

Sir Graham Balfour School Music

Development Plan Summary 2026–27

This Music Development Plan reflects the current provision and future aspirations of Sir Graham Balfour School and aligns with the National Plan for Music Education. The plan is informed by the school music curriculum and enrichment opportunities published by the school.

Academic Year	2026–27
Published	September 2026
Review Date	September 2027
Teacher of Music	Mr B Field
SLT Responsibility	Deputy Headteacher: Mrs R Haines
Local Music Hub	Entrust Music Service Staffordshire
KS4 Qualification	Pearson BTEC Level 1/2 Tech Award in Music Practice

Part A: Curriculum Music

Music is regarded as an essential part of school life. The curriculum aims to develop confidence, creativity, imagination and wellbeing through enjoyable music-making experiences. Curriculum overviews are available on the school website ([Music - Sir Graham Balfour School](#)) with further detail below:

In Years 7 to 9, learning is structured around three interconnected strands: Performing, Composing, and Listening and Appraising. Students sing and rap; perform on percussion instruments, keyboards and ukuleles; compose using music technology; explore music from a range of genres and cultures; and evaluate their own and others' work. The curriculum prepares students for future study and participation in music.

The music curriculum in Years 7-9 is based on the Key Stage 3 National Curriculum. At Key Stage 4, students can study the Pearson BTEC Level 1/2 Tech Award in Music Practice.

Key Stage 3

In Years 7, 8 and 9, students follow a carousel rotation, completing two 5-week rotations of 5 lessons per fortnight. This equates to 25 hours per year.

- Year 7 Rotation 1 aims to develop students' understanding of descriptive music and pulsation, through listening skills, group vocal performances, graphic scores, creating sound effects, samba drumming and playing instruments.
- In Year 7 Rotation 2, students are introduced to music technology by creating music on Incredibox using loops and having a consideration for structure and texture. They develop skills further by looking at pitch, through whole class performance using boomwhackers and glockenspiels; and working on composition skills in MuseScore (music notation software). The rotation concludes by consolidating what they have learnt about pitch and rhythm to perform melodies on keyboards.
- Year 8 Rotation 1 requires students to work on listening and appraising skills, through a range of vocal music. Students learn about musical devices such as, rhyme, emphasis and lyric structure and then write and perform a rap, which develops composition and performance skills. Further performance skills are enhanced using keyboards and ukuleles, with a focus on chords.
- In Year 8 Rotation 2, students learn about music used for adverts, through listening and appraising, and commenting on key elements such as the voiceover, jingle, persuasive language and sound effects. They then work in pairs to create their own advert for a new product or service, using Studio One sequencing software (music technology), including a backing track, voiceover, and digital effects.
- Year 9 Rotation 1 focuses on arrangements and remixes of existing music. Working in groups, students develop their own arrangement of a reggae song using their voice, and instruments such as keyboards, ukuleles and glockenspiels. Students then work individually or in pairs, to further develop their music technology skills in Studio One, by creating a remix of a piece of music. This involves them learning how to input music using MIDI controllers, editing the velocity, manipulating audio files, and creating drum patterns.
- In Year 9 Rotation 2, students complete a film music project which involves listening to and appraising film soundtracks from different genres; exploring how musical elements can create emotion and atmosphere; and how voiceovers and sound effects for films are recorded. The students then specifically look at horror music and the musical devices that are synonymous with this genre, before using their previously learnt skills to create the soundtrack for a horror film in Studio One.
- Across all rotations, students listen to and appraise a wide range of music including from classical, popular and global styles, and music used for the media. They further develop their knowledge and understanding of music styles and the use of instrumentation and musical elements through listening and appraising homework activities.

Key Stage 4

In Years 10 and 11, students can select to study the BTEC Level 1/2 Tech Award in Music Practice as part of the options process. The course enables students to explore music performance, composition and production and a wide range of music styles and genres. There are three components to the qualification:

- Component 1: Exploring Music Products and Styles – students take part in practical and listening activities to identify the musical elements and stylistic features of key music styles. They also develop skills in performance, recording, composition, and music technology; and produce three musical outcomes based on a theme, taken from a choice of solo and ensemble performance, a DAW remix (in Studio One), music for media composition, a live multi-track recording, and an original composition.
- Component 2: Music Skills Development – students select two disciplines from a choice of performance, composition and music technology, and evaluate their skills in these. They create and follow a development plan to improve two skills in each discipline over four milestones and apply these to two musical outcomes based on a theme.
- Component 3: Responding to a Commercial Music Brief – students apply the skills they have learnt in Components 1 and 2, to a real-world music industry scenario. Specialising in either performance and composition, or music production and composition, they create a new version of an existing piece of music (selected from a list provided by the exam board) in a different music style to the original.

SEND

Music within our school aims to ensure all students can strive for excellence. All our students are fully supported throughout the curriculum and work is scaffolded where necessary to ensure students can overcome any personal barriers. Students develop skills which aid in their creativity and performances.

Part B: Extra-Curricular Music

Students can participate in a vocal group, music club and school productions which enhance curriculum learning. These opportunities enable students to develop performance skills, improve confidence and stylistic awareness, and work collaboratively to progress towards more advanced musical learning. Suitable rehearsal and practice spaces are made available to support ensembles and individual musicians. Students can also join ensembles in the local area which are organised by Entrust, who also provide the majority of our individual instrumental and vocal tuition.

We have eight peripatetic teachers who visit the school at least once a week to deliver lessons to students in a range of instruments and for voice. They support the school's music teacher with the performance elements of the BTEC Music course and two of the teachers lead on delivering choir and music club.

We currently offer lessons in:

- Piano
- Electric/acoustic guitar
- Violin
- Singing
- Drum-kit
- Clarinet & saxophone
- Flute
- Cornet

Lessons for other instruments can also be organised. All lessons are part-funded by the school, and we offer free lessons for BTEC Music students, anyone on Free School Meals and Forces children. Parents/carers of Pupil Premium students can also apply for funding to subsidise the cost.

Part C: Musical Experiences

Students experience music through assemblies, celebration evenings, concerts, productions, and enrichment events. The school aims to provide regular opportunities to perform before audiences and these help students to develop confidence and musical excellence.

Students have the opportunity to experience the following during the school year:

- Performing at a Celebration Evening
- Watching a concert from the Hallé Orchestra at a local venue
- Taking on a performance role in the annual school production
- Performing with the choir, in the community such as at a Christmas event in a local church, at the hospital and in nursing homes.

Opportunities are also provided by The Music Partnership, which is the local music hub covering Staffordshire, Stoke-on-Trent and Telford. These include concerts, sing-a-longs, instrument festivals, and professional development for music teachers.

Future Development Priorities

The school will continue to ensure access to inclusive, high-quality music education for all learners, including those with SEND.

Priorities for future development include:

- Maintaining/increasing the uptake of instrumental & vocal lessons
- Increasing student participation in vocal and instrumental ensembles, both those organised by the school/Entrust, and those that are student-led
- Further developing music technology resources
- Adapting the Key Stage 3 curriculum once the national curriculum has been revised in 2027.

Further Information

This plan is based on the published music curriculum information available on the Sir Graham Balfour School website and will be reviewed annually.