

PE1694/W

Argyll & Bute Council submission of 31 October 2018

The drop-out rate of children having instrumental music tuition in the past two years:-

- 2016/17, 50% increase in fees, 22% drop in pupil numbers. 48% gave up after the first free year, and 40% of pupils got lessons for free.
- 2017/18, 3% increase in fees, 7.5% drop in pupil numbers, 33% gave up after the first free year, 51% got lessons for free.

The projected drop-out rate for this year if charges for instrumental music tuition continue to increase as they have done in recent years:-

- The fees were increased by 3% this year and following the trend of the last few years the number of children using the service may fall. Final figures will not be available till November but a projection of around 5–7 % is likely.

Is there a particular reason that instrumental music tuition is not being regarded by education departments as a core subject?

- Music is delivered to all children and young people within Expressive Arts, one of the 8 curriculum areas, as part of their core entitlement to a Broad General Education. If chosen as an option music can be continued to qualification in the Senior Phase at National, Higher and Advanced Higher levels.
- Given the significant reductions in Local Authority budgets all service areas are having to be considered for potential savings options. In prioritising expenditure Councils have to ensure that statutory services are delivered in compliance with legislation and non - statutory work, such as instrumental tuition, cannot be viewed on the same basis. Also, there is no similar tuition for any other part of the curriculum which is viewed as a core subject.

In addition, the following background information in this authority should also be noted.

- At February 2018, 14% (957) of pupils above P4, when the service is first made available in schools, accessed instrumental music tuition.
- The geographic profile of pupils accessing music instruction is based on the historic placement of music instructors, with a bias towards traditional piping areas and the existence of community bands. For example, both South Kintyre and Mid Argyll have just under 20% of pupils learning an instrument.
- The model of instruction that is offered is based on pupils being taught in groups of up to 4. Pipers have large groups of chanter players in the primary – up to 8. Learners may have 1:1 tuition.
- The model of extra-curricular support provided for music tuition is not available for other art forms (dance/ art/ creative design etc) or to support excellence in other subject areas (e.g. foreign languages, science, maths.) Specific government grant funding is the core funding support for the delivery of the Active Schools service.

