

Music development plan summary: Bristol Free School

Overview

Detail	Information
Academic year that this summary covers	25-26
Date this summary was published	October 2025
Date this summary will be reviewed	July 2026
Name of the school music lead	Gemma Kennard
Name of school leadership team member with responsibility for music (if different)	Kath Conway
Name of local music hub	Bristol Beacon
Name of other music education organisation(s) (if partnership in place)	N/A

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.

<p>Music Curriculum by Year Group</p> <p>Year 7:</p> <p>In Year 7, pupils begin the year with a focus on singing and body percussion. Pupils learn a body percussion rhythm that accompanies a folk song and must then work in groups to perform their own arrangement of the piece. After this, they work on composing their own body percussion rhythm to accompany a song. During this unit pupils become familiar with rhythm notation.</p> <p>In terms 3 and 4, pupils move on to pitch notation and learn keyboard technique through learning songs using the pentatonic scale. Pupils then compose and notate their own melodies using the pentatonic scale.</p> <p>In terms 5 and 6, pupils move onto ukulele, where they will learn five different chords and perform a pop song in groups, before composing their own song using two different chord progression.</p> <p>Year 8:</p> <p>In terms 1 and 2 pupils explore rhythm through learning the Djembe. After performing the class piece in groups, they then compose and notate their own Djembe piece.</p> <p>In terms 3 and 4, pupils learn Pachelbel's Canon on the keyboard and perform in groups, playing in canon, with one performer playing the ground bass.</p> <p>In terms 5 and 6, pupils explore the blues, where they focus on learning the blues scale, performing a blues piece and then improvising using the blues scale with a 12-bar blues accompaniment and walking bass.</p> <p>Year 9:</p> <p>Pupils begin in terms 1 and 2 with learning about film music. They perform a number of leitmotifs on the keyboard, before moving on to composing their own film music to a silent film using Logic Pro.</p> <p>In terms 3 and 4, pupils learn about Game Music, and again move on to using Logic Pro to compose their own Game Music.</p>
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In terms 5 and 6, pupils study pop songs, becoming familiar with pop song structure and lyric writing, before working in groups to compose their own songs, which they then have the option of recording using mics and Logic Pro.

KS4: We follow the Eduqas spec at GCSE level, where pupils will explore two Set Works – Africa and Badinerie, as well as learning about Musical Forms and Devices, Film Music, Pop Music and Music for Ensemble.

KS5: This is also through Eduqas – pupils will again have two Set Works to study in detail, as well as learning about a number of other musical styles and genres.

Lessons in school are 50 minutes long.

Years 7, 8 and 9 have one lesson per week.

KS4 have three lessons per week.

KS5 have six lessons per week.

Here is a link to the Music Curriculum at BFS: [Bristol Free School](#)

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.

Instrumental lessons are provided in partnership with Bristol Beacon. Pupils are able to learn a variety of instruments in school.

Instrumental lessons currently taking place: Piano, Voice, Drums, Guitar, Violin, Viola, Trumpet, Saxophone, Clarinet, Flute, Cornet

Instrument loans are available through Bristol Beacon, where support is also offered for pupils with an EHCP (free instrument hire and subsidised instrumental lessons)

Children who are eligible for Pupil Premium funding are also offered a subsidised rate both through Bristol Beacon, and through BFS.

A range of performance opportunities are offered through Bristol Beacon, with BFS having access to the Lantern Hall for one day of the year, or the option to partner with two or more other state schools to hold a concert in Beacon Hall.

Bristol Beacon also organise a Bristol Education Partnership (BEP) schools music project once per year which BFS are involved with. Last year was a massed choir concert with the Bristol Youth Orchestra in Beacon Hall.

Practice rooms are open daily for pupils to rehearse at break times, lunch times and after school. Pupils book rooms in the morning and have access to a range of instruments to rehearse with.

Extracurricular activities include the school choir and the school ensemble, who learn and perform all the music for the school production.

Additional theory lessons and Period 7 intervention lessons are in place for KS4 and KS5 pupils.

At the end of the academic year, pupils are celebrated for their work in lessons in each subject. In music, there is an additional award for pupils who have worked independently towards a performance goal; this could be as a soloist or a group of pupils in a band/ensemble.

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.

Our Winter and Summer showcases are popular with pupils across the key stages. Pupils sign up from early on in the term to perform in the showcases and these performances feature a mix of drama and music performances.

The school production is also a popular event and pupils begin rehearsals in September for a January performance, for which the music is provided entirely by our school ensemble.

Pupils are keen to perform in Awards Assemblies and end of term events.

There will also be an opportunity for pupils to compose the music for the drama department National Theatre project, which will be performed in Bristol old Vic.

A variety of trips are planned for the year, including a KS4 and KS5 trip to Bristol University Music Department, where pupils will experience being a university music student for the day. Other trips include musicals and performances such as Dear Even Hansen, and Blood Brothers.

In the future

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

- Grow the department and attract more pupils at KS4 and KS5.
- Add an additional Music Tech classroom to allow pupils to compose using a DAW from as early as year 7, and to allow for a vocational Music Tech course
- Introduce the NCFE Level 1 / 2 Technical Award in Music Technology
- Broaden our extracurricular offer
- Continue to work with Bristol Beacon and collaborate with other schools
- Partner with other Bristol state school to put on a performance in Beacon Hall
- Work with local feeder primary schools to put on student-led music assemblies

Further information (optional)

The Department for Education publishes a [guide for parents and young people](#) on how they can get involved in music in and out of school, and where they can go to for support beyond the school.

[Learn to Play | Bristol Beacon](#)

[Bristol Youth Choir | Bristol Beacon](#)

[Bristol Youth Orchestra | Bristol Beacon](#)