

Castle Newnham Music Development Plan 24/25

Overview

Detail	Information
Academic year that this summary covers	25/26
Date this summary was published	03/2026
Date this summary will be reviewed	09/26
Name of the school music lead	Emily Green
Name of local music hub	BLMK Music Hub

This is a summary of how Castle Newnham delivers music education to all 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 families understand what our school offers and who we work with to support our pupils' music education.

Part A: Curriculum Music

Overview

We follow the guidance of the [model music curriculum](#) to provide pupils with experiences in 4 main areas: Singing, listening, composing and musicianship. We follow the guidance on listening and composing by embedding it throughout the curriculum in areas such as whole class ensemble playing, use of music technology and different genre explorations. Our listening repertoire includes some recommended genres from the Model Music Curriculum but also pieces informed by subject specific knowledge to inform smooth progression across all Key Stages.

We assess the curriculum on a termly basis, primarily through the use of performance recordings, and occasionally with the support of written work. GCSE assessment is taken more frequently and based on the 3 main elements of the course: Performance, Composition and Appraising.

We are hugely supported by our local Music Hub, BLMK, who are based on site at our school. They support us with the renting of musical instruments and we have previously partnered with the BLMK Music Hub and BACE (Bedford Arts and Cultural Education) on trial curriculum content in a project called 'Future Music Makers' which is now a permanent feature in our schemes of learning.

- [Primary Music Curriculum Map](#) (Including national curriculum links)
- [Secondary Music Curriculum Map](#)
- Years 1-4 have 30 minutes with a specialist and 30 minutes with their class teacher each week
- Years 5+6 have 1 hour with a specialist each week
- Years 7+8 have 1 hour a week
- Year 9 have 1 hour a fortnight
- Years 10+11 have 5 hours a fortnight
- Sing up, Out of the Ark and Teaching Gadget are used to support classroom teaching
- Instrumental learning:
 - Year 1 learn a range of unpitched percussion
 - Year 2 learn 1 instrument
 - Year 3 learn 1 instrument
 - Year 4 learn 2 instruments
 - Year 5 learn 2 instruments
 - Year 6 learn 2 instruments

- Year 7 learn 1 instrument
- Year 8 learn 1 instrument
- Year 9-11 recap use of and hone knowledge and develop preferences in instruments

- KS1 is focussed on learning to read rhythm notation and basic pitch notation.
- LKS2 is focussed on developing pitch notation reading and playing pitched instruments. They also start to develop Music Technology skills.
- UKS2 is focussed on experiencing more instrumental playing, furthering rhythm and pitch notation reading and composition. We also delve further into singing with a specialist teacher.
- KS3 focuses on developing knowledge of reading and writing music and developing key elemental knowledge. We also develop wider listening skills.
- KS4 follows the main skill sets required by the EDUQAS GCSE Music specification.

Whole class ensemble tuition

Every year group has the opportunity to explore at least one instrument a year as part of a whole class ensemble. We have designed the skills development of our whole class ensemble instrument playing to build on fine motor skills, age related development, musical skills development and wider musical experiences. All whole class ensemble tuition is given by a subject specialist.

Year 1 explores music through body percussion and classroom percussion. They use a range of unpitched percussion instruments to explore beat, rhythm and pulse.

Year 2 continue with the use of percussion but develop their instrumental skills to include playing the Ocarina. Through this they get to develop their understanding of pitch. They play the Ocarina for a whole term in the year to embed this development.

Year 3 continue their pitch development by learning the chime bars and using them to start exploring pitch composition. They also learn this for a whole term in the year.

Year 4 start to pick up finer motor skills and more difficult musical development with the recorder and the Toot. They start the year with a term of Recorder and continue their woodwind skills development with a half term of Toots at the end of the year.

Year 5 start the year with a term of learning Piano and come back to it later in the year to develop their composition skills. We also reinforce the development of beat, rhythm and pulse by learning the Djembe and exploring African drumming.

Year 6 finish off our Primary development by learning the Ukulele and the Steel Pans. Some of the instruments used in Year 6 are informed by subject specialist specialism and so alter on a yearly basis, however, the same content is explored within the instrumental learning.

Year 7 develop their reading music knowledge and understanding of the elements through learning how to play the piano/keyboard.

Year 8 take on new skills by learning whole class Ukulele and they develop this into being able to play in small groups and develop their ensemble skills.

Year 9 get the opportunity to develop their ensemble skills in a band setting and can choose to specialise in any Rock/Pop band instrument and receive specific guidance in this.

