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Hire, Train, Retain - Building a Best-In Class Primary Music Team

Based on our 10-years' experience at the frontlines of music education, our attached guidance on staffing a first-rate music delivery team includes advice on:

- Knowing Your Ideal Profile for Music Specialists/Coordinators
- Sourcing Well-Trained, Classroom-Ready Candidates
- Making the Most of Modern Interviewing Techniques
- Developing and Retaining the Best Talent



Knowing Your Ideal Profile for Music Specialists/Coordinators

After guidance from the NPME that, "A primary school's music curriculum should be developed and ideally delivered by a music specialist wherever possible" schools have struggled to recruit appropriate teachers to deliver music lessons to primary schools.

Of course, each school is different so we work closely with schools to gain insights on what they want music provision to look like and what's important for them. So how can you be sure you are recruiting the right music specialist for your school? After 10 years sourcing and training music teachers for primary schools, we have put together our ideal music specialist profile to guide you in what to look for.

Tip: your music development plan will be key in knowing your ideal profile for music specialists and knowing your school budget for music will also allow you to be realistic in what you want to achieve.

Music Budgeting

MDP template



Our Ideal Music Specialist Profile:

- ✔ **Passion for Music and Teaching**
 They exude a deep passion for music and teaching, effortlessly sharing personal experiences and journeys in music that inspire others. They eloquently articulate how their love for music has shaped their teaching philosophy.
- ✔ **Adaptability and Versatility**
 This individual demonstrates remarkable adaptability in musical skills and teaching methods. They have shared fascinating experiences in various musical settings, always displaying a willingness to adapt to different teaching environments and pupil needs.
- ✔ **Engagement and Creativity in Teaching**
 Their teaching style is captivating, emphasizing creative engagement with pupils and employing innovative methods for interactive lessons, such as props, games, and technology.
- ✔ **Classroom Management Skills**
 When it comes to classroom management, they excel. They discuss effective strategies with ease and can handle large groups or challenging behaviors with grace.
- ✔ **Commitment to Professional Development**
 They express eagerness for ongoing training and development, demonstrating a genuine commitment to continually improving their teaching skills.
- ✔ **Alignment with Sing Education's Values and Teaching Approach**
 Their teaching philosophy aligns seamlessly with Sing Education's values of collective music making and child-centered learning, understanding deeply the transformative power of music education.
- ✔ **Flexibility in Scheduling and Commitment**
 Moreover, they are open to discussing availability and show remarkable flexibility in accommodating Sing Education's scheduling needs.
- ✔ **Reflective and Responsive Approach**
 Reflective and responsive, this teacher consistently learns from past experiences and feedback, applying lessons learned in teaching effectively.
- ✔ **Strong Interpersonal Skills**
 Their strong interpersonal skills are evident in every interaction. They communicate effectively, articulating experiences and ideas clearly, and respond well to hypothetical scenarios.
- ✔ **Enthusiasm for Collaborative Work**
 They are enthusiastic about collaborative work, eagerly contributing to the educator community and embedding themselves in the school culture.



