



THE MUSIC PARTNERSHIP

Newsletter - Spring 2026

"Ensuring all young people have the opportunity to sing, learn an instrument and perform as part of an ensemble or choir."



INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Shropshire Music Service on Tour!

Staff from SMS toured the county to celebrate 'Live Music Week' performing to schools across the region.



City Music Service

A range of engaging and exciting offers from City Music Service including song writing workshops and lots more!



Student Spotlight

Telford & Wrekin Music celebrate young people's musical talent with their student spotlight.

Staffordshire Virtual School

Increasing the engagement of our Children in Care and those previously looked after to access music lessons in school.

Young Sounds UK

A workshop to introduce and augment Young Sounds students' to DJ hardware/software.

In Harmony

In Harmony Telford & Stoke-on-Trent continues to run a busy and exciting programme of work in the four schools.

Supported using public funding by



Welcome to the Spring Term 2026 edition of The Music Partnership's newsletter

Dear Colleagues,

As we begin this new term, we want to celebrate the fantastic music work happening in schools across Shropshire, Staffordshire, Stoke-on-Trent, and Telford & Wrekin. Your commitment to music education, particularly through the busy Autumn term and hectic build up to the festive season, continues to make a profound difference—enriching lives, building confidence, and fostering creativity. Together, we are all helping to ensure that thousands of young people experience the joy and connection that music brings.

Why Music Matters More Than Ever

The recent Curriculum Review has shone a spotlight on a critical issue: access to instrumental and vocal learning remains deeply unequal. Too often, opportunities depend on geography, family income, or school resources and expertise. This inequality is something we must address collectively. Music is not an optional extra—it is a vital strand of whole-child development and a powerful tool for inclusion, aspiration, and wellbeing.

Championing Co-Curricular Music

Co-curricular music provision, such as instrumental & vocal tuition, choirs, ensembles and creative workshops—plays a key role for young people. It complements the statutory curriculum and opens doors for pupils who might otherwise miss out. Schools that invest in high quality co-curricular music tuition are not just enriching pupils' lives; they are making a strategic investment in personal development, academic achievement, and future opportunities.

Commitment to Inclusion

The Music Partnership remains focused on Musical Inclusion, ensuring every child, regardless of background or ability, can access high-quality musical experiences. This includes tailored support for vulnerable learners, SEND provision, and progression pathways that inspire lifelong engagement. We are here to help schools balance equality and equity in music education—because some pupils need additional support to access provision. Please contact your local music service to discuss this further.

National News

The publication of the Invitation to Tender for the National Centre for Arts and Music Education, originally scheduled for the end of 2025, with the centre due to commence operation in September 2026, has been delayed. The Department for Education has yet to release the formal procurement documents, extending the timeline beyond the anticipated opening date. As a result, this means the official tender process has been postponed, and the recruitment of the delivery lead for the new National Centre will shift to a later schedule.

In light of this, Arts Council England will continue to fulfil the role of national delivery partner for the Music Hubs programme on an interim basis. Their stewardship will remain in place until new arrangements are confirmed, with delivery responsibilities extending through to August 2027, ensuring there is no gap in support for schools, teachers, and students during the transition. This extension provides stability within the sector while allowing sufficient time for the procurement process to be completed and for the new National Centre to be formally operational. We'll provide further updates as soon as we have more information.

The term ahead

Within this newsletter you will find details of our programme of activity, which encompasses delivery, support, and performance opportunities for the terms ahead. There are links to CPD and Resources, new dates and information for professional development sessions, and further guidance and information for developing music in school. There are also case studies and practical strategies to help ensure that music provision reaches every pupil. You will also find information about upcoming concerts, festivals, and events for pupils to showcase their talents across the region.

Please explore the links in this newsletter, read our fortnightly updates, and visit our website for the latest information - www.themusicpartnership.org.uk

If you need support, whether for individual pupils or whole-school strategy, our team across The Music Partnership is here to help. Thank you for continuing to champion music in your schools. Together, we can make sure every child has the chance to thrive, belong, and discover their potential through music.

Best wishes for the term ahead,



John Callister

Head of Service

Entrust Music Service Staffordshire
on behalf of The Music Partnership
Email: john.callister@entrust-ed.co.uk

Events, workshops and CPD opportunities

To view all of our upcoming events please
visit: www.themusicpartnership.org.uk/events

Remember to join the mailing list for up to date event information www.themusicpartnership.org.uk



City **MUSIC** Service
STOKE - ON - TRENT

telford&wrekin
MUSIC

SMS
SHROPSHIRE MUSIC SERVICE
Teaching Music - Changing Lives

Help us to improve musical inclusion

The Music Partnership works across Shropshire, Staffordshire, Stoke-on-Trent, Telford and Wrekin.

- ✓ Help us to find and work with school children that could benefit from music education but whose circumstances mean they might miss out.
- ✓ Help our visiting practitioners adapt lessons to achieve the best outcomes by sharing information (eg SEND details).
- ✓ Get in touch with your local music service if you're unsure how to support a child's musical needs.



Contact us to find out more www.themusicpartnership.org.uk



The Music Partnership

The Music Partnership is a group of the region's leading music education providers, committed to working together to ensure all young people have the opportunity to sing, learn an instrument and perform as part of an ensemble or choir.

We receive funding from the Department of Education via Arts Council England to deliver the 'National Plan for Music Education'. We also depend on the continued financial contribution, and investment of time, made by our education partners, including schools, parents, pupils and charitable supporters. We cover the local authority areas of Shropshire, Staffordshire, Stoke-on-Trent and Telford & Wrekin and work with the three music services in these regions alongside around thirty other music partners.

Our Music Services are: Shropshire Music Service, Entrust Music Service Staffordshire, The City Music Service Stoke-on-Trent and Telford & Wrekin Music.

By working collaboratively and pooling our resources we are able to stage large scale events throughout the year giving students the chance to perform with world-class musicians, orchestras, and ensembles. We deliver quality CPD opportunities, conferences and create resources that are available for teachers to enhance the delivery of their work.

There are a number of ways we can work to bring music and singing into education settings:

Teaching, resources, support, CPD and training:

- Funded and part-funded Teaching and Wider School Projects
- Subsidised Whole Class Ensemble Teaching (WCET)
- Subsidised 'Progression' Teaching
- Fully funded School Transition and Open Evening support
- Part-funded 'In Harmony' Programme
- Fully funded Music Share Workshops and Concerts
- Subsidised Charanga licenses (online music resource to support teaching and learning)
- Subsidised Sparkyard Subscription
- Funded lessons for Children in Care (CiC) via partnership with local Virtual Schools
- Bursary support for individual families (upon application) please [contact us](#) for more information
- Bursary support for children from low income families with identified musical talent - Young Sounds Connect - youngsounds.org.uk

Concerts and events:

- A huge range of local events throughout the year:
- Annual Recorder Festival
- MusicShare Concerts
- Christmas and Summer Livestream massed events.
- Festival of Christmas
- WCET Celebration

CPD, support and resources:

- Musical Progression Maps (Key Stages 1-5)
- Assessing Musical Progress Framework (Instrumental and Vocal work)
- What a Good One Looks Like (WAGOLL) guides for senior leaders
- Music Network sessions
- A Music and SEND network
- A programme of annual Musical Training
- Fully funded support visits for Music Leads
- Fully funded Music Audits and the opportunity to access Excellence in Music Provision Awards
- Subsidised Early Years 'Soundpots' Music Conference
- Fully-funded membership of Music Mark – The National Association for Music Education (following audit).