GCSE pupils explore their chosen instrument from Year 10 and will occasionally explore key knowledge using other instruments.

Singing

As per the Model Music Curriculum guidance, singing informs a large part of the music curriculum at Castle Newnham School.

From Year 1-4, each pupil has 30 minutes of whole-class singing with the class teacher a week for the whole year. The repertoire for this is informed by the schemes of learning on either Sing Up or Out of the Ark. These year groups then have an extra half term a year that they study singing with a subject specialist. In these lessons we explore different levels of singing skills including projection, intonation, pronunciation, expression, timbre voice control.

Years 5 and 6 start every year with a full term of singing informed by the repertoire given by Young Voices, which changes every year, to cover a range of genres and languages and different skills such as call and response and harmony. These year groups then have singing interwoven into the rest of their curriculum in smaller ensemble settings to make sure that singing continues throughout the year.

In KS3, singing is embedded into schemes across the years including band projects, starter tasks and whole school events.

Technology

Music Technology is a new addition for our Primary curriculum and is in development for years 3-6. We start Year 3 and 4 off with using Chromebooks to explore basic concepts such as; sequencing a melody, creating a rhythm using a beat sequencer and combining the 2 to write music.

Year 5 and 6 start to use Garageband on iPads to develop their knowledge of sequencing. This includes creating chord progressions, looping, rhythmic development, basslines and structure.

Year 6 develop their use of technology a little further by interweaving it into other aspects of their learning. For example, they compose music with beatboxing and use the help of a loop station to build their music.

In Secondary, Music Technology becomes a subject in its own right. We teach 1 Music lesson and 1 Music Tech lesson alternately a fortnight. Secondary pupils develop their skills initially on iPads using Garageband, they then progress to using Garageband on Macs. They develop skills such as sequencing, looping, composing Music for Film and producing. In GCSE, pupils have the opportunity to use notation software, Musescore, and the DAW Cubase as an alternative to Garageband.

Part B: Co-Curricular Music

Overview

We offer a wide range of co-curricular musical activities to all pupils at Castle Newnham, these are shared between the school internally, the offer from the local Music Hub and outside agencies that we welcome into the school. The joint offer covers individual lessons, ensemble tuition, bands, instrumental loans and holiday provisions.

No matter how a pupil is learning or who with, we offer practice room space for all pupils on both school sites. Years 1-4 have one practice room available to them for their lessons or practice time at any point in the day or after school. Years 5 - 11 have 4 practice rooms available to them that they are able to book the use of in lunchtimes or after school including the use of any school instruments and equipment, all free of charge.

Singing

Our own extra-curricular offer includes choirs across both phases that meet weekly. Years 5-11 have choirs throughout the year that are run by subject specialists. These clubs are offered on a sign-up basis every half term for Primary pupils and Secondary pupils are given the opportunity to join at any point in the year. There are also external choirs that are advertised to all pupils and meet at Castle Newnham during the week.

Ensembles

Years 3 - 11 are offered the opportunity to join a musical performance every year. This is offered from the start of September to their performance after February half term. Pupils have this opportunity for an average of 5 months of the academic year, depending on year group. These performances are joined on a sign up/audition basis and every pupil that auditions gets a role.

The Year 5+6 choir is something that we transition between being an ensemble group that changes to the request of the pupils and move with the instrumental curriculum learning. This is the second year of trialling this, using Ukulele club as the alternative to choir which has increased our attendance on a more permanent basis.

Secondary pupils are also offered Orchestra club for those who play an instrument, trialling the addition of Year 5+6 pupils that are at a good enough performance level to play alongside Secondary pupils.

As well as the in school ensembles, we advertise the wide variety of ensembles outside of school that are offered by the Bedford Music service that can be found [here](#).

Tuition

We have a limited number of tuition slots that we offer as Musicianship sessions to all pupils, run by subject specialists for free. We take a select group of pupils using a mixture of Pupil Premium information and high attaining musical knowledge/skills and update this list every term. Pupils get a 20 minute lesson every fortnight with instruments that are a specialism to the subject specialist teacher.

We also advertise the tuition that is offered by the Bedfordshire Music Co-Operative teachers that we have on site every week offered by the Bedford Music Service. There are a range of individual, group and ensemble lessons that are offered both during school hours and at after schools/weekends. There are remissions offered based on Pupil Premium or Looked After status on both tuition and instrumental hire. Information on instrumental offer, tuition, prices and remissions can be found on the Bedford Music Service website [here](#).

