

Music Development Plan



All schools are required to publish a music development plan summary. This document outlines how Blacon High School delivers high-quality music education for all pupils, in line with the National Plan for Music Education.

Overview

Detail	Information
Academic year that this summary covers	2025 - 2026
Date this summary was published	September 2025
Date this summary will be reviewed	July 2026
Name of the school music lead	G. McHale
Name of school leadership team member with responsibility for music (if different)	R. Thomas
Name of local music hub	Edsential / Love Music Trust
Name of other music education organisation(s) (if partnership in place)	Peripatetic music tutors (guitar, brass, woodwind, piano, drums and vocals) Storyhouse partnership

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 improvements we are planning for the future.

“The Music Department is an alternate universe where pupils are often unrecognisable from who they are outside of it. The shy become confident. The agitated become calm. The lonely become included. The quiet become heard. And the lost become found. Music reveals the child.”

– *Vaughan Fleischfresser*

At Blacon High School, this belief underpins our Music Department’s vision and practice.

Music Department Vision

Why we teach music

The aim of the Music Department at Blacon High School is to develop **creative musicians** who can communicate musically with confidence and control sound through **singing, playing, composing and music technology**. We inspire pupils through our passion for music and provide meaningful opportunities to make music, think musically and take creative risks.

Music plays a vital role in pupils’ personal development, supporting confidence, inclusion, wellbeing and self-expression. Through music, pupils develop imagination, creativity, collaboration and a strong sense of identity.

How musicality is developed

Musicality is developed through a **carefully sequenced curriculum** that supports progression across three interrelated pillars of musicianship:

- **Technical** – control of voice, instruments and music technology
- **Constructive** – composing, improvising and structuring music
- **Expressive** – interpretation, communication and stylistic understanding

These pillars underpin pupils' development in **playing, singing, improvising, composing and critically engaging with music** through a culturally rich and diverse curriculum.

Part A: Curriculum music

Music is taught at **Key Stages 3 and 4**, ensuring all pupils receive a broad, balanced and inclusive music education.

At **Key Stage 3**, pupils receive **one hour of timetabled music per week** throughout the academic year. The curriculum follows an ambitious, unit-based and well-sequenced model developed by the Model Music Curriculum. Learning focuses on secure and incremental development of technical, constructive and expressive knowledge.

The curriculum emphasises that the **knowledge of music is more important than knowledge about music**, prioritising practical musicianship, listening skills and creative application. Opportunities for repetition, retrieval and consolidation are built in, recognising that depth and mastery support long-term musical understanding.

Lessons are adapted to ensure full access for pupils with SEND through adaptive teaching, differentiated resources and appropriate support.

At **Key Stage 4**, pupils can study the **BTEC Level 1/2 Tech Award in Music Practice**, developing performance, composition and production skills while preparing for post-16 pathways and careers within the music industry.

The full music curriculum for each year group is published on the school website.

Partnerships with **specialist peripatetic music teachers** support curriculum delivery through instrumental expertise and enrichment opportunities.

Part B: Co-curricular music

Blacon High School offers a **rich and inclusive range of co-curricular music opportunities**, enabling pupils to develop their musical skills, confidence and creativity beyond curriculum lesson time.

Music tuition

Peripatetic instrumental and vocal tuition is a significant strength of the Music Department. Currently, **over 70 pupils** access instrumental or vocal lessons each week.

- Tuition is delivered through **one-to-one or small-group sessions** by specialist peripatetic music teachers
- **All instrumental and vocal lessons are fully funded by the school**
- **No tuition or instrument hire fees are charged**, ensuring equitable access for all pupils

Instruments and specialisms offered include:

- **Brass** – trumpet, cornet, trombone, tenor horn, euphonium
- **Woodwind** – flute, clarinet and saxophone
- **Piano**
- **Drums**
- **Vocals**

Pupils are supported in preparing for **graded music examinations**, where appropriate, as part of their musical progression.

