

Your Geordie Symphony School In Harmony Newcastle and Gateshead

Dear Friends,

We are delighted to have In Harmony back in our schools and have worked hard to ensure the team and children are working safely. The children are all so pleased to be able to take part in their lessons again; making music with their friends. For myself, it has been lovely to hear music around school again. The summer term was very quiet indeed!

We took all the necessary safety measures to run a small-scale summer school where a 'bubble' of children took part in lots of fun activities including composing, body percussion and bucket drumming!

A huge thank you to Royal Northern Sinfonia for holding a performance during the summer holidays in our community that children and families had the opportunity to attend. We know that the families who were part of the audience enjoyed being able to watch our friends in RNS again.

Although live performance isn't an option right now, we are looking at imaginative ways to share the children's work and make the end of term special for everyone. Please look out for video links on our school websites where the children will be able to share their progress with you all.

Thank you for your continued support and hope to be able to welcome visitors into school sometime in the new year.

Jane Dube

Head Teacher – Hawthorn Primary School

Summer School

Early in the Summer holidays, thirteen children from Hawthorn Primary School formed a 'bubble' to enjoy a Summer School like never before! It was part of Newcastle City Council's '*Best Summer Ever*' involving different children and communities across the city.

As well as playing their string instruments, the children worked hard on remembering rhythms through Dalcroze exercises and body percussion routines.

During the two weeks, children took part in a drumming workshop with buckets – they also used their iPads to draw creative responses depicting '*Pictures at an Exhibition*' by the Russian composer Mussorgsky.



Overall, the Summer School gave us an opportunity to try various activities out ahead of the new term, helping familiarise everyone with social distancing measures in the school environment.

Royal Northern Sinfonia in our community!

As Jane said, in August, families from In Harmony were invited to a special outdoor performance by Royal Northern Sinfonia (RNS) at the Summerhill Bowling Club. We were so happy they chose this location as it meant that several of our families were able to attend. To see more about this performance, view this short video [here](#).



'Throughout lockdown it's been extremely hard for me and the boys, separated for 12 weeks because of my job, I decided I could protect them best by sending them away. Today was the first day we've been able to relax and enjoy a nice time together without me feeling mentally drained. The music was so beautiful and meaningful, thank you.'

- Parent

'My daughter could relate to RNS going on tour [when speaking to an RNS member] as she's been to Leeds, Liverpool and performed all across the city!'

- Parent

Prior to the performance, a few of the children who had taken part in the Summer School received a phone call from an RNS player. This was an exciting opportunity for them to talk about their shared experience of being in an orchestra and what they missed most over lockdown. Parents said that children had spoken confidently on the phone and were excited to reconnect with the musicians.

In Harmony Returns to Schools

During lockdown, around 50% of children in the programme took their instruments home and played alongside their families. We heard so many lovely stories of siblings helping each other with their music.



'Steven had his clarinet at home over lockdown and played it often. His older sister gave him lessons as she also had her instrument.'

- Parent

At the end of September, we were delighted to return to both Hawthorn and Bridgewater schools to resume In Harmony.

Due to the impacts of COVID-19 on Sage Gateshead, a re-structure took place which means that we now have a smaller team and those that aren't here will be greatly missed. Their work and brilliant contribution to the programme will 'play on' through the young people as they progress.

Returning Tutors said that the children had remembered a huge amount, and thoroughly enjoyed being back with their groups. Tutors and children were so pleased to reconnect and begin playing again.



'It was a reuniting of friends and a bonding of spirit. I did not visit a session that was not filled with smiles from children and Tutors alike'

- James Craig, Principal Study Leader, RNS.

Student Blog

Meet Alicia. She's our first student to write this new feature!

Alicia is in Year 7 and has continued her cello lessons at her new Secondary school – she also plays flute in Sage Gateshead's Step Up Programme.



'Hi, I'm Alicia and I play the cello and the flute. Leaving Year 6 at Hawthorn was hard because you have to say goodbye to people who have been with you for years - it was really tough. I loved being part of Summer school because I got to play music, see my friends and old music teachers. Going to high school was scary but everyone was nice. I got 5 new friends on the first day!'

'My first music lesson at LHS (Longbenton High School) was amazing. We practised basic things from when I was in Hawthorn, starting with the scales.'

'I started doing West Newcastle Symphony Orchestra in Year 6 and it made me push harder in music, it helps me so much. I'm so happy I went to Hawthorn.'

West Newcastle Symphony Orchestra

West Newcastle Symphony Orchestra were able to meet in person for just three weeks before the second national lockdown was announced. We took the opportunity to move WNSO online temporarily, joining Sage Gateshead's Young Musicians Programme (YMP) digital education platform. The children were quick to respond, and we now have fourteen children logging on for weekly lessons, musicianship and practice competitions!

We are proud of how quickly the children (and staff!) have adapted to the changes. We hope it won't be too long before we return to playing together in person, but we are pleased that the children are able to access weekly online activities. The Tutors have worked really hard to create the online resources and lessons which are extremely informative and enjoyable.

Upcoming Concerts

While live performances are paused, we have come up with new ways to share the children's achievements. The children will be sharing what they have learnt in their 'bubbles' - this will be recorded and shared on each of the schools' websites. We will make sure that you receive the link to these performances which will take place in the week before schools' break up. Hopefully you will get an insight into how well the children are doing within the new environments. Our string and boom whacker orchestra are certainly excited to show you what they can do!

About In Harmony

In Harmony is a national initiative that aims to inspire and transform the lives of children through community-based orchestral music-making.

Established by Government and now funded by Arts Council England and the Department for Education in conjunction with individual donors, trusts and foundations.

This immersive orchestral music making programme improves the life chances of children and young people in the West End of Newcastle, by increasing confidence, wellbeing, resilience and educational attainment.

'He loves his cello! It's his favourite part of school.'

– Year 1 Parent, Bridgewater School

From their very first day in Year 1, children at Hawthorn Primary School and Bridgewater School in Newcastle's West End begin learning an instrument – and the benefits extend far beyond the classroom into the wider community.

'For those who are not confident during school lessons, they shine during music and it has helped them in group situations.' – Teacher

The music-making skills, confidence, self-esteem, health, wellbeing and resilience of the children improve through the power and disciplines of ensemble musicmaking and music being part of daily life. In Harmony helps to build a sense of community and supports parental engagement with the schools - some have been so motivated by their children's development that they are now learning instruments alongside their children.

"In Harmony improves self-esteem, confidence, life chances and future health. I see the effect on children when I see them at my work – pride, confidence, self-worth and I see the effect on parents when I see them too"

– Dr Guy Pilkington, Local GP