

Music development plan summary: Ickford School

Overview

Detail	Information
Academic year that this summary covers	2024 -2025
Date this summary was published	November 12 th 2024
Date this summary will be reviewed	September 2025
Name of the school music lead	Emma Shackleton
Name of school leadership team member with responsibility for music (if different)	John Ronane
Name of local music hub	Buckinghamshire
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, 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.

Reception to Year 2 (Ages 4–7):

- **Instrument:** Recorder
- **Focus:** The recorder is often used for younger children because it's a relatively simple instrument to learn and helps with basic musical concepts like finger positioning, breath control, and reading simple melodies.
- **Music Reading:** Students are introduced to the basics of reading music, likely focusing on simple notes and rhythms, which builds their understanding for later.
- **Year 3 to Year 6 (Ages 7–11):**
- **Instrument:** Violin
- **Focus:** The violin is a string instrument that requires more coordination and attention to posture, bowing, and finger placement. It introduces children to new

musical skills, such as producing clear tones, intonation, and more complex rhythm patterns.

- **Music Reading:** By this stage, students are expected to read music with more complexity. They build on their initial music-reading skills to understand different clefs, dynamics, and techniques specific to string instruments.
- **Progressive Skill Building:** Starting with a wind instrument like the recorder helps young students focus on simple melodies and rhythm before transitioning to a string instrument, which is more technically demanding.
- **Reading Music:** Teaching music reading throughout their schooling ensures that children develop music literacy, which is essential for any instrument.
- **Transferable Skills:** The skills they learn on the recorder can transfer to violin playing, especially with rhythm and music reading.

This setup gives children a well-rounded introduction to music, covering both woodwind and string instruments while providing a strong foundation in music theory and reading. It's a great approach for developing young musicians

At Ickford we have a specialist Music Teacher which greatly enriches the school's music program, providing students with high-quality instruction that can significantly enhance their musical development and overall learning experience. Here are some key benefits of this approach:

Expert Instruction and Deep Knowledge:

High-Level Skills and Experience: A specialist musician brings expertise, technical skills, and a deep understanding of music theory, performance, and pedagogy. This ensures that students receive accurate, thorough instruction and can progress more effectively in their musical abilities.

Ability to Teach Complex Concepts: A trained musician can introduce more advanced musical concepts, adapting lessons to meet the needs and skill levels of different age groups. This level of expertise is especially valuable for teaching instruments, composition, and music reading in ways that are both clear and engaging.

Consistency Across the Music Curriculum:

Cohesive Program Design: With a specialist overseeing the music curriculum, there's a continuity in teaching methods, expectations, and curriculum content. This helps ensure a structured progression from one year to the next, as the specialist can adapt the curriculum to support long-term learning goals.

Comprehensive Approach to Music Education: A music specialist can integrate various elements—such as singing, instrument instruction, composition, music theory, and performance—into a unified program. This creates a well-rounded experience, where each element supports and builds on the others.

Inspiration and Passion for Music:

Modelling Passion and Musicality: A specialist musician often brings an infectious passion for music, which can inspire students and foster a genuine enthusiasm for learning. When students see their teacher's love for music, it can encourage them to develop their own connection to the subject.

Professional Role Modelling: By learning from a professional musician, students gain insight into what it means to pursue music seriously, potentially inspiring them to continue with music in later years or even consider it as a career path.

Enhanced Learning Outcomes and Skill Development:

Better Instrumental and Vocal Technique: With a specialist guiding their recorder, violin, and singing instruction, students can develop proper technique early on, avoiding common beginner mistakes and building a strong foundation.

Effective Feedback and Correction: A specialist can provide precise feedback on posture, finger positioning, tone, and rhythm, which is essential for developing good habits. This type of feedback helps students progress faster and feel more successful as they learn.

Ability to Offer Enrichment Opportunities:

Customized Workshops and Events: A specialist musician is often well-connected within the music community and may be able to organize workshops, guest performances, or other enrichment activities that provide added value to the program.

Opportunities for Advanced Students: If some students show advanced ability or particular interest, a music specialist can provide additional challenges and opportunities, such as more complex repertoire or guidance in composing.

Positive Impact on School Culture:

Building a Culture of Music: With music taught consistently by a dedicated specialist, the school can cultivate a culture where music is valued and seen as an integral part of education. This positive environment not only benefits students' musical skills but also contributes to their creativity, confidence, and sense of community.

Whole-School Musical Initiatives: A specialist can play a key role in organizing and leading school-wide events, such as carol concerts, festivals, and concerts, helping make these experiences meaningful for all students.

