

Music development plan summary: [Swindon Academy]

Overview

Detail	Information
Academic year that this summary covers	2024-2025
Date this summary was published	September 2024
Date this summary will be reviewed	July 2025
Name of the school music lead	Helen Welsby
Name of school leadership team member with responsibility for music (if different)	Zoe Thompson
Name of local music hub	Wiltshire Music Connect
Name of other music education organisation(s) (if partnership in place)	Swindon Music Service / United Learning

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 Key Stage 3, students are taught 55 minutes of music per week. The curriculum is based on United Learning's Key Performance Indicators (henceforth referred to as KPI's) for success in music performance, composition and appraising.

The musical content students are taught is diverse and builds incrementally in difficulty with regular opportunities to revisit and develop earlier taught skills and knowledge. The projects taught across KS3 offer a balance of performance and composition and utilise all of the equipment housed in our well-resourced department, including Apple Mac computers equipped with GarageBand, electric and acoustic guitars and basses, keyboards, drums and international percussion (Samba and African Djembes) and Ukuleles.

Swindon Academy is largely following the UL curriculum but adapted locally to meet the needs of our learners. The full curriculum for KS3 can be found here:

<https://www.swindon-academy.org/secondary/learning>

When designing the curriculum, we have taken care to embed performing, composing and listening activities into each unit. We aim to ensure all students have access to learning an instrument though the curriculum, therefore keyboard, singing and percussion is a big feature of year 7, building a solid foundation for students to progress into ukulele, guitar, more advanced keyboard skills throughout years 8 and 9 – ensuring they are ready for GCSE music and beyond. A full breakdown is below:

Year 7 Music

Overview

Term	What are we learning	
1	I've Got Rhythm	Students in this unit will know and understand the key terms rhythm and pulse. Throughout the unit we will study basic note values up to 4 beats, including rests, time signatures and accents. Students will also develop a feel for and understanding of pulse, beat and rhythm through performing, listening and composing in a stomp style.
2	Find Your Voice	Students in this unit will learn about singing technique, posture and projection. Throughout this unit we will be singing using different techniques like rounds, canon and basic two part harmony as well as learning about the musical elements using MAD T SHIRT (Melody, Articulation, Dynamics, Tempo, Structure, Harmony, Instrumentation, Rhythm and Texture)
3	Let's Play Keyboard	In this unit, students learn about the fundamentals of keyboard performance including correct finger position, treble clef notation and rhythm. Students will learn a variety of songs ranging from classical music to popular songs whilst developing their playing technique and confidence
4	Let's Play Keyboard Pt2	In this second part of the unit, we move onto look at sharps, flats and naturals – exploring the chromatic scale and its use in music from the classical era and the world of film.
5	Descriptive Music and the Orchestra	Students will learn about the Orchestra and its families of instruments, learning what their unique qualities are and how to recognise them when listening to music. We will then explore how music is used as a descriptive tool by studying Prokofiev's Peter and the Wolf and Saint-Saens' Carnival of the Animals before getting creative and composing our own animal themes using classroom instruments.
6	Play the Uke	In this unit, students will learn about the playing techniques of the ukulele, using key knowledge from the keyboard unit we will learn to read ukulele tablature and chords – playing a range of songs from popular music to folk music and beyond. Students will work in small groups to put together a performance as an ensemble.

Year 8 Music

Overview

Term	What are we learning	
1	World Rhythms (Saharan Sounds)	Students in this unit will revisit the key terms rhythm and pulse in their continuing journey as a developing musician. This time, students will study the rhythms and music of West Africa and use Djembe drums to perform and compose music using West African influences.
2	Minimalism	Students will learn about more unusual and experimental types of music. Students will explore and study the composers and main characteristics of minimalism music, learning to compose and perform using the features with classroom instruments and ICT.
3	Tonality and Structure	Students will explore and learn about how music is put together into different structures including binary and ternary form – through composing, appraising and performing activities. The unit also explores the difference between major and minor tonality – ensuring students have a solid understanding of how tonalities affect the mood of a piece of music.
4 & 5	Black Music in America	In this unit, students go back through the history of black music in America, beginning with the ring shout and cake walk – both invented by Black slaves. Students will explore and understand the structure of the 12 bar blues and listen to, perform and compose music using the key features of the style including: Walking bass line, 12 bar blues, chords, blues scale, improvising and call and response.
6	Performing Together	Using all the skills studied in previous units, students will form bands and put together a performance of a popular song using classroom instruments like the Bass Guitar, Keyboard, Voice, Ukulele and Drum Kit. This is a fun unit where students can develop and refine their ensemble skills.

