Music development plan summary: Whickham School

Overview

Detail	Information
Academic year that this summary covers	2026-27
Date this summary was published	October 2026
Date this summary will be reviewed	July 2027
Name of the school music lead	Mr Philip Noble
Name of school leadership team member with responsibility for music (if different)	Mrs Sarah Maher
Name of local music hub	Gateshead Music Service
Name of other music education organisation(s) (if partnership in place)	NA

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

At Whickham School we are passionate about creative subjects and our broad curriculum allows students to access a range of creative opportunities including Music. The music curriculum is accessible to all pupils. It engages and motivates, enables personal expression, builds confidence, encourages reflection, boosts emotional development, develops critical engagement, stimulates and inspires us every day. It is three fold in concept; topic, theory and practical.

The curriculum offers two hours of music per fortnight per year in Key Stage 3. This increases to 5 hours of curriculum time if pupils opt for music within Key Stage 4 and subsequently 9 hours over a fortnight for those studying music at A-level or equivalent.

Students study music as part of their Key Stage 3 curriculum. The ambitious curriculum covers the content specified by the KS3 National Curriculum and is informed by the national model music curriculum and is subject to continuous refinement. The curriculum is both inclusive as well as challenging, it is built around the three pillars of performing, composition and listening which is underpinned by the elements of music - Pitch, Rhythm

and Duration, Sonority and Timbre,Texture, Dynamics and Silence. Music is accessible for all but also provides opportunity to stretch those with musical talent.

In year 7 students explore themes such as; elements of music, music for a special event, and they also develop keyboard skills.

As students progress into year 8 they explore more of music from around the world, through Improvisation, Folk Music and Theme and Variations.To celebrate our North Eastern Heritage we have developed a scheme of learning where we explore Northern Folk songs including the Blaydon Races and Cushee Butterfield. Students have the chance to play keyboards, percussion, ukulele. Year 9 students focus on 'Music for Film' as well as exploring the "What makes a good song" and they then go on to develop their own pieces using music technology where possible.

Through the whole of Key Stage Three students focus on the musical elements, vocabulary and 'speaking like a musician' using correct terminology as well as describing the 'effect' of the music on the listener. Which helps students develop a life long love of music as well as preparing them for further study. Students also learn to read staff notation as well as 'Graphic Notation'. The curriculum has been designed to build strong musical literacy, including the understanding of notation, rhythm, duration, pitch, structure, dynamics enabling students to read, interpret and create music independently as well as groups.

Within Key Stage 4 students can study GCSE Music allowing students to perform solo and ensemble pieces, compose two compositions - one that is free choice and the other which is to a set brief from the exam board. In addition they study Set Works and Wider Listening in preparation for an Appraising Paper in year 11.

In Key Stage 5 students will study Level 3 BTEC Music Performance Extended Certificate which consists of Music Theory and Harmony, Music Industry and a Solo performance and Ensemble piece.

Part B: Co-curricular music

As a school we have a wide peripatetic offer. All students from Year 7-13 have the opportunity to have both one-to-one and/or small group lessons for instruments and voice. Students can also loan instruments through the peripatetics provision. Students have the chance to learn; guitar, piano, woodwind, strings, brass and voice.

In addition we have a strong extra-curricular music offer where students can join the Whickham Singers, Rock Band, Music Theory and Whickham Band. There is also the chance to partake in school productions both as part of the cast, musicians and crew. Students have the ability to book into the practice rooms to develop their musical skills with peers in social times and after school.

Part C: Musical experiences

To enrich students' experiences within music we have 2 school musicals planned each year. One is for the Whole School and the other is a Key Stage Three musical.

In the Autumn term we support Annual Charity Week with an “Open Mic” night which has proved popular with staff, pupils and parents.

Each Christmas we host a Carol Concert, Carols Around the Tree and Christmas celebration assemblies allowing students to showcase musical talents from Year 7-13.

In Spring we hold the Annual Spring Concert which is well supported and the local community.

In the Summer Term we hold our “Gigs on the Yard” during lunchtime for the pupils.

To develop cultural capital trips and visits take place throughout the year including theatre trips and a Year 7 Panto which allows pupils to experience music on a wider context. Trips are paid for by parents/carers and Pupil Premium places are funded through the schools PP fund. The Rich Experience Trip to London takes around 90 students from Y7-9.

In the future

We are hoping to establish a connection with Manor House Retirement Home to develop a relationship where Whickham Music is celebrated with older generations.

The development of music technology is a key focus for this and future years. DJ’ing is a concept that we believe will engage pupils and support them.

We want to continue to develop further our work with the primary schools and bridge the gap between primary and secondary musical provision.

Further information

To support parents/ carers The Department for Education publishes a guide for parents and young people on how to access music in and out of school.

Your local music hub should also have a local plan for music education in place from September 2024 that should include useful information.