

Music Development Plan summary: Great Sankey High School

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	Mrs Joanne Cosgrove
Name of school leadership team member with responsibility for music (if different)	Mr Graham Brighthouse
Name of local music hub	Liverpool City Region Combined Authority
Name of other music education organisation(s) (if partnership in place)	Love Music Trust, Liverpool Empire

Part A: Curriculum music

- A 'Great Sankey Musician' is a committed, creative individual with increasing confidence; they are role models and ambassadors for our Great Sankey musical family. A Great Sankey Musician will become an effective communicator, whilst also developing skills to listen with a critical ear, nurturing a platform to celebrate success and reflection for further improvement (both for themselves and for others). Our musicians naturally become leaders, developing their teamwork skills to fruition, enhancing values such as inclusiveness, respect, and fairness. Our musicians are tenacious, resilient and disciplined; they are dedicated to both independent and collaborative learning, understanding the importance of private practice and also the vitality of commitment to an ensemble. Above all, our musicians develop human values such as: learning to love, show empathy and compassion, enthusiasm, passion, emotional intelligence, beauty and good humour.
- Music is a universal language that embodies one of the highest forms of creativity. Our music curriculum is certainly broad and balanced as it encompasses science, maths, literacy, MFL, history, research skills and, above all, the arts. Our carefully crafted curriculum will engage and inspire pupils to develop a love of music and their talent as musicians, and so increase their self-

confidence, creativity and sense of achievement. As pupils progress, they should develop a critical engagement with music, allowing them to compose, and to listen with discrimination to the best in the musical canon. Above all, our curriculum will ensure a development of “family ethos”; our students will have a home where they feel safe, happy, valued, loved, trusted as they will naturally be provided with opportunities to lead and perform on a platform for sustained progress. Our students are individuals and our spiral curriculum nurtures and develops “the whole child”. We are a local lead Ambassador Music School (Warrington/ Halton), exemplified by our curriculum and extra-curricular offer.

- We are a well-resourced and large music department with four music specialist teachers: Mrs Cosgrove (Head of Performing Arts), Mr Bryan (2nd in Performing Arts), Mrs Mullin and Mr Murphy.
- In July 2023, we were awarded “Artsmark Gold” by Arts Council England.

KS3 Music

- At Key Stage 3, all students have two lessons of music (2 x 1hr sessions) per fortnight with subject specialists.
- Students are taught in mixed ability groups and study music throughout the academic year (not on a carousel).
- Our curriculum is split into half-termly units, which are covered on a carousel (due to the facilities and resources available in each of our four main music classrooms). Each unit encompasses reading and listening tasks, delivered as starter activities, in addition to the main assessment task of either a performance, composition or listening test; these are the three areas of skill for GCSE Music. Students will complete “do now” tasks related to different units on the carousel to assist with the development of long-term memory concerning key musical vocabulary in preparation for the KS4-5 musical courses.
- The music curriculum is an ambitious curriculum which builds on the National Curriculum for Music. The schemes of work throughout KS3 are designed to ensure that students are engaged, enthused, and enriched in their studies and to support progression for every young person who wants to pursue music beyond the curriculum. To this end, the KS3 curriculum prepares students for the demands of GCSE whilst providing a curriculum that stimulates and generates a life-long intellectual curiosity, creativity, and love for the Creative Arts, besides nurturing holistic, transferable (and employability) skills for all.
- The Music curriculum builds on the Key Stage 2 curriculum provided by our MAT primary schools. At the beginning of Year 7, teachers gain awareness of knowledge and skills through a ‘light touch’ baseline assessment (theory, listening and performance). During the 6-7 transition period, the Music Department gains awareness of students who have had instrumental and vocal lessons to facilitate continued progression, along with providing fresh opportunities for students to learn new skills in a co-curriculum setting.

