Sir John Nelthorpe School – Music Development Plan 2025-26

Detail	Information
Academic year that this summary covers	2025/26
Date this summary was published	September 2025
Date this summary will be reviewed	September 2026
Name of the school music lead	Mrs K Watson
Name of school leadership team member with responsibility for music	Mr D Waite
Name of local music hub	North Lincolnshire Music
Name of other music education organisation(s) (if partnership in place)	

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.

Following a successful year last year, the school has continued to thrive and build on its achievements in music. Sir John Nelthorpe School is proud to have strengthened its partnership with North Lincolnshire Music Service and to have been selected as one of the Music Hub's Lead Schools for Music. This recognition places us at the heart of music education in the region, with a responsibility to inspire and support the sharing of best practice across schools. We are also delighted to host the Music Hub's new Rock and Pop Afternoon sessions, a vibrant group open to all young people locally and particularly well attended by our pupils. Excitingly, this ensemble will form the pit band for the upcoming KS3 and KS4 Big Sing at the Plowright Theatre in February.

We are seeing record numbers of pupils choosing to study GCSE Music, and many of our young people regularly progress to A Level performing arts-related qualifications. In addition, our ability to offer A Level Music has enabled students to continue their journey into higher education, studying music at degree level. Alongside this, the number of pupils receiving instrumental lessons has risen significantly, and we are now at capacity for almost all instruments — a clear reflection of the growing enthusiasm and commitment to music among our students. Looking ahead, we are eager to build on this momentum, creating even more opportunities for young people to engage with and excel in music.

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.

Our curriculum is delivered in a well-resourced and welcoming environment which includes one teaching classroom with a suite of PCs connected to MIDI controller keyboards, two generously-sized practice rooms which each house a full drum kit, two further smaller practice rooms, and a drama hall which is used regularly for rehearsals and performances.

At Sir John Nelthorpe School, we are committed to delivering a broad and engaging music curriculum for all students. The time allocated to curriculum music per week is as follows:

- **Key Stage 3 (Years 7-9)**: Pupils receive **one** music lesson lasting 50 minutes per week throughout the academic year.
- **Key Stage 4 (GCSE Music)**: Students who choose to study music at GCSE receive **three** 50 minute lessons per week.
- **Key Stage 5 (A-Level Music):** Students who choose to study A Level Music currently receive three 50 minute lessons per week, as well as bespoke instrumental and theoretical study and independent working time.

Opportunities for Practical Music-Making

We provide all students with the opportunity to **sing and play instruments** as part of their musical development. This includes:

- **Whole-class teaching** in Key Stage 3, where students experience instrumental and vocal performance. We have whole class sets of keyboards linked to PCs, ukulele, African drums, Samba instruments, glockenspiels and in addition to this we are well-resourced with guitars, and bass guitars which are frequently used in our classroom lessons.
- Access to **peripatetic lessons** on a variety of instruments, including piano, guitar, drums, woodwind, brass, strings, voice and DJ/Music Production (delivered by Noise Academy).
- Regular **ensemble opportunities**, such as choir, musical theatre group, instrumental ensembles, and self-led rock bands.
- Participation in **school concerts, performances, musical productions and community events** to showcase their musical achievements.

Our KS3 and 4 Learning journeys, as well as further information regarding the KS4 specification can be found on our school website here.

KS3 Curriculum

Our music curriculum is guided by the principles of the **Model Music Curriculum (March 2021)** and follows best practices from national curriculum guidance. We ensure a well-rounded approach that develops students' skills in performance, composition, and listening across a wide range of genres and traditions. We acknowledge that young musicians now choose to acquire skills in a variety of different ways – through the use of traditional musical notation, through visual aids such as tutorial videos, through non-standard notation such as TAB or chord diagrams, and by rote. Our music learning journey encourages students to develop independent learning skills – and offers a variety of methods by which to learn musical material. In addition to this, learners are often offered a choice of resources such as keyboards, ukuleles, guitars, bass guitars and music technology and invited to respond to practical and creative tasks in a way which inspires them. Through the development of practical skills learners are then able to apply their understanding in appraising activities.

Music technology is a real strength at KS3, and learners are actively engaged using a range of free software. Pupils are encouraged to record their own work and share this with others through the use of technology such as Chrome music lab shared piano, Bandlab, and Signal.vercel.app. In addition to this, students gain increasingly sophisticated skills in creating and manipulating music and other sounds with music sequencers and DAWs in order to develop compositional skills.

KS4 Curriculum

Those pupils who opt to continue with music into KS4 study the Eduqas GCSE music. Eduqas GCSE music is accessible to all pupils who have experienced the KS3 curriculum. Much of the course is coursework based (30% performance; 30% composition), with a listening exam based on four Areas of Study (Musical Forms and Devices; Music for Ensemble; Film Music; and Popular Music). There are no pre-requisites to study GCSE music other than a genuine interest in the subject, an open-minded attitude towards different musical genres, and the willingness to improve practical skills through independent practice.

Learners are encouraged to develop their solo and ensemble performance skills through weekly or fortnightly practical lessons where freedom is given to explore styles of music which interest them, as well as developing instrumental and vocal technique.

Non-traditional performance skills are also encouraged at KS4, with some pupils choosing to present their NEA with DJ performances or through the use of music technology.

Music Qualifications and Progression Routes

Our school offers a **comprehensive pathway for music education**, allowing students to achieve formal qualifications:

- **Graded Music Exams** (available to all key stages, supporting students taking ABRSM, Trinity, or Rockschool assessments).

- **Noise Academy DJ and Music Production Levels** (Available to pupils engaging in these lessons)
- **GCSE Music (Eduqas Exam Board)** – Developing students' performance, composition, and analytical skills.
- **A-Level Music (Eduqas Exam Board)** – Providing advanced study in performance, composition, and musical analysis.

