

Music development plan summary: Upper Shirley High School

Overview

Detail	Information
Academic year that this summary covers	2025-2026
Date this summary was published	Autumn 2025
Date this summary will be reviewed	Autumn 2026
Name of the school music lead	George Smith
Name of school leadership team member with responsibility for music (if different)	Sian Cumming
Name of local music hub	South Coast Music Partnership (Southampton)
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

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.

Our school curriculum for music features four key areas as common threads throughout all academic years:

- Performing music
- Composing music
- Appraising music
- Use of modern music technology

Many of these areas overlap – students will use technology in every music lesson, sometimes for composition and analysis tasks and sometimes to aid in performance.

In Key Stage 3 students will develop singing skills as the primary instrument of choice, and also have opportunities to become familiar with the function and role of the drum kit and the layout of the keyboard, particularly as they relate to composing and

technology based tasks. The overall aim of our Key Stage 3 music curriculum is to enable and empower students to recognise the music that their world is filled with and to meaningfully converse about it in their adult lives. Technology and computer software is heavily featured because this lends accessibility, enjoyment and transferrable skills relevant to the wants and needs of children as a modern audience.

Post-options, students can study GCSE Music following the Eduqas exam board, or Music Technology, following the NCFE Level 1/2 Music Technology course. Students who are especially engaged in music and have future aspirations in the arts industry can opt for both subjects and are well supported by USH staff and our visiting music teachers in doing so.

Our curriculum is built around the needs and interests of our students and the strengths of our staff to ensure that children are taught content relevant to them and the modern world in a way that is authentic and fully informed. We have also developed our curriculum to make the best use of our new music department which was renovated over a year ago and features improved practice room facilities and a full suite of computers and software for two classrooms.

Part B: Co-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.

We offer a wide range of co-curricular opportunities in music, including:

- Choir
- Guitar Ensemble
- Jazz Band
- Termly Pop-up Orchestra
- Open music practice rooms for instrumentalists and options students to book and use at social times
- School musical production every two years, jointly with the drama department

We also have Fifteen visiting music teachers from the local music services who teach in school each week, with currently over 120 students taking part in individual or paired lessons. These are available free to pupil premium students and heavily discounted for students with an EHCP or who are LAC.

The termly Pop-Up Orchestra is a particular point of pride for our school as this initiative, which replaced a weekly orchestra practice, saw our orchestra increase in numbers and in quality of music performed and allows the wider school to see the value given to these activities as they happen during the school day. This initiative was

enacted because of pupil feedback that a weekly orchestra was not needed when our local music hub provides such an incredibly well structured and delivered suite of ensembles, and therefore a termly pop-up day would incentivise more students to participate without removing the opportunity from those who don't participate in local out-of-school activities.

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 co-curricular activities culminate in:

- Christmas and Spring concerts
- JEP Summer Promenade Concert jointly with our feeder schools, every two years
- School musical every two years
- Performances at the Autumn open morning and Summer Awards Evenings
- Various trips to take part in local performances, often organised by the local music hub, eg. open mic nights at The Stage Door

Additionally all students in Key Stage 3 are given the opportunity to take part in our community Remembrance choir as part of the singing curriculum.

We have also run various trips across the years; in particular, year 9 musicians have been able to attend a free lunchtime concert at Turner Sims each year, usually linked with our jazz topic, and we have arranged music specific Taster Days at Barton Peveril College for students in years 10 and 11, so that they might experience the life of college students who are involved in A level music, music technology and their specialist Jazz and Pop course.

In the future

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

As part of our music development plan, we are continuing in a planning stage for improving the following areas:

- SEND progress in the music curriculum
- Pupil voice when planning the curriculum, particularly in years in which students select their options (year 8 and year 9)

We are ready to implement the following after last year's planning:

- A meaningful, manageable and rewarding scheme of homework, particularly in Key Stage 3

Our Key Stage 3 curriculum has been redeveloped with our new music facilities in mind, particularly with music technology now available to all students every lesson. We are now reviewing the effectiveness of the major changes to the curriculum we made last year in order to tweak and refine lesson plans for this academic year whilst also more directly incorporating new USH core teaching practices.

Further information

Our school's music development plan was created with support from our local music hub who have attended our department meetings and offered advice and coaching on how to create and enact a music development plan. We are proud of our links with the South Coast Music Partnership and their team.

We are also pleased to be an SCMP Lead School for music, and form part of their Network of Excellence, consulting locally on high quality music education and eventually offering support to other schools in the local area who want to make use of the SCMP's menu of CPD.

We have strong ties with our feeder schools. The two-yearly JEP Summer Prom concert, usually at Central Hall, is performed alongside infants and juniors from Shirley Schools, Hollybrook and Wordsworth, and the music leads at all of these schools enjoy a strong, collaborative working relationship. As part of this partnership, George Smith (Leader of Music and Music Technology at USH) delivers an orchestra programme at Shirley Junior School.

We are very proud to have opened a newly refurbished music department last year, ensuring that all music lessons have access to the resources and space that they need and ensuring that an entire building is dedicated to music so that music lessons can always continue regardless of other school activities.