

KENT MUSIC

A MODEL FOR LEARNER VOICE

The problem

From academic research and having reviewed our quality assurance process and completed many observations of teachers we found very few teachers were discussing with their pupils what they wanted out of their learning and that most of the instrumental tuition was teacher-led.

Many lessons followed a typical routine of

- warming up and scales
- completing exercises on study pieces
- followed by exam pieces

We recognised there are many teachers who are incredibly successful in their approach and have pupils passing many exams, however, this approach won't be a best-fit for all and wanted to develop our workforce's use of learner voice.

Further challenges

Tuition figures had been hit by the pandemic, we wanted to do what we could to retain the pupils we had. Research showed that there were two significant factors in students stopping learning:

- A dislike of technical work, particularly scales
- Repetition, including lack of turnover in repertoire

A solution?

Our solution was to support our teachers in ways to include more learner voice, allowing pupils to have more input in their own music education

Our approach was supported by the findings of Trevor James (Senior Leader, Tuition and Ensembles) and the MA he embarked on.

Next steps

Using staff training opportunities we ran a year-long focus on pupil voice upskill of our staff using plan, do, review structure.



Plan

The model for learner voice was introduced to teachers at their INSET. Trevor James, who conceptualised the approach as part of his MA, introduced the model to staff supported by 4 Kent Music teachers who had been part of a working group with Trevor and supported the development of the learner voice model.

Do

Between September 2021 and April 2022 teacher's were asked to try out different approaches to implementing learner voice supported by the summary document.

Review

Teachers came together to our final INSET of the year to share their experiences using the model for learner voice. We used the following questions to support reflection in groups and instigate conversations around the model.

- How have you implemented youth voice into your teaching this term?
- How successful has this been?
- Have you tried any additional ideas or activities?

Staff responses

Staff feedback on our approach was generally positive, staff commented that they particularly liked

- Learning from each other
- Having time to connect with peers
- Having a united training focus for the year

"It wasn't that what they were doing was wrong, it was about making ways for putting the students first."

- Trevor James

