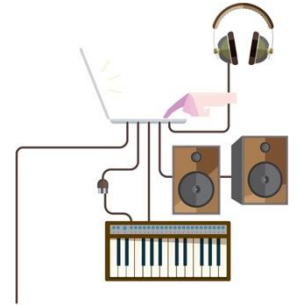


FIRST ACCESS CASE STUDY: Whole class iPad lessons make everyone a musician

Wiltshire's Music
Education Hub



“What a great musical opportunity for pupils to experience. Pupils of all abilities could easily access and learn from the project, allowing them all to explore electronic instrumental sounds. Those with SEN and behavioral needs seemed to thrive with this project and thoroughly enjoyed the music technology side.”
– Teacher Chantal Gooding

How did it come about?

Musician and music leader Adam Varney admits that he was uncertain when he was first approached about developing a programme to teach music on iPads to a full class of primary pupils: “Wiltshire Music Connect approached me with the idea of developing a programme that would be piloted in two schools. I really wanted to try it but I’m used to teaching small groups in informal settings – and wasn’t sure this would work.”

Chantal Gooding is the music teacher for one of the schools, Durrington Juniors. She teaches music one day a week as a classroom teacher at the school, and the music is based around topics being learned in school. As a trumpet player and pianist, she admits that music tech wasn’t a strength and so was keen to see how it could complement her work.

The idea was to develop and test a model that could then be used more widely. The programme would be adapted as the sessions progressed – and would help the team to understand if it could be led by a class teacher, rather than a school having to contract and pay for a specialist.

How did it work?

Adam visited the school weekly, taking a set of 16 iPads, each shared between two pupils using headphone splitters. Each session is developed in partnership with the teacher so that the model can evolve in a way that’s suitable for the teacher, pupils and school. Each iPad is numbered, so the pairs have the same iPad each week and can work on material they’ve created and saved in previous weeks.



“The class is all about exploring and composing,” explains Adam. “It takes the formal structure of a traditional lesson, with two tasks per session, a warm up and cool down. The tasks will always be about learning a new skill and putting that to use. We want to give them the confidence to use GarageBand, explore what they can do, and create their own music.”

For the first programme at Durrington, Adam created a song using the ‘Smart Piano’ and then broke it down into sections: “I’ve shown them how they can reconstruct the song, choosing different instruments and using the piano like a midi-keyboard, playing different instruments through it. The other week someone chose bassoon! Then I’ll show them how to add a rhythm and chords.”

Each session builds on the previous, and in the session exploring melody they can make their own compositions. There are a number of constraints, to make sure the music sounds good. Firstly, they have to use the pentatonic scale of G (a five-note octave rather than seven). Secondly, they can put the notes in any order, but need to use all the elements of a song – eg rhythm, chords, melody – and make conscious decisions about which instruments to use.



We connect children and young people in our county with a broad range of music making opportunities and experiences to compliment and support what schools offer. Because music is excellent for developing young minds.

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First Access programme:	iPads for First Access
Start date/timescale:	Mid February 2017/7 weeks (45-min sessions)
Name of school:	Durrington Juniors
Number of pupils on roll:	180 – three split year classes (3/4, 4/5, 5/6)
Number of staff:	30
Previous First Access:	Only ad hoc (there has been one term of ukulele in the past)
Other music activities:	Lunchtime recorder and woodwind lessons from volunteers; strings and woodwind lessons; weekly evening training band (wind) held at the school
Number & age of pupils receiving this programme:	60 pupils year 4/5
Projected continuation Rate	33% (10 using GarageBand at home, in addition to other pupils taking small group music lessons) Evidence of increased uptake of lessons unknown as yet
Resources provided:	16 iPads for the sessions (pupils can't take them home)
Cost:	Free as a pilot. Future cost tbc.



have a drum kit in school so to be able to learn about the different parts of a drum kit and to create a simple rock beat was really great.”

A related benefit is that pupils can start making appealing musical sounds very quickly: “You can get a nice sound very quickly, and the children pick it up so fast,” Adam continues. “Children are often self-conscious and don’t want to be shown up in class. The fact that they’ve been able to see the drum kit, played it, seen all the different types of drum, they’ve played electric and acoustic guitar – it really sparks that interest in music.”

There’s also been a significant benefit in terms of inclusion, as Chantal explains: “The pupils with behavioural difficulties and SEN were the ones that were particularly engaged. It gives the pupils who aren’t academically able, and those who may be more creative, a chance to succeed in learning because it wasn’t all about having to sit down and write things. I have one more challenging class, and it’s changed some of their behaviours with me for the following term. One boy who has a teaching assistant, wouldn’t ever stay in my music lesson, he had to take time out. Since the iPad project, he’s stayed in every single music session.” Adam continues: “I was told one young person may struggle to engage with the project because of his additional needs, but in fact he’s been brilliant. I’ve been giving him lots of praise and opportunity to show his stuff to the class, and he’s been able to both explore GarageBand on his own as well as follow the lesson.”

