

Music development plan summary: Bishop Challoner Catholic College

Overview

Detail	Information
Academic year that this summary covers	2025-2026
Date this summary was published	September 2025
Date this summary will be reviewed	September 2026
Name of the school music lead	Samantha Hughes
Name of school leadership team member with responsibility for music (if different)	
Name of local music hub	
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

At Bishop Challoner Catholic College we are committed to fostering a positive, inclusive environment where all students can explore their musical talents. We aim to provide high-quality music education, ensuring every student, regardless of background or ability, has the opportunity to participate, perform, and develop their skills. We believe music is a powerful tool for personal growth, and we encourage every student to make the most of the many opportunities offered.

Music is delivered by two highly qualified and experienced teachers, Samantha Hughes (Head of Department, full time) and Lucy Choudhury (SLT).

Each of our dedicated music classrooms are equipped with 17 keyboards and these are used frequently in weekly music lessons. Our recording studio is equipped with industry-standard hardware and software and is supervised by our full-time technician; the studio and music practice room each have a drum kit, microphones, and several electric and acoustic guitars. Our department owns a selection of instruments from each of the orchestral families to demonstrate to the students, and we have a set of 30 ukuleles which are used in extra-curricular activities. We also have a fully equipped auditorium

with lighting desk and spotlight, wireless microphones, bleacher seating, PA and extensive sound equipment which is available for many of our school performances; this room can be booked for KS3 and KS4 lessons.

The KS3 curriculum follows the guidelines outlined in the Model Music Curriculum and students receive one hour of music per week. This curriculum has been designed to build carefully upon KS2 learning and students from our diverse and various feeder schools will strengthen their skills in composition, listening, appraisal and performance. They cover the foundations of music theory, develop their solo and ensemble performance skills, and are given the tools to effectively and critically appraise music from a range of genres and cultures. Students also learn about the role music can play in their day to day lives, the holistic impact of music, and opportunities to develop their musicianship in further education and their later careers.

Through carefully structured lessons and schemes of work, students explore the cultural, social and historical background of different musical genres to deepen their understanding of music and its place and impact throughout history. Lessons include current, relevant and impactful examples of music and musicians to inspire and educate our young people and each lesson includes a range of activities with opportunities for solo and ensemble work. Each student has a work booklet to support each scheme of work which includes key terminology and success criteria for formative and summative assessment tasks.

Each lesson features a recall task, contextual exploration, independent work, opportunities for a range of questioning, oracy, and all lessons feature extensive teacher modelling and scaffolding. Literacy, as well as musical literacy, is embedded throughout the schemes of work and although the PowerPoints for lessons are streamlined across the department, each teacher is free to devise their own activities or choice of resources within the framework to suit their class.

In Year 10 all students have the option to pursue music at GCSE. At Key Stage 4, students receive five hours of music instruction in line with the Edexcel GCSE curriculum across a two-week timetable. At the start of Year 10 all students study a short course of music theory and an in-depth exploration of the musical elements which underpin the set works studied for the Appraisal component of the GCSE. The 8 set works are divided between the teachers, but each member of staff leads on the coursework components: Performance and Composition. For Composition, students can explore genres, instruments or sounds which are new to them, broadening their musical experience, and we encourage private instrumental lessons either at home or in school (via Services for Education) to give them the confidence and skills to perform to the standards of the GCSE Edexcel specification.

In Year 11 students receive an extra hour of music every two weeks, after school. These sessions can be for learning new material, retrieval practice, exploring exam technique or for working towards a coursework deadline.

SEND students, those with disabilities and the most disadvantaged are able to participate and engage with music making, through financial and technological support. One to one or group learning can be facilitated through instrumental provision with SfE and costs for instrumental tuition is subsidised for Pupil Premium students. 51% of students receiving instrumental tuition in school (as of September 2025) are Pupil Premium.

Bishop Challoner is a member of Birmingham's South Area Network which meets at least once a year in subject specific groups. We are also part of the Tolkien Cluster of schools which has strengthened our musical link to a number of feeder schools.

<https://bishopchalloner.org.uk/about/curriculum/subjects/music>

Part B: Co-curricular music

All students across the 3 key stages at Bishop Challoner are offered the opportunity to receive instrumental lessons on brass, strings, woodwind, traditional Irish instruments, drumkit, piano, steel pan via weekly provision from Services for Education and the register of students who receive lessons is currently 90. Whilst the lessons are primarily one to one (with the exception of steel pans), each visiting teacher from SfE offers bespoke ensemble opportunities which supports the musical development of the students, as well as preparing the GCSE students for the performance component of the course. There is a heavily subsidised cost for instrumental tuition, however for Pupil Premium students, tuition is offered free of charge.

