

Music subject policy

Date: November 2026

Due for review: November 2028



Music- meet the subject leader



It is an exciting privilege to have the role of music lead at West Rainton Primary School. From a very early age, I have had a love of music. Growing up the house was always filled with music, be it the guitar, the saxophone, the clarinet, the piano or a wide range of music coming from the stereo. As a child I was the taught the piano, which I still love to play, but my main passion for music comes from singing. Throughout my life, I have been a member of a number of music and operatic groups and have had the opportunity to perform in a wide variety of places from school halls to the Sunderland Empire and Durham Cathedral.

As music co-ordinator, it is my vision that all children in our school have the opportunity to become real musicians. Hence, pupils participate in a wide range of activities to develop their talents and skills in all aspects of music including rhythm work, instrumental skills, composition, singing, opportunities to perform and appreciation of live and recorded music. When the children are ready, they learn musical notation and children are taught correct musical terminology e.g. rhythm, melody, pitch, dynamics. It is my aspiration that all children will be able to read and understand music notation by the time they leave West Rainton Primary School.

We have excellent extra-curricular provision in music at West Rainton, including a steel drum band which performs at school events and in the wider community. Pupils also have the opportunity to take part in exceptionally high-quality school productions. I am also always looking for opportunities for the children to experience musical performances and learn from musicians as well as having the opportunity to perform themselves to a wider audience.

Mrs Julia Struthers

- **Mission statement for music in the curriculum**

Music is a unique way of communicating that can inspire and motivate children. It is a vehicle for personal expression and can also play an important part in helping children to feel part of a community. At West Rainton Primary School our aim is to provide all pupils with a high quality, meaningful music education which engages and inspires them to develop a life-long love of music, increases their self-confidence, creativity and imagination, and provides opportunities for self-expression and a sense of personal achievement.

The subject of music has a lead governor who is extremely passionate about the subject and who supports and challenges the subject lead in assuring the highest quality provision for all pupils.

- **How music fits into our overarching curriculum key drivers:**



Aiming high

We want our pupils to be inspired by our provision, and to ignite strong aspirations and high expectations of themselves and their future. Promotion of strong attendance is fundamental in this. Through the use of visits, visitors and enriching experiences, we will build knowledge and understanding of career possibilities as well as a hunger to embrace new and exciting opportunities. We will ensure we plan regular opportunities for children to develop self-belief and to see the benefits of taking risks and overcoming challenge. Our pupils will be supported to light up future pathways to fulfilling lives of employment choices, prosperity and future happiness. In music, this is achieved through the engaging and enriching experiences on offer, such as exciting educational visits and the opportunity to work with a variety of musicians and venues. Pupils in all key stages have regular opportunities to watch and be inspired by performances and also be performers themselves. Our music units also have links to composers and musicians in order to broaden children's knowledge of future study or career pathways.



Skills for learning and life

We want pupils to leave our school with a bank of knowledge and a skillset specific to each individual subject, whilst also making transferable connections across other areas of learning and life. Fundamental to this, is a curriculum rich in core skills of language, vocabulary, communication, literacy and numeracy. Our pupils will be taught to be inquisitive, follow a line of enquiry to reach answers, and to recall and present their learning in a vibrant range of ways. Opportunities to develop resilience, organisation, leadership, teamwork, adaptability, patience and initiative are all interwoven into our subjects and wider school life in order for our children to adjust to new learning situations. In music, our pupils develop the skills of composing, practising, performing and evaluating. They are given opportunities to work as part of a team and to develop their leadership skills. Music also develops their listening, hand-eye, and fine motor skills. Through music, our pupils also develop skills of self-confidence, curiosity, collaboration, communication, creativity and commitment all of which are important skills for their future life.



Growing healthily

Equally as important to us is the development of the whole child. Feeling safe, happy and valued is a fundamental right of all pupils. Our inclusive-rich ethos provides the backdrop to our personal development and wellbeing provision which is skilfully interwoven into all that we do. All pupils are supported to develop a strong understanding of the importance of good physical and mental health, whilst also learning a whole range of factors and influences that

can have a negative impact on us. Making, nurturing and maintaining healthy relationships, both on and offline, equips children with the strength and security to recognise what they want and need in life. We believe a strong understanding of e-safety forms a crucial part of being a healthy, well-rounded 21st century global citizen. In music, pupils learn to work effectively with others and they learn the importance of good working relationships. Music also increases their self-confidence, creativity and imagination, and provides opportunities for self-expression and a sense of personal achievement. Working together on a performance can be one of the most memorable and fulfilling things a child does in his or her time at school. Music also gives our pupils a vehicle for exploring feelings in a unique and safe way.



