HERTFORDSHIRE MUSIC SERVICE

SCHOOL MUSIC BULLETIN

Issue 36 | 23 November 2026

AT A GLANCE

SEND Music Conference | Participation and progression | Pupil voice | Music Mark conference themes | Seasonal performance planning | Upcoming events

Estimated reading time: 8 minutes.

View the School Music Bulletin online

SEND Primary Music Conference: inclusive practice, accessible music-making and shared learning

Thursday 11 February 2027 | Southfield School | 10.00am-2.00pm

Registration and refreshments from 9.30am | Optional school tour 2.00-2.15pm

Book the SEND Music Conference

How can music help pupils with SEND communicate, regulate, interact and participate? This practical Hertfordshire conference brings specialist expertise, accessible resources and school-based practice together in one focused day.

Delegates will:

- Explore inclusive approaches that support communication, regulation, interaction and engagement.
- Try accessible instruments and music technology
- Discover music support and resources available to parents, carers and families.
- Take part in Professor Adam Ockelford's Tuning In to Autism thinking and resources, with guided exploration of free digital and physical materials, breakout discussion and practical reflection.
- Leave with practical resources, professional connections and clear actions for your setting.

This is a valuable opportunity for music leads, SENDCOs, classroom teachers, specialist practitioners and senior leaders who want inclusive music to make a measurable difference for pupils.

Places are limited, so early booking is strongly recommended.

Book the SEND Music Conference

Top Tip of the Week: make the next step visible

At the end of a lesson, rehearsal or performance, name the next opportunity: another song, an ensemble, an instrument, a leadership role, a composition project or a local pathway. Pupils are more likely to continue when progression is specific, timely and personally achievable.

Seasonal planning: make performances part of the learning

December performances should celebrate the school community while also developing musical knowledge and skills. Build in explicit learning rather than relying only on repeated run-throughs.

- Teach one clear musical focus in each rehearsal, such as ensemble, tuning, diction, balance, phrasing or stagecraft.
- Adapt parts so that every pupil can contribute meaningfully.
- Use recordings to help pupils identify one audible improvement.
- Plan roles beyond performing, including composing, arranging, sound, lighting, presenting and programme notes.
- After the event, capture what pupils learned and the next opportunity available to them.

Spotlight: who participates, who stops and what happens next?

Music programmes are strongest where pupils feel ownership, belonging and can see a realistic route forward. Before the end of term, review who participates regularly, who tries an activity but does not continue, and which pupils remain absent from the school's musical life.

- Who attends curriculum, tuition, clubs, choirs, ensembles and performances?
- Which year groups, pupil groups or instrument families are under-represented?
- Where do pupils tend to stop participating, and what do they say about the reason?

- Can every pupil describe an achievable next musical step?

TRY THIS: THE PARTICIPATION AUDIT

Compare the register for the first three sessions of an activity with the current register. Ask one pupil who continued and one who stopped what influenced their decision. Choose one change to test in January.

National focus: pupil voice in music education

Pupil voice is most useful when it leads to a visible decision. Invite pupils to influence repertoire, performance formats, enrichment activities and leadership opportunities, then tell them what changed as a result.

- Use a short exit question after a rehearsal or unit: What should we keep, change or try next?
- Invite pupils to suggest repertoire within clear musical and curriculum criteria.
- Create roles for pupil conductors, composers, producers, technicians, hosts and ensemble mentors.
- Check whether quieter pupils and those not currently participating are represented in the feedback.

Music Mark Annual Conference: themes for school discussion

The 2026 Music Mark conference brought national conversations together around access and inclusion, progression, technology, partnerships, the creative workforce and young people's role in shaping music education. Schools can use these themes to test whether their current provision is connected, inclusive and future-facing.

- Access and inclusion: remove practical, financial, curriculum and confidence barriers.
- Progression: make routes from first experience to sustained participation easy to understand.
- Technology: use digital tools to support creativity and access, not simply as an add-on.
- Partnerships: link curriculum music with tuition, ensembles, community organisations and cultural partners.
- Young people and careers: connect musical learning with the breadth of creative and technical roles in the sector.

Across England this week

Music and the creative economy

UK Music's latest This Is Music reporting put the music industry's 2025 contribution to the UK economy at £8.4 billion, with 220,500 jobs. For schools, this is a useful careers message: music connects to performance, production, technology, events, education, management, publishing and many other pathways.

Read UK Music's This Is Music reporting

Book now: upcoming opportunities

Autumn term networking, CPD and events

25 Nov 2026	**Music Leaders: access, participation and progression for all**	Book now

Spring and summer term diary

13 Jan 2027	**KS4: participation, achievement and sustainable pathways**	Book now
11 Feb 2027	**SEND Music Conference: Tuning In to Autism**	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

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.

Book the Herts Schools Music Expo

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, inclusion, leadership, school visits and 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

Follow @hertsmusic: Instagram | Facebook | YouTube