

REPORT TO: CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE – 23 JUNE 2025

REPORT ON: INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC SERVICE - UPDATE AND OVERVIEW

REPORT BY: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SERVICE

REPORT NO: 199 -2025

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the Children, Families and Communities Committee with an overview of the Instrumental Music Service (IMS) provision across all school sectors.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that members of the Children, Families and Communities Committee note the contents of the report.

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the agreement of this report.

4.0 MAIN TEXT

- 4.1 The Instrumental Music Service (IMS) has staff of 27 professional music instructors (21.76 full time equivalent) including a Senior Instructor. The service is managed by the Education Support Officer (ESO) for Music, Performing Arts and Culture, and overseen by the Chief Education Officer. Currently the Instrumental Music Service has worked with 4568 children from a total school population of 18,627 children. This equates to 24.5% of the children in schools currently receiving a musical input from the IMS; almost 19% of these children are recorded as having an additional support need (ASN). The national average of pupils participating in instrumental music service activities is 9.5%.
- 4.2 External funding is received to support the delivery of specific workstreams such as Creative Scotland Youth Music Initiative programmes.
- 4.3 Dundee City Council abolished all instrumental tuition fees in academic session 2013/14 and instrument hire costs in 2017/18.
- 4.4 Weekly lessons are delivered across 8 disciplines including bagpipes, brass, guitar, percussion, piano, pipes band drumming, strings and woodwind. Lessons are delivered in either individual or small groups. In addition to the more traditional offer of individual or small group lessons, the Instrumental Music Service offers whole class activities in many primary schools across the city and offers support with Charanga Music Platform to non-specialist teachers in their delivery of the music curriculum.
- 4.5 Individual or small group, instrumental instruction is provided on the following instruments starting at these stages, although it does vary by instructor:
- P3- Piano
 - P4- Strings
 - P5- Brass
 - P6-Woodwind
 - P7-Percussion
 - P7-Bagpipes
 - P7-Pipe Band Drumming
 - S1- Guitar

Whole Class Activity delivered by the Instrumental Music Service includes:

- P2-Whole Class Kodaly(including P2 ESA)
- P5-Whole Class Doods, Toots 'n' J Sax
- Claypotts Castle Primary School & Rowantree Primary School Wind & Brass Project

- P6-World Percussion Project
- Mill Of Mains Piping and Drumming Project.
- P7-Rock School

- 4.6 There is a comprehensive offer of extra-curricular activities both at school level, and within our Central Bands and Orchestras programme (further details are available in the next section). Secondary schools are starting to develop closer links with their associated primary schools in offering pupils the opportunity to come up to the secondary school to take part in regular weekly rehearsals.
- 4.7 Instrumental staff have a unique relationship with the children they teach, as it often spans across many years of a child's education which helps to ensure the service Gets it Right for Every Child. The IMS is specifically designed along cluster lines to ensure that pupils have the best possible chance of achieving success. In consultation with schools, the Service alters the curriculum should the need arise. One such example of this is the Rock School at Ballumbie Primary School and Braeview Academy (Appendix 1).
- 4.8 During the 2022/23 academic year, the IMS extended its support to Ukrainian children who had recently been displaced from their homeland. Many of these young musicians were unable to bring their instruments, leaving them without the means to continue their musical education. Recognising this, the service provided each pupil with an instrument and weekly lessons to nurture their talent.
- 4.9 In March 2025, one of the Ukrainian pupils, benefiting from the Instrumental Music Service's guidance, achieved a remarkable milestone—gaining entry to the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland to study clarinet on the BMus (Hons) Performance Course. He also represented Dundee in the national Scottish Young Musicians Young Instrumentalist of the Year at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland in May 2025.
- 4.10 The IMS delivers a range of further programmes and activities in the following areas, and a detailed summary of activity is provided in Appendix 1.
- Central Bands and Orchestras Programme
 - Scottish Qualifications Authority Exams and Dundee Instrumental Service Graded Exams
 - Primary School Whole Class Kodály Programme
 - Whole Class Activity
 - Instrumental Music Service at Anxiety in Motion(AIM)
 - Whole Class Singing at St Ninian's RC Primary School
 - Youth Music Initiative Guitar Programme
- 4.11 A key aspect of the IMS is providing young musicians with opportunities to collaborate with world-class external organisations. As part of Every Dundee Learner Matters (EDLM) collaborative improvement strategy, the IMS has established partnerships with renowned institutions to expand the range of activities available to pupils in all our schools. Additionally, these collaborations enhance the skillset of our instrumental instructors, ensuring the sustainability of this work.
- 4.12 Included in Appendix 2 are a selection of local and national organisations that the Service currently work with in partnership.

