

Guide to Music Outreach

Working with Schools to Create
Musical Opportunities

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Contents

<u>Introduction</u>	3
<u>Top Ten Tips</u>	7
<u>Basic Principles</u>	8
<u>Timing is Everything</u>	8
<u>Pitching to the Right Age and Key Stage</u>	10
<u>Assessment</u>	12
<u>Curriculum</u>	14
<u>Money, Money, Money</u>	15
<u>Structure of Music Education</u>	16
<u>Making Contact with Schools</u>	17
<u>Changing Times</u>	19
<u>Your Place or Mine?</u>	21
<u>Embedding Outreach into the Department</u>	22
<u>Outreach Opportunities</u>	24
<u>Inclusion</u>	30
<u>Specialist Settings</u>	31
Behaviour Management	32
<u>Risk Assessments and Safeguarding</u>	34
<u>Feedback and Evaluation</u>	35
<u>Institutional Agenda</u>	37
<u>Glossary and Acronyms</u>	39
<u>Appendix 1: Types of School</u>	41
<u>References</u>	43

Introduction

Welcome to the Music Mark Guide to Outreach; a foundational guide to support musical connections by facilitating outreach focused on working with schools.

This guide aims to inspire those able to offer unique musical experiences to young people. Music Mark believes in music's power to unite communities, develop transferable skills, and encourage creativity and self-expression. Through outreach, you can use your expertise to inspire the next generation and ensure that every child, regardless of background or ability, finds joy in music. With opportunities for creative exploration increasingly limited in schools, outreach offers students new and dynamic experiences. Music is uniquely accessible through listening, movement, composing, analysis, performance, and experimentation. Its diversity - in genre, instrument, narrative, and culture - ensures there is something for every learner.

The guide is clearly structured as a reference document with practical suggestions and case studies throughout. It includes a [glossary and acronym](#) explainer in the appendix to clarify terminology and a table describing the differences between [types of schools](#). Based on structures and systems in education in the United Kingdom up to Spring 2026, the guide has been written taking into account the potential for challenges and changes, as the principles and themes here will remain important considerations for outreach into the future.

A note from the editors:

From our experience, teachers are highly ambitious and want to facilitate exciting and educational opportunities which broaden the horizons of their learners. We realise that so many elements of school life are unknown or taken as obvious, but with such difference from setting to setting and with the rapid developments in the education sector, we felt it necessary to equip those embarking on outreach with the information and tools to facilitate and deliver fulfilling experiences. We appreciate that some of the guide content will be known to many reading this, however, we will have been successful if it makes working with schools more achievable, more attractive and more likely to result in rich musical experiences for young people.

Music Mark is a subject association whose purpose is to support its membership and the music education ecology. As Research & Data Manager and Schools Manager we are driven by the ambition to connect schools with further and higher education institutions to empower the workforce and improve the progression into further musical study and careers both within and outside of the music industry.

*Thank you for reading,
Kerry and Abi*

What are the benefits of outreach?

Outreach is essential for connecting the music education landscape and demonstrating the benefits of music-making from early years to higher education. Collaboration across learning stages helps address challenges in the sector and benefits all involved - from young participants and their teachers to university staff and the future music industry.

Teacher Recruitment

The United Kingdom faces a range of challenges, including a recruitment, retention and job security crisis across secondary music, and peripatetic teaching roles. By introducing undergraduate and postgraduate students to the variety and rewards of music education, we can inspire them to consider careers in teaching.

Student Recruitment

Participation in music at all levels has been declining in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, and engaging experiences increase the likelihood students will continue their music studies. Local outreach also builds connections between learners and an institution's staff, facilities, and programmes. According to UCAS, 31% of UK 18-year-old accepted applicants intended to live at home in 2025, up from 30% in 2024 and 22% a decade ago, with the trend increasing steadily since 2016.^[iii]

Educating Young People

The primary benefit of outreach is providing memorable experiences that enhance learning and personal development. Higher education staff and students can enrich school music provision and upskill non-specialist teachers, opening new opportunities for young people.

Access and Equity

Across the United Kingdom, music continues to be more accessible to learners at independent schools (see [Types of School](#)) or those who can afford private tuition, widening the wealth gap in education and the music industry. Outreach helps provide opportunities to all students, including those in under-resourced schools and learners with additional needs, ensuring broader access to music. Those from disadvantaged backgrounds are also less likely to consider further and higher education as viable options, with a 20.1pp gap between non-free school meal and free school meal students (see [Low Income Areas](#)).^[iii] Spending time with university staff and current students can make this feel more attainable.

Expertise

Non-specialist (also known as generalist) primary teachers often lack confidence in teaching music, while some experienced music teachers may feel isolated or limited in their expertise. You can bring knowledge, confidence, and enthusiasm to the classroom, reinforcing the role that music can play in education.

Keeping Music Alive

Encouraging the next generation in the music industry—through performance, composition, research, therapy, or production—is vital for the discipline's future. You can showcase diverse composers, genres, musicians, instruments, and styles, demonstrating skills such as non-verbal communication and ensemble collaboration that students might not otherwise experience.

Servicing ‘Cold Spots’

There are many areas in the UK where cultural or educational opportunities are scarce, due to economic, transport, or resource limitations. Outreach ensures that those who live in these areas are not excluded and can bring their unique experiences into the sector.

Who is this guide intended for?

The guide aims to provide a starting point for those working at Higher Education Institutions who are interested in working collaboratively and facilitating outreach at schools from Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) to Further Education. It may also be of interest to:

- Further Education Institutions
- Cultural Organisations and Charities
- Freelance Musicians
- Learning and Participation Managers
- Music Industry Professionals

We want to support you to feel able and confident to reach out to and connect with:

- Early Years Settings (Nurseries)
- Specialist Settings (see [Specialist Settings](#))
- Primary Schools (including Infants and Juniors)
- Secondary Schools
- Networks of schools, such as federated schools or multi-academy trusts (see [Types of School](#)).

Issues in Pre-16 Music Education

Inclusion

Many young people with SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disability)/ALN (Additional Learning Needs)/ASN (Additional Support Needs) in state schools do not meet expected standards in Maths and English, leading schools to prioritise interventions in these subjects over music. Non-specialist primary teachers are also less likely to adapt music lessons to individual needs due to varying levels of experience or confidence in the subject.

Curriculum and Subject Value

Although music remains in the national curricula of each devolved nation, its perceived value has declined due to low emphasis in inspections and accountability measures like the EBacc in England. The Government-led [Curriculum and Assessment Review](#), published in November 2025, aims to restore breadth and balance in England, but English and Maths still dominate primary timetables.

‘Carousels’

Although music is required as part of the school curriculum, there is an increase in schools offering arts subjects on a ‘carousel’ basis. For example, in the first term, they may only offer music, changing to drama in the second term and art in the final term. This results in a reduction in hours and less longitudinal progress and development, often leaving long periods between musical opportunities.

State Schools (see [Types of School](#))

Music education is often described as a “post-code lottery”, where quality and quantity depend on one individual teacher and provision collapses if they leave. In contrast, independent schools typically include music as a standard part of their subject choices and often invest significantly in extra-curricular activities.

Teacher Retention and Recruitment

The United Kingdom has been facing a crisis in teacher recruitment across all levels of education. Since 2021/22, there has been a significant deficiency in the recruitment of secondary music trainee teachers in England, with only 331 recruited in 2023-24, 60% below the target of 820. The number of music teachers at secondary level across all three Key Stages in England has declined by 433 since 2011, despite the implementation of a [National Plan for Music Education](#).

Solo Teacher Departments

The combination of a teacher recruitment crisis and the low uptake in music at Key Stage 4 and 5 has resulted in many large secondary schools having solo teacher departments, with the Head of Music being the only music teacher to service the whole school.

Generalist Primary Teachers

Initial Teacher Training for Primary teachers focuses on generalist teaching, ensuring that teachers can deliver all subjects at a foundational level. The number of hours dedicated to teaching music to new primary teachers is also decreasing, meaning means that primary teachers often have little to no experience teaching or performing music and may feel out of their depth.

Workload

Teacher workload has been increasing across the board due to additional administrative and pastoral requirements, with music being particularly challenging due to the added pressures of extra-curricular and enrichment activities.

Instruments

The financial pressures facing schools have meant that instrumental supplies are often not well-stocked and students may be limited to learning only those which are available.

Space

Both primary and secondary schools are facing increasing student intakes resulting in little available teaching and performance spaces. The reduction in the number of students taking music as an optional subject also means that spaces which may previously have been allocated solely to arts or creative subjects are now being reallocated to other subjects.

Top Ten Tips

1. Get to know what is happening in your local area. There are often already structures in place for cultural education and pre-existing partnerships that you can collaborate with, such as Music Hubs and Services, and Instrumental Music Services.
2. Work with other departments across your higher education institution as they may already be running projects with local schools. This includes contacting outreach and engagement teams as well as other disciplines.
3. Create a culture for outreach within your department by clearly explaining the strategy and purpose. Staff and managerial buy-in is vital to ensure that it is adequately resourced and respected.
4. Student ambassadors are invaluable when delivering outreach as there is a mutual benefit for the school children, young people and the wider education ecology.
5. Utilise your expertise and acknowledge the esteem of the reputation of higher education to create memorable experiences for young people.
6. Have a strategy for how you will approach and work with schools - they are all different (See [Making Contact with Schools](#), [Types of School](#) and [Specialist Settings](#)).
7. Ensure that you are servicing a need rather than offering a service that is not needed. Find out what the gaps are in music education in your local area and support them.
8. Protect your future recruitment by planning strategically and with longevity rather than delivering ad-hoc unresolved projects.
9. Dedicate time to understanding the eco-system of pre-tertiary music education and all the potential pathways that lead to you.
10. Reflect on your own concept of a 'successful' musical experience. Many learners will not attain musical excellence, but everyone can benefit and grow from music education. High-qualityⁱⁱⁱⁱ teaching isn't the same as high attainment and success could be marked by academic attainment, participating, social interaction, active engagement, improvement or simply enjoyment.