Knowledge of the world

When our pupils leave us at the end of Y6, we want them to feel so proud of themselves as people that they have the personal strength and self-confidence to find their place as positive global citizens. Through our carefully planned provision, our pupils will experience a diverse and inclusive-rich experience that allows them to bank cultural capital as well as developing a secure understanding of the importance of equality. As well as a secure knowledge of British values, our pupils will have their minds and horizons broadened through diverse social, moral, spiritual and cultural experiences. Pupils will be regularly encouraged to revisit and extend their world-view, fostering tolerance, sensitivity and empathy to interact positively with others. The music curriculum map is carefully tailored so children encounter and experience a diverse range of music and learn about composers and musicians from a variety of cultures, time periods and musical genres. By studying the music of other cultures, children can develop positive attitudes and a greater understanding of other cultures and societies that may be very different to their own.

- **Intent**

Long-term planning: During discussions with individual class teachers, and considering the needs of the children within our class structure each year, the music leader creates an updated curriculum map for this subject, as well as a progression of skills map, which can be found on the school website. This approach is particularly important during years where there are mixed age classes, to ensure complete coverage of all objectives and to make sure that topics are not duplicated.

Medium term planning within each unit of work will contain; learning objectives, music activities, (Musicianship, active listening, singing, composing and performing) the vocabulary to be taught and used and assessment opportunities. Planning is uploaded to the staff shared area on the school network for monitoring purposes.

- **Implementation**

Music is taught as a discrete subject, as well as being taught as a cross-curricular subject, wherever appropriate across all key stages. This involves both whole class and small group activities.

Children in years 1-6 receive around 1 hour of music per week. They have many varied and regular opportunities to practise their music skills across the curriculum and beyond.

In 2021-22, the EYFS unit, worked alongside subject leaders to create a curriculum offer unique to the context and needs of our pupils.

- **Teaching and learning**

At West Rainton Primary School, we aim to make music an enjoyable learning experience. We encourage children to participate in a variety of musical experiences through which we endeavour to build up the confidence of all children. Children are given the opportunity to discover, explore and develop technical skills through practical music lessons.

We aim to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum. Pupils' understanding of music will be developed through activities which bring together the requirements of performing, composing, listening and appraising.

Children are taught to make music together, to understand musical notation and to compose pieces. They are also taught to sing and play in time, controlling the sound and pace. They are taught different ways to represent sounds graphically and symbolically.

One of the main methods employed to help children to access and engage with music in school is singing. Our teaching focuses on developing the children's ability to sing expressively, in tune and with other people. This is achieved through whole school weekly singing assemblies and key stage performances. Through singing songs, children learn about the structure and organisation of music. We teach them to listen to and appreciate different forms of music from various backgrounds and cultures. Assembly songs are also linked to various annual celebrations and festivals such as Harvest, Christmas, Chinese New Year and Easter.

Children are also taught how to use technology as a tool for creating, manipulating and storing sounds e.g. using the Garageband App on iPads.

In Year 2, pupils receive one term of specialist music tuition from Durham Music Service, learning to play Boomwhackers as part of their music curriculum. Through this experience, pupils develop their understanding of rhythm, pulse, pitch and ensemble playing, while learning to listen carefully, follow musical instructions and perform together as a group.

This provides a strong foundation for learning the steel drums in Key Stage 2, as pupils begin to develop the coordination, rhythmic awareness and collaborative skills needed to play tuned percussion instruments. Their prior experience of playing as part of an ensemble will support a smooth progression towards more complex rhythms, melodies and group performances on the steel drums.

In Key Stage 2, pupils receive specialist tuition from Durham Music Service to learn to play the steel drums for one term each academic year. During these sessions, pupils develop their understanding of pitch, melody, chords and harmony, while learning to perform increasingly complex and syncopated rhythms. They develop their ability to maintain a steady pulse, listen to others, coordinate their playing and perform as part of an ensemble. Providing steel drum tuition for one term each year allows pupils to revisit and build upon their previous learning, strengthening musical knowledge and practical skills over time.

As pupils progress through Key Stage 2, they can develop greater rhythmic accuracy, musical independence and confidence, moving from basic patterns and melodies towards more challenging rhythms, chord sequences and ensemble performances. This progressive approach enables pupils to deepen their understanding of music, experience success and develop a lasting enjoyment of playing an instrument collaboratively.

- **Equal Opportunities**

As part of our provision on offer, **pupils with special educational needs** are planned for very carefully in school. This is an important part of the art curriculum, as we strive to ensure that all of our pupils fully understand what they are being taught. This may involve greater explanations about what they learn, and simplified tasks to ensure that pupils with SEND gain as much as they can from the learning on offer. In fact, quite often our pupils with more diverse needs enjoy the freedom and ownership of the more creative subjects. Our provision across the curriculum was highlighted when we were awarded the inclusive 'Centre of Excellence' award in late 2020. It is crucial for us that our pupils with SEND make progress, and move on from where they are in their learning journey. This provision may look very different to our other pupils, through differentiation and modification of the curriculum. Our decisions are made in consultation with the SENDCo, Mrs Firth, who advises and supports members of staff with their provision

The teaching of music in our school takes consideration of our equal opportunities policy and inclusion. We recognise children as individuals and base our teaching upon our knowledge of their specific needs. A range of teaching methods and resources allow children with a wide range of abilities to achieve their full potential.

