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Update from John Callister

Head of Service, Entrust Music Service
Staffordshire on behalf of The Music
Partnership



Email: john.callister@entrust-ed.co.uk

Welcome to the Autumn 2026 edition of The Music Partnership Newsletter



Dear colleagues,

As we begin the new academic year, I would like to extend a warm welcome to all our schools, partners, teachers, and supporters across The Music Partnership. We hope you have enjoyed a restful summer break and are returning refreshed for what promises to be another exciting year of musical learning, creativity and achievement.

The start of a new term always brings fresh opportunities for young people to discover, develop and deepen their musical skills. Across our region, we remain committed to ensuring that every child and young person has access to high-quality music education, regardless of their background, location or circumstances.

We look forward to working alongside you to support musical progression, inspire participation and create meaningful musical experiences throughout the year ahead.

This autumn also marks an important moment nationally for arts education. Following the Department for Education's commitment to establish a new National Centre for Arts and Music Education, it was announced this month that 'Etio' has been appointed as the delivery partner responsible for establishing and operating the new Centre.

The Centre will provide strategic national leadership for arts education, support teacher development through new CPD

opportunities, strengthen partnerships between schools and cultural organisations, and from September 2027 assume responsibility for the national Music Hub network.

The appointment represents a significant milestone for the sector and an important opportunity to strengthen equitable access to high-quality arts and music education for children and young people across England.

A key theme running through national developments and continuing through our local work is quality. Quality is not a one-off event or a single outcome. Rather, it is a fundamental principle that is best seen through the long-term musical development and agency of young people.

We recently welcomed Carolyn Baxendale MBE to talk to regional music service staff, and her presentation challenged us to think carefully about the distinction between participation and learning: whilst access, enjoyment and engagement are all important, meaningful musical progress over time must remain at the heart of what we do.

Key themes that were discussed included being able to demonstrate strong leadership and vision for music, to provide workforce support, excellent teaching and learning, inclusive access, and clear progression pathways for our young people. These ideas resonate strongly with our shared approach across The Music Partnership.

Music Summit Conference 2026

We will be exploring these themes in greater depth at our upcoming Music Summit on 15 October, where colleagues from across the region will have the opportunity to reflect on what quality means in practice, share effective approaches, and consider how we continue to place musical learning, progression and equity at the centre of our work.

I'm delighted to announce that Carolyn will be our keynote for the conference, and the day is entirely free of charge for schools to attend.

Book your place

Please use this link to book a place - [Music Summit 2026](#).

Thank you for your continued commitment to music education across our region and for the difference you make to the lives of children and young people every day.

We look forward to working with you throughout the year ahead and celebrating the many musical successes that will undoubtedly follow.

John

Events, workshops and CPD opportunities

Our upcoming events can be seen at
www.themusicpartnership.org.uk/events
and is updated regularly.

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...

- ✓ 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.

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

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
- 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 & 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 & 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 & 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 an established group to further develop your playing? Do you want to learn to play an instrument or sing?

Staffordshire

Our Music Centres run weekly on weekday evenings or fortnightly on Saturday mornings at venues across Staffordshire, including Burton, Cannock, Lichfield & Rugeley, Moorlands, Newcastle, Stafford & Stone, and Tamworth.

All ages and abilities are welcome, from complete beginners to advanced musicians, with opportunities for young people and adults to make music together each week.

We offer a wide range of groups and ensembles, from beginner training bands to orchestras, choirs, rock bands, and specialist ensembles. More experienced musicians can take part in our county-level Youth Groups, including Staffordshire Youth Orchestra, Staffordshire Youth Wind Band, and Staffordshire Youth Choir, providing exciting opportunities to perform, develop skills, and work with expert conductors.

Our Music Centres are **FREE** of charge, helping to remove barriers and ensure everyone can take part. You can come along and try a group before committing, and enjoy making music, building confidence, and performing with others.

Stoke-on-Trent

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

Join us on the following days:

- 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

To register for our Music Centre groups, please scan the QR code or click [here](#).

Alternatively, 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.



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.

Shropshire

Our ensemble provision runs every week at various locations across the county: Shrewsbury, Wem, Ludlow.

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, SY3 9HG
- Ludlow Stompers Tuesday: 4-5pm, SY8 1TP
- Wem Stompers Wednesday: 4.45-5.45pm, SY4 5UB

Other events:

- Youth Orchestra: Monday 6-7.30pm, Shrewsbury College, SY2 6PR (Grade 3+)
- World Folk Ensemble: Wednesday, 6-7.30pm, Shrewsbury College, SY2 6PR (Grade 3+)
- Riffs – Rock and Pop: First Saturday of every month, 10am-1pm, Music Centre, SY1 4ND

Telford & Wrekin

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 (NEW) – 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

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

Registration

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



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

Shropshire Music Service celebrates inspiring summer of music-making

Young musicians across Shropshire have enjoyed an inspiring start to the summer, with two major Shropshire Music Service events bringing pupils, teachers, families and schools together through the power of music.

