

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Education and Children's Services Committee
DATE	12 September 2023
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	Music Service
REPORT NUMBER	CFS/23/232
DIRECTOR	Eleanor Sheppard
CHIEF OFFICER	Shona Milne
REPORT AUTHOR	Bethan Edwards
TERMS OF REFERENCE	1.1.1

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 At the Educational Operational Delivery Committee on 8th September 2022, there was an instruction for the Chief Education Officer to evaluate the quality and provision of music across the city and report the findings to Committee within one calendar year; to include details of the digital offering. This report responds to that Committee instruction.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee:-

- 2.1 notes the evaluation of the second year of free instrumental instruction.
- 2.2 instructs the Chief Education officer to continue to extend opportunities for music making through partnership working between the Music Service and Aberdeen Music School and others; and
- 2.3 instructs the Chief Education Officer to report back on progress within one calendar year.

3. CURRENT SITUATION

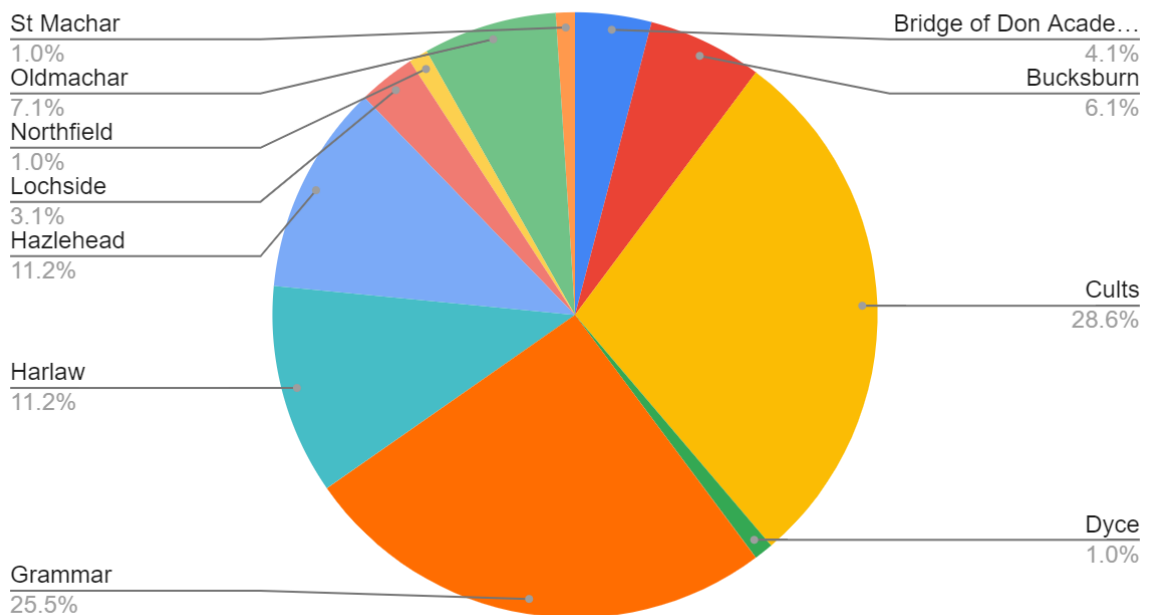
- 3.1. Elected Members requested that an evaluation on the quality and provision of music services across the city, to include details of the digital offering, be presented to the Education and Children's Services Committee in September 2023.
- 3.2. The aim of the Music Service is to offer high quality tuition to as many children and young people as possible. Currently there are **1989** children receiving lessons in a small group/individually on a weekly basis. In addition, over **5000** children have accessed whole class vocal and/or instrumental programmes over the course of the 2022/23 academic year.
- 3.3 This constitutes a significant increase from last year where only around **1821** young people benefited, due largely to the increased allocation of resource targeted towards whole class and large group instrumental and vocal projects.

This change was made to engage a higher proportion of children living in areas of deprivation with the service and there is evidence that this has been successful.