5.0 CONCLUSION

- 5.1 Under the leadership of the Education Support Officer, the Children and Families Service's IMS continues to extend its reach and impact. Music is not just an enrichment activity—it is a vital developmental tool. The dedicated and skilled IMS team not only help nurture and develop skilled musicians but use the medium of music to help develop fine and gross motor skills, to enhance emotional and social development and for wider cognitive and academic gains.

6.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 This report has been subject to the Pre-IIA Screening Tool and does not make any recommendations for change to strategy, policy, procedures, services or funding and so has not been subject to an Integrated Impact Assessment. An appropriate senior manager has reviewed and agreed with this assessment.

7.0 CONSULTATIONS

- 7.1 The Council Leadership Team were consulted in the preparation of this report and are in agreement with its content.

8.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 8.1 None.

AUDREY MAY
Executive Director of Children and Families Service

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Chief Education Officer

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Detailed summary of IMS Activity

Central Bands and Orchestras Programme

- a The central music programme primarily takes place at the Coldside Campus on Alexander Street but due to the recent expansion of the programme the service has had to start using various other centres across Dundee. The programme caters for musicians of all ages and abilities with groups for players that have been playing for a few months, to those that are significantly more advanced. The programme also includes residential trips to Scottish Outdoor Education Centres camps. The residential courses ahead of our concerts provide opportunities for our pupils to put the finishing touches to their performances but more importantly it gives them an opportunity to bond and create friendships that last way beyond their school lives.
- b As of session 2024-25, the central Bands and Orchestras programme consists of:
 - Development Strings Orchestra
 - Junior Strings Orchestra
 - Development Wind Ensemble
 - Dundee Schools' Concert Band
 - Ceol Dun Deagh Trad. Music Group
 - Dundee Schools' Pipes and Drums
 - Dundee Schools' Senior Wind Ensemble
 - Dundee Senior Schools' Orchestra
 - Dundee Schools' Rock Band
 - Dundee Caliente Jazz
 - Dundee Schools' Junior Guitar Ensemble
 - Dundee Schools' Senior Guitar Ensemble
- c In September 2023, three of our bands embarked on a tour to our twin city, Würzburg. Musicians from Ceol Dun Deagh, Dundee Schools' Pipe Band, and Dundee Schools' Rock Band travelled to Würzburg to perform at the renowned StraMu festival. Over 50 young musicians took the stage at one of Europe's largest street music festivals, captivating up to 100,000 visitors with their performances. In September 2025, our Pipe Band, Dundee Caliente Jazz, and the Traditional Music group Ceol Dun Deagh have been invited to return to Würzburg for StraMu 2025—an incredible opportunity to once again share Dundee's vibrant musical talent with an international audience.
- d It is proposed that all Central Bands and Orchestras, and Dundee Schools' Music Theatre will move to Drumgeith Campus for session 2025/26. The campus will serve as a modern hub for music and performing arts. This state-of-the-art facility will provide an exceptional environment for our performers, allowing them to continue thriving and expanding their talents.

Scottish Qualifications Authority Exams and Dundee Instrumental Service Graded Exams

Instrumental pupils receiving weekly lessons from the IMS continue to attain high marks in SQA exams. In the 2025 SQA exam diet the service had 140 pupils undertaking performance exams with a pass rate of 100%.

