

Music development plan summary: Cardinal Heenan Catholic High School

Overview

Detail	Information
Academic year that this summary covers	2025/26
Date this summary was published	1 st September 2025 (Update)
Date this summary will be reviewed	July 2026
Name of the school music lead	Mr J Cotton
Name of school leadership team member with responsibility for music (if different)	Mr J Sanderson
Name of local music hub	Resonate Music Hub
Name of other music education organisation(s) (if partnership in place)	Gospel Music in Schools, Spirit Studios, LIPA, Scratch Studios, DJ Innovation Project



Music is an important and valued part of life at Cardinal Heenan Catholic High School, and all pupils have access to a high-quality, inclusive music education. The music department is a forward-thinking department, with provision informed by the Model Music Curriculum and delivered through a carefully sequenced curriculum, a broad co-curricular programme and a wide range of musical experiences. Pupils are given regular opportunities to sing, perform, compose and listen to music, both within lessons and beyond the classroom, supported by strong use of music technology and partnerships with Resonate Music Hub, LIPA, Spirit Studios, Scratch Studios, Gospel Music in Schools, DJ Innovation Project and a range of local music and community organisations.

Music plays a central role in the cultural, community and Catholic life of the school, with pupils participating in concerts, performances, liturgical celebrations including music and singing in assemblies and community events throughout the year. The department is committed to continuous improvement, widening participation and providing clear progression routes into Key Stage 4, post-16 study and future careers in music.

Part A: Curriculum music

While curriculum time varies by key stage, the music department ensures that all pupils experience regular, meaningful musical engagement that aligns with national expectations and the Model Music Curriculum.

Time allocation and qualifications

Key Stage 3

- **Year 7:** One timetabled music lesson per week throughout the academic year.
- **Years 8 and 9:** One timetabled music lesson every two weeks.

At Key Stage 3, curriculum time is used to deliver a broad and balanced programme aligned with the Model Music Curriculum. Pupils develop skills in singing, keyboard performance, ensemble work, listening and composition, including the use of music technology. Curriculum maps show clear progression across Years 7–9, with increasing musical independence and complexity.

Key Stage 4

- Pupils receive **five music lessons across a two-week timetable**.

Pupils study one of the following qualifications, depending on cohort and pathway:

- **BTEC Level 2 Music Practice (Tech Award)**
- **OCR GCSE Music** (previous cohorts)

For the current academic year, **Years 10 and 11 are studying the BTEC Level 2 Music Practice qualification**, which focuses on practical music-making, genre awareness, performance, composition and professional practice.

Key Stage 5

- Students receive **six music lessons per fortnight**.

Students study the **RSL Level 3 Subsidiary Diploma for Music Practitioners**, a vocational qualification that develops advanced skills in performance, composition, evaluation and industry understanding, supporting progression to higher education, apprenticeships and employment within the music sector.

Curriculum intent and implementation

Our music curriculum is explicitly informed by the **Model Music Curriculum**, ensuring that pupils:

- Develop secure knowledge of musical elements (including rhythm, pitch, texture, harmony, timbre, structure and dynamics).
- Engage regularly in Performance, both individually and as part of an ensemble.
- Perform using voices, classroom instruments and music technology.
- Compose and arrange music using a range of musical styles, structures and starting points.
- Listen to, analyse and evaluate music from a wide range of genres, cultures and historical contexts.

Music technology plays a significant role in curriculum delivery and supports inclusion, creativity and independent learning. Pupils use edu.bandlab.com to compose, arrange, record and refine musical ideas, allowing all learners to access high-quality music-making regardless of prior instrumental experience. Technology is used progressively across Key Stage 3 to develop sequencing, structure, texture and production skills, and is embedded more extensively at Key Stages 4 and 5 to support coursework, assessment and portfolio development.

Interactive digital resources, including Teaching Gadget, are used to support the development of musical knowledge, notation, listening skills and recall. These tools are used to reinforce key concepts, address misconceptions and support retrieval practice, enabling pupils to build secure musical understanding alongside practical skills. Sono Bus is used within the classroom to record and standardise pupil work and to provide students with opportunities to perform live, supporting ensemble skills, critical listening and high-quality musical outcomes.

At Key Stage 3, pupils follow a curriculum that balances practical music-making with listening, appraising and composing, supporting the development of musical literacy, aural skills, ensemble awareness and confidence in using music technology.

Opportunities for whole-class performance and composition are built into schemes of learning and are clearly mapped across the year.

