

# Music development plan summary: Birches Head Academy

## Overview

Detail	Information
Academic year that this summary covers	2023-24, 2024-25
Date this summary was published	July 2024
Date this summary will be reviewed	July 2025
Name of the school music lead	Miss E Mooney
Name of school leadership team member with responsibility for music (if different)	Mrs A Orlando
Name of local music hub	Stoke on Trent City Music Service
Name of other music education organisation(s) (if partnership in place)	

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.

At KS3, pupils receive 2 hours a fortnight of curriculum time in Music with a specialist teacher. At KS4, those who opt to take part in BTEC Music receive 6 hours a fortnight of timetabled teaching with a specialist teacher.

Our music curriculum is informed by but not necessarily written based on the Model Music Curriculum. This helps us to inform progression and what students may have learnt at KS2 level, however, we use our links with the local music service and our feeder primary schools to inform this.

In Year 7, pupils begin with a transition project that helps to develop some fundamental skills in music as we are aware that despite there being a Model Music Curriculum in place that there is not always access to a specialist music teacher in a primary setting so therefore almost all students arrive to us in Year 7 at different levels of musical skill. In this learning programme, all pupils develop the ability to read treble clef staff

notation or recap this if this was learnt at primary or in private music tuition, develop some competence on a keyboard and also learn to sing as a whole class. They also work on their listening skills and will develop confidence in using tier 3 vocabulary to describe the music they are listening to. Following on from this, Year 7 go on to the focus areas of Rhythm, Keyboard Skills, Composition and Performance linked to the areas of African Music, Classical Music/Orchestra, Blues Music and Musicianship (aimed at developing fundamental skills prior to beginning the Y8 curriculum and mastering knowledge learnt earlier in the year).

In Year 8, as mentioned previously, pupils will study areas focused on the 5 key skill areas identified in our curriculum plan (Notation, Rhythm, Keyboard Skills, Composition and Performance – sequenced so that one will always feed into the next), beginning with Variation and the study of how music can be varied and changed. This topic focusses on developing both the notation based skills of the pupil and also their artistic ability with regards to how they trial out different ideas to change the music. Pupils then explore world music again in Learning Programme 2 with a focus on Brazillian Samba. In the academic year 2023-24 we were very privileged to have an 'Ignition' activity to extend learning outside the classroom as we participated in a workshop with local arts company Art Brazil. In 'Keyboard Skills' for Learning Programme 3, pupils will start to explore the theme of Social Justice linking to our school's ethos as they explore Soul Music. They will also continue to develop their ability to competently play a piece of music on a keyboard instrument. In Learning Programme 4 for the focus of composition, pupils will explore Film Music, with a particular focus on the leitmotif and underscoring as pupils will be expected to create a character theme following particular rules around certain musical elements such as timbre informed by expected character tropes. In LP5, again linking to Social Justice, pupils will begin their performance unit on the topic of 'Protest Songs' in which they will explore how music can be used to challenge injustice. For this they will learn to play a song about Nelson Mandela and perform this in small groups.

In Year 9, continuing their learning in the 5 key skill areas mentioned previously, pupils in Y9 will begin (in September 2024 – changed from Minimalism following pupil voice) with a Skill Development module around the skill of notation called 'My Musical Skills'. During this learning programme, pupils will build on their existing knowledge and skills from Y7 and 8 to develop deeper knowledge and understanding of how to understand music, how to listen to it and comment on it and also how to perform it. In Learning Programme 2, pupils will learn about Hip Hop and Body Percussion with a specific focus on rhythm. They will learn how to use body percussion, how Hip Hop songs are written and the links to social issues and social justice and they will write a rap to perform to a hip hop rhythm. In Learning Programme 3 for keyboard skills, the focus will be on Hooks and Riffs. Pupils will link prior learning from across KS3 and from LP2 to develop their understanding of how repetitive melodies and riffs are used in music. They will develop further their playing technique on the keyboard and begin to explore playing music in the treble and bass clef together. In Learning Programme 4, pupils will

begin to explore the role of the songwriter and how songs are written. This learning programme supports the key skill of composition and is supported by the 'ignition' activity based on the Eurovision Song Contest in which pupils write a song about one of the school values in their classes as a competition. Finally, in learning programme 5 alongside the skill area of performance, pupils develop their knowledge from the Songwriting learning programme to learn about Pop Music. This is a largely practical learning programme aimed at getting the pupils performing together in bands using a pack of resources to play 'Shotgun' by George Ezra.

