



ST. AIDAN'S
CHURCH OF ENGLAND HIGH SCHOOL

Music Development Plan Summary 2024-2025

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Contents

Overview	3
Part A: Curriculum Music	3
Curriculum Overview.....	4
Year 7	4
Year 8	5
Year 9	5
Year 10 & Year 11	6
Year 12 & Year 13	6
Time allocated.....	7
Special Educational Needs & Disabilities.....	7
Links to Local Music Hub.....	7
Music Qualifications.....	7
Part B: Co-curricular Music	8
Instrumental & Vocal Groups & Clubs.....	8
Peripatetic Offer.....	10
Instrument Choices.....	11
Charging and Remissions Information.....	11
Part C: Musical Experiences	12
Part D: In the Future	14

Overview

Below is an overview that outlines some of the key information regarding music at St Aidan's Church of England High School:

Detail	Information
Academic year that this summary covers	Academic Year 2024 – 2025
Date this summary was published	3 rd September 2024
Date this summary will be reviewed	3 rd September 2025
Name of the school music lead	Vicki Elliott
Name of school leadership team member with responsibility for music	Maggie Gee
Name of Local Music Hub	North Yorkshire Music Hub

Part A: Curriculum Music

This section addresses the content taught during lesson time, the duration dedicated to music lessons, and the music qualifications or awards that pupils can attain. An overview of the music curriculum, including the learning journey for each year group is available on the <https://www.poltairschool.co.uk/curriculum> St Aidan's website [Music - St Aidan's \(staidans.co.uk\)](#)

At St Aidan's, the KS3 music curriculum has its foundations based on the National Curriculum, incorporating elements from the [Model Music Curriculum](#) (March 2021). These elements are integrated into our teaching framework, with adaptations to suit our learners and our specific educational setting.

Practical music-making using students' vocal talents and a wide range of instruments is an essential part of the curriculum. Year 7 – 9 students embark on a series of engaging and stimulating units of work including learning how to read notation and rhythm, instruments of the orchestra, blues, cultural fusion, song writing, musicals, electronic dance music and film music. [Music-learning-journey.pdf \(staidans.co.uk\)](#)

KS3 Curriculum Overview

YEAR 7				
Rhythm	Elements of Music	Keyboard (notation)	Instruments of the Orchestra	Chords
Exploring how to read and notate rhythm through the topic Underground Music.	How Musical elements are the building bricks of all Music.	Exploring how to read notation through learning to play the keyboard.	Learning about the different families of instruments in the orchestra and their unique sounds.	An introduction to how to play simple chords on the keyboard.
YEAR 8				
Blues	Celebrating Black Musicians	Composer Spotlight	Cultural Fusion	Song Writing
Learning about the history and culture of the blues, whilst developing skills in blues performance.	Understanding the importance of the contribution of black musicians in the pop, jazz and classical genres of music.	Exploring the life of Beethoven by learning and performing Fur Elise on the keyboard.	Exploring the culture, history and music of India, West Africa and Jamaica.	Learning the basics of how to write a simple song including structure.
YEAR 9				
Theme and Variations	EDM	Film Music	Protest Songs	
Developing an understanding of the form across different genres and composing a piece using this structure.	Learning about the different aspects of Electronic Dance Music (EDM) using the DAW Soundtrap.	Exploring the way that composers have composed for different styles, moods and genres of film music.	What is a Protest Song? Learning about different types of protest song (incorporating rap), performing and composing own song in small groups.	

Year 7

In the first term of Year 7, students embark on their singing journey by participating in ensemble performances during class lessons. This foundational experience introduces them to the essentials of vocal harmony and group performance. During this term, rhythm notation is taught through an engaging Underground train station unit, featuring John Paynter's 'And All Stations to'. Students then create and perform their own versions of the piece in small groups. Additionally, this term lays the groundwork for understanding the elements of music, the fundamental building blocks of all musical compositions.