- **Learning Resources**

Learning resources for music are kept centrally in the cupboard near the staff room. A CD player is located in the main hall. Keyboards are kept in the library. Each class has its own iPad. Steel Drums are stored in the music studio on the yard.

Both nursery and reception have a range of musical instruments available to them both indoors and outdoors. They also each have a stage in the outdoor area, giving pupils performance opportunities.

- **The Learning Environment**

Classrooms have displays of music, including relevant vocabulary, as a celebration of work produced, but also as a reminder of core skills and knowledge. Resources for the unit of work being covered should be appropriately accessible.

- **Safe practice**

Safe practice must be promoted at all times. Teachers must also consider all relevant Health and Safety issues. Instruments will be checked regularly to ensure that they are in good repair and of good quality. In addition, any out of school visits (see below) are organised through the Evolve online system, to ensure that all relevant health and safety procedures are adhered to.

- **Extra-curricular opportunities**

Pupils in Y3-6 will be given the opportunity to learn the steel drums in an after-school club.

In addition, as part of the school's enrichment mapping, teachers may plan to undertake visits to watch musical performances and invite visitors to the school in order to support the learning objectives for units of work where relevant.

Homework

No specific homework is set at either key stage for music, although homework will be set on occasions where appropriate.

- **The Contribution of music to other aspects of the curriculum**

English – Music encourages children to listen carefully for specific purposes and to articulate responses. Singing songs develops children's language skills by focusing attention to rhythm, rhyme, diction and meaning. Music is also used to stimulate discussion or creative writing. Through working with others in a musical setting, children develop their ability to communicate ideas effectively.

Mathematics – By studying the structure of music, children are observing patterns and processes. Rhythm in music has a mathematical basis and counting and recording beats in a piece of music reveals mathematical structures.

ICT – Older pupils can use programmes such as Garage Band to compose music and younger pupils can explore sounds and instruments and compose using Busy Things.

PSHE and Citizenship – By making music in groups, children learn to work effectively with others and they learn the importance of good working relationships. Making and performing music builds self-confidence and can give all the opportunity to succeed. Working together on a performance can be one of the most memorable things a child does in his or her time at school. Also, music gives children a vehicle for exploring feelings in a unique and safe way.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development – Listening to, creating or performing music can sometimes be a moving or even spiritual experience. We encourage children to reflect on the important effect that music has on people's moods, senses and quality of life. Children at West Rainton Primary School have the opportunity to encounter and experience music from many cultures. By studying the music of other cultures, children can develop more positive attitudes towards other cultures and societies that may be very different to their own.

MFL – One of the best ways to teach a foreign language is to learn songs in the language, as children remember vocabulary more readily when they have learned a song using that vocabulary.

- **Leadership and management**

The head teacher discusses development needs so that the needs of individual members of staff are identified within the school's performance management programme. Staff attending training are expected to share key learning points, knowledge and strategies with relevant colleagues to support the development of music teaching and practice across the school.

EYFS, KS1 & KS2 teachers discuss needs with the head teacher and music co-ordinator to ensure that planned units of work are adequately resourced.

- **Assessment and Recording**

We assess children's knowledge and understanding by fast four starter questions and questioning, listening and observation during lessons. At the end of each term, individual pupil progress is assessed by their class teacher using Sonar. However, pupils are also actively involved in evaluating their own work and performances thinking about possible improvements throughout each unit of work.

- **How the subject is monitored and evaluated**

All teachers are responsible for monitoring standards using Sonar. This is overseen by the music lead during leadership time, at least termly, as well as informally on a one-to-one basis within discussions between the subject coordinator and class teachers.

Music evidence is available to be monitored, alongside all other books, fortnightly on our 'book look' Wednesdays. Video evidence of pupils' musical learning and performances will also be stored in the Music folder in the Subject Leadership section of the Staff Shared drive. The music lead will carry out a monitoring review of evidence, assessment and planning each term.

The music lead will also visit and support classes during music lessons and activities, including how the foundations of music are taught in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The music leader is also responsible for the implementation of the subject's action plan. This is then used as a tool to monitor and evaluate music across the school.

- **Policy Review**

This policy will be reviewed at least every 2 years in line with the school's policy review programme. The subject lead, along with the identified governor lead, are responsible for reporting to the full governing body about the quality of its implementation and its impact on standards. In light of this, policy amendments may be made.

J Struthers November 2026

Due for review November 2028

Lead governor for music – Stella Griggs