Ensembles and Groups

Do you play an instrument or sing at school and want to join a group to further develop your playing? Do you want to learn to play an instrument or sing?

Shropshire

Our ensemble provision runs every week at various locations across the county: Shrewsbury, Wem, Ludlow, Cleobury Mortimer. Our Riffs rock and pop ensemble runs on the first Saturday of every month at our centre in Shrewsbury. Our beginners group, Stompers is suitable for instrumentalists who can confidently play three or more notes. All ages are welcome and all our ensembles are completely free of charge!

Stompers

Beginner ensembles open to all instruments: participants need to play three notes confidently.

- Shrewsbury Stompers: Monday: 4.30-5.30pm, Music Centre SY1 4NG
- Ludlow Stompers Tuesday: 4-5pm, SY8 1TP
- Cleobury Mortimer Stompers: Tuesday: 4.15-5.15pm, DY14 8PE
- Wem Stompers Wednesday: 4.45-5.45pm, SY4 5UB

- Youth Orchestra: Shrewsbury College Theatre, London Road, SY2 6PR (Grade 3+)
- World Folk Ensemble: Shrewsbury College Theatre, London Road, SY2 6PR (Grade 3+)
- Riffs – Rock and Pop: First Saturday of every month, 10am-1pm, Music Centre SY1 4NG

Registration

Find out more and sign-up visit shropshiremusicservice.org.uk/ensembles or call 01743 874145.

Staffordshire

Our Music Centres run on weekdays or Saturday mornings at venues across Staffordshire: Burton, Cannock, Lichfield, Moorlands, Newcastle, Stafford, and Tamworth. We also run a group 'Blast Off' which runs online every Tuesday for all beginner instrumentalists. All ages are welcome, from KS1 to adult helpers. We have something for everyone, from fun beginner groups to advanced ensembles, covering all styles and levels of experience. Our Music Centres are all **FREE** of charge to musicians living or studying in Staffordshire. Want to try out a new instrument? We can provide a free-of-charge instrument for all members (subject to availability).

Registration

To register for our Music Centre groups please email us on musicservice@entrust-ed.co.uk visit our website: www.entrustmusic.co.uk for details of times, or call **0333 300 1900**.

Stoke-on-Trent

Get expert tuition and friendly support at our Music Centre in Stoke-on-Trent.

- Tuesday - Strings and Recorders
- Wednesday - Wind and Brass
- Thursday - Rock and Pop / Contemporary

Our Music Centres run on weekdays Monday to Thursday from 5.45-7.15pm at The Bridge Centre in Birches Head. All ages are welcome. We have something for everyone, from fun beginner groups to advanced ensembles, covering all styles and levels of experience.

Registration

Our Music Centres are all FREE of charge to musicians living or studying in Stoke-on-Trent. To register for our Music Centre groups email citymusicservice@stoke.gov.uk or call **01782 233796**.

Telford & Wrekin

Rock / Pop

Our Rock Clubs run weekly during term time at a number of our secondary schools . They are free and open to all.

- Charlton School - Tuesdays 4-6pm
- Telford Park School – Tuesdays 4-6pm
- Ercall Wood School – Wednesdays 3:15-4:15

Our Orchestral Ensembles are as follows:

Telford In Harmony Youth Orchestra

Thursdays, 3.30-5.30pm, Old Park Primary School, Malinslee

Telford In Harmony Youth Orchestra (TIHYO) is open to any young musician from Years 4-13 who plays a standard orchestral instrument. The orchestra plays a range of different musical styles and genres in a supportive and friendly environment and is free of charge.

Telford In Harmony Youth Ensemble

Thursdays, 5.30pm – 6.30pm, Old Park Primary School, Malinslee

In Harmony Youth Ensemble runs on a Thursday evening in Telford from 5.30 - 6.30pm and is for anyone from Years 6 -13 playing at Grade 2 standard or above on a standard orchestral instrument. Youth Ensemble members need to be able to read music to a reasonable level. TIHYE is free of charge.

Registration

For more information on any of the above contact us at Telford.music@telford.gov.uk or phone **01952 380981**.

Telford and Wrekin Music

Student Spotlight

Lila



Despite only just starting secondary school, Lila Rous has hit the ground running. She's embraced both a new school and a new teacher with enthusiasm and is already well on her way to being Grade 4 exam ready on the piano. Lila has shown incredible commitment, learning a new piece in under a week, a fantastic achievement and a brilliant start to her musical journey this year!



Ellie



Ellie, Year 5 at Redhill Primary Academy, recently took her Grade 2 clarinet examination over the summer and achieved a fantastic result. Ellie's enthusiasm and dedication to her music are truly inspiring. With her Grade 3 books already in hand, she's wasted no time and is well on her way to preparing for her next milestone. Ellie is seen here outside the exam centre with her fabulous TWM tutor Ms Osmund-Smith. A wonderful achievement, well done, Ellie!



Ellie



Ellie, Year 5, from SS Peter and Paul Catholic Primary School in Newport, has made exceptional progress on the flute in under a year and is now ready to begin preparing for her Grade 1 examination. Ellie is a dedicated young musician. Despite having a busy schedule full of extra-curricular activities, she continues to devote over 100 minutes each week to her flute practice, showing remarkable enthusiasm, commitment and determination. A fantastic achievement, Ellie, well done!



TWM Band

Our house band has a new singer, Ellie! Seen here rocking Sir Alexander Flemming Primary recently, the TWM house band visits a different school each week with an inspirational show exploring musical ideas through well known songs.

Visits are **free** for T&W schools, contact telford.music@telford.gov.uk to book one for your school!





William Reynolds Primary School and Nursery Gold Award

Congratulations to William Reynolds Primary School and Nursery on achieving their gold award for Music Provision.

The award is the culmination of a great deal of hard work from children and staff over a number of years. The School provides a wealth of musical opportunities and experiences to all children in an equitable and inclusive way. Well done to all involved!



THE POWER OF MUSIC



HOLMER LAKE PRIMARY SCHOOL

WITH T&W MUSIC



CURRICULUM OFFER

Our 4 year journey so far...

Music became a priority on our School Development Plan.

Music subject leadership moved to a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

We made contact with our local music hub - Telford & Wrekin Music - to seek support.

