

Music development plan summary: Helena Romanes School

Overview

Detail	Information
Academic year that this summary covers	2024 - 2025
Date this summary was published	February 2025 (updated)
Date this summary will be reviewed	June 2025
Name of the school music lead	Mr. J Cairns
Name of school leadership team member with responsibility for music (if different)	Ms. C Davis
Name of local music hub	Greater Essex Music Hub
Name of other music education organisation(s) (if partnership in place)	Great Dunmow Town Band Great Dunmow Youth Band Saffron Centre for Young Musicians Saffron Hall Outreach Department Thaxted Music Festival

This is a summary of how our school delivers music education to all our pupils across three areas – curriculum music, co-curricular provision and musical experiences – and what changes we are planning in future years. This information is to help pupils and parents or carers understand what our school offers and who we work with to support our pupils' music education.

Part A: Curriculum music

This is about what we teach in lesson time, how much time is spent teaching music and any music qualifications or awards that pupils can achieve.

Children in the Primary phase work with our specialist teachers from the secondary phase in their weekly music lesson. Aural skills are strengthened in every session with games such as call and response. Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 work on their listening skills, learning to read and play note values. We build a repertoire of songs and encourage pupils to sing as a soloist with growing confidence.

Pupils in Year 3, 4 and 5 play individual instruments provided by the secondary phase as part of the primary curriculum. Currently, they are playing the trumpet and trombone

as a whole class. Children take their allocated instrument home to help support individual practice at home.

Students in Year 7 & 8 receive an hourly session with a specialist teacher every week. Year 9 students who choose further musical study have three hours of music timeabled per fortnight, whilst GCSE Music students benefit from five hours of tuition per fortnight. Learning continues throughout the academic year, not by carousel rotation. This is the best way to ensure that knowledge, skills and understanding is developed on an ongoing basis.

Our curriculum covers the key aspects of the National Curriculum for Music. We have our own bespoke programme of study designed to give pupils a broad range of musical skills and a secure musical understanding of key concepts. Our curriculum is a working document, which is always under review. Key resources are regularly amended and enhanced as we work collaboratively within the department.

All pupils play tuned and untuned instruments. Everyone is encouraged to sing regularly. We play keyboards, ukuleles, samba percussion and West African drums as part of our Year 7 and 8 programme. Those who opt for music in Year 9 and beyond develop their skills on their chosen instrument in preparation for their GCSE coursework performances.

The school is part of the Saffron Academy Trust, “a family of schools who aspire to provide state education of exceptional quality”. As an all-through school, we benefit from being part of a group with three local primary schools and three secondary schools. The trust provides additional training and networking opportunities, for example Music Subject Conferences in February and May. These events give us opportunities to discuss subject specific issues, explore subject pedagogy and share good practice.

Students in Years 10 and 11 follow the OCR GCSE specification leading to GCSE qualification. Some students have additional individual instrumental tuition and prepare for graded music performance examinations. A level Music is currently being offered as an additional option after school. We hope this will be able to re-introduced within the school timetable in future years.

Part B: Co-curricular music

This is about opportunities for pupils to sing and play music, outside of lesson time, including choirs, ensembles and bands, and how pupils can make progress in music beyond the core curriculum.

Students are offered additional instrumental tuition on a 1:1 basis. Visiting peripatetic tutors augment the curriculum provision, giving students the opportunity to specialise in an instrument of their choice. This is an area for future development.

We run three secondary singing sessions and an after-school primary choir each week, enabling singers to build their confidence and vocal skills. The department provides a safe space for children to come and rehearse with their peers.

The school will be moving to a new site. Once we have improved facilities, we will open a music school offering high quality musical activities to develop young musicians. As part of this programme, we will expand our instrumental provision as we will have more teaching spaces available to us. Holiday provision would also enable us to make a significant contribution to the local community.

Also consider including:

Individual tuition is financed by parents and carers.

Once we move to our new school site, we will have better facilities, in terms of quality and quantity. Pupils are currently able to rehearse individually or in small groups, subject to availability.

Part C: Musical experiences

This is about all the other musical events and opportunities that we organise, such as singing in assembly, concerts and shows, and trips to professional concerts.

The Primary phase come together as a community to sing in their weekly singing assembly, led by one of our music specialists. Currently, we are enjoying African songs and spirituals such as 'Oh When the Saints Go Marching In'. This supports our ethos that we are all musicians.

Termly concerts are arranged to enhance our weekly provision. Students are encouraged to participate in order to share their skills and make music together. Children from the Primary phase perform at school concerts, with considerable support from the secondary pupils. Parents, carers and school staff are invited to come and join us. We have plans to augment our performances, by introducing more informal platforms to help build confidence, welcome newer performers and maintain momentum between the more large scale events.

Concerts are open to all. No charges are applied to either participants or audience members, with inclusion specifically in mind. A retiring collection is taken to support charitable causes (for example, Christmas Concert in December 2024 collected donations for a potential partner school in The Gambia).

The school has good relationships with other local arts organisations, including Saffron Hall and Felsted School. Already this year, our students have been invited to witness an opera, sing evensong, participate in masterclasses at other prestigious venues.

In the future

This is about what the school is planning for subsequent years.

The department is in a development phase, with new staff starting in 2023 and 2024, following a period of instability and staff turnover. Therefore our provision has already improved considerably, but continues to grow in quantity and quality. Our overall aim is to improve standards of musicianship and raise the profile of the subject across the school.

- > Continue to review current schemes of work to integrate new instrumental resources and further enhance learning opportunities
- > Raise profile of GCSE Music and increase uptake
- > Increase participation in extra-curricular activities