Year 9 Music

Overview

Term	What are we learning	
1	Samba	In this unit, students will understand how instruments, structures and textures are used in Samba music – whilst also learning about the culture and context of Samba music/Carnival in Brazil. Students will perform as a larger ensemble, using authentic samba instruments and will explore the role of instruments within the samba ensemble – knowing how they affect the overall performance.
2	What Makes a Good Song?	Pupils learn about the importance of Hooks and Riffs, Popular Song Structure and the various difference components/sections within, Melodic Motion (Conjunct and Disjunct Motion) and Lyrics – that when combined, create popular songs we know and love.
3	You're in the Band	In this unit, students form bands and learn, rehearse and perform a song of their choice focussing on the fundamentals of band performance (accuracy, timing, rhythm, communication) working towards a class concert.
4	You're in the Band pt2	Students will review ongoing development through a performance diary – understanding how to set themselves SMART targets for improvement ready for their final performances
5	Music in the Movies	Students will listen to and explore the features of film music including instrumentation, leitmotifs and mickey-mousing. We will then move onto looking specifically at the horror movie genre, where students will explore techniques for creating rising tension through minor 2nds, dissonance, atonality and cluster chords – resulting in a composition for a specific movie scene stimulus.
6	Song Writing	In this unit students use knowledge learnt in term 2, 3 and 4 to come together in groups and write a popular song including lyrics, chords, inversions, drums and other accompaniment parts and features. Students will gain confidence in lyric writing and setting this to music ready for a performance.

Key Stage 4

At Key Stage 4, students are taught four lessons of music per week, which are 55 minutes long. We run the courses Eduqas GCSE Music. More information about the course can be found on our website <https://www.swindon-academy.org/secondary/learning> and also on the Eduqas website: https://www.eduqas.co.uk/qualifications/music-gcse/#tab_overview

GCSE Music is divided into the following three components:

- Understanding and appraising music
- Performing music
- Composing music

The areas of study provide an appropriate focus for students to appraise, develop and demonstrate an in-depth knowledge and understanding of musical elements, musical context and musical language. The two compulsory set works can also provide a rich source of material for our students to work with when developing their performance and composition skills. The four areas of study comprise:

- **AOS 1 Musical Forms and Devices (With set work 1, Badinerie by JS Bach)**
 - **AOS 2 Ensemble Music**
 - **AOS 3 Film Music**
- **AOS 4 Popular Music (With set work 2, Africa by Toto)**

Key Stage 5

At Key Stage 5, students are taught 4 lessons per week, each lasting for 55 minutes. We run the Pearson BTEC National Extended Certificate in Music (Performing) and typically follow the units as described below:

Unit 1 (Mandatory) Practical Music Theory and Harmony

Unit 2 (Mandatory) Professional Practice in the Music Industry

Unit 3 (Mandatory) Ensemble Music

Unit 6 (Optional) Solo Performance or Unit 4 Composing

More information about the course can be found on our website: <https://www.swindon-academy.org/unitedcollege6f/subjects-at-sixth-form/music> and on the Pearson website: <https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/qualifications/btec-nationals/music-performance-2018.html>

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.

- Good level of extra-curricular offering in Music and Performing Arts.
- Welcoming department – encourage pupils to perform in different events. The enrichment timetable will include this year:

Choir, Keyboard Club, Violin Club, Guitar Club, School Show Drama and Music Club, Band Club.

