



# Music Newsletter 2024-2025

July 2025

## Our Musical Year at KSS

Taking over the music program from Mrs. Cass at Katherine Semar Schools was no small task, given her remarkable legacy as the music lead. However, with Mrs. Fitt teaching music in the Infant School, and the enthusiastic backing of Mrs. Puxley, it has been a joy to continue to nurture the school's musical endeavors. As ever, of course, our pupils have been a delight to work with.

We've successfully organised choral and orchestral concerts, as well as cherished events like the Christmas Carols and the Spirit of Christmas celebration. All children have performed musically in their class assemblies and productions. Our collaboration with Saffron Hall and the University of Cambridge on a sustainability project with Year 5 has been particularly rewarding, providing students with a unique learning experience. Additionally, we've invested in new instruments and advanced our curriculum by introducing ukulele instruction to Year 5. The Infant School enjoyed wonderful djembe drumming workshops, and Year 6 enjoyed rap workshops. All these and other initiatives and opportunities ensure that music remains a vibrant and integral part of the Katherine Semar Schools, building on Mrs. Cass's enduring legacy.

We have had a number of trips out to Saffron Hall for concerts across both schools; we are so lucky to have a fantastic relationship with Saffron Hall and to have excellent opportunities to enjoy professional live music experiences.

We continue to be a 'singing school' with whole school singing assemblies and vocal work in every music lesson, as well as continuing with our wonderful KS2 choir. We are also delighted to have added to our peripatetic team with an additional guitar tutor, Mr Gil Matthews, and our tuition offering remains as strong as ever. Janet Wheeler's strong leadership of our choir and orchestra continues very successfully. We have had a number of our instrumentalists gaining their musical grades, including several distinctions. Well done all! It is a genuine pleasure to lead music at Katherine Semar, where we believe that access to music is vital to children's development.

Our musical year at Katherine Semar Schools is so full that it would be impossible to mention all of the events in this newsletter, but below are just a sample. Wishing you all a happy summer break and *just keep singing!* Mrs Savill

### Spirit of Christmas



Spirit of Christmas was very well attended, and our choir performed to a very high standard. All schools sang together with the Choral Society for two pieces, which was very special. We have signed up to attend for Christmas 2025, and meetings are already taking place.

### Uprising Project

Year 5 took part in a project related to the new opera, Uprising, performed at Saffron Hall. We took part in several workshops learning about climate change, and how young people can have a voice on this issue. We composed verses to songs that were then performed at Saffron Hall alongside other schools, professional musicians and climate change experts from the University of Cambridge. It was a very interesting project, and Year 5 rose to the challenge!



Music is the universal language of mankind.  
Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

# Music Workshops

Year 6 were visited by rap maestro DJ Shy Cookie to lead them through a rap workshop. Children learnt some of the history of rap music and rapped a chorus written especially for them by DJ Shy Cookie. They then composed and performed their own verses - they were VERY good! This work complemented the music production work that Year 6 had been undertaking in the music lessons.

All Infant classes took part in djembe drumming workshops, learning how to use them to make different sounds and performing as an ensemble.



# More reasons to love music:

## Your brain on music

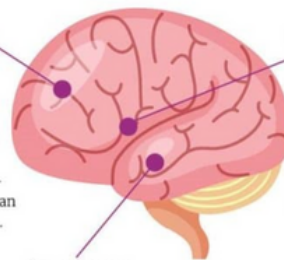
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### How the brain responds to music

Two professors and researchers from the University of Central Florida, neuroscientist **Kiminobu Sugaya** and violinist **Ayako Yonetani** have explored how music and brain are connected.

The following is part of their research.

**Frontal lobe**  
Used in thinking, decision-making and planning. The most important to being a human. We have a big frontal lobe compared to other animals. By listening to music, we can enhance its functions.



**Temporal lobe**  
Processes what we hear. We use the language center to appreciate music, which spans both sides of the brain, though language and words are interpreted in the left hemisphere while music and sounds are interpreted in the right hemisphere.

### Broca's area

Enables us to produce speech. We use this part of the brain to express music. Playing an instrument may improve your ability to communicate.

# Junior Concerts



Both our Spring and Summer Concerts took place in front of two packed audiences. We had a fabulous performance in Spring from Mrs Gardiner's Musical Theatre group. The choir and orchestra showcased their termly learning in both concerts, including fabulous choral performances from musicals and a range of orchestral pieces from around the world.

# Carol Concerts and Christmas Performances

Christmas was celebrated in musical style with our very special Infant Carol Concert, featuring solos from some of our talented Year 2 pupils. We had our fantastic end of term Junior whole school carol concert outside with families joining in some old favourite carols. Orchestra also performed, although there were some interesting battles with the winter wind and music stands! The Infants put on the fabulous Wriggly Nativity, and Years 3-5 put on The Stars Come Out for Christmas. We can't wait for Year 6s' final performance shortly: The Pirates of the Curry Bean!



# Derbyshire Choir

We were very flattered to be invited to sing at the farewell event for our trust CEO, Caroline Derbyshire. Alongside R A Butler's choir, we performed at a lovely evening event, singing a medley from Mrs Derbyshire's favourite band, The Beatles.



# Instrument Showcases

We have had a range of pupils very bravely showcasing their instruments this term. These included: guitar, piano, flute, vocal, clarinet, violin, saxophone. Information was sent home this term on how to sign up for lessons within school time. Do ask at the office if you cannot find this information.

## NEXT YEAR:

We have been granted a long term loan of violins of different sizes from Saffron Hall and are going to introduce these for whole class lessons. We continue to extend our tuned instrumental provision for whole class tuition, and have invested in more glockenspiels and ukeleles to this end. We have purchased a set of tongue drums, and will be using these for a nurture and SEND music group.

We are very excited that we will be preparing for and attending our biannual Young Voices Choir in the O2 Arena in January 2026.

Finally, we are currently in discussion with Saffron Hall about initiating a brand new schools choral event next year - more details to follow!