To support non-specialist staff in school and provide ongoing CPD, we mapped out curriculum music lessons to be taught by T&W music teachers.

Once curriculum music lessons were embedded, we developed Whole Class Ensemble tuition across KS2: ukuleles in LKS2 and guitars in UKS2.

Our music curriculum now consists of 2.5 hours of music every week!

Alongside the development of the curriculum, we have established weekly singing assemblies in EYFS/KS1 and KS2.

This year, we have focused on forming a choir and encouraging individual and small group extra-curricular music lessons.

Gives me confidence

"...opens up your heart..."

calm
relaxed
happy

I love singing and performing!

I have more confidence.

...makes me feel better...

My heart bounces.

THOUGHTS, FEELINGS AND WORDS FROM PUPILS...

Music-Making as a School Community

Article by: Teresa Phillips, Year 5/6 Phase Lead & Music Lead, Sneyd Academy, Stoke on Trent

Like most other primary Music Leads, I was completely ready to collapse by the end of last term. Ploughing through a massive to-do list of creating backing tracks, preparing song lyrics, organising rehearsals and trips, combined with the pressure of general teaching duties and other responsibilities, it was, as usual, overwhelming at times.

However, I always find that the heavy workload of Autumn 2 is usually softened by a bit of musical sparkle. Even after many years in the role of Music Lead, a sense of warmth always slowly emerges in me around about mid-November, as I begin to picture the children's faces, framed in gold tinsel, singing to proud, onlooking parents.

The school highlight of Christmas at the end of 2025 was, for me, the performance of a piece that combined both staff and pupils; one of my favourite things. What a wonderful expression of school community, shining through and beyond the mass of tests, marking and exhaustion. For this occasion – a Christingle service – I chose Mark Shultz's When Love Was Born, and I particularly adored the moment when the staff sang a lovely descant part in the chorus, appearing like angels to embellish the chorus that the kids always love belting out.

Staff choirs and bands have always been a particular passion of mine. I'm always the one to be found 'persuading' unsuspecting victims from the staff team to come and have a singsong. I find that people who work in schools tend to be bubbly, engaging types, quite often up for anything. There's always one or two musicians lurking around too, despite the fact that they try and keep their talent hidden.

Of course, there are always barriers to bringing together a staff choir or band; usually these are about the impact that varying roles have on the availability for rehearsal. Sometimes it is about confidence, or maybe the availability of instruments.



Children and staff rehearsing together for a Christingle performance

The truth is, interested volunteers are out there. The trick is to make it as simple as possible and remove the niggly issues as much as you can. Use up-to-date technology or AI to create a backing track that you can send out for staff to rehearse at their leisure, and then put on a few short rehearsals at different times for different groups of people. If it's a staff band that you're putting together, choose a 4-chord song for a quick win. Add in a simple melody for the children who play glockenspiel/recorder/ukulele. If it's a staff choir, use a C4 – C5 range of notes in the melody to make sure that everyone – male or female – can sing (at that pitch or an octave lower) comfortably and therefore successfully. Try adding a simple, easy vocal part to a song that the children are already singing – one that creates a layer and harmony but with different memorable words and a recognisable shape of its own.

Keep it short-term; it doesn't have to be a year-round commitment for people. Start with small audiences to increase confidence. Assemblies are a great spotlight for a rock band, as the children will always love it. Create opportunities that people care about, such as singing at someone's leaving do. Hand out the lyrics to everyone anyway, and they'll soon be tip-toeing along. Re-write the lyrics to songs people already know. Make it fun.

And of course, remember, that there will always be a captive audience; a room full of small people whose eyes are full of admiration as their favourite adults get up to be courageous and creative; an audience ready to be inspired along their own musical journey – and that's what it's all about!

For support or ideas, please don't hesitate to contact me at tphillips@sneydacademy.co.uk

Shropshire Music Service

To find out more about who we are and what we do, visit
www.shropshiremusicservice.org.uk or call us on 01743 874145.

SMS

SHROPSHIRE MUSIC SERVICE
Teaching Music - Changing Lives

SMS on Tour: Live Music Week

In November, staff from Shropshire Music Service toured the county to celebrate 'Live Music Week'. Our annual event celebrates the power of live music and features three bands performing to schools across all the regions of Shropshire.



Pictured from L to R: Karen Kirkland, Kian Samari, Jo Giles, Simon Tomkins, Jacob Potter



Pictured from L to R: Ed Wadon, Jerome Auxant, Caroline Nowotarski, James Rickard

Staff also demonstrate each instrument to children, showing its expressive tone and how it contributes to the overall texture of each piece. This year's repertoire featured Offenbach's 'Can Can', 'Wonderwall' by Oasis and film themes including 'Pirates of the Caribbean' and 'No Time to Die'. But the clear favourites with the audiences were recent chart-toppers including 'Pink Pony Club' (Chappell Roan) and 'Golden' from KPop Demon Hunters.



Pictured from L to R: Joe Butler, Mike Clowes, Beatrice Floyer-Acland

Schools had a fantastic time. Market Drayton Infants and Junior School remarked this was a 'wonderfully inclusive experience' for their students and Norton-in-Hales CE Nursery and Primary school 'enjoyed how the instruments were introduced, explained and demonstrated.' Coleham Primary School commented on how the programme was 'pitched perfectly for all year groups to access.' Their feedback echoed the purpose of Live Music Week, remarking that 'it was so lovely seeing the whole school community coming together in musical celebration. Happy faces and so much joy!'

Celebrating Student Success

SMS

SHROPSHIRE MUSIC SERVICE
Teaching Music - Changing Lives

Shropshire Music Service is celebrating the success of two ensemble students. It's always sad to see students move on from our ensembles as they progress to university but it's a real delight when those students take the next step in their musical career. At the end of the academic year, two of our ensemble students started their university courses in music.

Hamish remarked:

"The best thing about being in the Youth Orchestra is the support given by all the staff. They encouraged and helped me to become a better performer. I really enjoyed playing in Youth Orchestra and Stage and Screen Orchestra. Shropshire Music Service is a wonderful organisation to be part of."

Prior to moving to London to start his studies, Hamish was employed by the Music Service as an associate tutor, coaching younger drummers in our Riffs workshops.



Hamish

Claudia

We're also celebrating the success of Claudia Savage, principal violinist in the World Folk Ensemble. Claudia had been involved with Shropshire Music Service since year 2 when she was a pupil at Woodfield Infant School in Shrewsbury. It was a privilege for the World Folk Ensemble to be able to play one of Claudia's original compositions – a modern interpretation of a Celtic Air entitled 'Coed Llennyrch' - in our Spring Term Concert. We wish her every success as she starts her BA Music course at the University of Leeds.

Shropshire Music Service really is 'Teaching Music, Changing Lives' and we're so pleased our ensembles have played a key role in supporting these students to pursue a career in music.



Claudia

Soundbeam kit donation helps extend music access

Shropshire Music Service has gifted a Soundbeam class kit to Severndale Specialist Academy, empowering young people with physical differences to make music through movement.

