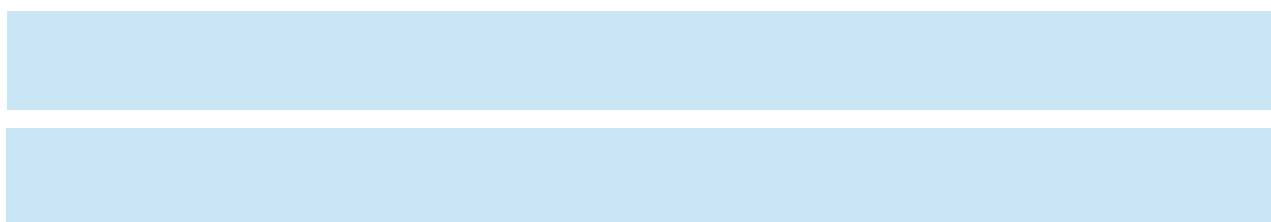
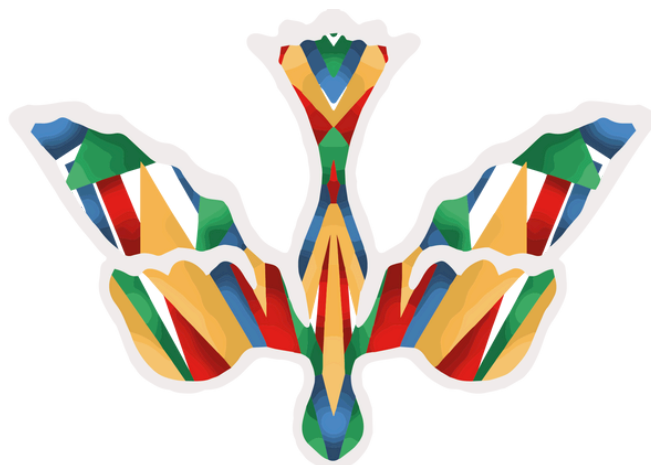

Music Development Plan Summary

The McAuley Catholic High School



Overview

Detail	Information
Academic year that this summary covers	2024-25
Date this summary was published	September 2024
Date this summary will be reviewed	September 2025
Name of the school music lead	Mr W Taylor
Name of school leadership team member with responsibility for music (if different)	Mrs K Ratcliffe
Name of local music hub	Doncaster
Name of other music education organisation(s) (if partnership in place)	NA

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 changes we are planning in future years. This information is to help pupils and parents or carers understand what our school offers and who we work with to support our pupils' music education.

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.

A summary of the music curriculum for each year group is available on the school website alongside similar summaries for all subjects [here](#). Information on how the school increases access for disabled pupils and supporting pupils with special educational needs (SEND) can be found in the SEND policy [here](#).

In Key Stage 3, pupils receive 2 hours of curriculum music per fortnight.

At Key Stage 4, this increases to 5 hours for those who opt to take the subject at GCSE.

At Key Stage 5, A-Level Music students receive 10 hours per fortnight, although there is no planned A-Level cohort for music for this current academic year.

Whilst the music curriculum is informed by the [model music curriculum](#) (March 2021), the [Ofsted Music Education Evidence Report](#) (March 2020), the [Ofsted Music Education Research Review](#) (July 2021) and the [Ofsted Music Subject Report](#) (September 2023), it goes significantly beyond these frameworks in one important respect.

The McAuley Music Curriculum is a real-life scenario, design brief based approach rarely found anywhere else, but a very common approach in other curriculum areas such as Food Technology and Design Technology.

Students are trained to think like musicians, using a creative, servant leadership approach to musical problems faced by real-life artists both contemporary and historical.

For the last 40 years, McAuley musicians have become the most active and loyal group of alumni known to the school. The current permanent staff and several of our peripatetic teachers are former pupils. Some of our alumni are full-time musicians working in the armed forces or in musical theatre and music education. However, the vast majority have successful careers in a wide range of fields including banking, engineering and medicine.