The Dundee Instrumental Music Service graded exams have evolved significantly since the first pilot in February 2022, expanding to include a wider range of instruments and increasing accessibility for pupils. Exam sessions are now structured across three main periods: November, March, and May, with parents able to sign up through Microsoft Exam Booking System.

Thoughtful innovations to make the exam process more accessible and beneficial for pupils and teachers include the use of MS Forms for the aural section of the exam, this reduces time pressure for both pupils and examiners. The introduction of an Initial Grade has helped younger musicians participate, contributing to a sharp increase in the number of exams taken—from 62 in 2021/22 to 187 in 2024/25, with a combined total of 544 exams undertaken to date.

Future development plans include a potential performance-only exam to support pupils who find sight-reading challenging; discussions with the Kodály team to provide opportunities for young singers, and collaboration with the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland to enhance offerings beyond Grade 5, though this would involve additional costs.

Primary School Whole Class Kodály Programme

- a The Dundee Primary School Kodály Programme was formally launched in 2018. Specialist Kodály instructors were employed to expand the initiative, ensuring access for schools beyond the 2014 Aspire programme. A key objective has been the development of resources that empower mainstream primary school teachers to confidently deliver Kodály-based lessons to their students. Many non-specialist teachers have expressed a greater confidence in integrating music into daily school activities, with feedback from teacher questionnaires overwhelmingly positive.
- b Programme Growth & Inclusive Expansion - The Kodály Programme has undergone continuous development, particularly in 2022/23, with notable expansions in inclusivity. A new Early-Stage Academy (ESA) provision has been introduced, alongside an adapted programme at Kingspark School, catering to pupils with profound learning difficulties. Infant classes at Kingspark also receive Kodály lessons within their classroom environments, supported by teaching and care staff.

In the 2024/25 session, the Kodály Programme further extended its ESA provision to mainstream schools including St Fergus RC Primary School, Rowantree Primary School, and Ballumbie Primary School, tailoring early musicianship opportunities to meet pupils' individual learning needs. These structured music sessions have significantly contributed to the development of shared attention, emotional regulation, social interaction, and play. For children with sensory sensitivities, the programme has provided a creative outlet, encouraging pitch matching, speech development, musical expression, and relationship-building with instructors and peers.

- c Mainstream Primary Offering & Teacher Engagement - The structure of the mainstream Kodály offering evolved in 2024/25, with Primary 2 pupils receiving three terms of Kodály lessons on a two-week rotation—equating to 15 weeks of instruction, complementing the 20 weeks they completed in Primary 1. In the third term, the focus shifted to Primary 1 pupils, establishing a strong musical foundation before the summer break, which will be expanded upon as they transition into Primary 2.
- d

Whole Class Activity

Where appropriate, the Instrumental Music Service offers whole class activity in primary schools to encourage as many pupils as possible to take part in music making in their school. Whole Class Activity has been part of the Instrumental Music Service delivery since 2014, initially as part of the Aspire Dundee Music project. Although the Aspire Dundee Music project came to an end in 2020, the Whole Class Activity model has been developed to build on the skills of the delivery team but adapted to suit the needs of each individual school.

Ballumbie Primary Rock School

The Braeview Cluster Rock School has become a highly popular project amongst both pupils and staff. Designed as an inclusive, performance-based model, it develops confidence, teamwork, peer-to-peer learning, social skills, and an understanding of musical and cultural history—all alongside instrumental tuition.

Pupils receive group instruction in classic rock and pop instruments, including drums, guitar, bass, keyboard, and vocals. They are encouraged to experiment with different instruments before selecting one (or two) to specialise in. Once they've chosen, they form small bands and collaborate on music as a group. Their repertoire spans rock and pop history from the 1950s to today, with pupils encouraged to contribute their own song choices.

Throughout the Rock School's lifetime, engagement, attendance, and attainment have all shown significant improvement, helping the music department thrive. Initially, sessions focus on developing core instrumental and musical skills. As the bands progress, members work together on performances, building their skills in a supportive and creative environment.

