

Wider Opportunities  
Information guide for  
schools





## 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.

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 five years Solihull Music Service has delivered and successfully sustained Wider Opportunity partnerships with **36** 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 2009-10 schools took part in a '**Brass Blast**', '**String Explosion**' and '**Woodwind extravaganza**' wider opportunities celebration at Birmingham Town Hall.

## How much does it cost?

Solihull Music Service is able to offer Wider Opportunities delivery at a heavily subsidized rate of **£27.00** per hour per member of staff (usual cost = £40.00). 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),  
= **£1782.00**

Points to note: -

- ♪ Instrumental wider opportunities that offer a variety of instruments such as whole class String or Brass must have **2 specialists** per hour(as above)
- ♪ 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 activities 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  
St Augustine's Catholic Primary School  
Dickens's Heath Community Primary School  
Haslucks Green Junior School  
Meriden Primary School  
St George and Teresa R.C School  
St Mary and Margaret's School  
Shirley Heath Junior School  
Sharman's Cross Primary 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  
Our Lady of the Wayside Catholic Primary School  
Cheswick Green Primary School  
St Andrew's R.C School  
Balsall Common Primary School  
Sharman's Cross Primary School

**Guitar:**

St Anne's R.C School  
Our Lady of Compassion R.C School  
Marston Green Primary School  
Langley Primary School  
Coppice Junior School  
St George and Teresa Catholic Primary School

**Woodwind:** (Clarinet, Fife, Flute)

St Patrick's Church of England School  
Oak Cottage Primary School  
St Margaret's C.E. School  
Hatchford Brook J & I School  
Sharman's Cross

**World Music:** (Steel Pans, Fife, Dance, Vocal, Djembes)

Hockley Heath J & I School  
Coleshill Heath School  
Knowle C.E. Primary School  
Peterbrook Primary School  
Tidbury Green School  
Castle Bromwich Junior School