Our ongoing collaboration with the Birmingham Irish Association has led to the formation of a traditional Irish Ensemble who meet weekly and have already performed across the city numerous times. Led by Jobe Sullivan from the BIA, students from a range of cultures and musical backgrounds meet weekly to rehearse and perform music through traditional Irish and classical instruments. This collaboration has also allowed many of our students to perform for and work alongside dementia patients who meet at a number of local venues, providing enriching outreach opportunities.

Bishop Challoner's 'We Sing' vocal ensemble meets weekly and explore a vast repertoire of music, from musical theatre, popular music and liturgical pieces. This ensemble frequently lead mass, have performed in competitions and city-wide events, and all music students at KS4 are encouraged to attend.

Instrumentalists are invited to attend BC Band on Tuesdays after school, where they will develop their score reading skills, ensemble skills as well as musical discipline, confidence in performance, and the ability to listen and respond sensitively to others. Participation also fosters a sense of belonging, commitment, and pride in contributing to the wider musical life of the school.

As a Catholic school, there are several services and Masses across each term which provide singing opportunities. Year 7 and 8 assemblies now feature hymn practice and

singing in assembly, which is supported by the Year 7 and 8 pastoral team and music department.

Music features heavily in the calendar of school events and each year we strive to engage as many students as possible in extra-curricular learning and musical opportunities, and at Bishop Challoner we also offer the following opportunities:

- BC Band
- Music Club
- GCSE support in composition, performance and catchup sessions after school
- Supervised access to the recording studio at break, lunch time and after school
- Mass
- Access to ABRSM/Trinity Guildhall/Rockschool accredited music examinations

Whilst Music and Music Technology is currently not offered, a number of students at KS5 have continued with their instrumental tuition in school and several have performed extensively with Birmingham youth ensembles and continued their Musical education at music colleges and Universities across the UK.

Part C: Musical experiences

Our school calendar already includes numerous opportunities for our students to experience music either as a performer or a spectator.

- Music Trip to Ireland
- Theatre trips
- Performances at Tea Parties for elderly members of the community
- Visit to the Dementia Café at the Birmingham Irish Association
- Christmas Show
- Summer Primary Showcase in collaboration with our feeder schools
- Annual Year 7 trip to Symphony Hall
- Mass (performing or attending)
- Spring Soiree
- Performances in Assembly
- Collaborations with local schools for (e.g. *Born For This*)

The school library hosts 'Bishop's Got Talent' half-termly events where departments can offer enriching educational activities or showcases and the Music Department regularly use these events to give our young musicians a performance platform and to inspire other students. While these events are often themed such as around St Patrick's Day, or Christmas, students have conceived, arranged and prepared their own events to present to the school and wider community.

Each year we present a Christmas event which includes singing. These events have ranged from traditional church services, festive instrumental and vocal showcases at local venues, musical-theatre styles Christmas shows in our auditorium, all of which are open to all staff, parents, carers and members of the wider community. We strive to be inclusive to all students who wish to take part, although solo singing roles may require audition.

Our Spring Soiree is our annual musical showcase of instrumental and vocal solo and ensemble performances, featuring any student who wishes to take part in the hour-long event. Woodwind ensemble, solo piano, violin duet and steel pan ensemble are typical participants in this event. Like the Christmas events, these are usually free to anyone who wishes to attend, although refreshments are sold and donations can be made; these funds go towards that term's chosen school charity.

In the Summer Term we frequently host a Primary Showcase event featuring a number of musical acts from a group of feeder schools and our own Bishop Challoner musicians, who assemble to perform as a Giant Choir at the end of the event. This event is a true collaboration between the Tolkien Cluster schools and not only gives our students the opportunity to perform in a dedicated space such as the auditorium, but they work alongside our secondary students to rehearse and perform, giving them an insight into musical life at secondary school, developing confidence and social skills.

Preparation for these events is largely supported by the instrumental teachers from the SfE who often attend and perform alongside the students.

In the future

Over the next two academic years, we strive to:

- Continue hosting Secondary Music ITT teachers who can present their own areas of expertise to our students
- Develop a programme of singing and hymn practice in collaboration with the Year 7 and 8 pastoral team
- Meet termly with the South Area Network Hub of Music teachers to share good practice and GCSE moderation
- Maintain our increased number of GCSE Music students
- Increase the number of external trips to see live musical performances
- Broaden our Irish Music provision to include more instrumental opportunities
- Increase our use of social media in the Music Department to share work, promote the department and for revision and exam technique at GCSE
- Run weekly enrichment sessions for Y12 students involving our technician and the studio software
- Strengthen our links with local secondary schools and increase our moderation and performance opportunities