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Music development plan summary: Cherry Garden School

Overview

Detail	Information
Academic year that this summary covers	2025-26
Date this summary was published	October 2025
Date this summary will be reviewed	September 2026
Name of the school music lead	Blanca Rios Gonzalez Theo Whitworth
Name of school leadership team member with responsibility for music (if different)	
Name of local music hub	Southwark 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.

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.

As a school with a play-based curriculum for children with complex learning differences pupils at Cherry Garden access music in a number of different ways. In class, musical opportunities are always available in the form of a music corner full of instruments, and much of what a pupil will do in a day at school will be mediated through musical activity and learning. Social games, intensive interaction, communication opportunities, and daily routine are just some of the ways in which children can express themselves musically, both in free flow time and during structured group work. These are all differentiated depending on where the child is at in their learning journey, so that each musical experience is made genuinely meaningful for the pupil. Singing is regularly modelled and encouraged in

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class, as is exploration of percussion, stringed instruments, music technology, and sometimes keyboards.

Furthermore, each pupil takes part in a weekly 20-minute discrete music or 'expressive performance' session, led by one of two music teachers. Reflecting the diversity of need at the school, each session is highly differentiated and distinct from the others, with additional differentiation taking place within each session to ensure the musical experiences are accessible and purposeful.

Some sessions are structured with time for pupils to make music (playing ukuleles, tuned or untuned percussion, singing etc), to move to music (responding to how music makes them want to physically express themselves), and to listen to music (developing skills around distinguishing sounds, melodies and instruments). Other sessions are focused on a more sensory approach, with a strong emphasis musical communication and intensive interaction. Many sessions combine elements of some or all of these approaches, depending on the needs of the pupils.

We often consult with and take advice from Southwark Music, our local music hub (for which we are a lead school for specialist primary provision). This can be in the form of specific discussions around particular needs, or more general conversations around structuring lessons. We also consult their curriculum suggestions for material to use in teaching, including the Southwark Listening Project for suggestions from rich and varied musical traditions. Every year, percussion tutors from Southwark Music lead a sequence of drumming sessions with a large number of our children, in small group sessions.

For further information about how music fits in with our school curriculum, as part of Expressive Art and Design, please visit this page on our school website:

<https://www.cherrygardenschool.co.uk/curriculum/>

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.

The majority of our children's music-making at school takes place during the school day, with the structured and continuous provision opportunities outlined in Part A. Additional music takes place during some dinner time playground sessions, with group singing or playing led by one of the two music teachers on a rotation system so every child has an opportunity to access it. As with all of the music at Cherry Garden, these sessions are highly differentiated, often with a sensory focus, so that they are meaningful for the children involved. If children communicate that they do not want to

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take part in these sessions, they are not obliged to and can do something else, making them optional.

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.

As previously stated, it is important to us that musical experiences, events, or performances are meaningful, accessible and purposeful for our pupils. With this in mind, we create annual bespoke opportunities for musical or expressive performance, including our Christmas show and our Glastoncherry festival-style experience in July, during which ensembles of children perform for the rest of the school. Christmas/festive shows are open to the wider school community free of charge, so children's families can see the results of some of creative work undertaken during the school day.

We also have sharing sessions at the end of projects led with external creative partners, allowing children the opportunity to perform in front of peers. Recent examples of this include a sharing some KS2 children gave based on work undertaken with BLINK Dance Theatre, an organisation which has worked with us on several occasions. We are planning to devise and deliver our own set of creative workshops this year, driven by us as a school staff group, which will lead to additional sharing and performance opportunities later in the school year.

We are fortunate to have established relationships with arts organisations in London. These include the Philharmonia Orchestra, who came and delivered workshops in school and invited us to a concert at the Royal Festival Hall, as part of their Orchestra Unwrapped series. We will aim to continue attending these concerts. Furthermore, Bold Tendencies (based in the nearby Peckham Levels), with whom we have a strong relationship, run some weekend and holiday music-related workshop provision for children with SEND, which we have shared with families to access.

In the future

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

As part of our ongoing commitment to delivering a high-quality and inclusive music education, we are continually reviewing and developing our curriculum and wider

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musical offer. Our aim is to ensure that every pupil experiences a rich, engaging, and progressive music curriculum that nurtures creativity, builds confidence, and fosters a lifelong enjoyment of music. The following improvements outline how we plan to enhance our provision in line with the seven features of high-quality music education.

The school will develop a new yearly music 'sharing' project that brings together pupils, staff, and the wider community to celebrate musical learning and achievement.

This project will include opportunities for staff CPD and peer teaching to build confidence and consistency in delivering high-quality, inclusive music sessions. Through collaboration with local musicians, music hubs, and community partners, pupils will experience a broader range of musical styles and live performances. The initiative aims to strengthen community links, enhance staff expertise, and provide meaningful, enjoyable performance opportunities for all pupils.

We plan to introduce the teaching of new cultural and meaningful instrument(s), e.g. ukulele, keyboard, or djembe drums to broaden pupils' instrumental experience and encourage ensemble playing.

Staff will receive ongoing training on the effective use of our SEND music interaction approach, and on leading singing and instrumental work confidently.

We intend to strengthen partnerships with Southwark Music hub to support workshops, visiting musician sessions, and performance opportunities.