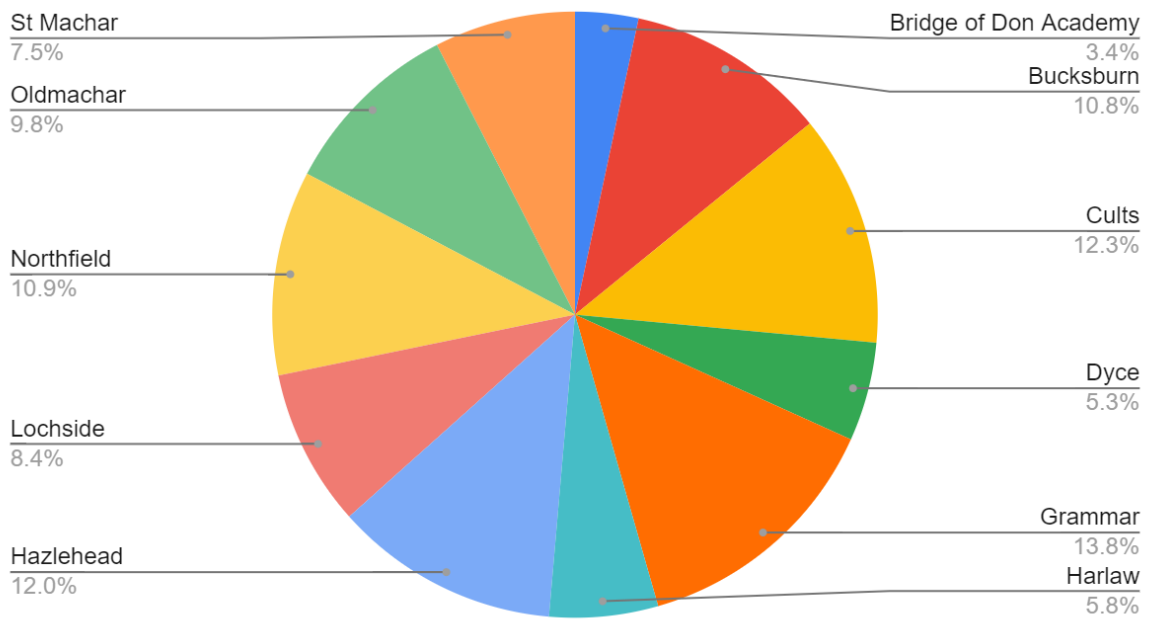
3.4 A significant change can be seen in regards to children in particular areas of the city accessing the service. For example, in April 2021 there were only seven pupils in the Northfield Associated Schools Group (ASG) accessing Music Service provision. This number now sits at 186 pupils. This change is welcomed by the Service.

3.5 The pie charts below show the change in the distribution of pupils accessing Music Service provision. It is evident that tuition is now more evenly distributed across all ASGs. These figures will continue to change as more children in areas of deprivation are offered the opportunity for tuition when they are at an appropriate school stage to begin learning an instrument.

