

May 2009

Directorate of Children, Young People and Schools

What pupils really think of their lessons

In the February edition of *OPUS* we reported on the survey schools completed about the quality of provision they receive from Doncaster Music Service. A very pleasing result showed that nearly 89% of schools felt that it was good or better, with no school reporting it as unsatisfactory.

This time it's the turn of the pupils to have their say and, based on just over 3060 evaluations, the results are even better: 90% saying good or higher, with 61% of pupils overall opting to place their lessons in the outstanding category.

Pupils in school were asked to say how much they agreed with statements such as:

"I think my instrumental/vocal teacher is trying their best to help me learn, progress and keep interested"

and were also asked to tell us about extra activities they wished the Music Service did.

This last category produced some interesting (and sometimes funny) comments, and some pupils took the opportunity simply to tell us that they like everything just as it is.

Comments made by pupils in years 7 to 13 ranged from pupils who would like harp lessons to those who wished they could play in a brass band. Many pupils said they would like to be involved in or see more

concerts and go on trips. Quite a lot of pupils in this age range also wished to be able to sing in a choir.



"When do we learn to download music?"

Key Stage 2 pupils also expressed a desire to play in more concerts, and quite a few said they would have liked the opportunity to play a different instrument. The opportunity to play an instrument normally depends upon whether an individual school chooses to request teaching on that instrument, and whether there are any vacant lesson slots. Schools normally prioritise their instrumental teaching, but parents can always make requests to schools if they feel strongly that a particular instrumental lesson should be available.

Many pupils would like their lessons to be longer, whilst other requests ranged from the very specific ("more

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Call and Response") to the wonderful plea for "Football lessons and free food and drinks".

Music Centre pupils who play in the various ensembles and those attending theory lessons were also asked to complete an evaluation.

A full report on the results of the evaluations can be found on page 2, and the comments pupils have made will be added to our website - www.doncastermusicservice.org.uk as soon as possible.

Thank you to all the pupils who took time to complete the evaluations.

The *OPUS* letters are available in colour from our website: www.doncastermusicservice.org.uk by selecting the News link. The diary page of the website will give you details of all events and important dates (closures etc.) during the current term.

Evaluation results

KEY STAGE 2 PUPIL LESSON EVALUATION

Pupils were asked to comment on the following statements:

- I really look forward each week to my instrumental/vocal lesson

Yes, lots!	63.94%
Quite a bit	24.95%
Sometimes	9.25%
Not at all	0.80%
- Do you enjoy the music that you play in lessons? Is it...

Excellent	54.82%
Good	38.86%
Satisfactory	4.52%
Not good	0.93%
- My instrumental/vocal teacher helps me improve my playing

Always	76.45%
Mostly	17.37%
Sometimes	4.99%
Not really	0.40%
- If you were entered for an exam or played in a concert recently, did your teacher help you prepare well for it?
(% based only on those results where the question applied)

Yes, lots!	78.15%
Quite a bit	16.98%
A little	4.24%
Not at all	0.62%

YEARS 7-13 PUPIL LESSON EVALUATION

- I really look forward each week to my instrumental/vocal lesson

Strongly agree	49.09%
Agree	43.79%
* NAND	6.06%
Disagree	0.91%
- Playing my instrument (or singing for voice students) is something I really enjoy

Strongly agree	68.48%
Agree	28.03%
NAND	2.58%
Disagree	0.76%

* NAND= Neither agree nor disagree

- I think my instrumental/vocal teacher is trying their best to help me learn, progress and keep interested

Strongly agree	86.06%
Agree	12.12%
NAND	1.06%
Disagree	0.76%

- I believe the music and exercises I am studying have been chosen to help me progress effectively

Strongly agree	61.21%
Agree	33.64%
NAND	3.94%
Disagree	0.15%

- My instrumental/vocal teacher really helped me to prepare for my recent examination/concert
(% based only on those results where the question applied)

Strongly agree	74.88%
Agree	20.81%
NAND	2.39%
Disagree	1.67%

MUSIC CENTRE GROUPS EVALUATION

- I really look forward each week to attending the Music Centre

Strongly agree	41.10%
Agree	44.26%
NAND	12.95%
Disagree	1.58%

- The music we play at Music Centre is challenging and interesting

Strongly agree	46.06%
Agree	40.54%
NAND	10.25%
Disagree	2.93%

- The conductor / director of my ensemble really encourages the group to play better and improve our standards

