved with practice, teachers such as Bella clearly located it as an internally fixed characteristic, which would remain stable through their lives. This is important, as it meant that for those who categorised themselves as unmusical at an early age, and also believed this to be a fixed state, they would have little motivation to engage with the subject from then on because there was no expectancy of success.

Throughout the analysis, I was struck by the teachers' over-reliance on these two categories to describe themselves and others. This simplifies music to an either/or dichotomy, which can clearly prove problematic if the majority classify themselves as unmusical. By using such labels therefore, the implication is that anyone who is believed to be 'unmusical' is immediately going to have a problem participating in anything that is considered 'musical', such as the teaching of music.

Taking this idea further, such categorical judgements could also be unhelpful if extended to the classroom, for example, if the teacher assumes the existence of a similar divide between the pupils. This could lead to questions over the value of delivering music lessons to a group of pupils, the majority of whom would be expected to be unmusical and would thus be assessed as having little chance of success in the subject<sup>12</sup>. Although less common than the prevalent belief in the dichotomy, this translation to pupils was explicitly evident in six accounts, including Amy's. She clearly sees music as having a diminished value simply because the majority of individuals will not be musical.

I can't say that [music] is one of my main priorities because it's not something that everyone can do... you look at your class and there's the one or two there who are really musical and

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<sup>12</sup> This issue of music only being valuable for the selected view is discussed in further detail in Chapter 8.

who really love it and they're really involved, but for most of them, well it's not really that important for them. (Amy, UKS2)

Amy's position clearly relies on a belief in the musical-unmusical dichotomy and the fact that people are classified as one or the other. This apparent 'fact' must be questioned if teachers are going to be encouraged to engage further with music; if extended to pupils, therefore, entity beliefs about musical ability could prove a major barrier to teachers' engagement as there will be little point in devoting time to a subject in which the vast majority can never progress. Importantly, if music is considered inaccessible for most, and is therefore only delivered to a select few, then the obvious threat is that the cycle will continue to be perpetuated and the next generation of teachers will continue to base their understandings on these beliefs.

However, the situation was not quite so simple for all the teachers in my sample. Although Amy clearly translated her beliefs about musical ability directly to her class, for some practitioners there emerged a distinction between the ways in which teachers referred to the potential of themselves and their pupils. Christopher, for example, consistently describes himself as "not a musical person at all", saying he has never had any skills in the subject or had any involvement with it. This dates back to his childhood and his comments imply that he sees being musical as a hereditary trait, shown by his claim that, "I've never had the musical thing, even though my parents did... they do say it bypasses a generation and it certainly bypassed me". He remains consistent in the denial of his own ability throughout, repeating categorically that he is not musical and contrasting himself with those who he does consider to have this "special gift".

However, despite these simplistic categorical judgements in relation to himself, Christopher's discussion of his pupils is much more thoughtful, and demonstrates a conception of musical ability that moves beyond a simple either/or dichotomy.

So I suppose, yes I do believe that talent is a big part of it because you can really see the ones who have that... but it's not the only thing... I think enthusiasm and hard work are really important too, and if you have those then I do think you've got a chance to develop these musical skills, even if they might not stand out straightaway [...] you've got to have something inside you that makes you *want* to learn a musical instrument. (Christopher, UKS2)

Whilst his reference to talent does indicate a belief in some kind of musical divide, Christopher points out how this is not the sole factor and that effort, hard work and internal motivation are part of a more complex construction of musical potential. This contrast between the ways in which individuals categorised themselves using a purely either/or dichotomy, but displayed much more nuanced judgements when referring to their pupils was repeated across several interviews, and is important to highlight regarding the teachers' motivation to deliver music to their pupils. The important message here is that whilst it may be difficult to subvert one's deeply entrenched *self*-beliefs regarding the use of fixed categories, it may be possible to encourage practitioners to think beyond these when considering their pupils and how they might develop musically. This clearly reflects the previous discussion in the quantitative chapter, whereby teachers' judgements regarding their own participation in music contrasted with the more positive assertions in relation to their pupils' responses.

For some teachers, therefore, the categories were not considered *completely* fixed, with the idea that providing increased opportunities might actually subvert the imbalance of musical and unmusical individuals. Catrina, for example, described herself as being, "not one of the

musical ones,” at school, but goes on to discuss how her own education was so musically rich that she was able to metaphorically cross the divide and enter the “musical world”. Evidence of the duality is still clearly present within her account, but crucially she does not construct the barrier between the two as insurmountable, claiming she was able to “enter the musical world” because of the education she received. Rather than perceiving her level of musical ability as being in some way predetermined, as Christopher assumes with his comment about it “bypassing” him, she believes there are ways to develop this ability and it is not simply a case that everyone is born with a fixed level of skill that cannot be improved. Regular music lessons can have the potential to break down the divide and by providing the pupils with increased opportunities she claims they will all have the potential to develop musically, just as she felt she did.

Catrina can therefore be considered unusual in this dataset, in that she cited her own experiences of improving her musical ability as justification for her belief in the importance of opportunity. This contrasts with the prevalence of entity beliefs relating to music, which in most cases appeared engrained, automatic assertions. For many teachers, those beliefs regarding *themselves* are largely unsubstantiated, relying heavily on the binary distinction between musical and unmusical, where everyone is necessarily one or the other. Often the only justification for the judgements made was the use of the actual terms - musical and unmusical – as a way of categorising individuals. This resulted in simplistic judgements being made, but ones which could have the power to preclude further involvement in the subject. However, evidence of a more nuanced understanding of musical ability with reference to their pupils could provide a way of encouraging teachers to both engage with the subject in the classroom and to reconsider their own self-judgements. By creating situations whereby

teachers could reflect on their own constructions of self, it may be possible to encourage them to question the fixed, categorical judgements about their own ability. The next section expands on this idea, looking at how these judgements are constructed and the ways in which what appear to be natural and automatic categorisations can actually be based on potential misconceptions.

## **6.2 Childhood experiences and critical incidents**

That's the power that music can have, it's that sense of elation after a good performance and it just makes you want to do more – you can't get enough of it. (Barbara, FS, MC)

If you've ever had a really bad experience early on, then sometimes that taints it for life doesn't it, you just don't like music, you're not interested, you don't want anything to do with it. (Bella, UKS2)

Some of the most powerful recollections of musical experiences recounted by teachers involved childhood events. These were considered to be of such importance that the memories and interpretations of the experiences continued to be referenced today. The above quotations summarise two of the common, but contrasting, positions which the respondents took regarding the impact of their childhood experiences: on the one hand, individuals such as Barbara discussed how captivating childhood experiences had led them into a positive cycle of increasing involvement with music; on the other hand, Bella points out how early negative experiences in the subject can lead people to eschew music completely, clearly linked to the negative self-judgements discussed in the previous section.

Although considered largely a personal construct, the development of a musical self-concept was often linked to the internalisation of perceived judgements from others. For many teachers, these judgements continued to remain associated with music throughout

their lives and, in some cases, laid the foundations for their involvement in, or avoidance, of music. The following narrative provides one such example, where the comments from others were taken as evidence for one's level of musical ability:

Music's one of those things that I've never really been that good at, it's not really my thing I guess [...] I remember I always enjoyed music at school but then we got tested, it was to see if you could play an instrument and they did these tests where you had to sing back what you heard – I was really bad, I just remember the teacher saying 'it's not for you, you don't have a musical ear,' and I was gutted really and it sort of stopped me – I never did anything after that because I always thought – well I don't have a musical ear!! [laughs] I'll always remember that! (Ellie, LKS2)

This provides a very clear example of a specific judgement being internalised and cited to justify her assertion that she is not musical. Ellie goes on to explain how the comment itself has proved to be a barrier to becoming involved in music because it created an expectation of failure whenever she was involved in music; as before the use of the term 'musical' here implies the categorical nature of the teacher's comment. Although Ellie appears to take this in good humour, other incidents were recounted in a more traumatic way. The following narrative is somewhat lengthy but I include the majority of it because of the profound impact it had clearly had upon the teacher in question.

The [event] that sticks in my mind the most- and I still tell people to this day – was our class was chosen to do some singing for a special event at the church, it was like a big deal, but it was unusual for us really because I can't ever remember doing any other type of singing [...] the head teacher, I think she must have been worried that we wouldn't be good enough so she did this thing where we had to be tested to see if we could sing, [...] all the class lined up and she made us all sing something on our own, like a solo, one by one [...] you have to remember we never really did much singing at all and definitely not on our own, and so this was the most scary thing I had ever had to do [...] Oh god it was terrible, I was waiting there and it was so, so scary because you knew everyone could hear. I think I was physically shaking and I felt sick and everything... and I heard everyone else sing, and I don't know if

they were actually good but to me, they all sounded amazing, and when I did mine it was, well it was horrible – I just couldn't do it, it came out all wrong and I had to go and stand away from everyone else, it was so awful, in the end there was just me and this boy Michael, we were the only ones who weren't allowed to do the singing because we must have been so terrible at singing... I still can't believe she did that, with just two of us... I mean I know I'm a terrible singer but you wouldn't single people out like that... that was the worst experience of my time at school. (Adele, LKS2)

This was perhaps one of the most dramatic events recounted in the interviews and it is thus unsurprising that Adele continues to be influenced by this. For her, having to sing for the test was perceived as scary and threatening, at least partially because she was worried about performing in front of others (“you knew everyone could hear”). The anxiety builds through her account because of the pressure to perform on a par with her peers, again stressing the social element of musical performance as the crucial part of the development of one's self-perceptions.

The key point highlighted by Adele was that she was singled out and consequently omitted from an activity in which the rest of the class participated; this led her to believe that she was incapable of any kind of success in music. Indeed, the experience of selective omission from music was a theme which emerged from several interviews, and which led individuals to assume that a lack of selection must be due to their lack of musical ability. Gemma, for instance, recounts the way in which the music teacher in her primary school would pick children to join the choir and to participate in instrumental lessons. On not being selected, she talks about how she thought, “Right, I'm not one of the musical ones in the class, I'll do something else.”

A perceived judgement, therefore, even inferred by omission could have a negative impact upon the way in which the child perceived herself in relation to music. The fact that music is

often provided to just a select few can help to reinforce the belief in a dichotomous either/or notion of ability. Since Gemma was not selected for the musical activity, her assumption was that she was not musical, even though this may not necessarily have been the case. Having worked in schools, I am fully aware that children are selected for instrumental lessons for a whole range of reasons<sup>13</sup>, and their musical potential may not even be considered. However, the fact that Gemma *interpreted* it as a categorical judgement of her ability is the crucial point, as her belief about the teacher's actions had real implications for her future involvement with music.

The experience of having been in some way musically segregated as children, ostensibly on the grounds of musical ability, was thus a common way in which the individuals' early self-perceptions regarding music had developed. This is important, as the inferences drawn from these experiences may actually be based upon misconceptions, demonstrating the fact that being 'musical' is not quite so automatic a judgement as many teachers assumed. Taking this further, it was possible to identify other teachers whose judgements were based not only on potential misconceptions but actually on very minor incidents. In contrast to Adele's anxiety-inducing experience, some of the teachers' accounts included ostensibly minor occurrences, yet these had still been retained and were drawn upon as evidence for their ability.

Three teachers particularly stood out with regards this, all of whom cited what seemed like innocuous comments that had been made regarding their musical skills. The following

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<sup>13</sup> I have observed children be selected on socio-economic reasons, for example if they would be unable to afford private lessons, or for behavioural reasons, for example to teach responsibility and self-discipline; neither of these are related to the child's musical ability.

vignette recounts Faye's experience in secondary school, which she draws upon to explain her reluctance to sing in the classroom:

I often used to hang around the music room and I remember when we were at school we got quite good friends with some of the sixth formers who were all doing A level music [...] I wasn't doing music at all or anything and I remember one day I was singing and one of them said, 'Shut up that sounds horrible,' and I was mortified because he obviously knew what he was talking about, and I thought, 'That's it! I won't sing again!' And I don't, I honestly never sing now, because I know I can't do it. (Faye, KS1)

This is interesting because the implication is that Faye was happy enough to sing before this judgement was made, but following the incident she wholly accepts that she cannot sing and so completely avoids this henceforth. Although it might seem questionable to base one's judgement so completely on an offhand comment from a fellow student, the fact that she remembered and recounted this event demonstrates that, for her, this was a critical experience and one that has continued to be of significance to her. Indeed, there certainly seems to be something highly personal about comments regarding one's singing, with two other teachers describing similarly trivial incidents which again resulted in a reluctance to sing in front of others again. In each of the three cases, the comments related to extremely minor events that would not necessarily be expected to have such a profound and lasting impact, yet they were perceived by teachers as critical incidents in the development of their musical self-concept.

The important consequence to note here is the resultant avoidance of music, which followed these social judgements. Although those scenarios described above were related to singing, in some cases the subsequent avoidance strategy actually extended to other forms of musical activity. Adele, for instance, constantly reiterates that she has eschewed all involvement in music, and her main justification for this is that she cannot sing. The negative

judgements made about her singing therefore proved to be the core basis for her categorical belief that she was not musical.

Careful reflection upon these constructions may be required in order for practitioners themselves to analyse these early experiences. If it is possible to unpick some of the reasons for their categorical judgements of musicality and their subsequent avoidance behaviour, it may be possible to subvert this. By demonstrating the fact that many self-assessments may be based on minimal evidence, or indeed misconceptions, it may be possible to subvert some of the current negativity related to music.

The definitions discussed in the previous chapter may also have an influence here. If one is equating musicality with solely singing or instrumental skills, the 'performative' aspect automatically makes it a public event, whose outcome is observable to others. Regardless of whether someone believes the perceived audience to be musical or not, it is usually quite easy to tell if someone is singing or playing out of tune or time. In this way, a musical performance *invariably* results in the threat of negative responses from others. Individuals will be aware that an instant critical judgement can be made about their performance, and so may wish to avoid this occurring; it appears that for some it is better to reject the performance opportunity than risk the negative judgement.

Whilst the examples presented thus far have focused upon negative experiences with music, there were also instances where the opposite effect occurred and praise at an early age could result in heightened involvement. Barbara, for instance, discusses how her experiences with extra-curricular music led to her being perceived as having high levels of ability in the subject, resulting in further achievement and praise within the school setting. This encouraged her to continue with music all the way to degree level, and she explains

how the boost she received from her primary school experience was crucial in her subsequent engagement.

I remember the first time I played the piano in front of my class in primary school and everyone was just like – really impressed and they kept saying how good I was... that really helped me, it made me feel like I could do something really special, that my playing was special and that this was something I must be good at, and so it actually made me want to practise more and get better and better. (Barbara, FS, MC)

The effects of the teachers' responses thus have implications for classroom practice.

Thinking about Bandura's (1997) theories of self-efficacy, positive judgements in the social sphere comprise one of the ways in which self-efficacy beliefs can develop. If teachers encourage and praise pupil participation in music, this may therefore prove an important way in which to achieve more positive responses across the class. For Barbara, a positive cycle was created whereby she became more motivated to practise because she was receiving praise and performing successfully. Increased practice then led to increased success and further reward, ensuring that she would consistently make the effort to engage with music. If such positivity can be engendered within the classroom, this may be a further way to help deconstruct the belief that musical ability is unattainable for most.

By exploring one's own experiences and looking at how the judgements of others have impacted upon the construction of *their own* self-theories, it may be possible to enhance teachers' motivation by demonstrating the crucial role in which they as practitioners play in shaping *their pupils'* understandings and self-beliefs. As noted in the quantitative phase, it could be beneficial to shift the focus from the inward preoccupation with one's own skills, in order to think about the impact upon pupils; this could encourage teachers to actually

engage with music more regularly in order to avoid replicating similar negative experiences to those which they themselves had received.

A key point here is that individuals largely constructed their self-perceptions in music through the internalisation of judgements from others, be these actual comments, perceived judgements and omissions, or even simply the potential threat of negative feedback. In this way, what appears to be a very personal, autonomous judgement, has its roots in social situations, reflecting the difficulty in fully separating personal and social influences. The stories recounted, which in some cases proved to be critical incidents in terms of the construction of their self-perceptions, all involved some kind of social element, rather than individuals making an innate personal judgement. Recognising and reflecting upon these past experiences and the ways in which understandings of self are constructed may be one way in which to start this process, and it is possible that such strategies could form an important part of future training programmes or whole school programmes.

One potential benefit of such strategies could be that the processes of collaborative reflection could expose the ways in which people automatically assume causal links between their previous experiences and their current understandings. These assumptions help to create an impression that one's destiny with regards music is fixed from an early age and that nothing can be done to subvert this: "I've never been a musical person and I never will be" (Claire, LKS2). However, I argue that it is wrong to apply an unbreakable causal relationship between one's past experiences and the ways in which one now approaches the teaching of music. Due to the fact that motivation is such a complex construct, built from many interacting and competing factors, the ways in which one interprets past experiences are not necessarily the sole determining factor. If one's own understandings are

constructed primarily through social interactions, it should equally be possible to work collaboratively in order to question, and perhaps challenge some of these deep-rooted notions, using social processes again to develop more nuanced understandings about one's own abilities. It could also help to focus more on the potential impact of the teachers' actions on their pupils' development, rather than the unhelpful preoccupation with their own self-perceptions and anxieties. If teachers can be encouraged to see how their own avoidance can impact on pupils' self-perceptions, this might encourage participation.

### **6.3 The notion of talent**

Although I have so far considered the ways in which teachers related their theories of musical ability to themselves, it is also important to consider how they perceived the abilities of others. One of the most common, and perhaps unhelpful attributions, was the notion of musical ability as being an innate natural talent, which some individuals possess in abundance whilst others lack entirely (Austin *et al.*, 2006). When combined with a belief in the entity nature of musical development, the notion that some individuals have an in-built natural talent could prove particularly detrimental to teachers' motivation, both in terms of their own involvement and the extent to which they promoted music to their pupils.

One significant assumption was that musical ability was located *within* the person as a stable, internal characteristic. This was a particularly prevalent way in which the teachers judged the musical ability of others, especially those whom they considered 'musical'. The teachers of Christ the King School provided an intriguing example of how musical ability could be perceived as an innate talent, even when the individual concerned did not consider this to be the case. The following extracts contain the judgements from other teachers in

the school with regards the ability of the music coordinator and will provide a stark contrast to her own narrative which follows.

Our music coordinator is very good, she's obviously got that talent, for singing and for the piano. You can't teach that. (Christopher, UKS2)

We're pretty lucky that we've got Cecilia because she's so good really, if she takes them all for singing she can hear what's right and how to improve it, it makes such a big difference having someone who's got those skills, it can really bring them on. (Catrina, UKS2)

Cecilia's obviously really talented which is really great to have, I mean you can do singing practice with the CD but it's not the same as when you've got someone who can actually lead it properly [...] and she's amazing on the piano, I listen in assemblies and I just think 'wow, that's brilliant, I wish I could play half that well!' (Claire, LKS2)

In contrast to the ways in which the other teachers describe Cecilia's ability, she portrays herself as lacking in confidence. Rather than citing natural talent, she emphasises the importance of opportunity, describing how she was lucky because her family had inherited a piano which she had the chance to learn whilst growing up. She attributes her ability as being primarily due to her hard work and practice, stressing the effort which she has to make in order to perform in front of others:

When I first started here, I think everyone thought, 'great we've got someone who can play the piano, she can do everything now', and so I ended up having to play in assembly every week and accompany all the concerts... it was really hard because I just wasn't confident in my playing and so I had to practice for hours and hours just to be able to play anything. (Cecilia, LKS2, MC)

In contrast to the perceptions of her colleagues, therefore, Cecilia repeatedly tries to downplay her own abilities:

I really wouldn't describe myself as a specialist or anything, I mean I'm not one of the those people who can just sit down at the piano and just be able to play anything just like that - it

isn't like that for me, I spend hours over it and can just about get by, it's nothing like proper musicians. (Cecilia, LKS2, MC)

The key point to take here is that Cecilia did not feel she could refer to herself as a musical specialist because she did not perceive herself to be "naturally talented" (her words). She bases her self-judgements on the fact that she has always had to work hard and "practice for hours" in order to perform in front of others. In this way, she attributes her performing skills to her hours of repetitive practice, in contrast to her colleagues' perception of "amazing" talent.

The problem is that Cecilia completes hours of practice before playing the piano in order to fulfil the expectation that she is a competent performer. She discusses her anxiety to avoid making mistakes that "everyone would hear" and she devotes large amounts of time to ensuring her playing is accurate. However, this excessive practice actually serves to perpetuate her colleagues' belief in her natural talent. Her actions ensure that her performance is of a high standard, but also serve to mask the hard work which has contributed to this; to observers, it appears effortless. This results in the misattribution by her colleagues of Cecilia's performance as being due to her natural talent which means she is able to "play anything she wants" (Claire, LKS2), in contrast to her own assertion that she specifically cannot do this.

In terms of individual teachers' motivation for music, this notion of natural talent can have detrimental effects on motivation if one is preoccupied with making comparative judgements with 'experts'. An association between musicality and the 'gift' of talent can contribute to finite judgements concerning one's own abilities. As this example shows, it is easy to observe a performance and attribute its success to inherent natural ability, without

consideration of the effort and practice which have contributed to this. This could then lead individuals to construct musical ability as something which is effortless to the musical few and inaccessible to the unmusical majority.

Actual failures themselves could also prove problematic when associated with the notion of talent, for example when first attempting to engage with music. If one assumes that some individuals are innately musical and that this ability is fixed, then failures can be perceived as evidence of a complete lack of ability, rather than simply a typical, intermittent setback, which would be expected when learning new skills (Rogers, 2002). In this way, teachers such as Bella discussed how they had given up on playing an instrument in the belief that they would never be able to make progress, precisely because of a perceived lack of talent.

Involvement with music thus ceased at an early age and their self-belief of being unmusical was either established or confirmed.

The key point in terms of teaching is that many of the teachers equated their own lack of talent with an inability to teach music. As Christopher points out, “Music’s such a problem for me *because I’m not musical*”, the assumption being that only those select few musical people would have any chance of delivering the subject. He makes a causal link between Cecilia’s supposed natural talent and her ability to teach effective lessons, leading him to draw the conclusion that he would never be able to teach music because he does not have this elusive ability. As noted in the introduction to this chapter, he was not the only one to make this causal link, and many of the teachers also negated anything they could offer on the basis of a belief that natural talent would be a requirement. As Claire claims, she would be “brilliant” at being able to teach music if she just had “a fraction” of the talent that her

music coordinator has; she thus demonstrates the assumption that one must possess musical talent in order to teach the subject.

This idea of effective teaching being *solely* equated with the idea of talent is one which must be questioned if teachers' motivation is going to be enhanced. The example of Cecilia's focus on practice, therefore, is actually important to highlight, in order to show that improvement and development of musical skills *is* possible and being musical is not necessarily a fixed entity. Whilst she received opportunity in music when she was younger, Cecilia discusses how it is actually the current practice and repeated engagement that has enabled her to develop both confidence and skills in music; although she consistently downplays her own ability, she does recognise that she has improved *because* of having to do this regularly.

I suppose I can see a difference [...] I hadn't played the piano for years and so I was just really rusty - but because I've been forced into it and I'm having to do it every week, I'm starting to get a bit better... I'm not totally confident still but I can – I do see that there are times when I play and I think – well that was okay. (Cecilia, LKS2, MC)

This recognition of her improvement is not linked to the idea of talent, which she categorically denies, but rather to her consistent involvement with music. Although this is very much on the level of musical performance, which could be considered specialist, the fact that repeated engagement leads to increased confidence and improvement, could be transferable to the teaching of music. Indeed, other practitioners in the sample recognised that repeated engagement, rather than talent, could be the primary way in which to gain confidence:

When I was doing my training I used to really worry about music because I just thought 'oh I can't do this', but I think when you actually start having a go, and getting involved then it's

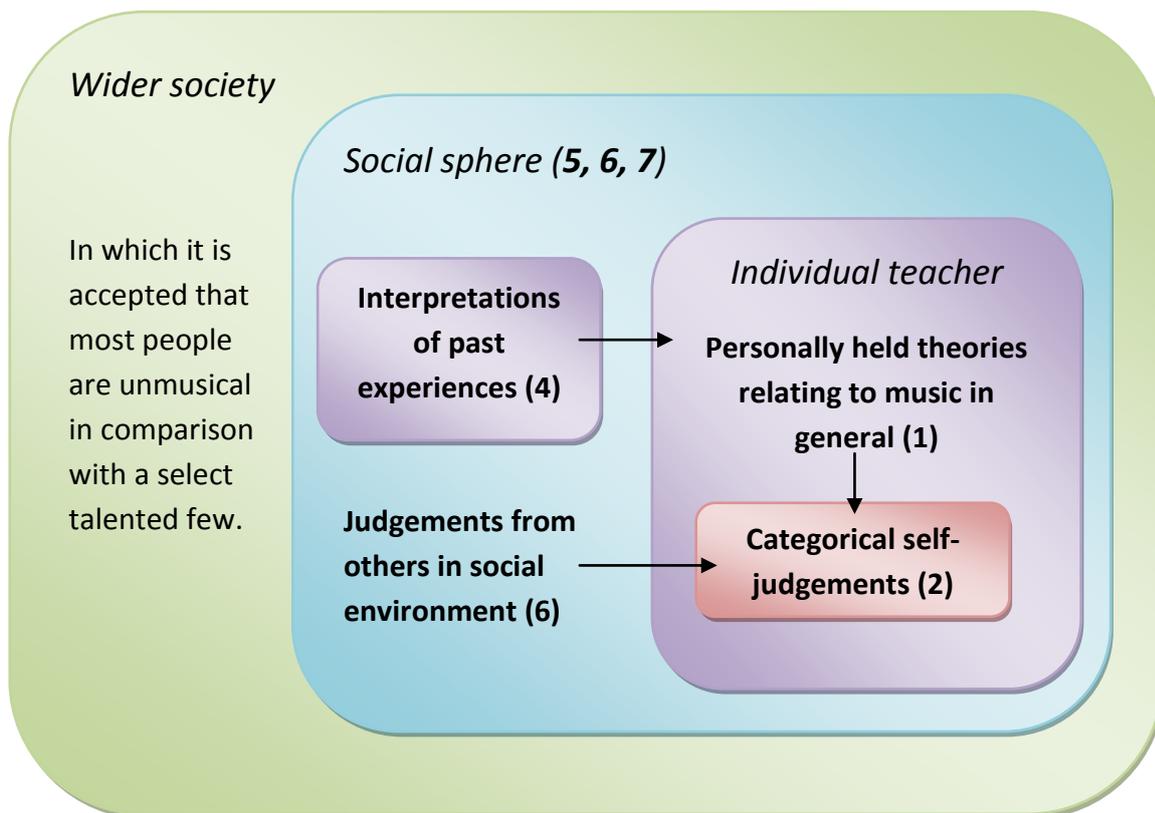
not really as bad as what you might think... I mean, it's taken me a while but I do think I can do it now, and that's down to actually having a go with it and keeping trying. (Daisy, KS1)

In this way, therefore, it might be helpful to distance the teaching of music from the idea of musical talent, connecting it instead with the notion that all teachers can be capable of doing this if they "have a go". Confidence in teaching the subject can be built up through repeated engagement and does not solely rely on the teachers' own perceived ability. This is a crucial theme to recognise if individuals are going to have any chance of prolonged participation with music in their classrooms.

#### **6.4 An iterative mapping of the thematic models**

Whilst the above discussion has proved useful for making explicit the ways in which teachers held specific theories regarding musical ability, it is now crucial to show how these played out in relation to the eight key factors discussed in Chapter 5. The analysis has always sought to be iterative, in which data and findings form an ongoing cycle of reflection; it is thus important to continue this throughout the discussion chapters. In particular it is necessary to consider how these understandings of music in general fit with the models previously presented and how they might connect to the key research areas of motivation and the individual-contextual divide.

Figure 6.3 maps the understandings onto the conceptual levels discussed in Chapter 2, showing how the themes which emerged from the interviews fit with this.



**Figure 6.3 Mapping the thematic models onto the contextual levels**

The above figure shows how personally held beliefs about musical ability (1) are constructed through a combination of the interpretations of one's past experiences (4), the judgements of others through social interactions (6) and, more broadly, the norms of society in which they are frequently replicated (McPherson & Welch, 2012). These views were discussed in the interviews in ways which were deeply entrenched, both across and within the individuals' personal accounts. In the majority of cases, the personally held theories about the nature of music (1) had been clearly related to the self-perceptions (2) in unambiguous ways, through the categorical judgements discussed above; individuals tended to believe in the existence of a musical-unmusical divide and classified themselves as one or the other with little room for manoeuvre.

Clearly these beliefs, which may prove detrimental to motivation, may also prove resistant to change, having been formed through this complex interaction of factors. One way to

potentially subvert them may be to encourage reflection on the part of the teachers, enabling them to consider how they themselves constructed their own self-perceptions in relation to music. This could have the benefit of allowing those teachers whose beliefs are based on either misconceptions or minor incidents to illuminate the constructed nature of these understandings and to start to question them. However, the fact that these views about the categorical nature of musical ability appear to be so deeply entrenched in society as a whole, means that this task may well prove difficult to achieve, as one's belief systems are necessarily constrained by the society in which they are situated.