Basic Principles

Timing is everything

School Day

School day timings vary by school, and include breaks, lunch, and extra provisions such as breakfast or after-school clubs. Teaching staff hours can range from 7:30 am to 6:00 pm, with lessons typically taking place between 8:20 am and 3:30 pm. It's important to know the schedule of the school you are working in, especially if working across multiple schools. Student independence increases with age, so end-of-day arrangements for younger children must be managed carefully to avoid childcare or transport conflicts.

Registration/Form Time

Registration records attendance and establishes routine. In primary schools, it is usually led by the class teacher, teaching assistant, or supply teacher, and can introduce short learning activities—such as listening to music for context in upcoming projects. Some schools highlight a composer or songwriter of the day/week/month to broaden knowledge.

In secondary schools, form time also takes attendance but focuses on pastoral support, as students see their form teacher daily. It's an opportunity to encourage reading, especially texts related to music, including biographies or fiction, supporting both literacy and musical education.

Assemblies

Assemblies are a key opportunity for music, especially singing. In schools within a religious content, singing and music will likely play a role in collective worship. Assemblies can be whole school, key stage, year group, or class-specific. External organisations also provide assembly content, often including music suggestions for active listening to reinforce a message. In secondary schools, they are often used to address broader issues of citizenship, beliefs and values, or students' futures.

Timetables

In a primary setting, one of the main drivers for timetabling is access to the hall, which is ordinarily used for physical education, drama, music, assemblies and lunch. Therefore, teachers may be restricted in their ability to offer a variety of suitable times if your activity requires a larger space.

In secondary schools, it is very common for teachers and students to have biweekly timetables, with their lessons differing between the two weeks. This is often the only way to navigate staffing, teaching spaces, subject choices and external factors, and means that you may only be able to schedule activities on a biweekly basis. Timetables are often confirmed in the spring term before the summer holidays, yet are always subject to changes due to the constantly shifting nature of student attendance and student choice. Teachers very rarely have any significant input into their timetable as they are co-ordinated by administrators.

Term Time

Local authorities publish term dates two to three years in advance to help parents plan holidays. Independent schools and multi-academy trusts set their own dates, resulting in staggered holidays across the country. Differences also exist between the four UK nations, which should be considered when planning events. Local authority calendars indicate likely holidays and inset days (see below). The school year is divided into six half-terms of 4–8 weeks and runs from September to July in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, and August to June in Scotland. Dates are mostly consistent but can shift slightly due to Easter and the weekday Christmas falls on. The holiday breaks are:

- October Half Term
- Christmas Holidays
- February Half Term
- Easter Holidays
- May Half Term
- Summer Holidays

Most half terms last one week, although some local authorities and independent schools opt for two-week breaks. Christmas and Easter are usually two weeks, and summer holidays are approximately six weeks long. Whilst there have been discussions around shortening summer holidays and lengthening half terms, these have not yet been implemented.

Schools organise learning in half-term blocks, which can range from four to nine weeks. When planning your outreach, consider how many weeks you'll be working and which half term best fits the available time.

Inset Days

Inset days (teacher training or CPD days) are set by local authorities or multi-academy trusts and typically amount to five days per year. Schools may schedule full days or may decide to offer multiple after-school (twilight) sessions to meet the required hours. They often occur at the start of the academic year or new term to discuss strategic priorities and review the previous year, and can involve multiple schools to offer wider training or development. On inset days, students are not on site, so parents must arrange care. With proper planning, risk assessment, safeguarding, and supervision, musical activities could be offered off-site on these days.

Lead-In Time (Planning Ahead)

Schools must plan their curriculum in the long-term to ensure the sequencing and progression of learning. Lead-in time is helpful for teachers to align this to their teaching plans, and ensure that the outreach opportunities contribute to the long-term aims for their learners. This may mean talking to schools a year in advance of programme delivery. Funding timelines often do not align to school schedules so communicate early and regularly.

Pitching to the Right Age and Key Stage

When working across borders of the UK, it is important to be aware that there are often differences in how year groups are named. As the academic year starts in September in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, each year group usually has children of two ages. Those born in September have a nine-month head start on their summer-born peers who are the youngest in their year group. For Scotland, those born in February are the youngest and those born in March are the oldest.

Specialist settings and alternative provisions cater for a range of needs meaning that the phase or level of education will not always follow the age pattern for each school year (see [Inclusion](#) for detailed information on working in specialist settings). For example, a young person aged in their teens with a learning need may still be accessing a Key Stage 1 curriculum. A young person in a SEND/ALN/ASN setting may require in an individualised curriculum at a different level and catering to different social and developmental areas, and it is not always possible to make generalisations about their ability across a range of subjects. Similarly, there can be exceptions in mainstream settings where it is in the best interest of the learner to repeat a school year, which will make them older than the peers in their class.

School Structures

	Compulsory
	Non-Compulsory

England and Wales

	Pre-School	Primary		Secondary	
	N/A	Key Stage 1	Key Stage 2	Key Stage 3	Key Stage 4
Age	3-5 years old	5-7 years old	7-11 years old	11-14 years old	14-16 years old
Year Groups	Pre-School and Reception	Years 1-2	Years 3-6	Years 7-9	Years 10-11

Northern Ireland

	Pre-School	Primary			Secondary	
	N/A	Foundation	Key Stage 1	Key Stage 2	Key Stage 3	Key Stage 4
Age	3-4 years old	4-6 years old	6-8 years old	8-11 years old	11-14 years old	14-16 years old
Year Groups	N/A	Years 1-2	Years 3-4	Years 5-7	Years 8-10	Years 11-12

Scotland

	Primary				Secondary	
	Early Level	Early Level	First Level	Second Level	Broad General	Senior Phase
Age	3-4 years old	4-6 years old	6-8 years old	8-12 years old	12-15 years old	15-17 years old
Year Groups	Pre-School	P1	P2, P3 and P4	P5, P6 and P7	S1, S2 and S3	S4, S5, S6

Early Years

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) describes the provision provided from birth to compulsory education, with the mandatory age for school attendance differing in each devolved nation (see above).

Primary

In Primary school settings, there may be one class per year group, however, in larger schools, this may increase to three or four classes. This is described as 'form entry' and if there are two classes per year group, schools would refer to having two-form entry. In some small schools, there are mixed ages in each class due to limited resources, budget considerations or space. This is often the case with schools in rural areas where there are fewer local children.

Whilst the two-tier system of primary school followed by secondary school is most common in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, some settings only cater for one or two Key Stages as part of a wider three-tier system:

Infant schools (deemed as Primary)	Teach Early Years and Key Stage 1
Junior schools (deemed as Primary)	Teach Key Stage 2
Middle school (most often deemed as Secondary)	Teach Upper Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3

Secondary

Secondary settings continue with the numbering of year groups, which are sometimes organised by ability for core subjects, such as English, Mathematics, Physical Education and Science. Each student is assigned a form and tutor to allow for regular time with the same teacher (who will also have a subject specialism). Timetabling at secondary will be arranged by subject and teachers will teach multiple year groups throughout a single day.

Your project can be valuable for students who did not consider music as a qualification. They may have an aptitude for music but chose alternative qualifications owing to different factors, e.g. combinations of subjects on offer at Key Stage 4, challenges of recruiting experienced teachers resulting in no GCSE available, or different subjects being required for their career

choice. Students may also study for graded exams (vocal or instrumental) external to school, having strong musical knowledge and ability but less opportunity to connect this to their school life.

Home-Schooling

Legally, a child must start school the September following their 5th birthday in England, Scotland and Wales and 4th in Northern Ireland, unless they are home-schooled (also known as Elective Home Education, or EHE).

Assessment

England

Primary

Internal and external statutory assessments dictate the rhythm of the school calendar. SATs, (standardised assessment tests) usually refer to the statutory year 6 examinations taken at a fixed time for all pupils during the final year of their Primary education. They are only in English and Math (reading, grammar, punctuation, spelling, reasoning and arithmetic are externally assessed, writing is teacher-assessed). The external papers are taken under exam conditions from Monday to Thursday during one week in May.

SATs in Key Stage 1 (Year 2) have been 'replaced' by optional tests.^[iv] These non-statutory SATs are intended to support teacher judgements; they have no fixed date and they are not externally moderated.

Secondary

Students in England will sit their Level 2 qualifications (GCSE or alternative) in Years 10 and 11, and their Level 3 qualifications (A-level or alternative) in Years 12 and 13. A-Level grades are assessed through a combination of coursework and examinations, with exams being sat entirely in Year 13, while vocational and technical qualifications may be assessed through coursework rather than examinations.

Northern Ireland

A new approach to monitoring literacy and numeracy across the education system will be introduced from the 2025-26 academic year. Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) will create, deliver, and mark written assessments, which will be completed by a representative sample of pupils in the final year of Key Stages 1, 2, and 3. There is no intention for the results to evaluate individual schools or pupils, and is being carried out to provide an overview of the school system.

Scotland

Children and young people in P1, P4, P7 and S3 complete online standardised assessments in writing, reading/literacy and numeracy at any time throughout the academic year. In secondary school, from S4-S6, students typically work towards National Qualifications, including National 1–5, followed by Higher qualifications, which are commonly used for university entry, and Advanced Highers, which provide more in-depth study and can earn advanced standing at some universities.

