

KENT MUSIC

**WORKFORCE
DEVELOPMENT**

What is an instrument

Kent Music challenged the idea of 'what is an instrument' and explain how working collaboratively and creatively as a team, accesible and inclusive opportunities can be provided for young people.

For the past year, a talented young person, born blind to rare Norrie disease has accessed music at [Folkestone Music Lab](#) - a creative space for young people aged 11-19 to work on band development, music technology and production, singing and instrumental skills, song writing and more. All sessions are supported by a team of professional tutors and pastoral staff who are passionate about music and helping young musicians develop their skills.

Led by the student and working collaboratively with the parents, tutors, music resources team and inclusion development manager, we recognise that lack of sight is not a barrier to musical progression and the student has access to a bespoke set-up enabling them to produce and record their own music.

"I was expecting different instruments to try. I wasn't expecting the music technology that allows me to produce my very own music!"

The students' journey started at beginner level, exploring traditional instruments and studio techniques and interfaces, progressing to microphone techniques and recording. Whilst exploring, we worked with the parents to introduce basic braille to keyboard notes, which was successful to some extent and allowed the student to engage in music as part of a small ensemble.

The student has a strong interest in technology, specifically Apple software, so transferred from keyboard to Mac, however recognised that accessing the [DAW](#) with voice over activation, may have some limitations for producing and recording music with the software the student was accessing and converted to using the [iPad](#) with voice activation.

Led by the students want to create their own music and in collaboration with the tutor, music resources and inclusion development manager, we invested in a [Boss Loop Station RC-500](#), [Korg Electribe](#), [Korg KAOSS Pad](#), portable [Focusrite Scarlett 18i20](#) audio interface and adapters enabling isolation of the voice over for effects, sampling and recordings. Now confidently creating their own recordings, the student also enjoys engaging with some of the hubs other inclusive instruments, including the [Roland Handsonic HPD-20](#).



"He loves it and is learning so much!" - Parent

Noticing the student's ability and confidence growing, we were delighted that the student has received recognition for 'significant achievement despite disability' at an annual children's award with judges stating the students "passion for music, exceptional ability and confidence - despite 'substantial barriers' - left the judging panel in no doubt that such an 'extraordinary chapter' in the 11-year-old's life made him deserving of the Remarkable Achievement award".

In addition, the student presents a weekly radio show and on entering secondary mainstream education is aiming towards GCSE music. The family have invested in [Native Instruments 'Kontrol'](#) with [Reaper](#) and continue to be supported by the [Kent Music](#) team and supporting organisations including [Sound without Sight](#) to support development and further progression.