The Soundbeam system is an assistive-technology tool that translates body movements into musical notes and sound — using sensor “beams” and wireless switches to detect gestures and convert them into music. It’s designed to be accessible, inclusive, and truly transformative for pupils who may find conventional musical instruments challenging to use.

The barriers to creating sound have dissipated with the use of this fantastic piece of equipment! The Soundbeam has opened a doorway to creativity, giving our students the freedom to make music with more independence and in ways that feel joyful, empowering, and entirely their own. We've seen pupils light up with excitement, bringing a sense of wonder into our classroom and connect with others through shared sounds and rhythms.

Sophie Canning, My Creativity Curriculum Lead at Severndale Specialist Academy.



As a former school music teacher, I know the power that music has on the lives and learning of our young people. It was a pleasure to witness the excitement of the students at Severndale Academy as they were presented with a brand new Soundbeam Kit donated by Shropshire Music Service. These instruments will allow all students to create music regardless of their ability and I can't wait to return for a performance

Councillor Neil Bentley (Deputy Portfolio Holder for Children & Education).

We believe music should be for everyone. The Soundbeam kit allows pupils at Severndale to explore sound in new ways and express themselves through movement. We're proud to support this important step towards musical inclusion in Shropshire.

Dr Sarah Browne, Head of Service at Shropshire Music Service



Staff at Severndale staff have received training to help students begin exploring and creating music in this new, embodied way.

Staffordshire Virtual School



One of our key priorities this year is to increase the engagement of our Children in Care and those previously looked after to access music lessons in school.

Fully funding their lessons we have worked hard, and we are pleased to say we have increased the number of Our children in Care learning to play a musical instrument. Caroline Williams, is devoting a huge proportion of her time helping us reach out to the schools and making the magic happen with the Entrust music teachers. In the Summer Term we had 30%, we now have 53% of Y4-6 Staffordshire children learning different music instruments and several children from other Local authorities, who are educated in Staffordshire also accessing this opportunity.

Music Ambassadors

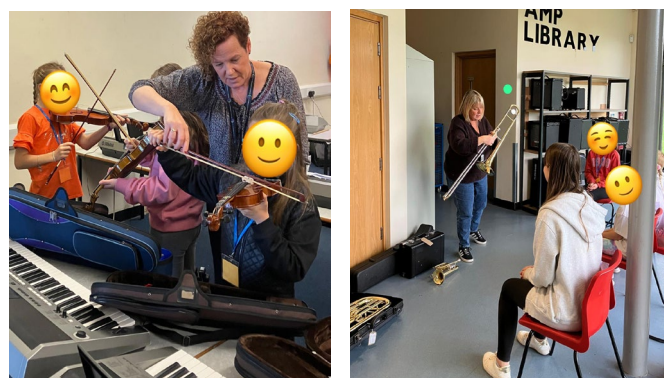
We also have two of our Children in Care serving as Music Ambassadors for the Virtual School – raising the awareness of the positive impact of playing an instrument and helping the younger children at our events. One of the ambassadors has started attending the Music Centres blast off sessions regularly at Stafford Centre and performed in one of the concerts just recently. She shared that she is 'loving it, as she gets to play music with others and her Foster Carer said, 'it has really helped improve her confidence, and her ability- she never stops practising at home too!!'



Children in care workshop

We had 18 children at our Children in Care 'Come and Play workshop' In October - our highest attendance figures on record, where we had some amazing Music teachers give up their time to teach the group how to play a variety of different instruments.

The room was bursting with activity and the notes soon came together as a musical piece, playing in harmony together. The Foster Carers, guardians and ourselves were blown away by what they achieved in just a couple of hours. We are very much looking forward to our next event in the Spring Term, where we hope to see and hear more of our children enjoying the positive impact music has on them.



Musical talent from across the district

I know the end of the Autumn Term is always a busy one for the musicians, and I was delighted to be invited to one of the many concerts that Entrust put together. Set in Lichfield Cathedral, we watched and appreciated the many musical talents of the children from across the district. The youngsters in the choirs, inspired by the teenage talent in the orchestra. A perfectly enjoyable evening.

I would like to thank Friends of Staffordshire's Young Musicians – whose charity support disadvantaged children across Staffordshire to access music in a variety of different ways. Thank you also to Entrust for all your dedication to keeping music alive and giving these opportunities for our children.

Any questions about the work we do please contact mary.gardner@staffordshire.gov.uk



Staffordshire Young Sounds Get Together

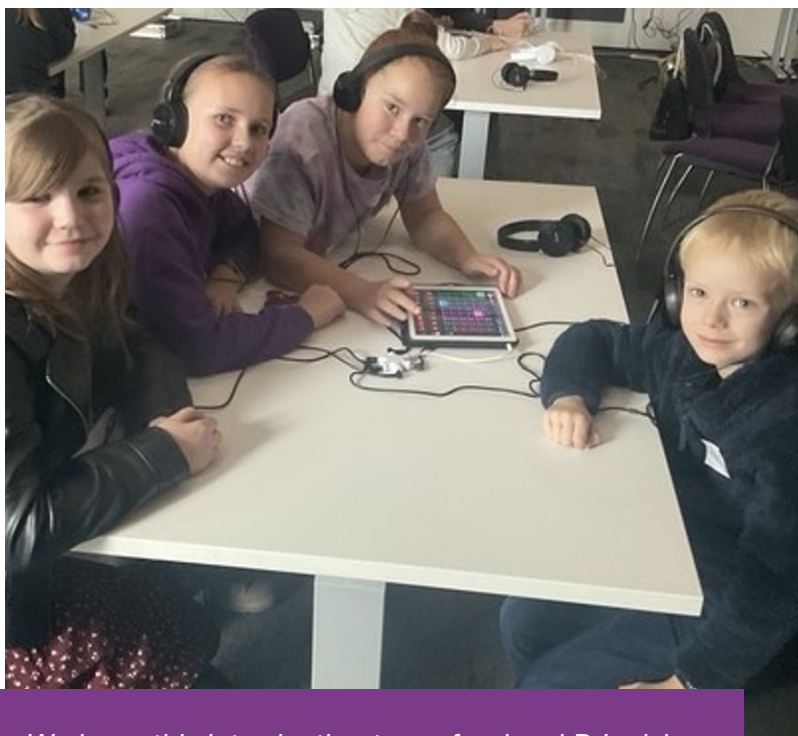
In the mix



Our Autumn Term Student Get Together was held on Saturday 8th November at Entrust HQ, Riverway, Stafford. The aim of this workshop was to introduce and augment our Young Sounds students' understanding of DJ hardware/software and acquire practical DJ mixing skills.

Led by Gifted Workshops, the Get Together commenced with an introduction into the history of music production and how the public accessed "new" music. The students got to see a variety of vinyl's, tapes, and even a first-generation iPod. After this, students explored different soundscapes using their environment: chairs and tables, body percussion and vocal sound effects. They then recorded these short audio extracts to be compiled into an ensemble track.

