

Wider Opportunities
Information guide for
schools
2008-09





Background

Wider Opportunities at Key Stage 2 is a national programme that has evolved from the government's pledge that

“over time, all pupils in primary schools who wish to will have the opportunity to learn a musical instrument.”

In December 2007 the government pledged £82 million for the next three years of continued funding for Local Authorities to spend on music education, with a further £40 million to purchase new instruments.

The aspirations behind this funding is that by 2011 all primary school pupils who want to can have the opportunity to learn a musical instrument for free, normally in a large group or whole class setting for a least a year.

At the **end of the first free year**, all pupils are able to make an informed choice and to genuinely decide if they wish to continue to learn a musical instrument.

The government expects that at least **50%** of children will choose to continue to learn a musical instrument.

By 2011 the government expects that more than 1.5 million pupils will participate in over 45,000 in schools, area/partnership based ensembles and Local Authority wide groups.

What is Wider Opportunities?

The wider opportunities programme allows children the opportunity to learn a musical instrument in curriculum time in a **large group or whole class** setting for a **full academic year**. Instruments can often be provided free of charge by Solihull Music Service for pupils to borrow for the duration of the Wider Opportunities programme.

At the **end of the first year**, all pupils are able to make an informed choice and to genuinely decide if they wish to continue to learn a musical instrument. Working closely in partnership with the music service, schools are then able to buy in instrumental provision for those pupils who wish to continue learning the instrument of their choice. Many schools buy in **ensemble delivery** from the music service to allow pupils to continue playing in an ensemble setting to follow on from their Wider Opportunities experience. (See Mill Lodge/ Bentley Heath case study)

For pupils to gain a truly Wider Opportunities experience at KS2 schools need to plan for a range of experiences that will introduce young people to the **widest possible range of musical instruments, traditions and styles**. Wider Opportunities programmes should complement and enhance the school's overall provision for music; including the National Curriculum, extra-curricular activities and the extended schools programme. Solihull Music Service can provide **live music** concerts for schools to ensure that pupils are aware of the many different types of music styles, genres and instruments being played from around the world. Please contact the music service if you would like more details of live music concerts delivered by Solihull Music Service.



Building successful and sustainable partnerships

Over the past four years Solihull Music Service has delivered and successfully sustained Wider Opportunity partnerships with **24** Solihull Primary schools across the borough (see list at the end of this pack). Each programme has been carefully developed to meet the individual needs of each school, and consultation between the music service and head teacher has helped determine which particular programme would enhance the musical community of the school.

In order to build a successful and sustainable partnership it is essential that the **roles** and **responsibilities** of all parties involved are fully understood and that the aims of Wider Opportunities are clear. It is therefore vital that the programme has the full support of the Head teacher who will over see the delivery, ensuring that staff at every level are aware of the outcomes and the benefits that will be gained by their **full involvement**.

Another essential aspect of the programme is the partnership between the class teacher and the music service. The programme should provide opportunities for classroom teachers and music specialists to learn from one another by jointly planning and delivering enhanced musical experiences.

Successful programmes have been developed when the Head Teacher:

- Consults with the Music service on the most appropriate programme for the their school (Instruments, year group, storage, place and time of delivery)
- Supports the programme through encouraging staff and pupils and being aware of the learning process taking place
- Ensures that classroom teachers are fully involved with the delivery of the project
- Facilitates performance opportunities that integrate the programme into the wider musical community of the school
- Develops musical pathways for pupils to continue to develop instrumental skills on the instrument of their choice after the programme.

Successful programmes have been developed when the Music Co-coordinator:

- Ensures that the programme is integrated into the School scheme of work with consideration made on learning that takes place prior to and after the Wider Opportunities year
- Assists with performance opportunities that integrate the programme into the wider musical community of the school
- Develops musical pathways for pupils to continue to develop instrumental skills on the instrument of their choice after the programme.

Planning and consultation for a project takes place in the spring term of each academic year, allowing the Music service to purchase a set of instruments for the school to borrow for the project, which starts in September and runs for **33** weeks over the academic year.



What are the benefits?