In the second term, students simultaneously learn to read and write musical notation while mastering the keyboard. This integrated approach not only develops both skills

but also fosters a love for playing an instrument. Additionally, students are introduced to the basics of melody writing during this term.

In the third term, students explore the orchestral setting, gaining insight into the various sections and roles within an orchestra. This experience broadens their musical skills and deepens their appreciation for the complexities of orchestral composition. Additionally, students learn to create and play chords on the keyboard, mastering simple pieces and improving their keyboard dexterity.

Year 8

In Year 8, students enhance their instrumental and vocal skills while delving into the history, culture, and style of the 12-bar blues. They learn to play the 12-bar blues chord progression, along with bass riffs and improvisation techniques. Students enjoy combining these skills to create and perform their own songs. Following this, the next topic, "Celebrating Black Musicians," allows students to explore the significant contributions of black musicians in pop, jazz, and classical music by listening to and performing pieces from their repertoire.

In the second term, Year 8 students delve into the life of Beethoven in our Composer Spotlight unit. They explore some of his symphonies and learn to play "Für Elise" on the keyboard. Following this, the Cultural Fusion topic allows students to immerse themselves in the cultures, traditions, and musical styles of India, Jamaica, and West Africa. They are introduced to Indian raga and drone, Jamaican reggae, and West African drumming using djembes.

During the third term, students further enhance their composition skills by learning the art of songwriting. Building on their knowledge of chords and melody writing, they focus on identifying structure and form, as well as composing their own pieces.

Year 9

Due to the facilities and timetabling in the music department, the Year 9 curriculum is modular and can be taught at any point during the year, depending on room availability. This curriculum builds on the units covered in Years 7 and 8, with a strong focus on preparing students for GCSE.

The Theme and Variations unit allows students to explore this diverse musical form, which is found in many styles and genres, from pop to classical. Students engage in various keyboard activities, building on their rhythm and notation reading skills, to create compositions either in pairs or individually.

The Electronic Dance Music (EDM) unit equips students with the knowledge and skills to compose using a Digital Audio Workstation (DAW), specifically Soundtrap. This unit explores and deconstructs the genre of EDM, teaching students how to layer and structure a piece. Additionally, students gain hands-on experience using a DAW to create and compose music.

Film Music delves into the art of composing for various styles, moods, and genres within the cinematic world. Utilising music technology, such as Soundtrap, alongside live film clips, students can immerse themselves in this creative process. They will have the

chance to craft storyboards for film clips and compose music that perfectly aligns with the visuals and timing, enhancing the overall storytelling experience.

The Protest Song Unit explores the question: What is a protest song, and how is it used in society today? Students will delve into the concepts of protest songs and rap, listening to tracks from both the past and present to deepen their understanding. They will also have the opportunity to compose their own songs in small groups, applying the techniques they have learned throughout the unit.

Year 10 & Year 11

AQA GCSE Music is a comprehensive course designed to develop students' musical skills and understanding. The curriculum covers three main components: understanding music, performing music, and composing music. Students explore a wide range of musical genres and styles, enhancing their listening and analytical skills. They also get hands-on experience in performing both solo and ensemble pieces, as well as composing original music. This well-rounded program aims to foster a deep appreciation of music and prepare students for further musical studies or careers.

Year 12 & Year 13

AQA A Level Music is an advanced course designed to deepen students' understanding and appreciation of music. The curriculum is divided into three main components: appraising music, performing music, and composing music. Students engage with a wide range of musical styles and historical periods, enhancing their analytical and listening skills. They also develop their performance abilities through solo and ensemble pieces and hone their creativity by composing original works. This rigorous program prepares students for further musical studies or careers, fostering a lifelong passion for music.