There remain, however, other avenues which may prove valuable in terms of enhancing motivation, in addition to personal reflection. One example is encouraging teachers to focus on the musical potential of their pupils. When thinking about the ability of the children they taught, there was evidence of more nuanced and, potentially incremental, conceptions of musical ability (Christopher and Catrina were two such examples described above). Whilst some teachers did question the relevance of music, due to their views of musical ability, there was also evidence of a belief that children would have more success in developing musical skills, regardless of whether they were considered one of the talented few. In a finding which replicates some of the discussion in the quantitative section, therefore, an attempt at increasing teachers' motivation could be focused on the pupils, their potential and the importance of avoiding a repeat of the critical incidents which teachers themselves had experienced. This will be considered in more detail in the next chapter as the desire for equality of provision could itself prove a powerful motivational tool.

One final recommendation from this discussion concerns the linking of the notion of talent to the teaching of music. This proved problematic for teachers' motivation, particularly

considering the deep-rooted nature of one's musical self-concept; there were a group of six teachers who, like many others claimed they had no talent in the subject, but then explicitly related this to a complete inability to even attempt to teach music. This perceived causal link between proved particularly problematic, meaning it may be necessary to encourage teachers to think beyond these simplistic notions of primary music teaching as dependent on specialist musical talent. The chapter which follows therefore explores the various conceptions of music teaching (as opposed to solely musical ability) which the teachers constructed, in order to uncover those which might prove either beneficial or detrimental to motivation. By unpicking some of the connections made by individuals, it is possible to explore the reasons behind their actions with regards music teaching, a necessary step when thinking about how to effect change.

## 7. Multiple conceptions of music: Linking teachers' understandings of music to their motivation

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The thing that was difficult was to know what exactly to *do* – I mean, what I actually *should* be teaching in music... [...] it was hard to know what skills and knowledge the children need and how you could help them get these skills... [...] to be honest I just didn't know and I didn't know where I could find out. (Faye, KS1)

This second discussion chapter focuses on the ways in which the practitioners in my sample constructed their understandings of music teaching in the primary school. The overarching aim here is to present the range of different conceptions which emerged from the data and explore how these might affect their motivation. This is important to highlight, because there was often confusion over what teachers felt music teaching should involve, leading to the emergence of a variety of understandings. Faye's quote above is indicative of this and reflects a general consensus where teachers were often uncertain of what they needed to deliver in music. This problem was exacerbated in certain institutions by the use of the Creative Curriculum, where teachers needed to find links between music and a broader topic; whilst the term ostensibly implies a greater emphasis on the arts, in some schools this broad topic-based approach actually resulted in a complete lack of music teaching. As music was tended to be considered 'different' from the other subjects, it was thus perceived as more difficult to link in to a wider theme.

Whilst it is important throughout this chapter to *present* the different perspectives of the teachers, it is also necessary to analyse these in more detail, looking at: how the understandings were constructed; how they might impact upon teachers' actions and engagement; and how they relate to other motivational factors such as self, values and

context. By focusing on these issues, my research is therefore able to move beyond the simple presentation of various viewpoints, as discussed in Chapter 3. Whilst putting forward the ideas and perceptions of the teachers is important and can provide significant insights into their understandings of the subject, it is also important to critically assess the impact of these upon both the teachers' motivation, considering the educational value of the lessons they aim to provide. This can only be achieved by unpicking the various factors in the webs of understanding, on both an individual and institutional level.

## **7.1 Multiple understandings of music teaching in the primary school**

With the subject of music in the primary school being one whose definitions are contested and in some cases confused, it was unsurprising that a number of different conceptions would emerge from the interviews. As with musical ability above, these were often constructed along dimensions which had the potential to be perceived as dichotomies.

These included:

- Whether music education should comprise instrumental tuition or should be constructed as a traditional foundation subject
- Whether music should focus on the delivery of basic skills or whether it should be directed towards creativity, exploration and individual expression
- Whether music should be delivered in a traditional teacher-led model or a more progressive pupil-centred one

An important point to bear in mind throughout this section will be that whilst contrasting understandings were perhaps inevitable, the perception of these as fixed, immovable dichotomies can in itself prove unhelpful to their motivation and engagement (Alexander, 2008). If underpinned by a belief in the dichotomous nature of musical ability, these various dimensions of teaching could prove cumulatively problematic. This chapter therefore

discusses how the personally held theories (1) which teachers construct in relation to the teaching of music, might relate to the previously discussed theories about musical ability (1) and the self (2).

### **7.1.1 “Proper music”: The prevalence of performance**

The previous chapter has shown how some individuals equated musical ability as solely dependent on performance skills and this belief was certainly replicated in the teachers’ notions of what effective teaching should constitute. For certain teachers, there was a tendency to view music lessons as solely the delivery of instrumental skills, with the aim of primary school provision being that pupils would develop the specialist skills needed to play an instrument. This construction was evident in all schools except Dalton, and could clearly pose problems for the motivation of those teachers who believed themselves incapable of such skills.

This distinction between music generally and music as instrumental tuition can be related to broader debates within educational literature. Bowman (2012), for instance, discusses the distinction between ‘educare’, or specific training and the preservation of traditional knowledge and skills, in comparison with ‘educere’, an approach in which the learners are themselves the creators of knowledge. This difference is fundamental to understand in relation to the ways in which teachers constructed their beliefs about music teaching; for some the purpose is solely to train pupils in instrumental skills and maintain traditions, whilst for others music offers an opportunity for creative knowledge construction. This distinction underpins this whole chapter.

For some schools, the ‘educare’ definition was clearly prominent, in that the majority of music which occurred was extra-curricular instrumental lessons provided by peripatetic

teachers. The purpose of this was to train pupils to become increasingly skilled performers, rather than providing a broad education in a range of musical learning activities. In Fairfield School, for example, this was almost the only music which took place, with the subject being positioned as largely external to the curriculum. Whilst some of the teachers praised this system, I would question whether it is sufficient to be classed as a full 'music education', particularly as it failed to include every child. The inequalities discussed by teachers in the previous chapter were thus being replicated, with not every child involved in music-making.

When considering the legitimacy of purely performance-based provision, Mantie (2012) suggests that the ultimate aim was to create school bands that would sound like orchestras. Through this, the performances themselves would be the fundamental output from music education and the aim would be to achieve as high a standard as possible. This is interesting to consider in relation to my own data as there are some clear parallels. In Christ the King and, to a lesser extent, All Saints and Emmanuel, the teachers discussed how their priority is to ensure the pupils are able to give high quality performances in school concerts. Rather than talking about the pupils' learning and development, the main concern for these practitioners was the end product, i.e. ensuring that pupils would be able to produce effective, musical performances in front of an audience. The priority within their teaching was therefore to repeatedly practise performing, both instrumental and vocal, so that this experience would *in itself* comprise their pupils' music education.

It is possible to further analyse this whole-school focus on performance in terms of the teachers' own aims for music education. For some practitioners, the ultimate goal they discussed was to support their pupils, not in developing musical knowledge and skills, but in *becoming musicians*. In a replication of the way in which teachers constructed their

understanding of the musical-unmusical divide, it was thought that pupils could become 'musical' by learning an instrument. This not only places performance at the heart of music education, it *becomes* music education in itself, a situation which will clearly prove problematic for generalist practitioners.

One contributory factor for this prominence of performance could be the emphasis placed on participatory instrumental programmes, which the previous government heavily supported throughout the first decade of the 2000s. In particular, the 'Wider Opps' initiative can be seen as reinforcing the belief that worthwhile music lessons should consist of instrumental tuition and little else. Several of the teachers, for instance referred to this as "proper" music, in contrast with the (implied lesser) provision that they themselves could offer.

This negative comparison is interesting to explore and is perhaps an unforeseen consequence of the 'Wider Opps' programmes. By delivering whole class music lessons which constituted solely instrumental tuition, this helped to reinforce the understanding that music lessons should entirely comprise performance. The fact that for most teachers the whole class instrumental lessons *replaced* the normal class music lessons, led to negative comparisons in terms of what the teachers felt they themselves could offer, with the result being that their own teaching was devalued in relation to the instrumental programmes.

This was particularly the case for those teachers who were either at the start of their career and whose only experience of music had comprised observing a specialist teach 'Wider Opps', or those who had moved school or year group and now found the responsibility for music had reverted from the peripatetic teacher to themselves. As Beverley (UKS2)

described, the only form of music lesson she had ever observed was whole class brass tuition, which she deemed to be clearly beyond anything that she herself could deliver; she thus portrayed herself as helpless in being able to even attempt music due to her belief that it must necessarily involve these higher level performance skills.

The belief that “proper” music needed to comprise instrumental tuition could therefore prove a barrier to engagement. Rather than focusing on the teaching skills which they possessed, there was a tendency to emphasise the need for specialist instrumental skills which, for most, were considered unattainable. This is an important misconception, and clearly links to both the quantitative findings and the previous chapter’s discussion of the perceived link between talent and effective teaching. Research has shown that it is perfectly possible for teachers who are excellent general practitioners to deliver effective lessons in music without necessarily having specialist music skills (Jeanneret & Degraffenreid, 2012). Additionally, there is no guarantee that someone who is a trained musician will automatically be able to teach classroom music effectively to primary school children (Mills, 2005). Indeed, some of the practitioners themselves recounted negative experiences with visiting musicians who were obviously talented *musically* but lacked the teaching skills to help the children make progress; the notion of automatically linking specialist performance skills to effective teaching can thus be questioned.

Whilst performance in music is clearly an inherent part of the subject, and can provide pupils with memorable, shared experiences (Jensen, 2000), limiting music teaching to this can serve to reduce practitioners’ motivation for the subject. A synonymous relationship of music education and performance can clearly prove problematic, particularly for those

teachers for whom such teaching would be perceived as anxiety-inducing and beyond their own skills.

In addition, it is important to question the educational value in music education programmes which rely solely on performing. Could this actually limit the value to the pupils in terms of their future involvement in music? It is possible to view the purpose of music as the provision of opportunities that will allow the identification of those who excel. This select group can then be given the chance to take the subject further, as was the case in Christ the King school. However, the logical extension of this idea is that music would be entirely directed towards the small minority in each class who were considered talented. As Bowman (2012) notes, if the purpose of music is to produce “musicians”, i.e. high quality performers, then this is going to be relevant for only a select few pupils; music therefore becomes positioned as optional and external to the curriculum and many pupils find themselves excluded.

The main problem here is that the distinction between instrumental training and broader-reaching music lessons was often considered by teachers to be an either/or divide. For some, “real” or “proper” music involved solely instrumental training, and any other kind of teaching would instantly be devalued in comparison. However, I agree with Bowman (2012) who claims that for music to be considered educational, it necessarily needs to extend beyond pure performance. Rather than perceiving the two approaches as incompatible, therefore, it is more helpful to consider them as complementary parts of a holistic system, whereby children are given the opportunity to develop the instrumental skills, especially if they have the desire to do this, but this forms part of a wider approach to music that incorporates a broader conception of the field.

### 7.1.2 Music as a set of 'basic skills'

Whilst appreciating that there were some teachers who perceived music as solely performance, it is now important to move beyond this notion of specialist provision to explore what the practitioners believed should comprise their own lessons in music. Here there was a divide between the idea of teaching the *basics* of music, in comparison with those who perceived the subject in a more *creative*, holistic, exploratory or progressive approach. This distinction can also be linked to the divide between 'educare' and 'educere', with the basic skills approach seeking to instil in pupils a set of traditional musical skills, whilst the creative approach was more focused upon enabling pupils to explore and learn experientially. This divide can also be linked with the development of the new curriculum (DfE, 2013), in which there does appear to be something of an ideological shift from the creative, pupil-focused aims of the previous regime to a greater focus on transmission of knowledge and traditional skills (Shirley, 2013).

The 'basic skills' approach, as I have termed it, focuses primarily on the idea of musical skills being taught discretely, usually through a traditional, 'teacher-authority' model. A key aim of such methods has been referred to as the development of "musical literacy", whereby the subject of music is split into specific skills with which the learner must become equipped (Jeanneret & Degraffenreid, 2012).

There was some variation in terms of the language used by the current sample of teachers in relation to this approach, with terms such as "basic", "fundamental", "technical" and "specialist" all being employed. Whilst the term "musical literacy" was not itself used in any of the interviews, this was implied through the notion that such an approach would develop children who were competent in a core set of musical skills. These included, although were

not limited to, notation, aspects of music theory and the development of aural skills relating to pitch and rhythm.

The ability to play an instrument also comprised part of this vision, although the idea of musical literacy is different from the *complete* focus on instrumental performance described above. The main way in which the teachers discussed the basic skills approach and its value was through the need for pupils to develop “musically”. This involves the more extended definition of musicality, which moved beyond simply the ability to play an instrument and included what could be considered specialised knowledge and skills (see Chapter 6). Fiona explicitly advocates the basic skills approach and justifies this by claiming it is the optimum way in which pupils can become musical and engage with the subject.

We have to help them to grow *musically* as they progress through school - and if they're going to do that they need to be able to actually understand all the basics, you know like notation and rhythms and pitch and everything... or else how can they get anywhere with it?  
(Fiona, LKS2)

The underlying idea here is that the only way to teach “musically” is through the delivery of these basic skills and without them the pupils will be unable to progress. In terms of how it should be delivered, the basic skills model was strongly associated with a top-down approach to teaching, where the pupils need to be equipped with an armoury of specific musical skills taught to them by the teacher. The practitioner here is presented as the keeper of knowledge, which needs to be passed onto the pupils so that they have a chance of progressing in music. Clearly the important point to note within this conception is that the teacher herself needs to be in possession of the knowledge and skills in the first place, in order that she can then instruct the pupils in this.

This notion is clearly problematic for those teachers described in Chapter 6 who did not believe themselves to be in possession of such skills and also felt it would be impossible to ever develop them. How can an individual assume the position of authority if their own self-perceptions of ability are so low? The basic skills approach can thus create problems in terms of the level of skills which teachers assumed were required to deliver it. Whilst Fiona, who described herself as a “musician” feels very confident in constructing herself as an authority figure, other teachers perceived this as a barrier to their attempts to teach music. This model can thus pose problems when related to their understandings of musical ability and whether they have the potential to develop this.

Across the interviews, those teachers who fully aligned themselves with this approach and described using it in the classroom were often those who had experienced this method of teaching when at school themselves. Fiona, for example, describes her own music education as providing the foundation for her future high involvement in the subject, discussing the fact that her experiences at school led her eventually to study performing arts and become a professional singer. She therefore provides a convincing personal argument as to how experiencing the basic skills approach can lead to success in the subject.

Catrina was another advocate of this approach and the phrase “basic skills” permeates her discussion. To highlight the potential positive effect of teaching music in this way, she discusses her own school experiences and how these contributed to her current level of ability and involvement:

So it should be the *basics* of music that we’re teaching them, the fundamental skills so that they can really develop as they go up through the school [...] when I was at school we learnt the basics of music, we learnt the technicalities and all the basic skills and we learnt how to read music and understand the language, it really opened the door for me into this whole

new world of music, it made me really appreciate music because now I could understand what was going on. And I loved it, I really did... and I sung in the choir and I really felt *musical*, it was like I had been let into this whole new musical world. (Catrina, UKS2)

Catrina identifies a clear trajectory in her own life, whereby the learning of what she considers to be the basic musical skills at school was the first step on a journey to developing a “real love” and appreciation of the subject. The metaphor used here is particularly important, as she perceives the development of a set of core musical skills as a means of unlocking the gateway to a “musical world”. Prior to being educated in these skills, this world was considered to be inaccessible, but once she had developed this set of basic skills she was able to gain entry, progress and flourish musically. This interpretation of her own education thus increases her motivation to teach music now.

Although both Fiona and Catrina firmly believe in the importance of delivering a basic skills approach, they also make the point that this rarely occurs within their own schools, meaning they find themselves in a difficult position within their respective institutions. For Fiona, the fact that her own ambitions for the subject are clearly in conflict with those of her colleagues results in feelings of isolation and helplessness in relation to music. She discusses how she does not feel as though any change could ever occur within the school – indeed, she seems to accept that the views of the other staff will inevitably conflict with her own and there is little she can do to influence this.

It is certainly possible for teachers within the same institution to hold vastly different conceptions and individuals may thus feel excluded from the shared consensual perspective. In terms of motivation, this could prove problematic, as it can be difficult to pursue one’s own priorities if they conflict with those of the majority. If the social environment is not

supportive of music, then one's own personal motivations can become threatened, even if these are highly positive.

In order to maintain her commitment to music, Fiona has to position herself in a way which satisfies her obligations to the school, i.e. focusing on what they consider to be the priorities, but also enables her to remain faithful to her own beliefs and aims (see further discussion in Chapter 8). She discusses how she manages to promote at least some musical literacy amongst the children in her class, despite the fact that the school is limited in terms of space and resources for this, and she consistently reiterates her desire to ensure that she herself is able to provide some opportunity in music in spite of the limitations of the school.

Catrina too discusses this dissonance between personal and institutional aims, describing the frustration and restriction caused by the dominant practices in the school.

If they [the pupils] were able to learn music properly and they actually started young with it and did it all the way through the school then it would be so much better, they would have these skills [...] think how good they would be [...] as it is, I do what I can, I try to give them that chance to have a go at notation and to –you know, do the theory things, but it's really hard because it's so new to them – there's no backing it up in other years, there's no foundation for it, but yeah - you do get some and they really take to it and it opens that door for them. (Catrina, UKS2)

Throughout the interview, she expresses a strong belief in the importance of delivering musical skills to her pupils, in order that they should have the *chance* to become part of the “musical world”. The idea is that by providing this opportunity to learn the basics, children would then gain the opportunity to go on to achieve highly and develop a lasting involvement in music. However, if the majority of practitioners in the school do not teach this, there are clearly going to be problems; as she claims, it is difficult to make a difference to pupils if this is not reinforced across classes.

As a result of these conflicts, both teachers construct the basic skills approach as something of an educational ideal that rarely occurs. Fiona discusses her shock at the children being unable to even identify “those black spots” as musical notation and how upon entering the institution, she quickly realised that music was not actually taught at all. In this way, her own motivation was gradually reduced, as she too recognises that there is little point in developing the pupils’ skills unless *all* the staff are involved, a situation which she deems impossible in her current institution.

It is interesting to note that the core musical skill which Fiona cites is the ability to understand musical notation. Whilst her complaint is that the *pupils* find notation incomprehensible, many of the teachers in her school also expressed difficulty with this, believing themselves to be completely lacking in this skill and thus having no chance of teaching it:

I think that’s what scares me the most, when I see musical notation and I just think – I don’t have a clue what that means – it’s just lost on me. I think that’s what people get scared about – the notation. (Faye, KS1)

Here, it is possible to start to see some of the links between the different understandings relating to both the self and to music education. On one level, Faye actually concurs with Fiona’s belief in the ideal of a basic skills approach, in that she too discusses the need to provide notation and other basic skills as part of the lesson. This understanding too was reinforced by experiences at school which focused upon music theory and notation, although she failed to achieve success in this. Her subsequent poor assessment of her own basic skills in music then leads her to the conclusion that she is completely incapable of teaching music effectively, as her self-judgements do not correspond with her image of what constitutes effective teaching.

Faye's experiences at school were perceived as off-putting and she cites this as the reason she never pursued music any further; however, it is now her lack of early involvement which she draws upon to explain why she is incapable of teaching music: "if I'd have done it properly at school and really got involved I would be better now" (Faye, KS1). This view is supported by a music coordinator, who cites the lack of previous experience in music as one of the main barriers for generalist teachers to overcome:

I think it can really seem like it's something that's just really difficult – I think if you didn't choose to do music at school, or even your school just wasn't very musical, then I think it's a subject where a lot of people might just not have the skills... And if you don't have these skills then how are you supposed to teach it? People just don't have a chance. (Abigail, LKS2)

Again, the belief here is that those teachers who do not have a core set of specialist skills in music will not have a "chance" of being able to deliver lessons in the subject. If teaching music is seen as involving the transmission of specialist musical skills to the pupils, the expectation is that teachers themselves must be in possession of these skills; if they lack confidence with these but consider them essential, the tendency appears to be they assume they will be unable to teach the subject at all. As with Faye, the easiest option may thus be simply to avoid it.

However, is there potentially a misconception here in terms of the ways in which teachers believe music must be delivered? Certainly from the previous National Curriculum there was an emphasis on pupil-led activities which could move the focus of skills away from the teacher and onto the pupils themselves. The following section will explore this alternative conceptions and whether these can make music more accessible to generalist practitioners.

### **7.1.3 Music as an avenue for creativity**

In contrast to music as a skills-based discipline built on specialist foundations, other approaches to the teaching of music emerged from the data. One alternative conception, explicitly advocated in 8 of the accounts, was that the subject provided a means by which individual pupils could express their own creativity in a free and inclusive way. This involved, for example, children being given the freedom to explore different sounds and to make their own unique 'music'.

In contrast to the traditional teaching model described above, the emphasis here was placed upon pupil-centred approaches to learning. This altered the role of the teacher from the knowledge authority to that of facilitator of creative opportunities, following Vygotskian principles. This clearly involves a different conception of the practitioner's role in music lessons, as well as eliciting different set of assumptions regarding the skills required. Given the previous discussions concerning the barriers associated with performance- or skills-based conceptions, this may prove beneficial to generalist practitioners. However, according to the teachers within my sample, it does not necessarily follow that more open and creative approaches to teaching necessarily produce valuable outcomes, and what may be gained in terms of access may be lost in the educational value of the outcomes. As has been stressed already, a belief in the discrete and incompatible nature of the two approaches could prove problematic, with it being preferable to include elements from both.

For some teachers, a key barrier to becoming involved with music at all was the constant desire to make music that was technically 'correct'. This could add an extra dimension of tension and anxiety due to the fear that a rehearsed performance would, as discussed in

Chapter 6, inevitably be followed by a judgement as to its quality. By adopting a more creative approach, it was possible to negate such concerns, as notions of producing technically correct music would be diminished in favour of valuing experiential learning through individual expression. In this way, a more creative approach could lessen the expectations placed upon the teacher, since the 'responsibility' for the performance was now positioned with the pupils.

This notion of music as a creative, exploratory subject appeared to be underpinned by a different philosophy of teaching to either the basic skills or the performance-only approaches presented above. Within this approach, the learners themselves take a more central role, as the children learn experientially through active participation in a democratic environment (Burnard, 2006b). This approach is therefore clearly reflective of 'educere' principles described above.

For me, I think the main thing is about them exploring sounds... so using their voices and instruments ... sharing and celebrating the sounds they can make. It's not formal, they can use the different instruments and see what happens. It's all very creative. You get to hear their real musical voices, it's not just about teaching them things. (Briony, FS)

Briony here contrasts her own methods of teaching music, with the more "formal" demands of the basic skills approach above. Interestingly, she does not see her role as "about teaching them things", but as the facilitator to their own explorations. By allowing the children the freedom to investigate with sound and create their own music, the need for the delivery of formal notation or technical instrumental skills was diminished, with the emphasis instead placed upon creativity and enjoyment.

Although such an open approach might be expected in the Foundation Stage setting, it proved equally useful for Bella, who, despite teaching Year 5, espoused a similar pupil-

centred teaching philosophy. Transferring this approach to music enabled her to alter her perception of the subject, subverting her previous belief that music was inaccessible and difficult, to one in which she now felt capable of teaching effective lessons. She discusses how she previously believed music to be concerned primarily with formal skills, but now views it as something much more “open”, where children could be creative and make music anywhere:

[Music] changed for me completely, because I saw a new way – I think I never really got how to teach it before, and I’d never looked outside the box really - rather than just looking at it like – you teach them to sing this song, or you teach them to play this instrument, or... you teach them to write it down in this way, it became something that was much more open - it was a way of learning about other things, and it wasn’t as strict as, ‘this is the note C and it sits here on the line’ and stuff.. it became something ‘ohhhh I can use it in much more open and cross curricular way’ and it became *more* than just these technical things. (Bella, UKS2)

The shift in her understandings to a more open approach helped Bella to believe that she could actually teach music effectively, regardless of the fact that she had not received any formal training in the subject. Rather than focusing on the anxiety over her lack of specialist music skills, she was able to focus on her ability as a teacher and support the children in their own exploration. This links back to the discussion in the quantitative section, whereby those questions which addressed teaching, rather than musical, skills, tended to receive more positive self-judgements.

It is important to focus on the ways in which Bella changed her understandings and thus increased her motivation to engage with the subject, as this was not solely an insular, personal development. Indeed, she discusses the influence of observing positive practices from a visiting teacher and how this collaboration exposed her to alternative teaching methods:

I think too often we get caught up in all the formalities of music because it's so easy to get bogged down by it all... I had a few sessions with a music teacher, where I got to observe him teach, and he talked about... just exploring sounds [and] wacky things like going out and hitting lampposts and seeing the sound that they made and stuff, and that I found much more inspiring than anything I'd ever done before and I could see how it could be fun for the pupils and how they could get something out of... it's trying to think about it differently, and letting the children explore music rather than forcing them into this formal way. (Bella, UKS2)

By working with a teacher whom she respected as a music practitioner, Bella was therefore inspired to change her understandings of music and engage with it to a greater extent than ever before. This suggests that it may well be possible for individuals to alter their own views and perceptions, if they have the chance to experience alternative practices through collaboration with others. The crucial point is that there needs to be discussion, sharing and modelling of ideas, all of which are crucial concepts which will be shown as vital in Chapter 9. However, such dialogue often fails to occur in peripheral subjects such as music, even if these are perhaps the areas where training and collaboration may be most vital.

A further way in which the creative approach could be considered useful was through its capacity to transcend barriers and allow all children to be involved. Barbara, for instance, discusses music's ability to support inclusion because it can negate the need for academic skills:

There are some of the ones that I teach who, you know, are sort of classed as SEN, but in music, they enjoy it and they – you know they're performing on the same sort of level as other children, everyone can get into it the same and they can all do well and get involved, which I think gives them that boost up of confidence frankly. (Barbara, FS, MC)

In this case, music is seen as an avenue through which those children with Special Educational Needs can achieve comparably with others in the class. The value of creative music making for Barbara can therefore be seen through the fact that it does not require formal or academic skills. However, this understanding seems to present something of an anomaly, given the majority of the findings discussed thus far. It has been demonstrated above that many teachers perceive music as an excessively difficult subject, demanding so many specialist skills that they are unable to deliver lessons on a regular basis; even for experienced teachers, music was often perceived as inaccessible due to the high skill level required. However, in contrast, Barbara's comment positions music as something in which all pupils can have an equal chance of achieving and in which everyone has the opportunity to excel. Clearly this seems contradictory with the notion that music is impossibly difficult, which was also frequently identified in the interviews.

It is possible to view the underlying belief in Barbara's account as being that all pupils will have an equal chance to do well in music if they are all given the same opportunity to engage in practical music-making, where the focus is on individual expression rather than technical brilliance. She considers music as an area which negates the need for traditional academic skills, meaning that it offers a chance for children who perhaps struggle in literacy or numeracy to succeed and achieve in a practical, play-based session.

However, even this notion, which seems logically sound, was not repeated amongst other teachers in my sample, who were more likely to equate musical achievement with more able pupils. This is perhaps more in line with research literature, where those who engage in music are often associated with higher achievement more generally (Jensen, 2000). Equally, although the subject is considered peripheral in terms of primary schools, it gradually gains

more social capital and prestige as one progresses through the educational pyramid, meaning that those who study for music degrees are not generally considered to be those who struggle academically and have resorted to music as a means of finding a subject they could actually access. There is therefore a complex set of assumptions which teachers need to negotiate when considering what they believe effective teaching to be, and the open exploratory approach was not always as straightforward as may first appear, despite its potential for making music more accessible.

One particular problem involved the products generated by such activities. For some practitioners, it proved difficult to subvert firmly held perceptions that musical performances needed to be polished, well rehearsed and accurate, even in the primary school. Catrina, one of the most emphatic advocates of the basic skills approach, would be unlikely to value her pupils playing out rhythms on a lamppost in the same way as Bella did. When discussing her own school's concerts, Catrina clearly sets out her expectations for accurate, technical skills which have been thoroughly rehearsed in order to produce a performance that is definitely 'musical', in the performance-based definition.

We do spend a long time on our concerts making sure that they have all the skills sorted out - they have to be done to a very high standard, I just won't have anything amateur, I never have done... it's got to be a high standard otherwise it's not worth it, so we have to put the effort in and, well the results are there to be seen, it really works and it's really good - musically. (Catrina, UKS2)

Catrina therefore values musical performances which reflect her own understanding of what high quality music should be, a desire which could prove contradictory with a more open and creative approach. As it is reasonably easy to judge whether a performance is 'musical', in terms of its pitch or rhythm, there can be difficulties in accepting the value of children's

exploratory music. Teachers often listen with adult ears to the music children produce and judge it by these standards (Kaschub & Smith, 2009), resulting in a potential disconnect between what children value in terms of music, and what their teachers believe to be worthwhile (Burnard, 2006b). Here the open, exploratory approach can fail to produce results which are deemed musical, and thus may be questioned by teachers as to its value.

I think one of the problems was that when we got the instruments out and they all had a play with them, yeah they probably had fun but - well there didn't seem to be any point to it all - there was no music going on – they just started bashing about and I couldn't tell anything that was musical about it. (Faye, KS1)

Such views were echoed by Eddy, when discussing his memories of music lessons within his school. He uses this experience to explain why he always makes the effort to ensure his class are engaged in “proper music”, i.e. some focus on skills, rather than simply “let loose” with the instruments.

