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Sent: 20 July 2020 19:38
To: Chair of Board <Chair of Board@wiltshiremusicconnect.org.uk>
Subject: RE: Music Education in Salisbury

Dear Tony

Thank you for your email about the importance of music education – I wholeheartedly agree with you on this. I appreciate that coronavirus has posed a significant challenge for the provision of music lessons but we are doing everything possible to return to as close to normal as possible in September.

High quality music education is a vital part of a broad and balanced curriculum, which is why both music and art are compulsory subjects in the national curriculum for ages 5 to 14. I feel strongly that high quality music education should inspire all pupils to develop a love of music and can increase self-confidence, creativity and sense of achievement.

The National Plan for Music Education sets out the vision that all children have the opportunity to begin to learn a musical instrument free of charge. This ambition is being realised through a network of music education hubs, funded by over £300 million between 2016 and 2020. In January 2020 a further £80 million investment was announced for these hubs for 2020-21.

The findings from the Call for Evidence on the Plan, which closed on 13 March 2020, will inform the development of proposals for the refreshed plan. Due to the COVID-19 outbreak, the refresh of the Plan is on hold, but this position remains under review. Until the plan is formally refreshed, Music Education Hubs will continue to fulfil their roles as set out in the existing plan.

The hubs ensure that every child aged between 5 and 18 has the opportunity to start learning a musical instrument, play in ensembles and sing regularly. The most recent data shows over 700,000 pupils experienced learning a musical instrument through whole-class ensemble teaching that was provided or supported by music education hubs. I am pleased that a further year's funding for the music hubs has been announced, meaning that thousands more children will have the chance to learn a musical instrument.

In addition to music education hubs, almost £120 million of funding is provided through the Music and Dance scheme which supports exceptionally talented young musicians, dancers and choristers to attend specialist schools and centres of excellence. National Youth Music Organisations, such as the National Youth Orchestra, have received almost £2 million of funding and the 'In Harmony' scheme, which aims to inspire and transform the lives of children in six areas of exceptional deprivation through high-quality musical education, has also received £2 million in funding.

I also welcome that a new arts premium worth £90 million a year will be offered to secondary schools to fund enriching activities, including music, for all pupils from 2021.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Very best

John