We also offer Pearson A level Music technology to our sixth form students. A Level Music Technology is a dynamic course designed to equip students with advanced skills in music production and technology. The curriculum covers a wide range of topics, including recording techniques, mixing, mastering, and sound design. Students engage with both theoretical and practical aspects of music technology, gaining hands-on experience with industry-standard software and equipment. The course is assessed through a combination of written exams and practical coursework, ensuring a comprehensive evaluation of students' abilities. [This program](#) not only prepares students for further education and careers in music technology but also fosters a deep understanding and appreciation of the technical and creative aspects of music production.

We also offer Pearson Performing Arts BTEC level 3, of which Music is a large part. Pearson BTEC Level 3 in Performing Arts is a versatile and practical course designed to provide students with a comprehensive understanding of the performing arts industry. The curriculum includes a mix of mandatory and optional units, covering areas such as acting, dance, musical theatre, and production skills. Students engage in hands-on learning through workshops, performances, and projects, allowing them to develop both their technical abilities and creative expression. The course is assessed through practical coursework and performances, ensuring that students gain real-world experience and feedback. This qualification supports progression to higher education and careers in the performing arts, equipping students with the skills and knowledge needed to succeed in this dynamic field.

Time allocated

At St Aidan's we follow a weekly timetable with 60-minute lessons.

Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11	Year 12&13
1 x 60 minutes	1 x 60 minutes	1 x 60 minutes	3 x 60 minutes	2.5 x 60 minutes	5 x 60 minutes

Special Educational Needs & Disabilities

At St Aidan's Church of England High School, a commitment to inclusion and equity is integral to the curriculum. It is imperative that every student has access to the music curriculum and attains successful outcomes. However, it is recognised that certain students may require additional, often temporary, scaffolded tasks to reach these outcomes. The [Local Area Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Strategy 2023-2026 \(northyorks.gov.uk\)](https://www.northyorks.gov.uk) document outlines potential barriers that students with special educational needs and disabilities may encounter in lessons, along with specific strategies to overcome these barriers.

Links to Local Music Hub

St Aidan's Church of England High School collaborate with the North Yorkshire Music Hub, including Harrogate Music Centre which is based on the school premises. NY Music Hub facilitates the engagement of instrument teachers to deliver instrumental lessons to individuals and small groups. We also have several free-lance instrumental teachers who also deliver lessons and, in some instances, lead and direct some of our music ensembles. A link to Hub website can be found here : [Home - North Yorkshire Music Hub](#)

Music Qualifications

St Aidan's offers students the opportunity to pursue AQA GCSE Music during Key Stage 4 and also AQA A level Music and Pearson Music Technology at KS5. In addition to this we also offer Pearson Performing Arts BTEC level 3. Students across all key stages have the option to undertake graded music examinations with peripatetic teachers, should they choose to engage in this opportunity.

Part B: Extra-curricular Music

This section addresses the opportunity pupils at St Aidan's have to sing and play music outside of lesson time. Within the school, students have access to a vast number of outstanding opportunities to make, create, perform and play music, this is through a variety of ensemble, instrumental groups and choirs which regularly receive local and national recognition. Students recognise this quality by responding with high levels of engagement and commitment. Between 350 and 400 students participate in co-curricular ensembles on a weekly basis.

Instrumental & Vocal Groups & Clubs

Rehearsals and clubs take place in specialist music areas such as the music department, school chapel, or the main hall where appropriate.

Junior Band

The Junior Band is open to students in Years 7 to 9 who play woodwind, brass, or percussion instruments. It focuses on developing traditional wind band ensemble skills and rehearses once a week during lunchtime. In addition to performing in several school and community concerts, the band participates in an annual residential weekend. This event is designed to foster social interaction among different year groups and enhance their ensemble playing and musicianship.

Symphonic Band

This senior wind band welcomes students from Year 10 to Year 13, typically those who have achieved Grade 5 or higher. Participation may require an audition. Building on the skills developed in the Junior Band, this group tackles more challenging music, reflecting the advanced abilities and maturity of its older members. They rehearse after school once a week.

