

Instrumental and Vocal Tuition Report

Parents Voice Feedback - April 2023

Thank you for all the feedback you have provided. Here are a few of the headlines from the responses received.

- 93% of parents agree that their child enjoys their weekly music lessons.
- 87% of parents agree that their child makes good progress in their weekly music lessons.
- 60% of parents agree that their child practices regularly at home.
- 76% of parents agree that communication from their child's tutor is clear and effective.
- 85% of parents agree that timetables are well organised.

It was fantastic to receive so much high praise. Here are a few highlights.

'We really could not be happier or more grateful'

'He loves his lessons and practices nearly every day of late.'

'Instrument lessons are a very valuable addition to school life'

She '....very much enjoys viola and I feel she is supported well.'

'My daughter really enjoys this activity and it has helped build her confidence.'

'I feel that she is inspired and challenged to continue making progress.'

'Teacher is great at communicating and very helpful with timetable changes'

She has '.....a good relationship with her teacher and he recognises her need to build confidence in a fun way'

'Brilliant - thank you.'

More than 100 parents responded to our request for feedback. I am unable to respond to each of you individually but I have written the following in response to some of the comments made and questions raised.

- Our instrumental and vocal tutors provide a written report during the summer term each year. The teachers are in regular contact with parents and we hope that the evidence of progress is in what you hear when your child is practising at home.
- Year 6 pupils are not permitted to miss maths or english lessons to attend instrumental and vocal tuition. This means that it is often necessary for year 6 pupils to have lessons before school, during lunchtime or after school. This does impact on timetabling for pupils in other year groups but can't be avoided.
- More than 200 pupils receive instrumental or vocal tuition each week from a team of 9 specialist tutors. It is not possible for the VGMS teaching staff to know when each individual child has a music lesson. Attending lessons on time does need to be the

responsibility of the child and their family. However, we have copies of the timetables on display in the music department so that pupils can check times if necessary. If your child struggles to remember the time of their lesson, they could set an alarm on a watch.

- Due to the number of pupils receiving instrumental lessons it is challenging to provide performance opportunities for every child. During the academic year 2022 - 2023 the music department has organised a soloists concert for both year 7 and another for year 8 pupils. These concerts provided a wonderful opportunity for pupils to share their musical achievements with their family and friends. When we feel it is the right time for individual pupils, they are asked to perform a solo at our Head Teacher's Assemblies. Our piano teacher has also invited pupils to take part in both a piano competition and a concert for young pianists during this academic year. We have an impressive extra-curricular programme which provides our young musicians with the opportunity to perform as part of an ensemble. There have been 4 group performance opportunities during this academic year as well as year group performance opportunities for year 5 and 6.
- In March 2023, Mrs Scott led her first ABRSM exam centre. This is an extremely time consuming task for staff but we do hope that this type of opportunity can be offered again in future but it would be impossible to organise for all ABRSM exams to take place at VGMS. VGMS are very grateful to the peripatetic team who put a lot of effort into organising exams at other exam centres. In addition to face-to-face exams some of our tutors offer digital exams as an alternative.
- When your child is ready to take a graded exam your tutor will be in touch. Pupils need to be in a good practice routine in order to enable this to happen.
- The musicians union currently recommends an hourly rate of £38.50 for individual and small group lessons. We believe that our tutors' rates are more than acceptable. All of our tutors are highly qualified and experienced teachers.
- It is highly likely that your child's lessons will be timetabled on the same day throughout the year. Our staff are in high demand and we have booked their time for a set number of hours each week. We currently have at least 3 specialist teachers delivering lessons in the music department every day. Timetabling of rooms and lessons is extremely complicated.
- Every pupil has a favourite subject that they don't want to miss. Unfortunately we can't take this into account when timetabling lessons.
- Although some of our teachers do offer lessons before and after school it is rare that we can make this arrangement on a weekly basis. We are occasionally able to do this for year 6 pupils in order that they don't miss Maths and English lessons.
- Unfortunately it has been necessary on a few occasions to miss a pupil off the timetable if payment for lessons has not been made or if a parent has not been in touch to confirm that a child is continuing lessons.
- The recent strike action has massively affected the timetabling of instrumental and vocal tuition and we realise that the alternative arrangements have not always been ideal. Our team of tutors will continue to try their best to provide an alternative.