With a new understanding of the progression of DJing and music production, students were given the opportunity to work together and create their own tracks in smaller groups. Using the software Launchpad on iPads, students were able to create loops and then add specific sounds and filters before recording multiple tracks in different musical styles. To conclude the workshop the students were shown a variety of DJ decks from different eras and the progression of these, with a demonstration of how their tracks could then be mixed into a live setting on this equipment.



We hope this introduction to professional DJ mixing hardware and software has ignited a curious interest to explore further and to continue creating their own tracks using Launchpad or other types of hardware/software. We hope they continue to explore different DJ skills and gain confidence in the creation and mixing of music.

Good News Story

Young Sounds student, Will, has found music to be a constant form of enjoyment. Being able to have drum lessons and create this musical routine has been grounding for him, helping him cope with the normalities of the everyday. Through a conversations and questions with his teacher Miriam, Will shares an insight to how the Connect Programme has helped him.



What impact has having drum lessons had on you?

It's helped me socialise; I enjoy teaching others about how the drums work. It has also made me show respect to music artists because of how difficult it can be and how much practice you need to do! Drum lessons have broadened my listening tastes, and I appreciate music much more because I know how much work is involved.

Miriam has helped me to improve my mental health and made me go above and beyond my usual comfort zone. E.g. Playing in concerts and going to Young Sound get together.

What is the best thing about playing drums?

Miriam! She is the highlight of my week. She gives me confidence to try anything with her enthusiasm and passion for music! She has been my teacher since I was very small and has been with me for the whole of my musical journey.

Playing the drums also looks cool and it's a chance to show off a skill that others don't have!

What makes attending Stafford Music Centre so important to you and why do you like attending?

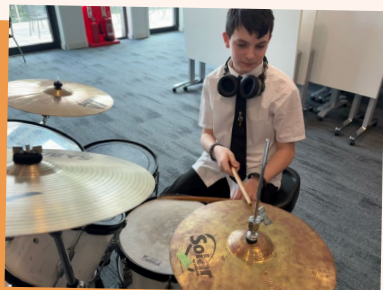
Routine is very important to me. It's a big community that you bond with, and you get along because you are all musicians and have similar interests.

I like attending because I have fun and share new ideas with other people. Even with my 'tism' they all accept me for me and help if I am struggling.

Has playing the drums helped you with other subjects at school, friendships, confidence, or life in general?

I'm in top set music at school. I was awarded musician of the term recently.

I've made lots of new friends in my music circle. Most days I'm in the practice room at school with friends that play other instruments. We have to work together to practice, and the drums have given me the confidence to take part. I've involved other friends in the school orchestra who wouldn't normally get involved in music. Drums have also helped me in my horse riding lessons as I can follow the rhythms of the horse strides. Playing the drums has given me more confidence to try new things. E.g. performing on the stage.

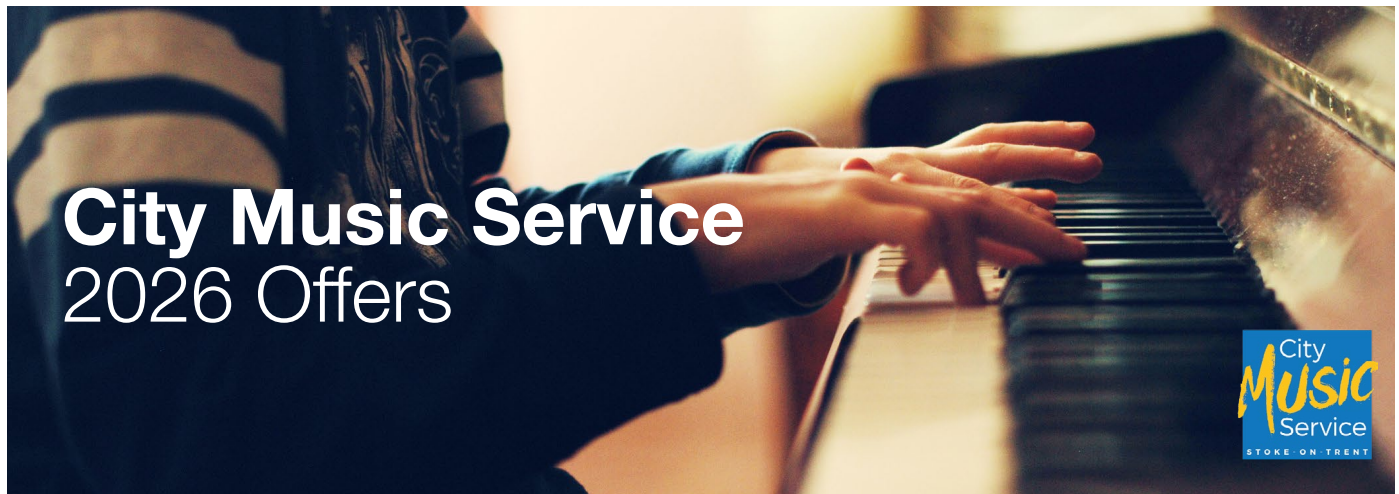


Will's Biggest Connect Programme Achievement and Aims For The Future:

With the Young Sounds Connect Programme Will has seen Jess Gillam at Birmingham Symphony Hall. As a part of this experience he visited backstage and got to listen to a solo performance. Travelling to Symphony Hall by train and staying for the entire performance was a challenge for Will. Despite this being "out of his comfort zone" Will was able to persevere.

"If I wasn't in Young Sounds, I don't think I would get an opportunity like this".

Will hopes to play in a band or orchestra in the future, and possibly teach music as well.



Music Workshops

£150 per 2-hour workshop. Workshops can be split into 2 x 1-hour workshops for two classes.

Singing for Wellbeing: 'Sing Your Socks Off'

A fun packed session that can be tailored to pupils of any age group, using songs and games to develop turn taking, team work, self-confidence as well as musical skills.

Ukulele

A fun beginner or intermediate workshop where pupils play and sing.

World Music

Explore the world of African Drumming or Samba with whole classes or small groups. Instruments will be provided.

Junk Percussion/Stomp

Making music using everyday household objects, recyclable materials in combination with body percussion in this high intensity create and perform workshop. (Minimum of 2x2 hour sessions).

Recorder

Inspirational workshop and performance from a professional recorder player.

P-Buzz

Try out this new instrument, it is blown like a brass instrument and you change the pitch by lengthening and shortening the tube. A great introduction to playing a brass instrument.

Folk Music & Dance

Explore the musical traditions of the British Isles in this lively interactive session.

Songwriting/Composition

A collaborative workshop where pupils can write their own song on a topic of your choice.

Music and ICT

Pupils create their own pieces of music using iPads (you will need to provide a class set).

Bespoke Workshops

If you are looking for something slightly different (e.g. topic based or instrument specific) then please get in touch to discuss your requirements.