Wales

Primary and Secondary

In Wales, learners undertake National Reading and Numeracy Personalised Assessments once per year between Year 2 and Year 9 in:

- Numeracy (Procedural)
- Numeracy (Reasoning)
- Reading (English or Welsh)

Rather than having set dates, schools are able to arrange them any time throughout the academic year, although they tend to avoid the same timings as GCSE or A-Level examinations due to the logistics of hosting large exam sittings.

Students in England will sit their Level 2 qualifications (GCSE or alternative) in Years 10 and 11, and their Level 3 qualifications in Years 12 and 13. A-Level grades are assessed through a combination of coursework and examinations in both Year 12 and Year 13, while vocational qualifications may be assessed through coursework rather than examinations.

Awarding Bodies

All recognised qualifications are administered and assessed by awarding bodies which are monitored by the UK government ([Ofqual](#) in England – the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation, [Qualifications Wales](#) in Wales, [Qualifications Scotland](#) in Scotland and [Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment \(CCEA\)](#) in Northern Ireland). The major awarding bodies for KS4 (Level 2 qualifications and GCSEs) and KS5 (Level 3 qualifications and A-Levels) are [Edexcel/Pearson](#), [AQA](#), [Cambridge OCR](#), [International Baccalaureate](#) or [WJEC](#), and each will have their own assessment and content requirements.

There are also many vocational awarding bodies, offering Level 1, 2 and 3 awards in more practical, coursework-led programmes, such as BTECs, for example Pearson, [Rockschool](#) (RSL Awards) and [NCFE](#).

Alongside curriculum-focused awarding bodies are those who focus on graded examinations in performance and theory, such as [ABRSM](#), [Trinity College London](#) and [Rockschool](#) (RSL Awards). Whilst these are not included in formal music lessons, some schools may offer them as part of their enrichment programmes or instrumental/vocal tuition.

Curriculum

Wherever you live or work in the UK, the '20s' (2020 to 2030) mark significant reflections, recommendations and changes for curriculum in education settings. The curriculum dictates the knowledge, skills and assessment mandated in each subject area, and teachers are restricted to fulfil the requirements of their devolved curriculum.

England

A National Curriculum review was undertaken by an expert panel chaired by Tim Oates, culminating in a report in 2011. A new review was initiated by an incoming Government between 2024 and 2025 with a panel led by Professor Becky Francis. The Curriculum and Assessment Review (CAR) panel set out a number of recommendations to government in their [final report](#) in November 2025 and reforms to curriculum will take place both in the immediate aftermath and over time. At the time of print, academies do not have to follow the national curriculum so long as their curriculum is at least as ambitious as the national curriculum. A bill is due to be passed by government to ensure all schools and academies must follow the national curriculum.

Wales

A basic curriculum and guidance for Wales were published in 2008, followed by a new [Curriculum and Assessment](#) act in 2021. This was updated in 2025, with a transition period for implementation from 2022 to Summer 2027. Mandatory expectations include 'feeder primary and secondary schools jointly drawing up a single transition plan to support learners moving from year 6 to year 7,'^[vi] which could be useful for musical projects.^[vii] The curriculum is structured around six Areas of Learning and Experience (AoLE), and music sits within the Expressive Arts area, though it could also be considered in Health and Well-being as well as Communication.

Scotland

The Curriculum of Excellence was introduced in 2010. Independent reviews were published in 2021 and 2023 instigating reforms to the education system for Scotland. The [Education \(Scotland\) Bill](#) was passed by the Scottish Parliament on 25 June 2025^[vii] and a paper on curriculum, qualifications and assessment reform was published at that time.^[viii] The Curriculum Improvement Cycle (CIC) began in early 2024 and is being led by Education Scotland, renewed curriculum guidance is anticipated to be available to teachers and practitioners in 2027. This will be implemented from the beginning of the 2028 to 2030.

Northern Ireland

Similar to the Curriculum for Wales, the curriculum in Northern Ireland is set out in Areas of Learning, with music sitting in 'The Arts'. It is not compulsory for pupils to study music at Key Stage 4, but schools must offer access to at least one course that leads to a qualification in The Arts. Schools must ensure that pupils develop cross-curricular skills, and music can support with the thinking skills and capabilities mentioned in the curriculum such as:

- Communication
- ICT (by using music tech, digital audio workstations)
- Being creative
- Self-Management - Improving Own Learning and Performance
- Working with others.

If students choose not to study music at GCSE, there is also the option of working towards Level 1 or 2 in performance skills.

Money, Money, Money

Funders and Funding Streams

Many funders - from local businesses and charities to large national bodies such as the Arts Council, Creative Scotland, National Lottery, and Paul Hamlyn Foundation - support schools with different educational or creative priorities. Large funders prefer bids from organisations with a track record but value school involvement. Examples of funds for exploration are:

- [Creative Industry Clusters](#)
- [Local Innovation Partnerships Fund \(LIPE\)](#)
- [Higher Education Innovation Fund \(HEIF\)](#)

National and Regional Skills Agendas

In each nation there is an agency that identifies skills shortages, creates development plans, and works with industry, education, employers, and communities. Funded by government, these frameworks support skills training and offer grants that may align with your institution's agenda. As a subject which can develop wider transferable skills, music can be a strong vehicle for skills development and therefore may be suitable for funding. In England, Scotland, and Wales, regional plans target set geographical areas, with more details available via the links below.

- England: [Local Skills Improvement Plan \(LSIP\)](#)
- Scotland: [Skills Development Scotland](#)
- Wales: [Regional Skills Partnerships](#)

While Northern Ireland do not have regional skills agendas, the Department for the Economy have several skills initiatives, the information of which can be found [here](#).

School Holiday Funds

The Department for Education (DfE) in England funds local authorities to run the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme during school holidays, active since 2018 and set to continue from April 2026 for three more years. The Welsh Government runs a similar scheme, '[Food and Fun](#)', after a successful pilot in Cardiff in 2015. Managed locally, schools can allocate part of their funds to activities supporting low-income families, primarily for primary-aged children. While promoting healthy eating and activity, the programme also offers enriching activities that support well-being and learning, including music. Similarly, in Scotland there are local authorities that run similar activities using the National Grant Programmes, see [YouthLink Scotland](#).

Structure of Music Education

In addition to its place in the classroom, music education often takes place across a wide range of organisations, partnerships, venues and timescales.

England

In England, [Arts Council England](#) are responsible for the delivery of the Hubs Partnership, consisting of a network of 43 Hub Lead Organisations (HLO). Music Hubs are responsible for connecting schools and academy trusts to local authorities, music and wider arts and education organisations and charities, community or youth organisations, and more. Often confused with music services as some organisations have labelled themselves as a 'hub', the music hub programme is a concept, not a singular organisation but a partnership.

Wales

In Wales, the [National Music Service Wales](#) is responsible for delivering the [National Music Plan](#) which includes 'the set-up of the national instrument, resource and equipment library, co-ordination of professional learning support, developing initiatives on addressing equity, diversity and inclusion, and ensemble development'. Within this sit 22 music services who run the music provision for each region.

Scotland

In Scotland, all 32 local authorities have Instrumental Music Services which deliver instrumental music tuition which is funded directly from the Scottish Government. There is further funding to local authorities from the [Youth Music Initiative Formula Fund](#). Work for particular groups of children and young people is also supported through the [Youth Music Initiatives Access to Music Making Fund](#). [Creative Scotland's Open Funds](#) also permit work in schools.

Northern Ireland

In Northern Ireland, music provision is offered by [Education Authority \(EA\) Music](#), renamed from The Education Authority Music Service in 2025, and is administrated by nine regional offices. EA Music offers visiting tutors in schools, runs ensembles, loans instruments and delivers small group instrumental lessons and musicianship training.

National Centre for Arts and Music Education

The National Centre for Arts and Music Education is a new government delivery partner for England to improve access to high quality arts and music education for children and young people. It is planned to launch in September 2026 and will support schools by providing online training for teachers, signposting arts and creative opportunities, and strengthening partnerships between schools and cultural organisations. The centre will also act as the fund holder for the music hubs programme from September 2027.

Teaching School Hubs (England)

There are 87 Teaching school hubs in England which replaced the network of 750 teaching schools in 2021. Teaching school hubs are centres of excellence led by schools and multi-academy trusts. They offer teacher training and professional development for teachers and leaders at all stages of their career. They play a significant role in the delivery of school-based initial teacher training, national professional qualifications, professional development and the early career teacher entitlement.

Centre for Teaching Excellence (Scotland)

The Centre, backed by £4 million of Government investment in 2025-26, supports teachers to engage with the best research and evidence to improve their teaching practice. This includes learning in relation to areas of priority identified by teachers, stakeholders and what we know already from a number of reports on Scottish education.^[1] The bases at the University of Glasgow and two further hubs expect to expand to cover greater areas of expertise.

Initial Teacher Training (ITT)/Initial Teacher Education (ITE)

Initial Teacher Training (ITT)/Initial Teacher Education (ITE) is the process through which individuals are trained and qualified to become teachers. It includes a mix of university-led courses and school-based training, covering teaching theory, curriculum knowledge, and practical classroom experience. Trainee teachers can benefit greatly from professional development opportunities or insights from subject specialists.

Making Contact with Schools

One of the initial barriers to partnership working and outreach is getting past institutional gatekeepers and reaching decision-makers. There are several ways to bypass this and ensure that your message gets to the appropriate contact.

Old fashioned phone call

Teachers are unlikely to take calls during teaching hours (approx. 8:00 am–3:15 pm). You can leave a message with office staff, but it may get lost in translation. It's best to follow up with a direct email to the teacher or ask the office to forward it to the most suitable staff member.

Email

Although many teachers check their emails before or after school and into the evening, it is important to protect teachers' work-life balance. It is courtesy to add when you make email contact to a teacher that you do not expect a reply until a suitable time for them, expressing any future deadlines.

