

Autumn Term Minutes for the Music Educators Group for Primary Schools in Walsall: Mini MusE

Venue: Watling Street Primary School

Dates: 22nd Sept & 25th Sept 2025

Agenda:

- 1.** Apologies & Welcomes
- 2.** Minutes
- 3.** Matters Arising
- 4.** CPD: Composition at Watling Street – Suzanne Norman
- 5.** CPD: Listen, Imagine, Compose at Bentley West – Helena Smith
- 6.** Music Service Update
 - 6.1 Lead Schools Programme
 - 6.2 Events
 - 6.3 CPD Sessions for 2025 - 2026
- 7.** AoB

1. Acceptances & Apologies

Present:

Andrew Smith	Beacon Primary - CHAIR	Melissa Whitehouse	The Radleys
Ashleigh Dolman	Sunshine Nursery & Infants	Michelle Wilkes	King Charles
Helena Smith	Bentley West	Raj Sandal	Hillary
Kirstie Smilie	Butts	Steph Dufty	Walsall Music Ed Service
Luke Wilson	Lindens	Suzanne Norman	Watling Street - - HOST
Lydia Farnell	Walsall Wood	Tony Orbell	Pheasey

Apologies:

Liz George	Hillary	Liz Millison	Ryders Hayes
Alicia Gindhay (Lici)	Goldsmiths	Lizzie Moore	Blackwood
Anita Hughes	New Invention Infants	Naomi Shaw	St James
Bev Cullen	Oakwood & freelance	Nicola Day	Fibbersley
Ceri Jones	Alumwell Infants	Rachel Tucker	St Giles
Georgia Sims & Zowie Rook	North Walsall	Sam Perry	Moorcroft Wood
Jennifer Wilson	Parkhall Infants		
Lisa Raybone	Pool Hayes		

2. Minutes

- 2.1 Minutes from the Summer term were accepted.

3. Matters Arising

- 3.1 5.2 – Charanga Training schools still wanted – Walsall Wood might host (Lydia will find out) – to send dates to SD. AS to ask Lighthouse schools if anyone wants to host for Sept 2025. Appetite for more Yu Studio training as few accessed it last year. **Action – email Steph if want to host training and get your whole school trained for free.**
- Talk of Chrome Music Lab (AS) as another free resource.
 - Also purple Mash – resources taking off this year (MW).
 - Twinkle have also expanded and have a new music scheme – AS enjoying. Has used a couple of songs. More KS1, lower KS2, maybe not mature enough for upper KS2.
- 3.2 Capital Grant – SD explained that Hilary will be receiving a class set of folding keyboards after they requested following our last meeting. Discussion on other funding streams that schools have tapped into. Discussion on resources bought and ideas shared. MW – got funding through UMuKSF (Universal Music UK Sound Foundation); Beacon also received funding through Universal Music, their SLT wrote the bid. Bought a samba set and a djembe set.
- 3.3 Due to the number of apologies for this week's meetings, there was the suggestion to move to October for autumn from 2026 – **AS to do a poll.**

4. CPD: Composing at Watling Street – Suzanne Norman

- 4.1 Composition through Charanga or composition through Sing Up. Slides shared.
- 4.2 Found the staff did not like teaching composition – lacked confidence teaching it and how to scaffold it. Went through a process:
- Step 1 – looked at INSET for staff - WMES came in (Glen Taylor);
- Step 2 - worked with Mish Mash also on how you could compose with the children throughout the year groups (nursery – year 6)
- Step 3- Look at planning and resources they had in school – Charanga – then stretch it out over a term. Initially only had Charanga, now subscribe to both Charanga and Sing Up using resources from both.
- Step 4 - Sold the idea to the staff that if they do musical composition, they will be hitting other skills:
- Skills: cognitive, social, emotional and motor skills, developing critical listening, team working/ co-operation, Self-expression; enabling children to communicate their feelings
- Step 5 - Created a rich musical environment – permanent displays in assembly of composers and what they do.
- add in more opportunities to listen to music on other lessons, e.g. maths, etc....
 - not just about what they are doing in music, it covers the whole curriculum.
 - learning pods throughout the school
- Step 6 - Got involved in different composition events – e.g. Music Service Comp to Pictures; Sing Up, BBC 10 Pieces, National Gallery. The latter Suzanne showed the group – you can google it. ENO, Classroom 200 (ABRSM) and Classroom 100 (ABSM), London Sinfonietta, BBC Ten Pieces, National Gallery (4 different projects linked to composing)
- AS will post to the group on Facebook – school systems seem to block this page for some reason.** The school use most of these, and the music lead gives the resources to the staff from which they choose which one they want to do.
- 4.3 Music is taught weekly at Watling Street (as NMPE states)

- 4.4 Discussion on different timetable models – e.g. WW have weekly blocks of projects – group suggestion was to build in this planning for next year or later this academic year. Pros and cons of different systems. Suggestion of cross curricular learning in other subjects, e.g. songs maths or history.
- 4.5 SN then shared different projects they have done in their school. Each project has been covered nursery up to Year 6: Humpty Dumpty; Carnival of the Animals and a Rousseau painting; Wild Symphony book by Dan Brown (passed round the group and looked at the App). The latter came highly recommended by schools in the group as a book and music resource. Great link to English - it's a poetry book.
- 4.6 SN showed examples of the displays for each year group for assessment/learning journey. Used graphic notation more so than staff notation. Music Service brass and woodwind delivery used their instruments and notation (Year 4 whole class instrumental delivery).
- 4.7 Next steps – digital pathways. Will be using Charanga YuStudio; also considering for future composition projects: Gruffalo, Bear Hunt more development with Wild Symphony poems...
- 4.8 This happens over the course of one week in the year and shows clear progression. This has improved over the years of doing this project and their children do consider themselves composers and can articulate this as it has become embedded in the music scheme each year. This year the school want to feed in the voice of their Music Champions (pupil voice) to steer the project.