From Monday 8 June to Wednesday 10 June, Shropshire Sings 2026 filled the West Mids Showground with song, energy and celebration as more than 1,100 children from 36 schools across the county performed across three unforgettable evenings.

Audiences of more than 500 at each event enjoyed a lively programme of well-known hits including Jess Glynne's 'Hold My Hand', Oasis's 'Wonderwall' and Miley Cyrus's 'Flowers', before the concerts concluded with the anthem 'Shropshire Sing', newly composed by Shropshire Music Service's Lead Teacher for Performance and Events, Karen Kirkland.

The festival atmosphere was supported by glorious sunshine, enthusiastic audiences and a live band made up of Shropshire Music Service staff. The 300-plus strong choirs were conducted by Domenica Porrett and Elaine Buckland MBE, helping pupils experience the excitement of singing as part of a large county-wide ensemble.

The impact on young performers was clear. One pupil said: "I loved singing and dancing to all the songs," while another added: "It was great to sing with all the other schools."

Karen Ball, Head at Much Wenlock Primary, said:

"We had a super time at Shropshire Sings this year. Thank you very much for all the time and effort it takes to put it together."

Marie Jones, Music Lead at St. Andrews Primary, Shifnal reflected on the lasting value of the experience:

"Our staff and children had an amazing time. So many children talked about the experience today in our choir practise and will remember singing together on a sunny afternoon for years to come. Thank you for the wonderful organisation, the band and the enthusiastic conducting that led us through the concert so well. I want to thank you for creating the opportunity for us as staff to still enjoy these experiences with our children: these are the moments to treasure."



continued >

Benedetti Foundation

The celebration of singing was followed by another landmark opportunity for young musicians when Shropshire Music Service welcomed the Benedetti Foundation for a week-long residency beginning on Monday 15 June 2026. The residency brought high-quality music-making opportunities to pupils, teachers and young string players across the county, beginning with creative workshops in primary schools around Shropshire.



As part of the week, Shropshire Music Service instrumental tutors also took part in an INSET session with a particular focus on string teaching, gaining fresh ideas and practical approaches to support their work with young musicians.

The residency culminated on Friday with the Big String Day at Shrewsbury School, where more than 50 string students worked alongside the Benedetti team on two specially composed pieces before performing for parents and families. The day gave young players, including beginners, the chance to build confidence, develop ensemble skills and experience the thrill of playing as part of a larger group.

Feedback

For families, the benefits of these opportunities were striking. One parent said:

"We just wanted to express how wonderful it was to see our daughter play in the string ensemble today. We couldn't believe how confident she looked playing alongside everyone, even though she is only a beginner violinist. She got so much out of the whole experience – she was buzzing when she came home and we could see how proud she was of herself for taking part. And that was just a week on after performing in Shropshire Sings! Thank you so much for all that you do to enrich the music education in Shropshire."

Experiences that support young players and teachers

Together, Shropshire Sings and the Benedetti Foundation residency demonstrate the breadth and ambition of music education in the county, from massed singing opportunities that bring schools together to specialist instrumental experiences that support young players and teachers.

Shropshire Music Service is proud to work in partnership with schools and organisations such as the Benedetti Foundation to provide high-quality, curriculum-aligned musical opportunities that inspire confidence, creativity and connection.



Case Study: The Grove School and Whole Class Instrumental Tuition



The Grove School and Sixth Form in Market Drayton has introduced whole class instrumental tuition for its Year 7 cohort as a key part of its music curriculum.

The programme is embedded within curriculum study, ensuring that all pupils experience practical music-making as part of their classroom learning rather than as an additional enrichment activity. Each student receives a term of instrumental tuition on either brass, strings or woodwind, giving them the opportunity to develop practical skills while deepening their understanding of musical concepts.

Through this tuition, pupils are able to study rhythm, pitch and duration in a highly practical and engaging way. By learning through instruments, students build their musical technique, skill and knowledge in context, applying what they learn directly through performance and ensemble work.

This approach helps The Grove School to create strong musical foundations early in Key Stage 3 and supports a more coherent progression route through the wider music curriculum and on to Key Stage 4 and 5 study.

Alongside this academic ambition, the school also sees the programme as the foundation for creating an orchestra, building a culture in which ensemble playing becomes a visible and valued part of school life.

The Grove School is committed to ensuring that pupils can continue their musical journey after their initial term of tuition. To support this, the school will be using pupil premium funding to provide access to small group lessons for targeted students, helping to remove financial barriers and sustain participation. This continuation pathway is intended to strengthen retention, develop confidence and ensure that pupils who show interest and promise are able to keep progressing.

