

Case study:

Bowerhill Primary School

A primary school where a specialist Music Subject Lead teaches curriculum music across the whole school



Music Cluster: Calne and Melksham

Bowerhill Primary School is a two-form entry primary school in the village of Bowerhill near Melksham and is part of The White Horse Federation multi academy trust. There are currently 407 pupils on roll.

The Music Subject Lead is Alison Guest, a music specialist who is employed for two days a week exclusively to teach music to every class in Years 1 to 6 as PPA cover.

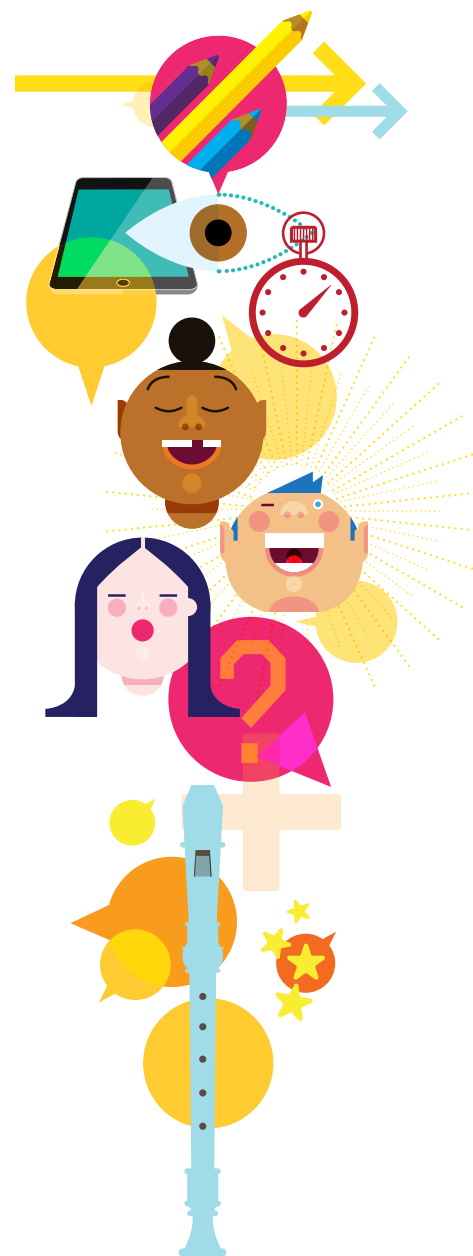
How is this school addressing the 7 key features of high-quality music provision outlined in the National Plan for Music Education?

1 Timetabled curriculum music of at least one hour each week of the school year for key stages 1–3

The Music Subject Lead teaches curriculum music to cover class teachers' PPA time. Instead of delivering one-hour weekly lessons all year round, the school has chosen to engage each year group in a weekly lesson of between 60 and 90 minutes for two consecutive terms out of six. Lessons in Year 5 and 6 include whole class ensemble teaching for 20-30 minutes of each lesson. During those terms when a class is not having a weekly music lesson, pupils are still involved in music through productions, topic-based work in class, and a weekly 30-minute singing assembly for the whole school.

Prior to this structure for PPA cover, all classes were on a carousel for music and no pupils had the subject two weeks running, which made continuity difficult. The Music Subject Lead feels that the current model is much more successful and has helped her to strengthen progression and develop stronger relationships with pupils.

Teaching the whole school means that the Music Subject Lead has a strong understanding of the needs of all pupils, including those with SEND. Needs in music may be different from in other subject areas, and the Music Subject Lead is aware of this and makes necessary adjustments, such as creating flashcards to support pupils' understanding of the lesson structure, using alternative tunings for ukuleles to support pupils who cannot hold down strings, and providing ear defenders or a quiet space to practise for pupils who find noisy environments overwhelming. Routines are adapted to support individuals, such as pupils with autism being given the opportunity to select an instrument prior to the lesson rather than having to choose along with everyone else.



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The Music Subject Lead has developed a bespoke music curriculum over the fifteen years she has been at Bowerhill. She is constantly reflecting on this and making improvements, and has recently updated it to incorporate elements of the Model Music Curriculum. Bowerhill Primary School's music curriculum is skills-based and shows a clear progression of skills from one year group to the next, which was an important feature of a recent Ofsted deep dive into music. Pupils are assessed continuously via formative assessment in lessons and this is used to tailor teaching to individuals' needs, such as planning extension activities for those who need greater challenge.

As a music specialist, the Music Subject Lead plays an active role in the Calne and Melksham Music Cluster, sharing her expertise with colleagues as well as enjoying the opportunity to participate in CPD and connect with others.