For further details on our curriculum and music qualifications, please visit: **https://www.sirjohnnelthorpe.co.uk/music-curriculum-information/**

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.

Sir John Nelthorpe School collaborates with North Lincolnshire Music (where we are one of the largest purchasers of instrumental and vocal lessons), as well as Noise Academy to enhance our provision. These partnerships provides students with:

- Specialist instrumental tuition from professional musicians.
- Opportunities to take part in external workshops, masterclasses, and large-scale performances.
- Access to music technology and composition resources.

Approximately 90 pupils engage in 1:1 or small group instrumental and vocal lessons, with a number of pupils choosing to study two instruments. These lessons are subsidised by the school (by 35%) to ensure fair access to those from all backgrounds. A further subsidy is provided for those in receipt of free school meals, and looked-after children are eligible for free lessons. In addition to this, through our school SEN department a number of pupils who may be in need of additional emotional or social support are selected to access free of charge DJ lessons for a term. Our current uptake for instrumental lessons includes: Violin, cello, double bass, trumpet, flute, clarinet, guitar, bass guitar, ukulele, piano, voice and DJ/ Music Production. Learners are able to borrow most instruments – including electronic keyboards - free of charge either through the Music Service, or through school.

We have a thriving extra-curricular timetable which welcomes pupils from all year-groups, including members of the sixth form. These open access groups are well-attended and members of these groups demonstrate ongoing commitment and pride.

Groups we currently offer:
School Choir
Rock and Pop Group
Musical Theatre Group
Student-led ensembles
GCSE Composition club
School Orchestra (prepared during instrumental lessons)

In addition to these groups, pupils are also encouraged to engage in informal music-making at lunch times using the practice rooms. Recently this has led to an increase in the interest in lessons in guitar, bass and drums, and student-led bands are becoming more proficient in managing their own rehearsal time.
Several of our pupils also attend the Music Service led groups, which are promoted to all of our instrumentalists.

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.

Performances are an important part of the school year, and a timetable is well-established. Our school production has usually taken place in the Autumn term, with rehearsals starting after Easter. Recent productions have included Andrew Lloyd Webber's Joseph and the Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat, Tim Minchin's Matilda, and this year we are planning to stage the Sherman Brother's Mary Poppins Jr. We are keen as a school for our productions to develop into something for more than just performers to engage in, and allow pupils to assist with sound, lighting, staging, costumes and props. In addition to our ticketed audience we invited local primary schools to watch a performance of our production, and also rewarded our year 7 with their own private viewing.

In December all pupils have the opportunity to perform in our Winter Showcase – a large proportion of which is provided by musical items including all ensembles, soloists and small groups. In addition to this, there are items prepared in collaboration with dance and drama to create a true 'performing arts showcase'.
Pupils in years 7 and 8 enjoy their Carol Services in the last week of the Autumn term, with whole class singing a focus in lessons.

In the Spring term members of the choir and soloists perform at the North Lincolnshire Music Festival in St John's Church. Last year there were 16 pupils who sang in the Song from a Musical or Film classes. One of our pupils was awarded the 'Most Promising Singer' Bursary which has contributed to their musical education; and one pupil was also awarded a fully-funded place on a prestigious residential music summer school. The choir

have also performed for several years in the Rock Choir class at Scunthorpe Music Festival.

We are also keen to engage with North Lincolnshire Music and have attended events such as the Year 7 Singing Day with Suzzie Vango – allowing 50 of our year 7 pupils to join with hundreds of other year 7 singers to develop their singing technique. This year we are planning to take pupils to the Music Hub's KS3 & 4 Big Sing, with members of the Rock and Pop Afternoon Sessions forming the accompanying band.

As well as these more formal performances there are regular opportunities for pupils to showcase their talents both in school and in the local community. These have recently included:

- Performances at the school's open evening
- D-day celebrations
- A ceremony commemorating our local Commonwealth War Graves
- Community carol services
- The Mayor's civic dinner and the civic service
- Christmas carolling at the pop up café for dementia patients
- Family members day
- Local literacy festival at Normanby Hall
- Year 7 Samba performance at Sports Day

Pupils engaging with DJ and Music Production sessions have a SoundCloud platform on which to showcase their work. This is facilitated by the DJ tutor from Noise Academy. Some of our pupils have been regionally acclaimed for their DJ work, and one past pupil is currently training to be a DJ tutor with Noise Academy themselves.
We also look to provide opportunities for our pupils to engage with live performances and have in the past welcomed professional musicians from a range of musical genres including the folk duo Winter Wilson, singer song-writer Chloe Rodgers and members of the National Youth Jazz Orchestra.
In addition to this, last year we took 50 pupils from KS3 & 4 to London to watch Matilda the Musical ahead of our own production, and this year members of our Mary Poppins cast visited the touring show in Bradford.

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

Sir John Nelthorpe music provision has grown considerably over the past 5 years, and it is hoped that this will continue. Future plans include:

- Introduce further aspects of music technology including setting up a recording studio for use with KS4/ Music production.
- Increase the number of pupils engaging with Musical Theatre productions
- Encourage student-led bands to perform regularly within school and in the local community.
- Engage further with North Lincolnshire Music to provide opportunities for pupils to experience live music and large-scale music-making.
- Explore the prospect of a tour for the Musical Theatre group.
- Explore further qualifications – particularly at KS5.
- Provide opportunities for our local feeder schools to foster connections and encourage engagement in co-curricular as soon as pupils enter in year 7.
- To make links with Performing Arts professionals to promote career paths for our pupils. In particular alumni of SJN who have gained accolade within performance-related careers.