

Music development plan summary: Helena Romanes School

Overview

Detail	Information
Academic year that this summary covers	2026-2027
Date this summary was published	September 2026
Date this summary will be reviewed	June 2026
Name of the school music lead	Ms Elizabeth Bowerfield
Name of school leadership team member with responsibility for music (if different)	Ms. Ginny Warren
Name of local music hub	Greater Essex Music Hub
Name of other music education organisation(s) (if partnership in place)	Great Dunmow Town Band Great Dunmow Youth Band Saffron Centre for Young Musicians Saffron Hall Outreach Department Thaxted Music Festival

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.

Children in the Primary phase work with our specialist teachers from the secondary phase in their weekly music lesson. Aural skills are strengthened in every session with games such as call and response. Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 work on their listening skills, learning to read and play note values. We build a repertoire of songs and encourage pupils to sing as a soloist with growing confidence.

Pupils in Year 3, 4 and 5 play individual instruments provided by the secondary phase as part of the primary curriculum. Currently, they are playing the trumpet and trombone

as a whole class. Children take their allocated instrument home to help support individual practice at home.

Students in Year 7 & 8 receive an hourly session with a specialist teacher twice every fortnight. Year 9 students who choose further musical study have three hours of music timetabled per fortnight, whilst GCSE Music students benefit from five hours of tuition per fortnight. Learning continues throughout the academic year, not by carousel rotation. This is the best way to ensure that knowledge, skills and understanding is developed on an ongoing basis.

Our curriculum covers the key aspects of the National Curriculum for Music. We have our own bespoke programme of study designed to give pupils a broad range of musical skills and a secure musical understanding of key concepts. Our curriculum is a working document, which is always under review. Key resources are regularly amended and enhanced as we work collaboratively within the department.

In year 7 the first term begins with a focus of the musical elements including key musical language and rhythm and melody skills. This then progresses to application of musical language and a development of instrumental skills through composition with a focus on programme music. The final term broadens students' musical experience with African Drumming and digital music.

In year 8 the first term deepens their basic skill learnt in year 7 looking at their instrumental and theory ability with an aim for both treble and bass piano playing. During year 8 students will also experience samba drumming, blues music. The final term for year 8 takes an in depth look into film music developing their compositional skills.

Those who opt for music in Year 9 and beyond develop their skills on their chosen instrument in preparation for their GCSE coursework performances. They will take part in topics that focus on both solo and ensemble performance skills to develop their chosen instrument or voice using the GCSE mark scheme so they are aware of the areas assessed. Students will improve their composition skills using the GCSE computer programmes used and use GCSE level musical language in preparation for future study.

The school is part of the Saffron Academy Trust, “a family of schools who aspire to provide state education of exceptional quality”. As an all-through school, we benefit from being part of a group with three local primary schools and three secondary schools. The trust provides additional training and networking opportunities, for example Music Subject Conferences in February and May. These events give us opportunities to discuss subject specific issues, explore subject pedagogy and share good practice.

Students in Years 10 and 11 follow the OCR GCSE specification leading to GCSE qualification. Some students have additional individual instrumental tuition and

prepare for graded music performance examinations. The OCR GCSE course includes four pieces of coursework (solo performance, ensemble performance, composition in the students chosen style and a composition in a style set by OCR) and an exam at the end of year 11 which involves listening questions on the four areas of study (Concertos, Pop music, Film music and world music.)

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.

Students are offered additional instrumental tuition on a 1:1 basis. Visiting peripatetic tutors augment the curriculum provision, giving students the opportunity to specialise in an instrument of their choice. This is an area in which the department is keen to grow.

We run a choir every Thursday lunchtime and an after-school primary choir each week, enabling singers to build their confidence and vocal skills. The department provides a safe space for children to come and rehearse with their peers.

There is future development for lunchtime instrumental ensemble activities such as band club these will hopefully be offered by the end of this academic year.

The school will be moving to a new site. Once we have improved facilities, we will open a music school offering high quality musical activities to develop young musicians. As part of this programme, we will expand our instrumental provision as we will have more teaching spaces available to us.

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.

The Primary phase comes together as a community to sing in their weekly singing assembly, led by one of our music specialists. Currently, we are enjoying African songs and spirituals such as 'Oh When the Saints Go Marching In'. This supports our ethos that we are all musicians.

Concerts are arranged to enhance our weekly provision, these are organised in collaboration with the drama and dance department. Students are encouraged to participate in order to share their skills and make music together. Children from the Primary phase perform at school concerts, with considerable support from the secondary pupils. Parents, carers and school staff are invited to come and join us.

In the future

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

The department is in a development phase, with new staff and continues to grow in quantity and quality. Our overall aim is to improve standards of musicianship and raise the profile of the subject across the school.

- Continue to review current schemes of work to integrate new instrumental resources and further enhance learning opportunities
- Raise profile of GCSE Music and increase uptake
- Increase participation in extra-curricular activities