

New music curriculum to help schools deliver world-class teaching

More young people will have the opportunity to listen to and learn about music through the ages, from Mozart and Bach to The Beatles and Whitney Houston, as part of a new plan for high-quality music lessons in every school.

To support the Government's ambitious plan for all children to have access to an excellent music education, the Department for Education has today (26 March) published a [new music curriculum](#) for Key Stages 1, 2 and 3. The plans to refresh music lessons follow the full return to school for all pupils this month, and alongside wider plans to help pupils recover time out of the classroom.

As part of the curriculum, pupils will learn about the great composers of the world and develop their knowledge and skills in reading and writing music. They will be taught about a range of genres and styles covering historically-important composers such as Vivaldi and Scott Joplin, world renowned pieces like Puccini's *Nessun Dorma*, and be introduced to instruments and singing from Year 1.

The Model Music Curriculum has been developed by a panel of 15 music education specialists – teachers, education leaders and musicians from across the UK – and led by Baroness Fleet, Veronica Wadley. The Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music (ABRSM) was contracted by the Department for Education to draft the Model Music Curriculum under the guidance of the panel.

The department has also committed £79 million in the 2021/22 financial year for Music Education Hubs which provide pupils with instruments to play in class, and £1 million for charities which teach pupils about different styles of music.

School Standards Minister Nick Gibb said:

Music is a hugely important part of most people's lives. This is especially true during the lockdown period, in which music has been used to inspire, soothe and energise us.

A rich variety of music should be part of the daily life of every school. We want all schools to have a rigorous and broad music curriculum, that inspires their pupils to love music, and stands alongside high levels of academic attainment.

I know music lessons will have been challenging during remote education, and while there is rightly a focus on academic catch-up, it is also important for children and young people experience music, sport and arts for their wider development.

After the most difficult of years, it's time for a musical renaissance across England's schools and I hope this will inspire a new generation of musicians.

Pupils will be encouraged to listen to classical music such as Beethoven and Tchaikovsky, Rock n Roll songs from Little Richard and Elvis Presley, jazz from Nina Simone and modern classics such as Queen.

The plan aims to support all pupils in their musical progression from Year 1 – where they'll be introduced to beat, rhythm and pitch – through to secondary school, where pupils will be introduced to more technical aspects of music like quavers, treble clefs and staccato and legato.

At Key Stage 1 and 2, listening to a variety of music styles and sounds is designed to broaden pupils' musical horizons and encourage them be open minded about the music they listen to. At Key Stage 3, pupils will have the opportunity to discuss and interpret the musical meaning behind songs, and develop their creativity through improvisation and composition.

As well as ensuring all pupils can benefit from knowledge rich and diverse lessons, the Model Music Curriculum is expected to make it easier for teachers to plan lessons and help to reduce workload by providing a structured outline of what can be taught in each year group. Case studies for each year of Key Stages 1 and 2 are provided as part of the plan to clearly demonstrate how teachers can combine knowledge, skills and understanding in a practical way.

Veronica Wadley (Baroness Fleet), Chair of the expert panel, said:

I passionately believe that every young person should be able to experience music and have the opportunity to learn a musical instrument. This experience can build confidence and self-esteem and also helps raise the aspirations of what children and young people can achieve in all areas of their life.

Music unites people and communities – and gives great joy and comfort. In schools, it brings together young people through the shared endeavour of whole school singing, ensemble playing, experimenting with the creative process and through the love of listening to friends performing.

The new curriculum, with its year-by-year guidance, is designed to help schools provide high quality music education for all pupils and reinforces the important role that music plays as part of a broad and balanced curriculum for all children.

Julian Lloyd Webber, Cellist and Conductor, said:

Music has immeasurably enriched my life and I cannot imagine existing without it. It provides motivation, stimulation and, most of all, joy.

We should never underestimate the power of music, it knows no boundaries of language, race or background. It is the universal language – everyone has a soundtrack to their lives.

The new Model Music Curriculum will provide children with a wealth of knowledge about music – and it's fun too.

Simon Toyne, President of the Music Teachers' Association, said:

The Model Music Curriculum is an important step in supporting our teachers to ensure every child is able to access meaningful music lessons in the classroom.

Culture Minister Caroline Dinenage said:

The importance of arts and culture in children's education cannot be overstated. Music has helped many of us through the challenges of the past year in how it connects, inspires and entertains. I am delighted this new curriculum will mean all children have access to a high quality music education. This will help bring through a whole new generation of talented musicians.

For children and young people to grow as musicians, they need to experience the world of music in all its richness and depth, with their musical knowledge and skills steadily growing over time. This cannot be achieved through short soundbites or teaching on a carousel system.

The curriculum's expectation of a minimum of one hour's classroom music per week from Year 1 to Year 9 – with first access instrumental tuition, and musical ensembles in addition to that one hour – could make a substantial difference to the musical lives of our children and young people, and to the country at large.

Thousands of schools are already working with Music Education Hubs, which were set up in 2012 to support the teaching of music both in and out of school and to deliver the curriculum in the most effective way.

Schools and other education settings should be continuing to provide high quality music education, with regard for the department's guidance on activities such as singing and playing instruments.