

Music Development Plan Summary: Gordon's School

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	Rachel Brazendale and Adam Stanworth
Name of school leadership team member with responsibility for music (if different)	James Greggor (curriculum) and Rhys Rowlands (co-curricular)
Name of local music hub	Surrey Music Hub
Name of other music education organisation(s) (if partnership in place)	

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.

Link to school curriculum and webpage for Music at KS3:

[School curriculum](#)

[Webpage](#)

Link to school curriculum for Music at KS4:

[School curriculum](#)

[Webpage](#)

Link to webpage for Music at KS5:

School curriculum

[Webpage](#)

Music is taught once a week in 55 minute lessons to all KS3 students.

At KS4 and 5 students receive 7 55 minute lessons across the fortnight.

Curriculum Outline

Our SoW and curriculum map are published on the school website. We have constructed a spiral curriculum which focuses on the key elements of music during Year 7: rhythm, pitch/melody and harmony. These are then revisited through projects of increasing complexity during Y8 and Y9. Although the projects in Y8/9 appear to be genre driven, those genres have been picked to allow us to focus in on one or more elements of music e.g. Blues in Year 8 is a focus on primary chords and chromatic melody. Our curriculum is informed, where appropriate, by the Model Music Curriculum.

SEND

The Music Department supports the whole school approach to increasing access for disabled pupils and supporting pupils with special educational needs (SEND) as laid out in the [SEN Information Report](#).

All students with SEND are taught in the main classroom. It is our experience that students with SEND often enjoy and excel at music making, and, with careful scaffolding and adaptive teaching, can make at least as much if not more progress than their non-SEND counterparts. All activities set offer a variety of levels of challenge. Lessons are broken down into short chunks of activity and starter activities based around recall and literacy help to embed literacy. IT is used to help engage students in theoretical skills and homework tasks.

For students with physical disabilities, we work with the [OMHI Trust](#) who can match students with suitably adapted instruments.

Practical Music Making

The focus through all KS3 classes is on learning to play the keyboard. This is to enable as many students as possible to access the GCSE course. Students who have no prior experience will start in Y7 by playing one hand only, but by the end of Y9 they should be able to play short, but reasonably complex pieces hands together. For those who already play, a differentiated scheme is available.

Other instruments are introduced as appropriate to the scheme.

Y7 – samba band instruments

Y9 – ukuleles

Singing is a very important focus for us, as it also feeds into GCSE Music. The first project in Y7 is all about getting students to sing confidently and with good technique. We introduce Kodaly hand signs to help with pitching.

Qualifications

At KS4, students can take GCSE Music (AQA – 8271).

At KS5, students can take A Level Music (Eduqas A660PA A Level - Option A A660PB A Level - Option B)

Students can also take practical instrumental and singing qualifications (see Examinations in Co-Curricular below).

In addition, we also deliver Arts Award (Trinity College London) as optional qualifications in the following year groups:

- Y8 – Bronze
- Y9-11 – Silver
- Y12 – Gold

Partnerships

Surrey Music Hub

We have a close working relationship with Surrey Music Hub. Rachel Brazendale is a member of the Surrey Secondary Schools Music Advisory Group and contributes regularly to their meetings.

Prince's Teaching Institute

The department has been a member of the Prince's Teaching Institute since the Music stream was introduced in 2011. We have been awarded the Schools' Programme Mark every year, and in 2023 we were in the top three schools nominated for the Bernice McCabe Award which celebrates excellence in subject leadership within schools, recognising departments that put quality subject teaching at the heart of the classroom. Rachel Brazendale works as a Development Partner for the PTI, assisting other schools on their PTI journey.

MTA

Adam Stanworth is a member of the Music Teachers' Association and regularly attends CPD with them.

Yehudi Menuhin School

Through their outreach work, we have benefitted from regular composition workshops, both at Gordon's and at the Yehudi Menuhin School. Students are able to hear their part completed, and finished compositions performed by the players at the school.

Arete Partnership

This partnership between Gordon's School, Woking High School, Robert May's School and Blenheim High School offers the opportunity for collaboration between Music departments. Recently this has taken the form of sharing good practice within the curriculum, an inter-school performance competition and hosting students from the other schools at our Creative Careers Day.

Reigate College

Specifically established for sharing good practice at A level, our link with Reigate Sixth Form College involves sharing of good practice, lesson observations and A level performance mock marking which we reciprocate at key points through the year.

Wellington College

We are part of the Wellington College State Schools' Partnership which involves CPD, opportunities, termly 'Teach meets' and opportunities to attend masterclasses provided by the school.

