

The Quality of Education: Music - Purpose and Provision



St Christopher's:
A Church of England Academy

That person is like a tree planted by streams of water,
which yields its fruit in season
and whose leaf does not wither-
whatever they do prospers.

Psalm 1:3

The Purpose of Study

The National Curriculum for music aims to ensure that all pupils:

- Perform, listen to, review and evaluate music
- Be taught to sing, create and compose music
- Understand and explore how music is created, produced and communicated.

We believe that pupils deserve a broad and ambitious music curriculum, rich in skills and knowledge, which ignites curiosity and prepares them well for future learning, in music, performing arts or employment. Our music curriculum aims to:

- Develop a thorough understanding of music, through performing, composing listening and analysing
- Develop self-confidence through performance, both through lessons and extra-curricular participation in the departments many ensembles
- Develop resilience as a key skill for all pupils that can transfer across subjects
- Encourage creativity through composition skills
- Understand the complexities of music through analysis of a wide range of genres from different musical and cultural perspectives
- Encourage personal development through ensemble performances and group compositions
- Understand that music is everywhere in society and can be appreciated in any shape or form that a student chooses, across a wide variety of genres
- Understand how music can support the development of life skills, such as confidence, self-awareness, perseverance and discipline and provide a holistic experience that they can take beyond their musical studies
- Develop their cross-curricular skills of problem solving, perseverance, diligence, team work, time management, organisation, responsibility and cultural history
- Gain a sense of achievement through performance.
- Make aware that music is for all regardless of background or ability and can have an enriching effect on a pupil's life
- Instil a life-long appreciation of music across a variety of genres and cultures
- Develop analytical and critical thinking skills
- Develop techniques such as mastery in practical lessons that can be utilised throughout the curriculum.

The Elements of Music are the foundation for the curriculum across all key stages and all schemes of learning focus on and develop these from Year 7 through to A-level. They are the building blocks of music.

The curriculum is wide and varied covering all aspects of music from the European Classical Tradition, Popular Music, Folk and Traditional Music to World Music. The curriculum ensures that all pupils sing, perform, compose and listen to and appraise music with good analytical skills employing subject specific language. The importance of involvement in extracurricular activities cannot be underestimated for the impact it can have on a pupil's life, such as learning an instrument, taking a dance or drama class, joining one of the department's many ensembles or participating in concerts, events and the school musical.

In order to reflect the National Curriculum Statements the academic curriculum is broad and varied in order to capture the enthusiasm of pupils and also deepen and broaden their knowledge of all things musical. The areas of study; Composition, Performance, Listening to and Appraising music are based in the Elements of Music and these are developed from Key Stage 3 – 5. These are the foundation blocks of every piece of music from a simple keyboard melody to studying a piece of music at A-level such as Mahler's 6th Symphony.

In composition all pupils learn to compose music in a structure and in various genres at KS3 which leads directly into the exam board composition requirements at KS4 and 5. Knowledge and Understanding is built upon throughout the key stages to enable this. Pupils are encouraged to effectively analyse and appraise music using the correct technical vocabulary with effective application in order to build knowledge and demonstrate understanding through the ladders of assessment. The pupils can see clear progress through these across Key Stage 3, through the use of milestone assessments and they also provide a clear and appropriate base for further study at Key Stage 4.

All pupils are invited to study an instrument and provision is made for any disadvantaged pupils (those eligible for the pupil premium) to undertake this free of charge.

Staff, within their own teaching and planning, are encouraged to structure and scaffold lessons in light of the class they are teaching whilst ensuring the SOL is covered in its entirety. All staff are expected to adhere to the Scheme of Learning and to ensure that there is consistency across all key stages with all students completing the same work, scaffolded where necessary. Any resources produced by staff are expected to be shared across the department, having been discussed at a departmental meeting and for all pupils and students to have access to these. Book scrutiny by the DoM ensures that this takes place and can identify any areas of concern. All lesson materials are engaging, link to the ladders of assessment and help the pupils to develop an inquiring mind about music and to seek further study and curriculum enrichment.

Our music curriculum is about learning **IN** and **THROUGH** music and the transference of the skills gained to all aspects of a pupil's life.

Complementing the School Purpose

Foundation Scripture

Music is the key gift that we have in order to praise God, whether that be through our voice or the use of an instrument. Therefore it contributes to that flourishing that is clearly seen in Psalm 1. It could be argued that all other aspects of music are secondary to this primary use of employing music to glorify God. **'To sing is to pray twice'** Augustine.