Strongly agree	72.30%
Agree	21.40%
NAND	5.41%
Disagree	0.56%

- I feel proud to be a member of my ensemble whenever we give a concert

Strongly agree	60.36%
Agree	31.08%
NAND	5.18%
Disagree	0.68%
I haven't done one yet	2.48%

THEORY LESSON EVALUATION

- I really look forward each week to my attending the Theory lesson

Strongly agree	40%
Agree	50%
NAND	10%
Disagree	0%
- The work we do in the lessons is challenging and interesting

Strongly agree	70%
Agree	10%
NAND	10%
Disagree	10%
- The teacher of my group really encourages me to improve my standard and achieve success at Grade 5

Strongly agree	70%
Agree	30%
NAND	0%
Disagree	0%
- I would consider taking theory lessons beyond the Grade 5 examination for which I am currently working

Strongly agree	30%
Agree	20%
NAND	40%
Not Applicable	10%

OVERALL RESULTS

The summary of the above results is as follows:

Strongly agree	61.35%
Agree	28.46%
Neither agree nor disagree	7.81%
Disagree	1.93%

Music Makers

These classes are for pre-school children with their carers. The sessions are fun and include singing, dancing, instrumental playing and play-acting. Classes take place on Tuesday mornings and Thursday afternoons. Each session costs £3.50, and £2.50 for subsequent children, payable each half term in advance.

DSSO's visit to Cumbria



At 8am on 25th April (rather too early judging by the bleary looks), 48 members of the Doncaster Schools Senior Orchestra assembled to set off for Queen Elizabeth school in Kirkby Lonsdale, Cumbria.

It was in October that Mr Dickinson first suggested that the group might benefit from a trip and concert out of Doncaster - as with all Music Centre groups, pupils come from a large number of schools and the bonding effect of such trips has a really positive benefit on the standard of playing, as does the fact of performing to an "outside" audience. In



consultation with a college friend who is now an assistant head at the host school and with whom Mr Dickinson had previously organized VCB

concerts, an itinerary was gradually assembled to include a visit to White Scar caves (there are more tall pupils in the orchestra than we realized), an aquarium (including mice, snakes and tortoises - don't ask), a steam train, and a boat trip on Lake Windermere.

The centrepiece, of course, was the concert which was presented jointly with the school's swing band. This was to an appreciative audience and the DSSO members acquitted themselves well with some of the best playing we have heard from them in a concert setting. This produced many positive comments and, judging by the number of DSSO members stating on a subsequent evaluation form that they wished to see more such trips, pupils presumably felt this to be a worthwhile venture also. As a result, the conductors, Mr Eke and Mr Dickinson, will look to provide similar future opportunities as part of the orchestra's continued development.



Grateful thanks to all staff who helped in any way, in particular to: Mrs Hooper, Mrs Thomas and Mrs French for accompanying the trip; Mrs Roberts for acting as our 24hr emergency contact, and Mrs McAteer in the office who co-ordinated most of the paperwork and sorted countless problems before we were even aware they existed. Here's to the next trip!

More photos can be found on the Music Service website. Go to the Special Events page and click on "DSSO in Cumbria"

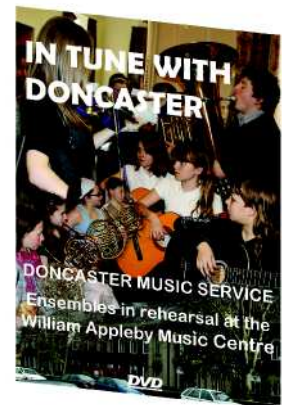
NOW.... SEE WHAT GOES INTO MAKING OUR PUPILS "IN TUNE WITH DONCASTER"

During March, many of the Music Centre ensembles were filmed at rehearsals, for a promotional DVD.

From Monday 1st June this DVD will be available for you to purchase. This is a great chance to see how our pupils progress through the ensembles, but will also provide those featured with a fond and lasting memento of their time at the William Appleby Music Centre.

The DVD begins with a little historical information about the early days of the Music Centre and then goes on to feature eighteen of our ensembles, ranging from the four beginner groups - Brass, Wind, Strings and Guitar - to our most senior and experienced ensembles. The DVD contains 42 minutes of fascinating insight into the work of the WAMC.

