



Hertfordshire
Music Service

School Engagement Strategy Hertfordshire Music Hub

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“Music education opens doors that help children pass from school into the world around them - a world of work, culture, intellectual activity, and human involvement.”

- Gerald R. Ford

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In this strategy document, reference is made to 'schools' and by this we mean all state-funded educational establishments including academies, trusts, colleges, alternative provision, and special schools.

Hertfordshire Music Hub will collaborate with Lead Schools, partners and regional teams to forge meaningful connections with all schools, ensuring every school knows how to access support and resources to achieve musical excellence.

Introduction

As the Hub Lead Organisation (HLO), Hertfordshire Music Service (HMS) aims to improve lives by creating diverse musical learning opportunities, nurturing happiness, and confidence. Our vision is that all children and young people in Hertfordshire, regardless of their background or circumstances, have the opportunity to discover or develop their unique musical voice and express themselves through the language of music.

The National Plan for Music Education (NPME) 2022, emphasises the role of Hubs in supporting school music improvement, embedding stronger practice, and supporting effective professional development for teachers. The plan emphasises schools' central roles in providing high-quality music education for children and young people expecting schools to deliver provision across three interlinked areas, curriculum music, instrumental and vocal lessons, and ensemble membership and musical events and opportunities.

While the NPME is clear that schools are responsible for delivering music well, Hubs will support and empower their schools to excel in providing high-quality music.

Context

School music engagement is about creating a dynamic and supportive environment where all students can explore, learn, and grow through the power of music.

The local context of music education in Hertfordshire schools ranges widely from nationally renowned, outstanding music departments to settings with very little support, expertise or musical engagement.

One of the greatest concerns raised by head teachers about music teaching in schools is the lack of confidence among teachers in delivering music education, particularly in primary schools. Many teachers feel they do not have the necessary skills or training to teach music effectively, which can lead to inconsistent quality and limited time allocated to music, if any. Apart from reduction in curriculum time allocated to music and the impact of the English Baccalaureate (EBacc), another major issue in secondary schools is the challenging recruitment market for experienced music teachers and therefore an increased need for more support and professional development for less experienced teachers.

It is challenging for the music hub to support school music education due to factors such as resource limitations and a wide range of school need. While the music hub plays a crucial role in enhancing music education, addressing these complex and multifaceted challenges requires collaboration with schools as well as a wide range of partners.

Through the Hertfordshire Music Hub School Engagement Strategy, we will focus on providing a 'one-stop shop' for schools to self-serve and find effective and relevant support to deliver the National Plan for Music Education (NPME).

By implementing this strategy, the hub will collaborate with regional teams, partners, and other stakeholders to forge meaningful connections with schools, ensuring every school knows how to access support and resources to achieve musical excellence.

Current Picture

Our dedicated team of educators and musicians bring a wealth of expertise and passion to every programme we offer. We have already established strong partnerships with schools, teaching school hubs, and other educational support partners, fostering a collaborative environment that enhances the educational experience for students.

Strengths

The Hertfordshire Music Hub is renowned for its comprehensive and inclusive approaches to music education, offering a diverse array of programmes and activities designed to engage students at all key stages. As the HLO, HMS aims to ensure that every child has the opportunity to explore and develop their musical talents by providing high-quality instruction, robust support for schools, and continuous professional development for music educators. Additionally, HMS operates ten music centres across the county, further enhancing the quality and reach of the Hub music education programmes.

Gaps and Opportunities

Understanding Need

Currently, our understanding of school needs is limited due to consistently low response rates to our needs analysis surveys. By conducting surveys during school music engagement visits in each region (refer to the Regional Engagement Plan for details), we aim to gather more comprehensive and representative data. This approach should enhance our understanding of the specific needs and challenges faced by schools, allowing us to tailor our music education provision more effectively.

Current understanding from recent school visits shows that many schools are not engaging with the National Plan for Music Education (NPME) and have not completed a School Music Development Plan (SMDP) or published it on their website. This gap in awareness and effective engagement with the NPME means that many schools and educators may not fully understand its objectives and benefits, leading to inconsistent implementation. To address this, it is crucial to encourage the completion of the toolkit audit to inform and ensure a comprehensive understanding of the NPME. Additionally, there is a need for close monitoring of the adoption and implementation of the NPME across schools, along with ongoing support and feedback, to ensure its guidelines are consistently and effectively integrated into school music development plans.

Training

Registration and Attendance data reveals that many educators do not access workshops, training sessions, and online courses that focus on enhancing teaching skills, curriculum implementation, and inclusive practices. To address this, it is essential to expand these opportunities and foster collaborative networks. CPD support through our partners will continue to be offered and developed to empower music teachers with the knowledge and resources required to deliver exceptional music education, ultimately benefiting students across all schools.