- The curriculum is taught across three Intent Themes of: Performing and Singing, Creating Music, and Listening and Understanding.
- During lesson time, the curriculum enables students to learn to sing and play an instrument (keyboard, percussion and ukulele) with sufficient control, perform, compose with purpose, demonstrate expression and musical understanding and have experience of composition via music technology through Bandlab Education.
- Students gain experience and knowledge of Western classical music and music from a range of musical traditions. This is in conjunction with a wider cultural context of the genre and era relevant to students, referenced to cross-curricular learning.
- Students gain awareness of composing through music technology by accessing two computer rooms furnished with midi keyboards and access to a range of music software (Bandlab and Sibelius). Students gain access to these facilities during one unit of study per academic year in KS3.
- The Music Department has four KS3 classrooms, two equipped with computers and MIDI keyboards, and two traditional classrooms which are also multi-functional for performance spaces. The Music Department also houses 3 separate practice rooms which all students have access to for instrumental individual lessons and/ or private rehearsals.
- The Music Department has regularly worked collaboratively with other schools, including our MAT schools, to strengthen ties between the curriculum and music programmes.
- All children have access to online resources through Microsoft Teams (this includes extra curricular ensembles).
- We have a Youtube channel with example performances related to the curriculum (and also concert performances).

KS4/5 Music

- Students have access to both specialist, experienced and well qualified Music teachers as they deliver GCSE Music (AQA), NCFE Music Technology, A Level Music (AQA) and A Level Music Technology (Edexcel) courses.
- Students are taught for 5 hours per fortnight at GCSE and 10 hours per fortnight at A Level.
- There is a specialist recording studio and suite kitted out for A Level Music and Music Technology students, in addition to a shared computer room with KS3.
- There are opportunities to experience live performances, for example: GCSE students visit the Bridgewater Hall every year to hear the Halle orchestra perform “Music through the Ages” from 1600 to the present day, which directly ties in with the curriculum. A Level Music students regularly visit the Liverpool Empire for musical theatre performances which is part of their Component 1. Similarly, Music Technology students visit The University of Huddersfield each

year for a masterclass in analogue mixing to support them in the recording component. These are just a few examples of the many opportunities we provide regularly to directly support with the examination syllabi. Student voice also ties in with how we design our curriculum and extra-curricular offer.

- The Key Stage 4 and 5 curriculum is designed to provide the opportunity for students to further their interests and talents through accessing the next stage of their Music pathway by supporting progression. This includes giving students an understanding of opportunities for specialist and advanced music tuition individually and in groups, and support access to local, regional, and national youth music opportunities (many of our students perform with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Youth Orchestra, JRNCM and also Liverpool Empire Youth Academy). To this end, we have an annual partnership with Liverpool Empire, where our students have guaranteed work experience places and Young Ambassador positions to shape the arts and culture in the region. We enjoy seeing our students progressing to higher-level Music education at Conservatoire and University level (destinations including the RNCM, The University of Leeds, The University of Cambridge, The University of Sheffield, The University of Manchester, The University of Liverpool, LIPA, The University of Huddersfield) as well as utilising the skills music study enables to pursue careers in Law, Medicine, Engineering, Maths, Geology, French and others.
- Results at KS4 and KS5 are consistently amongst the highest value added in the school.

Resourcing:

5 specialist music rooms

P1- computers, midi keyboards and piano.

P2- class set of ukuleles, keyboards, electronic drum kits, electric, bass and acoustic guitars, orchestral percussion (including timpani), PA systems and piano.

P3- recording studio with mixing desk, computers, midi keyboards (A Level room only) and piano.

P4- class set of ukuleles, keyboards, PA system and piano.

P5- computers, midi keyboards, PA system and piano.

BHT Stage- drum kit, grand piano x 2, PA system. This is a performing arts space (maglocked) and no longer multi functional as a dining room. Audience capacity is 250.

3 music practice rooms with drum kits, pianos and PA systems.

Inclusivity and SEND:

- As an ethnically diverse school, Music@GSHS aspires to provide a full year-round curriculum embracing all 3 Intent themes for all students.

- Great Sankey High School is committed to achieving greater access within music education through identifying and removing potential barriers, including for students in low-income families and students with special educational needs and disabilities.
- Barriers to accessing the full curriculum for SEND and EHCP students are removed through the careful application of teaching resources and staff input (see further links with the department and school SEND policies).