Instrumental demos (price on request)

Please get in touch to find out about arranging a demo assembly for your school. To find out more or to book any of the above please email Ruth.Steele@stoke.gov.uk or Jenny.Mawdsley@stoke.gov.uk





Contemporary Music Workshops for KS3 upwards

Workshops can be a 'one off' or a series of sessions depending on individual requirements. Ages are intended as a rough guide.

Songwriting for Young Creators (Ages 12-18)

Lyric writing, chord progressions, melody making.

Pop Music Production on a Budget (Ages 13-18)

How modern pop is made, even without fancy gear.

How to Be an Independent Artist (Ages 14-18)

The DIY path to releasing and promoting music.

Behind the Music Industry (Ages 13-18)

Understanding the ecosystem of jobs in music.

Song Architect: Building Music from the Ground Up (Ages 12-18)

How theory + creativity = songwriting power.

Theory Through Pop Songs (Ages 11-16)

Understanding music theory without textbooks.

The Soundtrack of Youth Culture (Ages 12-18)

Exploring how music reflects identity and society.

To find out more or to book any of the above please email Ruth.Steele@stoke.gov.uk or Jenny.Mawdsley@stoke.gov.uk

Soundpots Early Years Music Network Meetings

Come and join us for the Soundpots Early Years Music Network Meeting taking place either at The Bridge Centre in Birches Head or online via Teams on the following dates:

Monday 16 March 2026, 4pm and Wednesday 20 May, 4pm

The session is aimed at colleagues working in Early Years settings as well as those leading Music. Attendance is free of charge. To reserve your place please email citymusicservice@stoke.gov.uk



MusicShare Big Sing



Following the success of the SOT100 Big Sing Concerts at the Victoria Hall last year, we are running similar events in partnership with MusicShare on 23 and 24 June 2026. Schools will be able to sign up for KS1 and KS2 events. There will be songs to learn in advance and we will be sending these out to schools in the New Year.

The timings for 23 and 24 June are:

KS1 Morning: Arrive 9.30-9.45. Performance 10:00-11:15

KS2 Afternoon: Arrive 12:30-12.45. Performance 13:00-14:15

To sign up please click the following link or scan the QR code
[MusicShare Big Sing Summer 26](#)



Sparkyard

Out of the Ark Music offer a 30% discount on Sparkyard, their primary school song streaming service and music curriculum (and much more!) to every school across our region.

Many of you will know about Sparkyard already, but many more may well have been singing Out of the Ark songs for well over 30 years in school Nativities, musicals and assemblies. Out of the Ark's 45-minute [Cup Of Tea & CPD](#) online workshop sessions to help you get the most out of this award-winning resource.

One discount code will work for any school right across the region. Enter TMP252630 when you check out if you're a new user, or if you're an existing subscriber, go to your [manage account area](#) and add the code today to ensure your discount ready for when you renew.

A full suite of 4 different FREE 45-minute twilight CPD sessions will be running during Autumn Term to help Sparkyard users learn new tricks to make the most out of their subscription, or to show you what's possible if you become a Sparkyard School.

Full info here: <https://www.eventbrite.com/o/out-of-the-ark-music-workshops-18164632548>



Stoke Young Sounds UK Get Together

‘Create a Christmas Hit’

On 20th November pupils on the Young Sounds Musical Opportunities Pilot program came together at The Bridge Centre in Birches Head to write their very own Christmas Song.

Workshop leader and CMS teacher Mr Chubb worked with the young people to come up with the lyrics and melody for the Stoke-on-Trent themed song. They then recorded their creation, singing the vocals and playing the instrumental parts themselves before giving a debut performance to parents, carers and families at the end of the session.

In Stoke-on-Trent we have been celebrating the Centenary of the City all year, and hope that this song ‘Stockings on the Potbanks’ will be included in a special commemorative songbook along with other pieces that have been written for concerts and events throughout the year.

Pupils and teachers alike thoroughly enjoyed the evening:

‘I had an amazing night, I loved it!’

- Keely

‘My pupils were still singing the lyrics when I next went into school’

- Mr Kelly



Stoke on Trent Young Musician of the Year 2026

Stoke-on-Trent Young Musician of the Year will be held during the Spring term. Applications have been coming in thick and fast for this annual event which takes place at The Bridge Centre in Birches Head.

The competition is open to anyone of school age who lives in Stoke-on-Trent, is educated in Stoke-on-Trent or is a member of one of the City Music Service ensembles.

Preliminary rounds are held at the end of January with Junior (up to Year 8) and Senior (Year 9 upwards) classes for instrumentalists and vocalists. This is always a great chance to showcase pieces in front of a friendly audience and to receive useful feedback from our adjudicators. We welcome applications from young people at all stages in their musical journey.

From each class someone is selected to go through to the final where an overall Junior and Senior Winner are chosen. This year it will be held on 24th April. Winners receive a voucher to spend at A Major Music at Trentham as well as a trophy and medal. They also get the opportunity to perform a solo at The Victoria Hall.

Good luck to all of those taking part. We are looking forward to hearing you perform.



FRIENDS OF STAFFORDSHIRE'S YOUNG MUSICIANS (FOSYM) Charity Update 2025-26



FOSYM enables children and young people to experience the joy of making music...

How do we do this?

- By supporting young people financially where families cannot afford the additional cost of lessons
- By raising funds to ensure that pupils can continue their lessons year on year
- By advocating for Music in schools
- By spreading the word through our membership, at events and in schools

How can you help?

- By becoming a member of FOSYM
- By spreading the word about the work of FOSYM
- By donating to the charity as a one off or on a regular basis, through sponsorship and legacies
- By donating just £5 you are part funding a lesson for a young person

How does FOSYM help young people?

- By providing financial grants for individuals to learn an instrument or sing
- By providing financial grants for music, exam entry, or attending concerts
- By supporting quality musical activities and encouraging excellence

How many young people does FOSYM help?

- This year we are supporting over 230 young people from Staffordshire
- Dependent on funds available we aim to support 500 annually

How to apply for a grant

Visit our website fosym.org.uk or contact us at info@fosym.org

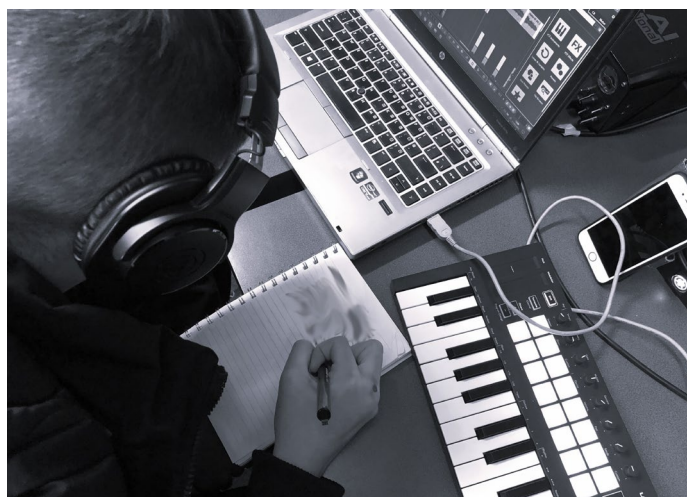


The Hive Launches New Alternative Provision for Young People in Shropshire

This winter, The Hive is proud to announce the launch of a dynamic new Alternative Provision programme aimed at providing a safe, creative space for children and young people who face challenges with traditional education. This initiative offers a flexible, non-academic environment designed to support those with complex needs, including attendance difficulties, SEMH (social, emotional, mental health) needs, anxiety, or care experience.

