

MUSIC IN MIND



A well-taught musical school and a successful school often go hand-in-hand. Sometimes music can be the catalyst that makes a good school exceptional.

The National Plan for Music Education (NPME) recognises the importance of music in the lives of all children and young people regardless of background and the need to ensure that all children and young people receive a music education that is of the highest quality.

Aspirations of the NPME

- regular classroom music for all pupils up to and including KS3 involving practical music-making which develops their singing, instrumental and composing skills alongside their knowledge and understanding of musical theory and the context and purpose of music-making
- the opportunity for affordable specialist instrumental/vocal lessons for pupils, to join groups beyond the school and to have the opportunity to progress to the next level of excellence if they so wish
- the opportunity to take part in concerts and performances and to contribute to the cultural life of the school.

These apply to all schools and can be delivered through partnership working between the school and the local music service/music education hub, with the latter augmenting and supporting music teaching in schools.

Questions for governors to ask

Initial questions might include: What value do we place on music in our school? Do our values recognise that effective music provision, within a broad and balanced curriculum offer, can provide benefit to all the pupils in our school through:

- supporting the overall performance of all pupils by developing skills and attributes essential to learning, such as thinking skills, decision-making skills, co-ordination, self-esteem, self-confidence, self-expression and self-discipline
- helping the school to develop a sense of community and identity
- contributing to a positive ethos and high standards in the school
- enhancing the provision for those identified as vulnerable, be that through special educational need or disability, disadvantage or hard to reach
- promoting the quality of the social, moral, spiritual and cultural life of the school and supporting pupils' emotional growth
- raising the profile of the school locally and, perhaps, nationally which in turn can support in developing school-to-school networks to share best practice
- opening up a lifelong interest as well as a wide range of career possibilities for pupils, not just in music.

Jem Shuttleworth explains what governors can do to ensure all pupils receive their musical entitlement

How do we evidence that value?

A policy is often the first port of call in evidencing a consistent whole-school approach towards valuing an area of learning. A well-crafted policy for music might include:

- acknowledging that music education should be an entitlement for all children through their classroom experience
- making such a music education an integral part of their whole school experience and education
- developing pupils' musical skills through music-making opportunities which reflect a broad range of styles and traditions
- supporting all teachers involved to develop knowledge, skills, understanding and confidence in music.

“ Music can be the catalyst that makes a good school exceptional ”

The delivery of that policy, possibly referenced within the school development plan, then rests with the headteacher and senior leadership team and can be picked up as part of a governing board's approach to whole school monitoring and evaluation. 

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