

HMS Teaching and Learning Standards Framework

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Context

As part of the HMS 'Year of Inclusion' in 2021-22, teachers met and discussed what it means to be an HMS teacher and the contribution they make to our shared 'Musical Voices' vision for music education in Hertfordshire. This included insights into qualities, skills and behaviours that led to great musical outcomes for all young people.

The 2022 revision to the HMS instrumental / vocal teacher job description to broaden the access to a teaching career with a music service reframed what an instrumental teacher could be and signified the next step on the journey to being a fully inclusive music service by 2030.

HMS was successfully appointed as the Hub Lead Organisation (HLO) for Hertfordshire from September 2024 and now continues the work to deliver the National Plan for Music Education (NPME) across the county. There are clear partnership ambitions for all HLOs, and this document sets out the expectations that HMS has for all music education activities delivered in Hertfordshire, in particular its own activities and that of any Hub partner.

What is 'Musical Voice'

Musical 'voice' refers to how a person expresses themselves through musical activity. This often means instrumental music making (including adapted instruments), singing and/or expressive visual communication e.g. sign language or conducting. Musical voice can also be expressed through composition, songwriting, music technology or written musical notation in any form.

Ambition

The ambition of this framework is to focus on the experience pupils and their families receive, create a quality framework that recognises the importance of engaging with youth voice and to provide a common framework for music education standards and Hub partner activities across Hertfordshire.

A set of 5 HMS quality principles has been created based on the input of HMS teachers, the HMS music and wider leadership teams, the Arts Council England quality principles and feedback from schools, children and young people.

This allows HMS to quality assure music education provision that takes place across Hertfordshire against a set of clear guidelines and clarifies the expectations HMS has on delivery partners as the HLO.

This standards framework can also be referred to by schools and partner organisations to assist them in ensuring the quality of third-party provision.

HMS Quality Principles

1. Engage all learners
2. Plan engaging and musical learning
3. Embed strong habits for learning and develop resilient learners
4. Model high-quality musicianship and professional behaviours
5. Use questioning, assessment and reflection effectively

HMS teachers believe that...

- Music education should be accessible to everyone, regardless of their background or circumstances
- Making music improves the lives and life chances of children and young people
- Everyone has a unique musical voice that deserves to be nurtured
- Making music together delivers powerful outcomes
- Musical learning continues beyond school and into the community
- Inspiration and impact can be achieved no matter the level of progress
- Music education holds a vital position in every child's educational experience
- Teachers never stop learning
- Teachers have a duty to pass on their own musical learning to the next generation
- Music is fun but isn't necessarily easy!

This document covers all aspects of knowledge, skills and understanding that are required for the consistent successful delivery of HMS services and provide HMS and Instrumental / Vocal Teachers with benchmarks that apply across the county in schools, music centres and other settings.

In its role as Hub Lead Organisation, HMS will continue to share these standards with partners who deliver, or co-deliver Arts Council England / Department for Education funded activities.

Whilst they will not replace existing standards developed by partner organisations, they will enable partners to be clear as to the expectations of HMS as a commissioner of services.

The HMS Standards provide:

- A benchmark for the initial training of HMS instrumental/vocal teachers, workshop leaders and third-party practitioners (referred to collectively from this point as Instrumental Teachers) and for their induction.
- A benchmark for the monitoring and observation of provision delivered that is unique to instrumental teaching.
- A framework for Hub partners against which activities can be quality assured as part of the Hub Partnership Agreement.
- A framework for teachers to use in their ongoing self-reflection.
- A tool to promote and exemplify high and consistent standards of teaching and learning.
- A set of standards agreed by all HMS staff that ensure we hold ourselves and each other to account for the benefit of the children and young people we educate.
- A set of standards that is informed by children and young people so the expectations of our staff accounts for youth voice.
- A framework for target setting as part of the HMS teacher performance management process.

The word 'teacher' or 'teachers' throughout this document refers to both HMS colleagues and Hub partner staff involved in the delivery of music education activities.

Principle 1: Engage all learners

What does this mean?

Teaching that recognises pupils as individuals, creates a positive and inclusive environment, and enables all pupils to participate, take risks and express themselves musically. Clear communication that makes progress visible, clarifies next steps and engages families and schools appropriately.

Why does this matter?

Pupils learn best when they feel safe, respected and understood. An inclusive environment supports motivation, persistence and meaningful musical progress over time. Timely, specific feedback supports purposeful practice and strengthens partnerships around each pupil's learning.

This quality principle is achieved when:

- a. I establish a purposeful and respectful learning environment in which pupils feel safe to make mistakes and take musical risks.
- b. I adapt my approach to meet differing needs, interests and backgrounds of my pupils.
- c. I recognise behaviour as communication and manage it constructively with pupils and parents, in line with HMS and school policies.
- d. I give feedback in the moment that is specific, constructive and focused on improvement.

Principle 2: Plan engaging and musical learning

What does this mean?

Great long-term and short-term planning that leads to musically rich, well-structured learning experiences and musical outcomes. Learning sustains pupils' engagement and progress.

Why does this matter?

Clear planning ensures that learning builds logically and sequentially over time. Well planned tuition develops a broad range of musical skills and maintains pupils' motivation.