String Ensemble

This ensemble, directed by our String Instrumental teacher, is for students who play the violin, viola, cello, double bass, or harp. It typically includes students from Years 7 to 10, playing arrangements of well-known repertoire, often arranged by the director. The String Ensemble also participates in the annual music residential alongside the Junior Band. Rehearsals are held once a week during lunchtime.

Symphony Orchestra

The Symphony Orchestra is an ensemble that includes all sections of instruments: strings, woodwind, brass, and percussion. They rehearse after school and tackle more advanced pieces from the classical orchestral repertoire. Year 13 students are often invited to perform a concerto movement or another piece with the orchestra at the final concert of the year. Participants are typically Grade 5 and above.

SAJE (St Aidan's Jazz Ensemble)

Originally started by sixth form students, this band continues to be run by current sixth form members of the swing band. The ensemble is open to students in Years 7 to 11 who play the alto, tenor, or baritone saxophone, trumpet, trombone, piano, electric guitar, bass guitar, and drums. It provides students with a solid foundation in reading jazz and swung rhythms and the basics of improvisation, by tackling some of the greatest jazz classics. Rehearsals take place during lunchtime, with the band being student lead under teacher supervision.

Swing Band

The Swing Band builds on the skills learned in SAJE, advancing them to a higher level by incorporating more complex improvisation and jazz reading skills. This teacher-led band, which rehearses after school, is open to students in Years 10 to 13 and requires an audition for participation.

Junior Choir

The Junior Choir is open to students in Years 7 and 8 and serves as an introduction to ensemble singing. The choir enjoys performing popular repertoire, including songs from musical theatre, as well as more serious pieces, often in parts, during special times of the year such as Harvest and Christmas. They rehearse once a week during lunchtime.

Senior Choir

The Senior Choir nurtures and develops voices in higher year groups, from Years 9 to 11. Open to male and female voices of all registers, it serves as an introduction to SAB/SATB choral repertoire. The choir rehearses once a week at a lunchtime and enjoys singing popular and musical theatre songs and also performs more serious pieces at the Christmas Carol service.

Chamber Choir

The Chamber Choir is exclusively open to sixth form students and requires an audition for participation. Rehearsing twice a week, both at lunchtime and after school, it plays a significant role in the life of St Aidan's as a Church of England school, participating in all services and special events. This highly regarded choir performs complex SATB repertoire from all periods of music.

WADE (West African Drumming Ensemble)

This group is open to students across Key Stages 3 and 4, focusing on developing skills with the djembe and dhun dhun African drums. No notation reading skills are required, as the ensemble often composes and performs its own repertoire, rooted in the West African tradition. It rehearses once a week at lunchtime.

APE (Aidan's Percussion Ensemble)

Directed by the percussion instrumental teacher, this ensemble requires some knowledge of percussion and standard notation reading and gives pupils the unusual opportunity of playing in a tuned and untuned percussion ensemble. Instruments used include the drum kit, congas and bongos, timpani, marimba, xylophone, vibraphone, and various handheld percussion.

Guitar ensemble

This ensemble gives our guitarists an opportunity to play together and learn new skills based on the blues, rock and pop traditions. It develops notation, tab and chord reading skills.

Aidan's Flame

The school's in-house worship band that accompanies all songs in collective worship assemblies. Students usually volunteer for this role and are self-motivated to rehearse and practise in their own time. Instrumentalists normally comprise of piano, drum kit, trumpet, saxophone, flute, guitar and vocalists.

Music Mark

As a result of its high calibre of Music, St Aidan's Music Department has been awarded Music Mark for the last 5 years.

The department was recognised for demonstrating a strong commitment to providing high-quality music education, as listed below.

Commitment to Music Education: The school recognises the value of music education as part of a broad and balanced curriculum.

Development and Improvement: There is evidence of a willingness to engage in conversations and actions aimed at improving music provision.

Inclusive Music Strategy: The school has a strategy in place that ensures all children have access to music education.

Active Participation: The school actively participates in musical activities and events, showcasing their dedication to music education.

