
Music Education, a guide for Governors

Providing high quality
music education in schools



**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**



National
Governors'
Association



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“Studying cultural education subjects, such as art and design, dance, drama and music, sparks creativity across the curriculum, encouraging young people to be inquisitive, disciplined and determined. Wherever children start in life, a high quality cultural education in every school should be a right, not a privilege.

Alongside literacy and numeracy, another skill needed in our workforce today is creativity. Cultural education subjects help young people to unlock their innate creativity, enabling them to become more rounded and confident human beings.

All of our children deserve a rich cultural education, but not all of them are getting it. The Arts Council has launched the Cultural Education Challenge in response to this to encourage educational settings, arts organisations and other partners to work together in giving our children and young people the best start we can.

This guide has been developed in partnership with Arts Council England, Music Mark and the National Governors Association as a resource to support you in your role as governor and critical friend.”

Darren Henley OBE
Chief Executive, Arts Council England

Context Setting and Vision



Governors have an important strategic role in ensuring that the school offers a broad and balanced, high quality curriculum. This document will help you to ask useful questions of school leaders and teachers to improve outcomes in music. In the pages that follow, we provide questions that will help you to support and challenge senior and subject leaders about music provision in your school. We follow these questions with a few pointers. We would never suggest that these responses are the 'correct answers' but they will guide you on to lines of thinking that will help you to improve your knowledge and understanding of music making in your school.

The government made a commitment to excellent music education when it launched the [National Plan for Music Education \(NPME\)](#), which outlines roles for schools and

other organisations. The NMPE builds on the fact that the National Curriculum has included music since its inception, and the subject has been an integral part of education much longer than that. Ofsted places value on music when looking for evidence that schools provide a broad and balanced curriculum.

Schools across the country seek to provide high quality music education for a whole host of reasons. Advocates of music education will often cite the subject's contribution to a school's ethos, its positive impact on attainment in other subjects, its role in developing social skills and the opportunity for self-expression. All of these are important points that should be taken into consideration.

More than anything, however, music should be a part of children's schooling for its own intrinsic good.

Acknowledgements

This document has been created through the partnership working of Music Mark, Arts Council England and the National Governors' Association.

Questions



V: Values and Ethos

V1: What value does your school place on music?

Is music genuinely valued by the school? If so, is that value more than just a 'shop window' function at parents' evening, etc? Is that value reflected in curriculum allocation, resources, funding and opportunity?

V2: Are you aware of music's place in the National Curriculum?

Music is a mandatory part of the National Curriculum in Key Stage 1-3. It forms part of the arts 'entitlement area' at KS4.

The National Curriculum and the KS4 'entitlement areas' do not apply to academies and free schools. These schools are, however, still required to provide a broad and balanced curriculum that promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and of society.

V3: Are you aware of the National Plan for Music Education?

The NPME remains in force until 2020 and outlines the government's vision for music education.

V4: Does your school have a dedicated 'music policy'?

A music policy allows you to clearly establish the value that your school places on music and communicate this vision to the whole school community. An effective music policy will focus on ensuring that all pupils have access to a high-quality music education.

The National Plan for Music Education

The National Plan for Music Education was published in 2011 as a response to Darren Henley's review, Music Education in England.

You can download Music Education in England here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/music-education-in-england-a-review-by-darren-henley-for-the-department-for-education-and-the-department-for-culture-media-and-sport>

The National Plan for Music Education can be accessed here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-importance-of-music-a-national-plan-for-music-education>

The Department for Education has published advice on charging for school activities, which can be accessed here:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/365929/charging_for_school_activities_-_October_2014.pdf



O: Opportunities

O1: Does music take place in your school?

Is music present both in and beyond the curriculum? Do teachers know how to make use of music in their lessons? Is there a member of staff who takes lead responsibility for the quality of music provision?

O2: Does your school provide (or have you considered providing) pupils with the opportunity to gain a music qualification?

There is a range of music qualifications suited to pupils of all ages. All schools should consider whether or not pupils have access to graded music qualifications (offered by exam boards such as ABRSM, Trinity College London and Rockschoo).