5. CPD: Listen Imagine Compose (LIC) at Bentley West – Helena Smith

- 5.1 It's a free document so you can google it. Local project / resource from Bham Uni. Prof Martin Fautley is a leading voice in assessment, (worth researching him) and Nancy Evans. HS saw them at the Expo in London and following a conversation with Nancy her school trust invited Nancy in for a training session for all their schools.
- 5.2 Teacher prompt resource is very useful indeed. HS has made them into cards: Questions you can ask pupil that sparks their own thinking. V useful in a loud classroom. Also peer review cards and sentence starters with HS showed the group.
- 5.3 5 stages of composition progress: exploratory, novice, emerging, competent, independent... Project starts at age 7 but there are some aspects from age 2.
- 5.4 Emphasis on the process rather than the end product. Are you assessing the final product/how they perform that end product, or the skills of composition?
- 5.5 Very useful info on how to comment when listening to pupil work – using musical language. A commentary on what they're created to then build on that for development suggestions.
- 5.6 Suggestions on how to scaffold improvisation and composition. Do give parameters on notes, mood etc to lead them step by step.
- 5.7 Stimulus ideas – pictures, nature, skyline (sketch the shape of the different heights and use for a sense of melodic shape); graph – use the shape.
- 5.8 How to assess melodies as you progress through the year groups....
- 5.9 Composing process flow chart
- 5.10 Listening to other examples, comp strategies after children have created in order to refine their own work rather than starting with the listening
- 5.11 Slides shared.

6. Music Service Update (SD/RC)

- 6.1 Lead Schools Programme:

Outline of program from Suzanne and Steph, launched only this month with the first meeting of the year for all the lead schools coming up in October. In this they hope to outline their offer. Discussion in the group about what they would like to see:

Focus on collaboration – positive discussion. WW would like to meet up and have 1:1 talk; others to go and see what's happening in other schools (MW) How does it look in other schools? Get out and visit (the fly on the wall). Possible options shared:

- Watling Street for composition
- Hillary for Music Tech
- People would like a 'guiding light' – esp where leads are HLTAs or non-specialists.

Collaboration with performances. Like QMHS and Butts for example? Transition work – orchestra model. Aldridge do this with Lindens. Integrating the phases with our networks....

Collaboration on moderation in assessment... can we share what year 2's do? where would you go next? What's the progression?

6.2 Events:

- **Once Upon a Christmas** – tickets on sale via box office and workshops all booked in. 20 schools involved. *If any schools would like comp tickets because they have not done this before and would like to see if it's right for their school next year contact Steph*
- **Composing to Pictures** – booking forms will be out next week. Only 8 group places available.
- **WYMS** – Open for applications from October half term (Walsall Young Music Star competition) – see WMES website
- **World Music Day – I'm a Believer** from Shrek. Parts differentiated, can sing or play or do all of, or a part of. Record your work in school and send to us and we'll stitch together for a mass performance when you can screen on World Music Day on 21st June. Videos needed by May and music will be out you soon if you're interested in taking part. Free to access.

6.3 CPD Sessions:

- SD shared the plan after input from this group in the summer meeting – has since been emailed to all. Here also below:

16th Oct – **Inclusion in the Mainstream Musical Classroom** with Kathryn Hopson

14th Nov: **What is a Musical Classroom?** with Tim Bond

12th Jan: **Composers Toolbox** with Nick Dewhurst

9th Feb: **Music Tech** – practical uses for teaching with Nick Dewhurst

20th March: **Getting the Best out of your Classroom Instruments** with Tim Bond

26th June: **Leading Music in Your School** with Steph Dufty & Tim Bond

See here: [CPD](#)

Action: Email Lizzie/see website - £40 per person, 1-4pm each session.

7. AOB

- 7.1 SD shared the news that Bev Cullen, SEND Music Specialist at Oakwood, has been unwell for many months and has sadly had to resign her post. She hopes to return when her health is better and wishes everyone well. Bev has delivered many SEND sessions for our group over the years sharing her wealth of resources and strategies for sensory and inclusive music making. We all wish Bev full and smooth recovery.

7.2 Future meeting dates proposed:

- 19th and 22nd Jan 2026 at Hillary Primary; Focus – Progression through the Early Years
- 18th & 21st May at Bentley West; - Focus Composition in the Classroom - LIC follow up
- Autumn 2026 to be in October – host school & date welcome, also ideas on a CPD Focus.

Next meeting

Hillary Primary

Hillary Street, Pleck, Walsall WS2 9BP

Host – Raj Sandal & Liz George

Focus – Early Years: Progression from Reception to Year 1

Monday 19th Jan & Thurs 22nd Jan 4.30pm – 6pm