

Mini MusE Minutes
for the Summer Term - Music Educators Group
for Primary Schools in Walsall
Venue: Bentley West Primary School
Dates: 18th May & 21st May 2026

Agenda:

1. Apologies & Welcomes
2. Minutes
3. Matters Arising
4. Music Service Update
5. CPD: Listen Imagine Compose - Led by Nancy Evans (BCMG) & Helena Smith
6. AoB

1. Apologies & Welcomes

Present:

Ceri Jones	Alumwell Infants	Liz George	Hillary
Emma Cook	Arts Council England	Michelle Wilkes	King Charles
Nancy Evans	BCMG	Rachel Tucker	St Giles
Andrew Smith	Beacon Primary	Martin Chance	Trinity CE Primary Academy (W'ton)
Helena Smith	Bentley West	Steph Dufty	Walsall Music Ed Service
Andrea Banyard	Bilston C of E Primary school (W'ton)	David Taylor	Walsall Music Ed Service
Lizzie Moore	Blackwood	Lydia Farnell	Walsall Wood
Kirstie Smilie	Butts	Suzanne Norman	Watling Street
Alicia Gindhay (Lici)	Goldsmiths	Jen Barrett	Whitgreave Primary School (W'ton)
Raj Sandal	Hillary		

Apologies:

Charlotte Simcox	Castlefort Academy	Tony Orbell	Pheasey
Becci Summers	Leamore Primary	Phillipa Wooding	Rushall Primary
Luke Wilson	Lindens	Naomi Shaw	St James
Matt Nicholls	Meadow View	Melissa Whitehouse	The Radleys
Anita Hughes	New Invention Infants		
Georgia Sims	North Walsall		

- 1.1 Welcome to David Taylor, newly appointed Music Education Specialist – Development. Joining Walsall Music on 1st June. David joins from Services for Education (Birmingham Music Service) where he has been Head of Brass for the last decade and previously a primary school teacher and brass peri.
- 1.2 Welcome to Emma Cooke, Relationship Manager for Arts Council England for Walsall Music Education Service and all 14 Music Services in West Midlands.
- 1.3 We also welcomed visiting staff from 3 Wolverhampton schools.

2. Minutes

- 2.1 Minutes from the Spring term were accepted.

3. Matters Arising

- 3.1 4.1 from Spring 2026 minutes– Charanga Training in Watling Street June 16th – all invited. **Actions: You should have an invitation if you have a licence but if you have not or you do not currently have a Charanga licence and would like to attend, please contact Steph or music@walsall.gov.uk**
- 3.2 Next meeting for Autumn: 12th and 16th October at Beacon Academy with the CPD focus on *ADHD in the mainstream classroom* lead by Walsall Music Inclusion Lead, Kathryn Hopson.
- 3.3 Call for host schools and suggestions/wishes for CPD foci next year. **Action: contact either Andrew Smith or Steph Dufty or music@walsall.gov.uk**
- 3.4 AS reminded about **Walsall Vocal Collective** – workforce choir for staff in Walsall schools and Walsall Council staff. No need to read music or audition. V friendly group of around 20 singers, Wednesdays 6.30pm – 8pm at Walsall Arena & Arts Centre during term time.
- 3.5 AS reminder about Facebook Group – videos and photos of our sessions are other files can be found there as well as group engagement: **Walsall Music Teachers and Leaders**.

4. Music Service Update

- 4.1 SLAs
 - SD Reminder to get sent back asap for timetabling. Thanks to all who already have.
- 4.2 Events
 - Xmas is full
 - Live Music is full
 - Singing Festival next month (June 23rd – 26th) – tickets for parents are in the internal post to you all, backing tracks to be sent in asap please.
 - Bandstand Bonanza – July 5th at Walsall Arboretum – free music from 10.30am – 5pm. All welcome.
- 4.3 CPD Sessions
 - Last one on June 26th: *Leading Music in Your School* – Steph Dufty will be leading this one with David Taylor. Places still available – please contact music@walsall.gov.uk to book or see Walsall Music website for more info. £40 per person.