Time to contact

Secondary teachers are allocated free periods and may schedule a phone call or take the opportunity to access their emails during the day if their timetable allows. Primary teachers are allocated PPA (Planning, Preparation, and Assessment) time once a week which is 10% of their teaching time. They may leave administrative tasks such as checking emails until then. The key is not to expect an immediate response.

Music Services/Hubs (England and Wales)

As the music services and hubs (see Extra-Curricular Music) work in direct partnership with schools across the region, they will have contact details of music teachers or specialist music leads in schools. The hubs and services strongly advocate for outreach programmes, meaning that they will likely be supportive and willing to assist with facilitating contact.

Outreach and Engagement Teams

The majority of Higher Education and Further Education Institutions have teams dedicated to outreach and engagement. Although these may not be housed within the music departments specifically, they will have pre-existing relationships with local schools and will be likely to hold direct contact information.

Other Departments

In addition to bespoke outreach teams, many departments across HEIs and FEIs will have their own links with schools in the local area. The core subjects (Mathematics, English and Science) will often offer workshops, teaching sessions and taster days to schools, meaning that they should be the first port of call when looking for key contacts. They may have pre-existing risk assessment forms, administrative documentation, and communication which you can use as templates for your own outreach, and may be able to assist you in the procedures used by specific schools or local authorities.

Examples of cross-departmental activities:

- Music and Mathematics (Fibonacci sequence, symmetry)
- Acoustics/Music and Physics
- Music Psychology (music and identity, music and neurology, performance studies, music therapy)
- Music and Literature (song and poetry, opera and literature, programme music)
- Music and Art (programme music, aesthetic trends e.g. impressionism)
- Music and Technology (sound engineering, virtual bands)
- Music and Artificial Intelligence (AI) (music creation, copyright)
- Music and Language (Modern foreign languages, translation, global literature)
- Music Industry/Business
- Music and Economics (economic contribution of the arts, creative industries)
- Music and Politics (music and war, medieval music,
- Music and Sustainability/Environmental Studies (biodiversity and music, music as awareness, composition and sustainability)

Changing Times

The pandemic shifted teaching and continued professional development (CPD) online, resulting in greater online resource banks, yet the circumstances only highlighted there is no replacement for experiences in real life. In music, the opportunities to listen, participate, perform, visit and experience are all part of building cultural capital and personal development.

Technology

New developments in technology are drastically changing the ways in which learners engage with education, and with music specifically. Technology can make music more accessible through high-quality software which allows those who do not play an instrument to still make music, but there are many considerations that need to be taken into account when planning sessions.

Basic Practical Considerations

It may seem obvious to highlight basic practical limitations and considerations with technology, but here are some important points:

- **Charging:** Ensure staff and learners fully charge devices before sessions.
- **Logins:** Confirm staff and student login credentials to both hardware and software to avoid access issues.
- **Internet:** Check Wi-Fi availability and bandwidth limits, as full-class usage may slow the system.
- **Administrator Rights:** Many schools will have IT staff who will lock technology to ensure that unsafe programs cannot be downloaded. Therefore, you may want to ensure that everything is already loaded onto the devices as they may be locked.

Laptops/Chromebooks

As digital literacy grows across the curriculum, many schools provide laptops or Chromebooks for teachers and learners. While useful for recording, editing, composing, and researching, devices vary in capabilities - Chromebooks, for example, have limited software compatibility. Check with teachers what technology is available to ensure planned activities are feasible.

iPads/Tablets

iPads/Tablets are a versatile tool for music education in schools, offering both creative and practical opportunities for learning. They can be used for composing and arranging music through apps that simulate instruments, notation software, or digital audio workstations, allowing students to experiment with melody, harmony, and rhythm without needing physical instruments.

Software

Some Primary, and many Secondary schools have music software to aid composition and recording, but limited budgets may restrict licenses. Check with teaching staff which programs (e.g., Sibelius, MuseScore, GarageBand, Logic) are available and how many simultaneous users are supported. It may also be useful to know how confident the learners and support staff are in the software you intend to use.

Artificial Intelligence

AI is increasingly encouraged as a teaching tool and to support teacher workload, reducing administrative burden and supporting responsible learning. Lessons on AI-generated music can engage students in composition, industry impact, copyright, and songwriting.

It may be useful to decide if you are going to design AI in (teaching responsible use) or out (ensuring it cannot be used) of your lesson.

Mobile phones and social media

Government policy is changing rapidly to respond to evolving technology and the negative impacts on under-16s. At the time of writing, new legislation and restrictions have been, or are soon to be, introduced.

Statutory guidance on mobile phone use in schools was published in June 2026 to support schools in implementing a new policy, effective from September 2026, that prohibits the use of mobile phones throughout the school day, including during lessons, between lessons, break times, and at lunchtime. Some social media applications, popular with children, will be banned for under-16s. Consider the platforms and resources you are using and ask schools about their policies. Some council authorities have strict website permissions that prevent the use of common channels such as YouTube. Mobile phone applications can be accessible tools outside the school timetable and for self-directed learning, but do not expect all schools to allow or encourage this.

Case Study - Cosmo

Cosmo was built around a simple belief: music is one of the strongest tools for communication, confidence and connection - but only when learners can access it in a way that works for them. Cosmo began in 2014, when a passionate team of therapists, designers, and engineers came together with a shared vision: to unlock every learner's potential through inclusive, co-designed technology that supports real development. The technology combines touch, light, sound and movement to turn music into a fully multi-sensory experience. For many SEND learners, sound alone is not enough. When rhythm is paired with colour, touch and movement, music becomes more predictable, easier to process, and more meaningful to engage with.

Each Cosmo Dot can act as a wireless MIDI controller, letting teachers map lights and presses to notes, loops, samples or compose in apps like GarageBand and ThumbJam. That connection turns simple touches into real music-making, and it means Cosmo can sit alongside and integrated with existing music tech workflows - from simple iPad apps to desktop Digital Audio Workstations (DAWs). Cosmo offers an inclusive route into musical engagement, supporting learners to explore and respond in ways that map onto the Sounds of Intent framework, and giving staff observable moments to evidence against the the Engagement Model ([Learn more](#)).

At Drake Music, participants used Cosmo connected to GarageBand to help arrange and perform a piece alongside violin and piano. The mixed-ability group explored synth sounds, built layered soundscapes and improvised together, with some participants playing multiple Cosmo Dots at once. For many, this was their first experience contributing equally within a live ensemble - with musicians of all abilities co-creating and performing side by side. (See [case studies](#) for more examples.) Independent research with University of Birmingham, and Cambridge University shows Cosmo delivers consistent gains in engagement, positive emotional expression and social communication for learners with complex needs.

[Watch Cosmo in action at Lancashire Music Service](#)



Your Place or Mine?

Where will the outreach take place? At your institution, the school or a separate venue? If you are building an outreach programme with longevity, the activity is likely to place in different places over time. To begin with, communicate with the school(s) about their preferences and work through different options together, being strategic about the benefits of different spaces.

My Place/An External Venue

A university or cultural organisation visit puts the students in a new environment. It makes them more likely to visit these spaces in future, broadens horizons and can help boost aspirations. With a university department, the resources and facilities, such as instruments, recording studios, concert halls, rehearsal spaces and libraries, can be entirely new to young learners and can demonstrate what is available at higher education. This builds community cohesion, cultural capital and can be part of a school enrichment offer.

Their Place

A school, dependent on size and experience with event management, will have procedures in place for safeguarding and risk assessments. Most schools have budget restrictions which may make activities on the school site more feasible. Being in a familiar environment may also make the outreach more accessible for some who find change challenging or have particular physical needs (see [Inclusion](#)).

Location	Benefits	Barriers and Considerations
Off-site	- Gaining cultural capital - Resources - Inspiring venues and performance spaces - Creates a bond with an institution/venue - Specialist hardware/software - Strong message of proactive outreach to your own stakeholders/ managers - Purpose built spaces for larger groups - Learners can see other young people undertaking musical activities, e.g. practice rooms	- Higher staff-student ratios needed - Risk assessment administration required - Travel costs for school or parents/carers - Travel arrangements needed - Safeguarding considerations - Logistical coordination, e.g. lunch space, parking for coaches/buses, toilets, parental/carers consent - Communication with the school(s) about logistics considerably far in advance - Staff confidence levels to engage and sustain some activities
School	- Staffing in place - Reduced administrative burden - Pre-existing risk assessments - Travel budget saved for school or parents/carers - Familiarity for learners and staff	- Limited spaces and timings (halls often double up for PE and serving school dinners) - Less inspirational or notable for learners and staff alike - Important to ensure there is still buy-in so that the value is not lost by it being on the school site - Limited access to specialist resources

Embedding Outreach into the Department

In order for outreach to be successful, it is important to create a culture for partnerships and collaboration across the school/department. This can include embedding outreach, community music or music education into the degree programmes through specific modules or assessments, or encouraging your students to create societies outside of their qualifications.

Music Education Modules

Music Education is becoming increasingly popular as an undergraduate module and offers students the opportunity to gain experience before embarking upon further training or a career. It also improves the perception of music education as being a worthwhile and reputable career which requires specialist training. Whether through reflective journals or portfolios, assessment can include participation in outreach and the creation of bespoke music education programmes. Music Mark are always delighted to speak to students as part of music education or careers modules, and often contribute to undergraduate and postgraduate courses. Students are entitled to free [Music Mark membership](#).

Initial Teacher Training/Initial Teacher Education

The landscape for gaining qualified teacher status is varied as are the musical experiences and training for early career teachers. This is an area that can be impactful, outreach can connect music departments to education departments within a higher education institution, assist institutions without a music department and immerse graduates into collaborative projects, creating richer links involving placement schools.