- All clubs provided are at no cost to students, with free instruments available to borrow, including Violin and Guitar from the local music service who run the clubs.
- A range of 1-1 and small group tuition with high quality teachers from the music service who use our practice rooms to teach. Currently, we offer guitar, drums, bass, vocals and piano.
- Music hub – GSW music hub (<https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/gsw-music-hub/gsw-music-hub-new-sept-2024/>).
- Students in SMS peri lessons have option to join external clubs and provision for music at a discounted or free rate.

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.

Extra-Curricular Music

We have a successful operation for instrumental tuition in partnership with Swindon Music Service (<https://smscio.org/>). Currently, we have 14.5 hours of tuition per week and tutors for guitar, bass, keyboard, drums, and vocals. We currently have over 70 students taking lessons. The majority of the cost is paid for by Swindon Academy through a special music tuition budget, and students are only required to pay £3 - £4 per week, dependant on whether they are FSM or NFSM students. For KS4 and 5 students, the cost of the instrumental lessons per week is free of charge if they are enrolled on the GCSE or BTEC course as it forms an integral part of their education and learning throughout KS4 and 5. As an extra for our students, we offer an instrument 'loan' programme to support students practicing independently each week.

Through Swindon Music Service we are also offering guitar and violin group tuition free of charge to students (students also borrow an instrument for practice) as afterschool clubs which are currently well attended with 14 students in guitar and 12 in violin club.

In house afterschool clubs are designed to cater to students' preferences and include a band club, choir, keyboard club and composing club. We also run a full musical production bi-annually in collaboration with drama to further enhance the musical experience of students at Swindon Academy.

Throughout the year, ensembles and soloists perform regularly, including the Christmas by Candlelight Concert, Christmas Carol Service in partnership with Marlborough College, Young Musician of the Year, School Musical and Assemblies / Awards evenings.

In 2023, Bath Philharmonia worked with our students, spending 2 days writing a new piece of music based on poetry. This composition was then performed alongside the professional orchestra in their evening concert to members of the public. A recording of this can be found here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=12B207pcmYg>. The partnership between Swindon Academy and Bath Philharmonia will continue, with students being offered free tickets for their families at any time of the year and more projects in the planning phase for the 24-25 academic year.

Trips

The music department have run several successful trips and continue to plan opportunities for students to experience music outside of the classroom context. This has included: London Residentials (To see a West End Musical), Bath Philharmonia Orchestra performances, United Learning Music Fest (2023), Trips to see musicals in Bath/Bristol annually and University visits for KS4 and 5 students to BIMM/ACM to explore higher education opportunities.

In the future

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

With the support of United Learning, we have reviewed ourselves against the Music Teachers Association self-evaluation framework. In doing this we identified that singing could be further developed in our school, so that we have a consistent choir that runs year-round and takes part in a variety of performances. To make progress towards this target, a number of our year 7 students will take part in this years United Learning 'Magic Flute' project in Spring/Summer 2025 where they will learn about Opera and have chance to perform in London's iconic Royal Festival Hall.

Another big priority is to continue to raise attainment in NEA elements of the GCSE and BTEC qualifications (performing and composing). We are already on this journey through providing free instrument tuition and instrument loan for all KS4 and 5 music students. We are working with a range of subject specialist and non-subject specialist experts in our school and MAT to support these outcomes.

An aim for 24-25 is to get external masterclass performers in to work with GCSE students on writing music for film/songwriting to further boost confidence and attainment in composing.

We plan to expand our already successful orchestra performance trips to include all of Key Stage 3; by the time any student leaves Swindon Academy, they will have been to at least one orchestral/live music performance.

We are also working to improve our facilities and looking towards refitting our 5 practice rooms studio with modern hardware, computers and PA systems to create several high-quality, dedicated live music performance and rehearsal spaces for all students at the academy.

Further information

The Department for Education publishes a [guide for parents and young people](#) on how they can get involved in music in and out of school, and where they can go to for support beyond the school.

Further information can also be found on the following websites, where you will find prices and information on joining the wider clubs available to students:

Swindon Music Service: <https://smscio.org/>

Bath Philharmonia: <https://www.bathphil.co.uk/>

United Learning Music: <https://musicpa.unitedlearningblogs.org.uk/?category=music>