

Music development plan summary: Thornley Academy Overview

Detail	Information
Academic year that this summary covers	2025 - 2026
Date this summary was published	September 2025
Date this summary will be reviewed	July 2026
Name of the school music lead	Anna Caine
Name of school leadership team member with responsibility for music (if different)	
Name of local music hub	County Durham Local Authority
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, extra-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

Curriculum Music – Thornley Academy

Intent

At Thornley Academy, our music curriculum is designed to inspire a love of music, helping pupils to see themselves as musical and to participate with confidence, enjoyment, and creativity. We aim to develop pupils' musical skills, knowledge, and understanding, enabling them to become confident performers, composers, and listeners.

We use the Kapow Primary Music Curriculum as our core framework. This approach introduces pupils to music from around the world and across historical periods, helping them respect and appreciate the diversity of musical traditions and communities.

Through our curriculum, pupils develop the essential musical skills of:

- Singing expressively and fluently
- Playing tuned and untuned instruments

- Improvising and composing music
- Listening and responding to music

Pupils also gain an understanding of the history and cultural context of music, as well as the basics of musical notation.

Implementation

Our music curriculum not only teaches musical skills but also fosters transferable skills including teamwork, leadership, creative thinking, problem-solving, decision-making, and performance skills. These skills support pupils' personal development and help them become positive, responsible citizens in line with our school values.

The curriculum is structured to ensure pupils meet the end-of-Key-Stage attainment targets outlined in the National Curriculum for Music (KS1 & KS2):

[National Curriculum Music – Primary](#)

We integrate the strands of performing, listening, and composing (with the history of music taught in KS2) alongside the inter-related dimensions of music—pitch, duration, tempo, timbre, structure, texture, and dynamics—to provide a holistic approach to teaching music.

Each five-lesson unit combines these strands within a cross-curricular topic, encouraging pupils to explore music creatively and imaginatively. Lessons teach pupils to:

- Sing and play instruments accurately, expressively, and with control
- Recognise and use the inter-related dimensions of music in improvisation and composition

Planning and Progression

A knowledge progression document identifies the musical concepts and facts pupils need to know and remember. This is mapped into our Long Term Plan and detailed Medium Term Plans to support classroom delivery.

A separate skills progression document outlines the abilities pupils will develop each year, ensuring they securely meet the National Curriculum requirements by the end of each Key Stage.

The Kapow curriculum follows a spiral approach, revisiting previously taught knowledge and skills while gradually introducing more complex tasks. Pupils develop their understanding of:

- The history of music
- Staff and other musical notation
- The inter-related dimensions of music

Lesson Structure

Lessons are practical and active, incorporating independent, paired, and group work, as well as improvisation and teacher-led performances. They also include movement, dance, and cross-curricular links to deepen engagement.

Using Kapow resources, differentiated guidance ensures that all pupils can access learning at an appropriate level. Knowledge organisers help pupils build strong foundations by encouraging recall of facts and core vocabulary.

To support delivery, each lesson includes video guidance for staff to ensure correct use of musical terminology. Ongoing CPD opportunities further support teachers in developing their own musical skills and confidence.

Key components of the National Curriculum that are taught are:-

In Key Stage One children will:

- use their voices expressively and creatively by singing songs and speaking chants and rhymes
- play tuned and untuned instruments musically
- listen with concentration and understanding to a range of high-quality live and recorded music
- experiment with, create, select and combine sounds using the interrelated dimensions of music.

In Key Stage Two children will:

- play and perform in solo and ensemble contexts, using their voices and playing musical instruments with increasing accuracy, fluency, control and expression
- improvise and compose music for a range of purposes using the interrelated dimensions of music
- listen with attention to detail and recall sounds with increasing aural memory
- use and understand staff and other musical notations

- appreciate and understand a wide range of high-quality live and recorded music drawn from different traditions and from great composers and musicians
develop an understanding of the history of music.

You can find out the government's National Curriculum music intent here:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a7b7f8c40f0b645ba3c4b8a/PRIMARY_national_curriculum - Music.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a7b7f8c40f0b645ba3c4b8a/PRIMARY_national_curriculum_-_Music.pdf)

Music is timetabled weekly for sessions of 30 to 45 minutes, allowing pupils to progressively develop their musical knowledge and skills over time.

Part B: Extra-Curricular Music

Instruments are introduced early in the children's music journey. EYFS use musical instruments through play and then in taught lessons. This continues into Year 1 through instruments in the Charanga sessions. From Year 2 children can get explicit instrument training through an external provider. This covers the keyboard and the children can build on their skills each year. Children are given the opportunity, should they wish to utilise it, to practise in a quiet room at lunchtime.

Children are given the opportunity to perform in front of their peers during assemblies and talent shows.

There is a vocal choir which runs every Friday in the second half term of the year (ie Autumn 2, Spring 2 and Summer 2). This builds to a performance each term at the Haydon Bridge Community Centre. The choir is open to Years 2-6.

The school promotes the wider musical opportunities that are available from the Music Partnership North which can be found here -

<https://musicpartnershipnorthnewcastle.co.uk/ensembles>

Part C: Musical experiences

Pupils at Thornley Academy have regular opportunities to perform publicly, both within school and in the wider community. Our performances include community events, particularly during the Christmas period, as well as school-based occasions such as the Harvest Festival, Christmas performances, and end-of-year celebrations. These

events allow pupils to share their musical learning and build confidence in front of a live audience.

To enrich their cultural experiences, pupils visit the theatre at least once a year, attending performances such as pantomimes or musicals. These visits are heavily subsidised to ensure that financial barriers do not prevent any child from participating.

Additionally, each summer we host a performance by a brass band from the Durham Brass Festival. This is a family-friendly event enjoyed by pupils, parents, and the local community, further strengthening pupils' engagement with live music.

Children also have opportunities to perform throughout the year, not only to their peers but also to the wider community.

Examples of school performances that occur annually include the Christingle Christmas Concert, EY and KS1 Nativity and the Year 6 Leavers Assembly. We have weekly singing assemblies.

Our WISE Childhood Pledge booklet has many music-linked opportunities such as learning a song/dance in a different language and planning and attending the theatre.

Children are exposed to religious music through learning about religious celebrations.

We want our pupils to be exposed to many genres of music which they might not normally experience (such as classical, ballet and jazz) and also world music. We will achieve this using external content supplied by the Royal Opera House -

<https://www.rbo.org.uk/schools/teacher-training/live-lessons>

These events are broadly free, sometimes we ask for a small contribution. Details can be found at our website in the Charging and Remissions Policy section -

<https://shaftoe.wiseacademies.co.uk/statutoryinfo/#policies>

In the future

In the future, we aim to expand our musical enrichment opportunities for pupils. This will include peripatetic music lessons and class sessions led by visiting music specialists, providing pupils with expert guidance and inspiring learning experiences.

We also plan to increase opportunities for pupils to experience live music, both in theatres and through in-school performances. We believe that regular exposure to high-quality musical experiences is essential for fostering a lifelong love of music and inspiring creativity in all pupils.

Body percussion is an area we have not investigated thoroughly and we will look to increase this in our provision. This could ultimately be part of our termly school assembly performances. We will aim to begin to incorporate it from Spring 2026.

Further information (optional)

The music development plan will now be built into the Thornley Academy action plan and reviewed on a termly basis.

There are no financial implications linked to this plan at this time.