

Music development plan summary: George Stephenson High 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	July 2027
Name of the school music lead	Charlotte Connor
Name of school leadership team member with responsibility for music (if different)	
Name of local music hub	North Tyneside School Music Hub
Name of other music education organisation(s) (if partnership in place)	

Part A: Curriculum music

KS3

Year 7 – Students receive one lesson a fortnight in the specialist music room. The Year 7 curriculum provides a broad foundation in practical musicianship, listening and musical understanding. Students develop their keyboard skills, including reading treble clef notation and playing major scales, alongside introductory guitar and ukulele skills. Singing and whole-class music-making are used regularly to develop confidence, rhythm, pulse, pitch and ensemble awareness.

Students explore the key musical elements, including **dynamics, instruments, rhythm, Tempo** through practical and listening activities. They are introduced to a range of musical styles and develop their ability to describe and analyse music using appropriate musical vocabulary. The curriculum is deliberately sequenced so that prior learning is revisited and developed, allowing students to build confidence and independence as musicians.

Year 8 – Students continue to develop their practical and theoretical musicianship, building on the foundational skills developed in Year 7. Students develop their keyboard skills through work in different major keys, including **C, G, F, D and Bb major**, while exploring music from different cultures and traditions.

Whole-class music-making remains an important part of the curriculum, with students developing ensemble skills through African and world music, including the exploration of African folk music and rhythmic traditions. Students also develop their understanding of harmony, melody, rhythm and structure through performing, composing and listening activities.

Students increasingly work independently and collaboratively, making musical decisions and evaluating their own performances. This prepares students for the greater independence and musical literacy required at Key Stage 4.

Year 9 – Students develop their musical independence through a range of practical, theoretical and music technology projects. Students explore genres including **jazz, reggae and popular music**, developing their understanding of how musicians work together as an ensemble.

Students develop performance skills through small-group and whole-class music-making, including learning how to rehearse effectively, maintain an individual part and respond to other performers. Composition and arranging activities allow students to develop their own musical ideas, while music technology is used to introduce students to recording, sequencing and digital audio production.

Students also develop their listening and analytical skills through studying music from different periods, cultures and genres. The Year 9 curriculum provides a clear bridge towards GCSE Music for students who choose to continue their study at Key Stage 4.

More information on our KS3 curriculum can be found on our website: [Performing Arts | GSHS](#)

KS4 – Eduqas GCSE Music

Students follow the **Eduqas GCSE Music** specification, developing expertise across the three core disciplines of **performing, composing and appraising**. The course is designed to foster well-rounded, independent musicians who can perform with confidence, compose creatively and engage critically with a wide range of musical styles.

Performance is developed through both solo and ensemble work, enabling students to refine their technical and expressive skills on their chosen instrument or voice. Students are encouraged to develop increasing levels of fluency, accuracy and musicality, while building the confidence and independence required for successful public performance.

Composition skills are nurtured progressively throughout the course. Students learn to create, refine and develop musical ideas using the key elements of music, including melody, harmony, rhythm, structure, texture, dynamics, articulation, tempo, sonority and tonality. Through a range of creative tasks, students gain experience in composing for different purposes and audiences, while developing the ability to evaluate and justify their artistic choices using appropriate musical terminology.

In **appraising**, students strengthen their listening skills, aural perception and theoretical understanding. They study a diverse range of music from different genres, periods and traditions, exploring how musical elements are used to create particular effects and meanings. Students develop the analytical and evaluative skills required to respond confidently to both set works and unfamiliar listening extracts in the written examination.

Students have regular access to **music technology**, including notation, sequencing and recording software, to support both composition and performance work. Where appropriate, learning is enriched through specialist workshops, performances and opportunities to engage with visiting musicians and industry professionals.

The GCSE curriculum is carefully sequenced to develop increasingly confident, knowledgeable and independent musicians who are equipped to perform, compose, listen, analyse and communicate sophisticated musical ideas, while providing a strong foundation for further study in music and the performing arts.

More information on our KS4 curriculum can be found on our website: [Performing Arts | GSHS](#)

KS5

Depending on the needs, interests and strengths of each cohort, students study either the **Pearson BTEC Level 3 National Extended Certificate in Music Performance** or the **OCR Cambridge Technical Extended Certificate in Performing Arts**. Both qualifications provide students with the opportunity to specialise in music performance and music production while developing a broad understanding of the creative industries.

Throughout the course, students build advanced skills in **performing, composing, listening and music technology**, alongside an understanding of professional practice within the music and performing arts sectors. Students explore how musicians and performers create, rehearse, record and present work, while developing the independence, resilience and organisation required for further study or employment in the creative industries.