A key strength of this project is the leadership behind it. The school's Headteacher, Mitch Allsopp is very supportive of music and the arts, recognising their importance within a broad and balanced education.

Head of Creative Arts, Emma Brundrett is passionate about supporting her students and creating a vibrant musical community within the school:

"The Grove School has worked closely with Shropshire Music Service for several years, and I was delighted when Mitch proposed whole-class instrumental lessons for Year 7. All students will now have the opportunity to experience playing an orchestral instrument. This initiative has strengthened our partnership and enabled us to develop a curriculum offer that inspires students to learn instruments they may not otherwise encounter, with a strong commitment to its long-term success."

At The Grove School, students engage in Music well, with many students already having 1:1 lessons in pop-based instruments and forming bands of their own. In the future, this initiative will also give students the confidence to explore orchestral instruments in the same way. Headteacher, Mitch Allsopp recognises the value of this provision, stating:

"Creativity is a driving force for our transformation here at Team Grove, we are delighted that we give our students the chance to learn a musical instrument - for many, it's their first time. The lifelong skills that learning an instrument equips a child with really fits our culture and mission for our students."

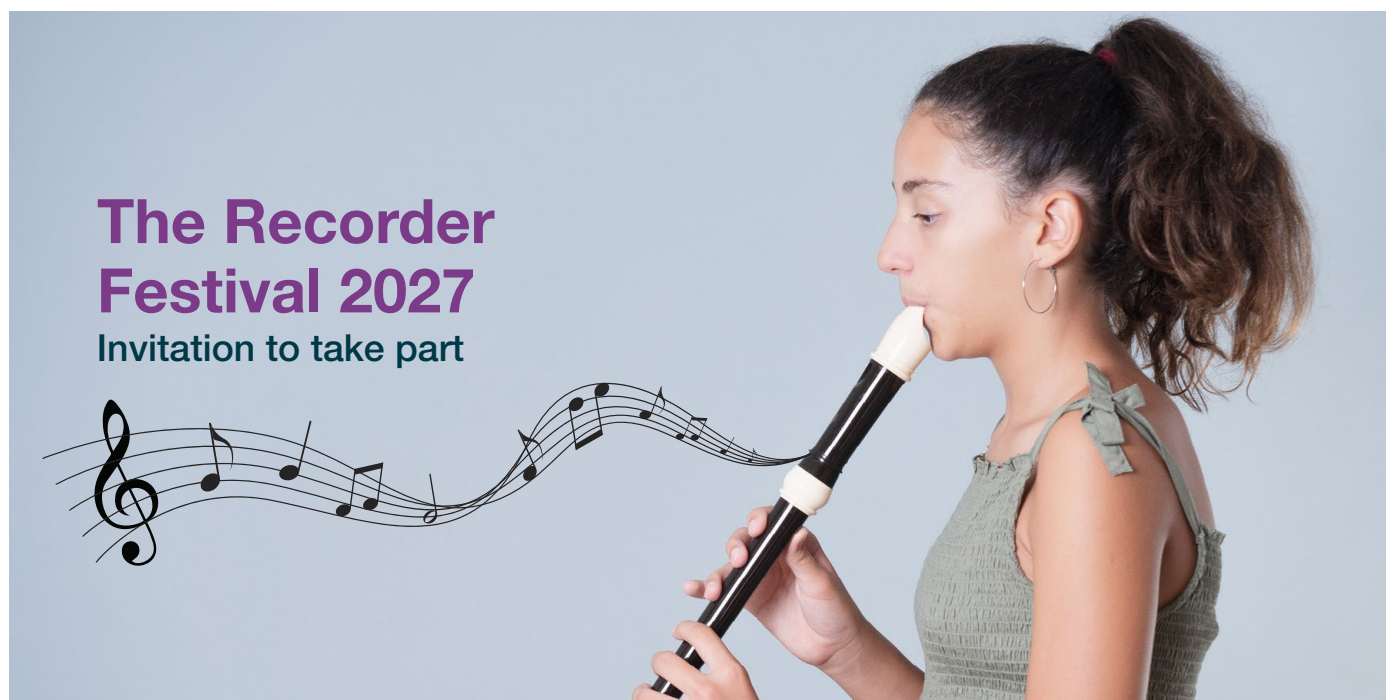
This shared commitment from senior leadership and the music department gives the project a strong foundation and increases its potential for long-term success.

Over the next two years of running the project, The Grove School should be well placed to see its intended outcomes emerge as pupils begin to make their option choices and progress to Key Stage 4. The school expects to see increased technical skill in music, greater confidence in performance and stronger engagement with ensemble playing. In time, this should be reflected in a rise in GCSE music uptake, a clearer progression pathway into post-16 study, and the establishment of a thriving school orchestra.