Student Ambassadors

If you are a college or university, the young people studying with you are invaluable when offering outreach opportunities. Not only can it be enriching for school learners to be exposed to new avenues, but providing your students with the experience of music education can lead them towards pursuing a career in music education themselves. It can also be inspirational for learners to see a diverse representation of music specialists and help them understand that music is for everyone.

Case Study: Working in schools to unlock musical confidence in generalist primary school teachers

For many Primary schools, music is taught by non-specialist teachers. Dr Jan Butler, Senior Lecturer in Popular Music at Oxford Brookes University, describes how offering a short series of workshops unlocked musical confidence in primary school class teachers without a music specialism.

The Challenge

The school did not have a music specialist, but they did have Charanga schemes of work and resources. They wanted to improve their music offer; however, they lacked the musical confidence to deliver this.

The challenge was building teacher confidence, and Jan's intervention included reframing what musical competence looks like, with the aim of helping teachers feel confident enough to try leading music themselves.

Workshops

Jan offered a series of 4 one-hour workshops at the school that could fit into their usual meeting structure and enable iterative learning. She adapted a technique that has been successfully used with student teachers with maths anxiety to develop a coaching-informed approach to the sessions.

In the workshops, Jan facilitated exploration of common negative beliefs about musical ability and introduced the work of Lucy Green ('music is innate in all humans') and Christopher Small ('musicking'). The teachers built confidence and competency in beat, rhythm and pitch, with Jan drawing mainly on familiar music examples, ranging from "Jelly on a plate", "Happy Birthday", through Queen's "We Will Rock You", Brubeck's "Take Five" and Nathan Evans' "Wellerman" to Williams' "Hedwig's Theme" and Tchaikovsky's "Russian Dance", amongst others. These were explored through body percussion, dance and singing. Jan also modelled the meanings of different music terminology and facilitated discussion.

The impact

At the start of session one, the teachers displayed a high level of trepidation, especially around music terminology, composition and notation. By the end of the three sessions, every teacher had sung a (short) solo, taken part in composition, and used a form of notation to portray a piece of music. Teachers reported a significant increase in their musical confidence, which led to excitement about teaching music in their classrooms in the future.

Outreach Opportunities

There are countless different approaches to providing outreach, whether it is focused on performance, composition, recording, sound production, active listening, music history or industry. Primary schools may connect multiple curriculum subjects through a topic such as Ancient Egypt or the World Wars. Here are examples of how you can facilitate outreach.

Examples of Educational Themes

There is an endless wealth of themes that can support musical learning and many of these topics are researched and taught within universities. A few examples are:

- Composers and their biography
- Historical context, e.g. industrial revolution, suffragettes, First and Second World Wars
- Ethnomusicology
- Careers and the Music Industry
- Multidisciplinary approach, e.g. links to theatre, art, literature, language, mathematics or fashion
- Programme music
- Extra-musical themes
 - War and Conflict
 - Race
 - Transport
 - Gender
 - Religion & Ritual
 - Animals
 - Philosophy
 - Climate Change
 - Nature and Place
 - Nationalism
 - Local History
 - Teamwork
 - Science and Maths
 - Film
 - Technology
 - Artificial Intelligence
 - Festivals – music, literary etc.
 - Occasions – birthdays, religious events, etc.

Your research interests are likely to align with curriculum content. When you share your areas of expertise schools can find the relevant connections to create a deeper teaching and learning impact.

Case Study: Manchester University Music Society

Within the wider Music Society at University of Manchester sits a proactive outreach programme which falls into three key categories; relaxed performances, ensembles and teaching. Run by students and supported by the music department, the outreach programme connects a mixture of undergraduate and postgraduate students with the wider community, providing meaningful musical opportunities for participants and rewarding experiences for the students.



Relaxed performances are programmed twice a year and welcome the local community and schools for sing-along concerts of carols and musical theatre. They are intended to be sensitive to and accepting of audience members who may benefit from a more relaxed environment, including (but not limited to) small children, those with autism spectrum conditions, anyone with a learning disability or a sensory and communication disorder.

The outreach programme also runs a choir and orchestra (conducted by Hiba Hana, Head of Outreach and Ed Houghton, Personnel Manager) who perform at schools, specialist settings, care homes, coffee mornings and primary school assemblies, encouraging audience participation.

Their reach is not limited to one-off events, working with schools through a series of workshops culminating in concerts as well as partnering with cultural organisations, such as Buxton International Festival. They have recently attended a local sixth form college to bring their A-level set work to life through a joint performance, including baroque instruments.

It's remit within the music society, as opposed to the department, means that it is open to students from anywhere within the university, with non-music students also participating and continuing their love of music.



"Running the outreach programme for MUMS has been a highlight of my undergraduate degree. It is the most rewarding work I have done in my 3 years at the University of Manchester. Being able to connect people across the city from various different backgrounds through a love of music is such a privilege and I have learnt so much throughout my time as Head of Outreach. The outreach programme was what drew me to the university, and I'm honoured to have been a part of it." – Hiba Hana, Outreach Manager

For more information, see <https://sites.google.com/view/manchesteruni-music-society/opportunities-projects/outreach>

Open Rehearsals

Opening rehearsals to learners provides insight into how ensembles work, highlighting teamwork, social benefits, and musical expression. University-led ensembles, such as symphony orchestras or choirs, are ideal due to their relaxed atmosphere and aspirational value. Logistics are generally straightforward, with the location, date, and time often confirmed, and schools can organise transport. For younger learners, shorter rehearsal periods or a question-and-answer session with performers or the conductor can enhance the experience. If teaching staff know the repertoire in advance, they can prepare lessons as an introduction, or performers may visit schools to provide sessions.

Free Performances

Free tickets to university showcases or student-led performances give learners access to live music they might not otherwise experience. Like open rehearsals, logistics are straightforward, and the experience can be enriched with bespoke educational sessions.

Relaxed Concerts

As many young people do not access live music, whether through bands or classical concerts, relaxed concerts are a great way to ease them in. This normally means removing any conventions that may be restrictive to children, those who are neurodiverse or adults who may be discouraged by the perceived social conventions of concerts. This could include:

- Having relaxed seating where they can bring cushions and sit on the floor
- Removing the requirement for silence when a concert is taking place
- Allowing people to ask questions between the pieces
- Having the conductor or a narrator share interesting facts to make the music more accessible
- Letting children bring drinks and snacks
- Making sure children can leave to use the bathroom or get fresh air when they need to
- Keeping the lights turned on rather than dimming the lights
- Including excerpts of popular works which will be familiar, such as music used in film, television, gaming or popular music.
- Letting children move along to the music and dance if they feel compelled to!

Revision Sessions

Hosting revision sessions for 14–18-year-olds around exam time allows you to reach multiple schools and colleges to support students studying music at GCSE, A-Level, or alternative pathways. These sessions foster student learning and strengthen relationships with teachers, and showcasing your facilities can generate excitement and encourage future engagement with higher education. Clear communication with school staff is essential to ensure the session aligns with the curriculum.

Curriculum Resources

Teachers are incredibly grateful for high-quality, relevant curriculum resources, from revision guides to lesson plans. Examination boards rarely offer resources to support the delivery of their qualifications, meaning that materials which are ready to use and fit for purpose can not only assist teaching and learning, but signpost learners to your institution through the inclusion of your name on their work and association with quality and enjoyment.

Case Study: University of Southampton

The resulting outreach toolkit stems from work that began in 2015. The project has had investment of considerable time, expertise and multiple funders. This short video 'Introduction to Pythagoras' Workshops Toolkit' explains the resource:

<https://youtu.be/k4eBzzXE1zo>

Pythagoras' Workshops Toolkit is a free digital resource that has emerged as an education extension of Pythagoras' Toolkit, a playful, wordless music-puppetry theatre piece for family audiences. Developed by puppetry director Rachel Warr, composer/conductor Benjamin Oliver and music education specialist Chi Ying Lam the toolkit explores music, specifically graphic scores and conducting, through music, sound-making, drawing and puppetry. The resource is aimed at educators to use with children aged 7-11 (Key Stage 2), although can be adapted for younger or older learners. While flexible and adaptable it is structured to meet the needs of school environments, including a downloadable guide, 31 project tutorial videos hosted on YouTube and sheet music resources.



A central focus of the toolkit is to make composition and conducting more inclusive and accessible for young learners, challenging the perception that these are specialist activities that should be reserved for advanced musicians. While music is a central focus, the inclusion of puppetry and crafts offers multiple entry points for pupils with different learning styles. This interdisciplinary approach supports engagement across ability levels and helps to build communication skills, creativity and collaboration. To help ensure the toolkit would be meaningful and appropriate for young people, the activities were piloted with children attending performances in Montreal (2023 and 2024), at the Turner Sims Family Day (2024) and in a series of workshops with Southampton primary schools (2025).



The development process highlighted potential tensions in outreach work. Practitioners often work through open-ended exploration, while schools require clear structure and alignment with curriculum priorities, and higher education institutions seek research insights and impact monitoring. Engagement and feedback from children, parents and teachers helped both refine activities and address any challenges through shared dialogue. The project demonstrates that higher education institutions and cultural organisations

can work effectively with schools by offering high-quality, accessible resources that empower teachers and young people alike. Public engagement should move beyond performance-led models to support sustained, participatory musical experiences that are collaborative, imaginative and inclusive.

Project website: <https://www.southampton.ac.uk/research/projects/pythagoras-toolkit>
Images: Tom Crame

Ensemble Leading

In secondary schools and further education settings, it is the responsibility of music teachers to organise and lead ensembles such as musicals, orchestras, string orchestras, wind orchestras, brass bands, jazz bands or choirs. Therefore, leading an ensemble as an outreach offer can not only be inspirational for pupils, but it can support the music teacher with additional curriculum and enrichment time. It is important to ensure that you are pitching the music at the right level as they will not be able to achieve the same level as a university ensemble and may not engage with the same style of leadership.