Receiving Music Mark also brings several benefits, such as access to resources, training, and advocacy support.

Peripatetic Offer

St Aidan's offers peripatetic music lessons delivered by specialist instrumental teachers designed to enhance students' musical education through individualised instruction. These lessons often combine with the co-curricular offer to create an integrated music experience which develops outstanding musicians, with many going on to achieve professional success. Typically, over 150 students access instrumental lessons on a weekly basis. This number has reduced slightly in the years since Covid; the department has fostered strong links with feeder schools to address this and encourage increased uptake at KS2. The St. Aidan's offer provides opportunities for students to receive tuition in a variety of instruments, fostering a diverse and enriching learning environment on a one-to-one basis.

Instrument Choices

- **Piano and Keyboard:** Students can learn classical and contemporary styles, focusing on technique, reading music, and performance skills.
- **Guitar:** Acoustic, electric or bass guitar lessons are available, covering a wide range of genres from classical to rock.
- **Strings:** Violin, viola, cello, and double bass lessons emphasise technique, musicality, and ensemble playing.
- **Woodwind:** flute, oboe, clarinet, saxophone and bassoon lessons are all available, focussing on notation reading and techniques such as sight reading and improvisation depending on the instrument.
- **Brass:** Trumpet, cornet, trombone, euphonium, baritone, tenor horn and tuba instruction focuses on embouchure, breath control, and ensemble playing.
- **Percussion:** Drum kit and tuned percussion lessons cover rhythm, coordination, and reading of standard and percussion notation.
- **Voice:** Vocal lessons are tailored to individual student needs, including classical, pop, and musical theatre techniques.

Charging and Remissions Information

There are two systems of payment that currently run at St Aidan's. Parents of instrumental teachers employed by North Yorkshire Music services (piano, flute, voice and guitar) are charged by monthly direct debit per term.

Individual 20-minute lesson £156.30

Individual 30 Minute lesson £219.50.

All other instrumental teachers are freelance and usually invoice parents on a half termly basis. Lesson prices vary according to the teacher but are usually in the region of;

Individual 20-minute lesson £13 a lesson

Individual 30-minute lesson £19 a lesson

All GCSE, A level and Btec students receive 50% discount on price of a lesson, which is paid for by the school. Some students who are interested in playing an instrument and receive pupil premium funding can receive free lessons.

Start the Music

Start The Music is a scheme run by the St Aidan's Music Association (a parent run association) that aims to encourage more young people to learn a musical instrument. Each year they fund approximately 6 students from St Aidan's to play an instrument for a full academic year. Students receive free tuition and an instrument. Applications are open once a year and students begin lessons in September. Many have continued learning the instrument beyond their free lessons and many have participated in choirs and ensembles at the school.

Peripatetic lessons at St Aidan's are designed to nurture students' musical talents and foster a lifelong appreciation for music. Through these lessons, students receive high-quality instruction tailored to their individual needs, ensuring that every child has the opportunity to develop their musical abilities to the fullest.

Part C: Musical Experiences

This section covers additional musical events and opportunities that we organise, such as concerts, shows, trips and events.

Within the academic year there are multiple opportunities to perform and take part in high quality music making.

Harvest Festival, Christmas Carol Service, Easter Liturgy

As a Church of England school, we offer numerous opportunities throughout the year for our community to engage in services that are integral to our school's identity. These services prominently feature the choirs at St Aidan's, whose performances reflect and enhance the essence of each service.

Senior Concert (October and March)

This event features performances by the Chamber Choir, Senior Choir, Swing Band, Symphony Orchestra, and Symphonic Band. These ensembles perform repertoire that they have been diligently rehearsing during lunchtimes and after school. The evening is always filled with exceptional music, showcasing the hard work and dedication of our talented students.

Open Day

An important day in the school's calendar, this event provides many of our ensembles with the opportunity to perform for prospective parents of students considering St Aidan's. We recognize the significant role that joining a music ensemble plays in a student's school experience. This event not only highlights the talents of our ensembles but also aims to attract prospective students by showcasing the vibrant musical community at our school.