Classroom Instrumental Learning

Inconsistency of classroom instrumental learning (First Access) across schools has been reported to the HLO music team. Variations in instructional practices and resources can lead to inconsistent learning experiences for students. To address this, it is essential to review the

offer, standardising instructional practices and resources, ensuring that all students receive a consistent and high-quality music education regardless of their school or teacher.

Funding and Advocacy

Data gathered from our current school visits reveals a significant impact of limited funding on music department budgets. In primary schools, reported budgets shared to date range from £0 to £500, while in secondary schools, the highest budget from current data is £1,500. This limited funding severely restricts continuous professional development as well as the resources available for music education, including instruments, materials, and extracurricular activities. As a result, many schools struggle to provide a comprehensive music education programme, which affects students' opportunities to engage with and benefit from music education.

To address this gap, it is essential to advocate for increased funding and support for school music departments from a variety of sources. Ensuring adequate financial resources will enable schools to enhance their music education offerings, providing students with the tools and opportunities they need to develop their musical skills and appreciation.

Strategic Aims

Collaboration and Relationships

- Develop and sustain responsive and collaborative relationships and engagement with all schools, detailed through Regional Engagement Plans.
- Collaborate closely with lead schools, teaching hubs, HfL Education and other partners to provide comprehensive support to all schools.

Empowerment

- Ensure that every school in the county knows how to access support and resources to achieve musical excellence.
- Empower schools to effectively utilise the Music Hub's schools Development Toolkit which includes guiding schools towards appropriate support for delivering a high-quality music curriculum that aligns with the Model Music Curriculum (MMC).

Professional Development

- Facilitate effective and targeted CPD for music leaders and teachers as well as establish and maintain networks with schools and educators.

Access and Musical Outcomes

- Ensure all students, regardless of their background, abilities, or circumstances have access to musical instruments and equipment, including accessible and adapted/adaptive instruments, where possible and appropriate, for young people with SEND.
- Ensure all students, regardless of their background, abilities, or circumstances have clear and accessible pathways for musical progression.
- Ensure every student has the opportunity to engage in high-quality singing activities.
- Create a comprehensive and progressive First Access offer with guides, training materials, and digital content.
- Facilitate regular and varied performance opportunities both within and beyond the school setting.

Strategic Delivery

Providing a 'one-stop shop' for schools to either self-serve or be signposted to effective and relevant support through the Hub's dedicated staff and the HMS School Music Development Toolkit to be accessed via the 'School's Area' on the Hub's webpage.

Schools' Area Webpage

The schools' area of our webpage operates as a single point of access, holding all relevant information, hosting the School Music Development Toolkit, a school's audit tool, school's newsletter, important publications and other essential resources that keep schools up to date. For more detailed information, please refer to the School's Area on our website:

[Schools' area \(hertsmusicservice.org.uk\)](https://www.hertsmusicservice.org.uk/schools-area)

Hub Music Visits

Face-to-face school music visits are a vital part of the Music Hub's school engagement strategy. The Music Hub follows a three-year school music visit cycle, offering structured and comprehensive support to all schools within Hertfordshire. This initiative is co-ordinated by the Head of Participation and School Music and delivered by the regional teams. For more detailed information, please refer to the [HMS Process and Qs for School Engagement visits.docx](#)

School Music Development Toolkit

At the heart of the Hertfordshire Music Hub's local school support plan for music education sits the Hertfordshire School Music Development Toolkit.

<https://www.hertsmusicservice.org.uk/schools-area/building-a-high-quality-music-education.aspx>.

Implementing School Music Development Plans (SMDPs) can be a rewarding yet challenging endeavour for schools. The Head of Participation and School Music, along with regional teams and dedicated partners, will encourage and support schools to utilise the Hertfordshire School Music Development Toolkit. This toolkit is designed to assist schools in formulating comprehensive SMDPs. It offers practical resources to facilitate the process, ensuring that high-quality music education is thoroughly integrated into the school environment. The toolkit includes templates for structuring the music development plan effectively, along with examples of exemplary music education practices to guide schools. Additionally, it emphasises the importance of evaluating the impact of the music development plan, providing guidance on how to review and refine the plan for continuous improvement.

Promoting the use of the audit tool in the Hertfordshire School Music Development Toolkit will support schools in understanding and meeting the expectations of the National Plan for Music Education (NPME). This comprehensive audit tool assesses not only the musical skills and knowledge of staff but also the entire music curriculum, co- and extra-curricular activities, as well as all other components outlined in the NPME. It focuses on key areas such as intent, implementation, and impact, helping schools to reflect on their current music provision and identify strengths and areas for development. By aligning with the NPME the audit ensures that the school's music development plan adheres to national standards and expectations.