At KS4, we deliver the BTEC Tech Award in Music Practice (2022 specification). In Year 10, pupils will complete the component 1 section of the course which accounts for 30% of their overall grade exploring music products and styles through a range of theory, practical and workshop based lessons. Pupils then begin to prepare for Component 2 in their lessons by completing challenge and workshop based tasks to develop their skills before beginning the next controlled assessment in the September of Y11. Component 2 is completed by early December, leaving a little bit of time to prepare for the external assessment of Component 3 which is a 3 part task requiring pupils to choose a song from a choice of 10 and transform it into a different genre (from a list of 4). This requires pupils to be able to source their material independently, be incredibly self motivated and be able to utilize their skills from across their time in school. For both of the internally assessed components, there is 1 resit opportunity available should this be needed.

For peripatetic music lessons, we receive tuition from our local music service. These lessons can be opted for by families and are paid for by the pupils' families. Pupils (unless individual is necessary or specifically requested) receive tuition in small groups and have lessons of 20 minutes with a specialist tutor.

## **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.

Outside of the main music curriculum, as mentioned above, we receive music tuition from the Stoke On Trent City Music Service and have teachers in on different days once weekly to deliver 20 minute lessons to pupils in small groups or individually who opt into receiving these lessons. We offer lessons for keyboard/piano, drums, guitar, woodwind (clarinet, saxophone, flute), brass, strings and voice (taught by BHA staff who are trained singing teachers). The lessons provided by City Music Service are

funded solely by contributions from families as we do not receive any subsidy for these. Families of pupils who receive pupil premium funding and free school meals receive a 50% discount to fees as we can partially subsidise these from the funding we receive for these groups. Instruments (unless provided by the pupil or available to use in school e.g. drums, keyboards, guitars) are rented from the music service for the duration of the lessons. The City Music service also provide support through the Music Partnership, which includes performance opportunities such as the recorder festival, MusicShare, and have included opportunities to work with the Manchester Camerata and Halle. They also provide CPD opportunities for staff and networking opportunities.

In school, we are proud to have a good extra curricular offering, providing our pupils with excellent personal development opportunities. We run a choir called 'BHA Singers' who perform repertoire of many kinds, a Rock and Pop band that is open to all year groups and abilities, a KS4 band dedicated to our BTEC pupils and a Steel Pan Band open to all years, working to learn different repertoire and perform to audiences on these fantastic instruments. We are also going to put on a school musical performance of Matilda Jr in March 2025 so many of our musicians will be involved in the show.

Pupils have many opportunities to perform, often in showcases, school events and assemblies to showcase their hard work and talents.

At Birches Head Academy, we also have access to practice rooms. These can be used as breakout spaces for ensembles, but are predominantly used to house peripatetic music lessons and also for the use of KS4 when rehearsing/producing recorded work for their BTEC. We are also in the process of putting together a media suite which will support the music department.

## **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.

In the academic year 2023-24, our pupils have performed in rewards assemblies and some school events, and in May 2024 we were incredibly proud to host a showcase evening to show off the hard work and dedication of our music and performing arts pupils which was a roaring success. Unfortunately this year, we have not gone on any trips, but hope to do this in the near future to increase the experiences our pupils have.

For the academic year 2024-25 we are preparing to perform the musical Matilda Jr in collaboration with the dance and drama department, so will look to show pupils a performance of this either on video or as a trip out to a theatre if we are able to.

## In the future

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

- In the academic year 2024-25 there have been some slight changes to the curriculum (this was a new curriculum for the academic year 2023-24 so feedback has been taken from teaching staff and from pupils in pupil voice) to improve the experience and learning of pupils including skills progression.
- In the academic year 2024-25, we are going to put on performances of Matilda Jr the musical in collaboration with the performing arts department which will give a large number of pupils (including those interested in music technology) the opportunity to take part in a larger scale performance
- A music event will be planned to showcase pupils taking music lessons and those doing extra curricular clubs

## Further information (optional)

<https://bircheshead.org.uk/curriculum-music/> - information around the music curriculum including Learning Programmes, a curriculum overview and a curriculum map.