

Music development plan summary: The County High School, Leftwich

Overview

Detail	Information
Academic year that this summary covers	2025-2026
Date this summary was published	November 2025
Date this summary will be reviewed	September 2026
Name of the school music lead	Jo Curry
Name of school leadership team member with responsibility for music (if different)	Jill Martland
Name of local music hub	Love 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.

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.

Learners at CHSL study music for one hour per week in year 7 and year 9. Year 8 students study music for three hours per fortnight. Content delivered covers 'big ideas' which include 'Gamechangers', 'Fusions', 'Song', 'Music as storyteller' and 'Sonority'. These themes are revisited and consolidated throughout the entire Key Stage. Lessons give learners the opportunity to develop practical skills and build theoretical knowledge; concepts are covered as part of the organic process of music-making. By the end of Year 9, each student will have had the opportunity to play a variety of musical instruments and to develop their expertise as singers.

In addition to fostering a love of music and an appreciation of the arts, the programmes of study that are followed at KS3 support and prepare learners who opt to continue to study music at KS4 through the OCR GCSE course.

In Years 10 and 11, learners study the OCR J536 GCSE music specification. Uptake is strong with an average of 20+ students studying this qualification each year. The qualification continues the broad nature of the KS3 curriculum, including performing, composing and listening. The examined part of the exam covers 'Rhythms of the world', 'Music for film', 'Conventions of pop' and 'The concerto through time', affording students a broad experience of musical styles and genres.

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.

At the County High School, Leftwich, we employ peripatetic music tutors who offer instrumental tuition in flute, clarinet, saxophone, all brass instruments, guitar and drums, DJ-ing and music theory. Weekly lessons are offered and over 100 students actively participate in this experience (almost 10% of the school cohort). Where necessary, instruments are provided for students, but many do eventually purchase their own. We also adopt the 'assisted purchase' scheme, supporting parents and carers to purchase instruments through school with a VAT exemption.

In addition, we offer funded instrumental tuition to any students in receipt of the Pupil Premium and demand for this continues to increase.

Currently, around 25% of students who engage in music enrichment either at lunchtime or after school are classed as PP, SEND or both, which is a statistic that continues to grow. The music department is felt to be a safe and welcoming space and community in which students can socialise with peers from different year groups as well as their own. Students have shared that they feel a sense of belonging and form strong bonds and friendships through the powerful medium of music.

Students have access to a wealth of opportunities through our outstanding extra-curricular offer. Any student is welcome at any of these groups, regardless of experience and/or ability and they are all offered free of charge. The offer includes:

- Wind Band
- Brass Band
- Beginner Band
- Woodwind Group
- Rock Bands
- Keyboard Club
- Choir
- DJ Club

In addition to offering a wealth of opportunities within school, we also signpost and support the ensembles run by Cheshire West and Chester's local music offer and many of our students do participate in this programme.

Students who wish to do so, have the opportunity to take external music exams which are organised and executed through school with our own accompanists. We offer the opportunity to take practical examinations through The Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music, Trinity exams and The Music Teacher Board; our students often achieve at Grade 6+ standard (success which can be used as part of their APS.) Our peripatetic staff also offer bespoke theory of music lessons to any student who reaches this standard, so that they can continue and access the higher music grades.

In terms of accommodation, we have two bespoke music classrooms; one of which is equipped with 17 PCs which run both sequencing software (Mixcraft) and notation and composing software (Sibelius) and the other which houses 15 electronic keyboards. We also have 2 Apple minimacs which run both Logic sequencing software and also serve as part of two DJ stations within the department.

We have 2 practice rooms which are primarily used for instrumental teaching but can also be accessed by students after school; we also have a classroom-sized rehearsal space which is multi-purpose. It is permanently set up as a band rehearsal room but also houses 3 drum kits and is used for guitar and drum tuition. In addition, this space is used by arrangement, for students who want to rehearse together before and after school.

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.

All members of extra-curricular groups are offered a range of opportunities to perform both in school and out in the local and wider community, learning vital life skills and gaining a wealth of Cultural Capital.

We perform 2 large scale sell-out concerts in school each year (Christmas and summer) and tickets are priced at £6 and £5. This revenue is used to purchase sets of music and equipment including music stands and performance uniform (waistcoats). We also use this income to subsidise transport to venues and performances where possible. Our groups have regularly performed at:

- Manchester Airport
- Northwich Memorial Hall
- Cheshire Show
- Davenham Carnival
- Local Primary Schools

- Local Care Homes

Notably, a number of our groups have built a partnership with Hebden Green Special School and our collaboration with their staff and students is ongoing.

Students from across the school are invited to experience live music concerts at venues including Bridgewater Hall; experiences that are supported by our Pupil Premium funding where appropriate.

In the future

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

We continue to give careful consideration and cognisance of the changing nature of music cohorts; especially at KS4. We are accommodating more learners with SEND, more learners who are in receipt of Pupil Premium and more Low Prior Attaining students who have limited experience and limited musical expertise. These students develop a passion at KS3, and we are working hard to develop their enthusiasm and support them to thrive. We continue to horizon scan and to look for additional qualifications which could run alongside GCSE music and hope to build links with Drama and Dance to strengthen our Performing Arts offer.

We have recently purchased DJ equipment, and the interest was such that we have now purchased enough hardware to run 2 DJ stations. In January 2025, we began to offer DJ lessons as part of our instrumental lessons offer to both individuals and small groups and students in receipt of these lessons staged our first performance night in May 2025.

Further development of the instrumental lessons offer would also include strings and vocal tuition as the indication is that there is a demand, and we are also continuously striving to develop students' experiences of live music in venues across the North West.