Music consisted of banging on things... that's about all I can remember... getting bits of wood and banging them together and calling it music. [...] I'm not sure how much musically we got out of it [...] I try to make sure that they're not just bashing about with stuff, I make sure it's all pretty structured so that there is an actual music objective, it's not just play-time for them (Eddy, KS1)

The language used here by both teachers clearly questions the value of allowing the pupils to play, or “bash about”, with the instruments in order to explore music themselves, and it is possible that the outcomes they produced were devalued because the sounds were not considered “musical”. If most people have a clear conception of what is and is not musical, much exploratory music in schools can find itself perceived as the latter. However, this should not necessarily negate it as an important first step on the road to musical

development and engagement, and does not mean that what pupils produce should necessarily be completely discounted and devalued (Kaschub & Smith, 2009).

I would contend that the creative approach to music can be a useful way of introducing pupils to different ways of making music freely, without the more formal constraints of more specialist aspects such as notation. It can provide a less threatening way for teachers to engage with music because the emphasis shifts away from specialist musical skills; it could thus prove the first step in encouraging practitioners to commence regular engagement with music. However, even in a creative approach, this does not mean that there should be no scaffolding or guidance provided at all and such strategies should not require a complete rejection of the delivery of 'musical' knowledge and skills. As pointed out in the previous section, the dichotomous divide needs to be broken down, with approaches presented as complementary rather than contradictory.

#### **7.1.4 Dimensions of music teaching**

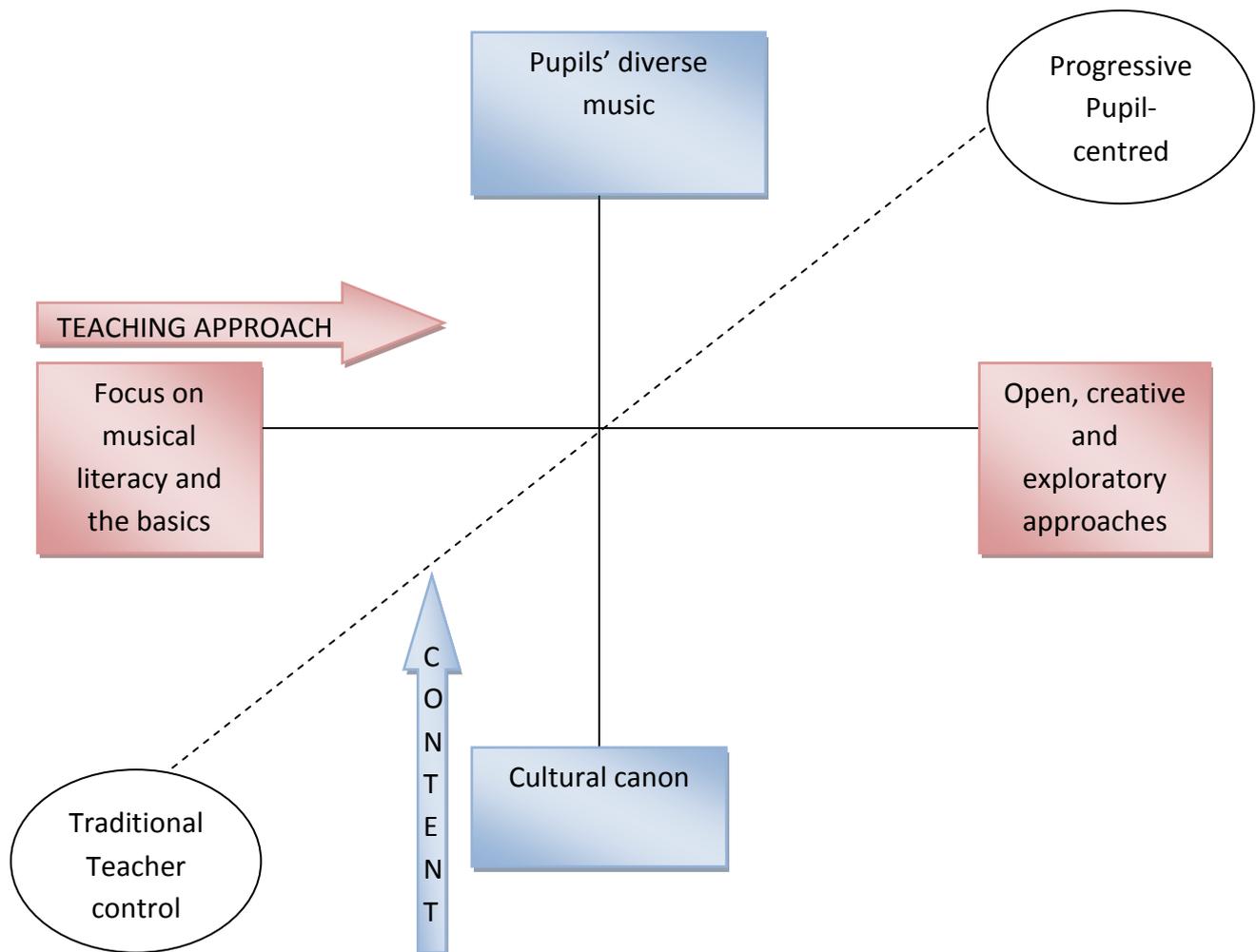
The above discussion has questioned the different ways in which the teachers understand music in the school, considering their beliefs about how and what music should be taught. This section will attempt to pull these understandings together in order to provide some conclusions about which positions may be most helpful in terms of both the teachers' motivation and the pupils' learning. Although teaching is not straightforward and will inevitably require some compromise between the two, it is important to consider both these dimensions concurrently; if one of the purposes of the research is to promote good practice, it is vital to question the teachers' subjective perspectives and explore the consequences of these.

From the above discussion, it is possible to consider two contrasting positions: one in which a very traditional model of teaching is presented, with authority positioned with the teacher who must direct the pupils in their pursuit of knowledge and skills, and a second, where the pupils direct their own learning through experience and creative expression. Although there is insufficient space within this thesis to expand fully on this point, the two could equally be linked to current policy and curriculum documents, where there is a similar debate over the actual musical products used within lessons: should the content be dictated by traditions and the great composers, or should music actually be designed to reflect the interests of the pupils themselves and their own tastes and interests? Policy seems to be split between the two, with recent initiatives such as Musical Futures favouring the 'garage band' style improvisation, whilst the 2014 National Curriculum very much advocates a focus on the 'great composers'<sup>14</sup> (Cain, 2013).

It is possible to map these different models in order to produce a conceptual diagram of how music teaching in the primary school has been constructed, through the use of a series of either/or dichotomies. Figure 7.1 attempts to do this, drawing on both the previous discussion and the broader debates regarding the content of music lessons advocated in the curriculum.

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<sup>14</sup> Although this issue moves beyond the remit of the thesis, it is possible to see the two positions as reflective of the views of different governments. The influence of current education secretary Michael Gove has resulted in a shift towards more traditional values and teaching models, in comparison with the more progressive approaches advocated under the Labour government.



**Figure 7.1: Approaches to music teaching**

It is clearly possible to identify the different perceptions discussed above as being situated largely within the bottom left and top right segments of the diagram, as the content of lessons often mirrored their positions as advocates either of a traditional, basic skills approach, or a more progressive, creative approach. However, as I have argued throughout, the two areas are often considered contradictory when in fact they need to be considered complementary. If there is too much teacher control, music can be considered too difficult for generalist teachers to deliver and can prove restrictive and potentially de-motivating for both teachers and pupils alike (Burnard, 2006b). By contrast, if the subject becomes too

heavily centred on pupil exploration, the outcomes can be educationally questionable and the subject can fail to gain sufficient capital within the crowded curriculum (Moore & Young, 2010). I would suggest that the most effective teaching would thus take place within the middle sections of the diagram and include elements of *both* ends of the continua.

This is worth exploring in relation to the data, as although most teachers could be easily positioned in one of the two quadrants, there were some exceptions where practitioners did attempt to traverse the divides. One teacher, for example, incorporated both basic skills and open, exploratory approaches into her delivery of music, having observed how each could be successful and valuable in its own way. In a similar way to Bella, Georgia was very comfortable with the creative approach to music and this seemed to fit well with her personal theories of education. However, she had felt her provision of this was insufficient in itself, due to her inability to provide more formal musical tuition alongside it. She thus recognised the need for creativity but felt that this should be supplemented with some form of musical literacy. Her desire was to include both 'educare' and 'educere' in her teaching, but having never studied music herself, she initially believed this to be something she was incapable of providing:

I suppose it was the usual thing that you always get with music, I hadn't had much training in it and because I didn't take it to GCSE I didn't feel confident at all about trying to teach anything when I first started [...] I did want to do more and I got more confident in doing all the creative stuff, like bits of improvising with them on the instruments but I felt it needed something beyond that, I needed to take them past just having fun with it and give them something more structured, but I didn't really know where to start with it. (Georgia, UKS2)

This situation changed, however, when she had the chance to work with a music specialist who taught the whole class using a set of keyboards which the school had purchased. These lessons included instrumental performance, notation and music theory, all of which Georgia

had previously felt incapable of delivering; however the teacher presented it in such an accessible way that she was inspired to attempt this for herself.

I worked with a really excellent teacher, she was fantastic, and the way she taught the children about pitch and rhythm and all the basics of music theory was so good [...] she did it using the keyboards but it wasn't really hard like you would think, you could have stickers on the notes and it was all really simple. I could see the way it built over the full year and I learnt so much from watching her... by the end I felt like, I can go and repeat that, I could actually go and teach that to the kids, because I could see exactly what she was doing and how it was really helping their musical skills come on. (Georgia, UKS2)

Georgia therefore was able to enhance her teaching of music by including aspects from *both* ends of each dimension. The observation of the instrumental specialist in her previous school had allowed her to bridge the gap between skills-based training and creative opportunities, to incorporate elements of both. In this way, she had enhanced her perceptions as to the value of what she could provide and had, importantly, realised that aspects which she had previously considered inaccessible were actually possible for her to achieve. As with Bella, the modelling of effective practice proved crucial to her change, yet all too often this is the experience which is lacking when teachers undergo their training in music (Hennessy, 2012).

Georgia's dual approach provides a positive understanding of music, which could be promoted to other practitioners. Whilst it is important to recognise and respect pupils' own preferences, an approach to music which simply replicates their experiences outside of school is unlikely to be considered particularly valuable within the curriculum (Mantie, 2012). Music education needs to go above and beyond their normal experiences and enable them to develop knowledge and skills which would not naturally occur (Bowyer, 2012). In

this way, the inclusion of basic skills within the music curriculum *can* be important if it used to enhance pupils' knowledge and broaden their understanding of the field.

There clearly needs to be a balance here between teacher control and pupil autonomy. As Georgia discussed, too much focus on one or the other could prove detrimental to the music offered to pupils:

It's like two halves of music really, you have to do the musical skills stuff and then you have to do the creative music side too. We need both, there's definitely room for both. (Georgia, UKS2)

Clearly the two approaches could be used in a complementary way, to support different aspects of the pupils' learning and development. In order to make the most out of the creative side of teaching, it was useful to have some understanding of the basic skills to produce musically valuable outcomes. Likewise, the basic skills approach alone could prove insufficient in allowing the pupils to express themselves freely and explore sound through experiences, as well as proving a barrier to teacher engagement. The more positive aspects of the dimensions therefore occur towards the middle of the continua, rather than at the extremes. Instead of being perceived as discrete either/or dualities, which the teachers in my sample tended to construct, the different dimensions should be combined to form an approach to music which incorporates all four areas. In this way, the teaching of basic skills could be combined with creative approaches, with the content of music lessons incorporating both philosophies of teaching; this could help to develop an understanding of music which is both accessible and educationally valuable.

## **7.2 Linking understandings of music to self theories**

Throughout the above discussion, there emerged the idea that the level of difficulty which teachers assign to music is at least partially dependent on the ways in which they believe the subject needs to be taught. The overall conception of music in the primary school thus interacts with the self-perceptions which one holds as to what it is possible to deliver in the subject. I now discuss this interaction in more detail, with reference to the self perceptions which were presented in the previous chapter. By considering the trio of personally held theories (1) and self-perceptions (2) relating to music, education and the teaching of music in the primary school (see figure 6.2), it may be possible to develop a greater knowledge of just how the subject does pose such difficulties for certain practitioners.

### **7.2.1 Interacting theories: is my teaching worthwhile?**

One of the main ways in which music presented a challenge to teachers was through the general belief that one must necessarily be 'musical', according to the definitions above, in order to teach music effectively. This was discussed in Chapter 6 and can also be linked to the quantitative finding that teachers generally considered themselves to lack to the requisite level of skills to teach music effectively. Together, a belief in the need to be 'musical', combined with a belief in the need for a high level of specialist skills could lead to the subject being considered inaccessible for the majority of practitioners.

Such understandings certainly manifest themselves throughout the interviews, particularly amongst those teachers who, (i) believe in the importance of the basic skills approach in the subject and (ii) feel that they themselves had missed out on developing these skills. It is important to remember that the quantitative phase showed that almost 70% of the generalist teachers in my sample did indeed feel they had missed out on the chance to

develop musical skills, indicating that this is a potentially common occurrence. If an individual believes it is necessary to be in possession of a full set of specialised skills in order to teach the subject in the primary school, then holding negative self-perceptions with regards this could result in an instant barrier to engagement with music. Despite the use of the term “basic” therefore, the teachers tended to perceive these skills as being both fundamental to delivering effective lessons *yet also* as being inaccessibly difficult.

In the above section, I discussed teachers such as Fiona and Catrina who held positive views about *both* themselves and their ability to deliver the basic skills approach. However, it was also possible to identify other practitioners who clearly believed that this was the way music *should* be taught, but did not believe themselves to be capable of doing so (for example Faye). What they were able to offer therefore failed to conform to the ideal of how they thought music ought to be taught.

This is an important disconnect, as it meant that it was possible for teachers to hold high, positive value judgements about music in general, but fail to value what they themselves could deliver. When considering one’s own teaching, therefore, the value of the subject could be vastly diminished; if one believes music is important but only when it is delivered in a skills-based, practical way, then low self-perceptions in one’s ability to deliver this specific approach could prove a fundamental barrier to engagement with music. Within this understanding, what the teacher feels they are able to offer would thus be devalued by their own belief about what music should entail.

This could in some way explain the anomalies in the quantitative phase, whereby 93% of generalist teachers claimed that music was a “valuable” subject for their pupils to engage with but as many as 38% taught the subject for less than half an hour per week, with 34%

rating its importance as “quite low” or “low”. The distinction here is between the value of music generally or the value of the music that the teacher herself can offer; it is possible to value the former very highly but fail to see how the music they themselves could offer would fulfil the criteria for effective lessons. In this way, the respondents could well hold both views, despite their apparent incompatibility.

In addition to the excess of skill which some teachers believed music required, there also emerged a belief that music was simply too demanding of effort and time to be able to find a place within one’s weekly timetable. Gemma was one of the teachers who discussed this problem and it is clear to see that she considers music to be in some way different from the rest of the curriculum:

I do find music very hard because there’s so much effort you have to put into it, if you want to do it well then you need to do loads of planning and organisation, it takes up so much time that – well sometimes you have to wonder whether it’s worth it [...] it’s not like other subjects where you just fit your topic into a normal plan and that’s it, in music there’s so many things to consider that it does take a lot of extra effort. (Gemma, KS1)

Her distinction here is that that most other subjects can easily fit into a ‘typical’ lesson plan, whilst music cannot easily be translated to this model. Music thus appears to demand greater effort from teachers because it requires a shift away from the norms of planning and teaching skills. Similar views were evident in Christ the King school, where the staff had undertaken a specific CPD programme in music. All those who had experienced this discussed it, and it became clear that any potential positive impact of the training was lost due to the perceived amount of time and effort that the intervention required. Christine, for instance, reflects upon attempting to implement this approach with her class, citing her initial enthusiasm for the project. She claims that she could “really see how amazing it could

be for the children” but that despite this, it proved impossible to maintain. The result was that now that she had now ceased delivering actual music lessons at all and focused solely on singing.

I don't do much music at all now... I did start after we had that training, some people came in from the Music Service and showed us how to do a proper lesson, and we got the musical instruments out and all that, but it was too hard to keep it up. I had to practise the lesson maybe two or three nights before I could deliver the lesson, which is a bit ridiculous really, I don't have time for it... and it was just too fast-paced with so much to get through [...] It would have been better if it would have been, something more achievable and I would have carried it on - because I like music, and I enjoyed music at primary school, and so I think these children are missing out. (Christine, LKS2)

The interesting point here is that although Christine could see the value of delivering a full, comprehensive music lesson to the pupils, referring to her positive personal experience at school, this did not outweigh the fact that practising for the lesson took up too much of her time. She repeated the phrase, “I don't have time for all that,” believing the amount of planning and preparation to be unrealistic for just one subject. Although she wanted to continue with music, therefore, it soon ended up being dropped.

Her point was reiterated by both Claire and Christopher, who had also experienced the training but had failed to commit to any change in practice. Both referred to the time and effort required to teach music but additionally related this to the end result they felt they were able to provide. For these two teachers, their negative judgements regarding their ability to teach music had not been subverted by the training but had actually been reinforced. By making negative comparisons between what they observed the “experts” deliver and what they considered themselves capable of doing, the training appeared to have actually had a negative effect in the longer term.

The key point made throughout this section is therefore that it is important to examine not only the teachers' understandings of what music should entail and how this might be of value to the pupils, but to relate this to their own self-perceptions of what they could deliver. The teachers in my sample appeared to base their decision to engage with music on a complex interaction of the different factors, and as the discussion thus far has shown, both **1** and **2** proved vital. This helps to explain the reasons why some teachers may ostensibly believe music itself to be important, based on how they understand it, but do not consider the teaching they can offer in the subject as worthwhile; the eventual decision to engage with this therefore rests on what might be termed a development of the typical expectancy-value judgement, rather than solely an isolated belief in the importance of music.

### **7.2.2 Teacher efficacy judgements: Music as a challenge to the norms**

Moving on from thinking about music in general, I now turn to look at specific aspects of the subject which could prove problematic for teachers. This involves building on the quantitative findings, where differentiation and ensuring pupil progression were considered to be particularly difficult, whilst classroom management and organisation seemed to pose many fewer problems. Although the qualitative phase offered some suggestions as to why this might be the case, it also resulted in some contradictory findings and the situation proved far from clear-cut.

The problem of a perceived lack of subject knowledge was certainly important to consider in relation to ensuring progress, particularly if one held a more traditional conception of music teaching where the teacher was positioned as the authority on the subject. Amy discussed this point explicitly, citing her own anxiety with regards music subject knowledge:

If one of the pupils asks you a question, like 'what's a semiquaver' or something, you can't be like, 'oh actually I don't know, hang on a minute, I'll just go and look it up', because you can't do that - you need to just know it and that's why I find it so hard. (Amy, UKS2)

The point here is her assumption that, as the authority figure in the classroom, she would need to know the answer to any musical question that might be posed by the children. As she did not feel confident in her own subject knowledge, she therefore perceived music as threatening to her role as a teacher. Whilst she did not avoid the subject completely, she discusses how she limited herself to singing, and other "simple" activities, because these were "something I can just do with them without worrying about being questioned".

However this resulted in her feeling unable to move them forwards in their learning: "I don't know how to get anywhere with it, we're just stuck because I'm stuck."

A similar problem was also created for those teachers who perceived their role to be essentially a demonstrator or performer. If the crucial skill to teach music is to model for the children how "good" music should sound, then for some this was considered a near-impossible task. In addition to a wide knowledge of music and theory therefore, came the need for a high level of practical skills which many teachers felt they did not possess.

One way in which this challenge presented itself was in the case of singing, which, in addition to being generally anxiety-inducing for some teachers, emerged as particularly problematic in terms of how to ensure pupil progress. Amy makes the distinction between "just singing with the children" and "actually helping them to become better singers".

Whilst she feels competent at organising opportunities for the children to sing, she feels that she cannot take them to a higher level musically, because she is unable to "really hear what's right or what's wrong" or "know how to make them actually better". She therefore considers her ability as being limited to simply providing the *opportunity* for pupils to

participate, rather than in actually assisting them in making *progress*, language which has clear links back to the quantitative findings<sup>15</sup>:

That's one of the problems with people like me doing the singing with them, because I *can* do it and they *do* enjoy it but – the thing I can't do very well is really help them to actually sing better – I make sure they're singing the right words, and being really enthusiastic of course, but I struggle to move it on – musically – because that's what I can't do, I mean, I can think – yeah it's ok, it's not bad, but I can't say to them 'oh that note there was wrong, you need to go higher,' or 'that rhythm wasn't quite right, it needs to go like this'. I can't take them forward like that. (Amy, UKS2)

The ability to possess critical aural skills in relation to children's performances was therefore considered to be an important quality of an effective music teacher, yet could also be considered an inaccessible skill. This might offer a potential explanation as to why "moving pupils' learning forward" emerged as a particularly difficult skill within the questionnaire data. The belief here is that individuals who are 'musical' will automatically have access to an in-depth understanding of the music which they hear and can thus use this to provide scaffolding for the pupils. Amy's use of the phrase "people like me" is also particularly telling and positions her as one amongst the majority who is incapable of these higher level skills.

In addition to moving pupils' learning forward, differentiation also emerged from the survey data as being potentially problematic. There was some evidence to support this from the qualitative interviews although the links between the two phases were less straightforward. Beatrice, for instance, referred to her difficulty in providing for the gifted and talented in music, being concerned that any tasks she could envisage would not sufficiently "stretch" these children. Conversely, Fleur discussed the problem of finding activities for those children who had never engaged with music throughout their previous years in the school.

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<sup>15</sup> See Chapter 4, where it was noted that teachers were confident in being able to provide opportunities for whole class performance but found it more difficult to provide help to support progress.

For her, the lack of music which took place lower down the school resulted in some children starting Year 5 having never developed any basic skills in the subject, meaning that it was difficult to find meaningful activities with which they would be able to engage.

Beliefs about the dichotomous nature of musical ability could also exacerbate this problem, for example by promoting the assumption that individuals would automatically cluster around the extremes of musical ability (i.e. be entirely musical or entirely unmusical), rather than converge around the middle points, as might be expected in other curriculum areas. This could result in teachers believing differentiation to be more difficult in music than in other subject areas: phrases such as, “there’s some who can just do it and some who just can’t” (Claire, LKS2) were particularly prevalent.

However, this concern over differentiation was not always evident and for other teachers, it appeared that this was barely taken into consideration when deciding whether to engage with music.

I think differentiation *could* be a difficult thing but it’s not really something I do much of in music, the whole point is about them getting involved in something altogether so it’s not like you would need loads of different tasks, they just all get in and do it together. (Ethan, UKS2)

Whilst differentiation could have the potential to prove problematic, Ethan’s view was that it could easily be ignored in music; this was replicated by teachers in Greengate School, where it was not considered something which teachers should be concerned with. By focusing on communal participation, for example, it was possible to negate the need for differentiation by advocating an approach where all the class were involved in the same activity together. Differentiation was therefore not always a deciding factor in teachers’ motivation to engage with music, as in many cases they simply were not required to do it.

The quantitative finding could thus be explained because it was something which was never actually done, thus could be perceived as more difficult.

It is possible to link this to the previous discussion about music's inherent difference from other curricular areas, with some teachers believing that it could be delivered *without* some of the traditional elements of teaching. This included differentiation but also extended, in some cases, to planning and assessment. This makes logical sense: if the subject is considered to demand different skills, some of the traditional teaching skills may not necessarily be believed to apply. This could perhaps explain why these aspects emerged as difficult in the survey but did not necessarily prove crucial in teachers' motivation and engagement; whilst they could well prove difficult, they were not necessarily considered requisite to the teaching the subject and it was thus not always necessary to do them. Equally, this could also contribute to the fact that music in general was perceived as difficult, because it does not draw on the skills in which teachers have particular expertise.

Perhaps more crucially, and in contrast to the disregard for differentiation, the teachers in my sample were extremely reluctant to participate in activities where their control of the class could be reduced. One of the major concerns over the teaching of music was the fear that they would lose control of their class, a finding which contradicts with the quantitative data in which only 14% considered it problematic.

I think that music can be a really hard subject to teach because there's so much to organise and keep track of in the lesson, they're all doing their own thing and there's loads of noise... I think the main problem I have with music is - well it's more their behaviour... *managing* them with musical instruments that's hard, because you're just scared that it's going to get really out of control and then how do you stop it! (Catherine, LKS2)

For Catherine, the aspect of music which caused her the most anxiety was losing control of the class and the fear that the noise level would “spiral out of control”. In contrast to the idea of communal participation, where all the pupils will be engaged in an activity together, she claims “they’re all doing their own thing”, believing that this creative independence makes music more difficult to teach. The problem here is not the differentiation of task but the fear that she would not be able to maintain control; she discusses music as a time in which the class would be “let loose” and how this results in her being taken out of her “comfort zone of normal lessons”. Interestingly, she contrasts her usually high level of classroom control with a fear of the potential “chaos” which music can cause, thus leading her to frequently avoid the subject out of fear of the pupils’ potential behaviour. This challenge here is very specifically related to music and its practical nature, and there is a clear divide between her perceived level of control in music, in contrast with the “normal” subjects, in which she describes herself as “very confident and organised”.

This finding is interesting and can perhaps be explained by reference to social factors. Catherine’s fear of loss of control is heightened because she describes how this will be observable by other members of staff, specifically citing her anxiety that other colleagues would be able to hear the noise. Her concern is that if they believed there to be chaos within the classroom, whatever the subject, they would question her ability as a teacher more generally; music therefore challenges the image she has constructed of herself as a competent teacher.

This positioning of music as innately different can pose problems for teachers in deciding to engage with the subject. Christopher, for example, describes music as being on “another level” to other curriculum subjects, that is “just very difficult”, despite the fact that he too is

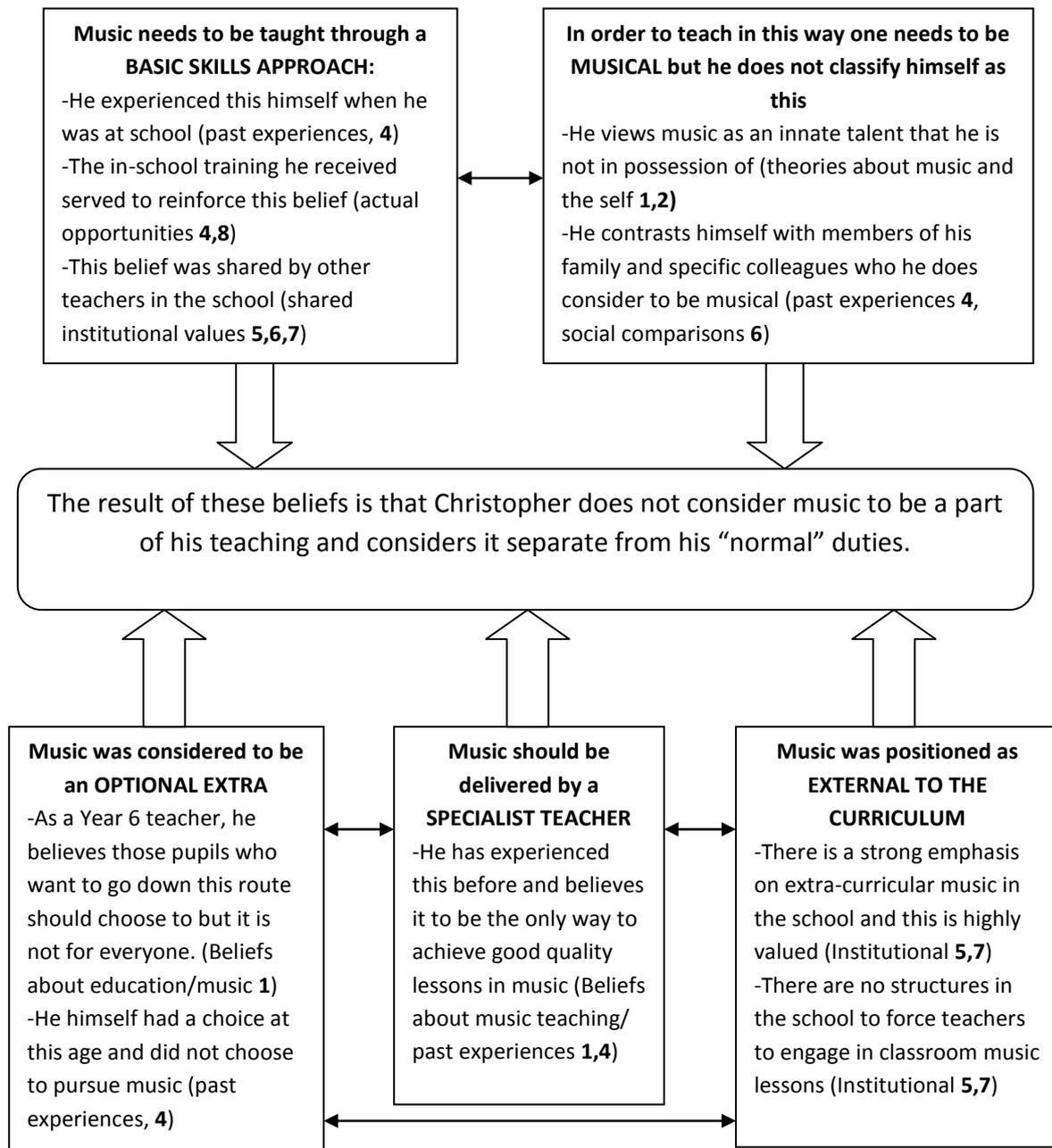
an experienced and confident teacher. He clearly positions the teaching of music as something which he feels is separate from his teaching in general, a strategy which could be seen as a way of protecting his sense of self-worth and competency. He repeatedly questions his own skills and ability to teach music, even going so far as to say he does not believe he could “ever” teach it himself. However, because he considers this separate from what is required of a teacher in general, he is able to maintain the positive judgement of himself as a practitioner, this being immune from any negative judgements regarding music.