World Events

Schools often celebrate important events in the calendar to widen pupils' horizons and raise awareness of world events and issues. These could include:

- Children in Need
- Comic Relief
- World Book Day (March)
- Black History Month (November)
- Autism Awareness Day (2 April)
- International Women's Day (8 March)
- World Poetry Day (21 March)
- Holocaust Memorial Day (27 January)
- Mental Health Awareness Week
- Armistice Day

Faith based events

Schools with diverse religious catchments or a specific religious community may mark significant calendar events with music or use music for regular worship.

Music Mark launched the Talk into Action campaign in 2021 to support organisations in the music education sector to achieve their Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) goals. As part of this, Music Mark commissioned Nate Holder to curate the 'Why Music' online series which now live as recorded online resources for Music Mark members.

The session, led by Faz Shah, on Music and Islam, unpacked what the Islamic tradition says about music by delving into the history of the faith of 1.7 billion people worldwide. Faz discusses cultures of music, modern technology, and how Muslim participants might engage in music education. Faz speaks about the roots of music in Islaam, and a legend in Arabia that music started with Hida (الحدا), the chant of a camel rider, who sang to speed up or slow down a camel. Faz shares his understanding of some Islamic families not permitting listening to music or poetry during Ramadan, and how to be sensitive to these choices when creating an outreach project with multiple schools.

His session highlights the different experiences of school communities at any given time of the calendar year and provokes careful consideration of music as an important component in many faiths.

Professional Development

In addition to directly educating young people in music, offering professional development opportunities for teachers improves their confidence, skills and knowledge. Confidence is a particular problem with generalist primary school teachers who may have little to no experience in music or music teaching, and who may be incredibly anxious about the prospect of teaching music. This could be done through offerings such as:

- Singing and Warm-Ups
- Composition
- Teaching Notation and Theory
- Music Assemblies
- Leading Ensembles

Creative Careers

Some secondary schools, and a growing number of primary schools, hold an annual event to highlight different careers, often from within their locality, as a tool for building aspiration and community cohesion. Some coincide with national initiatives such as [National Careers Week](#). There is also 'Discover! Creative Careers' helping schools and young people connect directly with jobs and people working across the creative industries. School involvement in careers events varies in style and format; examples include career-fair-style exhibits, presenting in assemblies, question-and-answer sessions with professionals, and practical workshops. Contributing to these days or serving as the leading partner in bringing a range of organisations together will promote and motivate students to study music. Be prepared to share, or lead, the space alongside other local cultural organisations (consider orchestras, libraries, museums, etc) as this variety is where schools find the value of the day. You can:

- Give real-life, authentic insight into the diversity in music and the variety of jobs.
- Inspire learners to continue to enjoy music.
- Present a broad perspective of musical life and occupations.

Higher education students and those early in their careers are well placed to share the realities, challenges, and attainability of a career in music.

Case Study: Primary Careers Week

Castle Hill Infant and Junior School has held an annual Careers Week to give pupils a chance to look ahead and think about what they might enjoy doing after they leave school. 2025 was their third annual event, bringing together people from many different jobs in hopes of helping students feel more confident about their options and showing them that there are many ways to be successful.

The school was particularly keen to include more people from the music and dance sectors, as many of their pupils are passionate about the arts, and they wanted to show that these interests can lead to real, fulfilling jobs.

'Including creative organisations helps us celebrate our students' talents and reminds them that the skills they learn through performing—like staying focused and working well in a team—are useful in any career they might choose.'

Jennifer Smith, Headteacher, Castle Hill Infant and Junior School, Ipswich

www.castlehillprimary.org.uk

Inclusion

In order to ensure that all learners are able to participate in music-making, it is important to have an awareness of issues of inclusion. Learners with a medical or learning need can benefit immensely from music-making, whether through the sensory aspects of the session, the transferable skills of teamwork and communication, or the opportunity to create and express themselves. There are certain factors which need to be taken into account when arranging an event or partnership.

Low-Income Areas

One significant barrier to music education is financial, with 31% of children across the UK living in poverty.^[xi] A key indicator of financial difficulty is the designation of FSM (Free School Meals) which identifies learners whose household income is below a certain threshold, meaning that they are entitled to free meals at school. In 2024, 25.7% of students in England received Free School Meals, yet some schools will have a significantly higher percentage of eligible pupils due to their location.^[xii] Certain locations have higher deprivation indicators and each nation has tools to explore this data^[xiii]. It can be useful to ask about this as it gives you an insight into the backgrounds of the learners and may dictate decisions to charge for any activities.

Physical Disabilities

Using the [Social model of disability](#), we can ensure that opportunities in music education are accessible to all. There are many possibilities for purchasing adapted instruments; however, as mentioned above, those who cannot afford these are doubly disadvantaged. New developments in technology have resulted in innovative digital instruments that use mechanisms such as sensors or eye movement tracking. Creative United has published a detailed [Guide to Buying Adaptive Instruments](#), that offers suggestions on instruments and funding sources. Music Hubs and Services in England are supplied with a [Capital Grant](#) from Arts Council England to purchase instruments, including adaptive instruments.

Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND)

Also known as, Additional Learning Needs (ALN) in Wales^[JM1], Additional Support Needs (ASN) in Scotland

In response to the increase in demand for SEND support, the English government published a white paper laying out the intended changes for the SEND system, underpinned by the £200 million investment for SEND teacher training.^[xiiii] An increasing number of children have education, health and care plans (EHCPs) which, once in-place, can unlock funded support. SEND encompasses those with physical disabilities, emotional development difficulties, neurodiversity, speech and language, sensory needs, behavioural needs and communication differences. A new ALN code was established in Wales in 2018, in which the term SEND was replaced with ALN (Additional Learning Needs) and support for young people was extended from 16 years old to 25 years old to encompass those who return to education.

Teacher Insight

As teachers work with their learners regularly, they will be able to inform you of any individual needs or preferences and make suggestions on how to differentiate tasks. There may be additional staff support in place for specific medical or behavioural needs.

If you are working in a primary setting, owing to staff-to-pupil ratios, classes with younger pupils are more likely to have a dedicated classroom assistant who will be able to support the learners. Some assistants are employed to work with older children or on a subject specialism. Ask about timetables for additional staff and if any have musical backgrounds or experience.

Individual Development Plan (IDP)^[xiv]

All learners with a diagnosis of SEND/ALN/ASN will have an IDP which is updated on an annual basis and includes information about their needs and adjustments. There would be no expectation for you to have access to or read this, but a good way to ask a teacher if there are learners with needs in their class is to ask, 'Do you have any learners with an IDP?'

One-Page Profile

All learners with a diagnosis of SEND/ALN/ASN will have a one-page profile; a one-page 'at a glance' document which provides a basic overview of important information about the learner, the environment they thrive in, what people can do to support them, how best to communicate with them and what they find difficult. They often include information about their interests which can be a great way to create a bond. These are quick ways to gain an overview of complex learners and can assist with the planning of a session.

Specialist Settings

Specialist Schools

Also known as alternative provision units, special schools, SEND settings, ALN settings and ASN settings.

Specialist settings are schools that cater entirely for those with ALN/SEND. They will be fully proficient in supporting their learners, yet there are key considerations when creating content. In terms of resources, specialist settings will normally have bespoke spaces which can create a holistic experience. For example, most ALN/SEND/ASN schools will have sensory rooms, which are often fitted with low-sensory lighting, relaxing music, and items to provide sensory stimulation, such as bubble lamps. They are also likely to have access to assistive technology, through equipment such as iPads or tablets. These can be invaluable for delivering music sessions as they can use software to make music accessible for those with more profound needs (see Changing Times). For those with profound physical disabilities, specialist settings will be adapted to suit the individual students' needs, and the ratio of staff to students will ordinarily be very high.

Homeschooling

In 2024/25, approximately 111,700 children were educated through homeschooling in the UK. Parents/carers choose this for a wide variety of different reasons, including but not limited to ideological preferences, individual learner needs which cannot be supported at a mainstream school, a preferred pedagogy, dissatisfaction with local schools or religious considerations. This can limit learners' access to music as they may not have the equipment that is needed, and teachers, whether parents/carers or external tutors, may not have the specialist knowledge or skills in music education. Group learning is a popular method of teaching in the homeschooling community, and parents/carers are often very well-connected, with specialist tutors running regular sessions. Institutions could contact these groups to offer bespoke activities, talk about careers in music or invite the learners to see their facilities.

Pupil Referral Units (PRU)

There are various reasons why a child may be educated in a PRU, ranging from being excluded from a previous setting to attendance anxiety or having individual medical, behavioural or mental health needs which cannot be met at a mainstream school. A child may attend a PRU full or part-time and sometimes attend a PRU on a part-time basis whilst attending another mainstream school to support them to integrate. PRUs have smaller class sizes and are not restricted by the national curriculum, although they are expected to teach core subjects such as numeracy, literacy and sciences. As a result of the flexibility, they often offer more vocational education, such as catering, health and beauty, or employability, and a less formal teaching environment. Music can offer opportunities for self-expression, and teach transferable skills such as discipline, teamwork and creativity.

Virtual Learning

Although virtual learning sounds like it is an online offer of education, this is not necessarily true. The term virtual learning encompasses young people who may have been excluded from mainstream state schools or have medical needs which restrict their physical attendance. They still meet at a venue with teachers and peers, but the curriculum is more geared towards skills-based learning and citizenship needed, and may focus on reintegrating into mainstream school at a later stage.