Following consultations with the Senior Leadership Team at Greenfield Academy, and the Principal Teacher of Music and Drama, plans are underway to ensure that the learning and teaching elements of Rock School align with the newly developed project-based curriculum for the school. This project aims to utilise the state-of-the-art facilities on campus to maximise pupil engagement and skill development among S1-3 pupils, creating a seamless transition into the Senior Phase for those who wish to continue.

Beyond rehearsals and performances, Rock School will equip Senior Phase students with essential industry skills, including event booking, marketing strategies, equipment maintenance and repair, as well as recording and producing their own demos. This comprehensive approach will not only enhance their musical proficiency but also prepare them for future opportunities in the music industry.

b Claypotts Castle Primary School & Rowantree Primary School Wind & Brass Programme

The Claypotts Castle & Rowantree Wind & Brass Programme continues to expand, offering instrumental instruction to pupils and fostering a vibrant musical community across both schools.

At the beginning of the school year all Primary 6 pupils receive introductory lessons in clarinet, trombone, and trumpet in large group settings. This approach concentrates on reading notation, note production, and ensemble playing. When pupils reach Primary 7, lessons shift to smaller groups or one-to-one instruction, allowing pupils to progress at a pace suited to their individual needs.

As the programme progresses, pupils have the opportunity to explore additional instruments, including flute and saxophone. Participation is opt-in, requiring parental consent rather than being a mandatory class activity. This structure has proven highly effective, encouraging more pupils to join after seeing their peers engaged in music. The programme remains fully inclusive, ensuring that children with additional support needs can participate and benefit.

The impact of the programme extends beyond their primary education. A notable increase has been observed in the number of pupils continuing instrumental instruction at Craigie High School. The 'Jammie Dodger' club has played a significant role in this transition, providing a supportive social environment for musicians during break times. The 'Jammie Dodger' club has strengthened pupils' confidence, helping them adapt to secondary school life while fostering a sense of belonging within the music department.

Craigie High pupils are increasingly engaging with Central Bands and Orchestras, showcasing their musical achievements beyond the school setting. The continued success of this programme highlights the importance of accessible instrumental tuition in developing musical skills, boosting confidence, and reinforcing social connections among pupils.

c Doods, Toots and jSax at Fintry Primary School

Now in its fourth year of running, Doods and Toots was started in 2021 at Fintry Primary School. The aim of the project is to develop pupils' musical abilities with wind instruments through the use of Nuvo Dood, Toot and jSax instruments, and to continue on musicianship skills learned in Kodaly music lessons in primary 1 and 2. Through weekly lessons Primary 6 pupils develop these skills with the instruments and work towards various performances to the whole school throughout the year, building pupil confidence and creating a link within the school community. The benefits of this project continue after primary 6 with all pupils being offered the chance to continue tuition on to woodwind instruments with a specialist instructor in primary 7.

d World Percussion Project

The World Percussion Programme is available to all P6 and P7 classes across Dundee. This two-term project focuses on exploring music from Africa and Brazil. Throughout the sessions, pupils are introduced to the fundamentals of music-making and movement while gaining insight into the rich cultural traditions from which the music originates.

The programme emphasises inclusivity, ensuring that every child can actively contribute to the success of the final performances. These culminations include both school-based and community events, with a recent highlight being a half-time performance at Dens Park. The project consistently receives praise for its ability to engage all pupils effectively and foster a sense of collective achievement. Overall, the programme has enriched pupils' educational experiences by combining cultural learning with creative expression, leaving a lasting positive impact on their personal and social development.

e Mill of Mains Piping and Drumming Project.

This pilot programme is designed to introduce Primary 7 pupils at Mill of Mains Primary School to Scotland's national instruments—the bagpipes and pipe band snare drum. Using a whole class teaching model, every pupil will have the opportunity to learn and practice with the Practice Chanter and Drum Pad and Sticks.