In his words, therefore, music is metaphorically placed on “another level” from his understanding of what it is to be an effective teacher. His position is clearly constructed with reference to a number of consistent beliefs which can be identified throughout his interview:

- He believes effective music teaching must consist of teaching a specific set of musical skills
- He views music as largely external to the main curriculum, mostly comprising extra-curricular activities such as singing, instrumental lessons and concerts
- He does not consider that music should be for all pupils, instead claiming that those who are interested will be the ones who choose to follow this path
- He believes music should be taught by a specialist teacher

Each of these factors contributes to the overall belief that music is somehow distinct and outside of his personal remit as a teacher. By examining these different strands in more detail, it is possible to explore the connections between them which led to this understanding of music. In particular, it is useful to identify the ways in which his own personal history, together with the factors related to the school environment, contribute in different ways to the formation of his current position. The following diagram therefore

serves to demonstrate how Christopher constructs his own position in relation to music (as ever, the numbers refer to the factors discussed in Chapter 5).



**Figure 7.2: A mapping of contributory beliefs**

Although the diagram is inevitably simplified, it is clear to see that a complex web of both personal and social factors contribute to Christopher’s understanding of music as separate from his remit as a teacher. This can be linked back to the different factors identified within

Chapter 5, and all but personal dispositions are represented here<sup>16</sup>. An institutional dimension emerges, which has not been fully discussed as yet, but which relates to the concept of social groups. Christopher explicitly aligns himself with other non-specialists in the school and claims that, in general, teachers who are not music specialists and who cannot play an instrument have no chance of ever being able to teach music effectively. We have seen above how Claire, Catherine and Christine, from the same school, also found themselves neglecting music because of its perceived difficulty so he is not alone in his practices.

I just think with music it's something different, it's not something that everyone has the skills for and if you don't have that musical thing then you've not got any chance of doing it justice... I mean there's only one or two teachers here that can really do justice to music, most of us don't have a hope... we're all in the same boat. (Christopher, UKS2)

The phrase “doing justice” to music is important to note here and connects to the previous issue of the perceived value of what he can offer in music. Christopher considers neither himself, nor the majority of teachers in his school, as being capable of providing music lessons that would be of value to the pupils or “do justice” to the subject. For this reason, he does not believe he should be delivering music because what he could provide is simply not sufficiently capable. Importantly this is considered the same for most others, so his sense of self-worth is not jeopardised by negative comparisons with those whom he considers his equivalent colleagues. By clearly associating himself with “most” of the other teachers in his school, he is able to legitimise his own lack of music teaching, citing the fact that no one else can do it either.

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<sup>16</sup> Although personal dispositions too could well contribute to Christopher's beliefs, this was more difficult to access from the self-report data.

Music therefore can be seen to challenge some of the norms of what is expected from teachers, leading to it being considered distinct from other areas of the curriculum.

However, this understanding of music as separate was not a universally held view across the interviews and some teachers vehemently argued that the subject should not be treated in this way. Dawn, for example, who is a great advocate of music and intensely committed to ensuring its delivery throughout the school, identifies the idea of music as different and separate as being, *in itself*, the most crucial barrier which teachers need to overcome. She claims that it is extremely unhelpful to focus on what is *different* about music and that teachers should instead be encouraged to focus on the *commonalities*:

Everyone seems to think it's different and difficult but it's really not different is it, it's like teaching any other subject, you need to know the learning objectives and the outcomes, you need to plan your lesson the same as anything else and you need to assess for progress in the same way you would do anything else. There's too many people who think of it as different and for me that's the problem. (Dawn UKS2, MC)

For Dawn, the teaching of music should draw upon the same skill-set as teachers employ every day across the rest of the curriculum, and there should be no difficulty in translating these to music. She goes on to cite the example of how she herself finds science a difficult subject to teach but that by focusing on the general teaching aspects, rather than the subject knowledge, what was initially deemed to be specialist can become accessible.

There certainly seems to be some merit in this way of thinking in terms of motivation; if teachers are encouraged to focus on the teaching skills they know they possess and in which they feel confident, it could help to overcome some of the concerns over the specific musical skills which have been highlighted throughout this chapter. Rather than the persistent view of music as being an impossible subject to deliver, it could be helpful to

encourage practitioners to focus on the skills in which they are already confident and how these can be used within music. This could diminish the constant anxiety over the need for an excess of specialist, musical skills and knowledge. The way in which Dawn encouraged this in her own school will be discussed in Chapter 9 but at this point it is important to claim that this could, potentially, be one way in which the skills required could be shifted from the emphasis on music, to an emphasis on teaching.

## 8. Why music? Negotiating individual and institutional values

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Whilst the previous two sections have largely focused upon teachers' understandings and self-perceptions, it is always important to recognise that these are part of a larger, more complex motivational system. Throughout Chapters 6 and 7, therefore, the question of music's value has inevitably infiltrated the discussion of teachers' understandings and beliefs. These judgements now become the key focus for the current chapter.

Whilst 'values' were not categorically named within the diagram in Figure 6.2, their impact upon motivation was far-reaching and complex. Indeed, when examining each of the eight factors generated through the coding, values actually contributed to the construction of each one. Rather than emerging as a straightforward category in their own right, therefore, value judgements formed part of both the personal understandings of the individuals *and* the socially-situated culture of the schools. The following table (8.1) summarises how each of the eight factors incorporates within them the notion of value judgements in relation to the importance of music. Value judgements underpin the whole integrated model of motivation, and comprised many complex constructions, with both personal and social origins.

<b>Identified factor</b>	<b>Value judgements contained within this</b>
<p>Personally held theories (1)</p>	<p>The personally held theories of teachers included explicit assertions related to the value of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Music in general</li> <li>• Education in general</li> <li>• Music teaching in the primary school</li> </ul> <p>The ways in which teachers constructed their understandings of music education therefore extended to the reasons as to why it was (or indeed was not) worthwhile to study in the classroom. Their personally held theories were clearly connected to the ways in which they valued the subject and how this fit with their own conceptions of education.</p>
<p>Self-theories (2)</p>	<p>Value judgements were made concerning what teachers themselves felt they were able to deliver within music. There was thus an inextricable link between the teachers' competency beliefs and the ways in which they valued their own teaching, particularly in comparison with others.</p>
<p>Dispositional factors (3)</p>	<p>For certain teachers, their disposition and attitudes towards teaching, such as having a strong sense of duty or being hardworking and diligent, led them to certain actions which could influence their value judgements of music. Those who felt strongly about ensuring the provision of all subjects were thus likely to value music in a similar way to other comparable foundation subjects. The increased engagement, due to dispositional factors, could thus increase the value judgements.</p>
<p>Past experiences (4)</p>	<p>The ways in which teachers had experienced music themselves at school led to certain value judgements being made as to its utility and worth. In particular, there were many instances whereby their perception of music during their own childhood translated to their current beliefs as to its worth in education. If the teacher's memories of music were primarily as an extra-curricular or selective subject, this could be replicated in their current views, with the expectation that this should be the role it would occupy in the school.</p>

Contextual factors (5)	The structural support within the school, including the place of music in the curriculum and the provision of resources, could lead to implicit value judgements as to music's worth. These could then be interpreted by the teachers themselves. Equally, the value judgements of those teachers in positions of power could well be reflected in the contextual features of the school.
Social factors (6)	The ways in which colleagues within the school valued music had the potential to impact upon the judgements which they themselves made regarding the worth of the subject. In those schools where there were collective negative judgements, it proved easy to accept the views of others and to fit one's own practices with this.
Socio-contextual factors (7)	The aspects which spanned both social and contextual factors clearly incorporated value judgements in terms of how music was operationalised within the schools. The role of individuals such as the music coordinator, as well as the collective obligations and responsibilities within the school, again communicated certain value judgements (or lack of them) to the teachers themselves.
Actual opportunities (8)	Values were also involved in, and could be related to, the opportunities which were provided within the school. It was possible to identify a school's priorities by the opportunities for CPD and training which were provided. These could then be translated to the ways in which teachers themselves perceived music in the school, with those institutions where additional support was provided tending to place more importance on the subject than those in which these were lacking.

**Table 8.1: Value judgements and their connections to the key themes**

With values comprising such a key component of the findings, it was necessary to take difficult decisions as to what to include within the current chapter. Eventually I decided to structure this around two key issues which emerged as particularly important and allowed me to build upon the previous discussion. Firstly, I consider the question of whether music

was considered a valuable subject for *all* pupils to study, which links back to the discussion in Chapter 6. This desire to provide musical opportunities for all children involves not only beliefs about the nature of musical ability, as previously discussed, but also inherent questions of music's importance. Secondly, I explore how music was positioned within the school as a whole, which varied across the sample. This involves taking a broader view of its role within the institution; in particular, I was interested in those schools where music was employed in more innovative and creative ways than simply delivered as a typical foundation subject, and question the impact of these.

Throughout this chapter, therefore, I will build upon the ways in which theories of self may either contribute to, or clash with, the institutional value judgements related to music. This is important in order to understand how teachers negotiated what were sometimes quite engrained self theories in relation to the institutional expectations. As one of the purposes of the research is to question whether teachers' motivation could be enhanced, I pose the question of whether it is possible for the school to encourage change in individuals and subvert what might have been previously negative perceptions of the value of music. It is impossible to ignore the musical histories which individual teachers bring with them but it may well be possible for school structures and social factors to encourage participation, in spite of these negative personal factors. As values prove a crucial part of each of the themes discussed and clearly cross the individual-social divide, focusing on the importance of music may prove a key part of enhancing motivation.

## **8.1 Who should study music?**

At the present time, debates are rife concerning the place of music within the primary and secondary curriculum, with the emergence of a "back to basics" approach providing a

perceived threat to the arts. Currently music remains a statutory subject for all pupils to receive as part of their education up until the end of Year 9, although the numbers pursuing the subject beyond this time remain worryingly low, even in comparison with other creative areas such as art and drama (Wright, 2008). Such research has shown, for instance, that while pupils often rate music as enjoyable, they fail to see it as useful for their future success and thus question its value (it therefore fails in terms of its utility value in Eccles' Subjective Task Value model discussed in section 2.3.4). However, as noted in the introduction to this thesis, there has been much positive rhetoric from some quarters and a key feature of the most recent government policy with regards music is that every child, regardless of their background or where they are from in the country should receive a full musical education throughout the primary school:

Children from all backgrounds in every part of England should have the opportunity to learn a musical instrument, to make music with others, to learn to sing and to have the opportunity to progress to the next level of excellence if they wish to. (DfE, 2011, p. 7)

Clearly the aim is for each child to receive equal opportunities to become involved with music, a strategy which is set out explicitly in the 2012 government report into the existence of inequalities between different areas, schools and even individual classes (Ofsted, 2012). However, for teachers themselves, the notion of inclusive music for all, where every child receives a full range of musical opportunities, is not always deemed possible or, in some cases, desirable. The question here concerns the extent to which teachers believe school music is a valuable use of time and effort for *every single child*, an issue which can lead them to question their overall beliefs about teaching in general and the purpose of education in the primary school.

This section builds on the previous chapter by linking teachers' understandings of what should constitute music lessons to the notion of whether it is imperative for all pupils to study the subject. As Bowman (2012) notes, "whether music should be part of the education of all children depends in fundamental ways on what we understand education to involve" (p.25). In this way, therefore, the teachers' understandings of the subject, which were explored in Chapter 7, will inevitably be negotiated through their value judgements.

### **8.1.1 'Music for All'**

I don't really know how people can question [music's] importance to be honest, I mean it's something that all children should be getting at school and it's part of what everyone should be doing as teachers [...] it's so important that every child gets that chance to experience just how powerful music can be. (Barbara, FS, MC)

Across many of the interviews, particularly those from Bramley, Dalton and Emmanuel schools, there was evidence of a strong belief that music was a subject which *every* child needed to experience as part of their education. The opening quote from Barbara was typical of many of these respondents, who expressed similarly strong beliefs about how music needed to be positioned as an important subject in the primary school. In some cases, the language used showed that this was a taken-for-granted belief, which did not even need to be questioned:

Of course, everyone needs to have the chance to experience music when they're at school and it needs to be something they do all the time – you know, every week, I mean it goes without saying that they should get that opportunity, it's one of the most important things they do. (Briony, FS)

Briony too demonstrates her firm belief that all children should get the chance to participate in music regularly, expressed with the imperative "needs to" and the phrase "goes without saying". There is a strong sense, in both this extract and across her other

assertions, that music itself has an inherent value to all pupils and its inclusion should not be questioned. However, are these claims sufficient to support the idea that every child should participate in music in the primary school, and what implications does this have for the type of music which is delivered?

Through examining Briony's interview as a whole, her only concrete justification as to music's importance for all relates to the enjoyment that the pupils can gain from this: "it's something the children really love doing". She uses phrases such as "it makes the children come alive because they love it", and "you see their excitement when they know they're going to do music", to reinforce her belief that music is an essential part of the curriculum. This was echoed in other accounts from within her institution, where there was a strong emphasis upon the fact that music needs to be enjoyable and pupil-focused, and that its value in the curriculum stems from this. The replication of this assertion throughout the accounts suggests that this is something of a consensual view, especially as it was also found within the quantitative discussion in Chapter 4.

Briony assumes, therefore, that children's involvement in music-making activities is intrinsically enjoyable for them, thus it is an intrinsically valuable part of the curriculum; however, this could well be questioned. Mantie (2012), for instance, argues that subjects can justify their place in the curriculum through the ability to provide, "knowledge thought to be necessary for everyone but not thought to be accessible or attainable without formal schooling" (p.71). Enjoyment, although a positive feature of music, does not necessarily, in itself, allow for this enhancement of knowledge, particularly if the teachers are following a wholly open, creative approach as described in Chapter 7.1.3. Returning to the dichotomies described, too much emphasis on pupil enjoyment can neglect the development of the skills

or knowledge and can thus lead some teachers to question the value of devoting time to the subject.

This proved to be the case in Fairfield school, where the teachers also tended to view music as an enjoyable activity for the pupils. However, in contrast to Briony, who drew upon this as a reason for music's inclusion, the accounts from some of the teachers in this school show how an emphasis on enjoyment led teachers to believe that music was *not* a priority subject. Frederick and Faye both use music with their classes but its purpose is seen as a way of filling a spare five minutes, giving the pupils a break or dividing up the day to maintain the children's concentration. Music itself is thus *devalued* as a subject because it is not treated as part of the main curriculum; the consequence of this is that they rarely, if ever, actually teach the subject and discuss how their lessons would never "start with an objective in music, it wouldn't happen" (Frederick, KS1).

There are clearly questions as to the legitimacy of citing enjoyment as the sole justification for delivering some form of regular music, especially if one is using this to position music as a break from the more taxing or academically rigorous subjects. Clearly in this case, music is less likely to be given priority teaching time, since it is perceived as being akin to other 'break' periods of the day:

I make sure we do lots of music together because it gives us a bit of a break... so if they're getting tired, or we've done loads of writing or something then we stop and we say, 'let's have a song', and it gets them going for learning again. (Frederick, KS1)

Although Frederick discusses his commitment to ensuring all the children were involved in music, this is because his aim is to ensure a balanced day for them, rather than because he particularly values the impact of music for each individual. Indeed, the quote above shows

he does not perceive music itself as the “learning”, simply as the preparation. For him, music can be considered useful because it can assist the pupils in maintaining their motivation and engagement *with other learning activities*. Rather than seeing music as having some kind of inherent value, its worth comes through what it can bring to the balance of his classroom more generally.

Perhaps, however, the concept of enjoyment could be taken in a different direction.

Barbara, who is a consistent advocate for music, cites her belief that music can offer pupils some of their most memorable experiences from primary school, which they will “really remember and treasure always” (Barbara, FS, MC). This sets music apart from the rest of the curriculum, again repeating the fact that it is in some way different from other subjects. She claims that participating in music will “heighten the experience” of education and so it is vital that everyone should be given that chance, not just a selected few: “it definitely benefits everyone”.

This understanding was shared by a number of other teachers, who believed that music provided a “special” opportunity for pupils. In contrast to the previous chapters, where music was considered different because it was perceived to be too difficult and demanding, Barbara actively constructs music as different in a positive way, in that it stands out from the rest of the subjects and offers children the chance to experience something *more* than simply academic learning. Its “difference” is thus shifted to a positive feature, whereby it is valued *because* it is not simply a replication of the academic subjects that comprise the majority of the curriculum.

A further argument presented as to why all children should experience music is linked to the notion of talent, which was discussed in Chapter 6. Claire, for example, discusses how

offering every pupil the opportunity to have the chance to learn to play an instrument allows each child with the opportunity to demonstrate their potential to achieve. She claims that it is important to make this opportunity universal, so that those who do “take to” the subject would then be able to be offered further opportunities.

They all have the chance to have a go and some of them are really good, they can go on from there, but if they haven’t had that first chance then they’ll never know, that’s why they all need to have the opportunity to get involved. (Claire, LKS2)

The suggestion is that pupils should all be given the chance to experience music in order to see whether it is going to be something in which they can achieve. If they do not all get this chance then it is possible that someone who has the potential to do well in music could fail to fulfil their potential, reflecting the government’s agenda that all pupils should have the chance to take music further “if they wish to”. This can be linked back to the finding in the quantitative phase where 69% of the respondents felt they themselves had missed out on the chance to develop musical skills in the past; Claire’s understanding here is that every child should be given the opportunity so that there is no chance of talent going unfulfilled.

Although some teachers expressed their commitment to ‘music for all’ with reference to the special qualities of music itself, it is also possible to identify more general beliefs about the content of primary education. Indeed, across a number of the interviews there was a feeling that education needed to be both fair and inclusive, with all pupils needing to receive the same opportunities to participate in every subject. This was a belief related to teaching generally, where the purpose of a broad curriculum was to ensure that children had a chance to “experience everything” at primary school, with opportunities for specialisms ideally only arising later. By providing every child with the chance to experience everything,

the hope was that all pupils would find their own areas of interest and then be able to take this further:

It's all about making sure opportunities are there in *everything*, because if you give them the opportunity you can engender that interest and they can take off with it... So we make sure that they have the academic opportunities but then that's got to be balanced with music and it's got to be balanced with sports and that way everyone has a chance to find something *for them*, I mean - I believe very strongly that it's our responsibility to provide the opportunity for this. (Gareth, UKS2)

Gareth views it as part of his duty as a teacher to ensure that all children receive the opportunity to participate in activities beyond the core, academic subjects. Through these opportunities, their interest in areas such as music and sports can develop and then they can "take off". He discusses how he himself was given opportunities with both music and sport when he was younger, and although he definitely "took the sports route", he recognised the value of having the opportunity to try everything and experience as much as possible. This now translates to his current practice, where he wants to provide the same broad experience for his pupils.

Gareth was not the only one to draw upon his own experiences as justification for his current beliefs and references to one's own school days were common when discussing the value of music. However, not all the memories were positive, with some teachers highlighting the perceived unfairness of their own experiences in order to justify their current actions. In some cases, the teachers made clear causal links between their previous negative experiences with music and their current understanding of how music should be delivered in the primary school.

Alison, for example, describes her own experience of being ignored by the teacher due to not having played an instrument, and uses this to support her current view that all pupils needed to receive some chance in music. She claims that the music teachers in her school “only tried hard with you if they thought you were going to take it further”, resulting in those who did not play an instrument being ignored: “the teachers just weren’t bothered with the rest of us”. Her perception of this injustice thus leads her to believe that all children deserve the chance to play an instrument so they can take it further if they desire to do so.

Alison’s belief in the value of music for all comes across consistently throughout her interview, but it could be argued that this judgement is made easier for her because she herself is not required to teach the subject. By participating in the Wider Opps scheme her class currently receive specialist tuition, which she values over and above anything that she feels she would be able to provide. Alison’s value judgement, therefore, did not lead to changes in her own practice and relied on her institution offering whole class specialist tuition. When positioning her views in relation to those of her colleagues, the general consensus within this school was that music could only be taught by specialists. Within this shared understanding, Alison is therefore able to judge her current situation as preferable to her own experiences and express very positive value judgements for music. Although she holds personal views based upon her past experiences, these are supported by the practices and shared beliefs within the school; this allows her to make a positive value judgements about all pupils being given a chance with music, but without any reliance on her own ability to deliver a lesson.

In contrast, Ethan describes how he *himself* tries to include music as part of the “normal classroom experience” so that all of the children get the chance to be involved in this,

despite not holding particularly positive self-perceptions regarding music. His main concern is that all pupils have the chance to engage with music, regardless of whether they undertake extra-curricular music or are learning to play an instrument. He links his own limited experience of music, where it was only available for the “gifted” pupils, to his current actions, where he specifically makes the effort to ensure *all* children have the opportunity to experience music in the classroom.

I do quite a lot of music with them in class and I think it's important they get this as part of... their normal classroom experience – as part of their general learning... [...] when I was at school it was only the few gifted ones who did any music – I never did anything at all and we didn't do anything altogether... and so by doing this in class, it means the ones who don't go to choir or don't play an instrument... they will still get some music at school and I think that's important, that everyone does something... not like me. (Ethan, UKS2)

The focus here is on a more inclusive music education, where everyone gets the chance to participate together and there is no distinction made between those who are considered ‘musical’ and those who are not. The comparison between the two accounts reflects a fundamental difference in the teachers’ understanding of what should be achieved in music education in the primary school. Returning to the discussion in the previous chapter, Alison views music education as being valuable only through specialist training (‘educare’), whilst Ethan views the subject as a more holistic experience (‘educere’). Whilst Ethan does concede that certain pupils will demonstrate a “natural flair and enthusiasm” for music, he still believes his job is to ensure that the whole class participate in music within the classroom. This is mainly delivered through participation in action songs, whole class performances, creative music-making and opportunities for listening to music, all of which he both considers valuable and, crucially, believes himself capable of delivering. His

motivation is therefore enhanced through both high value judgements *and* high self-perceptions of the music he can offer.

Although Ethan's judgements are clearly rooted in his own experiences, they can also be understood as situated within a school where there is a positive culture for music. The school is a very high achieving institution and prides itself on the fact that it is able to provide experiences that go *beyond* simply the provision of the core subjects and the achievement of high SATS scores. Reflecting Barbara's view, music in Emmanuel school is considered to be a "special" subject, which can enhance the pupils' experiences beyond the day-to-day norm. In contrast to both All Saints and Fairfield schools, the test results have been consistently high at Emmanuel and there are few worries about behaviour. These factors could suggest why Ethan, despite teaching in Upper Key Stage 2, is still able to focus more attention on music and the arts, and indeed, why this might be expected from all the staff here. It is crucial therefore to position his view in relation to the enabling context of his institution, as this clearly contributes to both his judgements and practices. Again, it is impossible to separate the joint contributions of both his own musical history and his institutional context.

### **8.1.2 Music for the 'selected few'**

I think it's one of those subjects... where – there's like a small group of pupils who are all really musical and who really, *really* get involved in everything... whereas everyone else is sort of on the outside... and – I don't think you always get that to the same extent in other subjects... because, well it didn't matter how good you were at maths, everyone had to do the same amount... but with music – it always seemed it was only certain people who got involved in it and seemed to do loads while the rest of us didn't really do anything.

(Gabrielle, LKS2)

In the above discussion, I have shown how certain teachers expressed the belief that music should be an important subject for *every* child to access in the primary school. They supported this by drawing on both their own personal experiences in addition to their understandings of the expectations of the school. However, as noted throughout, this belief as to music's importance could be identified even in the accounts of teachers who failed to deliver the subject themselves.

In contrast to the assumption that all pupils needed to study music, some teachers, such as Gabrielle above, perceived the subject as an optional extra in which only certain pupils would be involved. There were a number of justifications for this view and it is important now to consider the alternate positions that emerged. In common with many of the accounts discussed above, Gabrielle relates her current understandings of music to the situation as she experienced this at school, where music was positioned as something in which only a selected group of pupils would get involved. Her early experiences therefore continue to influence her current practices, as she continues to perpetuate her belief in the marginal nature of music. If teachers do not believe that every pupil will need to engage fully with music, it is likely their own motivation to include the subject will be reduced, meaning the subject may be neglected.

Fairfield School provides another example of an institution where teachers appeared likely to avoid teaching music. Faye, who perceived the subject as solely a way to provide the pupils with a break from their learning, was one such teacher who questioned the need for all pupils to engage with the subject:

I don't always think that it's got to be done with all your class or anything, because it's something that they can choose to do if they want to... I mean I have so many other subjects

to concentrate on and then you think- is music a necessary skill for everyone to have anyway - because obviously if people love it they'll go in that direction anyway. (Faye, KS1)

Clearly there are a number of important assertions within this extract which construct Faye's position in relation to music teaching, namely that it is not a subject for "all your class", it is something the pupils should be able to "choose" and it is not a "necessary skill". These all contribute to the fact that she, like Christopher above, positions music as beyond her remit as a teacher, viewing it instead as a subject which pupils can choose to become involved with outside of the classroom, should they so wish. When faced with a number of competing subjects to deliver, she does not perceive music as a high priority within this. She further explains her position by citing music's lack of use in later life for her pupils: "it's just not really that important for them is it, it's not going to help them in the future". She considers other subjects much more of a priority and does not see how music will be of benefit to the children within their lives.

Her final comment here is also particularly interesting, as she claims that the pupils who love music will go in that direction anyway; however, is this necessarily the case? Ellen, for instance, was extremely passionate about music when she was younger but suffered a lack of opportunities at school and now feels she has missed out on the chance completely. If selection of pupils takes place too early in the primary school, without consultation or at an age when they are not yet capable of making the decision, then it is possible that some children are completely missing out.

For some teachers, the idea of selection in music was perceived as inevitable, when the practicalities of resourcing the subject were considered. One issue which was frequently cited was a lack of sufficient instruments for delivering practical lessons in music. However, I

would argue that the complaints about resources did not always comprise the fundamental reason as to why teachers would avoid the subject, with the teachers' understandings of musical ability as being of arguably greater importance (see discussion in Chapter 6). For Gabrielle, for example, these beliefs about musical ability led her to question whether it was possible for music to be something in which all children had a chance of achieving and thus whether it was worth them participating in.

I think because music is quite a specialist thing really and it's not something that every child is necessarily going to get involved with... maybe people do have the potential to do *something* with music but obviously... you know, not everyone *is* musical so most of your class probably won't be able to go very far with it. You're obviously going to have one or two who are really musical and take to it and that's great but it's not really for everyone.  
(Gabrielle, LKS2)

The belief that pupils can be classified as either musical or unmusical at an early age was therefore a key factor in whether the teachers felt music should be offered to all children, with a number of the sample explicitly making this link. Although this belief tended to be found amongst the accounts of teachers of the top two year groups, there were also exceptions where practitioners working with younger year groups also cited music as a subject from which only certain pupils will benefit:

By Year 3 or 4 you can usually tell the ones who have that musical talent, and so it's really important to make sure they get the chance to develop that... that's where the extra-curricular things come in because you can push them down that route and make sure that they are the ones who do get the musical opportunities. (Claire, LKS2)

Clearly the dichotomous theory of musicality is again at the heart of this discussion, demonstrating the impact which categorical beliefs about musical ability can have upon value judgements of the subject. If teachers view music as something which the majority of their class will simply be unable to access, and in which they will have little chance of

progress, then it is unlikely they will feel the need to devote whole class teaching time to this.

Although these links appear easy to make, it is important to note that the belief in a divide between musical and unmusical pupils did not *necessarily* result in the idea that music should only be for the selected few. Barbara, for instance, clearly distinguishes the “creative” children as separate from the rest of the class, but still strongly believes that every child should participate in music on a regular basis. Her value judgement of the subject is sufficiently high that she feels it is worthwhile for all pupils to become involved with music at school, regardless of the extent to which they will be able to progress. Rather than selecting those “creative ones”, as she terms them, for special musical treatment, she believes that everyone should be involved together, again citing reasons of fairness and equality, and citing music as valuable and necessary for all.

For those who did perceive music as a more selective subject, this process would typically be initiated by the teachers themselves, usually through the identification and encouragement of those children deemed to have musical talent. This was particularly the case in Christ the King, where Claire noted that the main purpose of selecting the pupils was to “push them down that route” so they could become more proficient performers. This is indicative of the overarching approach to music in the school, in which the emphasis is placed upon the development of children as *performers*. This was replicated across the accounts from this school, as discussed in relation to Catrina in Chapter 7. Logically, if the key aim is to deliver high quality technical performances, then the best way to achieve this is through selecting the most talented pupils and providing them with very specialist training.

The school's shared goals therefore correspond to an approach in which not every child needs to study music.

Although teacher selection proved common in Christ the King, an alternative conception was to position music as a self-selective activity, in which the pupils themselves could choose whether or not to be involved. This was particularly common amongst the Year 5 and 6 teachers, who noted that by this point, most pupils should have decided whether they wanted to take the musical route:

The ones who've taken to it lower down the school, then yeah - they can carry on with it... the ones who don't - well they've had a go at it in other year groups but if they're not really that into it then there's not much point in them carrying on in class [...] it's not really a whole class thing when they get to year 6 - it's much more optional. (Amy, UKS2)

According to Amy, music should be considered to be an optional, voluntary activity, which is available for pupils to choose as they get higher up the school. Whilst she believes the whole class should have had the opportunity to experience music lower down the school, by Year 6 the ones who have "taken to it" will have the chance to continue, but outside of the normal teaching rather than in class. This reflects a very similar belief to the teachers of Christ the King and shows how music can prove problematic to fit in during the top years of the primary school. When there are already increased pressures to focus on the core SATS subjects, a belief in the subject as an optional extra can enhance the understanding that music is not valuable for every child. However, the self-selective route does rely on all the pupils having had the chance to experience music in other year groups, which, as has been shown, does not always happen.