Instrumental tuition at The Grove School is delivered by Shropshire Music Service, which works closely in partnership with the school to plan provision and deliver individual instrumental lessons alongside the whole class programme.

This partnership is central to the success of the project, combining the school's vision for music education with the specialist expertise and wider opportunities offered by the music service. The Grove School has already demonstrated its commitment to music-making on a wider scale, having previously hosted Shropshire Sings Around the County, welcoming primary schools from around the area to perform in the singing festival. That history of collaboration reflects the strength of the relationship between the school and Shropshire Music Service and underlines the important role this partnership plays in creating high-quality, sustainable musical opportunities for young people.





The Recorder Festival 2027

Invitation to take part

Telford

Date and Venue TBC

Stoke-on-Trent

9th and 10th March 2027
The Victoria Hall, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent

Tamworth

16th and 18th March 2027
The Coton Centre, Tamworth

Organisation

- ✓ Teachers' Meeting on Thursday 12 November, 4.15-5.15pm on Microsoft Teams.
- ✓ At least one teacher from each school should attend with their recorder and music.
- ✓ One set of repertoire for the massed items will be provided. There will be parts suitable for all levels of players.
- ✓ There is an opportunity for your school to perform individually (maximum time limit of four minutes).
- ✓ Participation fee of £100 will be charged to cover the costs of the festival.

Apply now

Applications must be received by Friday 16th Oct 2026.

Please complete the online [Recorder Festival Application Form 2027](#) or scan the QR code.



Soundpots Case Studies



Case Study One Soundpots Music Leaders

Context

Soundpots needed to develop their workforce and practitioners to deliver Soundpots. They were able to recruit experience early years staff with sound musical knowledge.

Development

Initial training was provided to the new members of the team who were then teamed up with an experienced practitioner to deliver 'team teaching' for a settings project. This allowed for the experienced member of the team to support the newer member but also to empower them to become confident in delivering their own sessions. Time for reflection and development was allowed after each session and this ensured that the development of new staff was effective. Mentoring and coaching was provided throughout this process for all staff as needed.

Success

Fully trained new Soundpots leaders are now delivering sessions with skill and confidence.

"I love delivering Soundpots and the sessions are a highlight of my week. It is amazing to see the confidence of the children and staff both growing together. It is wonderful to allow practitioners the time to see their children in small groups learning through musical activities whilst experiencing the holistic benefits that children need in early years."

Zoe - Soundpots Leader

Key points

- ✓ Time to support new staff is invaluable at the initial stages to ensure they are confident and to maintain the highest standards when delivering the project.
- ✓ Ongoing training through network meetings and National Conference is supportive to leaders with all range of experience as all can benefit from new ideas and learning.
- ✓ Reflective points throughout the project are important to ensure that informed next steps can be taken.



Case Study Two Workforce Development

Context

A key objective of the project was to ensure that staff in settings were given the skills and confidence in delivering music based activities and supporting children to access these.

Development

Settings were asked as part of their project to ensure that members of staff supporting the sessions each week, where possible the same staff with the same groups. This allowed development of confidence and skills. Staff were also provided with training at the appropriate point during their project. This training was essential to build on what was required for them to be able to develop their skills and abilities in delivering musical activities and sessions. All training was tailored to the needs of staff, settings and children.

Success

Staff have planned their own successive sessions for after the project and now ready to continue the success of Soundpots confidently and skillfully.

"We are so excited to carry on Soundpots after the project. We have been able to develop our own confidence from watching Zoe and working with her. The training was invaluable in preparing us to set up our own sessions to follow on from the project. She has provided us with the knowledge, resources and confidence that we can continue this important work with the children."

Early Years Lead

Key points

- ✓ It is important to consider staff starting points and ensure that they can build confidence alongside their skills.
- ✓ Giving staff a knowledge and resource base is key to empowering them to deliver musical activities.
- ✓ Understanding the holistic impact of Soundpots helps team members appreciate the benefits of weekly sessions for children at every age and stage.



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:

- Wednesday 21st October, 16:00
- Monday 8th February, 16:00
- Wednesday 26th May, 16:00

Book Now

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

Stoke-on-Trent Young Musician 2027

Application deadline: 27th November 2026

Preliminary rounds: The Bridge Centre - 26th January 2027 (Strings & Piano),
28th January 2027 (Woodwind & Brass), 29th January 2027 (Vocal & Open)

Junior & Senior Final: The Bridge Centre - 22nd April 2027

Eligibility

You should meet at least one of the following categories: You are a resident of Stoke-on-Trent, you are in full time education within the City boundaries and you are a member of one of the City Music Service ensembles.