Music Service Provision in August 2020

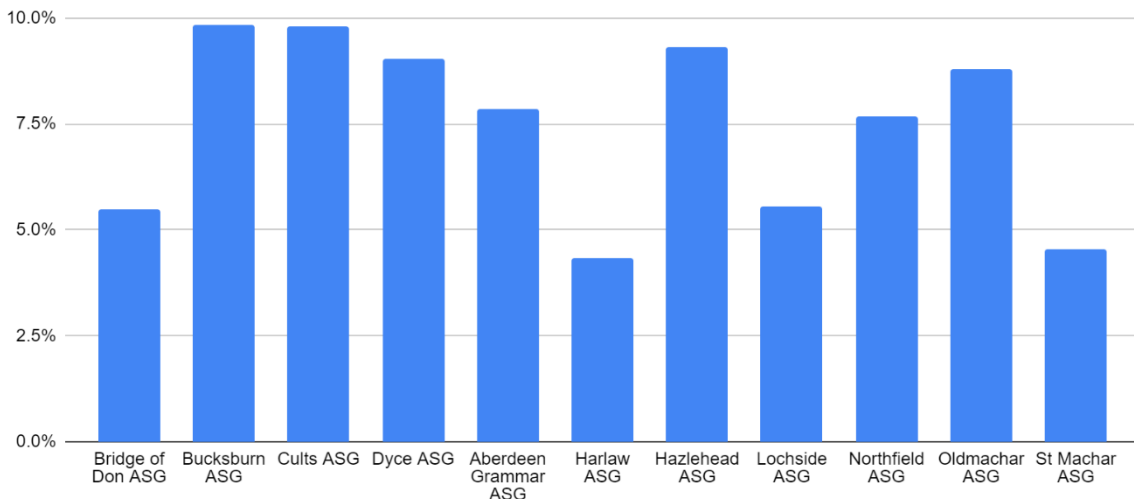


Music Service provision in June 2023



The chart below shows the percentage of children in each ASG receiving individual and small group music tuition. Through data analysis the service has identified priority schools for increasing numbers of pupils receiving tuition in the 23-24 academic session.

Percentage of ASG roll receiving group and individual tuition



3.6 The average number of pupils per instructor receiving small group and individual tuition in the 2020-21 academic year sat at 17. By June 2022 it sat at 63, and as of June 2023 it sits at 79. This change demonstrates a steady rise in the reach of each Instructor and is another positive change.

3.7 The Music Service looked to provide as many performing opportunities as possible for pupils in the 2022-2023 academic year given that the public health restrictions had compromised our ability to engage children in ensemble music making. Thanks to the flexibility of the Music Service these opportunities have been extensive over the school year having included:

- A Festive Concert at the Beach Ballroom in December 2022 with over 300 children involved
- Three locality concerts in October 2022
- The Aberdeen semi-finals of the Scottish Young Musician of the Year
- Performances at the Big Gig as part of the Aberdeen Performing Arts 'Light the Blue' festival
- Performances at the Aberdeen Highland Games
- A Cathedral at Noon Concert
- A Lunchbreak Concert at the Aberdeen Art Gallery
- Participation in the Mòd in Inverness
- A significant number of concerts in schools

The Service intend to maintain focus on this area over school session 2023/24.

3.8 The Music Service continues to be part of the 'Summer/Easter/October In the City' programme, with short holiday courses running in the Easter and October holidays and a week long course delivered in Summer 2022 and again in 2023. The Music Service worked closely with the 'In the City' team and activities were targeted towards the children most likely to be impacted by poverty. The Music Service Summer in the City 2023 programme included violin, ukulele, piano and vocal sessions and culminated in performances in the Marischal College Quad and the Duthie Park Bandstand. This inclusion of the Music Service in wider ACC run programmes is welcomed by the Service and this approach will be maintained.

3.9 A significant project for the Music Service in 2022-23 was the organisation of The Aberdeen Big Sing 2023. This unique event aimed to help children rediscover the joy of singing in larger groups and took considerable work from Music Service staff and those in schools. The event involved over 2500 children from every Primary 4 class in the city. The children had learnt and rehearsed songs over the course of the year, and then came together to sing them at Duthie Park on June 1st. A key component of the event was that pupils learnt British Sign Language (BSL) and were able to sign and sing together. This aspect was positively commented upon by members of the public who enjoyed the event.

The feedback from this event was overwhelmingly positive, for example from school staff members:

"It was such a wonderful event. I have been approached by staff and parents who really enjoyed it".

"Thank you so much for organising this event. The children had a fantastic morning and loved learning the songs on the lead up to the performance. We really appreciated the help and support in school from the music service. This really helped us learn the songs quickly and effectively. Thank you!"

"It was a great event. The children thoroughly enjoyed it and there was a lovely atmosphere. It was lovely to see so many family members attend."

Pupils also reported positive feedback:

"When I was singing I felt amazing, brilliant and powerful."

"When I was singing I felt joyful and excited."

"My favourite part was singing beautiful songs in Duthie Park".

