

Auchinleck & Cumnock Concert Bands programme.

Report April 2019

The Auchinleck & Cumnock Concert Bands [ACCB] programme was launched in May 2014.

Although the ACCB programme is still in its relatively early stages, the Bands have made remarkable achievements winning many Awards at the Scottish Concert Band Festival and the Ayrshire Music Festival.

Currently the programme engages over 200 pupils from schools across the Auchinleck and Cumnock Education Groups.

ACCB vision

- To offer as many young people as resource will allow the opportunity to learn to play a musical instrument and take part in weekly band rehearsals.
- To enrich young lives with the vast musical, social and academic benefits of learning an instrument and participating in weekly band rehearsals.
- To impart critical life skills and attributes that enhance employability ensuring that young people will have best life chances.
- To give young people an avenue to embrace lifelong learning – the process of learning a musical instrument and the quest for continuous self-improvement never stops.
- To give young people an increased sense of wellbeing and equilibrium through the cathartic escapism that music and playing music can provide.
- To achieve all of the above in a highly enjoyable, social environment amongst friends.

ACCB Saturday Bands Centre

Unique to the ACCB programme is the Saturday morning Bands Centre run by IMS staff. Due to the number of schools involved and the geographical distances between schools rehearsals cannot take place before or after a school day.

Each Saturday morning of the academic year between 9:00am and 1:00pm over 200 pupils from schools across the Auchinleck and Cumnock Education Groups converge on Cumnock Academy for band rehearsals. The setting remains educational but with a very strong ethos of fun, enjoyment and social cohesion.

There are 6 wind bands:

- ACCB Kick Start Primary Band
- ACCB Novice Concert Band
- ACCB Junior Concert Band
- ACCB Intermediate Concert Band
- ACCB Senior Concert band
- ACCB Senior Wind Ensemble

The primary Kick Start Band engages pupils from across both Auchinleck and Cumnock Education Groups.

There is a unique ethos of peer support on Saturdays with senior pupils volunteering to assist and support young musicians in the primary and junior bands.

Transitional and Social Impact

The programme begins in P4 each year. Meeting as a primary school Wind Band once per week throughout the academic year gives pupils the opportunity to meet and make new friends from other primary schools in the Education Groups.

This fosters inter-primary school friendships that undoubtedly ease the transition into secondary school. Pupils engaged in the programme transition into S1 with a wider social circle than those not engaged.

By bringing pupils from Auchinleck and Cumnock Education Groups together each week through the academic year, the ACCB programme has already begun a process of cohesion and transition in advance of the new Barony Campus opening in 2020.

“Participating in musical groups promotes friendships with like-minded people; self-confidence; social skills; social networking; a sense of belonging; teamwork; self-discipline; a sense of accomplishment; co-operation; responsibility; commitment; mutual support; bonding to meet group goals; increased concentration and provides an outlet for relaxation”. [The Power of Music, Professor Sue Hallam. University of London]

Academic Impact

Research shows that learning to play an instrument and participating in bands/ ensembles has significant impact on pupils learning across the entire curriculum and as such, the ACCB Bands programme has a significant role to play in helping to raise attainment and narrow the attainment gap.

“Playing an instrument can lead to a sense of achievement; an increase in self-esteem; increased confidence; persistence in overcoming frustrations when learning is difficult; self-discipline; and provide a means of self-expression. These may increase motivation for learning in general thus supporting enhanced attainment”. [The Power of Music. Professor Sue Hallam, University of London]

Innovation - Kick Start Initiative

The foundation stone to the ACCB programme is our **Kick Start** initiative.

Kick Start is an immersive and accelerated initiative for absolute beginner musicians.

The conventional approach to teaching beginner pupils is to begin with a lesson once per week. Progress in this fashion can be frustratingly slow for both pupil and teacher.

When beginner pupils only work with their teachers once per week it is very easy to leave the teaching room and forget some of the vital, formative information given to them.

With the very best of intentions it is all too easy to practice hard at home but go about things incorrectly reinforcing incorrect technique that has then to be stripped back and realigned at the next weekly lesson. It is surprisingly easy to get really good at going about things the wrong way.

This two steps forward and three back process is incredibly frustrating for young learners and it is usually at this stage when many aspiring and promising young musicians give up and drop out.

Additionally and very importantly the Kick Start weekend is a wonderful, socially cohesive experience for both pupils and parents. Young people get to meet and make new friends in an environment where they share a mutual interest.

Compared to beginning with weekly lessons pupils can progress through the equivalent of almost two terms worth of work in a single weekend. This experience for our young musicians is exhilarating, inspiring and uplifting.

Conventional logic suggests that in order to progress one has to persevere. In East Ayrshire we have found that the rapid progress made over a single Kick Start weekend is what gives our young musicians the inspiration *to* persevere.

DYW – Employability - Learning, Life and Work - Impact

Through inclusion in the programme pupils learn critical life skills, gain vital attributes and skills for Learning, Life and Work. This aligns with **EAC Community Plan** to ensure ‘children will have better life chances, particularly those in our most deprived communities’. Pupils will learn:

- To work as a team
- To understand their role within the team
- Self-respect
- Peer-respect
- Self-confidence
- Self-discipline
- To problem solve
- To develop resilience
- To persevere
- To appreciate the value and benefits of perseverance
- To be responsible
- To achieve
- Imagination and creativity
- Commitment and loyalty
- To appreciate the efforts of others
- To co-operate and take direction
- Happiness and enjoyment
- Friendship

These skills and attributes will help young people to secure positive destinations when leaving school and be supported into adulthood.

Partnership Working:

ACCB Parents Support Group

At the heart of the ACCB programme is an immensely strong ethos of partnership working. Support from schools, Head Teachers, Principal Teachers of Music and parents is paramount to success and continued opportunity.

The programme is supported by the ACCB Parents Support Group - a group of parent volunteers who support the ACCB IMS staff vision for the bands.

The group provide logistical and financial support to ensure that we can create maximum opportunity for the young people in the programme. In 2017 the Support Group secured a £5k grant from the Nationwide Building Society to purchase additional instruments.

Every Saturday at the Bands Centre parents run a fund-raising tuck shop. With 200 pupils being driven to Cumnock Academy by car there are plans to establish a drop-in coffee morning for parents. This will further strengthen our link with ACCB parents and nurture a social bond between parents and families.

ACCB IMS team.

The ACCB programme is led on a weekly basis by the following Instrumental staff:

Mr Craig Anderson [Programme Co-ordinator]

Mr Andrew McKreel

Ms Fiona Bell

Ms Seonaid MacPherson

Mr Gary Williams

National Recognition - Festivals and Competitions

In order to inspire pupils towards higher goals and to set an ethos for Challenge and Enjoyment, every band in the ACCB programme takes part in various Festivals and Competitions each year.

Within the early stages of programme launch the ACCB has already earned significant recognition across Scotland with pupils achieving top Awards.

For school wind bands there can be no better assessment for achievement and progress than by participating alongside peers from other schools and Authorities at high profile events such as the Scottish Concert Band Festival. Awards for 2018/19 below.

ACCB Awards 2018 - 2019

Scottish Concert Band Festival [SCBF] Regional Festival December 2018

ACCB Junior Wind Band – Silver Plus Award

ACCB Intermediate Wind Band – Gold Award

ACCB Senior Wind Band – Gold Plus Award

Intermediate and Senior Bands both qualified for the National Finals in Perth Concert Hall

SCBF National Finals – Perth Concert Hall March 2019

ACCB Intermediate Wind Band – Gold Plus Award

ACCB Senior Wind Band – Gold Award