Instrumental and vocal learning within the curriculum

Within curriculum lessons, pupils are given structured opportunities to: Sing regularly as a class and in smaller groups. Perform using classroom instruments and music technology. Develop ensemble skills through group performance tasks. Apply instrumental and vocal skills to coursework and practical assessments, particularly at Key Stages 4 and 5.

In addition to curriculum lessons, all pupils have access to one-to-one peripatetic music tuition, which is available free of charge, allowing all students the opportunity to take part. Lessons are available in drums, keyboard, guitar, bass guitar, vocals, woodwind and brass. This provision supports and enhances curriculum learning, allows pupils to develop technical proficiency alongside classroom music, and feeds directly into participation in school clubs, bands, choirs and other extra-curricular ensembles, supporting musical progression beyond the classroom.

Partnerships and external support

The music department works in partnership with a range of external organisations to enhance curriculum delivery and provide pupils with meaningful musical experiences. We work closely with **Resonate Music Hub** to access opportunities that support teaching and learning, including enrichment projects, professional development and progression pathways for pupils.

Pupils also benefit from targeted projects such as the **Gospel Music in Schools** programme, which supports singing, ensemble work and cultural understanding within the curriculum. In addition, funding accessed through the **DJ Innovation Fund** has supported the development of music technology, performance skills and alternative musical pathways, broadening pupils' experiences beyond traditional classroom music.

The department maintains partnerships with local and national music venues and studios, including **LIPA** and **Spirit Studios**, providing pupils with insight into professional music environments, industry practices and potential progression routes within the creative industries.

Inclusion and access

The music curriculum is designed to be inclusive and accessible. Teaching approaches, resources and outcomes are adapted to meet the needs of pupils with SEND, ensuring that all learners can participate meaningfully in musical activities. Practical music-making, use of technology and flexible grouping are used to remove barriers and promote engagement.



Part B: Extra-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.

Music tuition

In addition to curriculum music lessons, pupils have access to a range of co-curricular music tuition that supports progression beyond the classroom. The school offers one-to-one peripatetic music lessons delivered by specialist teachers. Music tuition is funded by the school and is tracked and managed using Involve Education, ensuring oversight of pupil engagement, progress and access.

Tuition is available in the following areas:

- Drums
- Keyboard
- Guitar
- Bass guitar
- Vocals

- Woodwind
- Brass

Music tuition is available to pupils across all key stages. The school is committed to widening participation and reducing barriers to access. Funding arrangements and support are in place to ensure that pupils, including those eligible for Pupil Premium, are able to access instrumental and vocal tuition where appropriate.

Ensembles, choirs and groups

Pupils are encouraged to take part in a range of **co-curricular ensembles and groups** that support musical development beyond the classroom. These opportunities help pupils to develop ensemble skills, confidence, musical leadership and a sense of belonging within the wider musical life of the school.

Current co-curricular ensembles and groups include:

- **School choir**, open to pupils across key stages, providing regular opportunities for group singing and performance.
- **Rock bands**, enabling pupils to develop performance skills in popular music styles.
- **Jazz band**, supporting stylistic understanding, ensemble awareness and improvisation skills.
- **School production band**, which supports musical theatre and whole-school productions.
- **Music technology and DJ clubs**, which develop skills in music production, DJing, live sound, audio technology and digital performance.

The department has a strong cohort of pupils who are actively involved in live sound and music technology, supporting rehearsals, concerts and school productions. These pupils develop practical technical skills alongside musical understanding, contributing to performances both on and off stage.

Ensembles are open to pupils from a range of year groups and prior experience is not a requirement. Participation is inclusive, and pupils are encouraged to join based on interest and commitment.

Progression beyond the curriculum

Co-curricular music provides pupils with regular and meaningful opportunities to develop musical skills, confidence and independence beyond curriculum lessons. Pupils are regularly involved in live performance, allowing them to apply their learning in authentic musical contexts and to develop stagecraft, ensemble awareness and professionalism.

Performance opportunities include school concerts, Battle of the Bands events and school productions, as well as performances within the local community and in partnership with other schools. These experiences support pupils in developing resilience, teamwork and confidence, while also raising aspirations and strengthening links with the wider community. Wider school events include Graduation Masses, Prize Nights and Welcome Masses. These experiences support pupils in developing resilience, teamwork and confidence, while also raising aspirations and strengthening links with the wider community.

Through sustained participation in ensembles, performances and instrumental or vocal tuition, pupils are supported to progress musically and to prepare for further study at Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5, as well as for participation in music beyond school. The department has a strong tradition of students continuing to participate in music beyond Cardinal Heenan, including further study, performance and involvement in the wider music community.