Part B: Co-curricular music

- There is a school choir “Sankey Singers” who are an SAT choir, a mixture of Y7-13 students (and staff from across the school). The choir sing a range of genres from musicals, pop and classical. The choir perform regularly at local venues in addition to their performances at school. The choir rehearse once a week after school. The choir is fully inclusive, with no auditions. There are lots of opportunities for soloists. Miss Boardman, our vocal teacher directs the school choir assisted by Mrs Cosgrove.
- There is a school orchestra, with players from all four sections of the orchestra. This is a classical orchestra; the repertoire consists of Bach, Beethoven, Tchaikovsky, Wagner, Sibelius, Dvorak, Elgar and Holst. Like the choir, the orchestra perform regularly at local venues in addition to their concerts and performances at school. The orchestra rehearse twice a week. The orchestra is fully inclusive, with no auditions. Parts are differentiated from beginner right through to Grade 8 standard. The department can loan out instruments to any student in the orchestra who does not own their own instrument (subject to availability). Mrs Cosgrove directs the school choir assisted by Mr Leighton-Jones (string teacher) and Mr Bryan.
- The Performing Arts Faculty puts on an annual whole school musical every February. This includes a live student band/ orchestra directed by Mrs Cosgrove from September 2025. The musicals have SATB live singing and are consistently sold out for three consecutive nights. In February 2025, almost 180 children were involved in “High School Musical 2”.
- There is a Ukulele and Guitar ensemble who rehearse once a week. Ms Graves directs this ensemble. They perform annually in our Christmas Concert and Summer Showcase. All abilities are welcome.
- There is a Samba ensemble who rehearse once a week. Ms Graves directs this ensemble. They perform annually in our Christmas Concert and Summer Showcase. All abilities are welcome.
- There is a Performing ArtsTech Club who learn all about lighting and sound run by Mr Byford, the Performing Arts Technician (supported by Barrow Hall College student

leaders). This team of students oversee the lighting and sound at our concerts and events.

- There are several rock bands who rehearse after school with Mr Bennett, the guitar teacher and also Mr Murphy.
- Mr Murphy leads the Guitar and Ukulele Club for KS3-4 students.
- Mr Bryan also runs a “Music Tech” club for KS3-4 students using the software “ProTools”.
- All ensembles are completely FREE of charge.

Music Service- LMT (individual instrumental/ vocal lessons):

We outsource our Music Service with “The Love Music Trust”. LMT is the lead partner and fund holder for the Cheshire and Wirral Music Hub. LMT provide a valuable service to the Performing Arts Faculty, in addition to reinforcing and developing the standards of instrumental and singing programmes within the music curriculum. The music peripatetic team play a key role in contributing to the success of the curriculum and they ensure a rich and varied programme. We currently have 110 students accessing the instrumental service. The programme operates through the school day (20 minute individual lessons), the timetable changing every half term to reduce the impact on subject areas where students need to leave to attend their music lesson. Parents pay £12.38 for one lesson. Orchestral instruments are loaned out for free of charge subject to availability. All music lessons and sheet music are completely FREE for Pupil Premium students. Students have the opportunity to take Graded exams (ABRSM or Rock School). There are 8 staff who cover a broad range of instruments, including voice:

Mr Bennett- Guitar and Ukulele

Miss Boardman- Vocal

Mr Dalzell- Piano

Mr Lovell- Drums

Mr Leighton-Jones- Strings and piano

Ms McDougall- Piano

Mrs Savell- Woodwind and piano

Mr Taylor- Brass

Students who have received instrumental lessons at their primary school, complete an online application form to continue with their lessons. Any student can sign up for vocal/ instrumental lessons throughout their time at GSHS. In Year 7, we conduct a “launch” assembly, to introduce students to the LMT offer, including all the extra-curricular opportunities. As part of the Year 7 Music Curriculum, we conduct baseline assessments in performance, music theory and listening. Any student who displays significant music potential and enthusiasm are actively targeted and encouraged to access the LMT and extra-curricular offer.

Part C: Musical experiences

Each year, we buy into the Liverpool Empire Creative Partnership for schools. Through this programme, professionals are committed to nurturing creativity and the next diverse generation of the workforce. Via a partnership, they work in meaningful and sustained relationships with Great Sankey staff and students, working together to co-author education activities that address curriculum outcomes and school priorities as well as create opportunities to work with the inspiring productions that grace our stage.

