

Music development plan summary: St. Mary & All Saints Primary School, Reading

Overview

Detail	Information
Academic year that this summary covers	2025-2026
Date this summary was published	22 nd July 2026
Date this summary will be reviewed	July 2027
Name of the school music lead	Helen Toole
Name of school leadership team member with responsibility for music (if different)	N/A
Name of local music hub	Berkshire Music Trust
Name of other music education organisation(s) (if partnership in place)	N/A

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. This document reflects on the academic year 2025-2026 and looks ahead to 2026-2027.

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.

- Every child has a music lesson every week: Nursery, Reception and Year 1 – 30 minutes (small groups), Year 2 – 40 minutes, Year 3 – 45 minutes, Year 4 – 45 minutes (30 minutes on Toots with BMT, 15 minutes singing focus with class teacher), UKS2 – 50 minutes. Weekly 20-minute whole-school Music Assembly.
- Planning is bespoke to suit our children's characters and needs and is based upon our own skills progression (that audits well against the MMC) and fits with the school's ethos that children should live "Life in all its Fullness". The "Sounds of Intent" framework is used as a reference point for children who are not able to access the Curriculum at an appropriate level. Lessons are delivered by a teacher who teaches music only across the school.
- Singing is used throughout the curriculum as either a focus for the main learning or as a musical warmup.

- The school has children with a wide variety of needs, including SEND, which are catered for on an individual basis subject to available resources and support. Children are catered for through bespoke planning, scaffolding, differentiation and provision of adapted instruments (Nuvo recorders; ukulele chord changers) as needed/where available. This year, a reorganisation of the music timetable meant that more time was available for our SEND units, facilitating sessions in smaller groups.
- In EYFS, engagement, movement and repetition is key, with opportunities to join in with familiar nursery rhymes, sing accessible simple songs and to explore sounds. A variety of safe instruments are used to promote exploration, improvisation and more focussed rhythm and pulse work.
- In KS1, we have a singing-led programme that uses a Kodály-inspired approach to teach early musicianship skills with vocal tuning and connecting with the inter-related dimensions of music. This approach puts “sound before symbol” by immersing children in experiencing concepts before they are named and before notation is introduced. Children have the opportunity to use first untuned then tuned percussion instruments to support their learning.
- In LKS2, the Year 3 programme starts with a continuation of the KS1 programme – this reflects the children’s needs as developing musicians to prepare them for learning recorder after Christmas. In particular, the opportunity is taken to develop further their understanding of relative pitch and simple plotting of pitch on two lines before introducing a full staff.
- Year 4 children take their recorder skills to the next level and learn to play TooT – a programme delivered for a whole year by a visiting teacher from Berkshire Music Trust, paid for by the school throughout. This extended to a performance at the Hexagon Theatre as part of a massed orchestra and it is hoped that this will be repeated in future years.
- UKS2 children re-visit and develop their musicianship skills on recorders and a variety of tuned percussion instruments (glockenspiels, xylophones, metallophones and a vibraphone). These are used to develop ensemble performance skills, their understanding of standard notation and encourage improvisation and composition in various styles. Singing continues to be a strong focus, including singing whilst playing.
- In Year 5, children are introduced to ukuleles and TAB notation, and by Year 6 (when they also revisit ukulele) they are encouraged to choose a preferred instrument to use in classroom ensemble (this can include instruments (if any) being learned outside school).
- Year 6 have the benefit of a short beginner keyboard course to prepare them for secondary school. They also have the opportunity to use music technology, working with Garage Band to compose a suitable textured backing track for a rap.

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 school has a Choir that is open to KS2 children and run after school every week – it is free to join. Children in Choir take part in a variety of performance opportunities, both in and outside school.
- The school also has an Ensemble Club that is open to KS2 children and run after school every week – it is also free to join. Children in Ensemble Club take part in a variety of performance opportunities, both in and outside school.
- Selected children in Year 5 progress from TooT to Flute in small group weekly lessons during the Autumn Term, paid for by the school. Thereafter, children wishing to continue will have the opportunity to sign up for individual or small group lessons, but these will need to be paid for by parents.
- All children are regularly signposted to musical offerings from Berkshire Music Trust (early years, instrumental and vocal lessons) and Universal Voices (Reading University children's choir).