As music teachers, if we do our job correctly both as teachers and mentors for our pupils, then we will send them out into the world ready to serve God in all they do, to be like the tree that flourishes and bears much fruit that is evident in a young person's life. If we model a life built upon the foundations of a living relationship with Jesus in which we demonstrate love for all and value everyone we create empathy for others in our young people. If we have built resilience through musical skills then trials become easier to bear as a young person gets older. If we have built the techniques of mastery then these can be applied through life. Overcoming the battle of a musical phrase that seems impossible to play in a rehearsal, through practice and determination, can provide an exemplar for life. This clearly reflects our foundation scripture and will encourage all students to build the skills required in life to prosper.

The Music Department seeks to value and respect all pupils and students and to see in all of them the image and likeness of God. Each student has an intrinsic value, unique to them to be developed and nurtured in order for them to flourish, not just as musicians, but as young people who can bear much fruit in their community and abroad.

Drawing out potential in a young musician, of any ability, helps them to develop and flourish not just as musicians but as young people. Aiming for excellence in musical skills within a student's own level and potential, develops and cultivates skills that are invaluable.

Staff working as a team with students in performance and composition drive forward academic achievement as potential is realised and skills developed. Working together as a team in an ensemble, in a production, on a concert tour builds essential social skills, encourages good and healthy relationships and creates within students a value for each other avoiding them sitting in the company of mockers.

Rehearsals often create an environment where pupils feel comfortable talking to each other and sharing difficulties helping them to heal each other in love and friendship. This has a direct impact on their studies helping them to overcome barriers and challenges that could otherwise hinder progress and academic success.

Music is everywhere in life and harnessing the skills required to perform, compose or appraise it will ensure a student planted by a stream of water, whose life glorifies God and who cannot but succeed and prosper in life.

Key Themes

Our curriculum in Music supports the ethos statement of the school. In many ways, music throughout the school forms part of the ethos of the school from curriculum to worship to performances. Music is deeply embedded in the life of the school.

The curriculum is carefully designed in order for all students to be able to develop their potential as young musicians and for all students to work together to improve, refine and develop these skills. Through this nurturing of musical talent, across a wide range of abilities, all students can learn how to live well in society, with each other, and most importantly how to contribute positively to society.

Knowing what it is to be fully alive

What better example could we have of what it feels to be fully alive than that of a musical performance whether as a performer in a classroom, as a performer in a concert or as a listener to a concert. Music speaks to the soul and communicates emotions and feelings that we often have no words for. Music aids mental health and often provides an escape from everyday troubles. Through improving the ability to develop listening and appraising skills across all three Key Stages from listening to a piece of programme music at year 7 level to the same for A-level provides a growing sense of wonderment and amazement at the intricacies of music and the feeling of being alive reflected in compositions. Exploring the Western Classical Tradition throughout the key stages, with the sacred music of Haydn and Bach, the requiems of the late Romantic Period or the intricacies of music in the 20th Century, allows students to explore their own emotions as they listen to the music. This heightens any sense of 'being alive' a student may have.

Learning how to live well together

Performing a duet in a class keyboard performance and mastering the intricacies of a group performance to performing on a concert stage as part of a choir or band teach team building and working together skills like nothing else can. Learning to rely on other musicians within the mix, learning to maintain their own part with security and assurance, learning to adjust for your fellow musicians demonstrates most ably the ability to live well together.

Performing on a concert tour and living and performing with the same people for over a week, often in demanding circumstances, teaches more life skills in one week than anything else could possibly do. Building empathy with others, understanding others and taking them at face value for who they are breaks down barriers of wealth, culture and ability. Helping others practically and emotionally on a demanding tour or concert builds empathy and love for others.

Securing wisdom and understanding

Wisdom can only be found through the fear of God. A respectful fear and one in which a student aims to get things right. Building a set of music skills which are transferrable across life is invaluable to gaining wisdom and understanding in all things.

Composing a piece of music and learning how to refine and develop this aids understanding across a wide set of other subjects and skills. Persevering through a difficult rehearsal, and supporting your fellow musicians through this, provides wisdom in how to deal with the challenges of life. Understanding a piece of music composed in the 20th Century and all the intricacies and challenges of chromaticism, tonality and structure can offer an insight into the mind of a composer and an understanding therefore, of how the mind works in communicating music and becoming a critical thinker in analysing it.