"My favourite part was learning and performing the BSL".

Parents also made extremely positive comments, for example *"This was brilliant to see!"* and *'Aberdeen needs more of this!'*

Due to the success of this event, the service is looking to run a Big Sing annually and plans are currently being progressed for The Big Sing 2023/24..

3.10 During the course of the 2022-23 academic session, the service continued the focus on teaching and learning to ensure that the lessons provided are of high quality. This included teaching observations of Music Instructors by the Music Service leadership team, peer observations and engagement in quality improvement visits. Music Service staff worked together to develop a shared understanding of what an excellent lesson looks like. There will be a continuous focus on supporting staff to ensure that lessons are high quality and progress will be monitored through collegiate discussion and observations.

3.11 As part of a Music Service pupil survey in June 2023, pupils rated the level of enjoyment of their tuition at an average of 8.9/10. One young person said:

"I think that it's very important that young people are given the opportunity to know what music can give you. Music is a really good way to let out your emotions. It improves both your knowledge and understanding skills. Learning an instrument teaches you the ability to not give up. Lessons show you that music is beautiful and a life experience that you never forget."

Many responses highlighted the importance of the support provided by Music Instructors, and said that tuition was the highlight of their week. Some parents wanted to see more performance opportunities for their children, which will be addressed in 2023-24 by the re-introducing Music Centre. Another theme in the survey was that parents were unhappy when there was an instructor absence and their child missed lessons. The Music Service will work to improve communication with parents when there are instructor absences. We will look to

build up materials so that when there is an instructor absence pupils are provided with resources to continue their learning.

3.12 DIGITAL OFFERING

Upon returning to face to face teaching in August 2021, it was recognised that pupils had a degree of digital fatigue and that there was a preference for in person learning. From that point onwards, the service has focused on ensuring that face to face delivery is high quality and is supported by digital content used to support practise between lessons. Our digital offer is now supporting the wider work of the service.

3.13 Every child who receives lessons from the Music Service is added to a Google Classroom by their Music Instructor, alongside their parents/carers. In June 2023, 70.9% of pupils reported that they use Google Classroom regularly. The Google Classrooms are used in a range of ways, including:

- Accessing information about timetables
- Accessing recordings of pieces
- Accessing voice notes made by Music Instructors
- Completing quizzes
- Submitting own recordings
- Accessing backing tracks
- Asking for advice from Music Instructors between lessons

3.14 Pupils gave an average score of 7.5/10 in terms of how useful they found the Google Classroom. There was a range of parent feedback about Google Classroom and this will be used to further develop the use of Google Classroom going forward. This feedback included:

“The Google classroom updates are very useful as they let us know how our daughter is progressing. They also give small details as to how she performs at school and what best to focus on in her practice at home”

And

“I like the Google platform to monitor progress and it provides a means of communication”.

3.15 A particular use for Google Classrooms in 2022-23 was to share resources with pupils in the run up to the Big Sing and the Festive Concert.

3.16 Taking the Big Sing as an example; primary pupils from a range of schools were invited to come together at the start of the academic year to rehearse and record songs in partnership with Robert Gordon’s College primary division. The recordings of these songs were then placed on a Google Classroom that was then shared with all Primary 4 teachers in the city. The service also collaborated with Aberdeen School for the Deaf to create recordings of the British Sign Language for the songs. These videos were uploaded to the Google Classroom and were used widely in preparation for the event. The teachers reported that these videos were vital during the preparation period.

