

Music development plan summary: Aston Academy 2024-2025

Overview

Detail	Information
Academic year that this summary covers	2024-2025
Date this summary was published	September 2024
Date this summary will be reviewed	May 2025
Name of the school music lead	Rebecca Miller
Name of school leadership team member with responsibility for music	Claire Anyon
Name of local music hub	Rotherham Music Hub

Part A: Curriculum music

The music curriculum at Aston Academy is ambitious and demonstrates a strong foundation in both the National Curriculum and the Model Music Curriculum (2021). The curriculum is designed with a seamless transition from Key Stage 3 (KS3) into a Key Stage 4 (KS4) GCSE music course.

Since 2023, Aston Academy has adopted the Aston Community Education Trust's joint secondary music curriculum, which offers a comprehensive and well-rounded approach to studying music. The curriculum aims to develop both theoretical and contextual knowledge through the strands of composing, listening, appraising, and performing.

In Year 7, students delve into various topics such as Basic Skills, where they learn fundamental music concepts and techniques. They also explore the world of music through the lens of popular television shows and movies in the "Big Music from the Small Screen" unit. Additionally, students engage with string instruments in the "Things with Strings" topic, experience ensemble playing in the "Band Lab" module, learn about different orchestral instruments, and explore the history and characteristics of marches.

Moving into Year 8, students further develop their musical skills and knowledge through topics like Basic Skills 2, where they expand on their foundational understanding. They delve into the rich heritage of baroque music and explore the expressive nature of blues and jazz. In the "Band Lab 2" unit, students continue their ensemble playing, and they also explore the unique musical world of computer game music. The curriculum culminates with a study of the innovative and energetic art form of Stomp.

By Year 9, students have developed a solid foundation in music and continue to explore and expand their musical horizons. They further refine their fundamental skills

in Basic Skills 3 and delve into the captivating world of film music, discovering the creative techniques employed in composing for the silver screen. Additionally, they are introduced to the art of songwriting, allowing them to express their creativity and develop their own musical ideas.

The department's focus on the development of musical skills and the progressive building of prior knowledge is evident throughout the curriculum. The department has implemented adaptive teaching strategies that ensure all students including those with SEND needs, can access an enriching musical experience.

For the academic year 2024-2025, music is scheduled for one hour a week in years 7 and 8, providing students with consistent exposure to musical learning. In year 9, music is on a rotation with drama for an equivalent of half the year. The sequencing of the KS3 curriculum is well designed, enabling students to build on prior knowledge and develop their musical skills progressively.

Students at Aston Academy actively engage with the Schemes of Learning and are encouraged to explore their areas of musical interest and skills. It is notable that some students choose to bring their own instruments to class, which enhances their learning experience.

As part of the KS4 options process, students can study music at GCSE level. However, in the 2024-2025 cohort, there are currently no GCSE music groups. It is encouraged for the music department to actively promote the GCSE music option to students, as it is a valuable opportunity for further musical development.

The music department is adequately resourced, with class sets of keyboards and ukuleles, as well as access to both acoustic and electric guitars, bass guitars, drum kits, and some classroom percussion instruments. However, there is a need to address the limited access to music technology resources.

Further curriculum information can be found on our website:

<https://www.astonacademy.org/page/?title=Performing+Arts&pid=62>

Part B: Co-curricular music

The instrumental and vocal lessons offered at Aston Academy are in partnership with Rotherham Music Hub

The following instruments and vocal training options are available:

1. Drums and Percussion
2. Guitar and Bass Guitar

3. Singing

4. Upper Strings

5. Brass

6. Piano and Keyboard

At Aston Community Education Trust (ACET) we offer all instrumental and vocal lessons at a subsidised rate to Aston Academy students who wish to learn an instrument. This subsidy ensures affordability and equitable access for all interested students, allowing them to pursue instrumental and vocal learning opportunities. There are approximately 45 students at Aston Academy who are actively engaged in learning an instrument within the school.

Co-curricular provision at Aston Academy encompasses various activities and opportunities for students to make music outside of regular classroom lessons. There are weekly rehearsals and dedicated spaces for students to participate in music. These offerings include the orchestra, vocal group, rock group, guitar and ukulele club, as well as open door rehearsal times available during lunch breaks. All of these activities are provided free of charge for students.

Aston Academy provides regular performance opportunities for students to showcase their musical talents. These include the Christmas concert, Snowflake Fair, One Voice, and the Celebration Evening.

Part C: Musical experiences

The Aston Music faculty demonstrates a strong expertise in providing musical experiences for students. They offer a variety of opportunities for students to engage in performance activities, such as singing ensembles, ACET awards evenings, and sport and music awards. This shows their commitment to ensuring that students have ample opportunities to showcase their talents.

One notable aspect of their expertise is their partnership with Rotherham Music Hubs, which allows for further performance opportunities in the wider community. Events like the Christmas Rotherham minster concerts and the One Voice performance led by Rotherham Music Hub and The Royal Opera House at Magna open doors for students to showcase their skills beyond the school setting. This not only enriches their musical experiences but also allows them to collaborate with professionals from the industry.

Access to these events is offered free of charge to all students, indicating their dedication to removing any barriers to participation. This inclusive approach ensures that every student has equal opportunities to engage with music-making experiences.