In section 8.1.1, one of the important ways in which teachers justified their position was by recounting their own negative experiences with selection at primary school and using this as

motivation to ensure that such inequalities were not perpetuated. This use of personal experience was also evident for those teachers of the opposite view, where certain practitioners again cited their past school reflections to justify their actions. However, for these practitioners, the recollections and interpretations of incidents from their own schooling now actively *discouraged* them from engaging in music with their full class.

As described in Chapter 6, one of the most dramatic experiences recounted was in the narrative of Adele, who experienced anxiety when forced to sing in front of her class. With regards her current teaching, Adele uses her interpretation of this incident to inform how she should treat her current pupils. She draws on her personal negative experience to justify her view that music, and especially singing, was something that no one should ever be “forced” into doing.

I always make sure they have a choice with it – if they want to sing then that’s great but I won’t force them to, it’s not fair because I know it can be a really scary thing. I don’t think you can force anyone into it... you know some children are going to enjoy it, some aren’t.  
(Adele, LKS2)

For Adele therefore, her understanding of music as optional stems from the subject’s potential to cause anxiety for pupils, thus she believes they should not be subjected to this. Music is therefore considered optional on the basis of how comfortable pupils feel in participating in this. Interestingly, the word “fair” is used again here, but rather than as being justification for music’s inclusion, Adele believe it is not fair to force reluctant children to become involved in music.

Christopher also considers the pupils’ potential reluctance to participate, citing the age of his pupils as to why some may wish to avoid the subject and agreeing that by Year 5 and 6 it should be largely optional. His argument is a developmental one, in that he believes Year 6

to be a time where some pupils may be feeling self-conscious and starting to make negative comparisons with others, resulting in a reluctance to participate. However, is this a justifiable position to take, considering that there is very little choice involved in other subjects which pupils must study in the primary school, and indeed up to the age of 14? Barbara argues forcefully that music should not be seen as optional basing her argument precisely upon this point. She claims that those “creative” pupils who do enjoy music may well be forced into subjects which they may not find enjoyable, which not only is there no way of avoiding but that also require much greater time in school. If this is the case, why should music be treated differently? Again her argument rests on the notion of parity and fairness for all: should those children who enjoy music be penalised for fear of causing others anxiety? Educationally this seems very unjust, but it cannot be denied that, for many in my sample, the anxiety-inducing aspects of music performance, combined with its peripheral status, contribute to the fact that teachers feel justified in classifying it as an ‘optional’ subject.

I would argue that for many of the teachers who discussed formative instances associated with anxiety, this was connected with the fact that they were not used to participating in music, i.e. it was considered an unusual occurrence with which they were not familiar. If pupils are continuously involved in the subject throughout school, i.e. there is a consistent whole school approach in which *all* teachers deliver the subject regularly, the pupils are more likely to view music as yet another norm in their education, rather than as an anxiety-inducing rare occurrence in which they have had little chance to develop confidence. Indeed, if they recognise early on that only a small number of teachers and pupils actually engage with music, then this can cement the belief that music is not a subject for the

majority and can thus replicate a cycle in which negative perceptions as to music's value persist (see, for instance, Mills, 2005). This idea will be further explored in section 8.2.2 below and provides further justification as to why a whole school approach to music may be necessary.

### **8.1.3 The impact of socio-economic circumstances and the potential for clashes of beliefs**

The above discussion has demonstrated how particular schools seemed to develop shared judgements as to the delivery and value of music, as well as the extent to which all pupils needed to be involved. A further finding relating more directly to the contextual factors (5) of the institution was that the socio-economic circumstances of the school could have an important bearing on how teachers perceived the importance of music. Teachers frequently drew on what they believed to be the needs of their pupils in order to justify their practice in relation to music. This was, in some cases, dependent on the characteristics of the catchment area, although the causal links made here were not always straightforward or predictable. When considering comparisons *between* schools, for instance, it did not follow that teachers in schools with similar socio-economic circumstances would necessarily value (or fail to value) music in similar ways. However, *within* schools themselves, the perception of a particular set of socio-economic circumstances did lead some to develop shared understandings about the purpose of music and there was evidence of whole-school, shared approaches.

Christ the King Primary School, which has received external recognition for music and has been discussed above for its emphasis on providing performance opportunities, provides one example of how music could be considered important for pupils from less privileged backgrounds. Teachers in this school tended to consider it their duty to provide musical

opportunities, because they believed this would be the only way in which their children could gain access to the subject. However, their belief as to what this music needed to be was based on three core dimensions:

- All the children should have the chance to be involved in regular performance activities, for example, class assemblies and concerts
- Those children who displayed potential for music should be given the opportunity to progress further through extra-curricular provision
- The children needed to be introduced to high quality (usually canonical classical) music, through listening activities which would take place in class or in assembly

The general notion was that if they did not ensure that their pupils had these experiences of music during primary school, there would be no other way in which they could become involved at all. The following two extracts demonstrate this view, where the school was perceived as providing a means by which the pupils could overcome the lack of financial and/or parental support for music.

A lot of our children - they don't come from families where they would have the opportunity or the money to be able to do [music]... that's why it's so important that we give them these opportunities. (Catrina, UKS2)

We've got so many musical children that have got great voices or whatever, that don't get pushed because the parents might think, 'oh it's a waste of time' or if they think it's going to cost them loads of money and so it really, really puts them off [...] I mean, you have to understand it, they're finding it hard enough to get uniforms for the children, never mind giving them music lessons... so when we offer it in school I think it's a really vital thing, definitely. (Cecilia, LKS2, MC)

For both these teachers, the school environment represented the only way in which they believed their pupils would ever be able to access music<sup>17</sup>, because they did not come from families who would be able (or in some cases willing) to pay for it. Reflecting some of the government's concerns that music may only be available to those in affluent areas (Ofsted, 2012), the school had made a specific effort to address this inequality by providing funding for a wide range of instrumental and choral opportunities. In this way, the school provides the chance for pupils to learn music as a way of compensating for a perceived lack of music at home, with the aim being to introduce them to the kind of high brow cultural capital with which it was assumed they would not normally engage.

Although music gained importance in the school through the perceived social circumstances of the pupils, it was equally possible to identify a belief that because the children were thought to be getting so little access to music outside of school, *anything* that was provided in terms of classical music was considered valuable. For some teachers, simply playing music to the children therefore gained legitimacy because it would give the pupils access to genres which they would not experience in everyday life; in this way, Mantie's (2012) assertion that education must take the pupil beyond one's normal experiences is partially satisfied, in that the experience of being exposed to this kind of music may subvert the norm, although the learning itself is more questionable. If music in the classroom is reduced to simply passive listening, then is this educationally valuable?

Although Claire, Christopher and Christine all expressed their belief in the value of simply playing music to the pupils, Catrina's account conflicts with this. She is a constant advocate

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<sup>17</sup> It is important to remember that in this school, a very traditional model of music emerged, with strong emphasis on introducing pupils to the classical greats. As discussed in the previous chapter, the approach employed was very teacher-led, where the pupils' own interests were not especially considered valuable.

of the basic skills approach (see section 7.2.2) and feels that the school's approach is insufficient for the pupils' musical development and constantly questions this passive approach. Whilst she is a strong believer in the importance of high quality performances and the need for increased knowledge of classical music, she feels this must be coupled with an approach focused on music skills, which she herself received. Her personal beliefs thus conflict with the generally accepted view as to how music should be delivered in the school, leading to feelings of frustration.

It doesn't seem to matter what we've done here, nothing seems to change – even when we had a full time music teacher, there was still not enough theory, not enough of the basics of music and that's what they need – they need these technical basics and they're not getting them. They need that knowledge, they need to *understand* music. (Catrina, UKS2)

Her main complaint is that by if all pupils are not taught these musical skills, they will be unable to understand music and thus be unable to gain access to the "musical world". Interestingly, she feels that even when the school had previously employed a specialist teacher, there had been insufficient focus on the basics of music, as she sees them; for her, the problem thus extends beyond the teachers' expertise in the school and is aligned with the culture of the school itself. She does not feel as though this is something which she is able to influence and thus feels somewhat helpless at effecting change, hence leading to her feelings of powerlessness and frustration.

Despite Catrina's isolation on this issue, music does still remain an important subject, at least in terms of performance, in Christ the King. This is largely due to the fact that the teachers *did* see it as part of their duty to provide some kind of opportunities in the subject, drawing on the pupils' home circumstances as evidence of this need. However, the evidence from other schools with similarly low socio-economic circumstances showed that other

interpretations were equally possible. In the case of Fairfield Primary school, a very different picture emerged, despite the comparable social circumstances. In this school, the priorities amongst the staff focused solely on the behaviour of the pupils and ensuring that they would leave their school being competent in the basic skills of reading and writing; collectively this focus proved very strong and left little room for activities such as music.

Against this backdrop, music's place within the curriculum was questioned by a number of teachers, who failed to see the value in the children spending time on music which could instead be devoted to the core subjects, and literacy in particular. As in the quantitative chapter, the problem here was the perception of music *in comparison* with other subjects, rather than necessarily as a subject in its own right. When thinking about the futures of these children, music was not deemed helpful in assisting them in their lives, particularly if they were lacking in the basic skills (as discussed in relation to Faye). In contrast to Christ the King, where engagement with classical music was perceived as a way of gaining social capital, the teachers here did not view a connection between learning music and any potential future success, resulting in the subject being largely marginalised. As noted in Chapter 7, it was often considered a fun "break" from the "more important" subjects, which diminished its value, resulting in an approach where the subject was almost ignored within the school. Indeed, when I arrived in the school, the teacher who greeted me was unsure who the music coordinator actually was, an indication of the lack of leadership or focus in the subject.

This shared belief was particularly interesting, given that within this school was the most musically experienced practitioner of all the teachers I interviewed (as an NQT she did not yet have a subject specialism, hence she was not the music coordinator). Fiona, who had

spent 15 years as a professional singer, found herself increasingly frustrated by the fact that her own values contrasted with those of her colleagues. In a similar way to Catrina, she was a firm advocate of the basic skills approach to music, and she too bemoans the fact that in her institution it simply does not happen at all. Indeed, her situation was a more extreme case than that of Catrina in that music seemed to be almost invisible in Fairfield School.

There was thus a major conflict between Fiona's own personal beliefs (1) and the contextual priorities in her institution (5,6,7), which was now leading her to question her own position. She was extremely passionate about music but could not foresee any way in which it would become important within her current school. The clash between the two sets of values, individual and institutional, was therefore clearly observable and she perceived this as impossible to overcome.

That's the problem here really, I mean I do music with the kids, we do lots in my class but what's the point really when they don't get it in any other class? There's never going to be that whole musical thing in this school, unfortunately, because it's just not really the main thing here. (Fiona, LKS2)

Fiona therefore contrasts her own practice with that of her colleagues, and realises that the institution in which she works is unlikely to ever consider music important. She discusses how she "understands" and respects why there is a need to focus so much upon behaviour management and the core subjects, but does not automatically equate this with the complete rejection of music. The situation provides such a conflict with her own educational beliefs, and indeed the reasons as to why she went into the teaching profession, that the only option remaining appears for her to leave the school. Her own position, therefore, conflict with the wider understandings within the school, which she believes will prove the enduring force.

The culture of the school and the shared understandings that exist can therefore appear particularly resistant to change, especially if when other practitioners themselves do not show any desire to alter the situation. Whilst Fiona sees a vital part of her duty as being to, “inspire” the children to get “that thrill from music”, the rest of her colleagues see the subject as external to their priorities, a belief which seems deeply engrained. Any attempt to develop a whole school approach would therefore require a drastic change of ethos, which could only become possible through extensive dialogue, education and training; in particular change would need to be supported and at present that appears difficult to achieve.

Although Chapter 9 will demonstrate that change is certainly possible, Fiona’s situation demonstrates it is also far from easy and needs to take into account both the perceived needs of the pupils and the understandings of the teachers. These may vary between institutions, meaning that any kind of approach which fails to recognise this starting point may be doomed to fail.

## **8.2 Music beyond the curriculum?**

The above discussion has concentrated primarily on how music was valued in terms of its place as a discrete subject in schools, albeit with some reference to additional extra-curricular provision. However, there were alternative conceptions as to how the subject should be employed and I turn to these now. This involves consideration of two major ideas which emerged from the data: firstly the notion of music as an enhancement to the learning of other subjects, and secondly of music as a way of developing pupils in a more holistic, personal and social way. These two aspects encouraged teachers to rethink the place of music in the primary school and consider allocating it a different role within the life of the school.

### 8.2.1 Music as an enhancement to learning

The understanding of music being a tool to enhance or reinforce learning in other subjects emerged primarily in the accounts of teachers from Fairfield School, although other individuals also referenced music's potential as a way of justifying its importance. This could involve specific subject links, for example, the commonly held belief in the link between musical ability and mathematical ability was repeated by four teachers, whilst one practitioner explained her belief that participation in music could help children with their reading progress. In addition, there also emerged a more general understanding, where music was perceived as a generic enhancement to pupils' overall academic achievement:

Music's such a powerful subject because it impacts on everything they do, if they're learning an instrument or singing in a round or doing composition then it really helps them in other areas, they're having to think quickly and link their ideas together and it must really help them with everything else. It gets their brains working! (Cecilia, LKS2, MC)

Cecilia's view corresponds with the body of literature which relates learning in music to the development of more sophisticated thought processes and increased cognitive connections in the brain. Rather than connecting music with a specific subject or skill, she notes how it encourages links between different areas of learning and cognitive development, which may then be transferable to other higher order abilities (Hodges & Gruhn, 2012). In this way, participation in music can be linked to greater academic performance across the board, as the requisite skills help to expand and develop the minds of the pupils. Cecilia's belief is that this comes through the ability to "think quickly" and "link ideas together", both of which may be translatable to other academic areas. This helped to enhance her argument as to music's value, because it could contribute to the overall performance of pupils, not just their musical development. This is important because she questions whether her colleagues

would ever value music in its own right but notes how she can encourage them to become involved by promoting music's wider benefits.

In Fairfield School, where the value of music as a discrete subject was certainly questioned, this alternative conception proved more prevalent. Both Faye and Frederick, who almost never taught music discretely, did include some elements of music in their teaching of other subjects:

We use music all the time in different lessons, it really gets them going and if they can link the learning to a song, it really does help them to remember it... it makes it more fun as well, I mean they all love it and it's more interesting than sitting there trying to learn, say, number facts just by saying them over and over. (Frederick, KS1)

Frederick therefore does not teach music itself, but he is able to see some value in the subject as a tool for learning. The emphasis for him is based on what music can do to benefit the pupils generally within the classroom, rather than specifically in music. As he points out, he does not consider himself to be "teaching music" because the focus is never upon a musical objective, recasting music's role as a teaching technique rather than an object of study:

I mean we definitely do lots of music in my class but the focus is always on the lesson rather than on the music... so say if we do some music in literacy, the learning objective is a literacy one [...] so even though I do loads of music in class, it's more supportive – it supports the other lesson, it's not really music on its own. Erm... if I had to think – well I don't really ever do music *itself*. (Frederick, KS1)

The key point here is that music is clearly subordinate to the lesson which it is used to support, thus reflecting an approach to teaching which is cross-curricular but in which one subject is subordinate to the other. Barnes (2011) discusses this, claiming it to be the most common cross-curricular strategy used by teachers, but questioning the extent to which

meaningful learning will take place in the 'inferior' of the two subjects, in this case music. Unsurprisingly therefore, Frederick's approach is one which has drawn criticism from music education advocates. Koopman (1996), for instance, claims that if music is to maintain its place in the school curriculum, it is necessary to ignore the non-musical reasons for studying it, such as its potential for increasing maths, reading or cognitive skills, and focus solely on its own inherent value as an intrinsically enriching form of knowledge. Paynter (2002) concurs, claiming that justifying music through its value in other domains actually diminishes the case for including it in schools at all; music simply becomes the tool to "enliven learning in the superior subject" (Barnes, 2011, p57).

These criticisms of the hierarchical approach appear justified, as if music is positioned in a subordinate role, this may lead to teachers failing to accept it as a subject in its own right, as has occurred at Fairfield. However, it appears to be common amongst music advocates to simply accept music itself as innately valuable, with little explanation to actually support this. Such assertions were replicated in my sample, with many who showed passion for the subject simply referring to it as "really important" or "powerful" and expecting this view to be considered unquestionable. However, do such assertions provide sufficient justification for discrete music lessons to be considered vital by the majority of non-specialists? Bowman (2012) suggests not, and his well-argued piece encourages us to think beyond simple, blind-faith assumptions as to music's inherent value. When teachers such as Frederick are continually rejecting the teaching of discrete music in favour of a cross-curricular approach, this indicates that there is certainly space for debate on this subject; it is clear that not everyone subscribes to the view of music's automatic and unquestioning importance and it is necessary to be open to, and explore, these alternative perspectives.

On a practical level, for example, arguments for the inclusion of music based on an automatic, often unsupported, value judgement can fail to take into account the realities of classroom situations. Indeed, the pressures of the intensely packed primary curriculum cannot be overlooked and for some teachers, the linking of music to other subjects was the only way in which they could engage with it at all. I would suggest that in these uncertain times, this approach should not be dismissed outright but actively explored. It is possible that initiatives could be developed in terms of how music may actually be used more effectively in cross curricular ways, rather than simply condemning such strategies as inferior or worthless. Frederick, for instance, does not ignore music completely, and it may be possible to build musical skills into his current provision; in this way, a cross-curricular approach could provide a starting point for increased involvement in music, if it could be shown that objectives could extend to both subjects on a more equal footing.

When thinking about how to promote music, the fact remains that one of the key themes, particularly within Fairfield School, was that music was considered to be of questionable value for the future prospects of the pupils. Whilst I have shown that it is generally perceived as “enjoyable”, its future utility is often considered to be much lower than other subject areas (McPherson *et al.*, 2012). Indeed, even some of the most passionate advocates of music with whom I spoke, accepted that perhaps the best way to ensure that music is delivered in the primary school is by linking it with a subject of a higher perceived status:

The best thing really is to link it to the core subjects [...] obviously if it can be placed with a subject like literacy, it's placed important – it's an important subject all of a sudden, so that's the way we're going – you need to make it important so if that means linking it then that's fine. (Debbie, FS)

The use of music within other lessons could therefore be arguably an effective method by which its value could be raised. By associating music with increased learning and enjoyment in other subjects, the assumption was that generalist teachers would be more motivated to include it within their teaching. It is possible that through seeing the value of music in this way, teachers might then be encouraged to go further with it and start to incorporate music objectives; if teachers are engaging in music to any extent, and perceiving this as valuable and achievable, then this could be the first step towards greater involvement.

However, the question remains as to whether this is the most effective way in which to promote the use of music to teachers. If its purpose in the primary school is solely as a tool for learning, then this in itself may actually devalue the learning of music in its own right, as has been argued in the literature. Is it preferable to include music as an enhancement to other subjects and risk de-valuing it as a discrete area, or is it better to demand a full, music-focused lesson and risk the chance of teachers simply avoiding it completely?

This is clearly a complex issue and, I contend, one which teachers and institutions need to consider more regularly than they currently do. Indeed, in the majority of the schools there was little (or no) reflection or dialogue on music's place and this is perhaps what is lacking. A whole school approach could take many forms and a cross-curricular starting point could well prove more appropriate in many institutions; I believe this would certainly be preferable than a complete lack of music at all. By encouraging these conversations in the first place it may be possible to avoid situations where the subject becomes invisible; debates and reflections on how music should be used within their particular institution may be the crucial starting point.

## 8.2.2 The perceived impact on personal and social development

Although thus far I have considered where music should be positioned in terms of children's learning, it could be argued that the role of education goes beyond simply the delivery of a set of standard curricular subjects. This is especially true at primary school level, and for some teachers, the delivery of music was perceived as a major part of their duty in enabling the development of socially and culturally rounded individuals (Henley, 2012). Some teachers justified their involvement with music through reference to the potential impact it could have on the pupils *themselves*, shifting the focus from increased knowledge and skills in music, to heightened personal and social development. Life skills such as increased confidence, cooperation and teamwork, self-discipline and commitment were all cited as potential benefits, with music being perceived as a means of providing education which could go beyond the confines of 'normal' teaching. Whilst music is again positioned as something other and separate, its difference is now conceptualised as a positive feature.

Of all the social skills associated with music, the development of confidence proved the most prevalent across the data. The main theory held by teachers was that being involved in musical performance would lead to the development of greater self-confidence, particularly if these activities resulted in praise from their peers, other teachers and parents:

We always do lots of music when we have a class assembly and it's hard work and they're always a bit nervous at first but the sense of achievement they get when everyone tells them how well they've done is amazing... you can see them buzzing and you can see them growing in confidence, so next time they're less nervous and the time after that they're even better... it's a development of all-round confidence and it's so rewarding to see. (Cecilia, LKS2, MC)

This belief in the link between musical involvement and the development of confidence was particularly strong for Cecilia and encouraged her to ensure there was sufficient opportunity

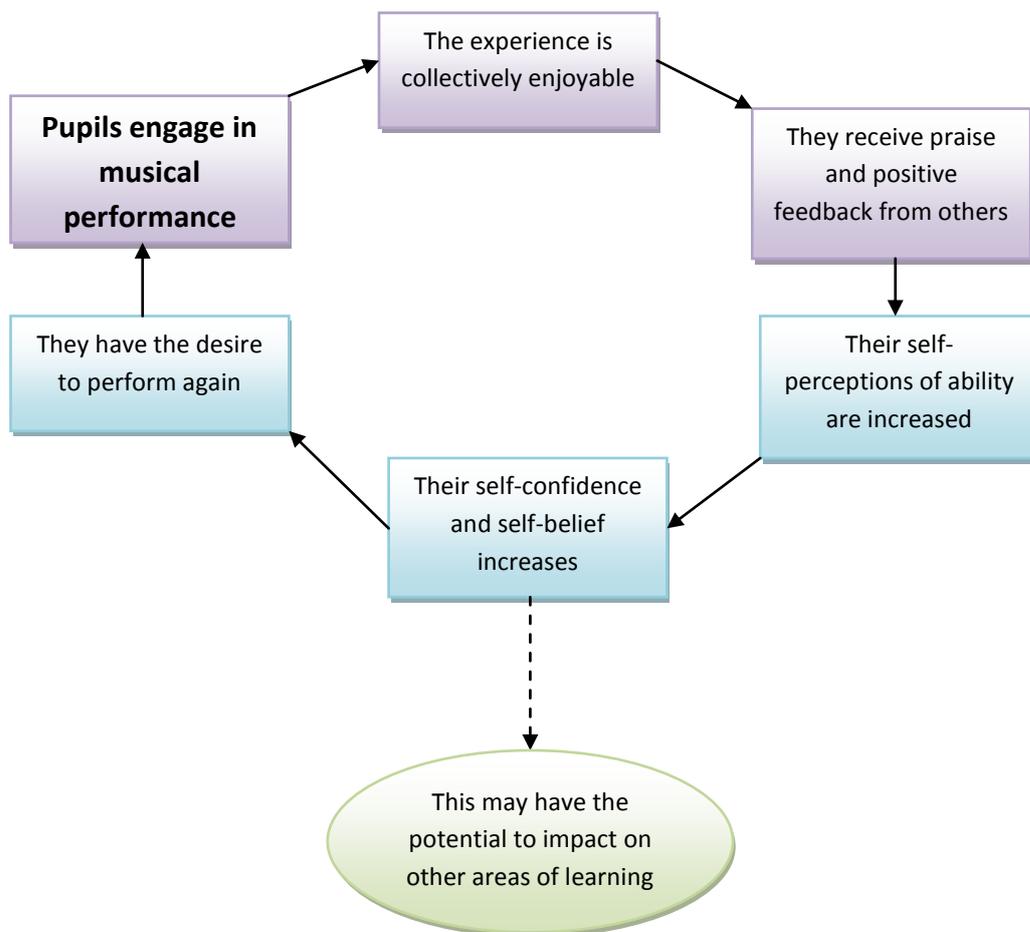
for her class to become involved in musical performance. She clearly cites a belief in the link between the positive experience of performing and the formation and development of confidence. This confidence, she believes, can then be translated to other contexts, thus demonstrating a value in music that extends beyond the confines of the subject itself and could, crucially, be used as evidence for its future utility. Rather than looking at the intrinsic value of the music itself, the development of confidence was a general skill which was considered vital for all children both in school and beyond.

I would never miss out music because I really see the benefit of it, you know for the children. It impacts on confidence, it impacts on everything, you can see the difference in them, you can see they have that confidence to get involved in other things and it goes beyond just music, they're more confident in the classroom and in their lives. (Barbara, FS, MC)

As noted in Chapter 7, therefore, music was considered important for Barbara because she believed it offered *all* children an opportunity to become more confident, regardless of their academic ability. Building upon this, she cited how music provided an avenue through which those who struggled academically, for example who were learning English as an additional language, could therefore develop confidence, without having to rely on language and academic skills.

It is possible to map the ways in which these teachers perceived music as connected to increased confidence, as shown through the diagram in Figure 8.1. Importantly, praise and positive feedback are key features and it is this external, socially-situated recognition of success in music which is perceived as the catalyst for the development of confidence. This was believed to be a vital step if children were to become more confident and may help to explain a potential anomaly in the data; although the development of confidence emerged as a key benefit of participating in music, many of the teachers *themselves* felt they were

lacking in confidence in music, often citing their school experiences as the reason behind this. As noted in Chapter 6, this lack of confidence was often linked to the negative judgements from others, thus it was believed that such issues could be subverted by the use of specifically directed praise and increased provision of opportunity.



**Figure 8.1: Teachers’ understandings of the positive impact of performance**

For some teachers, therefore, the will to deliver music was linked to a desire to help their pupils avoid a similar anxiety later in life, and to actively provide a positive experience which could enhance their confidence henceforth. The idea is that regular provision of positive performance opportunities would result in children perceiving performing as the norm (rather than as an anxiety inducing event) and would help them to develop positive self-

perceptions about their chances of success in music. The assumption was that this would negate the potential for anxiety and thus avoid a replication of the negative experiences which they themselves had often experienced.

Whilst the diagram demonstrates the potential of positive performance experiences to enhance confidence, the situation was not always quite so simple. Although practitioners in the younger year groups, such as Barbara and Briony, discussed their pupils' universal enthusiasm for participating, this was not always the case further up the school. As noted above, Year 5 and 6 teachers proved more likely to question the willingness of older pupils to become involved in music at all, noting their reluctance and self-consciousness as reasons for wanting to avoid music. For these older pupils, social comparisons can be heightened in performance situations, as the children start to become aware of themselves and their skill levels in relation to others (Kaschub & Smith, 2009). It therefore does not necessarily follow that *any* kind of involvement in music, even when accompanied by teacher praise, will inevitably raise confidence. If the individuals' own comparisons do not lead to favourable judgements, this is unlikely to result in feelings of high self-confidence.

Pupils themselves may thus build their own personal understandings of their ability, based on social comparisons, rather than simply accepting praise from teachers. It is therefore important to question the assertion that *any* kind of participation in music improves confidence. Indeed, if we consider the accounts from the teachers' own lives, there are numerous examples of individuals being forced into performing against their wishes, with the result being that they then eschewed any future involvement with music as much as possible (for example, Adele's narrative discussed above). The key point here was that for some teachers, being coerced into performances would lead to an obvious demonstration

of their ability to others, which could be perceived as threatening if they expected the outcome to be negative.

As such, the evidence from the narrative accounts of the teachers' early experiences with music suggests that whilst in some cases it may well have the potential to build confidence, it also has the power to destroy it completely. It appears that if not handled in a sensitive manner, there is certainly the potential for participation in music to create anxiety and threaten the confidence which teachers are attempting to build.

However, I return to the argument that regular and consistent involvement with music, which starts at an early age and which continues to be delivered as the norm, may be the way to subvert some of these negative effects. When examining many of the teachers' own stories of fear in relation to performing, the precursor was often that they were suddenly forced into a musically threatening situation, having had very limited experience prior to this. With Adele and her singing, for example, the fear she describes stems in part from the situation being alien to her: "you have to remember we never really did much singing at all and definitely not on our own, and so this was the most scary thing I had ever had to do" (Adele, LKS2). If there had been regular performance opportunities and the chance to improve confidence over an extended period of time then it is possible that the scenario would never have occurred in the manner in which it did.

Adele's negative experience was also characterised by a lack of positive encouragement from both the teacher and the other pupils. As Figure 8.1 showed, the children grow in confidence because they receive positive feedback on their performances, which helps them to develop positive self-perceptions and can thus help build confidence. Negative judgements, which are based on the dichotomous perception of musicality can thus result in

a complete rejection of the subject; this occurred with Adele in a very clear-cut way, where those children who could sing were physically distanced from those who could not. It is important therefore for teachers to be aware of the impact of their actions and avoid situations in which these views are reinforced. Performing can prove a very personal experience, and criticism of this can therefore be extremely de-motivating. In contrast with written feedback, in performances it can be very hard to dispel the idea that one is criticising the individual, not the object. Awareness of this difficulty, together with a consistent approach to providing opportunities, may therefore prove crucial in the development of pupil confidence.