Careers

At KS3, careers in Music are linked via the curriculum projects. Those students doing Arts Award in Y8 will also research their Arts inspiration, discovering how and where they trained in their art form.

Students taking GCSE and A Level will have access to our Creative Careers Day. Held in December, this day allows students to access workshops based on several musical career pathways. This year we will have the following on offer for students:

- Composing for film, TV and media
- Acting through Song (a career in Musical Theatre)
- Staging a music festival
- Waterbear Music College (contemporary music)
- University and Conservatoire Applications
- Army musicians

Trips and visits are organised throughout the year including:

- Powerhouse Recording Studio
- Royal Holloway University
- Royal College of Music

Part B: Co-curricular music

Instrumental Lessons

Gordon's School has a team of fourteen visiting instrumental teachers offering instrumental tuition on the following instruments:

- Strings: Violin, Viola, Cello, Double Bass
- Woodwind: Flute, Clarinet, Saxophones, Oboe, Bagpipes
- Brass: All orchestral and brass band instruments
- Percussion: Drum kit, Highland Snare
- Guitars: Acoustic Guitar, Electric guitar, Electric bass, Ukulele
- Voice: Classical singing, Musical Theatre, Rock and Pop

These lessons are offered on a 1-1 basis. However shared lessons can be arranged on request and where there is a suitable match. Lessons for 2026-27 cost £33 per 30-minute lesson. Lessons can be longer for student tackling higher grades. Students who qualify for Pupil Premium may apply to the school to use some of their PP funding to pay for music lessons. Pupil Premium (Forces) will receive one term of lessons from their funding.

The school can fund a small number of lessons for students on instruments which will be useful for the ensemble programme, particularly trumpet, trombone, tuba, violin, viola and cello. The school also has a limited set of instruments available to loan to students on this tuition scheme.

Examinations

Each term students can take graded instrumental and vocal examinations and are entered for these, with parental permission, on the recommendation of their tutor.

We offer qualifications with the following exam boards:

- ABRSM (Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music)
- LCM (London College of Music)
- Trinity Guildhall
- RSL (Rockschool)
- SCQF National progression awards and personal development awards

Large Group Tuition

Year 7s are introduced to brass instruments & pipes and drums in the form of a carousel which takes place every Tuesday during P7. This is undertaken in groups of 20. By the end of Year 7 every student will have spent 6 weeks learning to play a brass instrument and 6 weeks learning to play the bagpipes and snare drum.

Ensembles

Co-Curricular Music is based around the principle of ensembles rehearsing weekly throughout the year to prepare for carefully targeted and meaningful public performances. This ensures consistency as well as providing the long-term environment required to challenge all levels of musician from beginners up to the most advanced. All ensembles are free to join.

Choral Ensembles

- Junior Girls' Choir (Years 7 & 8)
- Junior Boys' Choir (Years 7 & 8)
- Semper Fidelis Singers (Years 9 – 13)

Jazz Ensembles

- Junior Jazz
- Intermediate Jazz

- Senior Jazz

String Ensembles

- Crescendo Strings (for beginner and intermediate string players)
- Gordon's String Orchestra (for intermediate and advanced players)
- Chamber Groups e.g. quartets and trios

Mixed Ensembles

- Concert Band (for all levels of instrumentalist)
- Orchestra (for more advanced instrumentals)
- Under the Arches Band (for intermediate and advanced instrumentalists)

Ceremonial Ensembles

- Pipes and Drums Band
- Under the Arches Band (for intermediate and advanced instrumentalists)

Music Practice

The department has a suite of 7 practice rooms and two classrooms which are open from 7.30 am in the morning and throughout the day for students to practice during their breaks or free periods. Supervised practice sessions are also held every afternoon between 4 and 5 pm and in the evenings until 7.30pm (9pm on Thursdays).

Music Scholarships and Awards

The school offers a number of music, musical theatre and piping scholarships to incoming Sixth Form students each year. Applicants should have achieved a minimum of Grade 7 on their instrument or singing. Students are selected following audition and interview. Students in receipt of scholarships receive three hours of additional tuition in their chosen discipline each week, which might consist of instrumental lessons, musicianship training, composition mentoring and external tuition.

The Gordonian Award is a single prize given to a Year 11 arts student who has shown high levels of involvement in the arts. This consists of money to allow students to further pursue their arts interest.

Co-Curricular Partnerships

Surrey Music Hub

We have a close working relationship with Surrey Music Hub. The Hub provides a coach for Period 7 activities.

