

Happy New Year!

With this years amazing Summer well and truly behind us, we embark upon a new school year with all the verve and zest our young students demand.

Our Inset days at the start of term saw the vast majority of our staff come together, meeting new staff and re-acquainting with old colleagues. On Tuesday the 2nd of September, all the Black Country Music Hub staff came together at the Walsall Arena and Arts Centre for an update after the 1st year of the Hub. It became clear very quickly that the Black Country is leading the way in many areas of instrumental music education and musical projects. If you'd like to find out more about what Walsall has to offer in 2025/26, please reach out to any of the management team, details of which can be found at the end of this Newsletter.

As promised at the end of last (school) year, we have a revamped look to the newsletter, most notably in the use of icons. There are four:

Contact us: Play a video: Make a booking: Internet link:

We hope you like the new format, please us know if anything doesn't work or with any suggestions for future improvements.

Have a great term

CURRICULUM MUSIC CONFERENCE

Music Education Solutions offers a day of inspiration for early years, primary and secondary music teachers, featuring practical workshops, discussion sessions, presentations, exhibition and more!

Thursday 19 March 2026th Cable Plaza, The Waterfront, Dudley

ONLY £35 for tickets. **Discounted** for Black Country schools!

Click icon to book

THE MUSIC MARK OF RECOGNITION

Music Mark is excited to launch the Music Mark of Recognition for Schools: a way for schools to receive recognition from their local music service for their provision and steps they are taking to improve their music education, with a certificate and logo to display. We are running two information sessions this month to explain the Music Mark of Recognition in more detail.

Find out more or register to join for information sessions.

MUSIC MARK Conference

Learn, collaborate, network, and be inspired as they explore Ambition and Quality in music education at the Music Mark Annual Conference 2025

Join them at the East Midlands Conference Centre in Nottingham on the 18th and 19th November for their annual conference to learn, share expertise, network, and be inspired as they focus on sustainability in music education. Covering all aspects of sustainability, this conference will provide insight, inspiration and tangible actions for all those working across the music education ecology.

On-site accommodation is extremely limited, so don't hesitate to [book your ticket now](#).

Mon 17th – Tues 18th Nov

Click icon to book

MUSICIAN OF THE MONTH - Impact report

We've included a few links to Musician of the Month in the past. Read on if you're interested in their impact report.

With a spotlight on musicians from a wide range of genres, backgrounds, and cultures, Musician of the Month is helping primary schools around the country celebrate diversity through music. The new Impact Report captures the difference these stories are making in classrooms.

Explore the report

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

The [Education Group](#) explore West African culture this October.

With Black History month almost upon us, the [Education Group](#) are offering African dance, Djembe drumming and Dan mask painting workshops.

Book a one-off session or a full day of cultural activities. Everything will be provided, so all you need to bring is your enthusiasm!

This is a very popular month, but they still have dates to fill. To check their diary, simply call on 01536 411334.

Complete the form.

Check out Nate Holders site too for great resources

Don't forget to check out *our* Black History resources

COMPOSING TO PICTURES

Visiting the New Art Gallery in Walsall is a major treat. In this project, local composer Nick Dewhurst (and teacher with our Music Service) leads students through the compositional process by visiting the Art Gallery and, through looking at selected art pieces, gain insights into how to create music to reflect the works of art.

The project presents a scheme of work for the whole of the Spring Term, including a visit to the Art Gallery, school visits from Nick and an end of project recording at school. All the recordings are skilfully weaved into a video presentation, which is then premiered on YouTube.

Visit our website for more information

Click icon for a full information pack, which includes the booking form

UK CHOIR FESTIVAL

The Workshops

Gospel ~ Pop ~ Vocal Tech ~ Soul ~ Improv Blend & Balance ~ Emotion ~ Performance

Take your choir for one or both days and experience the festival - it's supportive, non-competitive and lots of fun, learning, singing and performing together in the stunning city of St Albans.

St Albans Saturday 18th and Sunday 19th October 2025

An incredible weekend of singing, with tickets from just £39.50 and opportunities for everyone.

Click icon to book

CURRICULUM MUSIC: ideas and strategies in the face of change

From Music Teacher Magazine: Whether you're teaching in primary or secondary, leading a department, or shaping music education policy, Curriculum Music: Ideas and strategies in the face of change is your essential one-day conference this October.

Against a backdrop of major change – including new music hubs, curriculum reviews, and the upcoming National Centre for Arts & Music Education – this event will help you stay ahead. It provides insight into the future of music education and the changing landscape with tech and AI, but also practical advice and strategies to strengthen your teaching.

Join passionate peers and expert speakers Peter Bolton, Dr Lee Cheng, Jenetta Hurst, Jenny Trattles and many more. Topics include inclusive music-making, composing, tech-driven creativity, vocal pedagogy, CPD, and how to keep students engaged at every stage.

With tailored sessions for both primary and secondary, hands-on workshops, and an inspiring final session on ensemble singing, this day will energise and equip you for the year ahead.

Come for the learning, thrive in the meeting of like-minded peers and be part of the national conversation on music education.

Friday 17th October 2025

Click icon to book

NETWORK GROUPS

There are two Music Educator (MusE) network groups which staff can join:

[MusE](#) [Mini MusE](#)

MusE is for Secondary School Music Staff and leaders and Mini MusE is for Primary Music Co-ordinators, specialists and deliverers of music education.