Jazz Night

This annual event highlights the talents of our two jazz bands, SAJE and Swing Band. This informal concert features seating around tables, with the audience bringing their own refreshments. Both bands perform a set of pieces they have rehearsed throughout the year, along with opportunities for solos and small ensembles to shine. This concert also offers numerous leadership opportunities for our 6th formers, who guide and mentor younger pupils in SAJE.

Great North Big Band and Jazz Festival

This event is a competition in which the Swing Band participates every year. Held at a community centre in Chester-Le-Street, in which the band competes against other youth school bands. Performing a repertoire of approximately 10 minutes, the Swing Band has enjoyed significant success over the years, winning numerous section and individual awards, and even securing the top prize.

Summer Concert

This concert features our junior ensembles, including the Junior Choir, Junior Band, SAJE, WADE, APE, and String Ensemble. Typically held towards the end of the year, this event serves as their final concert and showcases the achievements and progress they have made throughout the year.

Junior Music Residential

This residential weekend, typically held in York, offers members of the Junior Band and String Ensemble the chance to stay for two nights at York Youth Hostel accommodation at the York Racecourse or York Youth Hostel. During this time, students have the opportunity to rehearse, socialise, and collaborate on their repertoire, benefiting from extended practice sessions beyond the usual lunchtime rehearsals. Additionally, they can enjoy social activities, including a trip to the bowling alley, various games, and a cabaret night.

Spotlight

The Music Department, as part of the Performing Arts Faculty, proudly shares the responsibility of producing an annual performing arts showcase for Key Stage 3. This event provides students in Years 7 to 9 with the opportunity to sing, dance, and act in a large-scale production featuring songs, dances, and drama pieces. Sometimes held at the prestigious Royal Hall, this non-auditioned and fully inclusive event celebrates the diverse talents of all participating students.

School Musical

Typically held in November, this event is open to pupils in Years 10 to 13, is auditioned and provides opportunities for students to sing, dance, and act in a professional setting, with multiple evening performances. Additionally, a select group of talented instrumentalists forms the show band that accompanies the performances. This production offers students broader opportunities and valuable experience in a unique setting.

Performing in the community

All of our ensembles regularly perform in the local community and surrounding areas. Whether at local primary schools, care homes, or school fairs, we believe that playing in the community is an important role. These performances not only showcase our students' talents but also foster a strong connection between the school and the community.

International Trips

In recent years, St Aidan's ensembles and choirs have had the privilege of performing overseas in various prestigious locations. Highlights include performances in Florence, Montecatini, and San Gimignano, as well as a tour to China featuring a performance at the Forbidden City Concert Hall in Beijing. Our musicians have also graced the stage at the world-famous Montreux Jazz Festival in Switzerland.

The Swing Band appeared at the Edinburgh Jazz and Blues Festival in July 2016, while the Chamber Choir embarked on a stunning concert tour to Barcelona in July 2017. In July 2018, the Symphonic Wind Band and Swing Band toured Lake Konstanz, performing in both Swiss and German venues.

More recently, the Chamber Choir visited Belgium in July 2019, performing in Bruges, Ypres Cathedral, and participating in the Last Post Ceremony at the Menin Gate in Ypres. In the summer of 2023, the Swing Band toured Belgium and the Netherlands, receiving great acclaim in Roermond, Hasselt, and Liège. Most recently, in July 2024, the Chamber Choir undertook a tour of Italy, performing in Verona, Padua, and the world-famous St Mark's Basilica in Venice.

Part D: In the Future

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

St Aidan's Church of England High School offers an outstanding quality and variety of Music, not only in its' curriculum but also in its' extra-curricular ensembles and clubs. Our plan for the future is that we continue to offer this high-quality provision both within the curriculum and as part of our wider St Aidan's Offer.