Behaviour Management

All schools will have their own mechanisms for behaviour management, from merits and demerits, to sanctions and reward trips. Learners can display disruptive behaviour in lessons, but it is the teacher's or teaching assistant's responsibility to manage behaviour when sessions are delivered by external staff. Therefore, there is no expectation for you to manage learners' behaviour.

Across the United Kingdom, there have been wider issues with behaviour, especially in the shadow of the pandemic. Worsening behaviour has been cited by teachers as a reason for leaving the profession, and schools have been pushed to implement tighter policies to tackle issues.

Attendance

Attendance at school has been increasingly declining since the pandemic and continues to be a significant focus at local authority and national government level. In 2024/25 in England, 18.14% of learners (persistent absentees) missed at least ten percent of school days with a further 2.39% missing at least half of their learning (severe absentees).^[xv] This increases with learner age, with the highest percentage of absentees being at Year 10 and 11, just before learners are able to leave school.

Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)

Attendance issues have led to an increase in young people classified as 'NEET' (Not in Education, Employment or Training). According to the English government, in October to December 2025, 12.8% of people aged 16 to 24 were NEET (957,000 young people). In addition to working with school-aged learners, these young people may benefit significantly from music education, whether formal or informal. Schools are also able to identify those that they believe are at risk of leaving school without moving into further education or employment, most likely through attendance figures.

Case Study: Noise Solution - Using music to support young people at risk of being NEET

Children and young people at risk of becoming NEET often present within school systems through behaviours that are misunderstood as defiance, disengagement or poor motivation. Noise Solution's work begins from a different diagnosis: that these behaviours frequently reflect unmet Basic Psychological Needs (BPN) for autonomy, competence and relatedness, as described within Self-Determination Theory (SDT, Deci and Ryan, 2000). When these needs are frustrated, young people disengage from learning, relationships and future-oriented thinking.

Noise Solution delivers specialist 1:1 music mentoring alongside schools, working with pupils at risk of exclusion, persistent absence or transition breakdown. The organisation currently delivers over 700 hours a month of 1:1 music mentoring, making predominantly HipHop, Grime, Rock, Electronically driven music. The intervention combines music-making with digital storytelling. Each participant captures and shares with family and professionals the highlights and reflections from each session. The combined process creates psychologically safe spaces where young people can regain a sense of choice (autonomy), experience success through skill-building (competence), and rebuild trust with an adult mentor and seen by trusted adults around them (relatedness). This is not enrichment activity; it is a structured wellbeing intervention embedded within school and multi-agency systems.

The theory of change is explicit: music is used as a mechanism to meet BPN, which SDT predicts will lead to improved wellbeing, engagement and reconnection with education or training pathways. You can read more about our work and how impact at <https://linktr.ee/NoiseSolutionUK> and noisesolution.org.

How You Can Help

Music can offer a relatable, vocational and creative means of expression and skill-development for young learners who are at risk of exclusion, or who have left school without plans for continued education or employment. Music can have a positive social impact through creating programmes that ignite a passion and engagement. Regular activities can also encourage school attendance as learners may be more likely to attend if they are able to participate in external opportunities. This means encouraging young learners who have been identified as having behavioural difficulties, rather than automatically exclude them.

It is important to consider how you professionally and safely share sensitive information about a pupil's behaviour with the teaching staff. Schools will likely have a digital system to record behaviour, such as SIMS, and a professional dialogue offering them details of the session will help them to best pass on the information or act upon it. Making private records of notable behaviour, both positive and negative, is useful for teachers to be able to either reward or discourage behaviour.

Risk Assessments and Safeguarding

Photographs and Videos

Taking photographs and videos of activities can be great for promotion, yet it is important to check with teachers who will be aware of which parents/carers have given consent for their children to be photographed or filmed, as well as whether they can be shared in a public medium. This is especially important for LAC pupils (Looked After Children) as those in a care setting are often unable to be photographed or video recorded due to certain safeguarding considerations. Therefore, it is vital to get permission from the teacher before recording, even if there is no intention to share them in a public medium. For more information, see the NSPCC: [Photographing and filming children](#) | [Images guidance](#) | [NSPCC Learning](#)

First Aid

During the planning stages of the visit, ask which members of the teaching and support staff who will be taking part in the outreach activity are first-aid trained, and make note of anyone within your department who has first-aid training. If there are any medical issues, there is a clear line of contact to someone who is able to assist.

Mental Health First Aid

In addition to first aiders, and because of the prevalence of poor mental health in children and young people, more cultural organisations are encouraging their learning and participation staff to become Mental Health First Aid trained. Music and the arts can create opportunities to explore challenging emotions, some of which may surface only whilst working with an external organisation. When planning your activity, you could also explore wellbeing outcomes. Music Mark has worked with [Soundcastle](#) to deliver this training to our members.

Risk Assessments

All schools are required to complete risk assessments for any activities outside of the school premises and any external visitor. Therefore, they are likely to have pro-formas and processes that you can use to ensure that your activity is safe and suitable. It may also be the case that individual students will have/need their own risk assessments in the case of more complex needs. For guidance on risk considerations, see, OEAP's (Outdoor Education Advisor Panel or The Association of Advisers for Outdoor Learning and Educational Visits) [Visit Leader Checklist](#).

Safeguarding

Safeguarding is a vital consideration for education and relates to procedures which are put in place to keep children safe and away from harm. Schools will have dedicated safeguarding teams and are required to publish their own policies and procedures, meaning that teachers would be required to monitor students and record any concerns. Some learners may open up to external staff members as they may not associate them with their school and may feel more comfortable talking to them. If a student discloses information, it is vital to ensure that it is passed on to their teacher who will follow their process, which may not involve speaking to their parent/carer depending on the circumstances. It is also important not to promise any pupils that you will keep anything a secret as it may be necessary to share the information if it puts them at risk. For more guidance on safeguarding, see NSPCC's guidance: [Safeguarding children and child protection](#) | [NSPCC Learning](#).

Schools will all have their own safeguarding policy and may ask for enhanced checks to be undertaken if you are working with students over a period of time. These are known as Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) in Scotland.

Feedback and Evaluation

Collating feedback from teaching staff and participants can provide key insights into the success of the outreach project and can be done easily and quickly, particularly if it is a format familiar to the school and learner. Feedback can also be useful as supplementary documentation for grant applications or REF submissions. For longer-term projects, a research study can add value, but it should be planned into the outreach project from the beginning so that code of ethics, permissions and school visits can all be agreed. You may plan for verbal or written feedback; however, to be inclusive, consider the barriers faced by different ages and learning stages, so they can give their feedback.

“Hands Up”!

The most common way adults ask younger children to answer questions is to raise their hand to answer, this can limit engagement. Schools and teachers (especially in Primary phases) have different approaches to address this, such as, drawing names out of a jar or using pre-selected ‘talking partners’. If the class is familiar with having ‘talking partners’ the group can be asked to tell their answer to a partner which gives all participants opportunity to think and give a response. Supporting adults can listen in to a range of conversations and record the feedback or ask a pair to give their feedback to the group.

Questionnaire/Survey

A short, well-designed questionnaire can gather both quantitative data for clear statistics and qualitative comments for deeper insight. While paper forms are possible, they require manual data entry and analysis. Digital tools like Microsoft Forms or Google Forms simplify data collection and automate analysis, making the process faster and easier. Teachers and teaching assistants can provide their feedback on what went well and what needs to be adjusted for future delivery.

Post-It Notes

With the school’s permission, sessions can be recorded and short video clips made capturing learner feedback, such as “What was your favourite piece of music today?” or “What did you enjoy most in the session?” This provides direct feedback and can also be used for evaluation or promotion purposes.

Technology

Many learners are familiar with using technology in lessons, and quizzes or games are an engaging way to both teach and gather feedback. Examples include:

- **Kahoot** – Offers free and paid accounts to create interactive quizzes and games for learners, which can be used to check understanding or reinforce learning.
- **Mentimeter/Slido** – Allows learners to give instant feedback through word clouds, graphs, charts, comments, and questions, making it quick and easy to capture responses.

Evaluation

To ensure that projects are both successful and repeatable, it is important to engage with evaluation strategies to reflect upon the process, inputs and outputs as close as possible to the end of the period. OEAP, the Association of Advisers for Outdoor Learning and Educational Visits, recommended by the UK Government, suggest asking yourselves the following questions:^[xvi]

Questions about inputs

- What was the financial cost of the experience?
- What staff time was involved in the experience?

Questions about outputs

- How many participants benefited from the experience?
- How many participants successfully completed the experience?
- Did the participants enjoy the experience?

Questions about outcomes

- What did the participants learn from the experience?
- How did the participants develop because of the experience?
- Did the experience achieve its aims and objectives?
- What were the outcomes from the experience?
- Were there any negative outcomes?

Questions about impact

- Is the learning/development long-lasting?
- What was the impact of the experience?
- Did the experience make a difference?
- To what extent can a specific impact be attributed to the experience?
- How or why did the experience make a difference?

Questions about theory of change

- Did the leaders facilitate an atmosphere of trust and support?
- Did the leaders integrate active reviewing into the experience?
- Did the leaders manage the activities so that the level of challenge was differentiated and matched to each individual?
- Were opportunities for real-world learning used?

Institutional Agenda

Beyond its educational benefits, outreach can align with institutional agendas and show tangible contributions to the organisation. Understanding your institution's policies and strategies allows you to design activities that support both the institution's goals and the advancement of music education.

Widening Participation

Widening Participation (WP) data may not be actively tracked by universities but is a key UK government metric (see [here](#)) monitoring access to further and higher education by free school meal eligibility, sex, ethnicity, ALN/SEND/ASN status, first language, POLAR quintile, and region. According to the Office for Students, universities must have an access and participation plan if they are registered in the 'Approved (fee cap)' category or wish to charge above the basic tuition fee cap. Identifying your institution's plan helps pinpoint areas your department can support and highlights existing large-scale projects and partnerships, often reducing administrative work. Institutions may also publish annual Widening Access reports summarising activities and existing collaborations.