2 Access to lessons across a range of instruments, and voice

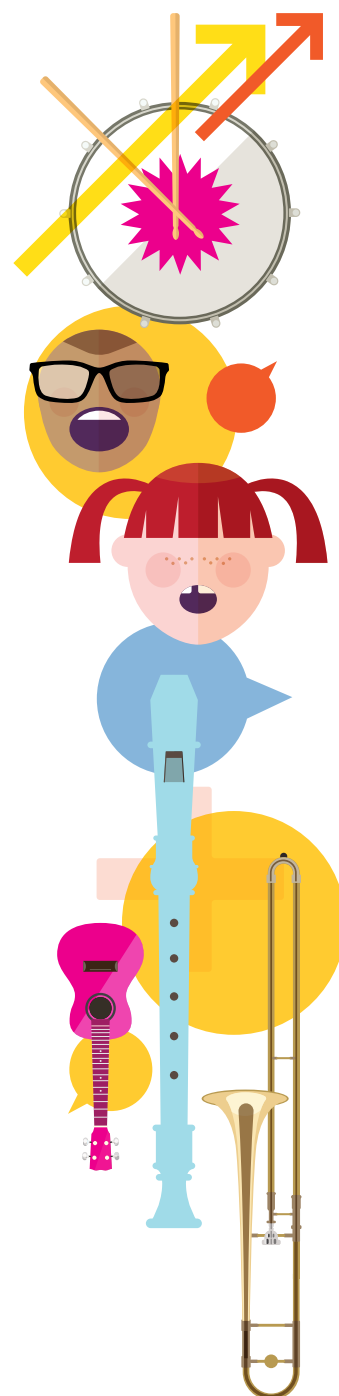
Bowerhill Primary School has peripatetic teachers who deliver lessons on brass, woodwind, guitar and piano. Some of these teachers are part of the Music for Schools Foundation and others work privately. These lessons are paid for by parents.

3 A school choir and/or vocal ensemble; and

4 A school ensemble/band/group

The Music Subject Lead runs two ensembles for Year 5 and 6: a choir and a ukulele club. These alternate each term so that each runs for a total of three terms out of six. These ensembles are always scheduled at lunchtimes to ensure that all those who want to attend can, without any conflict with out of school commitments. The Music Subject Lead is planning to start a recorder ensemble in the next academic year.

In order to expand the range of ensembles further, the Music Subject Lead has plans to make use of other colleagues' skills and capacity. Another member of staff plays brass, and Bowerhill Primary's School Music Development Plan includes a target for this teacher to start a brass ensemble. Although the Music Subject Lead will support this teacher at first, the intention is that the teacher will go on to run the ensemble independently, thus supporting brass pupils with specialist knowledge and facilitating a greater number of ensembles than the Music Subject Lead would herself have time to run as a part-time member of staff.



5 Space for rehearsals and individual practice

Bowerhill Primary has a cabin on the playground which provides a large space for peripatetic lessons, with a piano and drum-kit. Productions take place in the hall. All instruments and resources for curriculum music are housed in a specific space where everyone can see and access them, with displays to support musical learning.

6 A termly school performance

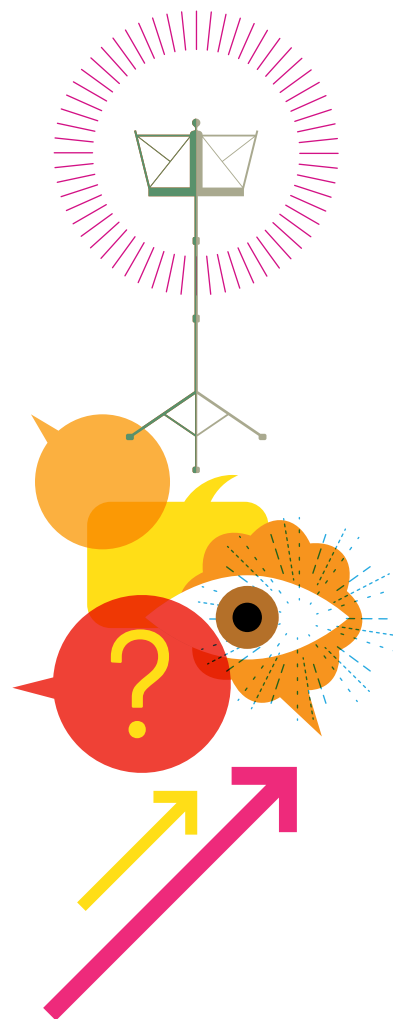
Every year group puts on a performance in school during the course of the academic year. Year R perform a nativity at Christmas, Year 1 give an Easter performance, Years 2 and 3 perform at Harvest, Year 4 put on their own concert, Year 5 take part in Young Voices, and Year 6 give an end of year performance.

7 Opportunity to enjoy live performance at least once a year

Bowerhill Primary School enjoys live performance opportunities via the Calne and Melksham Music Cluster, such as the Shelburne Ensemble and a music roadshow which have visited the school to perform a concert for pupils. The peripatetic teachers also perform to the whole school as a way of both demonstrating their instruments and recruiting new pupils for instrumental lessons.

What support does this school access from Wiltshire Music Connect?

- Staff from the school attend Calne & Melksham Music Cluster meetings
 - Pupils from the school participate in Calne & Melksham Music Cluster Projects
 - Staff from the school attend Wiltshire Music Connect's CPD sessions
 - Wiltshire Music Connect Associates provide music tuition at the school
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What can other schools take away from this case study?



Creative approaches to staffing can maximise ensemble opportunities

- Do any other members of staff play instruments or have experience of singing or performing? Could they lead an ensemble that uses their skillset (perhaps using instruments or genres of music that the Music Subject Lead is not familiar with)?
- Could the Music Subject Lead support other members of staff to lead ensembles by providing them with advice and resources, or team-teaching for the first rehearsals?

www.wiltshiremusicconnect.org.uk
info@wiltshiremusicconnect.org.uk

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