

NHGS School Music Development Plan

Overview

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	Connor Marston
Name of school leadership team member with responsibility for music	Alexandra Kent
Name of local music hub	Calderdale Music – part of West Yorkshire Music Hub

This is a summary of how our school delivers music education to all our pupils across three areas – curriculum music, the Ambit programme 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.

All students at NHGS study Music at Key Stage 3 for a total of two hours each fortnight, usually divided into one hour per week. Music is delivered by a team of three specialist music teachers and is taught in a bespoke music classroom where students have access to specialist equipment.

Year 7 introduces music for all students. Students learn how to understand rhythm, read classical musical notation and also learn how to put this into practice on the keyboard through the genre of blues music. The Year 7 curriculum also introduces composition using contemporary software such as *Sibelius* or *MuseScore* and introduces music from across the world.

The Year 8 curriculum develops skills established during Year 7. Students develop their understanding of world music by studying Reggae and Indian Classical music styles. Furthermore, they develop their understanding of musical structure through composition, developing short melodies composed in Year 7 into longer pieces of music in Rondo form. Students also learn how to perform on the ukelele and with tuned percussion, and they build on their group performance skills, gaining confidence in creating music and performing it in front of others. Students' understanding of music appraisal is enhanced,

with students exposed to a variety of music across the course to build their listening and analysis skills; students learn how to write critically about music, linking their responses to the core musical elements.

In Year 9, students are prepared for the optional GCSE Music course. The study of World Music continues, with African Music studied in the Autumn Term. Students develop their group performance skills via this project. Composition skills are developed and students gain confidence in writing in parts; there is also the opportunity for students to experience using alternative composition software, such as *GarageBand*. The Year 9 curriculum develops students' understanding of appraisal and also increases exposure to alternative music forms, such as Film Music. Students refine their keyboard skills through our study of popular music forms this year, and there is an opportunity for those who play orchestral instruments to advance their skills developed outside of the classroom in individual lessons as part of the curriculum.

Edexcel GCSE and A Level Music is an option for students at Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5 and is often a popular choice. These courses are set by the examination boards and develop students' skills in appraisal, composition and performance. Regular 1:1 support is offered with composition and students have access to specialist resources and facilities in order to complete their NEA. Results are regularly excellent and many of our students continue their musical studies beyond NHGS, be it at university level or through BTEC qualifications offered by other local education providers.

At NHGS, a commitment to inclusion and equity is integral to the curriculum. It is imperative that every student has access to the music curriculum and attains successful outcomes. However, it is recognised that certain students may require additional, often temporary, scaffolding to reach these outcomes. All teachers at NHGS follow the EEF's 'Five a Day' principles and Adaptive Teaching is core to our practice, to ensure that all students benefit from an enriching music curriculum.

The school has two dedicated Music teaching classrooms and three fully equipped practice rooms, which support both our curriculum and Ambit Programme.

Part B: Ambit (Extracurricular Programme)

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.

NHGS offers private musical tuition to students in all year groups in a wide range of instruments (piano, guitar, woodwind, brass, strings, percussion) and voice. Peripatetic teachers are employed by the school and the service of offering instrumental/vocal lessons is administered in-house. Many of our students opt to learn an instrument during their time with us. Support can be provided for students in receipt of the Pupil Premium. There is also a wide array of musical ensembles on offer for students. These

include: The NHGS Singers (unauditioned choir), Choral Group (auditioned choir), Concert Band, Big Band, String Orchestra and more. Ensembles are adapted to suit the range of players we have at any given time and anyone is welcome to join one of our unauditioned ensembles.

Support is also available in school for Music Theory and lessons can be provided to allow students to succeed in ABRSM Theory examinations. Students have access to the three practice rooms, three music classrooms (one shared with MFL) and also the Theatre in order to rehearse and perform.

The annual *Headliners* performance is a daytime showcase of popular music, often by audition. Students prepare their own performances, usually of a modern style. All students from Years 7 to 13 have the opportunity to watch the performance during the school day which allows them to experience the range of talents our students have.

We host an annual Music Competition where all students are invited to perform in a round of heats and receive feedback from a professional musician. The finals are held each year in the school Theatre and are externally adjudicated.

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.

There is a variety of large-scale musical events happening at NHGS. Each term we have a concert in our Theatre which parents, carers and the general public are invited to attend. This is in addition to our annual Carol Service held during the final week of the Autumn Term at Halifax Minster. Over 200 students from across the school and Sixth Form participate in at least one of these events across the academic year.

In the wider Performing Arts department, we aim to ensure that students have global experiences, in line with our school vision of broadening international perspectives, by incorporating music and drama pieces from around the world.

In school, we have a monthly recital programme where students are invited to perform to their peers and the school staff at lunchtime. This is a popular event and helps to build student confidence in performance, in line with our whole-school development of rhetoric in students.

We regularly have a school production open to all year groups in conjunction with the wider Performing Arts department. Recent shows have included *Matilda*, *We Will Rock You* and *The Wizard of Oz*. These opportunities attract students from a wide variety of areas, including music, drama, dance, stage management and technical production.

Trips and visits are an important part of our musical offering. In recent years, students have been to see professional orchestras such as Paradox Orchestra and the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra. We attend Calderdale Music's 'Voices Together' event each year and regularly enter the Calderdale Choir Competition organised by the Rotary Club of Halifax and the Mrs Sunderland Performing Arts Festival.

Music is a big part of school culture. Pianists regularly perform in assemblies and the whole school are learning the school song which is sung at key events such as Speech Day. We are fortunate to have been gifted an organ which should arrive in school by the end of 2025.

The school arranges a biennial music tour, the most recent to Edinburgh & Glasgow in March 2025 which involved 52 students from Years 7-13. We also have collaborated with the English Chamber Orchestra and the Paradox Orchestra.

In the future

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

Musical outreach is an area the school is developing for subsequent years. We are hoping to make more music in the community. We have recently introduced annual Carol Singing in Halifax and hope to expand this across the year with possible events for local care homes and charitable organisations.

Hosting visiting musicians is part of our aim, to allow more students from across the school to experience live music. We plan to make contact with military bands and other local musicians to expand this offer.

As part of our role as Lead School (Secondary) for Calderdale Music, we hope to collaborate with other secondary schools in performance. Furthermore, we hope to collaborate with local primary schools to support them in their offer.

In 2025/26, we hope to extend our Music Technology programme with the installation of Ableton Live in our main music suite.

We hope to run a whole-school production in July 2026.