

Reports from Councillors Appointed to Outside Bodies – Bromley Youth Music Trust (BYMT)

It has been a pleasure to join the board of BYMT as the Council's representative this year. As well as offering support and advice at the meetings I attended, I have had the genuine pleasure of attending as many concerts as I could, including some really top quality playing. BYMT is a very special organisation doing wonderful work for many of our children and young people, and we should be proud of it.

Bromley Youth Music Trust is flourishing, providing high-quality tuition to a very large number of our young people. The Trust continues to thrive as an independent organisation, transforming and growing its commercial offering substantially following the end of funding from the London Borough of Bromley.

A comparison with neighbouring music services shows the reach of the service. Over 15,000 children and young people took part in lessons, with a dazzling variety of performance opportunities as well - 117 concerts (2017-8 figures). A comparison with two neighbouring music services shows the reach of BYMT, with both boroughs added together not getting close to the number of children taught in Bromley.

The quality of tuition is evident, with excellent examples results (43% of Grade 8 candidates passed with distinction) and some very assured, impressive students, many of whom go on to the country's top music colleges.

But it is not just excellence but also inclusion where BYMT stands out. The Young Musicians Fund ensures that cost is not a barrier to children wanting to learn a musical instrument to a high standard, and their inclusion programmes for children with SEND are particularly noteworthy. Transformation has not been about cutting expenses but growing services and they should be applauded.

It has been a year with some financial challenges around staffing. Encouragingly, BYMT is in a position to withstand such headwinds and is well set to continue its long term evolution. It is certainly an asset for our Borough that we should be proud of. Many organisations would have struggled to cope with the removal of funding; BYMT has not only survived but thrived. They are a model many should emulate.

Arts Council England

The total number of pupils that have been engaged in the high quality Whole Class Ensemble Teaching (WCET) has consistently grown over the last three years and the Hub is now reaching a higher percentage of pupils than the national average. BYMT are also achieving figures well over the national average in terms of the number of individual lessons, large singing/instrumental lessons and ensembles that the Hub is supporting and/or delivering. BYMT's engagement with schools has remained largely consistent over the last 3 years and, although the continuation rates have dipped slightly in 2017/2018, they still remain much higher than the national average.

BYMT's commitment to diversifying and broadening the offer to cover a range of musical styles is evident in the range of opportunities the Hub provides for young people in the borough.

Cllr Robert Mcilveen