

RICHARD SHEPHARD FOUNDATION TO BRING MUSIC TO FIFTH YORKSHIRE SCHOOL



Image 1: Pupils from one of the Foundation's partner schools (more images below)

A charity set up in memory of the late composer and educator, Dr Richard Shephard, is bringing music classes to primary school children across Yorkshire.

The Richard Shephard Music Foundation, which was established following the death of Richard Shephard in February, aims to help more children experience music in classrooms, and at events, across the region.

Since the start of September, the charity has been providing music classes in four schools – Easterside Academy in Middlesbrough, St George's RC Primary School in Scarborough, Gillamoor Church of England Primary School, and Pickering Community Junior School. The Foundation is now set to launch its fifth partnership with Slingsby Community Primary School.

Over the last forty years, music education has declined dramatically in primary schools across the country. A 2019 survey by BPI said that "1 in 5 primary school teachers report there is no regular music lesson for their class". The risk is that a generation of children will grow up with many excluded from the experience of music, and the opportunities for development and educational achievement that music brings.

With schools often lacking the resources or time to develop a truly progressive and challenging music curriculum, the Foundation is aiming to catalyse change. Starting in disadvantaged or isolated communities, the Foundation is subsidising curriculum-based music lessons in primary schools, working with the education partner, [Sing Education](#).

Through the programme, all children participate in both a music lesson and singing assembly at least once a week, plus have the opportunity to take part in a choir or music club. Since the start of September, almost 700 schoolchildren have been taught weekly in music classes across their partner schools.



Alongside school music lessons, the Foundation has partnered with the prestigious Ryedale Festival to offer young people the chance to perform and attend events featuring professional musicians such as the Foundation's patron, pianist Isata Kanneh-Mason.

Commenting on the work, Cathy Grant, General Manager, said:

"Richard Shephard changed the lives of hundreds of children across York and North Yorkshire, and the goal of the Foundation is to extend that legacy and experience to thousands more children across the North."

"Right now, many children in communities across the region are unable to experience a full and progressive music education, through no fault of their own. By subsidising this programme of music teaching, and providing performance opportunities, this can start to change."

St George's RC Primary School in Scarborough was one of the first to sign up in September and Head of School Amanda Stone is already starting to see the impact of the lessons:

"The children absolutely love the music sessions. They are all engaged and enthusiastic. The teachers are excellent at their job, are friendly and have fitted into our school well."

Children from St George's recently demonstrated their musical skills at a showcase event for other school leaders in the area.

"I've been absolutely blown away by the impact that having weekly music lessons has already had on the pupils at St George's," continued the Foundation's manager Cathy Grant. *"Not only do the pupils sing together with greater confidence, their musical knowledge has also vastly improved. Children learn music from around the world, fundamental musicianship skills and play a variety of musical instruments together. As well as being great for children's general knowledge and wellbeing, we hope these building blocks will mean they'll enter secondary school with an increased level of confidence and understanding that will encourage more of them to study for a music qualification or seek out opportunities to further their musical skills."*

Future plans for the Foundation include the development of junior choirs and specialist provision for disabled young people to access adapted instruments.

"None of this would be possible without the generous support of our donors," continued Cathy.

"They make it all possible, and we'll be continuing to seek vital funding throughout the year to allow our activities to continue and expand."

To find out more, or make a donation, please visit www.rsmf.org.uk

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Photographs (see below) and audio – we have several photographs and one piece of audio – please get in touch.

Interviews/comments: Please contact Richard Shephard Music Foundation – 01904 557297/07801 421317 or email info@rsmf.org.uk



Image 2/3: Josh Cadman and Katie Brier from Sing Education leading one of the lessons.





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Image 4: Pupils from one of the Foundation's partner schools



Image 5: The late Dr Richard Shephard



Image 6: General Manager, Cathy Grant



Image 7: General Manager Cathy Grant with Trustee, Theatre Director Phillip Breen