



Policy: Instrumental Music in Schools

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1. Instrumental Music Education In West Lothian

- 1.1 West Lothian has a very rich tradition of music with forty-five local music groups meeting regularly to rehearse and give performances in venues throughout the district. No fewer than thirty of these groups are bands that have gained national and international recognition for their consistently high standard of performances at festivals and competitions. The area also enjoys a very active amateur music scene, which includes a number of successful choirs, operatic societies and chamber ensembles. An extensive instrumental education programme operating throughout all of the schools in the authority supports this diverse range of musical activity in the community.
- 1.2 West Lothian Council is committed to a vision of education as a powerful force in community development. Consequently a strategy has been developed which is inclusive and ensures access for all young people to participate in activities which will help develop their full potential. Underpinning this strategy is the belief that instrumental music plays a major role in this process by providing opportunities for pupils to learn to play a string, brass, woodwind, guitar or percussion instrument. Lessons are delivered on a weekly basis to over 2,000 pupils by a professional team of experienced instrumental staff.
- 1.3 West Lothian Education Services has developed an “Instrumental Music Service Policy” which reflects the values outlined in the Authority’s Corporate Plan whilst embracing the principles set out in the “Guidelines for Instrumental Teaching in Scottish Schools”. This policy document provides a framework for a comprehensive programme linked to the Council’s “Youth Policy” and enables young people to participate in a wide range of practical music-making activities in school and in the wider community.
- 1.4 In aspiring to deliver a service of excellence, a comprehensive programme has been developed which is based on the following key objectives:
 - To provide a wide range of opportunities for pupils who wish to experience the expressive and creative qualities of learning to play a musical instrument
 - To enable all instrumental pupils to realise their full musical potential
 - To enhance and support the music curriculum and musical activities in schools
- 1.5 A West Lothian Schools Area Band and Ensemble Programme has been extensively developed in recent years to include a Brass Band, Jazz Band, Wind Bands, String, Percussion, Fiddle and Guitar Ensembles. The principal aim of this

programme is to build on the skills and techniques learned in instrumental lessons, expose pupils to new and challenging repertoire and provide opportunities to participate in a broad and exciting range of activities such as concerts, music festivals, tours and events. Players are not auditioned but elect to join an ensemble and over four hundred pupils between the ages of nine and seventeen meet weekly to rehearse with experienced conductors and specialist coaches. Many area groups have gained recognition at recent National and International Music Festivals, regularly perform concerts in their community and feature in the annual West Lothian Schools Spring Concert Series.

2. Instrumental Music Service Policy

2.1 The aim of the Instrumental Music Service is to provide a quality instrumental education programme in West Lothian Schools which offers pupils opportunities to participate in a wide range of practical music making activities.

2.1.1 The Instrumental Music Service key objectives are:

- to manage, develop and support all aspects of the Instrumental Music Programme on behalf of West Lothian Education Services
- to provide a wide range of opportunities for pupils who wish to experience the expressive and creative qualities of learning to play a musical instrument
- to enable all instrumental pupils to realise their full musical potential
- to enhance and support the music curriculum and musical activities in schools

2.2 The Instrumental Music Service is committed to:

- ensuring the quality of instrumental lessons
- being responsible for the appointment and deployment of instrumental staff
- developing and disseminating appropriate teaching methods for instrumental tuition
- organising in- service training and personal development opportunities for instrumental staff
- monitoring and evaluating learning and teaching in instrumental lessons
- consulting with Head Teachers, parents, pupils and staff where appropriate
- developing and co-ordinating a range of instrumental activities which support the instrumental programme
- reviewing policy and procedures for the provision of instrumental education in West Lothian
- organising the deployment of instrumental staff and resources that take account of the following:
 - level of interest expressed by the pupils and parents
 - involvement of instrumental instruction in the service and school development plans
 - continuity available in the cluster group