Part C: Musical Experiences

Overview

As with our extra-curricular offer, we offer a wide range of musical experiences to all pupils at Castle Newnham, again shared between the school internally, the offer from the local Music Hub and outside agencies that we welcome into the school. The joint offer covers individual lessons, ensemble tuition, bands, instrumental loans and holiday provisions. We make sure that all pupils have the chance to experience music inside and outside the classroom and in a professional performance setting to further their cultural capital and encourage wider musical experiences. Any offers that require payment are either covered by the Bedford Music Service's remittance policy or Castle Newnham School offer support on an individual basis.

Our offer

Every year group gets the offer of at least one live music experience a year as a minimum. We take reception to Year 7 on an annual Pantomime trip at the Royal and Derngate. Years 5+6 pupils that opt to join the trip also get the additional experience of live music and performing at Young Voices every year, they take part in the world's largest choir and get to see other professional musicians perform for them. Years 8 -11 are taken to London to see a West End performance, the GCSE trip is informed by the GCSE Drama live review exam.

We have annual Primary and Secondary Musicians evenings that give every pupil the opportunity to perform anything they would like from a piece they have learnt in their instrumental lessons to something they've been working on in their own time, either solo or ensemble which is free to attend. We have a Christmas concert every year that involves pupils from Years 5-11. We also hold an annual summer festival where pupils can sign up to perform anything of their choosing which is a fundraising event for the whole school, this opportunity is offered to the whole federation.

As part of our extra-curricular activities, we offer two musicals to Primary pupils - One for our year 3 and 4 pupils and one for years 5 and 6 in conjunction with year 7's. We also offer one to Secondary pupils in years 8 - 11. In these musicals, pupils get the opportunity to perform in a formal setting with the use of microphones, lighting, staging and props.

We take our ensembles to external performance opportunities when they present themselves every year. We now have a long standing booking with a local church's Christmas tree festival and the Bedford Borough's light switch on performances that we take our Primary choirs to as well as some solo performances from Primary and Secondary pupils. These performances are also extra opportunities for pupils to see other musicians perform. We work closely with Bedford Music Hub to make sure that pupils are aware of, and can attend, any performance based events they host. For example, we always attend the annual KS3 Battle of the Bands and Beds Breakthrough.

In conjunction with the Bedford Music Service, we also try to make sure that pupils are given a termly assembly by instrumental teachers to promote peripatetic lessons. We also share the opportunities to perform or attend courses which can be found on their website [here](#).

In the Future

Overview

Please see below the ideas we have about developing our department and its offer over the coming years. We have identified areas where we might not be completely fulfilling the Model Music Curriculum or areas in which we feel we would like to improve to move our department forward. We have split our plans into curriculum, co-curricular and musical experiences as above.

Curriculum Music

- To improve the quality of assessment across the whole of Primary and Secondary music
- To develop a more robust assessment system that includes performance, theory and listening at an appropriate level for each year group
- Develop stronger relationships with local secondary music departments to enhance the delivery of the GCSE course and support the NEA content delivery
- Introduce permanent resources to assist students who struggle with foundational knowledge and to challenge those who excel

Co-Curricular Music

- To increase the offer of extra curricular activities to include the instrumental ensembles in Primary alongside choirs held for the entire academic year and more instrumental activities for Secondary
- To increase the efforts of the department to reach out to all pupils and make them aware of the offers outside of school, especially those by the Bedford Music Service. We would like to include regular reminders/updates sent to PP and LAC pupils of discounted offers they receive
- To monitor drop-out/retention rates of co-curricular clubs and instrumental lessons in conjunction with the Bedfordshire Music Co-Operative teachers
- To monitor 'soft outcomes' such as improved behaviour or academic success on those who take part in co-curricular music programmes

Musical Experiences

- To increase the amount of pupil voice to help inform curriculum, events and opportunities
- To increase the efforts of the department to reach out to all pupils and make them aware of the offers outside of school, as above
- To increase the number of musical performance opportunities available to Primary and Secondary pupils in and out of school

Further Information

Bedford Music Service website: <https://bedfordmusic.org.uk/>

Bedfordshire Music Co-Operative website: <https://www.bedsmusic.coop/>

Bedford Arts and Cultural Education (BACE) website:

<https://www.beds.ac.uk/culture-and-community-engagement/culture-sector-engagement/local-cultural-education-partnerships/bedford-arts-cultural-education/>

Future Music Makers final report:

<https://bedfordmusic.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/Future-Music-Makers-Final-Evaluation-Report.pdf>

DfE guide for parents and young people on Music in schools:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/music-education-information-for-parents-and-young-people>