



**Music development plan summary:
DURHAM JOHNSTON COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL**

Overview

Detail	Information
Academic year that this summary covers	2024-2025
Date this summary was published	1st September 2024
Date this summary will be reviewed	1st September 2025
Name of the school music lead	Mr Edwin Holmes
Name of local music hub	North and South of Tyne and Darlington
Name of other music organisation(s)	Durham Music Service

This is a summary of how our school delivers music education to all our pupils across three areas – curriculum music, extra-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.

The music department is at the heart of the school community, both in terms of our physical position in the building, but also in terms of the fact that we often have a presence at whole-school events. In the wider world, music can sometimes be considered as an elitist pastime, but we are proud of the fact that here it is a core part of the academic curriculum for all pupils, ensuring that all pupils, regardless of background acquire music knowledge, and have the opportunity to build musical skills. Durham Music Service (DMS) play a significant role in this process, providing top-quality professional instrumental/vocal tuition, available to all for less than the cost of private tuition, and available to FSM/PP pupils free of charge.

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.

The KS3 curriculum is built around the four musical disciplines of understanding, listening, performing and composing. Performance, composing and listening are interrelated. Pupils are encouraged, for example, to develop listening skills through performance and composition activities. Knowledge, skills and understanding in each of these areas are interactively through practical music-making. Pupils in Year 7, 8 and 9 have an hour of music teaching each week.

KS3 pupils are assessed formally at the end of each unit of work (half-term) with a practical assessment (performance or composition) that furthers practical skills, but also incorporates elements of knowledge and understanding of the style or genre of music being studied. In all practical lessons, less formal, but arguably equally valuable assessment takes place, as teachers advise on the creative process, and encourage improvements and modifications. Pupils should feel that they are making continual progress as performers and musicians, building skills gradually across the key stage.

The careful design of the KS3 curriculum provides carefully scaffolded activities. Because we have always taught mixed-ability classes, the curriculum was designed presuming that there would be some SEND pupils within each class, and therefore all materials would reflect this. For pupils with higher levels of need, extra resources have been, and continue to be produced taking into account the particular need.



At KS4, the Edexcel GCSE specification continues to encourage the integration of listening, performing and composing, and each of these strands is assessed. The content builds on the understanding developed at KS3 as students investigate, analyse and evaluate music and its features. They learn to perform, compose and appreciate different types of music, developing critical and creative thinking, cultural, aesthetic and emotional awareness, and the ability to make music individually, and as part of a group. (Pearson Edexcel)

Through all the key stages, the department is keen to build skills, knowledge and understanding for all pupils, from those for whom their music education finishes in Y9, to those who wish to take their musical education to the highest level, at a conservatoire, or top university music department. This is reflected in the choice of AoS/NEA briefs selected from the AQA A-Level specification. The specification allows pupils to develop particular musical strengths and interest, whilst also ensuring it provides access to higher education courses. As with the previous key stages, pupils are encouraged to engage critically and creatively with a wide range of music and musical contexts, and reflect on how music is used in the expression of personal and collective identities.

Through KS4/5 the department follows the schools programme of mock examinations for the relevant components of both the GCSE and A-Level specifications. Performance and composition are assessed more regularly, more in the manner of the model at KS3, where suggestions are made and guidance given for a cycle of continuous review and development.

The curriculum is informed by the following guidance and research:

Secondary National Strategy for School Improvement – Foundation Subjects: KS3 Music (DfES 2006)

Making more of music: Improving the quality of music teaching in secondary schools (Ofsted 2009)

Music in Schools: wider still, and wider (Ofsted 2008-11)

The importance of music: a national plan for music education (DfE 2011)

Music in Schools: sound partnerships (Ofsted 2011-12)

Cultural Education in England (DCMS 2012)

Model Music Curriculum: Key Stage 3 (DfE 2021)

The power of music to change lives: a national plan for music education (DfE 2022)

Part B: Extra-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.

The extra-curricular offer is a particular strength of the Music Department at Durham Johnston School. Through our partnership with DMS, pupils are offered one-to-one and small-group tuition on Woodwind (Flute, Clarinet, Saxophone), Double Reed (Oboe and Bassoon), Bass (Trumpet, French Horn, Baritone, Trombone, Euphonium, Tuba), Upper Strings (Violin, Viola), Lower Strings (Cello, Double Bass), Guitar (Acoustic and Electric), Orchestral Percussion, Drumkit, and Voice. Over 140 pupils have weekly lessons in school through this provision. The cost for these lessons is shared between school and parents, and tuition is free for parents and carers in particular circumstances (e.g. Pupil Premium).

The department also runs a weekly programme of ensemble rehearsals. Currently, this consists of Junior Choir, Senior Choir, Chamber Choir, Junior Orchestra, Senior Orchestra, Wind Band and Big Band. These groups prepare repertoire for concerts at Christmas and Easter, concerts at which there are also opportunities for soloists and smaller ensembles to perform.



Lunchtime activities are also offered weekly, including a Keyboard Club, sessions for aural training (in preparation for ABRSM and Trinity graded exams), and a Music Theory Club (helping pupils prepare for ABRSM graded theory exams).

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 musical highlight of the year at Durham Johnston is the annual Carol Service in Durham Cathedral. All pupils experience the performances provided by the school's ensembles, hear the world-famous Harrison & Harrison organ, played by the Cathedral's organist, and take part in the singing of traditional carols.

The school concerts at Christmas and Easter are well attended by parents, siblings and friends of the performers, and these include pupils from Y7 through to Y13 performing alongside each other and appreciating each other's performance. A small charge is made for tickets at these concerts (currently £4/£2) but this in turn allows the provision of the extra-curricular programme to be completely without charge to all pupils.

Other smaller-scale events in the school's year similarly attract audiences of parents, siblings and friends, and these currently include the annual Music Festival (a performing competition) and 'Music for a Summer Evening' (a cabaret-style occasion).

Durham Music Service (DMS) also has its own performing ensembles, providing opportunities for pupils across the county, of which Durham Johnston pupils are leading members. These groups rehearse weekly and undertake concerts in venues across the North East.

Pupils within school also experience live music on an occasional basis, with visiting musicians and groups sometimes delivering cross-curricular content (e.g. PHSE).

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.

The national system of [music hubs](#) is undergoing changes from September, and information about this is provided by the Arts Council.