

Music development plan summary: Thornley Academy

Overview

Detail	Information
Academic year that this summary covers	2026 - 2027
Date this summary was published	September 2026
Date this summary will be reviewed	July 2027
Name of the school music lead	Sarah Robson
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.

The Kapow curriculum follows a spiral approach, revisiting previously taught knowledge and skills while gradually introducing more complex tasks. Through the use of the Kapow Primary Music Scheme, children will develop the musical skills of singing, playing tuned and untuned instruments, improvising and composing music and listening and responding to music. They will develop an understanding of the history and cultural context of the music that they listen to and learn how music can be written down.

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 and planned 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

Music is timetabled weekly for sessions of 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 Kapow sessions.

Children are invited to join a school band through Rocksteady music tuition, where they develop their musical skills and work towards Trinity accreditation. Pupils can learn bass guitar, guitar, drums, vocals or keyboard and have the opportunity to perform to their peers and families each term. Alongside regular tuition, children are invited to take part in taster sessions, providing all pupils with opportunities to experience playing an instrument and explore their musical interests.

Children are also given regular opportunities to perform in front of their peers through assemblies, school events and talent shows, helping to develop their confidence, creativity and enjoyment of music.

There is a school choir that runs from Years 1-6. The choir performs in the local community during different periods throughout the year.

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.

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>

In the future

In the future, we aim to further strengthen our music provision by ensuring that all children have regular opportunities to develop their musical skills and confidence. We aim to introduce weekly singing assemblies, providing children with opportunities to sing together, learn a broad range of songs and develop their understanding of rhythm, melody and performance. We will continue to increase opportunities for children to perform, ensuring that music is a vibrant and valued part of school life and that every child has the opportunity to experience the joy of making music.

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.

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.