TEACHERS’ PERCEPTIONS OF THE IMPACT ON STUDENTS OF THE MUSICAL FUTURES APPROACH

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Background

Music education has faced considerable challenges in trying to bridge the gap between music in young people's lives and that taking place in the classroom. The 'Musical Futures' initiative aimed to devise new and imaginative ways of engaging young people, aged 11-19, in music activities through a process of informal learning based on popular music.

Aim of the research

This research aimed to explore teachers’ perceptions of the impact of adopting the Musical Futures approach on students' learning and attainment.

Methods

The research was undertaken in six Musical Futures ‘Champion' schools over a three year period. Twenty eight music teachers completed questionnaires in Year 1 and 11 in Year 2. The questionnaires included a series of statements about the impact on students which teachers responded to on a four point likert scale. Thirty interviews with teachers took place. Both questionnaires and interviews explored the impact of Musical Futures on students, take-up of GCSE music and involvement in extra-curricular instrumental and vocal activities;

Analytic framework

Questionnaire data were entered into SPSS and percentages and mean responses calculated. A thematic analysis was undertaken of the interview data.

Findings

Seventy six percent of music staff agreed that since doing Musical Futures students demonstrated higher levels of attainment, enjoyed their music lessons more (93%) wanted to do well (93%), worked better when they work with their friends (61%), were able to stay on task (63%), were confident (86%), had developed a wider range of musical skills (72%), had developed a good understanding of a range of musical genres (45%), created good musical performances (89%), demonstrated good listening skills (93%), had positive attitudes towards music (89%), were generally well behaved in lessons (89%), could work without help from the teacher (77%), worked together effectively in music tasks (91%), helped others during the lesson (89%), attended lessons regularly (100%), had mostly exceeded expectations when it came to improving their musical skills (81%), had high self-esteem in relation to music (68%), did not need much help from the teacher (61%), fulfilled their musical potential (73%) and demonstrated that they loved music (84%). In the interviews teachers elaborated
on these issues and commented favourably on the increase in the number of students continuing with
music after Key Stage 3 and the high levels of achievement in GCSE and BTEC.