2.3 The Instrumental Music Service will provide opportunities for pupils to:

- learn to play a string, brass or woodwind instrument in primary schools commencing in P4/5 where resources and staff time can be allocated
- learn to play a string, brass, woodwind, guitar or percussion instrument in secondary school where resources and staff time can be allocated
- participate in school and area band and ensemble activities, performances and events
- to participate in a singing activity in primary school

2.4 Instrumental Music Service Staff will deliver:

- instrumental lessons based on a progressive music curriculum
- a structured course of study which is suited to the pupil's abilities

- a range of practical music-making opportunities which support the skills and techniques learned in instrumental lessons
- instrumental tuition on a group basis or on an individual basis when necessary
- music activities under the Youth Music Initiative programme

2.5 Instrumental Music Service Staff are committed to:

- liaising with senior colleagues and attending parents' meetings as appropriate
- taking an active part in extended musical activities at school and area levels
- being involved in developing school and service plans with senior staff
- complying with agreed service and school assessment procedures
- recording and reporting pupils' progress and achievements to senior colleagues and parents
- encouraging pupils to perform and listen to others
- maintaining good order, discipline and safeguarding health and safety
- being effective in the administration of instrumental lessons and related tasks
- maintaining good levels of communication with colleagues
- operating an agreed selection procedure in all schools

2.6 Parents who choose to have their children participate in the instrumental music service programme are expected to:

- where appropriate, be responsible for the payment of all external practical examinations fees
- purchase music required for instrumental lessons
- encourage home practice
- provide replacement strings, reeds, valve oil, sticks, etc. when required
- be aware that they are responsible for the care and maintenance of any instruments on loan
- ensure that their child attends instrumental lessons regularly
- encourage their child to take part in school and area ensemble rehearsals and music activities
- contact the school or the instrumental service for advice when considering a change of teacher, supplementary lessons, purchasing an instrument or entering for external music examinations
- be aware that it is not in their child's best interests to arrange regular lessons on the same instrument with more than one teacher

2.7 Pupils who are accepted in to the Instrumental Music Service programme are expected to:

- practice on a daily basis
- attend instrumental lessons every week
- participate in school, area and national ensembles when invited
- clean and maintain their instrument regularly
- liaise with their instrumental teacher on all matters concerning tuition
- be aware that attendance at school and area bands and ensembles takes precedence over external musical activities

2.8 Schools providing opportunities for their pupils to participate in the instrumental music service programme are expected to:

- provide suitable accommodation for instrumental lessons
- assist in the selection of pupils for instrumental tuition
- timetable instrumental lessons and follow up pupil absences
- manage the provision and condition of authority instruments
- provide support for instrumental staff
- monitor effective learning and teaching in instrumental lessons
- liaise with the Principal Officer of Instrumental Music regarding all aspects of the delivery of instrumental lessons
- identify pupils' needs and liaise with instrumental staff accordingly

- make other arrangements as necessary for the organisation of instrumental instruction in the school
- ensure that all school staff are aware of the instrumental programme operating within the school
- encourage pupils to participate in the established schools area band and ensemble programme
- provide opportunities for instrumental pupils to participate in school ensembles
- inform the Principal Officer of Instrumental Music of any changes required regarding instrumental staff timetables
- maintain and repair all school instruments
- encourage parents to purchase an instrument if appropriate

2.9 The Instrumental Music Service can offer support or advice on:

- all aspects of policy and procedure for the delivery of instrumental tuition
- developing a school ensemble programme
- providing suitable instruments, music and equipment
- attending music courses at local and national levels
- information about a career in the music profession
- obtaining grants to support pupils attending courses, workshops and related musical activities
- choosing suitable material for internal and external practical examinations
- the provision of appropriate practical workshops for individual pupils and school ensembles
- the repair and maintenance of instruments
- joining a community band, orchestra ensemble
- attending local or national music festivals
- developing a school instrumental programme
- promoting, marketing and preparing concerts
- staff development issues and national initiatives related to instrumental education
- music dealers, publishers, music associations and professional bodies
- making Lottery bids for the purchase of instrumental equipment

3. Instrumental Music Service-Customer Care Policy

3.1 Mission Statement: The Instrumental Music Service is committed to creating a customer friendly environment for all our users, customers, staff, colleagues, stakeholders and supporters. We aim to provide high quality customer care in all our activities and to strive to exceed our customers' expectations.

