

KATHERINE SEMAR SCHOOLS MUSIC

NEWSLETTER 2025-2026

“Music is the only thing we can engage with that activates every part of our brain.”

--Dr. Annie Heiderscheit, Music therapist

In this year's Newsletter, I have focused on the wider benefits of music on the back page.



It has been such a musical year at Katherine Semar Schools! Looking back now, it is actually almost unbelievable how much we have fitted in. Pictured here are the Young Voices choir who worked so hard to learn lyrics and melodies (and also moves and sign language!) for a wide range of songs and medleys to perform at the O2. Please find some highlights of the performance by scanning this QR code.



Performances

The Junior Choir and Orchestra have performed at our Spring Concert and will be doing so again at our Summer Concert. Although due to Mrs Wheeler being unwell our Orchestra and Choir were unable to perform at our end of term Christmas Concert, we still very much enjoyed a great carol sing-along with parents and families as usual. Mrs Gardiner's Musical Theatre group also performed pieces from a range of musicals. Spirit of Christmas was as seasonally joyful as usual, and it was commented upon that Katherine Semar performed particularly well, and behaved beautifully. This is such a special occasion every year, with schools and families coming together with local choirs in St Mary's Church - the lighting and mood are somehow magical.

A group of Year 6 Choir members entertained the residents of Highfields Care Home with some carols in December, too.

This year our choir also took part in a new Spring Primary School Choral Festival, initiated by myself as Music Lead of Katherine Semar along with Laura Thomas, our peripatetic vocal tutor. Seven different local primaries brought their choirs along, and some SWCHS choirs were also involved. We had a performance from a local opera student, and were guided through the day, being trained in a collaborative choral piece by a professional vocal trainer, Carrie Rawlings. It was a great day.

Of course, other performance opportunities have included all children within Christmas productions and class assemblies.

This year's Year 6 production, Rock Bottom, was a huge success - amazing solos, ensemble and acting. It is also so lovely to see pupils contributing with backstage management and tech.

We have recently had our Summer Concert with performances from the choir and orchestra.

Many schools do not provide so many opportunities and our children really do gain experience and confidence which will help them in all sorts of ways as they get older.



Orchestra Summer Performance.

Choir Summer Performance.

The Music Curriculum at Katherine Semar

Just as in any subject, our music curriculum is constantly being evolved and developed to suit our pupils. Whilst our curriculum is firmly based in the Early Learning Goals and the National Curriculum expectations, along with the National Music Framework, at Katherine Semar we also carefully build a progression of skills, knowledge and vocabulary learning. Units that have been worked on this year have been to develop the teaching of music technology, rap and hip hop, film music and how song can be used as an expression of identity.

This year, we have been lucky enough to be able to fund the purchase of a range of new instruments, either to replace instruments that have come to the end of their natural life (it's a good sign that our instruments are actually used!) or new instruments such as the boom whackers pictured with Year 4 here. We have also made a successful bid to the Universal Music UK Sound Foundation which has enabled us to increase the number of samba instruments which we have available.

Our music curriculum is also tied into each Year group's topic, and songs and vocal teaching are incorporated where a class has an assembly performance coming up - pictured here are Elephant Class performing Who'd be a Viking Woman. Of course, Christmas play songs are also taught, as are carols. Both the Infant and Junior schools can be considered Singing Schools as music and song are celebrated and enjoyed in a weekly assembly with a music teacher.

Of course we have many enrichment opportunities such as visits to Saffron Hall educational concerts, our wonderful choir and orchestra, and protected weekly music lessons for all pupils.

Instrument Showcases

Each Summer Term, Junior children who learn a musical instrument are invited to perform a short piece to the Infant School. This is to give inspiration to younger children to become instrumentalists themselves, particularly Year 2 who are able to start instrument or voice lessons in Year 3. Our wonderful peripatetic instrument and vocal teachers are also able to come and do a showcase to all years from 2 - 5, as those children may wish to sign up for the coming September.

You can find the form to fill in for applying for instrumental lessons if you scan the QR code. Please note that there is a one-off music admin fee when you first sign up, but thereafter the tutor will invoice you for their fees. Please do ask if you require an instrument - we may be able to help with this. We would like all children to be able to take part in extra curricular music if they are inspired to: please speak to us if financial issues are preventing your child from doing so - we may be able to help in certain circumstances.



Final Words

I recently attended a Seed Talk on Music and Neuroscience, and it made me think even more deeply about the purpose and importance of music education. We should all feel very fortunate at our school that creative subjects such as music are given protected curriculum time and are seen as an important part of every child's education. Music is not just an "extra"; it is something all children are encouraged to take part in, whatever their ability or background. This means every child has the chance to enjoy music, develop their skills, and feel included.

Research shows that music plays a key role in children's development. For example, taking part in music helps to improve memory, attention and concentration, as children learn patterns, rhythms and sequences. It is also closely linked to language and reading development, because listening to and performing music strengthens children's understanding of sounds and words. Some studies even show that music education can support wider academic success, helping children to achieve well across different subjects.

Music is equally important for children's emotional and social development. When children sing, play or perform together, they learn important skills such as teamwork, perseverance and confidence. Research also shows that music can support wellbeing, helping young people manage their emotions and feel more connected to school and to each other.

More broadly, creative subjects bring children together from all backgrounds and give them a way to express themselves. They help to build confidence, creativity and a sense of belonging. By protecting time for music in our curriculum, we are not only teaching musical skills, but also supporting children to grow into confident, capable and well-rounded individuals.

I feel very grateful to be the Music Lead at Katherine Semar, and delighted that pupils here gain such a lot from the vision of the leadership team to maintain high levels of creative learning.

I wish you all a wonderful summer holiday, and I look forward to teaching the children on their return in September. And remember - Just Keep Singing!

Mrs Savill, June 2026