Although confidence was the most prevalent social benefit cited by teachers, involvement in music was also associated with other life skills. These were primarily social and involved the development of skills such as “being able to work together” (Ethan, UKS2), through empathy, teamwork, collaboration and shared goals. Returning again to the issue of music performances, these provided an avenue by which the pupils would all be motivated to work with each other to ensure the success of the performance, leading to the development of a positive shared ethos connected to the activity. In Christ the King and Emmanuel, this occurred regularly through class assemblies, where children would “come together” and “really work with each other” to put on a performance. As Catherine (LKS2) notes, “they all want to help each other and they want *everyone* to do well – it’s a real class effort”. She goes on to explain how even those children who may struggle to get along with others would be included in this and would want to work with others to make sure the performance goes well. Rather than being considered anxiety-inducing, the public nature of

the performance was seen as a way of inspiring a sense of community and “bringing the children together collaboratively” (Catherine, LKS2).

As noted in the introduction to this section, there was therefore a belief that music could provide something greater to both the school (or classroom) community and the individuals it comprised. Music was seen as a way in which social bonds between the pupils could be strengthened, through joint participation in music-making practices. As Ellen observes, in Emmanuel school music is placed at the “heart” of all social occasions because, “it really brings us all together” and “adds so much”. The value associated with music therefore moves beyond what it can bring to the classroom or the curriculum and is linked to the development of a shared school spirit; in this way it can gain power within the school despite being considered separate from the main curriculum. This indicates a further alternative way in which schools could decide to employ the subject; its value here is unrelated to debates over music’s place in the curriculum hierarchy and instead connected to the broader ethos of the school. This certainly proved successful in Emmanuel, where music supported the Christian nature of the institution and gained prominence due to being associated with collective worship; from this starting point, they have since gone on to develop a highly positive approach to music which has received external recognition, showing the potential benefits of promoting this view.

The view of music espoused in Emmanuel is also echoed by Barbara, whose passionate advocacy of music emerges throughout her account. It is clear that for her, music is not simply another lesson to be delivered like any other but can actually transcend this and improve the experience of education for both pupils and staff alike. Its difference therefore

should actually be at the heart of the case for its inclusion and I conclude this section with her words:

Music just *lifts* you, it really does... We had an experience in school where everyone was involved and everyone was singing together with different parts and it was brilliant! And I personally just felt uplifted for the rest of the day and another member of staff said to me 'that was amazing, we need to do it more often, I feel fantastic now' [...] I just think music's fantastic, it gives you that – release! It lifts you up and you're ready for everything and you can feel the buzz in the whole school. (Barbara, FS, MC)

### **8.3 A case for local plans?**

Within the field of music education research, there has been much anxiety over the fact that there is no “one true voice” which can inform those who might not be involved in music as to why they should be engaging with the subject. However, Bowman (2012) questions whether such concerns are really necessary. At the present time, perhaps the aim should not be to find a way of promoting the subject in a universal way, but instead to look to the local level and take account of the individual and institutional priorities. It appears that the schools in my sample negotiated music in terms of their own particular concerns, and although there were some instances where the subject was marginalised, there were other cases in which it proved extremely helpful to develop one's own, unique approach to music based upon the perceived needs of the school community. These issues will be further explored in Chapter 9, where one institution will be used as a case study in order to demonstrate the ways in which it is possible to develop a whole school negotiated approach to the subject.

As I have suggested above therefore, the crucial point is that there must be dialogue concerning music's place within institutions and that schools and the individuals within

them need to reflect on their own situations and the ways in which music can fit into this in a valuable way. By taking the time to think about these issues, an approach to music can be developed which suits both the perceived abilities and experiences of the teachers, but which crucially is considered *of value to the pupils*. Often this was the most important consideration for teachers when deciding whether or not to engage with music, and so it is vital that positive reasons as to its inclusion should be highlighted. By allowing schools the autonomy to develop an approach which suits their particular needs and allows them to build on this going forward, music can become a valuable subject within the school, in a way which suits the contextual requirements. I have noted above how this can become a highly effective strategy and the following chapter will detail the specific ways in which it is possible to achieve this, even when the individuals enter the school with varying (and sometimes negative) personal circumstances. Through the development of a whole school approach, it is possible that individual and institutional factors can be negotiated through value judgements. This section has provided a number of ways in which these judgements could be justified and constructed, meaning that successful approaches to music do not necessarily need to be identical; rather they need to reflect the perceived needs of the institution.

## 9. The development of a whole school approach – Enhancing individuals’ motivation through collective means

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The final chapter of the four discussion sections moves slightly away from the previous ones, in that it takes a closer look at how teachers’ motivation for music may be enhanced through the use of a whole school approach. By taking one example school as a case study, I examine the structures in place in this institution which enable the teachers to have a high level of involvement and commitment to music. This involves building upon discussions from the previous three chapters in order to assess the role that schools can play in increasing and developing the teaching of music. The focus therefore shifts from the personal sections in the centre of the models, to the broader social circle in which they are situated. This incorporates contextual elements (5), social elements (6), socio-contextual elements (7) and the current opportunities afforded within the setting (8), although again the divide is not quite so simple and the connection between the individual and institutional elements will again be considered.

Section 9.1 therefore assesses the potential impact which school structures can have upon the motivation of teachers, specifically addressing the extent to which it is possible for schools to effect change in those individuals who comprise them. This involves examination of literature about institutional change; since the concept of a whole school approach emerged from the data itself, school improvement literature did not form a major part of the literature review. From the data, it appears there are certain steps which can be taken by the school that can influence the ways in which individual teachers respond to music, both positively and negatively. This is certainly not to dismiss an individual’s personal history

as irrelevant, and indeed I have shown above how vital this is to consider. Instead, I argue that it is possible to reflect on the construction and interpretation of past events, and recognise the potential for change.

The evidence analysed comes from Dalton Primary, in which a very successful, whole-school approach to music had been developed. In this institution, music was a clear priority and all the practitioners involved in the research were highly committed to delivering this on a regular basis. Interestingly, over a period of several years, music had become perceived as a core part of the curriculum and was afforded a status at least equivalent to any other subject; this belief in its value permeated the accounts of individual teachers.

Importantly, these positive judgements were present despite the personal narratives of teachers here being comparable with those from other institutions, with many teachers in this school also having previous negative experiences with music. The aim behind this case study is therefore to highlight institutional level practices that could provide the basis for a whole school approach, in which even those teachers with negative musical histories can become involved.

Although individual case studies are inevitably subject to the criticism of not being readily applicable to other contexts, this does not mean there is nothing to be learnt from them (Johnson, 2012); indeed, I have been inspired by some of the practices of schools with whom I have worked and it is hoped that dissemination of findings could also motivate others to experiment with these strategies. Equally, in terms of providing a model for future research, the approaches outlined here could be specifically trialled within other contexts and investigated through more intensive, longitudinal studies. As my opportunity to work with this school occurred largely through chance and the data relies heavily on personal

accounts, what follows represents a snapshot of their perceptions and practices at the current time; it is thus important to note that the school has already gone through the process of change and was now well established in terms of its provision for music. A more in-depth study which follows a school through from the initial intervention and implementation of a plan would be a valuable addition to the field, and might expose more of the difficulties that might accompany such change.

### **9.1 The question of institutional level change**

Before commencing the examination of Dalton Primary School and the structures in place in this institution, it is important to explore the extent to which a school itself may actually be able to impact upon teachers' motivation. This requires consideration of the notion of change and how this might be achieved on an institutional, and potentially individual, level. This first section briefly examines the conceptions of educational change as presented in literature and considers how Dalton School fits in with this model. It is also important at this stage to outline some of the enabling conditions which assisted this school in developing a whole school approach to music, as this will underpin the discussion ahead. Research or institutions which may wish to emulate some of these practices need to be aware of where this school was starting from, and perhaps adapt their own plans to suit the current state of their own institution; as with all planning in education, knowledge of the starting point is crucial for a successful outcome and the reflective dialogue which I advocated in Chapter 8 is a necessary first step to establish this.

Change can take many guises and it is important to be aware of what one is trying to achieve. It would, for example, be possible to enforce the teaching of music to a greater degree by making it a requirement for teachers to provide planning and assessment

evidence to prove they were teaching music every week. However, such an approach could well leave the *motivation* of teachers either unaffected, or indeed, reduced. If it is teacher motivation specifically that one seeks to enhance, as opposed to simply increased involvement with the subject, it is important to think about the perspectives of the teachers themselves and take these into account. Initiatives which follow a solely top-down approach may thus prove ineffective and result in negative responses from the practitioners (Fullan, 2007). With reference to my previous models, it should not necessarily be seen as a uni-direction influence of context *upon* the individuals within it; instead, both sets of factors need to be considered throughout.

Being aware of the distinction between changes in practices and changes in beliefs is thus important, although it may be the case that one is a necessary condition for the other. Fullan (2007) notes how for a change in beliefs to occur, there must be reflective action on new practices, i.e. teachers can only offer insights about the ways in which new practices affect them once they have experienced these in practice. In this way, altering the actions of individuals, for example with externally regulated structures, may well represent an important early step in effecting change in beliefs and understandings, as long as this is accompanied by dialogue and reflection on their experiences. This notion again corresponds with the conclusions made in Chapter 8 regarding the importance of actually discussing a school's approach to music and taking into account the different perspectives of the practitioners.

One of the problems about thinking how schools might change with regards to music is the generally accepted notion that for any change to occur there must be the initial motivation to implement this (Fullan, 2007). How can institutional-level changes, therefore, *enhance*

teachers' motivation, if this motivation itself is a *precursor* for change? This is a complex question and requires an understanding of how change itself has been conceptualised.

According to the classic theory of educational reform, change occurs in three stages: initiation, which involves the decision to effect change; implementation, which refers to the processes of changing; and finally institutionalisation, where the change has become part of the culture of the organisation (Hopkins, Ainscow, & West, 1994).

The first step of any change therefore, is to ensure that this has been fully defined and is both understood and accepted by teachers as beneficial to the school (Fullan, 2007). In most cases, such as reforming the school in order to raise achievement, there is clearly a common cause which can unite the teachers within the school, such as supporting low attaining pupils or addressing behaviour problems. In these cases, convincing teachers of the importance of the need for action may therefore prove reasonably straightforward, even if the processes involved remain challenging. However, with a peripheral subject such as music, this first step itself requires extensive consideration and the perceptions of the teachers themselves need to be explored and respected. This will clearly require dialogue and the identification of both school and individual priorities. The question to ask here refers to the perceived needs of the pupils and their community, taken in combination with the ideals and principles of the teachers. In this way, any change must commence with negotiation about how the subject should be delivered in the school and how the practitioners themselves perceive this. These initial stages will prove crucial in order to gain the support and develop the motivation to engage with the potential change.

In the case of Dalton Primary, there was certainly dialogue and discussion prior to the implementation of the approach, with the music coordinator being very concerned that

teachers' views needed to be taken into account at every stage. However, there were also several important conditions which contributed to the success of the change in this institution and it is important to be aware of these:

1. Within the school, there was already a general desire to improve provision for music. This was evident for the music coordinator herself, who was very passionate about increasing the profile of the subject, but also amongst the other staff. As Diana discussed, "Music was always okay here but it was an area where quite a few of us felt there was potential to do more – I was really pleased when Dawn started to put that in motion." The phrase "quite a few of us" implies a collective desire to increase music provision, suggesting that several teachers were supportive of the changes being proposed and were thus motivated to be involved.
2. With regards to the pupils, there was a perceived need in relation to music in terms of the local catchment area. Dawn discusses the fact that many of the children (over 90%) come from non-British families, with strict religious regimes, whose parents were thought to provide little opportunities for them to be involved in music of any kind outside of school. There was thus a greater perceived requirement for the school itself to provide music because, unlike in Bramley School, it was not expected that they would be engaging in this outside of the school environment.
3. The school was graded Outstanding by Ofsted and consistently achieved high SATS results, meaning there was very little perceived threat to its current operation. As with Emmanuel School, this successful starting point allowed both the time and resources to devote to music, as well as a need to look beyond the success of the core subjects in order to take the school further. Diana discusses how they were "really looking to enhance the reputation of the school" and that gaining external awards in music provided one way to do this. The head teacher was particularly supportive of this aim and encouraged the school to develop its musical profile.
4. During the time of implementing change, several new members of staff joined the school all of whom were under 30 years of age and either Newly- or Recently- Qualified. This could be a vital contributory factor to the school's success with music, as they were both keen to learn and eager to fulfil the expectations set out by their

more experienced colleagues. As has been noted, longer-serving teachers, who have developed routines and habits, may prove more resistant to change, particularly in subjects which have the potential to threaten their own sense of security (Yilmaz & Kilicogru, 2013). Equally, it is possible that the newer teachers had themselves been selected because they showed the potential to be open to such approaches, although this assertion is not necessarily supported by their personal histories, which in some cases were very negative with regard music.

5. Finally, but crucially, music was a reasonably established subject in the school even before Dawn put her changes in motion. Whilst teaching was patchy before she arrived, there were a range of performance activities taking place, such as class assemblies, regular whole school singing and some instrumental provision. As Dawn described, “music was bubbling away”, meaning her attempts at improvement were not starting entirely from scratch. There was already some level of involvement with the subject meaning the institutional change which took place could build on what was already there.<sup>18</sup>

On the whole, therefore, Dalton School was in an extremely healthy position regarding its scope to enhance teachers’ motivation for music. Whilst any kind of change is a complex process, involving a number of different steps, the strategy is liable to prove more effective if it is tailored to the particular needs of the institution, as was the case in this school. By using dialogue and discussion and developing a clear picture of the starting position of the institution, it is possible that strategies could be introduced which could have the potential to impact upon the practices and beliefs of individuals; I now move on to explore how this might be achieved.

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<sup>18</sup> As noted in Chapter 8 therefore, other schools may well have had to start at a much more basic level than that introduced in Dalton. If the teachers were not used to doing any music at all, to suddenly demand full-scale lessons may prove too much. The key is to identify the starting point and build gradually, developing the support of practitioners along the way.

## 9.2 Expectations and obligations

As highlighted in the previous sections, one of the most important considerations within the schools was whether teachers were actually obliged and expected to teach music and whether there were structures in place to ensure that this occurred. This is often the first step on the road to achieving educational change, since it ensures teachers are involved in the specific intervention and then allows the chance to reflect upon this (Fullan, 2007).

In terms of music, one of the key contextual factors which can contribute to a lack of teaching was the absence of formal monitoring structures to ensure that teachers actually delivered the subject on a regular basis. Greengate School provides a good example of this lack of reinforcement, with several teachers making observations about the failure of the institution to support their delivery of the subject. With so many other competing pressures, it was easy to find music being ignored simply because senior staff paid no attention as to whether or not the teachers made the effort to include it. As Gemma describes:

When I first came here I did try to teach music but it was hard to find the time and I think within a few weeks I realised that it was more up to you what you did – no one really bothered about it, no one checked whether you did it or not, no one seemed to know, so – well I guess it sort of slipped away [...] I did try hard at the beginning but I just couldn't really see what [the pupils] were getting from it, we were just struggling through some songs and I needed the time for other things. (Gemma, KS1)

When Gemma failed to deliver music to her class, she realised there were no external consequences of this within the school system, meaning it quickly became standard practice to avoid it. Indeed, she questions whether any other teachers in the school would even realise whether or not she taught music, so little attention was paid to the subject. This point was reiterated by her colleagues, who also discussed how a lack of monitoring

reduced the need to teach it and positioned it significantly “low on the list of priorities” (Geoff, UKS2).

The school structures therefore contributed to Gemma’s lack of teaching, although this was also reinforced on a personal level. She discusses how her early efforts to teach the subject were just something to “get through” and that she failed to see what she delivered as important for the pupils. This is not, therefore, a complete personal rejection of music itself, but rather a realisation that what she could deliver in the subject did not represent the best use of her classroom time – she considered her own lessons ineffective, which led her to devalue what she could provide, resulting in a failure to include music (see Chapter 8). Coupled with the lack of school structures to support music, there became a complete lack of reinforcement, either positive or negative, individual or social, to support the implementation of music, meaning it simply was not delivered.

In addition to the more formal monitoring structures, the decision of whether or not to engage with music could also be mediated through social comparisons, as the teachers’ own actions were often influenced by what they perceived others to be doing. For some, once it became apparent that their colleagues were also failing to deliver music, their own motivation to make an effort with the subject started to wane. A lack of informal social ‘pressure’ therefore, could also result in a failure to feel the same level of obligation for music teaching as one would expect for perhaps other curriculum subjects. Another teacher in Greengate explains how when she first arrived at the school and realised other teachers were not doing music, she too found herself missing it off, despite her initial expectations.

I know it sounds awful but I just sort of fell into not doing it and because no one else was doing it either it just didn’t seem to matter. When I first started, I saw it was on the

timetable and someone explained to me that we had to go to a different room, an actual music room... and I thought 'oh god, I'm actually going to have to teach music here' [...] and so I did it a few times at first... but then it just sort stopped... I think the main thing was when I realised that no one else was actually doing it [...] there was no point in going through all the stress if no one else was doing it. (Gabrielle, LKS2)

It is interesting to note here that Gabrielle had initially associated the fact that there was a music room and a timetabled slot for the subject as indicative of music being a major part of the school's life. These observable features falsely implied a commitment to music within the institution, and she initially assumed that she too would have to adopt this. However, despite the resources and space available, the dominant values within the school were unconnected to these surface features, and she soon discovered that the ostensible commitment to music did not extend to actual practices.

This is important to note, as she had originally been willing to conform to what she perceived to be the expected practices of the school and ensure that she delivered the subject. As she said, "I thought 'oh god I'm actually going to have to teach music here'", showing she was willing to replicate what she considered to be the expected practices of the school, despite feeling reluctant to do this. However, in this case, once she understood the 'unwritten rules', she realised that the majority of teachers did not engage with music and thus was able to justify her own avoidance of the subject.

Such actions are explained by the literature, in which it has been claimed that individuals often choose courses of action based on interdependent, social factors, such as the desire to fit in with the norms of an institution or gain social approval from others (Markus & Kitayama, 2010). In the case above, Gabrielle was able to find a perceived social legitimacy for failing to teach music because her colleagues were largely doing the same. However, this

psychological principle could well have implications for designing a positive approach; if her colleagues had all taught music regularly, it seems likely she would have attempted to do the same.

It is clearly important, therefore, to attempt to develop a culture within which all teachers were engaging with music and thus newcomers to the setting would also be initiated in this. One's sense of duty could well increase with the observation that music lessons were occurring consistently throughout the school. Within this scenario, teachers may therefore feel more obliged to teach music because of the observable practice of their colleagues. The desire to fit in could thus be used in a positive way; if there is a culture in which all practitioners are expected to teach music and this is followed through in terms of actual practice, this could be a powerful motivator on an individual level. The social (6) practices of the institution could therefore interact with one's personal beliefs and practices.

There is evidence of such an effect in Dalton Primary School, where it is possible to identify a collective sense of responsibility for music. Rather than using loosely encouraging structures, whereby teachers are left alone and trusted to make their own decisions (Fullan, 2007), there are strategies in place to ensure that every teacher in the school *must* deliver music every week, with planning, assessment and lessons all being monitored.

This monitoring and assessment of teachers' practices was stressed by Dawn as one of the most crucial changes she was required to implement. It ensured that all members of staff had to deliver music lessons every week which covered the agreed key musical skills and objectives, and where possible, fitted in with their current topic work. Although based loosely on a creative curriculum model, the emphasis here was not solely on ensuring that every subject was squeezed into an overarching topic; rather the priority was that every

subject, including music, should be taught every week, *either* within the scope of the topic *or*, if it was deemed more appropriate, delivered discretely. If a link to the creative curriculum could not be found then this was not demanded; the requirement was to deliver music lessons every week, regardless of the overarching topic. This contrasts with other creative curriculum schools, such as Fairfield, in which the planning for music could be reduced to a single sentence on a mind map, whilst the subject would quickly be dropped if a link to the topic could not be found (if not before).

As Dawn herself explained, the monitoring systems left no opportunity for teachers to fail to engage with music. All planning and assessment was checked by her every week, and this needed to be completed with the same detail and diligence as other subject areas. As she discussed, “They know they have to plan it out properly and so they do it, there’s no getting out of it”. The teachers at Dalton Primary therefore had social (6) pressure and contextual (5, 7) reinforcement from within the school itself to ensure that there was no chance of music being perceived as an optional subject. They accepted this situation and all discussed their personal obligation to teach music; it was clearly considered a regular and required part of the weekly teaching of every practitioner, rather than a separate subject or something external to the curriculum.

Although this approach proved successful in Dalton Primary, attempting to translate it to other schools will not always be straightforward. As noted above, the practitioners here were able to concentrate on devoting time to planning and assessment in music because other areas within the school had already been judged to be successful. However, this was not always the case, and in other institutions, contextual (5) and socio-contextual (7) pressures in terms of Ofsted and pupil attainment could result in very little time to devote

to music. Several teachers discussed the conflicting expectations they were attempting to juggle, and how they were constantly faced with a series of dilemmas as to where to divert their attentions. As Calderwood (1987, p2) points out, these decisions are a “compromise between multiple costs and benefits” and require the individual to assess both themselves and the social context before deciding on a course of action. Teachers’ own attitudes to music therefore need to be considered *within* the confines of their own contextual roles, and as part of a system of competing obligations, meaning it was possible to have a very positive perception of music and its importance, but find that this was outweighed by the expectations and requirements of the school.

This was the case in All Saints School, where the music coordinator had to juggle the joint responsibility of leading both music and science. Despite her own ideals relating to the importance of music, she was unable to fully deliver in her role as subject coordinator because of the weight of additional responsibilities within the school. In contrast to Dalton Primary, the teachers within her institution all expressed concern over the imminent threat of Ofsted, due to low literacy and numeracy attainment, problems with behaviour and the fact that a nearby, comparable school had recently been placed in special measures; this perceived threat to their own status clearly induced anxiety across the whole staff and meant that there was a real push on improving achievement in the core subjects, to the neglect of most other domains.

Although the head teacher of All Saints did have the desire to improve music in the school, this was eclipsed by more immediate priorities, meaning that she was unable to provide the time or resources for Abigail to implement any kind of action. Indeed, when attempting to encourage other teachers to engage with music, Abigail was faced with colleagues who both

believed they were unable to teach music at all and who failed to consider it important within their school; the two dimensions of the classic expectancy-value theories were thus violated, resulting in a lack of motivation to even attempt to engage with the subject. She thus found it increasingly difficult to lead the subject because there was no support or encouragement from those around her.

Whilst Abigail had the motivation to improve music and deliver it to her pupils, she was unable to implement this across the institution due to the contextual (5), social (6) and socio-contextual (7) circumstances. The pressures which she faced emanated from factors beyond her control, and it was necessary for her to construct her own role within this framework. As she herself notes, she felt unable to introduce any kind of whole-school approach for music because she recognised that her colleagues were under too much pressure from other sources and would simply not be able to accommodate extra demands; her only option left for music was to attempt to improve extra-curricular provision, accepting that at the present time this was the only place where there was any capacity for change.

Returning to Dalton Primary therefore, it is thus necessary to understand the changes which took place here as not simply the outcome of Dawn's vision and leadership, despite the strength of this. Instead they should be considered the product of a range of institutional circumstances, within which there were motivated individuals who understood the need for music and together would encourage each other's practices. Attempting to apply Dawn's approach in All Saints may well have proved as unsuccessful as Abigail's efforts, due to the current pressures facing the staff; this indicates again how important it is to develop an approach which is compatible with the needs of the school. Raising the expectation of what

is required of teachers could well be an important first step but there also needs to be consideration for the broader picture. Recognition of the importance of the wider context is thus a necessary precursor to the section which follows.

### **9.3 Leadership and positive role models**

The role of the music coordinator proved an important factor in terms of establishing a whole school approach to music. At Dalton Primary, Dawn, a passionate teacher of music, had worked extremely hard to improve the standards and status of the subject within the school. It is possible to identify the qualities she demonstrates as relatively fixed dispositional **(3)** factors, which together contribute to her effectiveness as a subject leader. She was described by her colleagues, for example, as being extremely driven and committed; proactive and willing to embrace all opportunities; and confident in communicating and encouraging others to share her “vision” for music in the school. Rather than simply accepting as inevitable music’s place on the periphery of the curriculum, she had spent over ten years actively building up its profile and ensuring that there was an institutional-wide approach in which every teacher would become involved with it. This required her to provide frequent support to others in the school but was an investment of time she believed to be necessary and worthwhile.

Although it is clearly possible to understand Dawn’s effectiveness in terms of her personal qualities, a more helpful analysis should perhaps focus on her specific actions in order to provide a model for other coordinators to emulate. A key motivational strategy which Dawn drew on was the fact that she herself was not a music “specialist” in terms of the education she herself had received. As such, she had taken steps to ensure she was not viewed as an “expert” within the school. She repeatedly stressed to her colleagues that she too had

similar negative experiences with music to them, making the point that if she can teach music with relatively little formal training then so can they. In this way she clearly sets herself up as an empathetic leader because she understands that many of her colleagues hold negative attitudes to the subject.

I always stress to them that you don't need to be an expert or anything – I mean I'm not an expert and I tell them this [...] I did take music to GCSE but I didn't do as well as I should have, I really didn't like the pressure of performing and I just felt that it wasn't really very good in my school... I ended up not going any further with it and I didn't go down the musical path any more, I took a different path. (Dawn, UKS2)

This experience is important to highlight, as for Dawn, the cessation of formal music education, albeit at a more advanced stage, did not automatically result in a lack of ability to be able to teach the subject at primary level. In contrast to many of the other teachers, she did not perceive a causal link between her decision to 'leave' music education and her current teaching skills; actively working to deconstruct her colleagues' initial negative perceptions and connections was thus vital in ensuring that other teachers in her school did not get caught in similar prohibitive belief cycles.

Dawn's main argument, which she frequently put forward, is that anyone can teach music regardless of their previous educational experiences in the subject. By constructing herself as an outstanding music teacher with a lack of formal training, she demonstrates that the causal links between previous experiences and current teaching can be broken down. This was repeated to me by her colleagues:

Obviously Dawn's brilliant because she's the one who's really shown me that you *don't* have to be a total expert to do music, there's loads that we can do – you don't need to have done loads of exams or anything, and you don't have to be an expert in playing anything, and I think once you realise that you can get going with music. (Danielle, UKS2)

Dawn therefore actively sets herself up as a role model for the rest of the staff. She uses the fact that she is not a music 'specialist', in terms of her own education and training, to show the rest of the teachers that anyone can teach music and that it is not necessary to have undertaken formal music training in order to do this effectively. This is enhanced by the way in which she organises regular staff training events, which she delivers in collaboration with other members of staff. The fact that generalist teachers are involved in the training process again helps to challenge the perception of the music coordinator as distinct from the rest of the staff, ensuring that any new practices are presented as achievable for all.

In terms of practice, the regular staff training is supplemented by an extensive period of individual support, during which Dawn would assist with the delivery of music in other classes and offer guidance where necessary. In contrast to the short and unsuccessful intervention delivered in Christ the King school (see discussion in section 7.2), teachers here continue to receive support for as long as they needed, in addition to knowing that they would be monitored to ensure that the new practices were being maintained.

The ways in which training was organised and delivered at Dalton can be understood with reference to Wenger's (1998) notion of communities of practice. Rather than one 'leader' delivering a training programme to others, the fact that it was all conducted *within* the school and involved several members of staff resulted in a much more collaborative approach, whereby teachers worked together to build and jointly lead a individually designed set of objectives. Indeed, the focus for the sessions themselves was decided in a democratic way following what they described as a "self-skills audit", the principle of which was that teachers themselves would decide the agenda for training with no issue being considered too simple. Dawn refers, for example, to the way in which she developed her

own skills in music and how this involved going back to basics to “think how the children think” – her theory is that the simpler the training, the more effective teaching will ensue, meaning that the teachers felt very comfortable in asking for training on what might have been considered basic concepts.

This notion of a positive role model can also be explicitly linked to the recurring theme of self-efficacy theories. One of the key tenets of this work is that “social modelling” provides a way by which individuals’ self-efficacy and, thus commitment, to a particular subject may be improved (Bandura, 1997). If people see that others, who are crucially *similar to themselves*, can achieve in music then they are more likely to feel as though they themselves can also succeed. In particular, if it can be shown that sustained effort and application can result in non-specialists being able to teach music successfully, then other teachers will be more likely to attempt to master this rather than avoid it (Dweck, 1999).

Music in this school therefore, is very much portrayed as a subject equivalent to any other, which anyone can teach if they are willing to do the appropriate planning and preparation. Indeed, in contrast to previous discussion of music being a special case, Dawn constantly challenges the notion that there is anything distinct about it:

Music’s exactly the same as any other subject and you need to do it exactly the same as any other... I can’t say ‘Oh I don’t feel like doing science today, we’ll give it a miss’, and so you can’t do that with music either, it has to be there just the same as anything else [...] you do your research and plan it really carefully and get your resources prepped and, you know, it goes really well, it’s nothing special. (Dawn, UKS2)

By positioning music as a subject that required the same skills as the rest of the curriculum, Dawn draws heavily on her repeated discourse of it being “nothing special”. Her aim was to integrate music so that teaching it became the norm, rather than thinking of it as separate

from other subjects. She emphasises the fact that lessons can be planned and assessed in the same way as other subjects, and that the performative element of music does not, as many believe, make it impossible to teach. This replicates the quantitative finding whereby a focus on teaching skills, in which practitioners already feel competent, may be the best way of encouraging positive teacher self-perceptions in relation to their ability in music.