Guildford Cathedral

A choral link has been established between Semper Fidelis Singers and Guildford Cathedral Choir this year. The Director of Cathedral Music, Katherine Dienes-Williams will visit the school on a number of occasions to work on choral singing skills. This will culminate in 2024-25 with a joint Evensong performed by Semper Fidelis Singers and the Guildford Cathedral Choir.

Music Competitions

Within the department we run three internal competitions a year:

- Autumn Term: Christmas Carol Composition (winning entries have their composition performed at the Christmas Carol services)
- Spring Term: Concerto Competition (winning student performs their concerto movement with an orchestra at the Spring Concert)
- Summer Term: Academic Enrichment Competition

Students also have the opportunity to enter a number of external competitions including:

- Pro Corda Chamber Music Competition (semi-finalists 2023)
- Arete Performance Competition
- Woking Music Festival
- Woking Young Musician Trust

Leadership Roles

We encourage students to take leaderships roles within the department and the musical ensembles. These include:

- Choir Leaders
- Music Ambassadors
- Trumpet Corporal, Sergeant and School Trumpeter Ceremonial Positions (Arches Band)
- Pipe and Drum Ceremonial Roles (Pipe and Drum Majors, Pipe and Drum Sergeant)

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.

Musical Events in School

A busy programme of events is scheduled throughout the school year to ensure meaningful performance opportunities for singers and the full range of instrumentalists. The list below is open to all year groups, apart from where specified.

- Newcomers' Concert (Y7&Y12)
- Piano Recital Evening
- Inter-House Solo Competition
- Inter-House Group Competition
- Informal Concerts
- Parades
- Piping Concerts
- Chapel Services
- Evensongs
- GCSE Performers' Concert (Y11)
- Pianists play at open days
- GSPA Christmas Fair
- Carol Services
- Songs from the Shows
- Junior Musical (Y7-9)
- Senior Musical (Y9-13)
- Spring Concert
- Summer String Soiree
- Summer Arts Evening

Musical Events outside of School

- National League Playoff Finals at Wembley Stadium
- Houses of Parliament
- Whitehall Parade, London
- RAF Lakenheath
- Lord Mayor's Show
- Playing for King Charles at Windsor Castle

Musical Events with our Partners

- Yehudi Menuhin School – Composition Workshops
- Arete Partnership – Inter-School Competition
- Surrey Music Hub – Primary Schools Prom, Singing Picnic

- National Piping Centre - Masterclasses
- Primary school links – Involvement of Holy Trinity Primary in school events
- West End Care home – Fortnightly programme of outreach concerts at local care home
- Out of the Blue – Workshop and concert with A Capella group from Oxford University
- Wellington College – Instrumental masterclasses
- Guildford Cathedral – Evensong performed with Guildford Cathedral Choir

All members of the Pipes and Drums Band are part of the Gordon's School Army Cadet Force Music Section and have access to cadet music events e.g. Beating the Retreat at Horse Guards.

Trips and Visits

- Regular visits to view professional concerts at venues such as the Basingstoke Anvil and GLive in Guildford.

Tours

- Foreign tours are undertaken approximately biennially. 50 students performed in New York in 2025, singing at the Empire State Building and piping in the Tartan Day Parade on 6th Avenue. In 2027 there will be a summer tour to Lake Garda and Venice for members of the Pipes and Drums band and the senior choir (Semper Fidelis Singers).

Workshops

Workshops take place each year with the aim of reaching as many students as possible. Typical content includes:

- Body percussion
- Beatboxing
- Songwriting
- DJing
- String masterclasses
- Composition masterclasses
- Piano masterclasses
- Jazz masterclasses

For musical performances, concerts and shows in and out of schools, include how pupils get involved and from which year groups, whether pupils are participating or are members of the audience.

In the future

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

- Review KS3 Curriculum Scheme of Work for 2026-27 with a focus on adaptive teaching
- Prepare for the teaching of new set works at A level
- Consult with Surrey Music Hub as to how to broaden access to live music for all KS3 students (2026-27)
- Develop “Brass for beginners” scheme to identify and nurture potential brass players (2026/27)
- Continue to support and encourage the take up of orchestral instruments
- Develop jazz event at Ronnie Scott’s jazz club
- Develop the Steinway School hub through masterclasses and hire of venue/instruments

Further information (optional)

The Department for Education publishes a [guide for parents and young people](#) on how they can get involved in music in and out of school, and where they can go to for support beyond the school.

Other relevant links:

<https://surreymusichub.com/schools/>

<https://aretepartnership.wixsite.com/aretetemplate1>

<https://www.menuhinschool.co.uk/>

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

[ProCorda – be part of an incredible musical journey](#)