Practice and rehearsal spaces are available within the music department, enabling pupils to rehearse individually or in groups outside of lesson time, subject to availability and supervision.



Part C: Musical experiences

Musical events and performances

Pupils have access to a wide range of musical experiences throughout the academic year, which complement both curriculum and co-curricular provision. These experiences are designed to develop pupils' confidence, cultural understanding and enjoyment of music, while also raising aspirations and strengthening engagement with the wider school community.

Singing in assembly is a regular feature of school life, particularly for Year 7 and Year 8, supporting vocal development, ensemble skills and a shared musical culture. This is reinforced through curriculum learning and wider performance opportunities.

The school hosts a programme of musical performances, concerts and shows, including:

- School concerts and showcase events
- Christmas concert
- Battle of the Bands performances
- School productions, supported by performers and the school production band
- Sixth Form Festival (Supported by various bands and school artists)

These events involve pupils from across different year groups, either as performers or as members of the audience. For pupils in Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5, performance opportunities often include exam-related and assessed performances, allowing students to present work linked directly to their qualifications while gaining experience of performing in authentic contexts. Participation opportunities are open and inclusive, allowing pupils with a range of musical interests and experiences to take part, including performers, singers, bands and pupils involved in music technology and live sound.

Music also plays a central role in the Catholic life of the school. Pupils regularly sing and perform live music at key liturgical events, including:

- Whole-school Catholic Masses
- Year 7 Welcome Mass
- Graduation Mass
- Advent service

These events provide meaningful opportunities for pupils to participate in singing and live performance in a formal and reflective setting, supporting musical development, confidence and spiritual life. Pupils contribute as singers, instrumentalists and through

live sound and music technology, ensuring that music enhances the quality and reverence of each celebration.



Trips and experiences beyond school

Pupils are provided with opportunities to experience live music and the music industry beyond the school environment, supporting listening skills, cultural capital and understanding of professional musical contexts.

Planned and previous visits include:

- Attendance at concerts and events at the Liverpool Philharmonic, enabling pupils to experience high-quality live performance across a range of styles and ensembles.
- Visits to the British Music Experience, supporting pupils' understanding of music history, industry roles and contemporary musical culture.
- Attendance at live music performances at LIPA, giving pupils insight into performance practice, production and progression routes within the creative industries.

- Choir visits and performances in the local community, including fundraising performances at the Royal Hospital and for local charities such as Claire House, allowing pupils to use music to contribute positively to their community.
- Visits to professional recording studios, including Spirit Studios, providing pupils with first-hand experience of studio environments, recording processes and music technology.

Trips and visits are planned with accessibility and inclusion in mind. Information about charging, subsidies and support for pupils eligible for Pupil Premium is shared with parents and carers to ensure that financial circumstances do not act as a barrier to participation.



In the future

The music department is committed to the ongoing improvement of music education and to strengthening provision in line with the **7 features of high-quality music provision** as set out in national guidance. Planned developments will be introduced progressively over the coming academic years and reviewed regularly to ensure impact and sustainability.

Planned improvements include:

- **Curriculum music and outcomes:** A continued focus on strengthening curriculum quality and progression, with the aim of **increasing student uptake at GCSE and post-16**. Curriculum content and assessment will remain under regular review to ensure it is rigorous, relevant and responsive to pupil needs, supporting positive outcomes and sustained engagement.
- **Ongoing curriculum development and review:** The music curriculum will remain under continuous scrutiny to ensure it reflects best practice, national guidance and emerging developments in music education. This ongoing review process will support consistent improvement and ensure teaching and learning continue to evolve.
- **Resources and music technology:** While the department is already well resourced, there is a commitment to remaining up to date with current industry-standard technology. This will ensure that pupils have access to high-quality equipment, software and learning experiences that reflect professional music-making and production.
- **Careers education** Emphasis will continue to be placed on teaching pupils about careers in music, including performance, production, technology and the wider creative industries. This will be embedded across curriculum, co-curricular provision and partnerships to support informed progression choices.
- **Performances and musical experiences:** The department will continue to offer a strong and varied programme of performances, including concerts, productions and external events, ensuring regular opportunities for pupils to perform live and develop confidence and professionalism.
- **Community engagement:** The school will continue to work closely with the local community, charities and partner organisations to provide meaningful performance opportunities beyond school, strengthening pupils' sense of purpose, contribution and real-world musical experience.

These developments will be phased in over subsequent academic years and evaluated to ensure they support high-quality, inclusive and sustainable music education for all pupils.