Assessment is undertaken through a combination of **internally assessed coursework** and **externally assessed units**, allowing students to demonstrate both practical and academic achievement. In both qualifications, one optional unit is selected to reflect the strengths and interests of the cohort. Typically, students complete **Unit 6: Solo Performance** within the BTEC Music Performance pathway and **Unit 8: Performing Repertoire** within the Cambridge Technical Performing Arts pathway.

Students in Years 12 and 13 receive **11 timetabled lessons per fortnight** and benefit from access to specialist facilities, including rehearsal spaces, instruments, music technology software and recording equipment. These resources support a wide range of activities, including performance, composition, sequencing, recording and production.

All Key Stage 5 students have the opportunity to access **peripatetic instrumental or vocal tuition** and are encouraged to participate in the department's enrichment programme. Additional support is available for students wishing to achieve **Grade 5 Music Theory** or further develop their practical musicianship through graded examinations and performance opportunities.

The Key Stage 5 curriculum is designed to develop confident, reflective and versatile musicians who are equipped with the technical, creative and analytical skills needed for progression to higher education, conservatoire training, apprenticeships or careers within the music and wider creative industries.

More information on our KS5 curriculum can be found on our website: [Performing Arts | GSHS](#)

Part B: Co-curricular music

Student Leadership and Musical Mentoring

Students will be encouraged to take increasing responsibility for music within the school. KS4 and KS5 students can support younger pupils with instruments, rehearsals and musical activities. This provides opportunities to develop **leadership, communication, organisation, mentoring and teaching skills**, while strengthening their own musical understanding.

Students may also take responsibility for supporting performances, rehearsals and musical events, giving them experience of the wider roles involved in the music industry.

We work with NTMEH, North Tyneside Music Education Hub and self-employed instrumental tutors to offer individual, paired and small group lessons for a wide range of instruments:

Drums (Sophie Purvis)

Piano (Louis Wild)

Voice (Chiara Todisco),

Brass (John Flood)

Woodwind (Fran Harris)

Guitar and Bass guitar (Stuart Turner).

In these lessons students can be supported with their performance coursework and entered for graded music exams if they and parents wish to take this path. We use the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music (ABRSM), Trinity College London (TCL) or Rock School London (RSL) for our graded exams. Our tutors are self-employed and use the music hub price guidance for their fees. Prices vary depending on group size and duration of the lesson. We also provide a discounted tuition for students that have pupil premium status allowing for more students to access this type of music tuition. Students who don't have their own instruments are provided with one from our own supplies or those at NTMEH.

We also engage with NTMEH to provide large group music tuition to all students via our musical theatre group run by musical director (Andrew Clarence). This group is free of charge and open to all students at GSHS. On top of this we also support and promote groups that are hosted at our NTMEH such as their Sounding Out! Project and Saturday music school.

We have several music clubs available to students at both lunch time and after school which perform throughout the year both in house and in our local community. These clubs allow students to develop the musical skills whilst taking ownership of their own practice and performance. All students can participate in our choir or in our school band. KS4 can attend music theory club or become a student helper, engaging with and developing younger students on their instruments, whilst developing their own skills as mentors and musicians. Members of these clubs have participated in the NTMEH choir showcase, Christmas and Summer concerts, performed in our local community, have been showcased during open evenings and other events.

Our practice rooms are made available to all students to practice individually, as well as our specialist music room and small performance space. By having frequent availability to these specialist spaces students can grow and develop their skills independently and develop relationships with other performers in our school. The

results of this are several small groups of singers and small bands that have been independently created by our students. By working in these groups students have developed their musicianship and confidence to perform in front of others. We also can provide a number of instruments to allow students to practice at home, and our KS4 and KS5 students are encouraged to take instruments home to practice outside of lessons.

Part C: Musical experiences

At GSHS students are given multiple opportunities to perform over the whole year. This includes concerts, performing for other students in assemblies, performing to staff and to the wider community.

This Includes:

Open Evening

GCSE showcases

Christmas Concert

North Tyneside Music Education Hub Choir Showcase

Annual School Musical

Song Writing Showcase

Open Mic Night

Transition Days

Rewards Assemblies

Information Evenings

Options Evening

The Glasshouse International Centre for Music events

All performances and events are free for all students to participate in. We do ask that audience members pay a small contribution towards our larger concerts, but all showcases are free to attend for parents/carers. Events hosted by our music partners have their own cost for audience members. Parents/Carers of students with pupil premium status have access to free tickets to our in-house concerts.