These network groups support each other with CPD, generally peer led, sometimes externally and funded by the Walsall Music Education Service. The groups develop and shape region wide events such as the Summer Singing Festivals, Transition and Leadership Events like the Spotlight Concert Series, and really anything they want to create and we the Music Service can enable.

These groups, generally set their own agendas and lead the Music Service in the direction of the support and training they need. From this we have had sessions on Deep Dive training, bespoke Charanga training, moderation days for KS4 and 5, vocal workshop training, compositional techniques, SEND focussed support, Early Years training, assessment strategies and new schemes among other things.

More

Contact [Steph Dufty](#)

CPD

In addition to FREE CPD every MusE meeting for primary, and most meetings for secondary, we offer these bespoke CPD sessions. Schools with an SLA with us receive **25% discount** too!

October 16th – Inclusion In The Mainstream Musical Classroom (Kathryn Hopson)

November 14th – What Is A Musical Classroom? (Tim Bond)

January 12th – Composers Toolbox (Nick Dewhurst)

February 9th – Music Tech. Practical Uses For Teaching (Nick Dewhurst)

March 20th – Getting The Best Out Of Your Classroom Instruments (Tim Bond)

June 26th – Leading Music In Your School (Steph Dufty and Tim Bond)

All sessions run from 1-4pm

£40 per teacher. 3 bookings for £100

Find out more [here](#)

Contact [Lizzie Sale](#) to book

Full details

MUSIC LICENSING IN EDUCATION | Q&A

Put questions to leading Music Licensing organisations Printed Music Licensing Ltd (PMLL), PRS for Music and Christian Copyright Licensing International (CCLI), and help you navigate the world of Music Licensing for your school or organisation. Submit your questions in advance when registering or asked during the session itself.

16th October 4pm - 5pm Online (Zoom)

Click to book

RSL

Piano syllabus: New repertoire, new format

They've taken everything you love about the Rockscool Piano syllabus... and levelled it up. From refreshed repertoire to upgraded interactive resources, the new syllabus is designed to **reflect the way modern musicians learn**.

The new Rockscool Piano syllabus is out now! You can get instant access on your digital device, as well as order the brand-new (and super sleek-looking) Rockscool Piano hardcopy books.

Explore the syllabus [here](#)

Introducing Riff

As of September 2025, we've retired our Learning Platform (including its Android and iOS app) and replaced it with **RIFF**, our new digital sheet music player. **RIFF** offers a major upgrade with features designed to make teaching and learning more effective.

Click the icon to watch the introductory video (less than 1 minute)

ENGLISH FOLK EXPERIENCE

Coming in February 2026, Walsall Music Education Service in association with the English Folk Dance and Song Society (EFDSS,) are offering students in Walsall the chance to take part in a Saturday Folk Experience Day.

Up to 30 young musicians (aged 11-18) will learn from highly skilled folkartist educators in a positive and inspiring day of creative folk music workshops

When: February 28th 2026, 10am til 4pm

Where: Bluecoat Academy Birmingham St, Walsall WS1 2ND

Free to attend, but booking must be made before

Book via Lizzie

I've seen a lot of work by EFDSS over the years, and I've never failed to be impressed – it's always well-thought-out, rigorous, and a lot of fun! Deborah Rees, Head of Camden Music Service

ENGLISH FOLK DANCE AND SONG SOCIETY

Connection Online: Focus on Virtual and Hybrid Learning

Join EFDSS for this online practitioner development event presented by their **Folk Education Network**, in partnership with **Live to Your Living Room (LTYLR)**.

The session will be focussed around the principles of the new LTYLR online resource - 'Connection, Quality and Inclusion' - and how this can be used to inform and inspire online folk arts learning and participation.

The event is aimed at folk arts educators who are already using online teaching and facilitation, those who might be thinking about it, and those generally interested in how it might work

Tue 7 October

2 - 5pm

Online Tickets: free (advance booking required)

[Book here](#)

JAZZ IN EDUCATION

Jazz in Walsall grows from strength to strength.

Here's a lovely video exploring the history and music of Jazz in an extremely engaging way (about 7 minutes)

Contact [Nick Dewhurst](#) for more information on all things jazz.

Dates for your diaries

Full details and more: <https://walmused.co.uk/upcoming-dates/>

- Tues 21st Oct Live Music Staff Band Year 7 Performances
- Tues 25th, Wed 26th, Thurs 27th Nov Once Upon A Christmas (All Music Centre activities cancelled)
- Tues 2nd Dec Music Centre Concerts (details tba)
- Tues 9th Dec Music Centre Concerts (details tba)
- Wed 10th Dec Rock n Pop Festive Gig



APPENDIX

Sources for selected items in this Newsletter include:

- [Walsall Music Education Service](#)
- [Music Mark](#)
- www.musicianofthemonth.co.uk
- [Music Education Solutions](#)
- [GOV.UK](#)
- [National Childrens Orchestra](#)
- [Sound and Music](#)
- [BBC Bitesize](#)
- [RSL](#)
- [UK Choir Festival](#)

Email addresses:

[Steph Dufty](#)

[Monica Hollins](#)

[Glen Taylor](#)

[Ruth Crowson](#)

[Nick Dewhurst](#)

[Helen Miller](#)

[Matt Firkins](#)

[Kathryn Hopson](#)

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