
Bringing Black British and Electronic Music into the Classroom

Diversifying music education: not either/or, but widening what schools teach

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Partner Organisations: EQUALIZE is delivered by Young Sounds UK; The Black Music Research Unit (BMRU) at the University of Westminster (academic lead Dr Mykaell Riley), Punch Records (Birmingham), Bradford Allstar Entertainments, and Bradford Music & Arts Service.

Executive statement

Whilst uptake of musical tuition from young Black and Asian people is significant¹, Black British musicians are severely underrepresented in the employment sector². A diversified music curriculum would mitigate this.

Key messages and recommendations

The EQUALIZE project aims to foster access to inclusive electronic and Black-British music education for young people.

- Advocating for representation of electronic and Black-British music in schools
- Inclusive participatory workshops that foster young people's wellbeing
- EQUALIZE as a model for inclusive and culturally responsive teaching

“Having to go in that studio for the first time and making my own song with my friends, it was amazing, especially when we'd written these lyrics ourselves.”

[Bradford Workshop Participant]



Credit: EQUALIZE, 2026

¹ Cox, T. & Kilshaw, H. (2021). *Unlimited: Creating a more inclusive classical music: A study of the orchestral workforce and the correct routes to joining it*. Institute of Classical Musicians Report. https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/download-file/Executive_Summary.pdf

² UK Music. (2026). *Black Music Means Business 2026*. UK Music Report. <https://www.ukmusic.org/research-reports/black-music-means-business/>

Context

Key areas of research interest for Ofsted are inclusion and participation and pathways³. Whilst electronic and Black-British genres of music are popular⁴, they are underrepresented in current music provision. Research indicates the popularity of electronic and Black-British music⁵. 38% of respondents in the Music Fans Voice survey attended live music venues specifically for electronic music events⁶. The EQUALIZE project brings electronic music workshops to young people in the Bradford and Birmingham areas, through collaboration with school partners, music hubs and expert researchers in music education⁷. This facilitates learning opportunities and presents a diverse variety of music styles for young people, making them feel heard and seen⁸.

What EQUALIZE did

EQUALIZE is a project led by Young Sounds UK in partnership with the Black Music Research Unit (University of Westminster) and regional partners Punch Records (Birmingham), and Bradford Music & Arts Service⁹. EQUALIZE ran electronic music workshops in 2025-2026, aimed at helping young people develop musical potential across genres and abilities¹⁰. EQUALIZE's findings indicated that the workshops aided learners understanding of music genre and make connections to new genres¹¹.

Key Findings

Main barrier: Teacher capacity, not student interest (skills, confidence, time, funding).

Teacher perspective: Genres seen as engaging and empowering, but many feel unprepared.

Wider context: Reflects uneven, often deprioritised music provision.

Key insight: Pedagogy matters more than technology.

Engagement drivers: Learner choice and agency boost confidence, creativity, and participation.

Effective tools: Genre-authentic, reverse-engineered Ableton templates support all skill levels.

Scalability: Most teachers believe the approach can transfer to classrooms with adaptation.

Overall implication: Targeted, genre-authentic DAW-based teacher training is key to widening access⁸.

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³ Ofsted (2026) Area of research interest. https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ofsted-areas-of-research-interest/ofsted-areas-of-research-interest?utm_content=buffera73f4&utm_medium=social&utm_source=twitter.com&utm_campaign=buffer

⁴ Robinson, J. (2026b). EQUALIZE Final Report, 2026. Young Sounds UK, University of Westminster Black Music Research Unit Report, 2026.

⁵ UK Music. (2026). Black Music Means Business 2026. UK Music Report. <https://www.ukmusic.org/research-reports/black-music-means-business/>

⁶ CGA & NIQ. (2025). A fan-led review: A preliminary music fan-led review of the live music industry, aimed at giving music fans a voice within the sector. Music Fan Voice Review. <https://musicfansvoice.uk/results-2025>

⁷ Robinson, J. (2026a). EQUALIZE Interim Report, 2026. Young Sounds UK, University of Westminster Black Music Research Unit Report, 2026.

⁸ Robinson, J. (2026a). EQUALIZE Interim Report, 2026. Young Sounds UK, University of Westminster Black Music Research Unit Report, 2026.

⁹ Robinson, J. (2026a). EQUALIZE Interim Report, 2026. Young Sounds UK, University of Westminster Black Music Research Unit Report, 2026.

¹⁰ Robinson, J. (2026a). EQUALIZE Interim Report, 2026. Young Sounds UK, University of Westminster Black Music Research Unit Report, 2026.

¹¹ Robinson, J. (2026b). EQUALIZE Final Report, 2026. Young Sounds UK, University of Westminster Black Music Research Unit Report, 2026.