Please note - pupils included in the cover photograph are not necessarily featured on the DVD



Priced at only **£5.00** and available from the Music Centre shop from 1st June.
(8.30am - 4pm Mon-Fri
9am - 1pm Sat)

Celebration Concerts at The Dome

We are now approaching the end of our third year of whole class tuition projects (the "Wider Opportunities" programme). Plans have now been made to bring together as many of the participating schools as possible to celebrate the year's work in 2 full days of concerts at the Doncaster Dome. These will take place on Tuesday 9 June and Wednesday 10 June between 10 am and 4 pm and will feature pupils from the following schools:

Auckley Junior and Infant School, Castle Hills Primary, Adwick Park Junior, Warmsworth Primary, Edlington Victoria Primary, Copley Junior, Intake Primary, Barnburgh Primary, Kirk Sandall Junior, St Francis Xavier Catholic Primary, Conisbrough Ivanhoe Junior/Infant, Our Lady Of Sorrows Catholic Primary, Hatfield Crookesbroom Primary, St Joseph and St Teresa's Catholic Primary, Wadworth Primary, Tickhill Estfeld Primary, Armthorpe Tranmoor Primary, Bentley Kirkby Avenue Primary, Plover Primary, Toll Bar Primary, Owston Park Primary, Branton St Wilfrid's C of E Primary,

Town Field Primary, and Rossington St Michael's C of E Primary.

24 instrumental teaching staff, assisted by the class teachers, have been helping these year 4, 5 and 6 children to learn to play instruments in whole class groups which include samba bands, brass bands, woodwind groups, string ensembles and guitar groups. In the concerts, each group will get a spot in which to show off it's particular achievements, but there will also be massed items with everyone playing together. One thing is for certain, it will be a very spectacular and fitting opportunity for these young musicians, some of whom will be playing in their very first concert.

Entry is free, and we look forward to seeing as many parents as possible supporting their children, and staff from schools who have yet to sign-up to the projects would find this a real opportunity to see what it's all about.

Please contact Karen Roberts at the Music Service for up to date information on times of performance and further details.

INSTRUMENT PURCHASE SCHEME

The Music Service is able to offer parents or carers the opportunity to purchase new musical instruments at a discounted price and without the addition of VAT. If you are interested in the scheme please ask your son/daughter to contact his/her Peripatetic Music Teacher or collect a form from the Music Centre reception or visit:

www.doncastermusicservice.org.uk/faq

Beginner Brass players, this is just for you.....

Coming soon ...

BRASS BLAST !

18th June 2009

With : The Brass Team

*Miss C Daws, Mr R Dickinson,
Mr A Gurnhill, Mr J Stuart, Mr P Stubbs,
Ms E M Thomas, Mr D Tonkin*

This will take place at the Music Centre and is a group workshop from 12.45pm which will conclude with a short informal concert for parents and friends at 3.30pm. Your brass teacher will be able to give you further details nearer to the event.

HOLIDAYS AND CLOSURES

- Half term -

The Music Centre will be closed from **Saturday 23 May to Saturday 30 May** inclusive, and will reopen on **Monday 1 June**.

- Summer Holiday -

The Music Centre will close at 3.00pm on **Friday 17 July**, and reopen on **Thursday 3 September**.

The first rehearsals after the Summer holiday are on **Thursday 10 September**.

CONCERT GOER

"The Young Idea", the annual Museum concert, in which, usually, four musicians provide a Sunday afternoon programme, has been running for 22 years. This year's (26 April) started badly as one of the performers was indisposed at the last minute, but classical guitarist Sami Alsindi and pianist Jessica Crich each contributed an extra item to make up some of the shortfall. Indeed Jessica's, Chopin's Nocturne in E minor, played from memory, was as good as anything she played, her repertoire also including Mozart, Rachmaninoff, Debussy's Reverie, dreamy indeed, and Grieg's Wedding Day at Troldhaugen, a musical performance though the right hand work needed more technical confidence.

Sami gave confident accounts of Tarrega's Grand Vals and, especially, Albenez's Leyanda; his extra item was Villa Lobos' Mazurka-Choro, perhaps the sort of thing Chopin might have written had he composed for the guitar.

Recorder player Emily Hemsley, accompanied by John Pearson, concentrated on the baroque era, thus ensuring a well-balanced afternoon overall with Handel's C Major Sonata on treble and the later two movements of Sammartini's Concerto in F: nicely prepared performances both.

Philip Scowcroft

MUSIC CENTRE MATTERS

Concerts - Dates for your Diary - Summer 2009

Please would the performers arrive at least 15 minutes before the start of the concert.