Age categories

Junior - up to and including Year 8 in the 2026/27 academic year
Senior - Year 9 to Year 13 in the 2026/27 academic year

Apply now: Complete the online form [here](#), scan the QR code or email a clear copy of your music and any accompaniment or mp3 backing track to citymusicservice@stoke.gov.uk



FREE Piano Masterclass

We are fortunate to be hosting another piano masterclass with funding from Arts Council England through the Stoke Classics Programme.

Schools can apply for free tickets to watch three local students take part in the masterclass with pianist Clare Hammond. The masterclass will take place on Thursday 18th March 2027 at the REP Theatre in Stoke-on-Trent from 10.30-12.00.

Get your FREE tickets now

If you would like free tickets for pupils then please email citymusicservice@stoke.gov.uk stating the number of tickets you require.

MusicShare Big Sing 2027



Booking is now open for next year's MusicShare Big Sing taking place at The Victoria Hall, Hanley on Tuesday 22nd June and Wednesday 23rd June 2027.

- KS1 / City Songbirds, 10:00-11:15
- KS2 / City Voices, 13:00-14:15

Apply now

To apply please complete the online form [here](#) or scan the QR code.



Lichfield Cathedral Concerts

2026

- Tuesday 17th November - for year groups 3 to 6 SOLD OUT!
- Wednesday 18th November - for Secondary schools in Stafford and Stoke on Trent for any age from Year 7.

2027

- 9th March - one concert for year groups 3 to 6.
- 10th March - one concert for SEND schools for year 3 to secondary in Stafford and Stoke-on-Trent.
- 22nd and 23rd June - for year groups 3 to 6.





In Harmony

This summer, the four In Harmony schools based their end of year concerts on the theme of Arts from Around the World.

The four schools benefitted from dance workshops from professional dance artists, exploring African Dance with Rhythm Nation and Bhangra with SAMPAD. This was the basis for the music they then learnt in their orchestras through the summer term. All schools performed amazing concerts for families and carers.

Old Park Primary also incorporated dance in another ambitious In Harmony first! Each 80 piece year-group orchestra provided the musical accompaniment for another year-group to dance to, exploring the continents through Streetdance (North America), Traditional Greek Dance (Europe), Bhangra (Asia), West African storytelling dance (Africa) and Carnival (South America). The teachers and children choreographed their own dances, and music was specially arranged to accompany it.

Thirteen children from Hollinswood Primary, Old Park Primary and St Augustine's Catholic Academy attended a special event with Foden's Brass Band at The Victoria Hall. The children rehearsed a special fanfare alongside Foden's musicians with which they then opened the concert.



The children had a brilliant time performing on stage with the band with one child exclaiming: "This was the best day of my life!"

Harrison, a Year 5 flute player from Telford, wowed the audience when he played as part of the Telford Young Musician competition in May. After submitting a video to enter, he was invited to perform at the finals at Charlton School, where he performed the theme tune from Swan Lake from memory. Children from Years 1 & 2 at St Maria Goretti and St Augustine's Catholic Academies participated in the Big Sing event at The Victoria Hall in June. This was preceded by children in years 3-6 participating in the WCET performances at the same venue on recorders, brass, percussion and strings.

For more information about the programme, visit www.inharmonytelfordstoke.org

Upcoming Events for Staffordshire Schools

Christmas Festival 2026 – Lichfield Cathedral

Celebrate the festive season with an uplifting evening of music and song, featuring children and young people from Staffordshire schools and Music Service Groups. Audiences can enjoy a varied programme of traditional Christmas favourites and seasonal performances.

Moorlands Music Centre Concert

An opportunity to showcase the fantastic achievements of the Moorlands Music Centre's instrumental ensembles and vocal groups. Join us for an evening of music performed by talented young musicians from across the area.

Lichfield & Rugeley Music Centre Concert

Featuring performances from the instrumental and vocal ensembles of Lichfield & Rugeley Music Centre, this concert highlights the dedication, progress and musical talent of young people from across the district.

Tamworth Music Centre Concert

A celebration of music-making from across Tamworth Music Centre, bringing together instrumentalists and singers in a varied programme that reflects the breadth of musical opportunities available to young people.

Festival of Christmas Music 2026 – Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

One of Staffordshire's most popular festive events, the Festival of Christmas Music brings together hundreds of young singers in a spectacular celebration of Christmas. Featuring traditional carols, festive favourites and special guest performances, it is a wonderful way to begin the holiday season.

Stafford Music Centre Concert

Showcasing the work of Stafford Music Centre's ensembles and choirs, this concert celebrates the commitment and achievements of young musicians through a diverse and entertaining musical programme.