Social Responsibility/Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG)

Social Responsibility or Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) refers to integrating social and environmental goals into institutional strategy, including environmental impact, ethical output, philanthropy, and curriculum decolonisation. Outreach that addresses sustainability, equity, diversity, inclusion, or employability contributes directly to an institution's social responsibility agenda and strengthens the department's position within the wider organisation.

Community Engagement

Higher Education Institutions are encouraged to actively participate in community engagement and will often publish both their plan and their output. This may include lifelong learning, extending research outputs into the community, working with underprivileged areas or collaborating with the cultural heritage of the area. In the case of music, strong partnerships can be made with neighbouring orchestras, choirs, theatres, galleries, dance companies and heritage properties (such as the National Trust, English Heritage and Historic Scotland), all of which can also incorporate schools and young people.

Case Study: The Paul Robeson Ambassadorship Scheme at Cardiff University

The Paul Robeson Ambassadorship Scheme seeks to inform and preserve the legacy of Robeson, an African American singer-actor and civil rights activist of the last century, for students of different ages in South Wales, through music, sound and story.

Dr Cameron Gardner oversees and manages the students in creating multimedia resources (including soundscapes involving the distinct sound of Robeson's bass-baritone voice and coal mining), drawing upon his biography, discography and broadcasting to link his legacy as an African American championing the miners of South Wales to current issues of race, immigration and community. The approach has to appeal to the audience by engaging them with opportunities to communicate their political and social concerns in a safe and sensitive environment.



It has been fantastic to see how effectively music students adapt the story of Robeson to a multicultural audience of today through collaboration with schools, music services, and communities of disability and ethnic diversity in concerts, workshops and presentations. A recent surprise has been that our students, whilst rehearsing with schoolchildren from Caerphilly, heard from one of the directors that his grandfather befriended Robeson soon after arriving in Cardiff in the 1930s as a refugee from Spain!



Working with many schools with widening participation backgrounds helps to address their key curricula and resource objectives as well as Cardiff's own (a Community in Music module will appear in our new BA in Music for 27/28 entry). At the same time, the Robeson ambassadors develop their skills in teaching, mentoring and leadership to impact their own studies and beyond. A huge portfolio of partnerships has consequently emerged, not only with educational institutes but with refugee groups, nearby community projects and organisations for people with visual impairment and neurodiversity.

For Cardiff University, the Paul Robeson ambassadors have also regularly contributed to key events in the EDI calendar, such as Black History Month and International Women's Day, and attracted interest from local and national media. All of this would not have been possible without the help and support of Beverly Humphreys, OBE, alumna of the School of Music and co-founder of the Paul Robeson Wales Trust.



Glossary and Acronyms

A-Level	Advanced Level
ACE	Arts Council England
ACW	Arts Council Wales
ALN	Additional Learning Needs (Term used in Wales for SEND)
ALNCo	Additional Learning Needs Co-Ordinator
AoLE	Area of Learning (Welsh Curriculum)
AP	Alternative Provision
ASC/ASD	Autism Spectrum Condition/Disorder
ASN	Additional Support Needs (Term used in Scotland for SEND)
BESD	Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties
BTEC	Business and Technology Education Council qualification
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
DfE	Department for Education
EHCP	Education, Health and Care Plan
ELSA	Emotional Literacy Support Assistance
ESTYN	Welsh for 'rise', Welsh organisation to inspect quality and standards at schools
EWC	Education Workforce Council (Wales)
EYFS	Early Years Foundation Stage
FE	Further Education
FSM	Free School Meals
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education
HE	Higher Education
HLO	Hub Lead Organisation
HLTA	Higher Level Teaching Assistant

ITT/ITE	Initial Teacher Training/Education
KS	Key Stage
LA	Local Authority
LAC	Looked After Child
LPME	Local Plan for Music Education
LSA	Learning Support Assistant
NEET	Not in Education, Employment, or Training
NPME	National Plan for Music Education
OFSTED	Office for Standards in Education, Children’s Services and Skills. (inspectorate, England)
Ofqual	The Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (England)
PCET	Post-Compulsory Education and Training
PGCE	Post-Graduate Certificate of Education (Teacher Training)
PPA	Planning, Preparation, and Assessment
PRU	Pupil Referral Unit
SATs	Standardised Assessment Tests
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SEND	Special Educational Needs & Disabilities
SENCo	Special Educational Needs Co-Ordinator (sometimes known as SENDco) Special Educational Needs & Disabilities Co-Ordinator
SPaG	Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar
SRB	Specialist Resource Base
STA	Standards and Testing Agency
T-Level	Technical Level
TA	Teaching Assistant
UCAS	Universities and Colleges Admissions Service
V-Level	Vocational Level
WCET	Whole Class Ensemble Teaching

Appendix 1: Types of School

State/Local Authority/Maintained Schools	These are all terms for a state-funded school that is overseen by the local authority, which is responsible for admissions, funding, and support, and must follow the national curriculum.
Academy	An Academy is a state-funded school that is independent of local authority control and is run by an academy trust, giving it greater freedom over its curriculum, budget, and term dates.
Multi-Academy Trust (MAT)	A Multi-Academy Trust is an umbrella organisation that has multiple settings unified by values and vision. There is often a team that work for the Trust. The largest multi-academy trusts (MATs) in the UK include Academies Enterprise Trust, Harris Federation, Oasis Community Learning, Kemnal Academy Trust, and United Learning Trust, with United Learning being the largest.
Private/Independent School	An Independent School is a fee-charging school that is not funded by the government and operates independently of local authority control, setting its own curriculum and admissions policies. They sometimes call themselves a 'college'.
Free School	Free Schools are funded by the government but are not run by the local authority. They can set their own pay and conditions for staff, change the length of school terms and the school day, and do not have to follow the national curriculum.
Sixth Form	Sixth Form is the optional final two years of secondary education (ages 16–18), where students typically study A levels or equivalent qualifications in preparation for higher education or employment. Sixth Forms are based in a Secondary School whereas Colleges are for Further Education only.
Steiner Schools	A Steiner School is a school based on the Waldorf educational philosophy, focusing on holistic development through creative, practical, and academic learning, and it may be independent or state-funded.
Montessori Schools	A Montessori School follows the Montessori educational approach, emphasising child-led learning, independence, and hands-on activities, and are usually independent, especially at early years and primary level.
Forest Schools	Forest Schools are an educational approach that uses regular outdoor learning in natural settings to support children's confidence, independence, and practical skills, often alongside mainstream schooling.
SEND Setting/Special Schools (see Specialist Settings)	A SEND setting or special school is a specifically designed to support children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). These schools provide tailored teaching, therapies, small classes and resources to meet individual learning, social, and physical needs.

Subject Specialist Schools	A subject specialist school must meet the full curriculum offering across all subjects, but may focus on a particular subject in its recruitment procedures and extra-curricular activities. This includes specialist music schools, such as Chethams, The Yehudi Menuhin School and The Purcell School, as well as schools for sports, performing arts, dance, mathematics and STEM.
Pupil Referral Unit (PRU)	A Pupil Referral Unit is a local authority-run education setting that provide alternative education for children who cannot attend mainstream school, often due to exclusion, illness, or behavioural needs.
College	The title is also used by some Independent Settings and Higher Education Settings.
Grammar School	A Grammar School is a state-funded secondary school that select pupils based on academic ability, usually through an entrance exam known as the 11-plus.
Boarding School	A Boarding School is a school where pupils live on site during term time, receiving both education and accommodation from the school.
Faith School	Faith Schools must follow the national curriculum, but they can choose what they teach in religious studies. Faith schools may have different admissions criteria and staffing policies to state schools, although anyone can apply for a place. This includes, but is not limited to: RC - Roman Catholic CofE – Church of England CofW – Church of Wales These may include Voluntary Aided schools (which are entirely local authority funded) and Voluntary Controlled schools (which are part-funded by the local authority and part-funded by the voluntary organisation).
Girls/Boys School	A Girls or Boys School is a single-gender school that educate only boys or only girls, rather than a mix of both.
Welsh-Medium School	A Welsh-medium school is a school where Welsh is the primary language of instruction for most subjects. Students are immersed in Welsh for teaching, communication, and daily activities, while English is usually taught as a separate subject.
Gaelic-Medium School	A Gaelic-medium school is a school where Scottish Gaelic is the primary language of instruction for most subjects. English is introduced as a secondary language.
Preparatory (Prep) Schools	Prep schools are fee-paying schools for children typically aged 7–13, designed to prepare pupils for entry into independent secondary schools, often through entrance exams.
Home-Schooling	Home-Schooling is when parents or guardians take primary responsibility for educating their children at home instead of sending them to a formal school.

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- [iii] 'Quality' is often debated in music education, Arts Council England have developed seven [quality principles](#) to raise the standard of work being produced by, with and for children and young people.
- [iv] [Optional key stage 1 national curriculum tests: information for parents - GOV.UK](#)
- [v] <https://hwb.gov.wales/curriculum-for-wales/summary-of-legislation/#maintained-schools-and-maintained-nursery-schools>
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- [xi] <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/school-pupils-and-their-characteristics/2024-25>
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- [xiii] <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/every-child-achieving-and-thriving>
- [xiv] Acronyms and terminology continually evolves; this may be referred to as an Individual Education Plan or similar.
- [xv] <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/pupil-absence-in-schools-in-england/2024-25>
- [xvi] OEAP, [Educational Visits Coordinator](#)

Information correct as of 25th September 2026. This resource is reviewed and updated regularly to reflect any changes.



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