Newsletter

Issue 28: Spring Term 2026

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Welcome!

Although this has been a relatively short term, there has been so much going on since January! I always enjoy this term, where I spend a lot of time driving between the first schools to help to deliver the workshops for the Singing Schools Festival in March. As I drive through the villlages, I get to clearly see the change in the seasons as we move from cold (and wet!) January to bright and sunny March (although perhaps colder this week than we were hoping for!). We've had an eclectic range of musical performances this term from rock to folk, from classical to musical theatre. It's been great to see many students across all ages getting involved! As I write this, I'm also busy making plans for our annual Arts Fest in May, which I hope lots of you will come along to support - the more the merrier!
I wish you all a restful break (and let's hope the warmer weather returns!)
Hanna Trevorrow
Head of Wessex Schools Music

Family ceilidh in January, with the TH Folk Band.

Christmas Concerts

On 3rd December, students from all the Wessex Music ensembles came together to perform at the Christmas Concerts.
We had performances by Stringalings, Bandemonium, Dorchester Children's Orchestra and Nightingales choir, as well as many of the Thomas Hardye School ensembles.

A special mention must go to our TOPs orchestra that night. This was put together for the event and consisted of 25 children from across the middle schools who had only just started learning their instruments in October. They performed as a group and then got to be inspired by the Thomas Hardye Concert Band performing a medley of film music including extracts from A Nightmare Before Christmas.
It was a wonderful evening celebrating the range and breadth of musical talent that we have in our schools.

Joe Stilgoe Workshop

In January, students from the Thomas Hardye School Jazz Band were lucky enough to be visited by renowned jazz pianist, Joe Stilgoe, for a workshop on arranging and improvising. During their two hour session, they created their own version of two standard jazz pieces and also got to witness Joe's impressive improvisation skills.
Later that evening, several students watched Joe perform at his evening gig with singer, Liza Pullman, at Dorchester Arts.
We extend a huge thanks to Joe for kindly giving up his time so generously.

TH Rock and Pop Night

After a delay due to the flooding in January, Thomas Hardye hosted their annual Rock and Pop night in February. Many rock bands took part, including students from all years and it was a fantastic evening for all!
We hope to see more Rock bands (including bands from the middle schools), performing at our upcoming Arts Fest in May!

National Children's Orchestra Workshop Day

On 7th March, around 45 children took part in a special orchestral workshop day with the National Children's Orchestra, hosted by Wessex Schools Music. Most of the children came from our first and middle schools, although there were also children from the wider area. The children performed two pieces as an orchestra - Under the Sea and an extremely catchy Mambo. They then worked in small groups to create a composition to an ocean documentary. Both of these performances were shared with parents at the end of the day.
The workshop facilitators were wonderful and we are so grateful to NCO for bringing this exciting opportunity to our area. We are hopeful that it will become an annual event!

Mia has Rotary success!

Huge congratulations to Year 13 student, Mia, who came a very admirable 2nd place in the South West and Wales final of the Rotary Young Musician Competition in Bristol last week. Mia was put forward to represent our area after our Young Musician Festival that we held in November. She then participated at a regional final in February, before the South West final in this week. The competition was of a very high level, with other competitors taking part who were music scholars at some of the top independent schools. Well done Mia - we are very pround of you!

TH Orchestra and Dorset Chamber Orchestra

On 14th March, 30 students from the Thomas Hardye Orchestra joined the Dorset Chamber Orchestra for a performance of Pictures at an Exhibition by Mussorgsky. The concert included narration that was narrated by actor Martin Clunes and the students got to meet Martin at the end of the rehearsal.
In addition to this piece, Mia W and Freya M performed a brilliant virtuoso clarinet duet with accompaniment by the orchestra.
The concert was attended by families from across the area and it was particularly lovely to see some of our stringalings and Bandemonium students watching.

Singing Schools Festival

On 16th, 17th and 18th March, all year 4s (and some year 3s) in the local schools took part in the annual Singing Schools Festival. The children prepared songs in their own schools and then came together on the day to sing in harmony as a large group. This year's theme was 'Songs from Stage and Screen' and included 'When I grow up' from Matilda the musical, 'Can you Feel the Love tonight' from The Lion King and 'The Explorer and the Bear' from Paddington the musical. In addition to performing, the children also experienced watching a performance by the Thomas Hardye Rock and Pop Choir when they visited the school for their morning rehearsal.
Well done to all who took part!

Music under Helios

On Friday 27th and Saturday 28th March, students from Thomas Hardye and the middle schools are going to be taking part in various performances under Luke Jerram's art installation called 'Helios' which is coming to Dorchester Arts this Easter.
On Friday, Thomas Hardye Singers and the TH cello ensemble will perform for the opening launch evening. In addition, Freya M will perform a solo piano composition which she has composed especially for the event.
On Saturday, students from Dorchester Children's Orchestra will join local community orchestra, Dorchestra, to perform a number of sun-inspired pieces, including 'Here comes the sun' by The Beatles. If you are around Dorchester over Easter, do go and visit Helios!

Ensembles

In addition to the many ensembles that are available across our schools, we also run four cross-school ensembles. New members are always welcome, so do consider joining one in April!

<u>Wednesdays @ Thomas Hardye School</u>
4pm - 4:50pm **Stringalings** (beginner strings) and **Bandemonium** (beginner wind & brass)
5pm - 5:50pm **Dorchester Children's Orchestra** (grade 2+)

<u>Fridays @ Thomas Hardye School</u>
4pm - 4:50pm **Nightingales Middle Schools Choir**

Tickets for Spring Concert from:
<u>https://www.trybooking.com/uk/events/landing/107451</u>

Wessex Arts Fest 2026

Our annual Arts Fest is a whole day celebrating music, drama and dance. Young People from across our schools come together to perform and take part in various music, drama and dance activities. The day is FREE and open to all - everyone is welcome to come along to watch and take part. We have workshops (samba drumming, singing, dance) which anyone can join in with (children and adults), we have an outside band area for our young bands and solo singers, we have large group performances which you can freely wander in and out of, we have drama shows to watch and lots of other things to do including a BBQ and other refreshments. The day runs from 10am - 3pm and you can drop-in for a short time or stay for the whole day.

We also have a 'Come and Try' area set up where children can come and have a go on a variety of instruments, to see whether they might like to learn an instrument in the future.

Visit our site to see full details and how to sign-up to be involved: <u>https://music.wessex.ac/wessex-arts-fest-2026.html</u>

We'd love to see you there!