5. CPD: Listen Imagine Compose – Nancy Evans (Bham Contemporary Music Group) & Helena Smith (Music Lead at Bentley West)

Highlights and notes below:

- 5.1 INTENTION – this should be our main focus when composing; Composing = ‘playful organisation and manipulation of sound to express and communicate ideas with intention’
- 5.2 Very much about process; composing has been in the curriculum since 1989.
- 5.3 LIC toolkit free as a PDF on website.
- 5.4 Children explore their musical voice
- 5.5 Can share children’s compositions via QR codes on displays – example shown in Bentley West. They should be heard.
- 5.6 Discussion on preparing Children for Composing Soundscapes; discussion on how you prepare children for composition:
- Theme
 - time with instruments to explore sounds
 - listening to music and discuss what they can hear (e.g. how does this build suspense, etc....), suggestion of more than 1 example is good.
 - Specific questions so listening is purposeful.
 - Pictures / video clips helps with the theme (e.g. if doing space, children need to know what is meant by space).
 - Mind mapping – sugar paper with groups with ideas. E.g. sea – calm sea vs stormy sea... words and images. Do in groups and then share so they build up ideas. Ask the children to write lots of adjectives (e.g. theme = rain: drizzle, plop, monsoon...etc)
 - Play related warmups
 - Real / imaginary sound walk
 - Learn new skills – recording, using software
 - Improvise with a pitch row
- 5.7 ACTIVITY on Dawn / Storm / Choppy Waters / Moonlight – complete piece of a soundscape journey. Shows Structure.
- Challenge on keys, major/minor
 - Idea of Motif and development through the piece.
- 5.8 ACTIVITY – Body percussion warm ups
- 5.9 ACTIVITY - pictures of elements of sea scape, in pairs create a sound for each image, teacher then conducts them (or layers them; pupils could have a go too).
- Can try with a pictorial score too using the images.
- 5.10 Resources – BBC have sound effects; Minute of Listening
- 5.11 ACTIVITY – HS said this is very good with the pupils even for the more challenging pupils. Listen to 1 minute of each of the 4 movements of Britten’s Sea Interludes. Draw images or list words (HS suggested as a teacher you can go round the tables snapping photos, upload the to the google drive then share on screen really quickly to discuss with the class. V interesting to ask the pupils why they have drawn what they have drawn. Then ask them to chose 3 sections from their 4 pieces of drawings/doodles and pair up with someone to create a conversation of their sounds to create their composition. A whole unit of work if you split up the scenes by lesson.
- Dawn 0:00
 - Sunday Morning 3:40
 - Moonlight 7:18
 - Storm 12.06
- 5.12 ACTIVITY – composing a sea shanty. Sheet of rhythm ideas, notated and dots and dashes, also pitch (5 or 6 notes for e.g.) – then organise with instructions of rhythmic ostinatos / melodic ostinatos with melody ideas..... development ideas discussed as to how to extend your melody.

- 5.13 Reflect and evaluate and refine sentence stems shared – good as a classroom poster.
- 5.14 Brief discussion on how soundscapes change from year 2 to year 5. Progression chart.
- 5.15 Think about variations of their ideas – can your melody be varied to sound like it's the sea in the moonlight? Can your melody now be a sea in a storm?
- 5.16 Helena shared what she found most useful with her pupils having done this this year:
- Noise and how to better manage – don't give them all the instruments ever time and all at once!
 - Less is more for your planning (don't put too much into your lesson plan)
 - Ask the children about their ideas
 - Short compositions are fine – quality not quantity
 - Give them less instruments to choose from – it's easier
 - Frequent pit stops – check in every few minutes, WWW/EBI – pose questions each time, what if....?
 - Questions on the keying 😊 – therefore to hand when you need them
- 5.17 Helena shared last year's work vs this year's work and how it's more structured through applying these techniques.
- 5.18 Created 18 statements of what being a composer means and uses that with the children and as displays/objectives for lessons.
- 5.19 Slide Deck shared to support session.

6. AOB

6.1 None

Next meeting

Beacon Primary School
Davis Road, Willenhall, WV12 5HA

Host – Andrew Smith
Focus – ADHD in the mainstream setting – with Kathryn Hopson
Monday 12th Oct & Thurs 12th Oct 4.30pm – 6pm