

Music Development Plan Summary

Horizons Academy

This summary sets out how Horizons Academy delivers music education across curriculum music, co-curricular provision and musical experiences. It also identifies next steps for developing music as the academy grows and as pupils' needs, pathways and interests become clearer.

Horizons is a specialist SEMH setting. Music is planned as part of a broad, balanced and therapeutic curriculum, supporting creative expression, communication, confidence, regulation, collaboration and cultural capital. Provision is adapted so pupils can access music safely and successfully, including pupils who may find noise, performance, group work or unstructured social situations challenging.

Overview

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Detail	Information
Academic year that this summary covers	2025-2026
Date this summary was published	June 2026
Date this summary will be reviewed	September 2026, then annually before the start of each academic year
Name of the school music lead	Gemma Bendell-Whittaker
Name of school leadership team member with responsibility for music (if different)	Gemma Bendell-Whittaker
Name of local music hub	Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Music Hub / Inspire Music
Name of other music education organisation(s) (if partnership in place)	To be confirmed as partnerships are developed. Potential links include local peripatetic teachers, visiting musicians, theatre/music organisations, the local authority music service and local post-16 or community arts providers.

Part A: Curriculum music

What we currently provide

Music is delivered through planned curriculum experiences that are adapted to the needs of pupils with SEMH, communication, sensory and learning needs. The school is developing towards a consistent one-hour weekly music entitlement for Key Stages 2 and 3, in line with national expectations, while ensuring lessons are safe, accessible and purposeful for pupils who may need shorter, structured learning episodes.

- Pupils are introduced to pulse, rhythm, tempo, dynamics, pitch, texture, structure and simple notation through practical, low-threat activities.

- Pupils listen to, discuss and respond to music from different cultures, genres, time periods and traditions.
- Practical music-making includes voice, body percussion, classroom percussion, keyboards, guitars, digital music tools and accessible instruments where appropriate.
- Lessons support wider SEMH outcomes, including self-regulation, turn-taking, listening, confidence, resilience, teamwork and safe expression of emotion.
- Teaching is adapted using visual supports, reduced sensory load, individual workspaces, predictable routines, choice of participation level and opportunities for pupils to rehearse or record privately before sharing work.
- Music links with English, performance, PSHE/SMSC, history, art and technology where this strengthens engagement and helps pupils make meaningful connections.

Curriculum intent

The intent of music at Horizons is for pupils to experience music as a creative, expressive and inclusive subject. Pupils should develop confidence in listening, performing, composing and evaluating, while also learning that music can be a tool for wellbeing, identity, communication and connection with others.

Curriculum progression

The music curriculum is being sequenced so pupils revisit key musical knowledge over time. Pupils begin with structured listening, rhythm, pulse, simple performance and sound exploration. They then move towards composition, ensemble work, digital music production, lyric writing, performance skills and evaluation of their own and others' work. Progress is measured through participation, skill development, completed pieces, recordings, pupil reflection and teacher assessment.

Qualifications and awards

For Key Stage 4 and post-16 pupils, music qualifications will be considered where they match individual pathways and interests. Horizons will explore accessible accreditation routes such as AQA Unit Award Scheme units, Arts Award, Entry Level or vocational-style music/performance units. GCSE Music may be considered for individual pupils where the curriculum, staffing and pupil pathway make this appropriate.

Part B: Co-curricular music

Current and developing provision

Co-curricular music will be developed gradually as pupil numbers grow and as pupils' interests become clear. The priority is to offer safe, structured and confidence-building

opportunities that pupils can access without feeling pressured to perform publicly before they are ready.

- Small-group music club opportunities, such as rhythm group, keyboard group, guitar group, songwriting, digital music or band-style sessions.
- Targeted one-to-one or paired music sessions for pupils who may benefit from music as a way to build confidence, engagement, regulation or communication.
- Opportunities for pupils to practise during agreed times using supervised spaces and clear routines.
- Use of school instruments and accessible music technology so pupils are not prevented from taking part by cost or lack of equipment at home.
- Exploration of peripatetic tuition or visiting specialists through the local music hub, depending on pupil interest and available funding.
- Development of a vocal group, rhythm group or informal ensemble when there is enough pupil readiness and interest.

Access and inclusion

No pupil should be excluded from music because of confidence, prior experience, SEND, SEMH need or family circumstances. Where charges apply in future for external tuition or trips, the school will consider subsidies, pupil premium support or alternative in-school access where possible. Pupils will be able to take part through performance, composing, recording, technical support, listening, artwork, lyric writing or evaluation, depending on their strengths and readiness.

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 experiences at Horizons will begin in a small, safe and achievable way. Our priority is to build pupils' confidence, enjoyment and sense of belonging before moving towards larger events or off-site visits.

At this stage, musical experiences may include:

- listening to and discussing music during tutor time, PSHE/SMSC, assemblies, curriculum lessons or themed days
- pupils sharing music created in lessons with a trusted adult or small group
- using music as part of rewards, reflection time, celebration activities or wider curriculum work

- small in-school opportunities such as a visiting musician, staff-led music activity, workshop or recorded performance
- introducing pupils to music-related careers such as performer, producer, DJ, sound technician, composer or music therapist

We are not currently planning large whole-school performances or external music trips. As the school is new, we will first focus on routines, confidence, safety and emotional readiness. Any future events or visits will be carefully planned around pupils' sensory needs, safeguarding, travel, staffing and individual risk assessments.

How pupils get involved

Pupils can take part in different ways depending on their confidence and needs. This may include listening, composing, recording, helping with equipment, choosing music, designing visuals, performing to a trusted adult or sharing work with a small group. Pupils will not be expected to perform publicly before they are ready.

In the future

During 2026–2027, we aim to develop music gradually by:

- confirming the named music lead and SLT lead for music
- mapping music across Key Stages 2, 3, 4 and post-16
- building a small bank of accessible instruments and digital music resources
- developing links with Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Music Hub / Inspire Music
- introducing small, low-pressure sharing opportunities
- exploring music clubs such as rhythm, songwriting, digital music or school band when pupils are ready
- considering accessible accreditation such as AQA Unit Award Scheme or Arts Award
- recording progress through photos, recordings, pupil reflections and teacher notes

Longer-term aims

Longer term, we would like to offer more regular instrumental or vocal opportunities, create a supervised space for music-making, develop a small school group or digital music collective, and increase access to live music or local cultural events when this becomes safe and appropriate.

In the future

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

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Further information (optional)

This summary should be read alongside the school curriculum information, SEND information report and wider personal development offer. Horizons will continue to review music provision as the academy grows, ensuring pupils experience music as part of a broad, ambitious and inclusive curriculum.

Useful links:

- School curriculum page: [Curriculum by key stage - Horizons Academy](#)

- Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Music Hub / Inspire Music:
<https://www.inspireculture.org.uk/services-schools/nottingham-and-nottinghamshire-music-hub/>
- DfE school music development plan summary template:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-music-development-plan-summary-template>