- Children, having made an informed choice, are more aware of the commitment involved in learning a musical instrument, therefore are more likely to continue their studies after the Wider Opportunities year, (whether this is in instrumental lessons or in an extra curricular ensemble), rather than try it for a few months and then give up as can often be the case.
- Wider Opportunities can be firmly linked to, complement and enhance the music curriculum / ethos of the school and potentially also the wider community, building upon musical events, traditions and resources within the school
- Class teachers who are **fully involved** in the delivery of Wider Opportunities have the opportunity to not only build upon their relationship with the children they teach, putting themselves into the role of learner alongside the children, they are also in a position to build upon their own music skills as well as their music teaching resources. Schools may wish to target teachers with particular strengths in order to begin to build in-house sustainability for the future. However, it is important to note that the involvement of specialists in the delivery of Wider Opportunities is vital
- **Wider Opportunities is also not a vehicle by which PPA time can be gained**
- Wider opportunities help build partnerships, not only with the music service, but also with other primary and secondary schools as well as the local community

Issues to Consider

Who should receive wider opportunities?

Wider Opportunities has been delivered most successfully to children in year 4, (it is better that the Wider Opportunities year is prior to the children being given the opportunity to learn an instrument through the usual Solihull Music Service day time lessons in year 5).

Impact on the whole school initiatives.

Has Wider Opportunities been identified in the SIP and built into the school policy for the development of music?

Does Wider Opportunities have the full backing of the school Governors and are the PTA and parents informed and involved etc?

What strategies are in place to ensure involvement of other instrumental activity in the school, therefore developing the wider musical community?

Wider Opportunities has been most successful where the value of the project has been recognised and shared (through activities such as concerts), by the **whole school community**.

Sustainability.

Wider Opportunities has to be viewed as a **long-term** initiative. As in the case studies attached, schools need to consider what will happen as the next cohort of children move into the Wider Opportunities year and the second / third year so that Wider Opportunities is not only sustained, but the children who wish to continue with their involvement in musical activities, or instrumental

lessons have the opportunity to do so. This may involve the development of a new school ensemble as well as increased instrumental lessons.

Concerts

Concerts are a vital part of the children's experience. It is vital to have opportunities for the children to celebrate their achievement in performances to both peers and parents. In recent years Solihull Music Service has several Wider Opportunities concerts involving schools that learn the same family of instruments. These concerts take place in venues such as Warwick Arts Centre and Bushell Hall. The concerts provide a chance for each participating school to celebrate achievement, and also be involved in a performance with the senior Solihull Music Service instrumental ensembles, providing aspiration for pupils. In 2007-8 four schools took part in a '**Bold as Brass**' and five schools were involved in a '**String Explosion**' at Warwick Arts Centre.

How much does it cost?

Solihull Music Service is able to offer Wider Opportunities delivery at a heavily subsidized rate of **£25.00** per hour per member of staff (usual cost = £37.00). This means that, the total for two specialist members of Music Service staff for one hour per week (based on a delivery of 33 sessions a year),
= **£1650.00**

Points to note: -

- ♪ Instrumental wider opportunities that offer a variety of instruments such as whole class String or Brass need **2 specialists** per hour.
- ♪ The subsidized price is for the Wider Opportunities delivery only and not the continuing instrumental delivery or extra curricular ensembles. (In many schools charging for these lessons can become largely self-financing).
- ♪ Some schools may also wish to have additional INSET for staff involved or even whole school staff; this can be negotiated directly with the music service.
- ♪ **Wider Opportunities is NOT PPA cover.** Successful projects have been where the class teacher and music service staff have worked together to provide pupils with the most satisfactory experience.



Instrumental Delivery

Solihull Music Service currently delivers whole class delivery in

Brass: (Trumpet, Cornet, Baritone, Trombone, Tenor Horn, Tuba)

Mill Lodge Primary School
Greswold Primary School
Chapel Fields Junior School
Lady Katherine Leveson Junior and Infant School

Strings: (Violin, Viola, Violoncello, Double Bass)

Bentley Heath CE Primary School
Kineton Green Primary school
George Fentham Endowed J and I school
St James C.E. School
Dorridge Junior School

Guitar:
St Patrick's Roman Catholic Primary School
Coleshill Heath School
Bennett's Well

Woodwind:
St Patrick's Church of England School (Clarinet)
St George and Teresa (Flute)
Cheswick Green (Recorder)
Meriden (Ocarina)

Vocal:

Tidbury Green
Haslucks Green

Shared Wider Opportunities

Each school receives a term of delivery in Dalcroze, Vocal and Steel Pans

Marston Green
Bosworth Wood
Alcott Hall

Each school receives a term of delivery in Dalcroze, Vocal and African Drums/Samba