The programme and delivery timeframe will be tailored specifically for children with EHCPs or EOTAS packages, who are not attending formal education or are struggling with school attendance and social skills. The Hive's innovative approach fosters engagement, confidence, and resilience by offering a relaxed, vibrant setting where young people can explore their interests through music and a variety of visual arts.

"Our goal is to create an environment where every child and young person can find their place in the world," said Katie Jennings, CEO of The Hive. "We recognise the importance of individuality, diversity, and personal growth. Our programme is about more than just learning — it's about developing identity, building healthy relationships, and gaining the confidence to thrive."



The programme

The programme offers flexible support sessions, ranging from 2 to 4 hour sessions, tailored to individual needs.

Whether through one-to-one mentoring or small group activities, each learner benefits from experienced staff who adopt a mentor-style approach, fostering trust and exploration. Activities include DJing, singing, songwriting, recording, photography, graphic design, and printmaking — all interwoven with core academic subjects where appropriate.

By encouraging self-awareness, communication, and emotional development, The Hive aims to reignite a love for learning outside of traditional classroom settings. The programme supports young people in overcoming barriers to engagement, reducing anxiety, and nurturing their personal and social skills, fostering a sense of achievement and belonging.



Find out more

For more information about The Hive's alternative provision program and how it can support children and young people in Shropshire, please contact Amy Smith, Youth Engagement Lead: projects@hiveonline.org.uk

Royal Ballet and Opera Create and Sing CPD Training

FREE TO ATTEND

No prior
knowledge of
opera is
required!

FREE in-person certified CPD training for primary school teachers wanting to build their confidence in teaching singing.

This FREE CPD training is part of the Royal Ballet & Opera's award-winning Create & Sing programme, a curriculum-led teacher development programme designed for primary school teachers. The team will take you through techniques for teaching singing and drama to build your students' self-expression, creative collaboration, performance confidence, voice, movement, and memory skills.

During this CPD training, you will:

- Learn practical, easy-to-implement, warm-up, and engagement activities.
- Explore the building blocks of dramatic singing and learn how to use them to meet Music curriculum outcomes.
- Discover different creative techniques for using singing across the curriculum e.g. literacy.
- Be introduced to the Create & Sing classroom resources.

The day is led by a team of Royal Ballet & Opera artists and is suitable for:

- Class teachers or subject leads
- Teachers who are new to teaching singing
- Teachers who are looking to brush up their skills

Don't miss out! Book now...

Date: Thursday, February 5th 2026, Time: 9.00-15:00

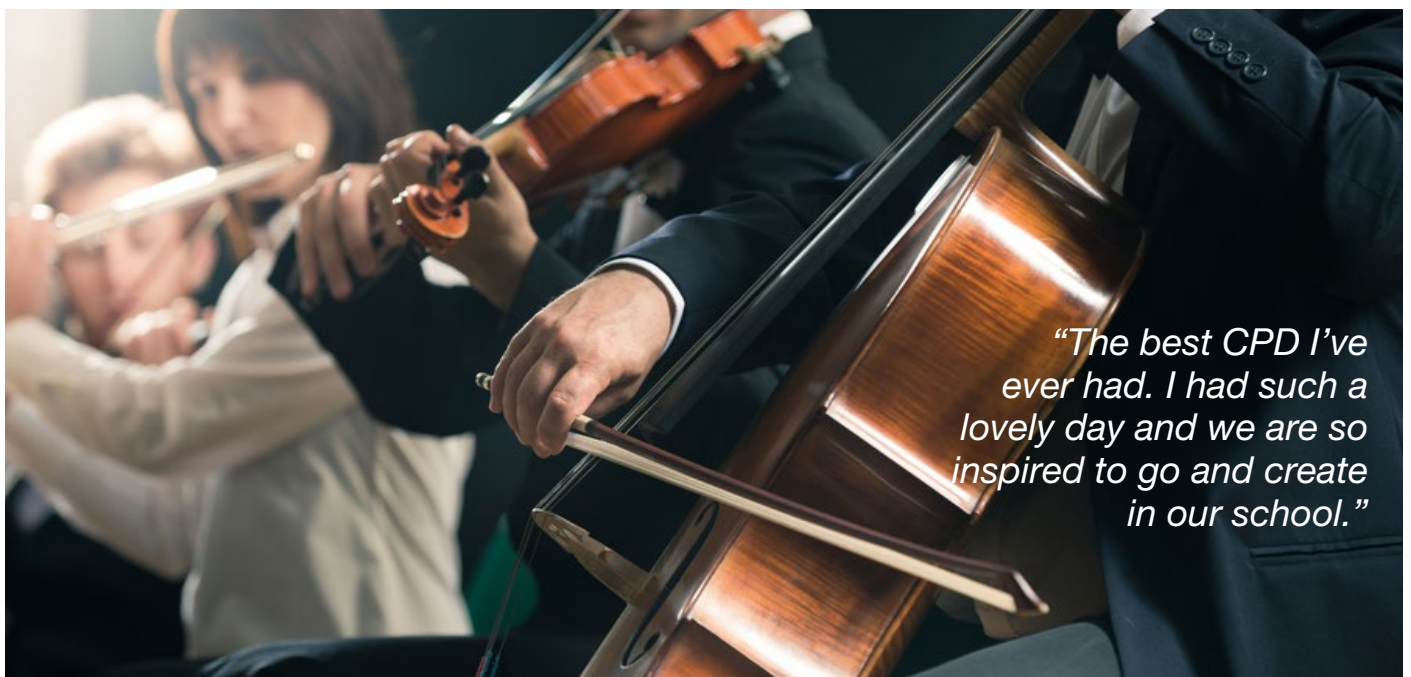
Location: The Bridge Centre, Birches Head Rd, Stoke-on-Trent, ST2 8DD

[Book your place here.](#)

Date: Thursday, January 29th 2026, Time: 9.00-15:00

Location: Idsall School, Coppice Green Lane, Shifnal, Shropshire, TF11 8PD

[Book your place here.](#)



"The best CPD I've ever had. I had such a lovely day and we are so inspired to go and create in our school."

Music Education Solutions®



Projects Nominated for THREE Music & Drama Education Awards!