Future Development Priorities

Curriculum Music

Continue to develop a broad, ambitious and sequenced KS3 curriculum which builds practical musicianship, musical literacy, listening and composition skills. The curriculum will provide clear progression towards GCSE Music and support students who choose not to continue with formal music qualifications to remain active musicians.

Musical Independence

Increase opportunities for students to practise, rehearse and perform independently, including through student-led ensembles, practice-room access and musical leadership opportunities.

Music Careers

Develop a structured programme of careers education across KS3–KS5, introducing students to the wide range of careers within music and the creative industries. This will include curriculum activities, careers-focused projects, visiting professionals, workshops and links with local and regional music organisations.

Professional Experiences

Continue to develop partnerships with organisations such as **North Tyneside Music Education Hub** and **The Glasshouse International Centre for Music**, providing students with opportunities to work with professional musicians and experience music beyond the classroom.

Access and Inclusion

Continue to remove barriers to participation by providing access to instruments, subsidised tuition and free or low-cost extracurricular opportunities, ensuring that financial circumstances do not prevent students from participating in musical activities.

Performance

Increase opportunities for students to perform in school and the wider community, ensuring that performance is an integral part of students' musical development and provides meaningful opportunities to celebrate achievement.

This retains the spirit of the original plan while making it sound much more like an **actual development plan for your department**, rather than a description of what music education generally should look like.

Music Careers and the Creative Industries

Careers education will be embedded throughout the music curriculum to help students understand the wide range of opportunities available within music and the wider creative industries. Students will be encouraged to recognise that a career in music does not necessarily mean becoming a performing musician, and that the skills developed through music can lead to a wide variety of professional pathways.

Throughout Key Stage 3, students will be introduced to the different roles involved in creating, producing, performing and sharing music. This will include exploring what happens behind the scenes of a recording, concert, musical theatre production, film, television programme or digital media project. Students will develop an understanding of how performers, composers, producers, sound engineers, technicians and other creative professionals work together to create a finished product. This will allow students to make connections between the practical activities they undertake in music lessons and the skills used by professionals in the industry.

As students progress through Key Stage 3, careers learning will become increasingly focused on the skills, qualities and experiences required to work within the music industry and wider creative sectors. Students will be encouraged to consider how skills such as **creativity, collaboration, communication, problem-solving, organisation, resilience, leadership and the effective use of technology** can be developed through their musical experiences. Practical projects involving composition, performance and music technology will provide opportunities for students to experience some of these roles themselves.

At Key Stage 4, careers education will be connected more explicitly to the **Eduqas GCSE Music course**. Students will consider how the three areas of performing, composing and appraising relate to real-world careers and further study. They will explore how the skills developed through GCSE Music can be transferred into employment, further education and other creative opportunities. Students will also be encouraged to consider different progression routes available after GCSE, including Level 3 study, vocational courses, A Levels, apprenticeships, university and specialist music training where appropriate.

Music technology and composition work will provide opportunities for students to explore the increasingly important role of technology within the modern music industry. Students will gain experience of creating, recording, editing and developing music

using digital tools, helping them understand how technology has changed the way music is created, produced and distributed.

Where possible, the department will provide students with opportunities to hear from and work alongside **professional musicians and other creative practitioners**.

Workshops, performances, visits and partnerships with organisations such as the North Tyneside Music Education Hub and The Glasshouse International Centre for Music will allow students to gain a greater understanding of the realities of working within the creative industries. The existing development plan already identifies professional musician experiences and partnerships as an area for future development. School Development Plan Complete

Students will also be given opportunities to develop their understanding of the less visible aspects of the music industry through school performances and events. Supporting concerts, showcases and other musical activities can help students understand the planning, organisation, technical and promotional work required to deliver a successful event. This can provide valuable experiences of teamwork, responsibility and leadership alongside their musical development.

At Key Stage 5, careers education will build on this foundation by developing students' understanding of the **music industry, employability and portfolio careers**. Students will be encouraged to consider how musicians and creative professionals may combine different roles, freelance work, teaching, performance, production and other employment to develop sustainable careers.

The overall aim is for students to leave school with a broader understanding of **where music can take them**, whether they intend to pursue music professionally, continue it as a significant part of their further education, or use the skills developed through music in another career. Music should therefore provide not only opportunities to become better musicians, but also opportunities to develop the creativity, confidence, independence and transferable skills required for life beyond school.

Further information (optional)

<https://ntmeh.org.uk/>

<https://theglasshouseicm.org/>

<https://www.sunderland.ac.uk/performingarts>