



Why Music Should Be Your Next Ofsted Deep Dive

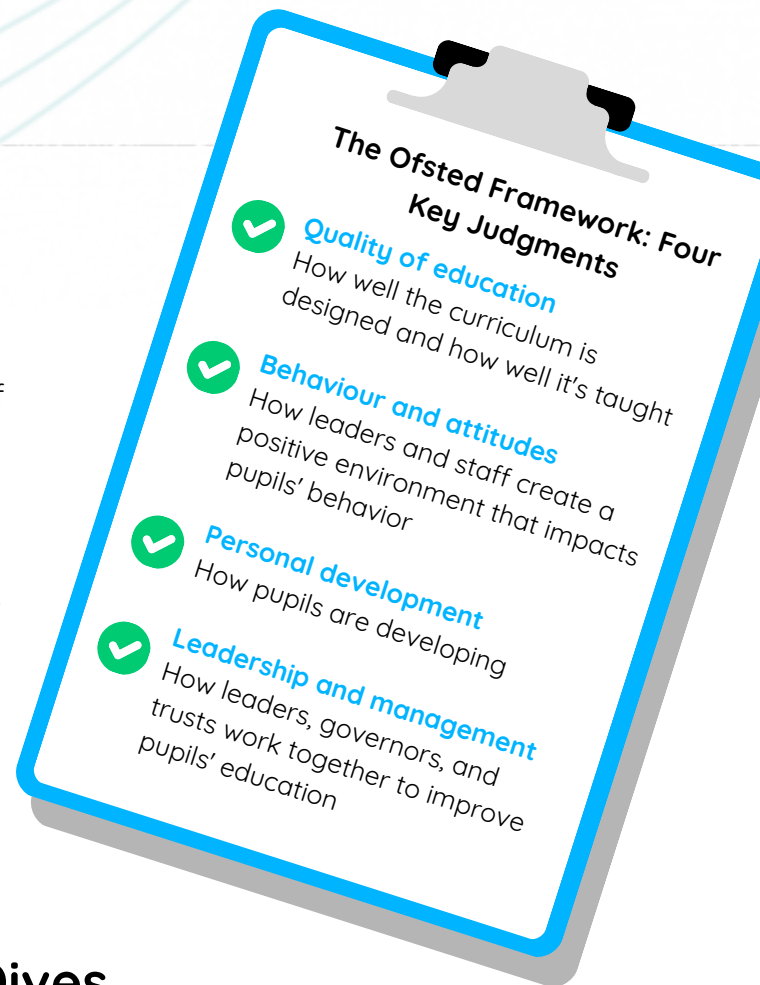
With Ofsted inspections still behind from Covid, lots of schools are expecting their next inspection any day. How will you stand out and why should you choose music as a deep dive subject?

We analysed over 7000 ofsted reports from the last 3 years to help us understand better how Ofsted choose subjects to deep dive, and what impact this may have on Ofsted results. Read on to find out more...

Understanding the Ofsted Framework

Ofsted evaluates schools based on four key judgments: Quality of Education, Behaviour and Attitudes, Personal Development, and Leadership and Management. Each of these areas plays a crucial role in shaping the overall effectiveness of a school.

A well-designed curriculum, positive school culture, and strong leadership all contribute to better pupil outcomes. Music education can support each of these areas by enriching learning experiences, fostering a sense of community, and providing opportunities for personal growth. The following sections explore how music aligns with Ofsted's expectations across these four key judgments.



Understanding Ofsted Deep Dives

We analysed over 7000 ofsted reports from the last 3 years to help us understand better how Ofsted choose subjects to deep dive, and what impact this may have on Ofsted results.

Our research showed that there are 3 clear tiers of subjects. Whilst Ofsted don't publish how they choose deep dives, our research showed that schools can typically expect 4-5 deep dives during an inspection. These usually include two Tier 1 Deep Dives, one or two Tier 2 Deep Dives, and zero or one Tier 3 Deep Dive.

- 1 Tier 1:** Mathematics, Early Reading/Phonics, English/Reading/Writing
- 2 Tier 2:** History/Humanities, Geography, Art, Science, P.E.
- 3 Tier 3:** Music, Computer Science, Design & Technology, R.E., Languages, P.S.H.E

While music is often categorised as a Tier 3 subject, its impact on a school's overall performance should not be underestimated. Our report shows that when compared with similar schools, Sing Education client school performed significantly better with a 14% increase in Outstanding ratings, and a 7% decrease in RI ratings.

Quality of Education

A well-structured and effectively taught curriculum is essential for achieving a high-quality education. Music, when integrated properly, supports this by ensuring:

- A broad and balanced curriculum that builds progressively on pupils' knowledge.
- Clear sequencing of learning objectives, ensuring pupils retain and recall important information.



	Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1	Summer 2
EYF5 Focus Areas	Hooping and Chopping	Repeating Patterns, Actions and Rhythms	Pitch-Matching	Rhythms, Songs and Stories	Playing and Responding	Singing, Listening and Playing Together
Nursery	How to the Music: Hooping and Chopping	Follow the Leader: Copy the	Singing Skills 1: For your voice	Telling Stories Through Music	Feeling the Music	Exploring Musical Sounds
Reception	How to the Music: Hooping and Chopping	Follow the Leader: Copy the	Singing Skills 2: Top with the	Rhythms, Songs and Stories: Old and New	Noticing Patterns and Describing the Music	Exploring Musical Worlds
K1 Focus Areas	Pulse	Rhythm	Pitch	Composing	Music-making: Preparing for Performance Skills	Music-making: Preparing for Performance Skills
Year 1	Exploring Pulse and Tempo 1: Fast the Beat	Exploring Rhythm 1: Playing and Copying	Exploring Pitch 1: High and Low	Creating Music 1: Sound Effects and Storytelling	Singing and Playing Skills 1: Echo the Leader	Understanding Rhythm and Pitch (Perception)
Year 2	Exploring Pulse and Tempo 2: Fast the Beat	Exploring Rhythm 2: Copy the Beat	Exploring Pitch 2: Set the Beat	Creating Music 2: Sound Effects and Storytelling	Singing and Playing Skills 2: Echo the Leader	Playing Rhythm and Pitch (Performance)
K2 Focus Areas	Performing: Reading Rhythm	Performing: Reading Rhythm	Performing: Instrumental Performance	Composing and Improvising	Creating and Performing	Music-making: Singing and Listening
Year 3	Reading Notation 1: Rhythm and Tempo	Exploring Staff Notation 1: High and Low (Clockwork)	Exploring Skills 1: Call a Response (Clockwork Off-Beat)	Composing Skills 1: Play, Rhythm and Storytelling	Exploring Musical Theatre: Rhythms and Tempo	Becoming Musicians 1: Singing and Playing
Year 4	Reading Notation 2: 2, 3 and 4 Time	Exploring Staff Notation 2: Copy the Beat (Clockwork)	Exploring Skills 2: Making and Answering (Clockwork Off-Beat)	Composing Skills 2: Instruments and Rhythms	Exploring Musical Theatre: Lyrics and Stories	Becoming Musicians 2: Rhythm and Tempo
Year 5	Reading Notation 3: Reading Rhythm	Exploring Staff Notation 3: Copy the Beat (Clockwork)	Exploring Skills 3: Making and Answering (Clockwork Off-Beat)	Creating Music for Storytelling	Exploring Musical Theatre: Lyrics and Stories	Becoming Musicians 3: Rhythm and Tempo

Alderbrook Primary School was noted for its “ambitious, broad, and engaging curriculum,” allowing pupils to build knowledge progressively.

In the Sing Education music curriculum, pupils start by identifying the pulse in different musical styles before advancing to rhythm, tempo, and musical notation. In a similar way, younger pupils can focus on replicating rhythms, then apply this understanding to performing and reading musical notation.

Music seems to be the most revealing subject for a Deep Dive and reflective of the school as a whole.

Our research shows when music was the Deep Dive subject, it uniquely resulted in an **increase in Outstanding QoE ratings, but also an increase in RI or Inadequate ratings**

At **St Robert Southwell** “Younger pupils focus on replicating rhythms. As they progress, they apply this foundational understanding to perform, read musical notes notation and understand pitch.”

Behaviour and Attitudes

A positive learning environment is crucial for supporting pupils' behaviour and engagement. Music plays a vital role in fostering a sense of belonging and cooperation within schools. Music lessons provide structured opportunities for collaboration, discipline, and focus, contributing to improved classroom behavior and overall school culture.

Sing Education offer 360° provision, meaning music becomes part of the fabric of the school with singing assemblies, after school clubs, instrumental lessons and regular performances.

Music is often noted for its positive impact on wellbeing and cultivating a sense of community.

At **Morningside Primary School** “Leaders value the ‘voice’ of all pupils. Weekly singing assemblies promote ‘togetherness’. Pupils sing in unison with musicality, control and expression.”

Personal Development

Music education enhances pupils' personal development by building self-confidence, communication skills, and emotional well-being. Through structured music programs, pupils develop resilience, teamwork, and self-discipline—key attributes that support wider academic success and future learning.

At **Springfield Primary School**

"Pupils are exposed to a wide range of musical styles and traditions. They learn how to appreciate and respond to musical styles"

The **St John Fisher Catholic Primary School** report said "Pupils are taught important subject vocabulary, as well as how to respond when answering questions and talking with each other. As a result, pupils communicate effectively and with maturity."

We compared the ratings of client schools with other similar schools. We used a propensity score matching technique to select a group of comparable schools that had very similar demographic data, based on pupil roll, FSM percentage and EAL percentage.

When compared with similar schools, **Sing Education client school performed significantly better with a 14% increase in Outstanding ratings, and a 7% decrease in RI ratings.**

	Sing Ed Schools	Similar Schools	Difference
Outstanding	25.00%	10.98%	↑ 14.02%
Good	72.50%	78.36%	↓ -5.86%
Requires Improvement	2.50%	9.47%	↑ -6.97%
Inadequate	0.00%	1.18%	↑ -1.18%

Leadership and Management

Strong leadership and strategic curriculum planning are essential for sustaining high-quality education. Schools with a well-integrated music curriculum benefit from improved outcomes and stronger overall performance.

Sing Education supports leadership teams by offering:

- A 360° wraparound provision that includes curriculum design and teacher training.
- A well-planned, cohesive, and progressive music curriculum aligned with Ofsted expectations and all the information you need to talk confidently about it.
- Over 70 hours of annual training and supervision for our specialist music teachers, ensuring high-quality instruction.
- Proven impact, with a 14% increase in Outstanding ratings and a 7% decrease in Required Improvement ratings among client schools.

Abingdon Primary School

"Leaders have revised the curriculum to reflect the diverse range of cultures within the school."





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