This quality principle is achieved when:

- a. I plan long-term programmes of learning that are progressive and appropriate for my pupils.
- b. I select and prepare repertoire and activities that are suitable for each pupil's stage of development.
- c. Every lesson I teach is clearly structured to interest and motivate pupils.
- d. I make learning intentions clear, so pupils understand what they are working towards.

Principle 3: Embed strong habits for learning and develop resilient learners

What does this mean?

Teaching supports pupils to practise effectively, work independently, and develop secure routines that lead to sustained progress over time. Teaching sets appropriate challenges, breaks learning into manageable steps, and helps pupils respond positively to difficulty.

Why does this matter?

Progress depends on what pupils do between lessons. Strong habits help pupils practise with purpose and take ownership of their learning. Resilient learners are more likely to persevere, maintain motivation and achieve long-term musical progress.

This quality principle is achieved when:

- a. I reinforce key skills through regular revisiting and consolidation of previous learning.
- b. I teach pupils how to practise, not just what to practise; breaking down complex skills into clear, manageable steps.
- c. Pupils and their families understand what is expected of them between lessons to make progress.
- d. I set learning goals that are challenging, realistic and appropriate for each pupil.
- e. My feedback encourages effort and improvement without lowering expectations.

Principle 4: Model high-quality musicianship and professional behaviours

What does this mean?

Demonstrating secure musical understanding, professional standards and positive attitudes that pupils can observe and learn from.

Why does this matter?

Pupils learn from both how you behave as well as what you teach them. High professional standards build aspiration and musical identity.

This quality principle is achieved when:

- a. I professionally model techniques, musical understanding, and expressive performance.
- b. I professionally demonstrate high-quality rehearsal and practice behaviours.
- c. I communicate professionally and regularly with families and schools to support pupils' learning.
- d. I demonstrate curiosity, creative risk-taking, and I seek out ways to improve my teaching practice
- e. I recognise and respond to any additional needs or adjustments my pupils may require.
- f. I complete admin tasks regularly, I treat all colleagues respectfully, and I am knowledgeable on the musical opportunities available to my pupils.

Principle 5: Use questioning, assessment and reflection effectively

What does this mean?

Ongoing assessment and dialogue that helps pupils understand how to improve and reflect on next steps for their own learning.

Why does this matter?

Effective discussions and open questioning helps pupils become thoughtful, self-aware musicians who can identify and address areas for improvement independently.

This quality principle is achieved when:

- a. I assess pupils' learning regularly and adapt my teaching in response.
- b. I encourage pupils to reflect on their own playing and learning journeys.
- c. I maintain an open dialogue with each pupil's family to support musical progress.
- d. I encourage pupils to join ensembles, enter exams and take part in performance opportunities that are relevant and achievable for them.

Department for Education Teachers' Standards Part Two: Personal and Professional Conduct

Hertfordshire Music Service, like the Department for Education (DfE), believe that every teacher is expected to demonstrate consistently high standards of personal and professional conduct.

As such, the DfE Teachers' Standards Part Two forms part of the HMS Teaching and Learning Standards Framework.

The Personal and Professional Conduct standards are comprised of a series of statements which define the behaviours and attitudes which set the required standard for conduct throughout a teacher's career.

The DfE Teachers' Standards document containing the Part Two Personal and Professional Conduct Standards can be accessed in summary [by clicking this hyperlink](#), and in full [by clicking this hyperlink](#).

Responsibilities of Hertfordshire Music Service

HMS shall provide effective support that enables teachers to meet the HMS Standards by:

1. Providing a comprehensive induction programme that specifically helps new HMS teachers to meet the HMS Teaching and Learning Standards.
2. Offering relevant, comprehensive, and ongoing training as part of the CPD programme, which supports the attainment of the HMS Teaching and Learning Standards.
3. Maintaining a supportive performance management process based on the HMS Teaching and Learning Standards, enabling HMS teachers to use statements drawn from the standards to assess their own teaching.
4. Organising appropriate training and support (upon approved request or at the direction of management) that supports teachers in maintaining the HMS Teaching and Learning Standards consistently. Ensuring that an effective action plan and support programme is offered when the HMS Teaching and Learning Standards are not met.
5. Creating opportunities for musicians new to teaching to receive mentoring, coaching and support to meet the HMS Teaching and Learning Standards in order to gain ongoing employment and deliver the HMS musical vision.
6. Negotiating fair and effective Service Agreements with schools and any other institution offering instrumental tuition, to ensure that resources and accommodation are conducive to good teaching and learning within the national standards framework.
7. Providing opportunities for teachers to undertake a breadth of activities, including large and small group teaching and ensemble coaching as well as one-to-one teaching.
8. Using the standards to support career progression for HMS teachers linked to HMS Pay and Conditions.
9. In certain circumstances, a failure to meet the HMS Teaching and Learning Standards can result in the cancellation of a Hub partnership agreement, or for HMS teachers, formal management intervention, including performance management or the disciplinary process.

Key changes or updates

August 2026

- Revised 9 quality principles to 5 following development and feedback on the use of the standards framework day to day.
- A separate self-reflection form will be used that follows this framework with the addition of space to track and monitor confidence and consistency for each aspect of the quality principles.