By having a specialist musician lead all music teaching, the school offers students a uniquely high-quality music education, giving them the skills, confidence, and passion that can shape their appreciation of music for years to come.

Inclusive Singing Practice:

In Music Lessons: By integrating singing into music lessons, every child can experience the joy and benefits of singing, regardless of their vocal skill level. Singing reinforces musical concepts like pitch, rhythm, dynamics, and phrasing, and gives students confidence in using their voice as an instrument.

Reinforcing Music Literacy: Singing helps with music reading and ear training as children learn to match pitch, understand intervals, and recognize patterns in melodies—all foundational skills that enhance their instrumental learning.

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.

There are opportunities at Ickford for private piano lessons and private violin lessons.

These are taken outside of lesson times and violins can be hired free of charge.

Several children are members of the Thame Chamber Choir.

<https://www.thamechamberchoir.org/contact>

Children can also receive music tuition via the Buckinghamshire Music Trust.

<https://www.bucksmusic.org/>

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.

Carol Concerts, Harvest Festivals, and End-of-Year Concerts: These events give children an opportunity to perform and connect as a community. Singing together during these celebrations fosters school spirit, builds a sense of unity, and provides children with experiences of performing, which are great for confidence and public presence.

Creating Positive Memories: For many children, these singing events become memorable experiences that cultivate a lifelong appreciation for music and community gatherings. These moments contribute to their personal and social development as well as their musical growth.

Developmental Benefits:

Encouraging Expression and Confidence: Singing encourages children to express themselves vocally and creatively. It helps them overcome any shyness related to public performance and lets them build confidence in a supportive setting.

Health Benefits: Singing also promotes breath control and vocal strength, which have physical benefits and improve overall vocal health.

While a formal choir might offer more intensive vocal training, the school's approach ensures that singing remains an accessible, joyful, and regular part of every child's experience. This type of program creates a musical environment that is inclusive and enriching, celebrating the voice as a key part of musical expression for all.

This school's approach to exposing children to classical music both inside and outside the classroom is outstanding, as it immerses students in music in a way that enhances their appreciation, understanding, and enjoyment. Here's how each element of this approach enriches the students' music education and overall experience:

Attending Classical Concerts:

Exposure to Professional Performances: Taking groups of children to live classical music concerts in Oxford or London gives them a rare opportunity to experience the power of live, professional music. This exposure can deepen their understanding of classical music, as they see and hear high-quality performances and gain insight into the skills of accomplished musicians.

Building Cultural Awareness and Appreciation: These excursions expand students' horizons, fostering a lifelong appreciation for the arts and helping them understand the role of music in cultural heritage. For many children, these experiences can inspire a greater connection to music as an art form and may even encourage them to pursue further music studies.

Enhanced Learning through Context: Hearing live performances allows children to connect the music they study in school with real-world performances, making their learning more meaningful and engaging.

Direct Interaction with Professional Musicians: Workshops with renowned musicians, like the Carducci Quartet, give students a unique, hands-on learning experience. Through live demonstrations and interactions, children gain insights into the world of classical music that textbooks or recordings can't fully provide.

Enhanced Understanding of String Instruments: Since students learn violin in this program, seeing a professional string quartet perform gives them role models and allows them to observe advanced techniques. This can deepen their understanding and inspire them to improve their own playing.

Inspiring Passion and Curiosity: Workshops make music feel accessible and personal, as children see real people dedicating their lives to music. The presence of professional musicians can spark curiosity and foster an environment where students feel excited about music.

Classical Music in the Corridors:

Creating a Musical Atmosphere: Playing classical music in the corridors throughout the day surrounds children with music, creating a calm, inspiring atmosphere that supports focus and emotional well-being. This background music helps them become familiar with classical music, embedding it into their daily lives.

Subtle Learning and Familiarity: Listening to classical music as part of their environment helps children absorb musical elements—like melody, harmony, and structure—without actively studying them. This passive exposure can lead to a natural sense of familiarity with classical music and broaden their musical palette.

Mood and Focus: Classical music has been shown to promote a relaxed yet alert state, which can benefit the students' focus, behaviour, and overall school experience. This adds to a positive school climate, where music contributes to an environment of curiosity, learning, and calm. By bringing students into contact with classical music through live performances, professional workshops, and daily background listening, the school is creating a well-rounded and immersive musical experience. This approach not only enhances students' music education but also fosters a genuine love for music that can last a lifetime.

In the future

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

Our aim as a school is to consistently review our curriculum and we continue to do so in music. Nonetheless, we are proud of our tradition particularly the focus on classical music and musicianship.

In the near future we are looking to explore using the Music Medals assessment programme run by the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music (ABRSM).

We are also trying to increase our visits to concert halls and workshops.