The programme's primary aim is to provide an engaging introduction to the bagpipes, exploring their origins from the early 1600s to their prominent role in modern Scottish culture. Pupils gain a deeper appreciation of the instrument's historical and cultural significance. Complementary activities will highlight the connections between music, song, and dance, incorporating Scots Song and Scottish Country Dancing into the sessions.

Over the course of ten weekly sessions, pupils will participate in hands-on music learning alongside foundational music theory. This will include concepts such as rhythm, tempo, and note construction.

Due to staffing vacancy within the Service, the programme was postponed but is set to resume for the 2025/26 session, with plans to expand it to schools across the city. By introducing pupils to these instruments and traditions, this project aims to inspire a lasting appreciation for Scotland's vibrant musical heritage.

Instrumental Music Service at Anxiety in Motion (AIM)

- a Anxiety in Motion (AIM) is an educational programme designed to support young people who face chronic non-attendance at school due to emotional, health, and well-being challenges. These barriers significantly impact their personal development and access to learning opportunities.
- b Since 2019, the Instrumental Music Service (IMS) has been an integral part of AIM, providing weekly musical instruction to young people who are unable to attend mainstream schools. This initiative ensures that these individuals have access to music education, which they would otherwise miss out on. Instruments such as keyboards, guitars, bass guitars, and drum kits are taught, with the aim of fostering confidence and self-esteem.
- c The selection of the music instructor was approached with great care, prioritising not only musical expertise but also empathetic and listening skills to align with AIM's ethos. The IMS works with six pupils, focusing on building confidence not only in music but also in their interactions with peers and adults. Much of this work is extracurricular, offering a creative outlet and a break from the anxiety these young people experience.
- d Staff at AIM have observed noticeable improvements in the confidence of pupils who participate in the IMS programme. This collaboration exemplifies the vision of IMS: to provide inclusive learning and support for all children and young people, including those with significant needs.

Whole Class Singing at St Ninian's RC Primary School

This initiative builds upon the successful P1 and P2 Kodály Musicianship Sessions and is delivered collaboratively by two staff, who share the roles of rehearsal leader, accompanist, and conductor. The project provides a choir experience for all P3 pupils at St Ninian's, following the positive impact observed at SS Peter and Paul's RC Primary School in session 2024/25.

Launched in August, the project has been consistently supported and valued by the St Ninian's SLT and teaching staff. The Primary 3 teachers diligently document evidence of pupils' progress, providing valuable insights to share with parents. The whole-group teaching approach has been well received, with pupils demonstrating enthusiasm and responsiveness throughout the sessions.

- a Each one-hour session is structured into distinct components: warm-ups, musicianship revision, interactive game time, choir practice, and a concluding cool-down period. Learning is scaffolded progressively from week to week, ensuring consistent development.
- b Sessions begin with whole-body and vocal warm-ups, which are repeated weekly to reinforce learning and set clear expectations for behaviour and focus. Warm-ups are accompanied by piano, familiarizing children with this timbre and reinforcing song structure elements such as introductions and endings. The

repertoire consists of a combination of NYCOS materials, *Go for Bronze*, and additional choral selections, with a particular emphasis on songs featuring the pentatonic scale.

- c Pupils confidently demonstrate their understanding of pentatonic pitches using Curwen hand signals while singing. The Kodály team intends to expand this offering, incorporating certification to align with the Dundee Instrumental Music Service exams.
- d Beyond its impact on pupils, the project also serves as an invaluable CLPL (Career-Long Professional Learning) collaboration for the Kodály team and non-specialist teachers. As far as known through networks across the country, this initiative represents a uniquely integrated choral experience specific to Dundee, made possible by the expertise and dedication of the Kodály team.

Youth Music Initiative Guitar Programme

The Instrumental Music Service currently holds eight classes on Tuesday evenings at Coldside Campus. Each week from October to March, four classes of twenty Primary 5 pupils and four classes of twenty Primary 6 pupils participate, continuing their musical education from the previous year. To ensure consistency across Dundee, all tutors follow the same curriculum, allowing pupils to progress using a unified teaching method. This approach ensures that, upon entering Primary 7 pupils transition seamlessly into the central Junior Guitar Ensemble and a year later into secondary school guitar lessons.

