

HMS Instrumental and Vocal Tuition – Information for Parents



Hampshire
County Council

Music Service

Why learn a musical instrument?

Learning to sing or play an instrument offers lifelong benefits. Regular musical engagement supports academic progress, boosts confidence, and enhances social and emotional wellbeing.



High-quality teaching from Hampshire Music Service (HMS)

HMS provides highly skilled, well-trained teachers who receive ongoing professional development and performance monitoring. Lessons are supported by HMS schemes of work and high-quality teaching resources. Where possible, pupils are taught in groups to develop ensemble skills and prepare them for participation in bands, orchestras, and school music-making. Grouping may vary depending on instrument type and learning level.

Assessment and progress

Pupils' progress is celebrated through the HMS Certificate Scheme, which includes Beginner, Introductory, and Stages 1–8 awards. These benchmarks help pupils recognise their achievements and stay motivated. At higher levels, our teachers will support pupils through external music examinations.

How Lessons are organised and charged

HMS charges schools directly for the teaching time they request. Each school sets its own policy on how charges are passed on to parents, so costs may vary by school. HMS teachers are available for lessons each week, except during HMS INSET days and one planned PPA session per term.

Instrument Hire

Affordable instrument hire is available for pupils taking lessons within Hampshire. Full details can be found on the [HMS website](#).



What instrument can my child learn?

We provide tuition on a wide range of instruments; however, availability may vary between schools. Parents are advised to consult their child's school directly to confirm which instruments are currently offered.

Different instruments suit different ages, physical development stages, and learning styles. While all children can enjoy making music, some instruments are easier to start at younger ages, and others are best introduced when pupils are physically ready. Below is a helpful guide:

Instruments Well-Suited to Younger Beginners (Year 2–4)

These instruments are physically manageable and support early musical development:

- Recorder – Ideal first instrument; helps develop breathing, fingering skills, and reading music..
- Keyboard/Piano – Immediate success with sound production; supports strong musical foundations.
- Violin ($\frac{1}{4}$ or $\frac{1}{2}$ size) – Available in small sizes; good for developing listening skills and posture.
- Singing – All ages can enjoy singing; helps pitch, memory, and confidence.

Instruments Recommended for Older Key Stage 2 Pupils (Year 4–6)

These require a larger hand size, breath capacity, or coordination:

- Flute/Clarinet/Saxophone – Suitable from around age 9+ due to arm length, hand span and embouchure.
- Cornet/Trumpet – Works well from Year 4+ when pupils can support the instrument and develop sustained airflow.
- Cello ($\frac{1}{2}$ or $\frac{3}{4}$ size) – Larger instruments need greater reach and posture stability.
- Guitar ($\frac{3}{4}$ size) – Requires finger strength and coordination.
- Trombone – Slide length and arm reach make it more suitable from Year 7 onwards.
- Drum Kit – Coordination across all limbs develops more naturally with age; usually best from 9–10+.

These age guidelines are not strict rules. Every child develops at their own pace, and HMS teachers will always consider each pupil's physical comfort, interest, and motivation when advising on instrument choice. If your child has a particular passion for an instrument outside their typical age range, please speak with your school or HMS teacher to explore the options.

“Our music department benefits enormously from the contribution made by Hampshire Music Service staff. Their enthusiasm and commitment not only help our students excel musically, but also elevate our wider extracurricular programme to an outstanding level.”

- Headteacher



For further information, please speak to your child's school in the first instance, or contact Hampshire Music Service at music.service@hants.gov.uk