Concert clothes: dark coloured trousers/skirts and white shirts/blouses should be worn, except where directed otherwise.

Unless stated otherwise, admission to concerts is free, with a retiring collection for Music Centre funds.

Wednesday 20 May

Music Centre Pupils. Doncaster Museum and Art Gallery, Chequer Road at 1.00pm. The Museum makes a small charge for admission on the door.

Saturday 23 May

Doncaster Schools Symphonic Band. St Peter's Church, Bentley Rd, Bentley at 7.30pm. Admission payable on the door, £4.00 and £2.00 concessions.

Wednesday 17 June

Doncaster Schools Senior Orchestra. Music Centre Hall at 7.00pm.

Friday 19 June

Beechfield Youth Orchestra, Senior Brass Group, and the William Appleby Violin Ensemble. Music Centre Hall at 7.00pm.

Wednesday 24 June

William Appleby Chamber Orchestra. Doncaster Museum and Art Gallery, Chequer Road at 1.00pm. The Museum makes a small charge for admission on the door.

Tuesday 30 June

Electric Guitar Groups. Music Centre Hall at 7.00pm.

Friday 3 July

Vermuyden Concert Band. Hall Cross Lower at 7.00pm.

Saturday 4 July

Guitar Groups. Music Centre Hall at 11.00am. Rehearsal at 10.00am.

Saturday 4 July

Band Concerts at Hall Cross Lower School. The Beginner Wind Group and the Beginner Brass Group at 9.00am.
10.00 Band at 10.00am.
11.00 Band at 11.00am.
12.00 Band at 12.00pm.
1.00 Band Concert at 1.00pm.

Wednesday 8 July

Guitar Groups. Music Centre Hall at 7.00pm.

Thursday 9 July

Recorder Groups. Music Centre Hall at 7.00pm.

Friday 10 July

Steel Pans. Music Centre, Room 8, at 7.00pm.

Saturday 11 July

Orchestra Concerts in the Music Centre Hall.
9.30 Beginner Strings at 9.30am.
10.30 Transitional Strings at 10.30am.
11.30 Progressive Strings at 11.30am.
Saturday Afternoon Orchestra at 12.45pm.

Saturday 11 July

Senior Brass Group. Warmsworth Gala. Afternoon performance.

Directions to Hall Cross Lower School, St. Michael's Road, Bessacarr, DN4 5LU.

From the south (Cantley and Bessacarr). After Cantley traffic lights take the first left turn into St. Augustine's Road. At the end of the road turn left. The school is on the right.

From the Race Course roundabout, proceed along Bawtry Road to Cantley traffic lights and U turn. Take the first left turn into St. Augustine's Road. At the end of the road turn left. The school is on the right.

Last Minute Cancellations to Music Centre Rehearsals

Please be aware that whilst we make every effort to provide cover for teacher absence, there will be times when this will not be possible; for example, if a teacher is ill at short notice. We do attempt to contact parents by phone wherever possible (**please make sure you let us know if you change your phone number mid year**) and publish any last minute changes to rehearsals on the Music Service web-site (www.doncastermusiccentre.org.uk), but we would advise that you wait a few moments when dropping off your child to ensure their ensemble is running.

Notification of pupil absence from Music Centre

Please note that from September 2009 the Music Service will be discontinuing the practice of writing to parents/carers following three pupil absences from the Music Centre.

If you know your child will not be able to attend a rehearsal or concert for any reason, please let the conductor of the ensemble know in advance by telephoning the Music Centre office. A message can be left outside office hours.

Final rehearsals this term.

As a general guide, most ensembles will not have any more rehearsals after their end of term concert, until the start of the next term. Exceptions to this are listed below

DSSO - Wednesday 8 July
DSSB - Mr Gurnhill will advise

Theory Classes

The last theory classes this term will take place on Tuesday 7 July.

Lost Property

If your child has lost anything, please call at the Music Centre office. We shall dispense of any unclaimed items to charity shops during the week before the Summer holiday.

Car Parking

In the interest of the safety of Music Centre pupils, please would parents ensure that they **park only in the designated parking spaces** and take the utmost care when driving away, especially at busy times such as Saturday mornings. **Parents who are only dropping off their children may find it more convenient to do this at the front of the building. Please do not drop off or pick up your children around the rear door area.**

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The Music Service staff would like to wish everyone a relaxing Summer holiday.