3.2 Customer Care Objectives:

- a) all customers will be treated equally and with respect
- b) all service staff will receive training in basic customer care and communication skills
- c) all service staff will be polite to customers and avoid conflict
- d) all service staff will remain professional at all times and do their best to uphold the values and standards of the service in all their dealings with customers, users, colleagues, stakeholders and the public
- e) if you wish you lodge a complaint, a leaflet titled "Comments and Complaints on West Lothian Council Services" is available from all libraries and Council Offices. You can also telephone the Customer Service Centre on 0800 328 5143 or email: customer.service@westlothian.gov.uk
- f) all customer complaints will be dealt with swiftly and appropriate action taken

4. West Lothian Schools Area Band And Ensemble Programme

4.1 The West Lothian Schools Area Band and Ensemble Programme exists primarily to support instrumental education in schools and provide pupils with an opportunity to perform a wide range of challenging music. The principal aim of this programme is to build on the skills and techniques learned in instrumental lessons, expose pupils to new and challenging repertoire and provide opportunities to participate in a broad and exciting range of music activities such as concerts, music festivals, tours, recordings, workshops and master-classes.

4.2 Education Services remains fully committed to supporting the following music groups:

West Lothian Schools String Orchestra
West Lothian Schools Junior String Orchestra
West Lothian Schools Rock Platform
West Lothian Schools Guitar Ensemble
West Lothian Schools Brass Band
West Lothian Schools Wind Ensemble
West Lothian Schools Concert Band
West Lothian Schools Percussion Ensemble
West Lothian Schools Jazz Ensemble
West Lothian Schools Fiddle Group
West Lothian NYCOS Children's Choirs

4.3 Arrangements

4.3.1 All groups will be organised by the Principal Officer of Instrumental Music and any enquiries concerning any aspect of the programme should be directed to the Principal Officer at the Arts Unit.

4.3.2 The groups will meet weekly in the first and second terms to rehearse for concerts and music activities.

4.3.3 Experienced conductors and specialist tutors will be invited by the Principal Officer to work with the various ensembles as required.

4.3.4 Pupils can elect to join one or more of the groups on recommendation by their instrumental instructor.

4.3.5 Pupils will be required to complete and return an application form to the Principal Officer of Instrumental Music.

4.3.6 Transport for pupils may be provided to and from rehearsal where practicable.

4.4 Concerts and events

4.4.1 Information regarding concerts and events for the area bands and ensembles will be published at the beginning of the session where possible. This will allow schools to avoid clashes of dates when planning musical activities which may involve the same pupils.

4.5 Music

4.5.1 Conductors are required to discuss programme planning with the Principal Officer prior to the start of the session and music will be purchased for the group as required.

4.5.2 Conductors are responsible for returning all scores and parts to the Principal Officer immediately after the Spring Concert Series.

4.5.3 Parts will be distributed at rehearsals to pupils who are responsible for their music.

5. Suggested Notes for Parents

5.1 WEST LOTHIAN INSTRUMENTAL INSTRUCTION SCHEME: SUGGESTED NOTES FOR PARENTS

5.2 These notes are intended to help parents to ensure that their children gain the maximum benefit from the West Lothian Instrumental Instruction Scheme.

5.2.1 In accepting your child into the scheme the Education Department is demonstrating a commitment to developing his/her talents to the full. Highly qualified and experienced musicians and teachers will teach your child. If their efforts are to be worthwhile, pupils and parents must show a similar level of commitment.

5.3 Practice

5.3.1 Regular, thoughtful and constructive practice is the foundation for all musical development. Yet for many pupils it is the hardest thing to learn. Practice time varies enormously from age to age and from instrument to instrument. The instrumental teacher is the best person to advise on this.