Christian Virtues

Christian virtues are taught through the curriculum throughout all three Key Stages. Love for one another as you work together for a performance at Key Stage 3 or an A-Level recital, supporting one another in love is clear. And amusingly the hope here that the other person will indeed get it right!

Living and working together in lessons of performance and composition and performing the music develop fortitude as you strive to improve skills and performance level. It is the not giving up that counts and the wonderful sense of achievement as you master something that was previously unobtainable. This demonstrates fortitude within a student that they can reflect in life.

Perhaps the most important value that music can convey is one of love. Love for our fellow musicians, love for the poor and marginalised at a charity concert, love for each other and lifelong friendships formed across a bond of music making and striving for excellence. The 'music gang' is one to be involved, non-judgemental, totally accepting and a loving and supporting environment.

Curriculum Aims

Music can offer pupils and students an opportunity to explore their faith and beliefs. Through performing sacred music at a high level in one of the school choirs to listening to a movement from the Verdi Requiem in a GCSE lesson, music affords the performer or listener the time to absorb it and reflect. Studying a piece of world music such as the Sitar music of Ravi Shankar can allow other faiths and beliefs to be explored. In the study of Blues music and the 12 bar blues songs in year 8 a focus on life and all its trials can help a student explore some of life's greatest challenges. Studying the music of the African slaves and its influence on Jazz music can allow us to see mistakes that have been made and the importance of not making these again. All of these add to the rich musical culture that we have in the West.

Provide opportunities for all pupils to learn and achieve

Music at St. Christopher's is inclusive for all regardless of background, the ability to pay for music lessons or academic ability. All pupils can study a musical instrument of their own choice from across the broad spectrum of all orchestral instruments, guitar or keyboards. All instrumental teachers are carefully appointed and offer students of all abilities a clear structured course with progression towards graded examinations. The department's ensembles offers the opportunity for all musicians of all abilities to participate in, perform, gain valuable ensemble skills and make progress playing music with others. In classroom music every lesson is differentiated to allow all students to access it. There is clear progression through the Department's ladders of assessment and departmental meetings offer the opportunity for staff to share good practice and lesson ideas and resources. Book scrutiny and lesson observations allow the DoM to observe good practice and to ensure that all pupils are learning and achieving across each key stage.

At Key Stages 4 and 5 difficulties to student's success are identified early and extra support and provision put in place. All students can access these extra sessions. Further resources are employed to raise pupil standards and expectations and extra examination practice questions and support are offered. Pupils at Key stage 4 are often mentored by a senior music captain or a member of staff.

Promote the moral, cultural, mental and physical development of all pupil

Music can provide the most amazing support for students who are struggling with their mental health and it helps to support them as they get involved with others, build friendships and encourage one another. Playing a musical instrument either in class or in instrumental lessons build good physical stamina and often aids those who suffer from Asthma. Singing is good for all of the above and could be described as 'food for the soul'. If we sing we lift our own hearts, feel a sense of purpose and achievement and develop as young people and adults alike. Music helps us to 'escape' from the realities of life for a while and then return stronger to face them.

Experiencing another culture on a concert tour, meeting with students from another school abroad, performing with the African Children's Choir all aid to a student's cultural development and acceptance of other cultures. It makes the world a much friendlier place!

Prepare pupils for the opportunities and responsibilities of adult life

'Music is the only reason I have the confidence and ability to work with other people.' Sixth Form Student.

Singing together in a choir, in class, playing together in a band, learning a musical instrument whilst overcoming difficulties and striving for excellence build essential skills to success in life. A rich curriculum offering a multitude of opportunities for students can give them a love of music which will transfer to their own children. The value of music in a young person's life is priceless.

Understanding their own limitations as they perform, compose or listen to music, being able to build skills and knowledge to overcome these and the sense of achievement as they succeed should never be underestimated. What better preparation could there be as we set them out into the adult world and all the challenges it presents?

Discussing the emotional and intellectual meaning of music in class discussions from Year 7 to 13 creates an emotional intelligence within students.

Complementing the School Provision

Teaching Approaches

All departmental staff use a variety of teaching approaches in order to get the best out of the students. All members of staff have a wide and diverse skills set and this is used to the fullest in curriculum lessons and in ensemble and choir practises. Modelling is often very successful and for the A-level student higher level questioning in order to tease out the intricacies of a piece of music have proved to be successful in raising student attainment.