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.

- Our weekly Music Assembly includes singing, listening and rhythm activities for the whole school. Children also sing at the school's church services.
- EYFS and KS1 do a musical Nativity performance for Christmas and Year 6 perform a musical play at the end of the academic year – each is performed to the school and to parents. It is hoped to reintroduce a musical play for LKS2 at Easter.
- At the end of the academic year, LKS2 children perform on recorders (Y3) or Toots (Y4) and singing to the up-coming yeargroups; UKS2 children perform (voice/instruments) to the whole school.
- Year 4 took part in new massed schools project to play alongside an orchestra at the Hexagon and it is hoped that this will become a regular occurrence.
- The Choir takes part in the annual Berkshire Music Trust Junior Music Festival at the Hexagon Theatre.
- Choir and Ensemble Club have opportunities to perform to the school, parents and the wider community for Christmas and at the end of the academic year; Ensemble Club also performs on Samba instruments at Reading Half Marathon (annually).

- Opportunities have been taken to bring in musicians from outside the school to perform: 5Ts Brass, a musician from the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and boys from the music department at Reading Boys' School.
- A successful application for subsidised tickets and a travel grant for a group of 25 selected children was made to the Royal Opera House to see La Fille Mal Gardee. This was followed by a short project in which the relevant children composed a simple cups routine to perform for a film that was submitted to the ROH who gave some lovely feedback.

In the future

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

- Consistent weekly teaching across the school has resulted in an upwards shift in progress and consequently of the planning philosophy, particularly at Reception and Y1 level where focussed musicianship training using the Kodály-inspired First Thing Music progression will be introduced earlier. Due to improved progress in Reception, Y1 will be starting at a more advanced point.
- Music is taught in EYFS and KS1 in a manner that is accessible to all teachers to deliver. The staff who accompany the children to these sessions (taught by a music teacher) are encouraged to actively join in and to treat the sessions as CPD with a view to delivering similar sessions themselves in the future.
- The Year 3s of 2025-2026 made better progress than previous years and this has been flagged with the peripatetic teacher from BMT who will teach them in Year 4.
- Whilst the Year 4 Project covers all aspects of the Curriculum, for 2026-27, we are introducing an additional singing scheme into Year 4 to supplement their learning by maintaining and progressing their singing skills – singing in tune and developing confidence in different styles of part singing.
- The expectation that KS2 classes will perform to the school at appropriate points will be pursued further as appropriate with the aim of becoming more frequent.
- Due to greater progress in Year 4, greater expectations will be placed upon the Year 5s for 2026-27. Their developing recorder unit in Autumn Term will involve a focus song and an instrumental break and more part playing will be introduced. The curriculum for Year 5 has been reorganised to put their ukulele unit in Summer Term so that less is lost before embarking upon their Year 6 ukulele unit in the following Autumn Term.
- We are continually exploring ways in which to engage and progress the children who have additional needs and have established a new routine for teaching those in our special needs unit; this will be developed further and kept under review.
- The new National Curriculum for Music is awaited with interest. It is anticipated that, since our progression already audits well against the Model Music Curriculum, has a good focus on notation, and uses an active no-screen-needed

approach in EYFS and KS1, it should not have a significant impact upon how music is taught.

Further information (optional)

- Music teaching at SMAS adopts the Swanwick “Clasp” structure, in which each unit of learning includes “composing” (which includes improvising), “literature study” (learning elements of music theory such as notation), “audiation” (listening activities, including listening to each other), “skill acquisition” (correct instrument handling and technique) and “performance”.
- Our approach prioritises engagement, aiming to give children the opportunity to experience enjoyment through a variety of musical activities, using voices and instruments and including movement activities to reinforce musical elements at every level.
- We aim to ensure that, by the time our children move on to secondary school, they are confident singers who can play instruments musically using correct posture and technique. They will have developed a general understanding of the inter-related dimensions of music and learned how they can be utilised to create an effect, and they have become more confident in reading simple standard rhythm and pitch notation.
- SMAS is a Lead School for Music in partnership with Berkshire Music Trust; our music lead regularly provides support and teacher training for other schools within the school’s local catchment.