

Music development plan summary: Bishop Challoner Catholic School

Overview

Detail	Information
Academic year that this summary covers	2026–27
Date this summary was published	July 2026
Date this summary will be reviewed	July 2027
Name of the school music lead	Fiona Donaldson, Head of Music
Name of school leadership team member with responsibility for music (if different)	Oliver Walsh
Name of local music hub	Tower Hamlets Arts & Music Education Service (THAMES)
Name of other music education organisation(s) (if partnership in place)	Music Mark

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.

At Bishop Challoner, all students in Key Stage 3 receive weekly curriculum music lessons delivered by specialist music teachers. Our curriculum is informed by the National Curriculum for Music and the Model Music Curriculum (March 2021) and is designed to develop students as performers, composers and listeners.

Students study a broad and diverse range of musical styles, genres and traditions through practical music-making, singing, listening and composition activities. The curriculum develops core musical skills including performing, composing, improvising, notation, analysis and critical listening. Students regularly work collaboratively and independently, building confidence, creativity and resilience through musical learning.

Music technology forms an important part of the curriculum and is integrated across Key Stage 3 to enable students to compose, record and produce music using industry-relevant software and digital tools. Students engage with a variety of creative projects, including cross-curricular and thematic work such as *Beyond Earth* and *Heritage Sounds*, allowing them to explore music within wider cultural, historical and creative contexts.

Adaptive teaching strategies ensure that all students, including those with SEND, can access and achieve within the music curriculum. Practical activities, resources and assessments are scaffolded and differentiated to meet the needs of all learners.

At Key Stage 4, students have the opportunity to study GCSE Music. The course develops performance, composition and listening skills and provides a strong foundation for further musical study, apprenticeships and careers within the creative industries.

The department works closely with Tower Hamlets Arts & Music Education Service (THAMES) to support curriculum enrichment, progression opportunities and access to wider musical experiences.

Part B: Co-curricular music

Music plays a significant role in the wider life of the school, and students have access to a wide range of opportunities to develop their musical interests beyond the classroom.

Students can access instrumental and vocal tuition through visiting specialist music teachers. Tuition is available across a broad range of instruments, including piano, keyboard, guitar, drums, voice, strings, brass and woodwind, subject to demand and availability. Students are encouraged to work towards graded examinations where appropriate and to develop their skills through regular performance opportunities.

The school offers a range of ensembles and performance groups, including choir, bands and instrumental ensembles. These groups provide opportunities for students of all abilities to rehearse, collaborate and perform regularly throughout the academic year.

Students involved in choirs, bands and ensembles perform regularly at school concerts, Open Evening, liturgical celebrations, Masses, celebration events and community occasions. These opportunities support musical progression while developing confidence, leadership, teamwork and communication skills.

Practice and rehearsal spaces are available before school, during breaks and after school, enabling students to rehearse independently or as part of an ensemble. The department works closely with THAMES and other external partners to ensure students can access additional progression opportunities, borough-wide ensembles and musical experiences beyond the school setting.

Where funding is available, support is provided to ensure that financial barriers do not prevent students from participating fully in the musical life of the school.

Part C: Musical experiences

Music is an important part of the life of Bishop, and students are provided with a wide range of opportunities to perform, create and experience music throughout the academic year.

Students regularly perform in both formal and informal settings. These include concerts, showcases, assemblies, Open Evening, celebration events and staff recognition events. These performances provide opportunities for students of all abilities to develop confidence, musicianship and stagecraft while sharing their work with the wider school community.

The school choir plays a central role in the musical life of the school and regularly leads and supports singing at school Masses and liturgical celebrations throughout the year. Through participation in choir, students develop vocal technique, ensemble skills and an understanding of the role of music within worship.

Students also participate in smaller-scale performances throughout the year, including lunchtime performances, classroom showcases and contributions to whole-school events. These opportunities ensure that performance is embedded within the culture of the department and accessible to a wide range of students.

Music features prominently at key school events such as Open Evening, where students act as performers and ambassadors for the department, demonstrating the breadth of musical opportunities available at Bishop. Students also contribute musical performances to staff celebrations and other community events, helping to strengthen links across the school community.

Where possible, students have opportunities to experience live music through workshops, visiting musicians and external performances. The department works closely with Tower Hamlets Arts & Music Education Service (THAMES) and other partners to broaden students' musical experiences and provide progression opportunities beyond the classroom.

Through these varied musical experiences, students develop confidence, resilience, teamwork, creativity and a lifelong appreciation of music.

In the future

- Over the next three years, the Music Department aims to:

- Increase participation in instrumental and vocal tuition across all year groups.
- Expand ensemble provision and create additional opportunities for collaborative music-making.
- Further develop the use of music technology within both curriculum and co-curricular provision.
- Increase the number and variety of performance opportunities available to students.
- Strengthen progression routes from Key Stage 3 into GCSE Music.
- Continue to develop partnerships with THAMES and other arts organisations.
- Increase opportunities for students to experience live music and work with professional musicians.
- Further improve access and participation for disadvantaged students and those with SEND.
- Continue to embed singing and ensemble performance as central aspects of the musical life of the school.
-

Further information

The Music Department works closely with Tower Hamlets Arts & Music Education Service (THAMES) to provide high-quality musical opportunities for all students. Further information about music tuition, ensembles and performance opportunities can be obtained by contacting the Music Department.

Parents and carers are encouraged to support students in participating fully in the musical life of the school and to take advantage of the wide range of opportunities available both within school and through external music organisations.

Further information about borough-wide opportunities can be found through THAMES, which offers progression pathways, ensembles, performances, workshops and instrumental tuition opportunities for young people across Tower Hamlets and the City of London.