Structured and good feedback at Key Stage 3 is invaluable – and building in some reflection time into lessons for students to act on the feedback has met with much success.

In performance and composition lessons peer and self-evaluation in line with the ladders of assessment has proven to show good development of both compositions and performance. This has also built confidence amongst the students.

Perhaps the most important teaching strategy we have is one of encouragement – at whatever the level the student is at. Encouraging a performance of a simple piano piece to a performance of an A-level recital piece gives confidence thus building better skills and mastery of technique.

Pupil Attitudes

Music is popular amongst many of the students and this is evident in the uptake for Music lessons, the constantly full department at lunchtime as students meet and chat and make music together. Pupil voice has given key insights into the curriculum popularity and this has been used after a departmental inspection.

Being able to run an annual concert tour with between 50 – 60 participants each year and the always oversubscribed school musical, shows the musical nature of the pupils and their pleasure at being involved. Getting to know the pupils and students at these events has been invaluable and the positions of Music Captain are well fought for every year!

All the Department's ensembles have many members from year 7 – 13 and are popular with excellent attendance each week.

Going beyond the National Curriculum and / or Exam Board Specifications

If a student leaves with a love of music in any genre and an appreciation and understanding of that then we have done our jobs well. If an A-Level student progresses on to study music at Conservatoire then enter the profession, having joined us with limited skills in year 7 then we have nurtured and shaped talent and given them a musical future.

We strive for excellence in all ensembles and drive the students to master technical passages that should be beyond them. In the Key Stage 5 curriculum we study a vast amount of additional music allowing a greater understanding of the historical and stylistic areas of study and encourage the students to write about these in their essays.

We are exploring and using the new Model Music Curriculum and have developed a scheme of learning that is robust, teaches many skills, builds teamwork and resilience within a student. We aim to teach them a huge variety of musical skills and encourage them to apply these across the board.

Extra-Curricular and Enrichment

There are huge opportunities for all pupils and students to get involved in. The department has several ensembles covering the entire ability range from beginner to advanced.

Wind Band, Concert band, Jazz Band, String Orchestra, Orchestra, Senior Vocals Girls' Choir, Cantores SATB Sixth Form and Senior Student Choir, Guitar Group, Flute Ensemble, Junior Choir and Music Theory and GCSE Composition groups.

The annual concert tour takes the jazz band and two senior choirs on tour abroad. Trips are organised to King George's Hall to see the North West's top orchestras. Several concerts are arranged within the community supporting local churches and charities and the Department is well known in the east of the County.

The choirs perform regularly at Diocesan events and services and also compete in local and national competitions. They have also been regular competitors at the International Eisteddfod in Llangollen and in the BBC Choir of the Year Competition where they have been awarded Choir of the Day.

Our rock musicians regularly rehearse within the department and many have gone on to secure recording contracts with their bands. For curriculum enrichment we encourage pupils at Key Stage 3 to come along and work on their performances and compositions at lunchtime and at Key Stage 4 we have clinics at lunchtime to help them progress and achieve or exceed their target levels. At KS5 one to one support is offered to all students where necessary.

Whole School / Cross Curricular Elements

There have been several cross curricular events with other departments to provide a holistic approach for students. When studying Holst's, The Planets Suite, pupils gained a musical understanding of the work, made the planets in art, wrote about their planet in English and then these were displayed in Accrington Town Hall as part of a project with Blackburn Symphony Orchestra. Pupils were invited to attend the live performance of the work and this was very successful.

Reading time is allowed in most lessons as we cover the history of music from the Renaissance Period to the 21st Century. Silent reading time is used as well as sharing reading throughout the class. At Key Stage 5 all students are encouraged to read round the subject and are provided with a reading list, often given books to read and then these are discussed as a group in lesson.


As part of the whole school HDS has complete the Leadership Pathways Programme, the Diocesan Christian Leadership Course and is also the SLE in music for the East Lancashire Teaching School. HDS is also an examiner for three examination boards and a moderator for music with AQA.



The Department has a reputation within the County – one of where music is encouraged and developed, where every student can learn to the best of their ability and most importantly to succeed. Many of the school musicians play in County Ensembles.

Ad Gloriam Dei

To the Glory of God



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