Throughout the interview, Dawn discusses her vision for the future of music in the school, making it clear that she is not going to “stand still” but will continue to work to improve the subject’s status. However, for other music coordinators the role was more problematic, meaning that attempting to translate Dawn’s strategies to another context may not be a straightforward process. In the most extreme case of Fairfield School, some practitioners were not even aware of the identity of the music coordinator, and in both All Saints and Greengate the coordinators themselves expressed a high degree of anxiety in relation to their roles. As noted above, for instance, Abigail struggled to manage competing expectations and failed to find a way of subverting her colleagues’ negative attitudes.

The role of music coordinator also resulted in some dilemmas in terms of how they were perceived by others. I noted that Dawn set herself up as equivalent to her colleagues in terms of her previous musical experiences. However, in a number of institutions, the music coordinator was considered by staff to be in possession of specialist musical talent and somehow separate from ‘typical’ teachers, even in cases where they themselves did not feel this was necessarily the case. In Chapter 6, for example, I discussed the case of Christ the King school, where the other teachers praised Cecilia’s “natural talent” and believe her to be in possession of expert skills. This was despite the fact that she herself questioned her own ability and would practise for hours before performing in front of others.

It is interesting to revisit this, as both Cecilia's attitude towards her own skills, and the ways in which she constructs her role, clearly contrasts with that of Dawn. For Dawn, her own lack of formal musical training was used explicitly as inspiration to her colleagues, claiming that if she was able to teach music effectively, then anyone could do it. In contrast, Cecilia feels the pressure of expectation from the other staff to fulfil the role of musical expert, hence she spends hours practising in order that she should be able to play the piano to a higher standard. Her fear of "making a mistake" therefore comes as a result of her desire to meet the high expectations of her colleagues.

The problem for Cecilia is that she feels the constant apprehension of being observed and evaluated by others (Geen & Shea, 1997). When faced with the prospect of performing, she aims to consistently portray the image of a competent musician, which leads her to spend excessive amounts of time practising. In a similar way to those teachers who felt threatened by music because it could question their authority as a practitioner, Cecilia feels she can only maintain her role as music leader if she proves herself to be observably 'musical' to the rest of the staff. Indeed, she stresses how she is worried about being "found out" for her own lack of skills, thus demonstrating a vastly different understanding of what is required to lead the subject to Dawn.

Although it is possible to interpret these contrasting positions as being down to individual differences, the contextual (5) factors also play a role. In Christ the King school, the emphasis of their music provision is to help pupils develop the skills to produce technical, musical performances. What is valued is high class musicianship, with the result that Cecilia too feels the need to display this. Rather than focusing on the need to present music as accessible to all, her concerns are related to perpetuating the high quality music that is

valued in the school. However, in terms of motivating other teachers, this poses problems in that it may well increase the perception of music being difficult and inaccessible, and could reinforce the barriers to engagement.

The leadership of the music coordinator, whilst clearly an important factor, must therefore be positioned within the field of the school. Here, the head teacher and senior leadership team will also hold much of the power, and thus leadership in a broader sense also needs to be examined (Robbins, 2000). This issue reflects the concerns of Hennessy (2012, p626), who cites the head teacher as the main protagonist in the “uneven provision” for music in different institutions, something that was clearly demonstrated in my own data. She claims that music will only “blossom” in institutions where the head teacher values the subject, for example by understanding the ways in which the subject can “flourish” within their own school and by supporting staff in their development.

The role of the head teacher is therefore crucial to consider, as their support will be necessary in the development of any whole school initiative. Taking firstly Dalton school, the initial circumstances which facilitated change were certainly reliant on the support of the head teacher, who provided Dawn with time out of class to devote solely to music. This allowed her the opportunity to begin the process of monitoring and supporting other teachers in the delivery of music, something that would simply not have been possible without this additional time out of class:

I've been lucky in that most weeks I have a full day out of class and that's just a godsend [...] our head really understands what we're trying to do here and she's so supportive, which makes a big difference. (Dawn, UKS2)

As the head teacher believes in the importance of music within the school, she is thus prepared to allow additional time for Dawn to implement her initiatives and training. In contrast, the issue of time was a particular problem for other music coordinators. I noted above that Abigail felt pressure from her head teacher to enhance the status of music within the school, but this proved difficult as she did not have the time to devote to this. Indeed, she often felt that she did not even have time to teach music to her own class, *let alone* try to assist other teachers in their delivery of the subject, and her solitary afternoon of PPA time was inevitably devoted to her alternative role as science coordinator. Although the head teacher, therefore, was ostensibly committed to music, she was also unable to provide the support that would be necessary to effect change. This is yet another example of positive judgements which are valid solely when music is considered in isolation, rather than when it is compared to other priorities and commitments.

The head teacher certainly retains some degree of control over the provision for music, but the level of this can vary between institutions. Also, as noted above, the situation is more complex than simply one individual having control over any potential for change. Head teachers too may find themselves beholden under a weight of conflicting expectations; they are expected to negotiate a series of dilemmas, taking into consideration of the needs of the school, pupils, parents, governors and teachers, as well as managing the public face of the institution in the community. Decisions must therefore be taken as to which issues need to be approached or avoided (Fullan, 2007), and with SATS, league tables and Ofsted pressures inevitably taking priority, head teachers themselves may feel that devoting sufficient time to music is an impossibility because of other commitments.

As the majority of schools in my sample have shown, music is often simply not a priority, which can hinder any involvement and support from the head teacher. If one assumes that the role of the head teacher is crucial in effecting any kind of change (Hennessy, 2012), it would be necessary not only for them to be convinced of music's importance but also feel that they had the autonomy to support this. As with many of the barriers, therefore, the fundamental issue for those wishing to increase involvement with music is one of advocacy, but one which extends beyond the scope of any one individual. Ensuring that those in positions of leadership are both proactive and positive in communicating the value of music to those around them is a useful way to start, but needs to be considered within the whole institutional context.

This discussion can therefore be extended to include wider policy debates. Although many of the individuals in my sample were keen to distance themselves from issues of policy, the actions of the head teacher are necessarily governed by the higher level government issues. If there is little support for music within the National Agenda, then the head teacher's autonomy to choose specific actions for the school may be reduced. Whilst personal choice and beliefs are important factors, decisions must be made within the confines of the wider systems discussed in the literature review, and the head teacher's role is strongly influenced and constrained by these (Moore & Young, 2010).

#### **9.4 Ownership, collaboration and autonomy**

In line with some of the core motivational research, such as Deci and Ryan (2012), it is possible to identify three core areas which have particularly emerged as important in developing teacher engagement on an individual level. These were ownership, autonomy and collaboration and each of these factors came through as part of the approach taken by

Dalton Primary. Whilst some of the structures discussed above were important for externally ensuring that the teachers actually engaged with music, the idea is that change should occur on an individual level too. Indeed, these extrinsic systems will be most effective when combined with intrinsic motivation; by exploring these three factors and how Dalton School developed them, it is possible to see how external motivational strategies can potentially lead to an increase in intrinsic motivation.

### **9.4.1 Ownership**

Chapter 7 of this thesis demonstrated how the teachers in my sample held various understandings as to what they believed music teaching and learning should entail, many of which had consequences for their motivation and engagement with the subject. In some cases, this diversity of opinion could lead to individual teachers feeling a sense of isolation, especially where their own understanding of music did not correspond with the general consensus in the school. Practitioners such as Fiona and Catrina both felt frustrated by this, in part because there was no outlet for them to put forward the case to other members of staff; as Fiona herself commented, “There’s never any insets or training or staff meetings about music, even though that’s what people need. We have loads for literacy but that’s a subject everyone can do – it doesn’t make sense, if we could have a focus on music for once then I think things might change but I can’t see it ever happening here.”

In contrast, Dalton Primary school had taken an active approach to including additional opportunities in music, which allowed a space for this dialogue to occur. In addition to the more formal CPD events organised by Dawn, there were also regular music-focused staff meetings, during which the other teachers were encouraged to ask questions, share experiences and decide together the focus for any forthcoming training. Rather than taking

a laissez-faire approach to music, as appeared to be the case in some institutions, they actively sought out and shared different experiences and perceptions so that the beliefs of individual teachers could be explored and discussed.

This open approach to dialogue and reflection was discussed by the teachers as being one of the most positive features of their whole school approach. Dawn explained how she recognised the diverse range of musical experiences which teachers would bring with them and how these would need to be taken into account if any approach was to prove successful. She highlights the lack of ITT training or experience which most practitioners had received, and the fact that this would need to be addressed; in addition to this, she was also keen to gain their input on the direction which the school should take. The idea was that their school approach should represent an amalgam of different perspectives, rather than a top-down initiative that teachers would need to blindly follow. As Diana describes:

When Dawn first started to work with us on music – it was all very democratic... I mean we all put forward ideas and she took them all on board, it was all very open, it wasn't at all like someone coming in and telling us what we needed to be doing, different people suggested different things and then we pulled something out of it all (Diana, LKS2)

The key point from this is that the whole approach was very collaborative so that the teachers themselves could gain ownership of the programme. This involved the development of their own resources and schemes of work, which incorporated the aspects of the subject which they themselves considered most valuable for their pupils to experience. Rather than being given a scheme and expected to follow it, the teachers themselves were involved in the decision-making process and the development of the approach, resulting in greater ownership over what they would be teaching.

We all got together to establish what skills they should be doing and we put them all into a grid so it was there, it was really clear to see – it split the whole subject up, it split it into different sections so you could see what you needed to do and you could tick them off as you did them. You weren't just told what to do. (Debbie, FS)

Being involved in the development of the school's resources had particularly helped Danielle to gain ownership of her music teaching, as well as helping her to actually understand more clearly the different aspects of the subject. She discusses how beneficial she found being involved in this process itself, rather than being given a book and being left to interpret it independently:

[It] was really useful because I got to ask, in a very nice group 'I don't know what that means', so if I don't know how are the children going to know? Let's dumb it down a bit and make it more accessible... that whole process of sorting it out made me know the skills I needed to teach and *know* what they were myself. (Danielle, UKS2)

The involvement in the process of developing resources was therefore a useful strategy in helping teachers gain ownership of their teaching. Dawn's belief in the fact that music was a subject that anyone could teach came through extremely strongly in the interviews, both through her own transcript and through those of the other teachers in her school. She extends this further, claiming that the "best teachers" are often those who are not necessarily "musical" themselves, because they are able to "break down quite complicated theory into very simplistic terms, so that *they* understand it". Such notions have also been supported in the literature, where it does not follow that specialist teachers will necessarily prove most effective (Bowman, 2012; Mills, 2005).

The prevailing belief in this school, and one that has been encouraged by Dawn, is that all the staff have the capacity to teach music because they are good *educators*, rather than good *musicians*. Again this links specifically to the discussion in Chapters 4 and 7, whereby it

appeared that putting the focus on the teaching skills with which teachers felt confident could help to break down some of the negative perceptions about music being inaccessibly difficult.

This emphasis on teaching skills, rather than specialist music skills, has been reflected in the development of their own resources in the school. As Danielle pointed out, the emphasis was always on breaking music down into manageable sections and providing sufficient information for teachers to clearly understand all the concepts, for example through the development of their own booklet of musical terms. In this way the subject knowledge was made accessible for all teachers, and they could then use their educational skills to find ways of delivering the subject, just as they would in other lessons. The book did not comprise an endless list of complex music terms, but simply focused on the areas which the teachers had decided as both important and in need of clarification. The practitioners were therefore equipped with simplified resources which they had helped develop themselves and thus felt some degree of ownership over. Equally, the concern about specialist skills had been taken away because the knowledge required was provided for the teachers in a clear, simplistic way, using accessible language.

#### **9.4.2 Collaboration**

When thinking about the training and development activities which were organised in Dalton School, I noted the importance of learning through collaboration. The organisation of regular music-focused meetings also allowed the teachers to observe instances of good practice, modelled by both Dawn and other colleagues. This helped individuals form and extend their understandings of how music could be delivered, and also provided a platform for the sharing of other successful strategies. Jorgensen (2012), for example, highlights the

importance of sharing ideas and practices in a public forum where these can be “discussed, criticised, debated, evaluated and contested” (p637). This was clearly a regular occurrence at Dalton.

The music-focused meetings, which happened at least once a term, presented a crucial opportunity for the teachers to develop their own skills, allowing teachers the chance to discuss different elements of the subject and explore ways in which these might be organised and delivered. This involved reflecting on what had worked well in the past and what they might be able to do to improve practice in the future. Dawn was very keen that the philosophy in the school should be open and one in which ideas could be shared and built upon.

The thing I always stress is that you can't just bury your head in the sand with music and hope that it will go away – it won't! But I do think that's what can happen with it if you're not careful... it doesn't work like that here though, everyone brings ideas, everyone reflects and I really encourage everyone to share... if something hasn't gone right then we talk about it, we see what we can do and we work together to solve it – sometimes that means me going in and team-teaching for a bit, or showing them a different way to do it, sometimes it's just sharing different ideas... it's about all working together and not feeling isolated, I don't want anyone to feel alone with music and they know they can always come and ask me about any of it... I'm not saying I always know the answer but we can usually work through it together. (Dawn, UKS2, MC)

A key aspect of Dawn's leadership therefore involved working alongside teachers to support their delivery of music. Daisy, a recently qualified teacher, discusses how when she first came to the school Dawn provided her with the opportunity to observe how the subject could be delivered. After observing good practice, they then taught several lessons together before finally she felt ready to teach the lesson herself. This was a crucial part of her development and allowed her to build confidence over time.

I found it such a help when we would teach the lessons together, it took away some of that pressure at the beginning, when I wasn't really sure what I was doing or how to organise it... the fact that there were two of us there – it was a godsend at the beginning when I didn't feel very confident with it. (Daisy, KS1)

These early experiences in the school therefore helped to overcome some of the problems that other teachers recounted to me in the early stages of their career, where music was considered a potentially threatening subject and they were worried about the risk involved with teaching it. By teaching alongside Dawn, she therefore was able to develop ideas about how to teach the subject effectively and observe positive models of practice.

Danielle discusses a similar pattern to her early experiences, where the collaborative experience of teaching alongside a confident colleague enabled her to observe specific strategies that she could then use independently in the future:

I'm quite good at picking stuff up and getting organised with it but I really need to see what to do – when Dawn came in and taught [music] with me I spent the whole time thinking 'okayyy so that's how you're supposed to do that', and 'that's how to organise that' and 'that's how you need to group those things'. I don't know what I would have done without those experiences really, it would have been much harder because I would have just had to work it out for myself. Some of my friends in other schools never teach it at all but I think that's because they've never seen how you can do it. (Danielle, UKS2)

The experience of team teaching and the sharing of good practices proved beneficial for both these teachers, and Dawn's actions as music coordinator appear to have reduced the potential anxiety of music for early career practitioners. However, it is important to note that whilst Dawn provides the actual support, this is another instance in which the assistance provided by the head teacher proved vital. Dawn was given time out of her own class to support her colleagues, which could well prove impossible in other institutions. Indeed, other music coordinators expressed their frustration at not being able to devote

time to the delivery of music across the school because they were simply so busy with their other responsibilities to actually attempt to develop any kind of cohesive approach to music. Barbara, for instance, contrasts her current situation, as being “stuck” in the Foundation Stage and unable to support music throughout the rest of the school. Having previously been in a position where she was able to teach music to every year group, her current responsibilities have left her in a position where she now feels that music provision is slipping away. However, there is neither the time nor the resources to rectify the situation:

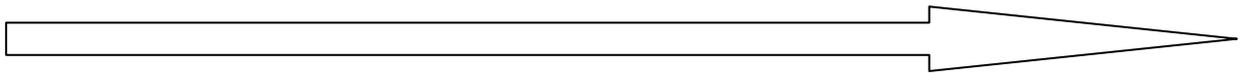
If I go back a few years, I really had my finger on the pulse for music, because I was there in every year group, I'd be in year 1 and then I'd be in Year 6 and I could see how everything fit together [...] Now, well you've got to take into account everybody's experiences, and some people are more experienced than others [...] I would really like to think it's being done still but I don't think it is [...] but I can't really do anything about it. (Barbara, FS, MC)

Barbara's comments were particularly striking as she was such a passionate advocate of music. In the Foundation Stage the provision for music was now outstanding, but because she was no longer given the time to support colleagues in other year groups, she laments that music has “probably gone” for some of the classes. Whilst she works hard to organise whole school singing, she is unable to extend this influence to classroom practice due to a lack of release time. Building collaborative practices such as those achieved in Dalton is therefore not an easy process and relies on more than simply the enthusiasm and will of the music coordinator; Barbara was equally as passionate as Dawn but was constrained by the structures of the school.

### **9.4.3 Autonomy**

Finally, I turn to the issue of autonomy, although this clearly builds upon some of the strategies which have been discussed thus far. Crucially, a sense of autonomy over one's

actions is an important factor in achieving intrinsic motivation and developing self-determination (Ryan & Deci, 2000). The following continuum demonstrates how control can gradually shift from the external to the internal, showing how schools themselves can impact upon individuals. McLean (2003) cites the four stages which contribute to this and it is possible to map the examples from Dalton Primary onto the following table.



<b>External Control</b>			<b>Autonomy</b>
External regulation: Monitored planning and assessment; observations of teaching (5, 7)	Introjected regulation: Teachers become involved in the regular delivery of music, with support (7, 8)	Identified regulation: Teaching music starts to move from a chore or duty to something which teachers feel is important (1)	Self-determination: The goal of teaching music is now part of one's personally held theories (1)
Coercion / rewards: Obligation to teach music; consequences if not delivered (5, 7)	Sense of ought: Teachers start to feel individual obligation to teach music in the same way as other subjects (6)	Development of positive value judgements: Outcomes start to be valued and important to one's own goals (1)	Intrinsic motivation: Teachers are motivated to become involved in music and feel they are able to achieve this (1,2)

**Table 9.1: Moving from external to internal control (based on McLean, 2003)**

As the above table demonstrates, the first step that needs to occur in order to develop intrinsic motivation is that there should be an expectation and obligation to teach music within the school, i.e. there should be some kind of external regulation with regards music. This came in the form of ensuring that teachers had to complete planning and assessment in the same way as other subjects. As this was closely monitored, it became an essential requirement, meaning that the starting point for any kind of change was the external regulation of all practitioners.

Once their initial involvement in the subject was secured, the teachers were then able to get involved in the development of the curriculum and activities (autonomy), participate in regular training (support) and work together to develop confidence and skills (collaboration). These steps, as described throughout this chapter, could eventually lead to the development of greater value judgements of both the subject in general and, perhaps more importantly, of what one was able to provide in it. Motivation to engage with the subject was therefore likely to be enhanced because the product which the teachers were providing was being endorsed by others as valuable, thus some of the negative self-perceptions could gradually be overcome.

Although autonomy was clearly an important precursor to the development of intrinsic motivation, achieving this could prove quite challenging in other schools. Whilst education as a discipline is often thought to work in cycles of change, it has generally been accepted that the onset of SATS and Ofsted significantly reduced the potential for professional autonomy which teachers were able to develop in the years before the National Curriculum (Woods & Jeffrey, 2002). Indeed, many of the teachers have felt constrained by these controlling forces and believed there to be little room for manoeuvre due to the current pressures of the job.

However, within the subject of music, I have shown that there was more scope for individual variation in terms of how the subject was interpreted, a fact which may explain why some schools fail to develop consistent approaches to the subject. If music does not form part of the collective value system of the institution, the decision as to whether or not to teach the subject can become entirely reliant on individual factors. In these situations, consideration of one's capabilities and competence can take precedence, which for many of

the teachers in my sample, could negate any theoretical value they attached to the subject.

In other schools, teachers held some degree of autonomy over their actions in music, but for many, the decision they took was to avoid it completely.

It is important to note, therefore, that on an individual level, the trajectories and past experiences of the teachers within Dalton Primary School did not follow particularly different paths to those of other institutions, with 4 out of the 5 teachers I interviewed not having taken music past the compulsory stage of Year 9. Indeed, when discussing their past experiences, there were several critical incidents which were extremely negative and which had prevented their involvement with music. One example is Danielle, who describes her initial attempts at teaching music as disastrous and anxiety-ridden:

The lunchtime before I had to teach music [on placement] I was in absolute tears, no other lesson made me cry before I had to teach it but the music lesson made me cry... I was absolutely fretting, I was so worried, I didn't know what to do, I didn't know how to manage the children and even though I was coming to the end of my second placement [...] it was just horrendous. I remember sitting on the carpet area of the classroom and just crying [...] I hated it, I absolutely hated it. (Danielle, UKS2)

Clearly for Danielle, music was a subject which she perceived as extremely stressful and which she did not know how to deliver. Her own teacher training had failed to provide her with sufficient guidance and she could not understand how this translated to actual practice, resulting in the sense of helplessness she describes above. However, as has been shown throughout this chapter, she has made progress in Dalton School because of the support structures in place here. She discusses the ways in which she overcame her previous negativity and was able to develop both skills and confidence in the subject. Indeed, she now actively assists Dawn in delivering the training events and has been required to demonstrate various musical skills in front of her colleagues. She reiterates the

point that if she can teach music then anyone can, and by involving herself in these events she too was able to act as a role model to other teachers, encouraging them to engage with music. Given her previous past experiences and anxiety over the subject, she may well have avoided it herself were she positioned within a different context, and this is the crux of this chapter – despite the similarities of her personal narrative to those of teachers working in other schools, she has overcome her negative musical history thanks to the support of the school and is now full committed to the subject.

## **9.5 Hopes and limitations**

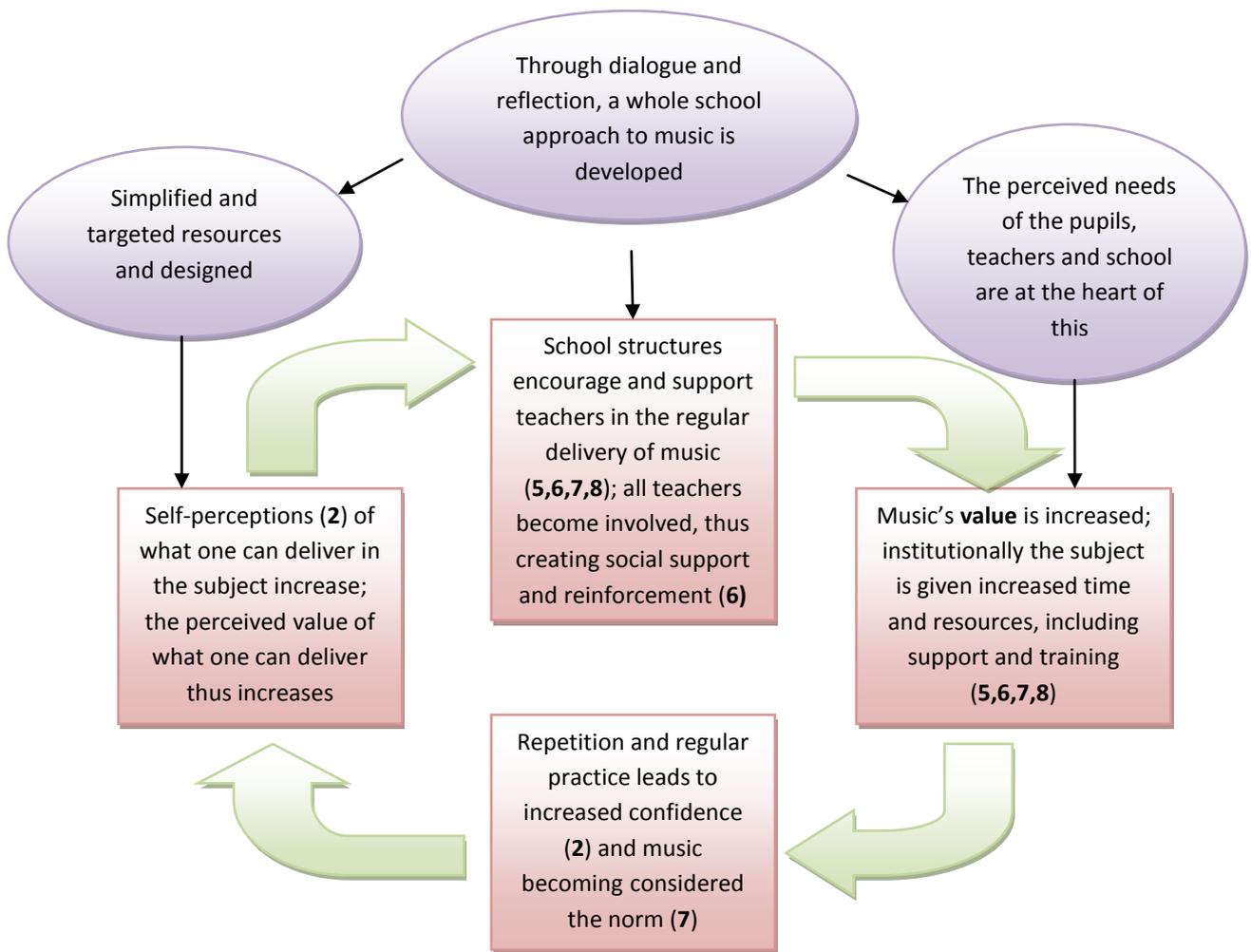
This chapter has outlined the strategies employed by Dalton School which contributed to the development of a whole school approach in which the teachers were both extrinsically and intrinsically motivated to teach music on a regular basis. This began with structures which both coerced teachers into engagement with music and supported them in this, creating an environment which took account of the teachers' own needs and self-perceptions. Although the music coordinator was especially proactive, the striking point was the involvement of every member of staff throughout the process of change. I would contend therefore that in the case of Dalton, it was the actual experience of being involved in the implementation of the changes themselves that resulted in its success.

It is possible to explore how such changes occur by using a framework set out by Schiebinger (1999). When discussing positive change in the representation of women, she questions whether we need to fix the women, the organisation or the knowledge. These distinctions can be translated to the current problem, although the emphasis is now on enhancing an object of study. Is the solution to 'fix' the teachers themselves, for example, by changing their perceptions and practices? Do we need to 'fix' the organisations, i.e. the

schools, by altering the structures within them? Or do we need to 'fix' the knowledge, in this case the curriculum and the knowledge as to what music should be?

I would argue that the above discussion has included elements of all three of these strands and that any whole school plan would need to take each area into consideration. Dawn began by ensuring the regular teaching of music, and this alteration of school practices was a crucial first step. Equally, if the individuals had not received supportive training to contribute to their own development of confidence and skills, the structures may well have resulted in only surface level changes, with practitioners' values remaining unaffected. Finally, the knowledge itself changed within the subject, as this no longer relied solely on external schemes of work with staff being involved in the creation of resources. The teachers developed their own curriculum and resources, which was based upon what they considered important for their pupils. This additional framework therefore provides a concise way of summarising how this school implemented their approach.

It is possible to relate the strategies used here to a positive cycle of motivation, which clearly developed within Dalton Primary. Changes which took place on different levels of the system were able to impact upon how individual teachers perceived music within the school, and the increased level of engagement led to increased positive understandings and self-perceptions. Figure 9.1 demonstrates this:



**Figure 9.1: The potential positive cycle of motivation**

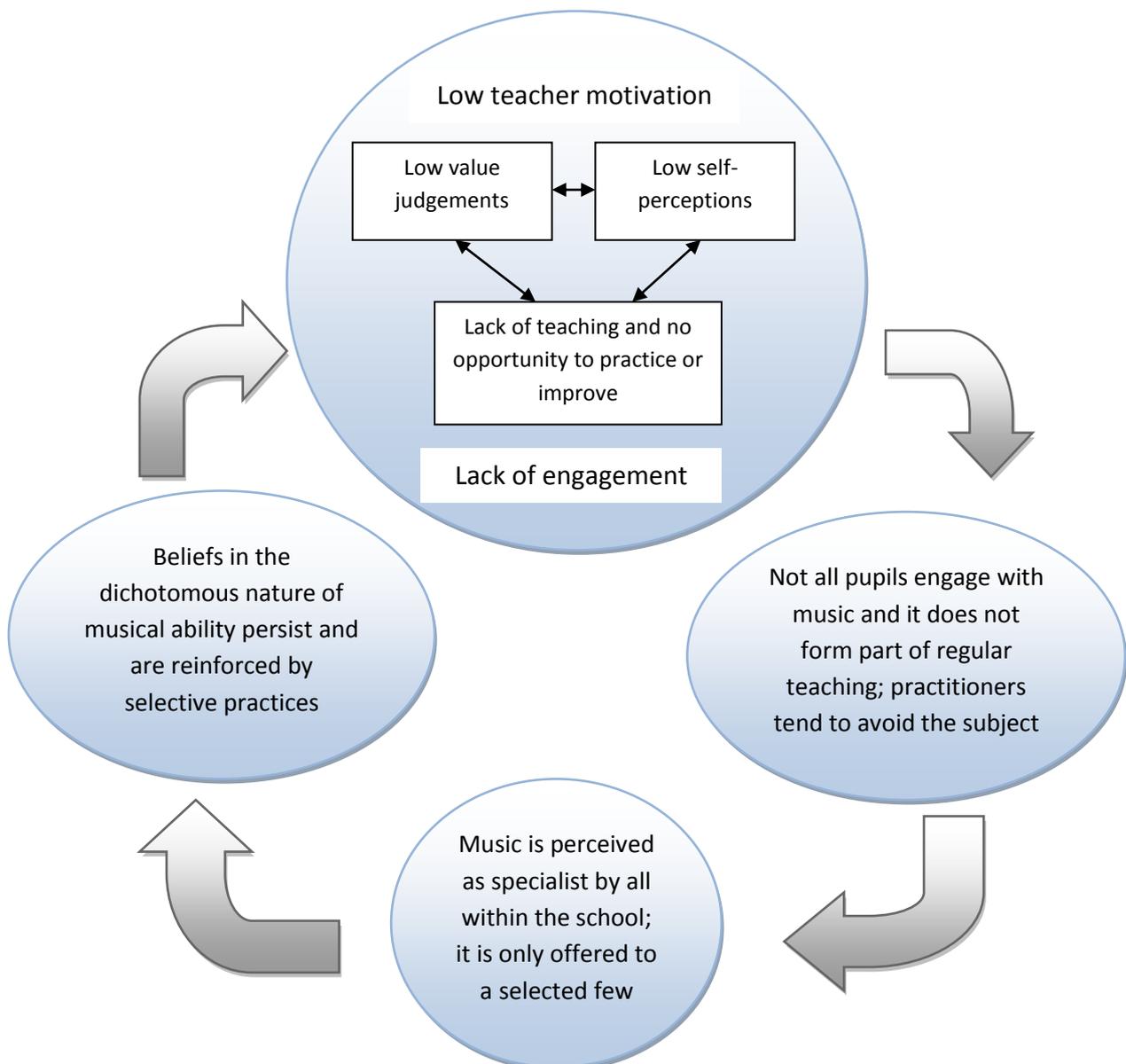
One of the most important findings from the analysis of Dalton School’s approach is that negative past experiences with music do not *necessarily* result in a failure to teach music. I demonstrated in Chapter 6 the tendency on the part of teachers to make this assumption, and so perhaps the most positive point to take here is that this is not necessarily the case. The individuals in this school had varied ‘musical histories’, many of which included similarly negative experiences to practitioners in other institutions. However, at Dalton they had still become involved in the whole school approach and were now teaching music regularly, building confidence in the subject. It may thus be possible to subvert previous negative experiences and to effect change upon one’s ostensibly fixed beliefs.