Partnerships and Training

The Head of Participation and School Music will continue to seek, establish and maintain suitable and effective partnerships to provide relevant and effective support to schools. Supported by the regional teams, schools will be signposted to a range of professional development opportunities designed to enhance the skills and knowledge of music educators. Professional development will be offered online, in hybrid formats, and face-to-face for both specialist and non-specialist music teachers.

Additionally, we will create and maintain networking opportunities tailored for Early Years, Primary, SEND, Secondary, and cross-phase settings. For more detailed information please visit [School CPD](#).

The Hertfordshire Music Hub is currently working with a wide range of partners to support schools in delivering high-quality music education. These partnerships include collaborations with schools, teaching hubs, Herts for Learning, music curriculum specialists, alternative provision, digital resourcing, and various other organisations. Through these extensive partnerships, and by working with the new Lead schools, the Music Hub will aim to provide comprehensive support and resources, ensuring that all students have access to exceptional music education opportunities. Additionally, we will actively seek to expand our network of partners and will engage parents, carers, families, local artists, and community centres in music-related activities, fostering a supportive and inclusive community for music education.

Equitable Access

To ensure equitable access to high-quality music education for all students, regardless of their background or abilities, we will increase understanding and adoption of inclusive practices. This includes offering financial assistance for instrument and vocal lessons to eligible students from low-income families, ensuring that all students have access to the necessary materials and opportunities to participate in music education, including accessible and adapted/adaptive instruments, where possible and appropriate, for young people with SEND. We will also work with schools and our partners to remove barriers to participation by addressing issues such as geographic location and availability of specialist music teachers. By promoting equity, we aim to create a music education landscape where every student can engage with and benefit from high-quality music education. For more detailed information please visit [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy \(2022 - 2025\)](#).

Monitoring and Evaluation

Effective monitoring and evaluation are crucial to the success of the School Music Engagement Strategy. By systematically tracking progress and assessing the impact of our initiatives, we can ensure that our goals are being met and identify areas for continuous improvement.

Measuring the success of programmes and initiatives.

School Music Visits

The Hertfordshire Music Hub's school music visit schedule is maintained via a shared School Engagement Tracker, which records past visit data. Collaborative efforts between the Head of Participation and School Music and Regional Teams prioritise school music visits based on historical data analysis, with a particular focus on schools that have not been visited in the last three years. The outcomes of these visits are documented in the school engagement tracker, and actions and follow-up visits are prioritised and arranged accordingly. Regional Engagement Plans will be updated as needed with specific actions based on learning from school music visits.

Targets

- Complete 180 school music visits across the county in 2024-25 to support HLO growth target.
- Gain a clearer understanding of school needs by all 180 schools completing the 2024 Have Your Say school survey as a part of the school music visit.

Training and Support Feedback

Feedback on all training and support received by asking the following 3 questions:

1. Which specific sessions or materials from the CPD/support did you find most informative and why?
2. Were there any topics or techniques you felt were not covered adequately? If so, please specify which ones and what additional information or training you would like to see included in future sessions.
3. Can you provide specific examples of how you plan to implement the skills and knowledge gained from this CPD/support in your work?

Assessment of the impact of training on teaching practice (e.g. Early Years Program and Primary Music Matters curriculum support) will be done via classroom observations and teacher self-assessments.

School Music Development Plans: Data extracted from published summaries will be captured within the School Engagement Tracker and analysed to further inform strategic planning and delivery.

Through rigorous evaluation of feedback and data, we aim to maintain accountability and transparency through regular reporting to stakeholders recognising the contributions of schools, Lead Schools and other partners. Regularly reviewing and updating the strategy based on feedback and evaluation findings.

Conclusion

The Hertfordshire Music Hub School Music Engagement Strategy is a comprehensive plan designed to ensure that every child and young person in Hertfordshire has the opportunity to engage with and benefit from high-quality music education. By fostering strong partnerships with schools, and other educational providers providing targeted support and professional development for teachers, and ensuring equitable access to musical opportunities, we aim to create a vibrant and inclusive musical environment across the county.

Through this strategy, we are committed to learn more about the challenges faced by schools in delivering music education, such as the lack of confidence among teachers and the need for more specialist music educators. By leveraging the resources and expertise of the Music Hub and our partners, we will support schools in developing robust music programmes that align with the National Plan for Music Education and the Model Music Curriculum.

Our focus on continuous improvement, inclusivity, and collaboration will help us to build a sustainable and dynamic music education landscape. We will regularly monitor and evaluate our progress, ensuring that our initiatives are effective and impactful. Together with our partners, we will strive to make music an integral part of every child's educational journey, nurturing their creativity, confidence, and lifelong love of music.

In conclusion, the Hertfordshire Music Hub is dedicated to transforming the musical experiences of young people in our region. By working collaboratively with schools, educators, partners and stakeholders, we aim to create a legacy of musical excellence that will inspire and enrich the lives of future generations.