

FIRST ACCESS CASE STUDY: Using ocarinas for a whole school, teacher-led approach



Wiltshire's Music
Education Hub

"As a school we're very much about celebrating learning and achievements: the ocarinas have contributed to that. They've given children confidence, made them realise they can make music, they can achieve – even the younger students in reception and year 1. I have twins in our reception class, so I know very well that it's possible!"
Ian Rockey, headteacher.

How did it come about?

Westwood with Iford is a small village primary school in West Wiltshire. None of the teachers are musicians, although many are enthusiastic about music. Headteacher Ian Rockey was keen to try the Ocarinas programme not only as a way of improving how music was taught in the curriculum, but also as another way to enrich the community and culture of learning:

"We saw it as a chance for all of us teachers to learn with the children. We were starting from the point of being 'non-music' staff," says Ian. "So I set us a challenge: that we'd work from the ground up and see how good we could become, together,"

For all hubs, one of the largest and most important areas of work is, as the National Plan puts it in Core Role 1, to "Ensure that every child aged 5-18 has the opportunity to learn a musical instrument, other than voice, through whole class ensemble teaching programmes for ideally a year, but a minimum of a term."

Up until 2015, the model for these 'First Access' or 'Whole Class Ensemble Teaching (WCET)' programmes in Wiltshire was relatively traditional: schools would be offered programmes delivered by music tutors employed by the music service. This was a costly model which was failing to grow its reach into schools. And although schools might take up the offer, they would generally play a quite passive role: 'receiving' a service that was delivered by the music service, as had been the case for decades.



What is different?

First Access in a Box – Ocarinas, provides everything a school needs to teach whole classes of pupils to learn an instrument, and is suitable for teachers who have no musical experience.

Westford with Iford has taken the idea one step further. Rather than simply allocating First Access to one class, Ian decided that *all* pupils and staff should have the opportunity to take part. The school funded an extra 45 ocarinas, and gave one to each staff member and student to take home.

How did it work?

One of Wiltshire Music Connect's cluster coordinators, Jenny Knight, who's also an ocarina specialist, led two assemblies at the school, and the staff then took their ocarinas home, teaching themselves using the books provided with the instruments. "she engaged the children beautifully, teaching them (and us) how to hold the ocarina and to play individual notes," remembers Ian. "We then moved on to beginning to learn a song which set us on our journey!" Training is now being scheduled for summer term, but Ian says: "I wanted staff to have a go first, before they had any training – then the training could support any difficulties they were having rather than starting them from scratch."

Ian was the first to start introducing the ocarina into lessons, during those he covers for PPA (planning, preparation and assessment) time. Gradually other teachers started introducing ocarina time into their lessons, and the school

First Access programme:	First Access in a box - ocarinas
Start date/timescale:	Summer term 2017/ one year and one term
Name of school:	Westwood with Iford
Number of pupils on roll:	105
Number of staff:	6 teachers, 7 teaching assistants

Previous First Access:	Violin (year 3)
Continuation* rate:	Est 35% go on to have lessons
Other music activities:	Peripatetic violin, guitar, piano (previously cello, clarinet) from year 4, singing

Number & age of pupils receiving this programme: 105/all ages

Number having first experience of learning an instrument 50%

Projected continuation rate: 100%

Resources provided: 60 ocarinas, two sets of class books, DVD Rom

Cost: £100 for 60 ocarinas

* continuation is the percentage of young people taking lessons following a First Access programme

day often finishes with a 15-20-minute session, sometimes with classes linking up to learn together. As a school they are about to start having an ocarina assembly every week, recording the performances and putting them on the school blog.

Children are allowed to take the ocarinas home, and are expected to bring them to school every day.

What are the benefits and what impact has it had? Views from the head:

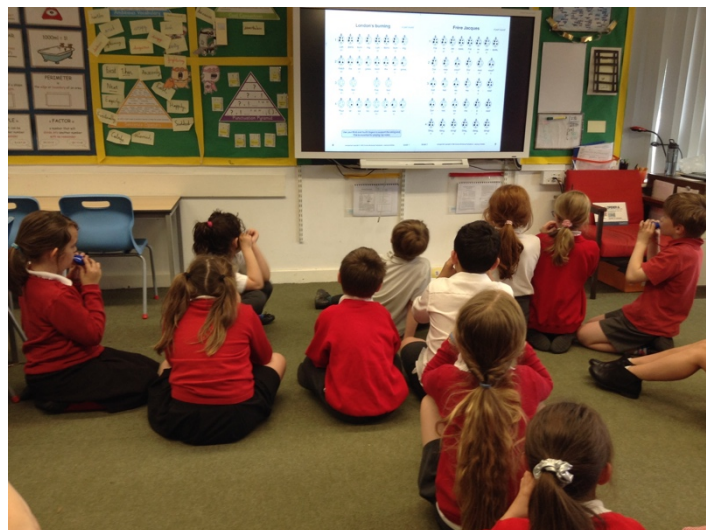
Continuation rate: "I think with Ocarina, because they have their own, it will increase the numbers going on to have private music lessons. We want to carry on using ocarina at all ages, for it to become an embedded part of our week."

Whole school learning culture: "It's about that community approach to learning and enjoying music. Learning it together and supporting each other is really important."

Concentration, perseverance: "It encourages them to focus, to concentrate and to persevere. Perseverance and resilience are important to our school."

Confidence: "It really brings on their confidence, to be able to master an instrument, and play in front of someone else. Even for us as teachers! We're going to take a group of children to play in a concert with another school who also learn ocarina."

Intrinsic motivation: "Every child has absolutely loved them. On the first day, I heard the children leaving the school playing their ocarinas as they left. The older children have gone home and looked on YouTube for contemporary songs which they've now started to learn independently. Children often come up to me and excitedly say, 'I learned how to play this last night'."



Cost effectiveness and sustainability: "It's very cost effective and sustainable for us. It doesn't put a big ask on us in terms of time, and if we need to, we know we can ask for help from Wiltshire Music Connect. If we need to give the ocarinas back, we will definitely buy replacements."

Staff development: "Even at our age there is a sense of achievement, in learning an instrument, playing a song from beginning to end without making mistakes: and it shows the children that it is possible. We're very much about learning with the children, we don't hide it when we make mistakes."

Support: We can access Jenny, who is a qualified classroom teacher. She can come and do a staff meeting, link us up with people in other schools. It fits how education works now, less about people coming in to deliver, more about going to a session with other teachers and learning together."

Community links: "Next year we hope to undertake a local oral history project with the village, and we hope we can involve local musicians with the school, as well as children going out to play in the community."

Ian sums up: "As a school we're very much about celebrating learning and achievements: the ocarinas have contributed to that," says Ian. "They've given children confidence, made them realise they can make music, they can achieve – even the younger students in reception and year 1. I have twins in our reception class, so I know very well that it's possible!"

"I enjoyed playing the ocarina because I have never played the ocarina before. London's Burning is great fun you will like it soooooooooooooo much that it will be your next talent you might even win the Britan Scot talent [sic]. Whattttttttttttttttttttttttt yep it that amazing." Pupil.

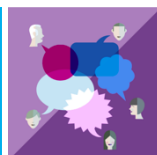
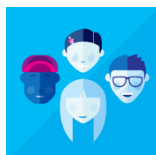
17 tips for embedding First Access music into your school – lessons learned from Westford with Iford

Ian Rockey, headteacher of Westford with Iford Primary School in Wiltshire, gives his top tips for embedding First Access in your school from scratch – based on his experience of non-specialist staff teaching ocarinas.

- 1 Be enthusiastic when presenting to staff and get everyone on board
- 2 The lead teacher should attend a training course and learn from an expert
- 3 Set meeting time aside for staff to play and experiment with instruments and have fun
- 4 Discuss and agree a manageable amount of time that everyone can deliver regularly
- 5 Engage the children with an introductory assembly from an expert to heighten enthusiasm
- 6 Learn together with the children in short, regular sessions
- 7 Start every session by reinforcing correct technique for playing the instrument
- 8 Use flashcards to teach individual notes
- 9 Play rhythm games to consolidate skills already learnt
- 10 Ensure that everyone in the school has their own instrument and they are in school every day



- 11 Hold a music assembly every week where children bring their instrument and use the provided software to play along to songs together
- 12 Experiment and practice playing songs in the round
- 13 Send songs home for the children to learn - they love it!
- 14 Encourage staff to use spare moments in the day to bring out the instruments for a play
- 15 Don't be afraid to make mistakes with the children when playing - it gives them confidence to try
- 16 Celebrate every achievement and encourage children to play in front of their peers
- 17 Enjoy, enjoy, enjoy and have fun with music



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