Sourcing Well-Trained, Classroom-Ready Candidates

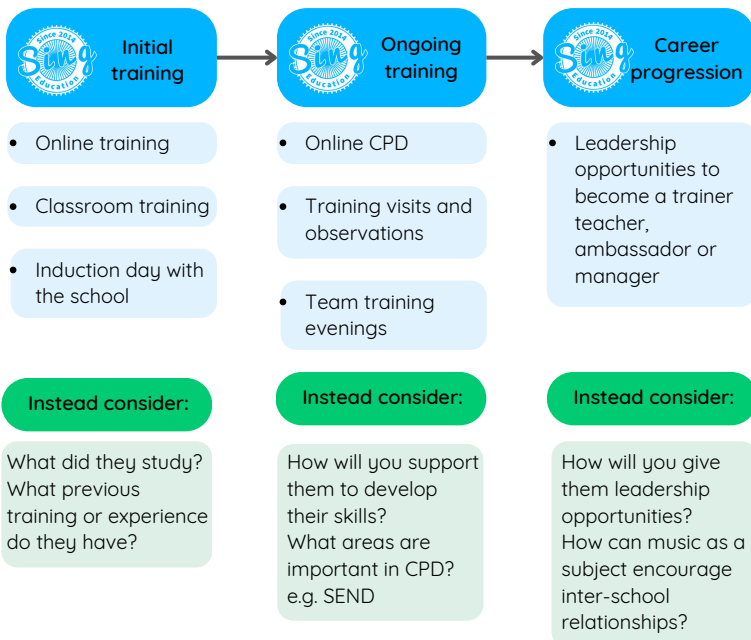
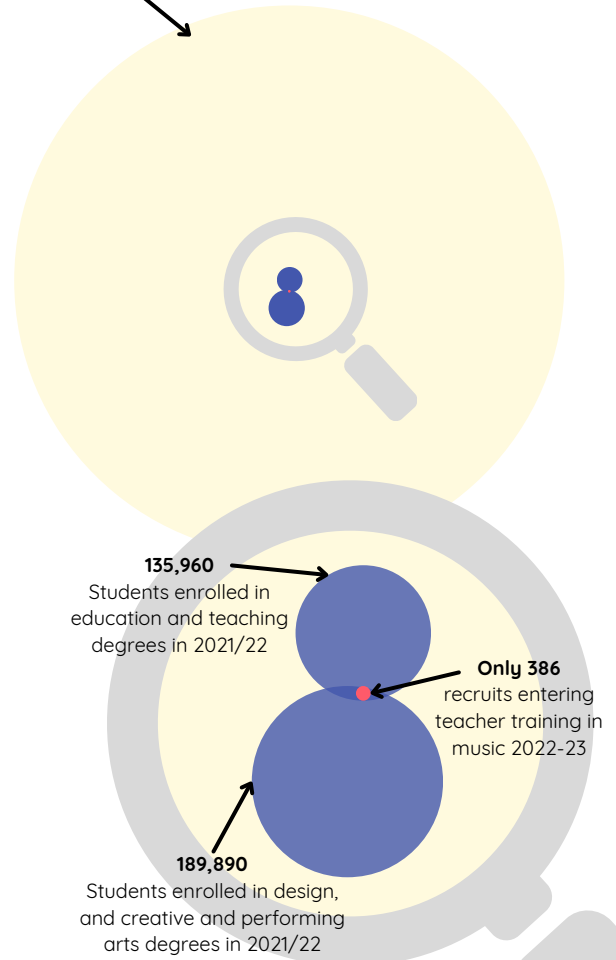
Staff budgets are in place, governors are on side, and your hiring needs are well-documented. You've worked with your senior leadership team to develop a strategic hiring plan and you're looking to the talent market!

With only 0.01% of those with degrees pursuing music teaching as a career, how can you find the perfect candidate?

Here are our tips:

- Where are you looking?**
 - Advertise in niche and music specialist music areas
- What is the role?**
 - Have a defined job title. Are you looking for a music specialist, music lead, or both?
 - Have a clear job description including the essential requirements and all aspects of the job such as: lesson planning, curriculum development, whole class instrumental lessons, performances, choirs
- Why should someone apply?**
 - Why competitive pay is so important for both new and experienced teachers alike
 - Why wellbeing incentives and flexible working add to teacher satisfaction

2,862,620
Students enrolled in degree courses in the UK in 2021/22



Of course the other factor to consider is training. How was your teacher trained and how will they continue to train and develop their skills?

At Sing Education, training is a significant portion of what we do. We have a comprehensive pre-placement training programme as well as regular staff training and CPD. We also partner with the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire to deliver specialist training for their Kodaly course.

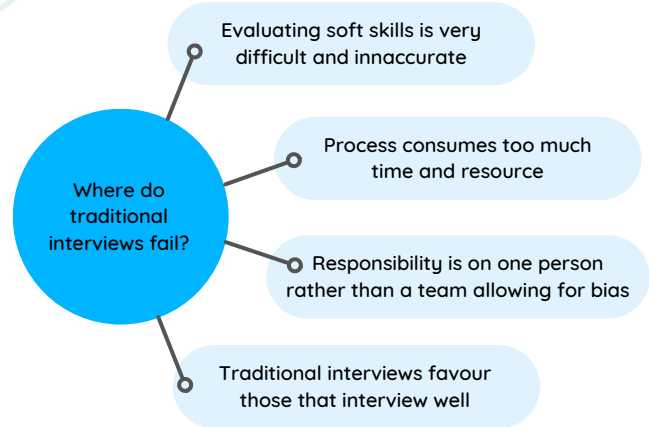
Most schools do not have extensive training resources or time so you may want to consider these factors when looking for your new hire.,



Making the Most of Modern Interviewing Techniques

The high quality applications are streaming in and everything is in place to ensure you only hire the best and that they continue to develop their skills over time. Now how do you select the cream of the crop, without wasting time or resources. Here is our approach to interviewing candidates.