Newcastle Music Centre Concert

An evening of outstanding performances from the instrumental and vocal groups of Newcastle Music Centre, demonstrating the enthusiasm, talent and progress of Staffordshire's young musicians.

Cannock Music Centre Concert

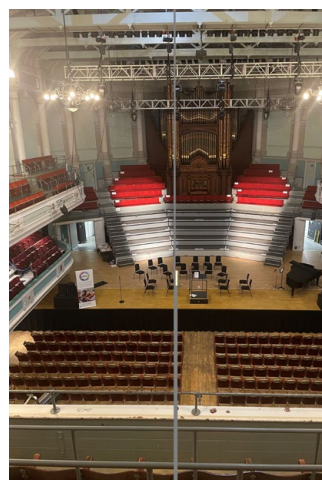
A chance to see the talented performers of Cannock Music Centre in action, with a programme featuring a range of instrumental and vocal ensembles performing music to suit all tastes.

Burton Music Centre Concert

Celebrate the musical achievements of Burton Music Centre's young instrumentalists and singers as they perform an exciting programme showcasing their work throughout the year.

Virtual Christmas Sing-Along

Bring your school community together for a festive online celebration. Featuring favourite Christmas songs and seasonal cheer, this interactive event allows schools across Staffordshire to sing along and share in the joy of Christmas from their own classrooms.



Find out more about what's on [here](#)



Movies and Video Games in Concert

On 29th May 2026, fourteen of our Young Sounds Connect students, accompanied by family members attended the Movies and Video Games Concert at Symphony Hall, Birmingham, performed by CBSO.

The programme was book-ended by music from the greatest living movie composer, John Williams, in the form of extracts from the first Harry Potter movie and the last of the final Star Wars trilogy. The film fantasy theme came from music by the likes of Danny Elfman, Hans Zimmer, Howard Shore, Micheal Kamen and many more, together with some Studio Ghibli extracts from award-winning composer Joe Hisiahi. From the world of TV, an extract from global success story Game of Thrones and representing video games, the Japanese maestro Nobuo Uematsu for his brilliant contribution to the Final Fantasy series, all with the strand of taking the listener on the journey through a world of fantasy.

To perform this extensive, demanding musical program, our Young Sounds students were treated to seeing and hearing one of the largest orchestral ensembles possible, including nine percussionists, harp, contra-bassoon, keyboard, piano, electric guitar and electric bass guitar. Experiencing this performance in one of the worlds finest concert halls, truly was a memorable experience for our students and families.

"The concert was very inspiring, and I enjoyed the music selection. My favourite piece was the Game of Thrones theme. I was mostly looking at the strings section and noticed how invested one of the musicians was in the music. I was surprised there was someone playing an electric guitar in the orchestra". - George

"The thing I enjoyed most about the concert was seeing (and hearing) music from films like Mission Impossible, that I know well, performed in real life. My favourite piece of music was Pirates of the Caribbean. Because I play the violin, the section I kept my eyes on the most was the strings. I really noticed their posture being good! I also enjoyed watching all parts of the orchestra". - Iona

Movies and video games quiz - how many can you get?

1. Which composer is famous for their work on the Studio Ghibli films?
2. Which film composer has been awarded the most Academy Awards?
3. What is the best-selling video game of all-time?
4. Which actor is famous for doing their own film stunts?
5. Which composer has written the music for nearly every Tim Burton movie?
6. Which instrument plays the main theme from the Game of Thrones?
7. What musical genre does Rupert Gregson-Williams fuse with orchestral music in the Wonder Woman soundtrack?

Answers: 1. Joe Hisiahi 2. John Williams 3. Minecrafft 4. Tom Cruise 5. Danny Elfman 6. The cello 7. Rock music



Friends of Staffordshire's Young Musicians (FOSYM) Charity Update 2026

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



Friends of Staffordshire's
Young Musicians



Singing for Health: a new stage for Newcastle-under-Lyme's young performers

This term, the Newcastle-under-Lyme LIF Children & Young People's Coalition is launching Singing for Health.

This is a brand-new programme giving Year 7 secondary school pupils from across the Borough the chance to learn, rehearse and perform one song together, then take home their very own professionally filmed music video.

The experience starts with two taster sessions from a trained singing teacher from Lichfield Cathedral School, before pupils' own music teachers take over in school, using materials the coach provides. Schools will then come together for one big joint rehearsal, before the whole cohort performs live at a central Newcastle venue in front of the cameras and microphones.

Behind the fun, there's a serious purpose. Singing is a brilliant way to build breath control and support a healthy respiratory system, and it's especially valuable for young people living with asthma.

Places are limited to 10-15 pupils per participating school in this first phase, with a waiting list held for any spare capacity. Schools taking part are asked to support pupils with in-school lessons and practices, arrange transport to the joint rehearsal and performance (both during the school day), and confirm a refundable deposit of £150.

