SCHOOL MUSIC BULLETIN

Issue 34 | 2 November 2026

Welcome back after half term. In Issue 34, explore how music can support meaningful remembrance and reflection, review your school's music priorities for the term ahead, and book upcoming CPD, networking and events. Estimated reading time: 6 minutes.

View the School Music Bulletin online

AT A GLANCE

Remembrance and reflection | National curriculum update | Upper KS2 CPD | Music Development Plan review | Lead School support | Upcoming CPD and events

CPD spotlight: Upper KS2 engagement and musical independence

Tuesday 10 November 2026 | 4.00-5.00pm

Join the conversation: How can we help older primary pupils take greater ownership of their musical learning?

Explore practical approaches that develop pupils' confidence, creativity, independence and musical decision-making. The session will consider how teachers can move pupils from following instructions towards making increasingly purposeful musical choices of their own.

Suitable for music leaders, class teachers and colleagues delivering whole-class instrumental learning.

Book now

SEND Conference spotlight: Tuning In to Autism

Thursday 11 February 2027 | 9.30am-2.30pm | Southfield School, Hatfield

We are delighted that Professor Adam Ockelford and colleagues will contribute to the Hertfordshire SEND Primary School Conference, sharing work connected with Tuning In to Autism.

The session will explore how music can support autistic children's communication, interaction, learning and wellbeing. Delegates will be introduced to practical resources and approaches that can help schools, SEND settings and early years providers create more responsive and inclusive musical experiences.

Professor Adam Ockelford is Professor of Music at the University of Roehampton and an internationally recognised researcher in music, autism and special educational abilities and needs. He founded Sounds of Intent, a framework and collection of resources that supports practitioners to understand and develop the musical engagement of children and young people with diverse needs and abilities.

The conference will bring together keynote contributions, practical workshops and shared practice focused on removing barriers and enabling every child to participate, progress and thrive through music.

Book the SEND Primary School Conference

Top Tip of the Week: Use music to support remembrance and reflection

Music can create a shared space in which pupils listen, reflect and consider how individuals and communities remember significant people and events.

Begin with a short, carefully chosen piece of instrumental, vocal or ceremonial music. Before giving pupils its title or context, invite them to listen closely.

Ask pupils:

- What do you notice first?
- Which instruments, voices or sounds can you hear?
- How do tempo, dynamics, texture and timbre shape the atmosphere?
- How are silence and sound used?
- Why might this music be suitable for a ceremony or act of remembrance?
- How can music help communities express ideas that may be difficult to communicate in words?

Follow the listening with an age-appropriate musical response. Pupils might create a short soundscape, compose a reflective motif, select sounds for a commemorative event or explain how their musical choices communicate meaning.

Take care to provide context, avoid assumptions about pupils' personal experiences, and ensure that the music is used respectfully.

Music can help pupils understand not only what communities remember, but how and why they remember together.

National music education update: preparing for curriculum change

The Curriculum and Assessment Review published its final report in November 2025, alongside the government's response. The government intends to consult on the draft curriculum during 2026, publish the revised National Curriculum in spring 2027, and introduce first teaching from September 2028.

The government is also establishing a National Centre for Arts and Music Education. Its planned remit includes supporting high-quality arts teaching, developing professional learning, strengthening partnerships between schools and cultural organisations, and working with England's Music Hub network to improve access to arts and music education.

Schools do not need to wait for the new curriculum before strengthening provision. Continue to develop a rich and ambitious music curriculum, supported by a clear School Music Development Plan and strong partnership with your local Music Hub.

Curriculum reflection

- Do all pupils have regular opportunities to sing, listen, perform, compose and create?
- Is musical learning sequenced so that pupils build knowledge, skills and confidence over time?
- Are there clear pathways from curriculum music into instrumental learning, singing, ensembles and performances?
- Which pupils or groups are currently underrepresented, and what may be preventing their participation?
- Does your School Music Development Plan translate your vision into clear, achievable actions?

The national direction continues to place a strong emphasis on high-quality provision and equitable access to arts education, particularly for children and communities currently least able to access it.

Resources

Is your School Music Development Plan driving action?

The beginning of the second half of the autumn term is a useful point at which to check whether your School Music Development Plan is actively shaping provision.

- Participation: Who is taking part, and who is not yet represented?
- Curriculum: Is learning sequenced and progressively challenging?
- Singing: Do all pupils sing regularly and develop their vocal skills?
- Instrumental learning: Can pupils access sustained opportunities to learn?
- Ensembles and performances: Are opportunities visible, inclusive and appropriately varied?
- Progression: Do pupils know how to continue their musical learning?
- Inclusion and representation: Whose music, experiences and identities are reflected?
- Staff development: What knowledge, confidence or practical support do colleagues need?
- Impact: What evidence will show that your actions are making a difference?

Download the School Music Audit Toolkit:

- **Primary / Early Years:** music-development-school-statements-ey-primary.xlsx
- **Secondary:** music-development-school-statements-secondary.xlsx

The audit is designed to be completed over time, so don't feel you need to do everything at once. Start with the areas most relevant to your school. Choose one priority that can be strengthened before the end of term. Identify the next action, who will lead it, and how you will know whether it has improved pupils' experiences.

Book now: upcoming opportunities

Herts Schools Music Expo 2027

Friday 2 July 2027

Creating a Music Education Ecosystem in Hertfordshire that Inspires Lifelong Participation and Musical Growth

A day of discovery, connection and practical inspiration for school leaders, music subject leaders and educators, alongside cultural partners and national music education organisations. Explore programmes, resources, services and partnerships that can help pupils participate, progress and thrive. Venue and programme details will be shared with registered delegates.

Book the Herts Schools Music Expo

Autumn term networking, CPD and events

Date	Event / focus	Booking
10 Nov 2026	Upper KS2: engagement and musical independence	Book now
25 Nov 2026	Music Leaders: access, participation and progression for all	Book now

Spring and summer term diary

Date	Event / focus	Booking
13 Jan 2027	KS4: participation, achievement and sustainable pathways	Book now

Date	Event / focus	Booking
11 Feb 2027	SEND Primary School Conference	Book now
25 Feb 2027	KS1: inclusive experiences, understanding and confidence	Book now
10 Mar 2027	Music Technology and Creative Production	Book now
19 May 2027	Recruitment and Retention	Book now
26 May 2027	Enrichment, Choirs and Ensemble Leaders	Book now
16 Jun 2027	KS3: engagement, participation and progression	Book now
2 Jul 2027	Herts Schools Music Expo 2027	Book now

Partners

Herts for Learning Traded CPD

2 Mar 2027	Leading primary music across your school	Book now

Looking further ahead

HERTFORDSHIRE SCHOOLS' GALA

Sunday 12 March 2028. Further information will follow.

Support

Lead Schools for Music

Connect with an experienced Hertfordshire music lead for practical peer-to-peer support.

Support can include:

- curriculum planning and progression;
- singing development;
- assessment;
- enrichment and performance planning;
- participation and progression;
- inclusive practice;
- music leadership;
- professional conversations, school visits or online meetings.

Request support from a Lead School

Head of Participation & School Music

Christina Luchies

christina.luchies@hertfordshire.gov.uk | Book a meeting

Contact

Christina Luchies | Head of Participation & School Music | Hertfordshire Music Service

christina.luchies@hertfordshire.gov.uk | Book a meeting

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