



Music Development Plan – Update and Review

Academic Year: 2026–27

Linked documents: Music Development
Plan Summary 2024–25;

Music Development Plan Update 2025-26

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Music)

Local Music Hub: Calderdale Music

Date of review: Autumn Term 2026

Date of next review: September 2027

1. Context and purpose of this update

This update should be read alongside our original Music Development Plan summary and the 2025-26 review. It records developments in curriculum music, co-curricular provision and musical experiences, and sets out our priorities for 2026-27. Our focus is on accessible music-making, strong progression and sustaining the quality of provision as participation grows.

2. Key developments since the last review

Part A: Curriculum Music – Updates and developments

Music continues to combine performing, composing and listening. KS3 provision builds practical skills and musical understanding through a sequence of units, with progress recorded and supported through Showbie and iPads. GCSE Music follows the Eduqas specification.

The planned renewal of the computer suite has progressed to a working Mac mini suite with GarageBand and MIDI keyboards. This strengthens access to composition, including for students who find notation software a barrier.

Assessment remains a development priority. Baseline listening assessments and end-of-unit knowledge checks support the identification of gaps, alongside practical assessment. Curriculum and Assessment Plans and the use of Showbie are being refined to make expectations and next steps clearer.

The proposed reintroduction of A Level Music at Crossley Heath has not proceeded for 2026-27. Post-16 progression remains a priority.

Part B: Co-curricular and instrumental provision – Updates and developments

The range of group music-making continues to support students with different instruments, interests and levels of experience. Current provision includes the school band, choir, guitar group, brass group, string group and clarinet group, alongside music theory support and opportunities for independent rehearsal.

Recruitment is focused particularly on Year 7, helping new students move from classroom music into regular ensemble participation and instrumental or vocal lessons.

One-to-one instrumental and vocal teaching remains an important part of the offer. The previous review recorded 148 students accessing lessons and approximately 70 ABRSM entries; we are currently at 154 students accessing these lessons. We are continuing to offer shortage instrument provision on brass instruments, oboe and there are plans for Viola too.

The school continues to provide an internal ABRSM examination centre, with accompaniment support. Visiting teachers also support other examination pathways appropriate to their students.

Student leadership and peer support remain priorities, building on the student-led bands and sixth-form mentoring described in the previous review.

Part C: Musical experiences – Updates and developments

Year 7 Sing with the Band continues to provide an early opportunity to rehearse and perform together, helping students and families become involved in the musical life of the school.

The established programme includes the Piano Festival, GCSE Performance Showcase and ensemble performances, alongside contributions to wider school events. The Christmas celebration at Halifax Minster was established as an annual event in the previous review.

A London visit is planned for 25-26 February 2027. The visit will connect regular participation in music with opportunities to experience professional live performance.

A new concert has been inserted into the calendar for this year which will focus on Guitarists and Vocalists both solo and ensemble.

Partnership work will build on previous Music for Youth participation, international touring and primary-school outreach. These achievements remain part of our development journey; new participation will be reviewed as opportunities are confirmed.

The Music Mark recognition reported in the previous review provides a foundation for continued work with Calderdale Music. Music will continue to contribute to the school's wider arts development and its ambition towards Artsmark Platinum.

3. Impact so far

The Mac suite provides a stronger platform for composition and independent work. Ensemble activity and performance opportunities support confidence, collaboration and belonging. GCSE results provide evidence of strong outcomes.

As GCSE cohorts grow, sustaining individual feedback, access support and intervention will require continued review of staffing, resources and class organisation. Evaluation this year will also consider participation and retention, student feedback and the experiences of disadvantaged students and students with SEND.

4. Revised priorities and new targets (2025–26)

Building on the developments outlined in this update, the department's priorities for 2026–27 focus on strengthening curriculum music, widening participation and musical experiences, and sustaining high-quality provision as the department grows.

1 Deliver an outstanding curriculum

- Complete the remaining GCSE Curriculum Ambition Plans, identifying clear end points and the knowledge and skills students need to achieve them.
- Embed the revised KS3 curriculum, using evaluation of teaching and students' work to refine schemes of work and strengthen progression in performing, composing and listening.
- Continue to develop high-quality digital learning resources, including curriculum podcasts and retrieval activities, to support classroom teaching and independent learning.

2 Raise student achievement

- Sustain strong GCSE outcomes and support further improvement through targeted intervention, adaptive teaching and effective feedback.
- Refine assessment practices so that all students, particularly those with SEND and disadvantaged learners, receive appropriate support and make strong progress.
- Embed retrieval practice and Prove–Improve strategies across all key stages, helping students consolidate knowledge, respond to feedback and improve the quality of their musical work.

3 Enhance digital music provision

- Fully embed the new Mac mini suite into teaching and learning, developing students' confidence and independence in using GarageBand and MIDI keyboards.
- Maximise the use of iPads, Showbie and music technology to support composition, performance, assessment and independent learning.
- Explore emerging technologies, including AI, where they offer clear educational benefits and support students' own musical understanding and creativity.

4 Grow participation and student leadership

- Increase participation and retention in choirs, bands, Guitar Club and other ensembles, with particular attention to welcoming Year 7 students and widening access.
- Further develop Arts Ambassadors and Sixth Form Music Leaders, providing meaningful responsibilities in rehearsals, mentoring and events.
- Expand the KS3 Excellence in the Arts programme, creating further opportunities for students to develop their musical interests, demonstrate achievement and take on leadership roles.

5 Strengthen community and partnership links

- Build on partnerships with local primary schools through workshops, shared music-making and performances.
- Continue to develop links with Calderdale Music, Music for Youth and other external organisations to broaden students' musical experiences.
- Increase opportunities for students to perform within the local community, developing confidence and strengthening the school's contribution to local musical life.

6 Build a sustainable and ambitious department

- Develop distributed leadership and collaborative working within the department, supporting shared responsibility for curriculum development, assessment and enrichment.
- Progress plans for the future reintroduction of A Level Music, while strengthening communication and support for students accessing post-16 Music through current partnership arrangements.
- Review staffing, specialist resources and technology with school leaders to ensure that provision supports growing participation, increasing GCSE cohort sizes and the department's long-term vision.

Progress against these priorities will be reviewed throughout 2026–27 through curriculum evaluation, assessment information, participation records and student feedback, informing the next annual Music Development Plan update.

5. Alignment with DfE expectations

The three areas of this update follow the Department for Education's music development plan summary structure: curriculum music, co-curricular music and musical experiences. Our priorities support the National Plan for Music Education's emphasis on singing, instrumental learning, creating music together and progression through partnership working.

Progress will be reviewed during 2026-27 through departmental evaluation and discussion with school leaders. The next published update is planned for September 2027. Curriculum information and current arrangements for lessons, groups and events should be read alongside this summary.