Music Education Solutions® are thrilled to announce that three of their recent projects have been shortlisted for the Music and Drama Education Awards 2026.

Hot on the heels of being placed as a finalist in the Teach Primary Awards, the Primary Music in Conversation podcast is shortlisted in the Outstanding Music Education Resource category. The podcast features conversations between presenter Dr Liz Stafford and music subject leaders based in primary schools across the world. Season 2 is streaming now, with a new episode released every Monday, and Season 1 is available on demand wherever you get your podcasts.

MES director Dr Liz Stafford and consultant Dan Francis recently worked with Collins Music to produce a new book for secondary heads of music, the Secondary Music Leaders' Handbook. Released in June and already receiving excellent feedback from teachers across the country, this text is now shortlisted in the Outstanding Music Education Print Resource category.

Last year, Music Education Solutions® worked with Drums for Schools and Waltham Forest and Leicestershire Music Hubs to deliver the Building Musical Confidence Action Research Project which saw 8 schools provided with free teaching resources in order to raise confidence and skill levels amongst non-specialist teachers. The results were so dramatic that this project has now been recognised in the Outstanding Musical Initiative category for its positive impact.



Find out more

You can find out more about the work of Music Education Solutions at www.musiceducationsolutions.co.uk

Curriculum Music Conference Returns to the Midlands

TICKETS CAN BE BOOKED [HERE](#)

The Curriculum Music Conference CENTRAL will take place on 19th March at Cable Plaza in Dudley, the home of Black Country Music Hub.

As usual this event features a mix of workshops, discussions, and presentations, alongside a trade exhibition and plenty of networking opportunities. A few highlights from this year's programme include a keynote from Ofsted's National Lead for Music Chris Stevens HMI, a workshop on Assessment with BCU Emeritus Professor Martin Fautley, and a chance to contribute to the Music and Me research project led by Professor Karen Burland from the University of Leeds.

In Harmony



In Harmony Telford & Stoke-on-Trent continues to run a busy and exciting programme of work in the four schools. Our after-school ensembles in Telford performed in a community concert at the end of term (and enjoyed hot chocolate with marshmallows!). The Old Park Primary choir and Telford In Harmony Youth Ensemble for secondary age children performed at the Malinslee Lights Switch-on, setting a great festive tone for the event!

At St Maria Goretti Catholic Academy, the after school ensemble performed at the Christmas fayre, and In Harmony musicians also entertained the crowds with christmassy musical numbers.

This year, we've remodelled our provision at Hollinswood Primary School to enable children from Years 4-6 to have more choice in the instruments they are able to play. The new set-up means children can choose in Year 4 which orchestral instrument they want to learn. The new scheme has seen increased engagement from children and staff.

Old Park Primary school celebrated the end of term with Open Orchestra sessions where parents and carers were able to sit in and experience the excitement of orchestral learning.

Children from St Augustine's Catholic Academy involved in the Songbirds programme visited the Victoria Hall to take part in the City Songbirds Christmas Concert run by City Music in Stoke-on-Trent.

Our Team development day in September focused on a new curriculum and assessment document based on the Sounds of Intent framework. With a high proportion of children with additional needs in the In Harmony schools, we are working to implement a more inclusive framework. This is being trialled and developed across the academic year.

This term we have also delivered CPD for primary class teachers at an affiliate school in collaboration with Royal Birmingham Conservatoire, aiming to develop teacher confidence in delivering the music curriculum practically.

Find out more

Visit www.inharmonytelfordstoke.org for more information about the programme and how you could get involved.





RSL NEXT GEN
CREATIVITY

FLEXIBLE GRADED MUSIC EXAMS

Tailor-made for the contemporary musician

Since 1991, Rockschoool has been producing materials to help people learn musical instruments and assess their progress. We want candidates to be as comfortable as possible, however and wherever they take their graded music exam. Whether it is in person or online, learners are in complete control with RSL Awards allowing them to pick their preferred assessment format.

Across the Rockschoool and RSL Classical suite, candidates can book their exams in the form of a face-to-face exam, live-stream or recorded digital exam. Music Production and Music Theory exams are taken online via remote-invigilation or through a privately-invigilated exam session.



FACE-TO-FACE EXAMS

The original exam experience. Take an exam whilst being observed in person by a member of our expertly trained examiner panel. Some of our candidates have aspirations of a life on stage, so our traditional face-to-face exams ensure that these candidates have a specific date and time they can prepare for, much like a professional gig or show.



RECORDED DIGITAL EXAMS

Recorded Digital Exams give candidates the ability to pre-record their exam submissions via video and upload them to our online portal for assessment by our examiners. After assessing the performance, the examiner records a short video message delivering the candidate's result.



LIVE STREAM DIGITAL EXAMS

RSL's Live Stream Digital Exams allow an examiner to be streamed from a remote location directly to the candidate, giving every candidate the opportunity to demonstrate their musical learning in a convenient location or familiar environment.

RSL LEARN MORE
www.rslawards.com



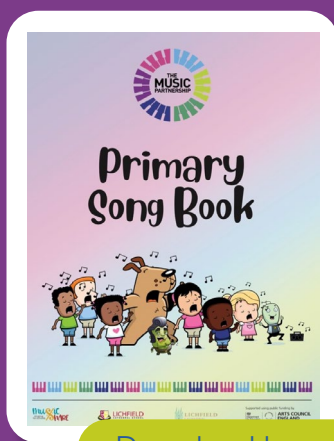
Congratulations!

Congratulations to the brilliant MusicShare and exceptional Cathy Lamb for winning the Classic FM Music Teacher of the Year for Best Learning Initiative.

MusicShare is an award-winning singing for schools programme that is a joint initiative between The Music Partnership, Lichfield Cathedral and Lichfield Cathedral School with support from the Entrust Music Staffordshire and the Arts Council England.



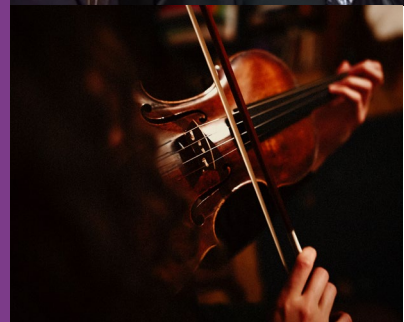
[Download here](#)



[Download here](#)



Don't forget to make use of our fantastic Secondary and Primary Songbooks!



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Our Partners

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City of Stoke-on-Trent Symphony Orchestra
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Friends of Staffordshire's Young Musicians
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My Inter Theatre Company
Normans Instruments
North Shropshire Music

OHMI Trust
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RSL Awards
Severn Teaching Alliance
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SSPA Events
Stoke-on-Trent Festivals
Sympho
Telford & Wrekin Music

Telford Music Trust
The Hallé Orchestra
The Hive
The National Youth Orchestra
Trinity College London
Virtual Schools in the West Midlands
West Midlands Music
Young Sounds UK