Secondary schools will want to consider GCSE, BTEC, RSL Music Practitioner, the NCFE V-Cert – all of which contribute to performance measures. As can graded examinations from Grade 6 upward.

At Key Stage 5, AS Level, A-Level, BTEC, RSL Level 3, Pre-U are all possible choices.

Some schools may find that various Level 1 qualifications are well suited to their needs. Arts Award, RSL and Pearson's BTEC are examples of music qualifications that can be studied at Level 1.

O3: Does your school provide pupils with the opportunity to have additional instrumental and/or vocal lessons?

Do these lessons cover a range of instruments? Are multiple styles available for various instruments? Are pupils' interests both catered for and challenged by the offer? Your music education hub will be able to provide support.

O4: What opportunities do your pupils have to perform in front of an audience?

Are there opportunities for pupils of all abilities? Is music performed in assembly? Is music performed at school events (sports day, open evening, etc)?

O5: What extra-curricular music provision does your school provide?

Does your extra-curricular provision provide opportunities to participate in a range of different activities, for example playing different instruments as part of an ensemble and alone or using music technology? Excellent music provision will strike a balance between meeting pupils' interests and providing them with new experiences. Your music education hub will be able to help you broaden your range of extra-curricular music. [This page of the Music Mark website](#) will help you to find contact details for your local music education hub.

R: Resources

R1: How is music staffed in your school?

Does your school have a specialist music teacher? Is music delivered by generalist teachers? Are music teachers sufficiently trained to deliver high-quality musical experiences?

Why not encourage your head teacher or music lead teacher to speak to your local Music Education Hub about the various staffing options for music in your school?

R2: Are your music facilities fit for purpose?

Any room can be a music room with careful planning. Do you have enough suitable music spaces to ensure that all pupils can benefit from music making? Are rooms sound-proof or far enough away from other classrooms to allow for lessons that are musical in nature? Are the acoustics suitable? Is the room large enough to fit your pupils and their instruments?

R3: How are funds allocated to support the development of music in your schools?

How are funds allocated from the school budget? What is your school's policy on charging for additional instrumental and vocal lessons?

Questions



T: Teaching

T1: Are pupils given the opportunity to engage with musical activities in lessons?

In order to achieve high-quality outcomes in music, pupils should have the opportunity to engage in practical musical activities. Music lessons should be filled with singing and the playing of instruments. Writing can certainly support musical learning but practical music making should be the primary medium for knowledge-acquisition.

T2: Is assessment in music simple yet effective?

In 'Music in Schools: Promoting Good Practice', Ofsted stated that assessment in music is often over-complicated. Does your school's assessment policy take into account the needs of musical learning? Do teachers have sufficient training and experience to accurately assess music?

T3: How is the quality of teaching being assessed?

When assessing pupil-outcomes in music, consideration should be given to the nature of music making. Pupils' work will include recordings of performances and compositions. The staff conducting lesson observations and work scrutinies should be suitably qualified appraise the quality of this work.

Ofsted has produced documentation intended to support senior and middle leaders when making teaching and learning decisions about music education.

You can find this document here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/subject-professional-development-materials-music-in-schools-promoting-good-practice>



P: Partnerships

P1: What is your school's relationship with the local music education hub?

Has your school developed a strategic partnership with your Music Education Hub? Does this partnership extend beyond the simple provision of visiting music teachers?

P2: Is the effectiveness of partnerships monitored by middle and senior leaders?

Are clear goals set for partnerships? Do middle and senior leaders have the knowledge, skills and experience to monitor a partnership?

P3: Do partnership projects take into account existing musical provision so that funds are spent where they are most needed?

Are projects designed to extend learning that takes place in lessons? Is there continuity between projects and extra-curricular music provision?

Help and support with music in your school

Music Mark, a national subject association for music education, is available to provide CPD support for governors:

Website: www.musicmark.org.uk

Twitter: @MusicMarkUK

Facebook: www.facebook.com/UKMusicMark

You can find Music Mark's directory of music services here:

<http://www.musicmark.org.uk/about-our-members/music-services-directory>



Partners:

www.musicmark.org.uk

www.nga.org.uk

www.artscouncil.org.uk



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