Get involved

Secondary schools across Newcastle-under-Lyme wanting to get involved should contact Emma Colclough, Programme Lead, at emma.colclough@nhs.net



Music Education Solutions®



Lead Schools
Networking Day

New national network for Lead Schools

Music Education Solutions® are inviting all lead schools for music across the country to an inaugural Lead Schools Networking Day in Birmingham on Friday 2nd October from 10am-2pm.

During the day, each school will have the chance to present, as formally or informally as they would like, their approach to supporting other schools, and there will also be a national picture update from Dr Liz Stafford. There will be ample opportunity to network, learn from, and make connections with other Lead Schools during the day, which includes lunch and refreshments. Towards the end of the event schools will discuss if and how they want the Lead Schools Network to proceed in the future, so that schools can continue to support each other on a national level, taking into account challenges around budget and time!

Find out more

To find out more and book your place click [here](#).

Call for content from primary teachers, can you help?

Music Education Solutions® are always on the lookout for articles for Primary Music Magazine, and guests for the Primary Music in Conversation podcast. If you would like to write for the magazine, or appear on the podcast, please contact admin@musiceducationsolutions.co.uk to discuss your ideas.

You can find the podcast [here](#)



You can find the magazine [here](#)



New CPD programme led by Professor Martin Fautley

Are you teaching curriculum music to KS1, KS2 or KS3 classes and looking for help and support with assessment?

Music Education Solutions® are delighted to announce that Professor Martin Fautley has joined their team to deliver a brand new CPD programme the **Classroom Music Assessment Certificate**. This blended learning programme begins on Thursday 1st October, and consists of 6 live webinar sessions supported by online learning materials designed to help you consider both the theory and practice of assessment, and relate this to your own teaching context. You will critically evaluate how assessment functions in your own school learning how to develop and improve your assessment practices for the benefit of your pupils.

The six taught sessions are:

1. Introduction to assessment in music education
2. Uses and purposes of assessment in music education
3. Summative assessment and assessment data
4. Validity and reliability of assessment
5. Assessment as a curriculum planning tool
6. Assessment in your own context

Find out more

To find out more and book your place click [here](#).



Marches Academy Summer Term Events

Belgium Music Tour

Pupils of the Marches School went on a Music Tour to Belgium in May. Bands, Orchestra, Choir soloists and vocalists performed in the Band Stand in the centre of Oostend as well as outside St. Martin's Cathedral, Ypres. Pupils had an excellent time exploring Burges and the rides at Bellewearde theme park!

London African Gospel Choir

It was fantastic to have 150 singers from Marches Trust Schools come together at St. Oswald's Oswestry for an African Gospel Singing workshop! Thank you all the pupils who came along from Kinnerley, Lower Heath, Oakmeadow, Marches, Grove, Idsall and SJT! You were all brilliant!

Hafren Theatre

The Marches Youth Choir perform at Hafren Theatre with the Montgomery County Music Festival Chorus and Professional Orchestra led by Patrick Larley - 4th July. Concert Conductor and Composer Patrick Larley: *"Thank you so much was your immense contribution to the success of Saturday evening's concert. The choir were a real credit to you and the school."*

Chorus Master and Concert Co-ordinator Stella Gratrix: *"The behaviour of these students was exemplary. I think they had fun, musically they performed brilliantly but also they were polite, courteous and impressed the professional conductor and musicians that were there."*

Professional Orchestral Player - Violinist - Caroline Nowotarski *"The choir were outstanding, some of the orchestra were nearly in tears. I just felt compelled to let you know."*

Marches Academy Trust Orchestral Day

90 Pupils from the Marches Trust gather at Shrewsbury School Barnes Theatre for a day of instrumental music. All of our high schools in the trust as well as some of our primaries joined for a fantastic day of musicianship! We started with sectional rehearsals in the morning and then all came together after lunch! Thank you to our fantastic music teachers and per team!



Pupil comments...

"Thank you for the amazing opportunity of taking us to Belgium - what an amazing experience it was!"
Connie Wilson, Year 8

"A fantastic experience with great music, cultural learning, and a welcoming atmosphere. Receiving a special shout-out made it even more memorable. I would definitely go again." Emily Hulett, Year 10

"We had a wonderful time performing with such a lovely group of musicians, the choir and orchestra were so kind and talented it was an honour to perform with them all, I loved it!" Lucy Hawley, A-level Pupil

"Performing alongside an orchestra, choir and professional soloists was an unforgettable experience that inspired me and strengthened my confidence." Franki Porter, A-level Pupil



Staffordshire Virtual School

As we reflect on another fantastic year of music across Staffordshire Virtual School, it is wonderful to celebrate the achievements, growth and enthusiasm shown by our children and young people. This year has seen a significant increase in participation in music lessons and musical activities, with more children choosing to engage in opportunities that develop their confidence, creativity and wellbeing. Through our Music Entitlement offer – see below, our children continue to have access to music lessons in school, ensuring that every young person can explore and develop their musical interests and talents.