Although altering self-perceptions was important, perhaps the most crucial underlying factor in the development of a whole school approach is the value judgements made with regards music. Underpinning Dawn's actions is the firm belief that the subject is a crucial part of the education of all children. By communicating this to her colleagues, and encouraging them to adopt similar beliefs, she has developed a community in which *all* teachers recognise the importance of music and are thus motivated to develop their own teaching skills. By contrast, in other schools, this positive value judgement was absent, resulting in little chance for any kind of change to occur. In particular, if those in positions of power do not see the value in music, it would prove extremely difficult to raise its profile, as the head teacher certainly facilitated the success of Dawn's work.

Although Dalton provides a positive example therefore, it is important to remember that this was one school out of seven, and the other institutions are perhaps more typical with regards their approach to music. In these schools, the lack of supportive school structures resulted in teachers perceiving music as optional and thus drawing on their own self-perceptions (2) and personally held theories (1) when deciding whether to teach the subject. For individuals in Fairfield School, for instance, there was no consensus amongst the staff as to how music should be delivered and in this school, the individual's own past experiences were more likely to prove decisive. The positive cycle described above, could therefore easily be translated to a negative one, in which both personal and institutional factors contributed to a neglect of music.

Of particular importance, is the fact that a negative cycle can operate beyond the confines of the teachers within schools and can actually impact upon the future generations (Hennessy, 2012). If teachers today are failing to engage with music and continuing to

replicate the belief that it is specialist, optional and selective, then this has the power to affect future generations too. As the following diagram shows, individuals and school culture together can equally become caught in a negative cycle regarding the delivery of music and the perceptions of its worth.



**Figure 9.2: The negative cycle of music**

Whilst Dalton Primary therefore presents hope for the future, the demonstration of the crucial impact of schools also provides a warning of what can happen to music if such

strategies are absent. Comparison between the institutions in my sample showed how music could find itself completely excluded from the school's priorities and also from any debates surrounding these, with long-standing assumptions as to its lack of importance being repeated across institutions and no reflection on the subject's position taking place. This is clearly a situation to be avoided if there is hope for music to maintain its status in today's crowded curriculum.

# 10. Conclusions

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It is not easy to determine the nature of music, or why anyone should have knowledge of it.  
(Socrates)

In the introduction to this thesis, I posed the question “why music?” when considering my own motivations for commencing this research. I now return to this question, thinking about the difficult issue of advocacy and its fundamental relationship with improving schools’ provision for the subject. All too often, music finds itself at the periphery of the curriculum and if it is to gain increased power, this relies on positive value judgements. Whilst the previous chapter set out a detailed description of potential strategies that schools can use, these will be of little use without the will of the individuals within them to effect change. For this to happen, future educators themselves must reflect on the value of the subject and engage with some of these debates.

It is evident from current research that there is concern over finding the elusive ‘one true reason’ as to why music should be studied (McPherson, 2013). Throughout my discussion, it has been shown that there are actually a multitude of purposes which music can serve in the school, as well as a variety of ways in which it can be delivered. This plurality is perhaps something which should be welcomed, rather than dismissed; who understands the needs of the pupils better than those who work with them on a daily basis? The perceptions and beliefs of the teachers themselves are thus important for the research community and music advocates to understand, as these will directly affect the practices that are occurring in schools. This research is thus valuable in adding the voices of teachers themselves to the debates; by reflection upon one’s own individual priorities and beliefs, as well as those of the school and pupils, it should be possible for institutions themselves to develop an

approach to music which serves the requirements of their situation and which can thus prove sufficiently important as to warrant regular engagement from the teachers.

A crucial part of this process, therefore, is that some form of dialogue and debate needs to occur. Teachers should be actively encouraged to consider their own positions in relation to music and negotiate these in relation to the broader context of the school. This is a more effective strategy than simply leaving music to the discretion of the individuals; as shown in this thesis, the *laissez-faire* approach carries the risk of a complete lack of teaching as practitioners often considered the subject to be too difficult, a lesser priority, or a combination of both. Through collaboration and discussion of the institution's priorities, and the eventual recognition of how music fits into this, it might be possible to reduce the risk of the subject being completely left out of the curriculum. Misconceptions regarding its difficulty and the fixed nature of many self-perceptions can also be challenged through a collaborative approach, as shown in Dalton Primary. Self-perceptions based upon negative incidents from childhood need to be questioned, and individuals encouraged to view change as possible.

Whilst this personalised reflection may lead to a degree of variety between schools, surely this is a preferable situation than simply allowing music to slip out of regular teaching completely. It is important to stress that I am not advocating an approach where schools should be considering whether or not they teach music at all; this should be delivered, in some form, in all schools, and I would encourage the increased use of specific institutional structures to ensure that this is the case. In all too many cases, provision for music was simply ignored, meaning it was very easy for teachers to simply avoid it. The flexibility and autonomy I am advocating, therefore, comes in *how* music is delivered, especially in the

early stages of any whole-school development. By allowing schools to focus upon the areas which they collectively believe are most important, it may be possible to increase the teaching of music gradually over time so that the subject eventually becomes a more visible part of the curriculum. Rather than it being unthinkingly missed out, it needs to become a regular part of teaching, with as much expectation upon its provision as other equivalent areas; again, Dalton Primary provides a model of how it might be possible to achieve this.

Elliott (2012) claims that taking the time to reflect on practice should not be optional and I am inclined to agree. The fact that so many of the teachers commented how they had “never really thought about” the issues we discussed demonstrates how little opportunity teachers get for reflection, despite the fact that it is increasingly being considered an essential aspect of the profession. This is particularly the case for subjects that are less likely to be the focus of whole school training. It is important to note, for instance, how little experience of music CPD many teachers had; schools were therefore doing little to address the openly self-confessed lack of confidence in the subject. The previous chapter has demonstrated how powerful reflection can be in terms of developing individuals’ understandings and practices, and the focus needs to regularly shift between subjects so that specific areas are not repeatedly ignored, as is often the case for music.

Indeed, practitioner reflection is all the more important in peripheral subjects, where there is more likely to be variations in self-perceptions and understandings. One can better understand the place, provision and value of music with careful reflection, examining all issues from both sides and taking the time to draw logical, balanced conclusions which are appropriate to the setting (Elliott, 2012). This, I believe, is one way in which teachers’ motivation can be enhanced; rather than being forced into engagement with the subject,

they themselves can take ownership of any change of practice. Of all the strategies that Dalton Primary put in place, perhaps the most fundamental reason for its success was that teachers felt they were included in the development of the plans and their views were explored and respected. They contributed to, and in some cases actually constructed, the approach which the school developed. Equally importantly, they were given time and support to explore which parts worked and which did not, meaning further enhancements or alterations could be made. This clearly contrasted with all other accounts of training given by the teachers and must be highlighted as evidence of good practice in how future change might occur.

The identification of the eight factors within this thesis has provided a useful framework which could be employed in further research. Whilst the discussion chapters have demonstrated how these might prove appropriate for exploring music, it could be possible to map similar concerns onto other subjects with comparable performative elements. Indeed, the quantitative chapter identified a potential split between those subjects which require teacher demonstration of skills and those which can be seen to follow a more traditional teaching model; the integrated motivational model could thus be further investigated with reference to other subjects which may involve similar elements of risk to music, for instance art and PE, which could be seen to include specialist skills, or maths, which, although core, may be an area in which practitioners hold low self-efficacy judgements.

Returning to music, however, there remains much scope for further research. A more longitudinal study, for example, which followed schools through the implementation of a whole school approach and included a more expanded methodology, could provide further

insight into whether the strategies which proved successful in Dalton Primary could be translated to other settings.

From analysis of the rich data generated by the teachers in this project, some schools may need to rethink what teachers actually need to do in music, in order to challenge the conception of it as impossibly difficult. In those schools where there was no scheme of work used, the teachers often drew on their own understandings of what music should be, and all too often this led to the belief that it was completely inaccessible to them (see the negative cycle presented in Chapter 9). This presented a crucial barrier to teachers' engagement with the subject, but is, perhaps, one that can be overcome. As the examination of those teachers who subverted their negative positions shows, it is possible to develop a new understanding of music that focuses not solely on the specialist technicalities of music but on the teaching skills which the practitioners already possess. By challenging the idea of music as specialist, for example through the collaborative construction of simplified resources and plans, it is possible to negate the view that generalist teachers simply cannot access it and to present music as simply another area which draws upon the teaching skills they already possess.

In certain institutions, this may involve challenging the notion of music as purely synonymous with performing. This could prohibit practitioners from being involved in music at all, because they devalued what they themselves could provide by contrasting it with specialist instrumental provision. It is possible to focus on appreciation and knowledge of music through a wide range of teaching methods and this has the potential to be inclusive for all teachers and still inspire children's involvement. Performance may well form a part of this but it should not be seen as the only option.

However, whilst there does need to be a simplification of music, this should not descend into an anything goes situation, in which simply playing a CD to a class of children is considered sufficient. Clearly such superficial approaches do not give power to the subject, resulting in music being devalued within the curriculum. There therefore needs to be balance to any school-based approach, with the series of dichotomies described in Chapter 7 being used as a guide as to how the extremes should be avoided.

There are certain ideals which individuals may have as to what should constitute music, and these are important to explore through dialogue and reflection. However, the assumption should not be that these can be reached easily, and there needs to be small steps taken in order to make progress. All too often it seems teachers view music as all or nothing – this kind of dichotomy needs to be broken down. Dalton Primary did not achieve their positive approach instantaneously and the expectation should not be that such strategies should yield immediate results. Rather, teachers should be encouraged to see their skills and understandings, and the progress they make, as a gradually evolving process, through which their own confidence in the subject can gradually increase. In the same way that they initially developed their skills as practitioners, so they can develop positive self-efficacy judgements in the delivery of music, through regular, achievable tasks.

I would recommend therefore, that schools discuss and develop their own plans for music. This may involve using some of the strategies employed by Dalton Primary school, such as the collaboration and support, but that the ultimate aims need to be negotiated between the needs of the institution and the educational values which the teachers hold. If this leads different institutions to different approaches this is not necessarily negative, especially if it leads to increased involvement.

The question of music's value underpins all aspects of the model of motivation I have developed and these necessarily play a crucial role. In particular, the justification for music needs to be examined within schools in much greater depth than is currently the case. Whilst there are many justifications for music's inclusion, I would suggest that perhaps the most crucial reason is one of opportunity. Letts (2012) notes how music has the power to invoke a lifetime of commitment and participation, which can include listening and appreciation as well as simply performance; if there is no opportunity to commence this involvement with music, how will one know whether or not they have missed out on something which could prove to be life-changing? I agree therefore with the teachers who argued that if this opportunity is not there in the first place then it is likely that the negative cycle will continue indefinitely (Hennessy, 2012). It is very easy for poor provision of music in schools to perpetuate the misconceptions regarding its difficulty and low importance. By contrast, the strategies which have been put in place in Dalton School can suggest one way in which it is possible for teachers with previously negative perceptions to become caught up in the positive cycle described above and this should be encouraged. Schools and teachers, therefore, need to start asking themselves the important question of 'Why music?' and initiate debates upon the subject. The discussion that this provokes may well represent the future for music education in the primary school.

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## Appendix A

The following questionnaire, which comprised the quantitative section of the research, was administered both online and in paper format, although the content remained the same in both formats. The paper version is reproduced here.



### *Teacher Survey*

### *Music in the Primary School*

#### Welcome!

I am a PhD student at Lancaster University and I am currently investigating teachers' perceptions of music in the primary school. I am particularly interested in how teachers judge music's position in the curriculum and whether there are particular aspects of the subject that may cause concern. By filling in this questionnaire you can be part of this study.

The survey should take no more than 15 minutes to complete and consists mainly of multiple choice questions. As an incentive, there will be an opportunity to be entered into a prize draw to win £20 of Waterstone's vouchers. Please read each question carefully and be as honest as you can with your answers. All responses will be treated anonymously and will not be linked with any specific individual. No judgement will be made on individual responses and there are no 'correct' answers.

Thank you for your time.

#### Before we start...

**It would be helpful to the researcher to know which schools have had teachers involved in this project, although as noted above, no schools will be identified by name in the final report. If you are willing to provide your school name please type it below. (If you do not wish to give this information please leave the box blank.)**

## PART ONE: Personal information

**Gender:**      Male                       Female

**Age:**             24 and under      25-34                       35-44  
                       45-54                       55 and above

**How many years' teaching experience do you have in total?**

**For how many years have you worked in your current school?**

**Which year group(s) do you currently teach? Tick any that apply.**

Nursery             Reception             Year 1                       Year 2  
 Year 3                 Year 4                       Year 5                       Year 6

**What is your current status in the school?**

Head teacher             Deputy head             Assistant head  
 Head of Key Stage      Class teacher             Music specialist

**Do you have a subject co-ordinator role in your school?**             Yes             No

**If yes, please specify which subject(s)**

## PART TWO: Comparisons between curriculum subjects

### Which subjects do you consider most important?

Primary school teachers are often under a lot of pressure to offer a “wide” curriculum and face difficult decisions over what to include.

How much importance do you place on each of the following subjects within a typical week of teaching? Use the scale below to rate the relative importance of each subject and place a tick in one box for each subject.

**1 = Low importance:** it is not a priority for me to teach this subject.

**2 = Quite low importance:** I have to devote less time to this subject as I see others as more important.

**3 = Moderate importance:** I try to include this subject but it may occasionally be missed during pressurised weeks.

**4 = Quite high importance:** I almost always teach this subject, except when it is completely unavoidable.

**5 = High importance:** it is a top priority for me to teach this subject.

	<b>1 Low</b>	<b>2 Quite low</b>	<b>3 Moderate</b>	<b>4 Quite high</b>	<b>5 High</b>
<b>English</b>	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Maths</b>	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Art / Design</b>	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Geography</b>	1	2	3	4	5
<b>History</b>	1	2	3	4	5
<b>ICT</b>	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Modern Foreign Languages</b>	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Music</b>	1	2	3	4	5
<b>PE / Sports</b>	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Religious studies</b>	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Science</b>	1	2	3	4	5

### Which subjects do you feel most confident in teaching?

How do you rate your CONFIDENCE TO CONSISTENTLY DELIVER EFFECTIVE LESSONS in the following subjects? Please tick the appropriate box for each subject, using the scale identified at the top of the table. NB The scale now has 6 points, ranging from 1=Very low to 6=Very high)

	1 Very low	2 Quite low	3 Slightly low	4 Slightly high	5 Quite high	6 Very high
English	1	2	3	4	5	6
Maths	1	2	3	4	5	6
Art / Design	1	2	3	4	5	6
Geography	1	2	3	4	5	6
History	1	2	3	4	5	6
ICT	1	2	3	4	5	6
Modern Foreign Language	1	2	3	4	5	6
Music	1	2	3	4	5	6
PE / Sports	1	2	3	4	5	6
Religious studies	1	2	3	4	5	6
Science	1	2	3	4	5	6

### Where does your own expertise lie?

How do you rate your own BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE AND ABILITY in each area? This is how competent you consider yourself to be in each subject area, NOT simply your ability to deliver a lesson in the subject. Please tick the appropriate box for each subject.

	1 Very low	2 Quite low	3 Slightly low	4 Slightly high	5 Quite high	6 Very high
English	1	2	3	4	5	6
Maths	1	2	3	4	5	6
Art / Design	1	2	3	4	5	6
Geography	1	2	3	4	5	6
History	1	2	3	4	5	6
ICT	1	2	3	4	5	6
Modern Foreign Language	1	2	3	4	5	6
Music	1	2	3	4	5	6
PE / Sports	1	2	3	4	5	6
Religious studies	1	2	3	4	5	6
Science	1	2	3	4	5	6

### **PART THREE: School Characteristics**

**Please indicate the key features of your school by ticking the appropriate box on each row:**

- |                                    |    |                                             |
|------------------------------------|----|---------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Urban     | OR | <input type="checkbox"/> Rural              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Religious | OR | <input type="checkbox"/> Non denominational |
| <input type="checkbox"/> State     | OR | <input type="checkbox"/> Private/fee paying |

**Please indicate the approximate size of your school by estimating the number of pupils. Tick just one box.**

- |                                    |                                   |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Under 100 | <input type="checkbox"/> 100-300  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 301-500   | <input type="checkbox"/> Over 500 |

**Does your school hold any of the following awards? Please tick any that apply.**

- |                                           |                                          |                                        |
|-------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Artsmark         | <input type="checkbox"/> Artsmark Silver | <input type="checkbox"/> Artsmark Gold |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sing Up Bronze   | <input type="checkbox"/> Sing Up Silver  | <input type="checkbox"/> Sing Up Gold  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sing Up Platinum | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know      |                                        |

**Does your school participate in music activities organised by the Local Authority? Please tick ONE box.**

- |                                                                               |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, we always participate as much as possible       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, we take part in selected activities but not all |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, we occasionally take part                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> No, we never take part                               |

**Approximately how many hours of CLASSROOM MUSIC LESSONS do your pupils receive in an average week? NB. This question does not include extra-curricular activities or whole school singing.**

- |                                       |                                                 |                                       |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> None         | <input type="checkbox"/> Less than half an hour | <input type="checkbox"/> Half an hour |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 hour       | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 and a half hours     | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 hours      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Over 2 hours |                                                 |                                       |

## PART FOUR: The teaching of music

### How do you feel about specific aspects of music teaching?

After reading the following statements, decide how true each of them is for you and your teaching of music. Next to each statement, tick the number that most reflects how true this statement is for you. Use the scale below to guide your selection.

1=Very untrue for me

2=Mostly untrue for me

3=Slightly untrue for me

4=Slightly true for me

5=Mostly true for me

6=Very true for me

	1 Very untrue	2	3	4	5	6 Very true
I feel I have the appropriate level of skills to teach music to my class.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I am able to implement my school's music scheme of work.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I consider myself to be a musical person.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I am able to plan appropriate musical activities for my class.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I am comfortable playing school instruments with my class.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I am able to motivate pupils to engage with music.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I am able to differentiate for varied skill levels in music.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I am always able to maintain the appropriate degree of classroom control during music lessons.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I feel confident when I am teaching music lessons.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I consider music to be a vital part of the primary curriculum.	1	2	3	4	5	6

	1 Very untrue	2	3	4	5	6 Very true
--	---------------------	---	---	---	---	-------------------

I worry whether pupils will respect my musical abilities.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I have always found music a challenging subject to teach.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I feel anxious if I have to sing in front of my class.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I have too many other responsibilities in school to be able to teach music regularly.	1	2	3	4	5	6
The music curriculum demands too many specialised skills for me to feel comfortable teaching it.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I would feel embarrassed to teach music if other adults were present.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I feel I cannot move my pupils' ability forward in music.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I feel anxious if I have to sing in front of other adults.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I feel I have missed out on the opportunity to develop musical skills myself.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I have received criticism of my musical abilities in the past.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I am able to organise opportunities for whole class performance in music.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I can offer pupils appropriate guidance to move them to the next level of learning in music.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I know that most pupils in my class enjoy school music.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I have received appropriate training to be able to teach music.	1	2	3	4	5	6
In my current school, I <i>must</i> teach music every week.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I can always access the resources I require for music.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I would welcome more professional development training in music.	1	2	3	4	5	6
In my opinion, the primary music curriculum is relevant for pupils today.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I believe a musical education is valuable for my pupils.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I share the same beliefs about music teaching as most of the staff in my school.	1	2	3	4	5	6

## And finally...

Thank you very much for completing this questionnaire, your responses will be extremely valuable for my research.

**Should you wish to make any further comments about music in the primary school, feel free to write them in the box below:**

Should you wish to receive any further information about my study please feel free to contact me through the following address:

[b.evans2@lancaster.ac.uk](mailto:b.evans2@lancaster.ac.uk)

**If you wish to be entered into the PRIZE DRAW to have the chance to win £20 of Waterstone's vouchers, please provide your email address or phone number below. NB. This will be separate from your responses which will all be treated anonymously.**

Contact details: \_\_\_\_\_

THANK YOU AGAIN!

## Appendix B: Building the code families

The following table details the development of the codes and how they were initially brought together to form connected families. These eventually were pulled together into broader categories within the diagram in Figure 5.1 and, following that, to form the eight key thematic areas from the analysis. This transition stage is shown here in order to demonstrate the codes from which the initial families were constructed.

<b>Code Family</b>	<b>Codes within family</b>
<b>Aims and aspirations</b>	-Aims for pupils -Aims for school -Aims for self
<b>Anxieties</b>	-Anxieties with music in general -Anxieties with lesson content -Anxieties with performing -Anxieties with teaching -Early anxieties -Training anxieties -Anxieties with social judgements
<b>Change / stability of position</b>	-Individual change -School change -Fixed views -Unable to see opposing view
<b>Collaborations</b>	-Collaborations with teachers in own school -Collaborations with specialists -Collaborations with other schools
<b>Commitment</b>	-High commitment to music -Low commitment to music -Lack of teaching music -Motivations -Persistence (or lack)
<b>Comparisons</b>	-Comparisons between self and other(s) -Comparisons between schools -Comparisons between teachers
<b>Confidence</b>	-Confidence in teaching music -Confidence in performing -Confidence in singing -Confidence at entry to teaching -Subject knowledge confidence -Development of confidence -General self-confidence -General teaching confidence
<b>Cross-curricular music</b>	-Creative curriculum -Linking music to topics -Including music in other lessons -Music as a tool for other subjects
<b>Current school context</b>	-Community issues -Extra-curricular music

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Instrumental provision</li> <li>-Class music</li> <li>-Music coordinator role</li> <li>-Obligations</li> <li>-Performing/singing</li> <li>-Traditions</li> <li>-Priorities</li> <li>-Resources</li> <li>-Staff</li> <li>-Whole school approaches</li> <li>-Music's place in current school</li> </ul>
<b>Elements of the curriculum</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Composing</li> <li>-Performing</li> <li>-Listening / appraising</li> <li>-Notation</li> <li>-National Curriculum</li> </ul>
<b>Enablers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Being proactive</li> <li>-Breaking music down</li> <li>-Habit</li> <li>-Having a go</li> <li>-Helpful resources</li> <li>-Modelling</li> <li>-Regular engagement</li> <li>-Training</li> </ul>
<b>Inequalities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Socio-economic factors</li> <li>-Resources</li> <li>-Inequality of opportunity</li> </ul>
<b>Leadership</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Head teacher / Senior Management</li> <li>-Local Authority / Governors</li> <li>-Role of music coordinator</li> </ul>
<b>Luck</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Good luck</li> <li>-Bad luck</li> </ul>
<b>Memories</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Achievements</li> <li>-Anxieties</li> <li>-Aspirations</li> <li>-Commitment</li> <li>-Difficulties with music</li> <li>-Disengagement with music</li> <li>-Enjoyment</li> <li>-Expectations</li> <li>-Involvement</li> <li>-Judgements from others</li> <li>-Motivations</li> <li>-Music vs other subjects</li> <li>-Regrets</li> </ul>
<b>Music outside school</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Home/family</li> <li>-Friends</li> <li>-Dissonance between home and school</li> <li>-Opportunities outside school</li> </ul>
<b>Music vs other subjects</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Music vs literacy and numeracy</li> <li>-Music vs other subjects general</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Music vs other subjects specific</li> <li>-Music's place in curriculum</li> </ul>
<b>Musical ability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-As dependent on effort / practice</li> <li>-As fixed</li> <li>-As genetic / inherited</li> <li>-As dependent on opportunity</li> <li>-As dependent on interest / motivation</li> <li>-Natural talent</li> <li>-Musical vs non-musical</li> <li>-Musically gifted people</li> <li>-Self musical ability</li> </ul>
<b>Perceived impact of past experiences</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Impact of early experiences</li> <li>-Impact of significant others</li> <li>-impact of specific events</li> <li>-Impact of specific school</li> <li>-Impact of specific colleague</li> </ul>
<b>Pressure</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Time</li> <li>-Behaviour</li> <li>-Ofsted</li> <li>-SATS / test results</li> <li>-Funding</li> <li>-Pressure from colleagues</li> </ul>
<b>Previous schools context</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Community issues</li> <li>-Extra-curricular music</li> <li>-Instrumental provision</li> <li>-Class music</li> <li>-Music coordinator role</li> <li>-Obligations</li> <li>-Performing/singing</li> <li>-Traditions</li> <li>-Priorities</li> <li>-Resources</li> <li>-Staff</li> <li>-Whole school approaches</li> <li>-Music's place in previous school</li> </ul>
<b>Primary school</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Judgements</li> <li>-Lessons</li> <li>-Opportunities</li> <li>-Peers/friends</li> <li>-Resources</li> <li>-Selection</li> <li>-Singing</li> <li>-Teachers</li> <li>-Music's place in primary</li> </ul>
<b>Problems with music</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-With music general</li> <li>-With specific skills</li> <li>-With workload</li> </ul>
<b>Pupils</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Age</li> <li>-Enjoyment</li> <li>-Progression</li> <li>-Skill levels</li> </ul>

	-Pupil perspectives
<b>Purposes of music</b>	-Background music -Enhance community spirit -Enjoyable -Essential arts -Extra-curricular activity -Music as specialist -Music for everyone -Music for social / emotional / behaviour -Manipulate moods -Time-filler -Tool for other subjects -Tool for class control
<b>Resources</b>	-Instruments -Music / CDs -Resources general -Scheme of work -Sing Up -Technology
<b>Secondary school</b>	-Judgements -Lessons -Opportunities -Peers/friends -Resources -Selection -Singing -Teachers -Music's place in secondary -Transition from primary
<b>Self-perceptions</b>	-As a teacher in general -As a teacher of music -For singing -For performing / playing -In relation to other musical skills -As a learner -Playing down own skills -Teaching other specific subjects
<b>Sense of duty</b>	-As a teacher -As a provider of music -To pupils -To the school -Sense of guilt
<b>Social judgements</b>	-From colleagues -From family -From friends -From pupils -From leaders -Fear of judgement
<b>Specialist teachers</b>	-How necessary? -Role in current school -Previous experience of specialists

<b>Teaching issues</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Assessment</li> <li>-Class management</li> <li>-Differentiation</li> <li>-Lesson content</li> <li>-Lesson delivery</li> <li>-Planning</li> </ul>
<b>Teaching philosophies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Arts issues</li> <li>-Attitudes to music</li> <li>-Empathy</li> <li>-Views on role of teacher</li> <li>-Views on education</li> </ul>
<b>The teaching of music</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Can anyone teach music?</li> <li>-Diversity</li> <li>-Freedom</li> <li>-Gender</li> <li>-Necessary knowledge / skills</li> <li>-Workload</li> <li>-Voluntary</li> </ul>
<b>Training</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Teacher training opportunities / activities</li> <li>-Teacher training judgements</li> <li>-Lecturers</li> <li>-Placements</li> <li>-Selection</li> <li>-CPD</li> <li>-Dissonance between uni and school</li> </ul>
<b>Value judgements</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-For pupils</li> <li>-For school</li> <li>-Of class lessons</li> <li>-Of instruments</li> <li>-Of own teaching</li> <li>-Of performing</li> <li>-Of singing</li> <li>-Of specialist teaching</li> <li>-Of other subjects</li> <li>-Benefits of music</li> <li>-Individual priorities</li> </ul>
<b>Wider factors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Policy</li> <li>-Media</li> <li>-Research</li> <li>-LEA</li> <li>-National Plan</li> </ul>