Oak Cottage
Hockley Heath
Peterbrook



Case study 1: Mill Lodge School

Whole Class Brass

The children in year 4 at Mill Lodge Primary School learn a Brass instrument as part of a whole class ensemble for 1-year alongside their classroom teacher, with 2 visiting Brass specialists delivering the sessions over a period of 1 hour per week (**45 minutes of delivery, 15 minutes preparing space and instruments**). During the course of the year, the children's instrumental learning is reinforced by a variety of musical activities, including performances within school to peers and parents, workshop days at St James C.E. Primary School and taking part in the Solihull Music Service "Brass Blast" concert at Warwick Arts Centre.

Background

The school needed to find space to house the instruments as well as a large enough space to comfortably sit the children during their lessons, (the school hall). As well as a very keen and enthusiastic classroom teacher, the school has also benefited from a volunteer parent and grandparent (who are both Brass specialists), who visit the school each week to hold practice sessions for the children, as well as to service and maintain the instruments. The school has also made links with the local Shirley Brass Band, (which performed with the children in the schools summer fête), and Salvation Army Band.

During the summer term of the Wider Opportunities delivery to year 4, the school send home letters inviting the parents to apply for their children to continue playing the instrument, (or an alternative instrument) in small group instrumental lessons. The school bought in the time for which from Solihull Music Service, with a contribution towards the costs incurred from the parents. The school also made sure that there was time available for the children continuing with their instrumental lessons to be able to play together within an extra curricular ensemble, thereby beginning to build a real ethos for instrumental playing within the school. The children were also invited to come along to Solihull Music Service to be part of one of the early evening Millennium ensembles, which are very popular with children across Solihull, and also provide an opportunity for children to expand their musical and social experiences as well as perform in prestigious concert venues including Warwick Arts Centre. It is now possible to see how the from Wider Opportunities brass players from Mill Lodge are progressing with a number of children now playing in the Solihull Youth Brass Band.

The Solihull Music Service provided all the instruments for the Wider Opportunities pilot at Mill Lodge. However, in order for the project to be sustained long term, the school have started to replace a number of instruments themselves with a long-term plan in place to eventually own their own set. In the mean time the Music Service will continue to support the school.



Case study 2: Bentley Heath Primary School

Whole class strings

The children in year 3 at Bentley Heath learn a string instrument as part of a whole class ensemble for 1-year alongside their classroom teacher, with 2 visiting string specialists delivering the sessions over a period of 1 hour per class per week (**45 minutes of delivery, 15 minutes preparing space and instruments**). During the course of the year, the children's instrumental learning is reinforced by a variety of musical activities, including performances within school to peers and parents, workshop days at St James C.E. Primary School and taking part in the Solihull Music Service "String Extravaganza" this year held in June at Warwick Arts Centre.

Background

The school needed to find space to house the instruments as well as a large enough space to comfortably sit the children during their lessons, (the school hall).

As well as providing year 3 pupils with the opportunity to learn a string instrument, the school buy in a music service string specialist to run a school string orchestra after school for all pupils in year 4-6 who have chosen to continue lessons in a small group. The school has also made links with the local secondary school which has a thriving string ensemble for pupils to perform in.

During the summer term of the Wider Opportunities delivery to year 4, the school send home letters inviting the parents to apply for their children to continue playing the instrument, (or an alternative instrument) in small group instrumental lessons. The school bought in the time for which from Solihull Music Service, with a contribution towards the costs incurred from the parents. The school also made sure that there was time available for the children continuing with their instrumental lessons to be able to play together within an extra curricular ensemble, thereby beginning to build a real ethos for instrumental playing within the school.

Pupils who continue to have instrumental tuition in small group lessons are also invited to join a music service ensemble run by Solihull Music Service to expand their musical and social experiences as well as perform in prestigious concert venues including Warwick Arts Centre.

The Solihull Music Service provided all the instruments for the Wider Opportunities pilot at Bentley Heath. However, in order for the project to be sustained long term, the school started to replace a number of instruments themselves with a long-term plan in place to eventually own their own set supported by the school P.T.A.

Contact the Music Service

If you would like any further information on Wider Opportunities programmes or any element of instrumental delivery in you school please contact Claire Noakes (Assistant Head of Solihull Music Service) on **0121 743 2483** or via email on cnoakes1@solmus.solgrid.org.uk