5.3.2 All instrumental staff will give written instructions to pupils in their Progress Dairies on what to practice. Make a point of looking at this and ask your child what he/she is aiming to do in the practice session. If you do not understand what is required, try to see the instrumental teacher concerned. An appointment can easily be arranged, preferably in your child's own lesson time, and teachers will be only too pleased to see that you are taking an interest. Parents of younger children may find it helpful to attend instrumental lessons regularly in order to see for themselves what is expected of their child.

5.4 Music

5.4.1 Schools spend a great deal of money every year on ensemble music and basic teaching material. You will be asked, through your child, to buy some music for his / her own use. Schools are only too aware of the expense and will keep such requests to a minimum. Please try to acquire new music as quickly as possible to avoid unnecessary delays in progress in instrumental lessons. Parents who have difficulty in purchasing music should consult the Head Teacher.

5.5 Instruments

5.5.1 At first many pupils may have the use of an authority instrument but when it is clear that the pupil has ability on an instrument and wishes to continue to play, parents will be asked, where financially possible, to buy the child their own instrument. Pupils will have the use of the Council instrument for a maximum of two years although this period can be extended for the most expensive instruments or where parents have difficulty meeting the costs. Buying their own instrument usually increases a pupil's commitment to playing and ensures that they continue to play when they leave school. It also releases the Council instrument for use by another pupil.

5.5.2 Buying an instrument can be expensive for parents, especially when a child's playing develops to a level at which a quality instrument is needed. Choosing an instrument is a complex business so always consult the specialist instrumental teachers first. Their expert knowledge could save you a lot of money. A good instrument at a fair price is likely to be a safe financial investment. The instrument should always be insured.

5.6 Musical Activities

5.6.1 West Lothian schools offer a comprehensive programme of musical education, including opportunities for pupils to play in Area Bands and Ensembles. When your child has made sufficient progress, we would encourage him/her to play in the school orchestra/band and area orchestra/band.

5.6.2 Please make sure that he/she attends weekly practices regularly (which normally takes place outside normal school hours) and attends rehearsals and concerts when required.

5.6.3 In principle there is no reason why a pupil should not be involved in orchestra and bands outwith the school system, but schools should be kept informed of such activities. Music staff will be pleased to advise on the suitability of a particular activity for a pupil's stage of development and will try to ensure that pupil's are not over-burdened with too much playing at the expense of individual practice.

5.6.4 If a school performance date clashes with an outside body, we would normally expect the school performance to take precedence. Please check any possible concert dates with the school before agreeing to perform elsewhere. Instrumental teachers should be consulted before a pupil undertakes a solo performance of any kind.

5.7 Concerts

5.7.1 Music is infectious. Some of the major influences in any musician's development are little more than copying or imitation. Your child will learn much by listening to the teacher, to other pupils and to performances on record and in concert. Make the most of the opportunities Lothian offers to hear first-rate professional music. In particular, look out for visits by players of your child's instrument and encourage critical listening.

5.7.2 The preference experience is important for pupils too. Please support them by attending concerts and encouraging your friends to come.

5.8 Communication

5.8.1 We cannot guarantee that there will be no problems arising from the Instrumental Instruction Scheme. What we can promise is that the sooner we are aware of them, the sooner we shall be able to do something about them.

5.8.2 As with any school pupil, general educational and pastoral matters are the concern of the Head Teacher, guidance staff or class teacher. Should you wish to discuss any aspect of the Instrumental Instruction Scheme, a brief note or phone call to the Head Teacher in the Primary school or the Principal Teacher of Music at Secondary stage is all that is required. A meeting with one of the visiting instrumental instructors can easily be arranged if necessary.

5.8.3 We hope that by staff and parents working together for the benefit of pupils the musical life of all our young musicians will prove enjoyable and fruitful throughout their school years and beyond.