Furthermore, the Aston Music faculty actively signposts additional opportunities from Rotherham Music Hub and other organizations for students to access and take part in. By actively seeking out and sharing these opportunities, they are enabling students to further develop their musical skills and expand their horizons beyond the school environment.

Another impressive aspect is the involvement of parents and carers in supporting music-making activities. By attending events and demonstrating their active support, they play a crucial role in nurturing and encouraging the musical talents of Aston's students.

Overall, the Aston Music faculty showcases a commendable level of expertise in providing musical experiences for their students. Their commitment to offering a variety of opportunities, forming partnerships, removing barriers to participation, and actively involving parents and carers in supporting music-making sets them apart as a dedicated and capable department.

In the future

Widening participation in instrumental lessons: It is important to provide a wider range of instrumental lessons for students. By broadening the choice of instrumental lessons, more students can have the opportunity to explore and develop their musical talents.

Increasing uptake of music at KS4: To enhance the music faculty, efforts should be made to increase the number of students choosing music as a subject at Key Stage 4. This could involve promoting the benefits and rewards of studying music, showcasing successful musical alumni and their achievements, and perhaps even organising workshops or taster sessions to ignite interest among students. By boosting the uptake of music at this stage, the faculty can grow in diversity, creating a more vibrant and dynamic learning environment.

Delivering a music course at KS5: Looking towards a five-year plan, it would be beneficial for the music faculty to develop and deliver a music course at Key Stage 5. This could be an A-level course or any other relevant qualification that aligns with the interests and aspirations of the students. Offering a music course at this level would provide a pathway for those who wish to pursue music further, potentially opening doors to higher education and careers in the music industry.

Enhancing the use of music technology in the classroom: To enrich the KS3 curriculum and improve musical outcomes, it is important to incorporate music technology into the teaching and learning process. This could involve providing training and resources for teachers to effectively integrate music technology tools such as digital audio workstations, music composition software, and electronic instruments. By using technology, students can explore different styles and techniques, create their own compositions, and develop digital music production skills.

To implement these improvements, the music department should consider the following actions:

- Provide professional development opportunities and resources for teachers to enhance their knowledge and skills in music technology.
- Allocate budget to invest in suitable equipment and software to support the integration of music technology into the curriculum.
- Review and update the KS3 curriculum to include music technology as a key component, ensuring students have opportunities to develop proficiency in using music technology tools.
- Foster partnerships with local music technology experts or organizations to provide workshops, guest lectures, or mentoring opportunities for students and teachers.
- Regularly assess and monitor the impact of music technology integration on student engagement and progress, adjusting as necessary.

1-Year Development Plan:

1. Widening instrumental lessons:

- Conduct a comprehensive survey to assess student interests and demands for additional instruments.
- Hire additional qualified music teachers specialized in the identified instruments.
- Develop a timetable to accommodate a broader range of instrumental lessons.
- Market and promote the expanded instrumental lesson offerings to students and parents.

2. Enhancing the use of music technology in the classroom:

- Provide professional development workshops for teachers to familiarize them with music technology tools and applications.

- Acquire necessary music technology equipment and software for classroom use.
- Integrate music technology into existing KS3 curriculum units, incorporating hands-on activities and assignments.
- Regularly evaluate the effectiveness of incorporating music technology on student engagement and learning.

3-Year Development Plan:

1. Widening instrumental lessons:

- Monitor the uptake and engagement of students in the expanded instrumental lessons.
- Assess the need for further diversification of instrumental offerings based on student demand and interests.
- Collaborate with local music organizations to provide additional performance and ensemble opportunities for students.

2. Increasing uptake of music at KS4:

- Develop targeted marketing campaigns to raise awareness about the benefits and opportunities of studying music at KS4.
- Strengthen links with feeder schools to ensure a smooth transition and continuity in music education.
- Offer tailored guidance and support to students interested in pursuing music at KS4, including subject selection advice and relevant resources.

3. Delivering a music course at KS5:

- Research and explore the requirements and feasibility of offering a music course at KS5, such as A-level Music or BTEC in Music.
- Design a comprehensive syllabus that aligns with exam board specifications and meets the needs and interests of students.
- Recruit and appropriately train teachers for delivering the KS5 music course.
- Seek accreditation and approval from relevant authorities to offer the course.

5-Year Development Plan:

1. Widening instrumental lessons:

- Continue to evaluate the demand for instrumental lessons and expand offerings accordingly.

- Establish strong relationships with local music tutors and institutions to offer specialized lessons and masterclasses.
- Consider offering scholarships or financial assistance to students who demonstrate exceptional musical talent but lack financial means.

2. Increasing uptake of music at KS4:

- Develop mentorship programs, connecting KS4 music students with experienced musicians or industry professionals for guidance and inspiration.
- Extend community outreach programs to share the achievements and success stories of music students from Aston, encouraging more students to take up music as a subject.

3. Delivering a music course at KS5:

- Further refine and expand the KS5 music course, offering a diverse range of pathways, such as composition, performance, or music technology.
- Foster partnerships with universities, conservatories, or other higher education institutions to provide seamless transition pathways for students pursuing music at the tertiary level.
- Continuously review and update the KS5 music curriculum to ensure it remains relevant and aligned with industry standards and expectations.

Regular review of this development plan, it is crucial to monitor progress, gather feedback from students, parents, and staff, and make adjustments as necessary to ensure the ongoing improvement and effectiveness of the music faculty at Aston.

Further information

[Rotherham Music Hub](#)