We have a multi-stage interview that allows us to get a really accurate picture of each candidate



Phone call

Meeting in a casual setting, such as a phone call, enables candidates to showcase their genuine selves without the pressure often associated with formal interviews. This authenticity provides interviewers with a clearer understanding of the candidate's personality which can be valuable in assessing cultural fit within the organization. The initial phone call interview facilitates a swift evaluation of whether the candidate aligns with the requirements and expectations of the job role. Key questions include do they live a commutable distance? Do they have availability to start when you need them? Have they had any relevant experience?



Assignment



This is a great way to see their musical capabilities in action. While academic qualifications such as degrees or certifications can provide some insight into a candidate's musical knowledge and training, they might not fully reflect their practical abilities. Musical proficiency is often honed through hands-on experience, practice, and performance, which may not be entirely captured by formal education alone. You could ask them to teach a musical concept or technique, perform a piece or excerpt, or engage in a musical activity relevant to the position.

Online interview

Interviewers must carefully craft questions that address key aspects of the candidate's background, expertise, and suitability for the role. Open-ended questions encourage candidates to provide detailed responses, offering insights beyond mere yes or no answers. Probing further with prompts like "Can you expand on that?" or "Tell me more." encourages candidates to elaborate on their experiences, skills, and perspectives. This approach helps interviewers gain a deeper understanding of the candidate's capabilities, experiences, and soft skills such as communication, problem-solving, and adaptability.



Classroom interview



The classroom interview is a bit like a job audition allowing interviewers to see their teaching styles, pedagogies and management skills. It offers candidates a platform to exhibit their teaching skills firsthand. It allows them to engage with students, deliver lessons, and manage classroom dynamics. Simultaneously, it provides candidates with a genuine understanding of the job environment, helping them assess whether the teaching position aligns with their career goals and teaching philosophy.



Developing and Retaining the Best Talent

Why do good teachers leave?

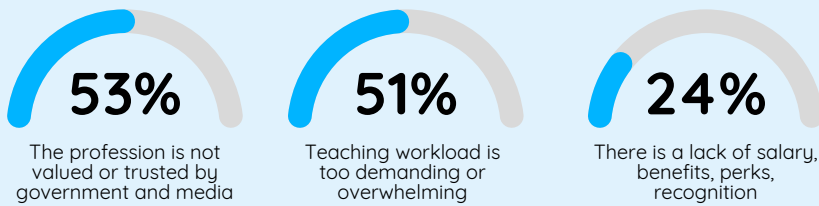
With 35% of teachers say they will definitely no longer work in education in five years' time, teacher retention is a huge problem in the UK. According to March 2021 National Education Union survey results, "Respondents indicated a strong view that professional autonomy, student focus through smaller classes, and more staff in order to administer them, is a route to resolving the historic workload challenge." But it is also clear that wellbeing and competitive pay (against the career alternatives potential hires may be exploring outside the classroom) are significant reasons teachers leave.



35% of teachers say they will definitely no longer work in education in five years' time.

"Teachers should not have to choose between their career and having a life, according to a maths teacher and author who quit the classroom "exhausted, stressed, frustrated and absolutely furious"
- Schools Week

Above all else, check in with staff. Whatever your position, ask people how they are and try really hard to listen to their response. This goes for all staff: maintenance, catering, support, teaching and even leaders."
- TES



How can we encourage teachers to stay?

Sing Education know the value of ongoing training and development. We understand that as our industry modernises and transforms, classroom music professionals require continuous learning to stay at the forefront.

- 1 **Celebrate and encourage music:** By making music part of your school culture and encouraging children to pursue music as a career, you create a rewarding job as a music teacher. You can also develop inter-school relationships using music as a bridge.
- 2 **Encourage other music-focussed jobs:** By providing different career paths and encouraging your teacher to develop their own musical skills, you create a supportive work environment and a place where the music teacher's love of the subject can never die
- 3 **Provide engaging CPD:** Music education covers more than just instrumental skills, and teaching pedagogies are always improving. Ensuring your teacher is fully equipped can help them feel confident to manage any classroom environment.
- 4 **Provide Resources:** Workplace overwhelm is becoming an even more significant factor for people when applying to jobs. Provide access to resources such as Music Mark, Sing Up, Out of the Ark and BBC. Just ensure the lessons have a clear progression and development that can be measured.
- 5 **Appropriate Remuneration:** "I frequently see Music PPA cover jobs advertised at barely above minimum wage, when you would never, ever see a primary class teacher position advertised at such low rates. This kind of budgeting decision does not really show a high level of value being placed on music as a subject." MusicTeacherMagazine



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