- 3.17 The Festive Concert in December 2022 was ambitious in terms of the number of children involved and the available rehearsal time. In order to ensure that children were feeling confident when attending rehearsals we uploaded the music onto Google Classroom prior to rehearsals taking place to ensure that they had an opportunity to practise it and to look at it during their lessons. Staff and pupils found this approach beneficial, and therefore it is something we are looking to continue as we further develop ensemble opportunities.
- 3.18 During the 2022-23 year, the Music Service developed our partnership with Charanga. Charanga is an online platform providing music resources that can be used to deliver the curriculum and instrumental lessons. This partnership has included provision of Charanga for all primary schools, secondary schools and Music Instructors with associated training opportunities. In January 2023, there were ten primary schools regularly using Charanga. By June 2023 this had risen to 30 primary schools, with further training opportunities planned to extend the use to all schools. Over the past 12 months teachers have used Charanga in schools for 1766 hours in total, and we will be working with schools to this increase over the next 12 months. We are looking to use Charanga resources to support our whole class provision through their First Notes to First Band programme.
- 3.19 In November 2023 we have a planned INSET day with a Music Service from another authority where we are looking to share best practise in digital learning and further build our own expertise. The Music Service is proud of the new experiences offered to children and young people over the school session and look forward to developing our partnerships and opportunities further over school session 2023/24.

3.20 PROPOSALS FOR THE SERVICE IN THE LONGER TERM

- The service is working with the Digital First team to review music tuition registration procedures. The aim of this piece of work is to ensure that registration processes are straightforward, quick and that they show which instruments are offered in which schools so that parents are available of the choice available from the outset.
- 3.21 City-wide ensembles will be relaunched in autumn 2023, following trial ensembles during the 2022-23 academic session. The trial ensembles have introduced pupils in target areas to ensemble playing, and have helped staff gain confidence in working in these settings. Our ensemble plans for the 2023-24 year include a focus on inclusivity for all pupils. We are also looking to ensure that there is an appropriate level of challenge for our more advanced learners by inviting them to targeted ensembles working on a project basis in the lead up to performance opportunities, by offering a range of solo performance opportunities, and by working with Aberdeen City Music School to create more rehearsal and performance opportunities and by encouraging them to enter the Scottish Young Musician of the Year competition. We are aiming to provide as many high-quality performance opportunities as possible for our learners.
- 3.22 The Music Service Working Time Agreement for 2023-24 sees a change in staff meetings. The service will be moving from online to in-person meetings and these have been timetabled to allow more opportunities for collegiate working and planning. Due to the peripatetic nature of the Music Instructor role,

opportunities to have professional dialogue can be challenging logistically, but the new collegiate calendar should support staff in being able to progress improvement priorities together.

- 3.23 The service will continue to focus on maximising pupil numbers. This will include monthly pupil number scrutiny by the Music Service management team, and planned targeted pupil recruitment exercises in areas where there is capacity for more learners. An example of this in the 2022-23 academic year was a band project at Quarryhill Primary School, Abbottswell Primary School and Kirkhill Primary School where there had previously been very few learners. Music Instructors worked with a whole class to introduce them to woodwind, brass and percussion instruments, and the pupils then chose an instrument and began receiving small group lessons and rehearsing as a wind band. By the end of the academic year, the pupils were able to play several pieces together and it was clear that they really enjoyed the experience. Those pupils will be continuing to receive lessons and play in a band together throughout the 23-24 academic year, and this model is one that will be used where appropriate. The service will continue to focus on equity of provision and will continue to work closely with school staff in target areas. Analysis of pupil numbers at schools and school SIMD profiles has enabled the service to identify high priority schools to target in the 2023-24 academic session.
- 3.24 An exciting new project is beginning at Ashley Road School, where all upper stage pupils will learn a woodwind instrument, with support from a Music Instructor. We hope to provide performance opportunities for these pupils, for example they will be invited to play as part of the Big Sing 2024. Charanga will be used as a resource for this project, with bespoke training being provided for school staff.
- 3.25 The service will continue to develop our work with partner organisations, which will lead to further opportunities for collaboration. We will look to continue to develop our relationship with Aberdeen City Music School, and an example of this will be pupils working together to rehearse and perform at our Christmas Concert in December 2023. We will also look to create shared rehearsal and performance opportunities, and our aim going forward is to have at least one collaborative project per term in addition to collaboration at each 'closed weekend' where young people come together to have practice sessions during the day at the weekend. The service began working more closely with the Music School in 2023 with a joint Young Musician Competition, and the Music Service Co-ordinator being part of the judging panel for the ACMS Performer of the Year competition.
- 3.26 We hope to build upon our work with Scottish Culture and Traditions through a project in Seaton and Tillydrone which will introduce pupils to Scottish traditional instruments such as the tin whistle and clàrsach and will lead to performances as part of the Alec Green Tin Whistle Festival being run at the University of Aberdeen.
- 3.27 Music Service pupils have shown a strong interest in musical theatre, therefore we are hoping to further this by taking them to see a show in Aberdeen in the 2023-24 year. Following this we hope to launch new musical theatre provision which would lead to pupils performing a show in spring 2025. This would also