Celebrating Musical Success

Our music events and workshops have been a tremendous success, providing children with opportunities to learn new skills, work alongside professional musicians and experience the enjoyment of making music together. These sessions have encouraged creativity, built resilience and helped many young people discover a new passion. A particular highlight of the year has been the creation of our very first orchestra. Bringing together young musicians from different schools and backgrounds, the orchestra has provided a unique opportunity for children to perform as part of an ensemble, develop teamwork skills and experience the excitement of making music collectively. Seeing our young musicians perform together for the first time was a proud moment for everyone involved.

Music Ambassador Leading the Way

We are also delighted with the progress made by our Music Ambassador, who has continued to grow in confidence throughout the year. From supporting the younger children at our events, to performing in front of audiences, they have demonstrated how music can empower young people and help them develop valuable leadership and communication skills. Their willingness to perform and share their musical journey has inspired others to get involved.

Increasing Participation

The growing number of children engaging in music lessons in school, now 60% and workshops demonstrates the positive impact that music can have. Whether learning an instrument for the first time, taking part in a workshop or performing at an event, our children have embraced opportunities to develop their skills and confidence.



Looking ahead

We are incredibly excited about the opportunities planned for the next academic year.

Our Music Entitlement Offer

Staffordshire Virtual School and the Music Service are continuing to work together to give all Children in Care the entitlement to a fully funded music lesson through 2026-27.

All Children in Care in Years 4, 5 and 6 have access to this funded entitlement and can start or continue lessons on a musical instrument, or the voice, completely free of charge. Funding is provided by Staffordshire Virtual School for these lessons and the Music Service provides the teaching staff, loan of instruments and free access to music groups across the county.

“Many young people have progressed from being reluctant performers to sharing their talents with others, highlighting the importance of providing accessible and inclusive musical experiences”.

Telford & Wrekin Music opens a new home at Holmer Lake Primary School



Sam Newth, Cllr. Shirley Reynolds, Tracey Stirling and Harv Kumar.

Telford & Wrekin Music has opened a new Music Centre at Holmer Lake Primary School, providing a dedicated base for children and young people to develop their musical interests and talents.

The service delivers instrumental and vocal tuition in around 90% of schools across the borough and offers lessons on a wide range of instruments, including guitar, piano, drums, brass, strings and woodwind. The new centre provides greater flexibility, with lessons available during and outside the school day, as well as at weekends, helping more children, including those who are home educated or have SEND, access high-quality music education.

Supported by Arts Council funding, lessons remain affordable while contributing to Telford & Wrekin Council's 10 by 10 initiative, which encourages every child to learn an instrument before the age of 10. Through music, the service helps young people build confidence, creativity and wellbeing, while fostering a lifelong love of music.

"Music plays an important role in helping children develop confidence, creativity and self-expression, and we are proud to provide a base that will support even more young people from across the Borough to experience the benefits of music."

Harv Kumar, Headteacher, Holmer Lake Primary School

"The new centre is a fantastic addition and supports our commitment to giving children and young people the best possible opportunities to learn, develop new skills and reach their full potential."

Councillor Shirley Reynolds, Cabinet Member for Children, Young People, Education, Employment and Skills

Telford & Wrekin Music enriches the lives of children and young people, helping to build creativity, confidence and wellbeing through access to high-quality music education close to home.

Find out more

For more information about lessons and how to get involved, visit Telford & Wrekin Music. People can apply for lessons online.



Student spotlight

A Change of instrument, a world of difference

When Kai first started learning guitar, his tutor noticed that his natural playing style was better suited to bass guitar. Drawing on his expertise, he recognised similarities to the technique of legendary Motown bassist James Jamerson and encouraged Kai to make the switch.

Since then, Kai has flourished, making excellent progress and developing into a talented young musician. His story highlights the impact that skilled instrumental teachers can have in identifying individual strengths, building confidence, and helping young people find the instrument that best matches their abilities and potential.



MUSIC CONFERENCES 2026/27

Shropshire | Staffordshire | Stoke-on-Trent | Telford & Wrekin

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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.

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Discover Sparkyard!

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

St Maria Goretti Catholic Academy

Whole School Concert

The music curriculum and whole-school performance highlights at St Maria Goretti Catholic Academy in Stoke-on-Trent showcase a highly active music department that gives all students the opportunity to sing, play instruments, and perform.

Below are a few photos from the Whole School Music Concert that took place over the summer...





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