Pupils are more likely to lead their own learning than in other models of First Access: “They don’t have to wait for me to teach them one note at a time,” says Adam, “and they really do want to explore and play. I’ve had to factor in free time as they want to do so much ... but we need to keep to session plans to make sure they learn new skills.” Once they start creating they’re particularly proud of their work: “They’re so keen to show you what they’ve done”, says Chantal.

The programme was intended to support teachers as much as pupils, and non-specialist teachers can benefit as well as specialist teachers: “Even though I’m a musician, I really didn’t like music tech,” Chantal continues. “I didn’t think it was for me,



A final performance in the last session is followed by feedback and reflection, helping students to understand why certain things do and don’t sound right, what worked well and what could be improved, and to discuss the decisions they’ve made. The traditional ‘two stars and a wish’ is used as a structure for feedback.

The songs are then burned onto a CD, which Chantal says has been particularly helpful: “We’ve never recorded music before, but now we have a CD of all the pupils’ compositions. In the final session we listened to them as a group, for feedback and as a celebration. In future we’d like to do a half-hour session for parents, or to email it to them or transfer it to memory sticks.”

What is different, and what impact has it had?

One of the obvious differences is that the programme is more about composition, than learning any particular instrument. This has been the result of the revisiting of what First Access is meant to be about, by Wiltshire Music Connect.

Another difference is the instant sense of connection and confidence pupils have with iPads: “I imagine with instruments you’re unsure if you’ll get it wrong, or even break it, whereas with iPads, it’s really familiar,” says Adam. “I asked them early on, if they’d heard of GarageBand and, five or six out of thirty had some experience.”

“Pupils got to know different instruments, which work well together, how to compose, how tempo and beats work, what a pentatonic scale is ... they learned almost without realising it,” continues Chantal. “For example, it’s rare to

but I'm far more confident now and I'd definitely hire a set of iPads so I could do this in the future. I think even a non-specialist primary teacher could deliver this, once they have seen it delivered and have the basic skills."

Working in pairs means First Access also has a strong peer-to-peer learning element, as well as teamwork: "They're having to use those social skills: it can be frustrating if you have to do something together, and you just want to get on and do it yourself. They're learning how to manage that," says Adam.

Perhaps the biggest difference is the fact that pupils learn to compose and create their own music. "It's learning through play, exploring – and that's the way children learn," says Adam. "I'm hoping this will encourage them that they can write their own music ... perhaps eventually for their school play or gym class!"



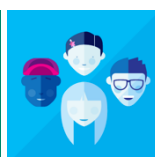
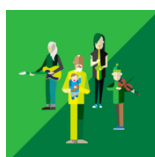
Where will this go? Both Chantal and Adam believe it has potential to encourage continuation. "At least ten pupils have told me they've got GarageBand at home now because of this," says Chantal. "At least two have taken up guitar lessons as a result," says Adam, "So it's definitely sparked an interest in continuation. I hope that having the confidence to create their own music, it'll inspire them to get an instrument and learn how to play something or that they continue to use music software."

"It's never come to me about learning about music before, but now it makes me more happier towards music. I feel really good about making ... the music what I want. Instruments aren't just toys, they're something that can help you in life. I'm going to carry on making music on an iPad at home."
– Pupil with additional learning needs.

"I used to not like music but now I love music. I think I have the confidence to make my own songs and do different instruments." – Pupil.

7 tips for whole class iPad music

- 1** *Pay attention to beginnings and endings:* "Ritualising the session so everything is put away properly avoids last minute rushing to clear up before the next lesson." – Adam. "Build in time for set-up and tech problems! Pupils fiddle with headphones, wires, and headphone jacks, and they aren't that strong, so it can slow things down and then become a behaviour problem." – Chantal.
- 2** *Structuring the session:* "Definitely having a proper structure and keeping to time for each section, is really important. Giving free time as a reward helps with that." – Adam.
- 3** *Mirror the class teacher's class management:* "It took me a while to adjust to the tone of the classroom, being fair but firm. Chantal has modelled how she manages behaviour and I mirrored it. Things like call and response claps."
- 4** *Use the class teacher's reward system:* "The school has a system called 'happy notes' – Chantal will spot people who're working hard and working together well we reinforce and share that each session." – Adam.
- 5** *Think about differentiation:* "If one pupil is really creative and immediately gets it, creates a piece ahead of the others, you need to have an extension task you can give them." – Chantal.
- 6** *Consider how children can continue:* "Not everyone has an iPad or iPhone and GarageBand is only available on those, so I've been suggesting what other apps children can use on their tablets – a lot of them have Huddles - one app I've recommended is FiftyinOne, a piano app which has lots of different instruments and is similar to ThumbJam, another iPad app." – Adam.
- 7** *Consider how iPad music can combine with other instruments in the school and how it can be linked with cross-curricular topics:* "I'm looking into how we can use boomwhackers and glockenspiels with the iPads." – Adam. "We have topics in three or four-year cycle, this iPad project wasn't planned to fit in with that but you could easily link it in." – Chantal.



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