offer a new experience for our instrumental pupils who would be able to play in a musical theatre pit band/orchestra.

- 3.28 We are also planning performances as part of SPECTRA 2024, the Aberdeen Highland Games 2024 and at other cultural events with internal and external organisations. Alongside our large scale Christmas Concerts we are also planning Spring Concerts, a S6 Leaver’s Concert, a Lunchbreak Concert at the Art Gallery, Junior and Senior Aberdeen Young Musician of the Year and Cathedral at Noon lunchbreak concerts. We are also planning to work with the Aberdeen University, the Royal Scottish National Orchestra, the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra and the National Youth Orchestra of Scotland. We have also been working with professional musicians who are performing at venues in Aberdeen (Music Hall, Tivoli Theatre etc) to perform as part of their concerts.
- 3.29 The Music Service hopes to establish a partnership with the Scottish Schools Pipe Band Trust. The aim of this partnership would be to increase the capacity for piping tuition and to target provision towards schools in priority areas with the hope of developing a pipe band. This pipe band would be offered a range of performance and competition opportunities.
- 3.30 Over the last session the Music Service has worked hard to increase access to music tuition across the city for all learners. The work being done with class groups in primary schools is beginning to have impact on resilience and continuation rates into the secondary sector. The high number of partnerships developed during the year has led to a marked increase in opportunities for young people to perform and activities planned for next year will see this rise further.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no legal implications arising from the recommendations in this report,

6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 No negative environmental impacts have been identified.

7. RISK

Category	Risks	Primary Controls/Control Actions to achieve Target Risk Level	*Target Risk Level (L, M or H) *taking into account controls/control actions	*Does Target Risk Level Match Appetite Set?
Strategic Risk	None identified		L	Yes
Compliance	None identified		L	Yes

Operational	None identified		L	Yes
Financial	None identified		L	yes
Reputational	Risk that poor quality of provision will present a reputational risk to the Council	Data scrutiny and reporting enhance the Council's reputation for transparency and accountability	L	Yes
Environment / Climate	None identified		L	Yes

8. OUTCOMES

<u>COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN</u>	
	Impact of Report
Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement	<i>The Council's Delivery Plan states that the Music Service continues to work to maximise uptake, establish a Music Centre and welcome families back to concerts to celebrate the musical skills of our pupils. This report reinforces this aim and furthers it by offering increased rehearsal and performance opportunities for pupils. The report describes how we will work towards our 23/24 Partnership Agreement Commitment which is to actively work with partners to increase citywide delivery of music education, promoting excellence and enabling group performance.</i>
<u>Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan</u>	
Prosperous People	<i>This report supports the LOIP Key Driver 7.1 Improving pathways to education, employment and training for identified groups (including disability, ASN, term time leavers and those from priority neighbourhoods) because it supports the Music Service giving additional musical opportunities for children and young people through more rehearsal and performance opportunities led by the Music Service and in conjunction with partners.</i>
Regional and City Strategies Regional Cultural Strategy Prevention Strategy Children's Services Plan National Improvement Framework Plan	The universal provision of education is fully aligned to the Prevention Strategy and a key partner to the Children's Services Plan.

9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Integrated Impact Assessment	Stage 1 assessment completed
Data Protection Impact Assessment	Not required
Other	None

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

11. APPENDICES

None

12. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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