Ensembles, clubs and rehearsal opportunities

All pupils are encouraged to take part in ensemble music-making. Opportunities currently include:

- **School choir** (open to all year groups)
- **Instrumental ensembles and bands** (open to all year groups)
- **Music technology and composition opportunities**
- **Open practice sessions at lunchtime**

Rehearsals take place in a **dedicated music classroom**, with access to **individual practice rooms and rehearsal spaces** during lunchtime and after school.

Pupils regularly perform at a wide range of school events throughout the academic year. There are also opportunities to collaborate with the **Dance and Drama departments** on whole-school productions. The Music Department is currently working on **Matilda JR**, scheduled for performance in **July 2026**.

Partnerships and enrichment

Partnership working plays a vital role in enhancing co-curricular music at Blacon High School. Specialist peripatetic teachers support both curriculum and enrichment through high-quality instrumental instruction.

The department also works closely with **local composer and musician Matt Baker** and **Cheshire Dance Company**. In **March 2025**, Year 10 BTEC Music students collaborated with these partners to compose original music for the production **The Outside World**, exploring themes around artificial intelligence and its impact on society. The production was created for the **REWIND Youth Theatre Group**, featuring pupils from feeder primary schools, and was performed at **Storyhouse**, with Blacon High School students attending as invited VIP audience members.

Chester Schools Together partnership

The Head of Music also serves as **Partnership Lead for Chester Schools Together**, a collaboration between:

- Blacon High School
- The King's School, Chester
- Bishop's Blue Coat Church of England High School
- Catholic High School, Chester
- Upton High School
- Queens Park High School
- Christleton High School

Through this partnership, schools work collectively to deliver a shared calendar of events and opportunities for pupils and staff. Previous projects have included:

- Performance workshops with touring professional ensembles (e.g. Northern Chamber Orchestra)
- Saturday music masterclasses
- Performing arts careers events
- Diversity and inclusion conferences
- Composition workshops with professional composers
- Storyhouse performing arts partnership projects

The partnership is generously funded by **The Westminster Foundation** and enables pupils at Blacon High School to access a **wide range of high-quality workshops, performances and enrichment opportunities** throughout the school year.

Part C: Musical experiences

Musical experiences are central to school life and pupils' cultural development at Blacon High School.

Planned opportunities for pupils at Blacon High School include:

- Singing and music-making in end of term assemblies
- At least one annual school music performance (Christmas Soiree/Summer Showcase)
- Whole School productions (Matilda JR, July 2026)
- Opportunities to experience live music at least once per year, either in school or through external visits - our peripatetic teachers perform in key stage assemblies and local musicians are invited into school to perform
- Pupils perform in end of term assemblies, termly rewards assemblies and at whole school events throughout the year
- Visits to the Liverpool Philharmonic, British Music Experience and Beatles Museum or London Theatre District are offered to engage the pupils in LoTC.

Pupils participate as performers and audience members across all year groups.

Where costs are involved, events and trips are **subsidised wherever possible**, with financial support available to ensure equitable access for all pupils.

External partnerships, including the local music hub and visiting musicians, enhance these experiences.

Student voice

“I found my confidence through music; it is my passion. You can be inspired and share your creativity with others. Music is not just a song or chords; it is in fact a part of life. It is a part of my life.” – Owen, Year 11 BTEC Music Class, 2023/2024.

Owen completed his Level 2 First Award in Music at Blacon High School, then studied Music Performance full time, BTEC Level 3 at the prestigious LMA, Performing Arts College, founded by Robbie Williams, in Liverpool for 2 years and is currently studying a Popular Music Degree at Chester University.

In the future

Over the next two years, the Music Department aims to:

- Further strengthen curriculum sequencing and assessment at KS3
- Increase participation in co-curricular music activities
- Expand instrumental and vocal tuition
- Develop additional ensembles
- Increase performance opportunities within school and the local community
- Strengthen partnerships with external music organisations
- Develop opportunities for more trips and LOtC opportunities for all pupils.

These developments align with the **seven features of high-quality music provision** outlined in the National Plan for Music Education.

Further information (optional)

Further information about music at Blacon High School can be found on the school website. Additional opportunities and support are available through **Cheshire West Music Hub Edsential / Love Music Trust, Storyhouse Partnerships**, alongside national guidance published by the Department for Education for parents and young people.