As part of Dundee's Instrumental Music Service graded exam system, guitar instructors have structured the course to prepare students for the Initial Grade and Grade One exams. To date, 171 pupils from the Youth Music Initiative (YMI) Guitar Programme have opted to take a graded exam.

The vision of the Instrumental Music Service is that this structured approach will encourage more children to continue their musical education, fostering long-term engagement with guitar studies.

Partnerships with IMS

Included below are selection of local and national organisations that the Service currently work with.

a Benedetti Foundation

In November 2024, in partnership with the Benedetti Foundation, 128 young string players from across the city joined together at Coldside Campus for a day of workshops and performances. Children from all of our primary schools, junior pupils from our secondaries, and Big Noise Douglas pupils worked in collaboration and friendship on three pieces of music, two of which were composed especially for the day.

b Dundee Chamber Music (DCM)

The Dundee Chamber Music Club (DCM), established in 1929, has a long-standing mission to promote interest in and the study of chamber music in Dundee. In 2022, DCM partnered with the IMS to explore innovative ways to support young musicians. This collaboration has focused on creating practical opportunities for young people to engage with professional musicians, fostering positive role models, building confidence, and enhancing performance skills.

A significant shift in approach was implemented in 2023, emphasising active participation in chamber ensemble workshops over passive listening experiences. To date, five workshops have been conducted, focusing on piano, wind, and string instruments. These workshops have directly engaged 117 pupils from all eight secondary schools in Dundee. Participants were provided with music in advance, ensuring a focused and productive learning environment. The workshops emphasised small ensemble playing without a conductor, promoting teamwork and musicianship.

Looking ahead, the program has ambitious plans to further expand its reach and impact. In December 2025, a clarinet workshop will be led by a renowned clarinetist and teacher, followed by a brass ensemble workshop featuring Brass Tacks in 2026.

c Royal Scottish National Orchestra- Singing Project

The Royal Scottish National Orchestra (RSNO) secured funding to develop and deliver an ambitious three-year initiative (sessions 2024/25–2026/27) aimed at enhancing singing opportunities for children in Dundee. This initiative will focus on improving singing provision in primary schools, equipping teachers with high-quality resources, and building non-specialist teachers' confidence in leading singing activities.

During the first year, RSNO will design a comprehensive suite of whole-school and classroom singing resources tailored to primary school settings. These resources will include lesson plans, vocal warm-ups, and song arrangements. To pilot these materials, 6–8 workshops will be conducted in Camperdown, St Clement's, St Joseph's and Victoria Park primary schools, in collaboration with Dundee's Instrumental Music Service's Kodaly team. Insights from the pilot phase will guide the program's refinement and expansion in subsequent years.

The project's aims to evolve into a "choir creation" model. Participating schools will work towards establishing their own choirs, potentially culminating in a large-scale joint performance that celebrates the musical achievements of participating schools.

d National Youth Orchestra of Scotland- Engage Project

NYOS Engage is a collaborative project aimed at beginner and intermediate musicians from local authority Instrumental Music Services. The program offers young participants the chance to experience orchestral music in an inclusive and welcoming environment. By working closely with local authorities, NYOS Engage is tailored to meet the specific needs of each Instrumental Music Service, ensuring both accessibility and effectiveness.

This program is entirely free of charge for all participants. Additional support, including transport assistance, catering, and snacks, will be provided to ensure no barriers to participation. NYOS Engage embodies the principle that all young people, regardless of circumstances, should have the opportunity to learn, grow, and perform.

In October 2025, NYOS Engage Dundee will begin, marking a significant partnership between NYOS tutors—experienced in leading mixed-ability ensembles—and Dundee IMS instructors, who bring invaluable insights about their pupils. This collaboration seeks to offer transformative opportunities that neither NYOS nor Dundee IMS could achieve independently. The project aspires to enhance musical skills, build confidence, and foster a strong sense of community among the young musicians involved.

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