Music at Our Lady and St. Thomas Catholic Primary School

Part of the Bishop Hogarth Catholic Academy Trust

I**ntent Statement:**

At Our Lady and St Thomas Catholic Primary School, we are committed to providing all students with a high-quality music education that ignites their creativity and fosters a lifelong love of music. We believe that music is not only an essential part of a child's personal development but also an avenue for self-expression, self-confidence and achievement. Through engaging with music, our students develop essential skills such as listening, collaboration, discipline, and emotional expression.

Our music curriculum is designed to provide every child with the opportunity to develop their musical abilities and gain exposure to a diverse range of musical styles, periods, and cultures. We aim to inspire students to appreciate music in all its forms, from classical and choral to contemporary and popular. Above all, our music education fosters a sense of community, teamwork and pride as students participate in performances and share their musical achievements.

Our music education provision includes:

* A structured progression of musical skills from EYFS through to Year 6, allowing students to grow from basic musical concepts to more advanced vocal and instrumental techniques.
* Active involvement in creating and developing musical ideas through vocal and instrumental practice.
* Performance opportunities that build self-confidence, teamwork, and a sense of personal accomplishment.
* Access to high-quality teaching and leadership, ensuring that students receive the best possible musical education.

**Implementation Statement:**

At Our Lady and St Thomas, we implement a comprehensive music curriculum (via Charanga) that is designed to ensure a gradual development of musical skills while providing rich and varied learning experiences for all students. Each class receives a dedicated 45-minute to 1-hour music lesson each week, which is carefully planned to provide both the theoretical and practical aspects of music education. Through regular classroom instrumental teaching, students are introduced to a wide range of instruments, developing their hands-on music-making abilities and gaining a practical understanding of different musical traditions.

We are proud to offer every child the opportunity to learn an instrument by Year 3, with a focus on ensuring that musical learning starts at an early age. As part of our progressive approach, we are introducing opportunities for younger children in Key Stage 1 to engage with musical instruments. Alongside these instrumental lessons, students participate in weekly hymn practice, which not only develops their vocal abilities but also fosters a sense of collective participation and teamwork as they sing together in assemblies.

We place a strong emphasis on specialist instrumental instruction, with small group or 1-to-1 lessons available for students wishing to further develop their skills in instruments like the violin and piano. These lessons are delivered by expert tutors from Durham Music Hub, ensuring that students receive the highest level of guidance and support. Termly visits from external music specialists provide additional opportunities for students to learn new instruments, develop their vocal abilities, and explore different musical genres.

Through partnerships with external organizations such as Durham Music Service, Durham Cathedral Outreach Choral Programme and Durham Brass, we provide students with exposure to professional music performances, workshops and collaborative projects. These partnerships allow our students to experience the diversity of music beyond the classroom and connect with the wider musical community.

Music at Our Lady and St Thomas is not just about learning instruments; it is about creating a supportive and inclusive environment where all students feel confident to express themselves. We regularly provide performance opportunities for students in school assemblies, concerts and external events. These performances help to build students’ confidence, collaboration skills and pride in their musical accomplishments. Additionally, our inclusive curriculum ensures that all children, including those from mixed-age groups and Pupil Premium backgrounds, receive tailored support and access to music education, including funding for extracurricular lessons and performances when necessary.

Our commitment to professional development for staff ensures that our teachers are equipped with the knowledge and skills to deliver high-quality music education. Through continuous professional development and partnerships with curriculum providers, such as Charanga, we ensure that our music teaching remains current, inspiring and engaging for all students.

**Impact Statement:**

The implementation of a comprehensive, well-structured music curriculum at Our Lady and St Thomas has had a profound impact on our students, both musically and personally. Students are developing strong musical skills, from an understanding of basic rhythm and notation in the early years to advanced instrumental and vocal techniques in later years. As a result, children leave our school with a deep appreciation of music and the ability to engage with it in a creative, confident and informed manner.

Through regular performances, students have developed increased self-confidence, a sense of achievement, and the ability to collaborate with peers. Performance opportunities both in and outside of school allow students to showcase their skills to a wider audience, deepening their sense of pride in their musical development. Students have become more self-disciplined, creative and resilient, learning to embrace challenges and celebrate their accomplishments as part of a team.

Our students demonstrate a broad and inclusive appreciation of music, actively engaging with diverse musical styles and cultures. This broad exposure helps them to develop not only technical musical skills but also empathy and respect for different musical traditions. Their ability to express themselves through music is a testament to the impact of our carefully planned and sequenced curriculum.

The impact of our music program extends beyond musical skills; it positively influences the students' personal development. Students show improved teamwork, communication and emotional intelligence as they collaborate in musical ensembles and perform in front of audiences. Their involvement in music fosters a sense of community, belonging and pride within the school and our community, as well as an understanding of the importance of creative expression in their lives.

As we continue to develop our music curriculum, we are confident that our approach will ensure that students leave Our Lady and St Thomas with a lifelong passion for music, a strong set of musical skills, and the confidence to pursue further opportunities in music and beyond. Through our commitment to high-quality teaching, collaboration with external experts, and a wide range of performance opportunities, we are helping students develop the necessary skills to become thoughtful, confident and capable individuals.