The partnership with Liverpool Empire offers:

- Hands on workshops & Masterclasses led by industry professionals
- Performance opportunities on the Liverpool Empire stage
- Hugely discounted theatre trips
- Guaranteed work experience places
- Young Ambassador programmes with students across the region, shaping the educational cultural offer
- Production led engagement
- Interactive Venue tours
- Careers Insight talks and events
- Teacher Network events
- Teacher CPD opportunities
- School Partnership Programmes
- Show Related Learning with touring productions
- In School TIE performances

In addition to our partnership with Liverpool Empire, we also have contacts with Culture Warrington, Warrington Concert Band, Warrington Youth Orchestra, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, Junior RNCM, Manchester Camerata and The University of Huddersfield.

We have a parent group called “Friends of Sankey Performing Arts” (FoSPA) who support all our in-house events selling refreshments, raffle tickets and supporting the Performing Arts team with fundraising. All funds raised goes back into the music and drama departments.

This year, we have been inviting some of our parents to perform in the school orchestra for the Christmas Concert and the Summer Showcase as guest performers. These parents of children in our ensembles play in Warrington Concert Band (with Mrs Cosgrove and Mr Bryan) conducted by our parent, Ben Lloyd. It is wonderful to share collaborative performance with students, staff and parents alike. We are a “three-legged stool” and this really does build capacity, confidence and skill across all ages.

For 2025- 2026 our programme of concerts, events and trips is as follows:-

September

- Annual Y7 Launch Assembly
- Annual whole school musical rehearsals (“Annie”)

October

- Annual GCSE Music Solo and Ensemble Concert.
- KS3 Blood Brothers workshop in house.
- KS4-5 “Devising” workshop
- Annual “Music Through the Ages” Halle trip to the Bridgewater Hall

November

- Annual “The Last Post” live performance for Armistice Day.

December

- Year 7 “Matilda” the musical trip to the Liverpool Empire
- Annual Orchestra/ Choir Christmas assemblies.
- Annual Christmas Concert at Livewire.

January

- Annual School Musical (“Annie” in 2026)

March

- Annual March 20th Choir performance for the commemoration of the anniversary of the Warrington bombing.
- Young Ambassadors for the Arts at Liverpool Empire.
- Y8- 9 trip to the Liverpool Empire to watch “Dear England”

April

- Young Ambassadors for the Arts at Liverpool Empire.

May

- Annual GSHS ABRSM Grade 8 diploma students at “Proms in the Square” (Times Square).
- Young Ambassadors for the Arts at Liverpool Empire.
- “Sunny Afternoon” KS4-5 trip to the Liverpool Empire.

June

- Annual MAT Factor singing competition with performances from all schools in Omega.
- Annual Summer Showcase in BHT involving all ensembles and leaving soloists.
- Scholars Performing Arts are awarded in our Summer Showcase for each ensemble (most outstanding and most committed).
- Student performance at the Liverpool Empire

July

- Livewire Summer Performance for the Choir and Orchestra
- Y10 and Y12 Work in Theatre Week for work experience.

In the future

Development

- To further embed our curriculum so that it actively informs students of careers and routes to industry which is integrated into schemes of work.
- To develop the KS3 Schemes of Learning with some new units such as “musicals” which link into KS4-5 curriculum and the drama curriculum. To develop the Year 7 “Introduction” to music so it is more practical.
- To organise a music tour to a different part of the UK/ abroad so the school orchestra and choir have the opportunity to perform in different venues and new performance spaces. This is all part of teaching our children to learn to adapt to new performance spaces- a necessary skill for any musician. The opportunity to try new experiences will assist in boosting self-confidence, independence, teamwork and communication skills, expression and commitment, whilst also developing new perspectives. There is no doubt that culture influences the ways we learn, interpret and experience music. Touring to a different part of the UK or overseas will provide our already high standard of choral/ orchestral performers the chance to bond, strengthen friendships, foster understanding, and shape ensemble unity, whilst also building relationships between the different ensemble members, within sections and also with their directors/ conductor. Touring would also assist in playing to new audiences, getting Great Sankey High School on the map nationally.
- To increase our numbers for KS4- 5 Music and Music Technology.
- To appoint “Performing Arts Ambassadors”, two per year. These students will support staff with Options Evenings, performances, assemblies, leading ensembles, marketing, raffles and fund raising, ticket sales, student voice and presentations of awards.