We believe that successful musicians are successful learners who understand their contribution to the greater good, something which resonates with our catholic ethos and sits at the very heart of our curriculum.

We believe this is the reason why music continues to thrive at McAuley when it has disappeared from so many of our local schools.

In all year groups, our students learn to sing together and play keyboard together on a regular basis, as well as other opportunities to play as an ensemble using percussion.

However, unlike many other schools, (see Ofsted Subject review 2023) composing and improvising sits at the very core of what we do with students composing music using both traditional notation methods, even with pencil and paper, right up to the use of the most sophisticated software used by today's industry professionals.

McAuley continues to work in very close partnership with our local music hub who provide us with our team of instrumental teachers and other opportunities such as the iSing choir festival and Stage Invasion rock programme in which we participate fully.

All students are welcome to opt to take GCSE music in Year 10 and 11 with no conditions of entry. Those who do not already play a musical instrument outside curriculum lessons are offered a free weekly 20 minute lesson on their choice of guitar, piano or singing.

Music is an increasingly popular option subject with numbers higher than the national average and the demographic of the cohorts being truly representative of the school overall. This includes students with SEND, with English as a foreign language and the full ability range.

Post-16 students with grades 7-9 at GCSE music are encouraged to take A-Level music. With no current cohort, we are now looking at alternative qualifications to offer from September 2026.

Students who learn a musical instrument with our team of peripatetic teachers are encouraged to take instrumental grades with any of the popular providers such as ABRSM, Trinity and RSA. We support students in doing these with either a live examiner or taking them online.

Part B: Extra curricular music

This is about opportunities for pupils to sing and play music, outside of lesson time, including choirs, ensembles and bands, and how pupils can make progress in music beyond the core curriculum.

All students are encouraged to join The McAuley Chorus, who are trained to sing especially arranged popular songs in three part harmony requested by the membership. They perform at least one song every half term including in live concerts and online recordings. For the last two years they have participated in the Doncaster iSing massed choir festival.

Students in Year 10 upwards are also encouraged to join our chamber choir who perform more formal and challenging arrangements for our busy programme of liturgical events throughout the year, as well as our regular concerts. Year 9 students can also take part if they continue to attend McAuley Chorus.

All students are encouraged to attend the Keyboard Ensemble which is an extension of what is taught in the classroom curriculum. We produce our own carefully notated and differentiated arrangements of synth pop anthems which make the very most of the range of timbres found on modern keyboards and give students of all abilities the chance to perform music almost indistinguishable from the original track. The programme is unique and innovative, rarely found in any other school. Students learn their part using computer tutorials where they can slow down the recording and learn the piece section by section along with the on-screen notation. Once they are confident, they perform live with other musicians before making a recording or performing live in one of our concerts.

The school has its own rock band studio permanently set up with drum kits, electric and bass guitars, keyboards and microphones. Students in all year groups are encouraged to form bands and given regular support, feedback and opportunities to perform. Those who perform in our concerts can then go on to participate in Stage Invasion, where they are given 3 hours of composition coaching with a professional songwriter and perform their original track live on stage at The Dome in a massed Doncaster rock concert known as The Big Gig.

The school has 3 practice rooms which students can use to rehearse individually or in groups. At least one music classroom is open at all times throughout the week for students who wish to compose or practise using the classroom keyboard and computer facilities.

Students who receive free instrumental tuition for GCSE and A-Level music are given expert support and advice as to how to get the very best results for the qualification as well as fully enjoy the experience of learning to play. Singers and guitarists are often taught in small groups to support their ensemble skills development.

All students have access to subsidised lesson on all orchestral instruments. Slots are bought from the Doncaster Music Hub so that not only can we meet demand, but also give students a free 3 week taster experience of their chosen instrument. Last year there were 70 students participating in our instrumental tuition programme, but a

further 30 students enjoyed the benefit of having an introductory opportunity on an instrument of their choice.

The school buys 21 hours of tuition a week from the Music Hub, supplemented by a further 2 hours a week from our own music staff.

The cost for this tuition, including the free lessons comes from a combination of school budget, alumni donations and parental contributions.

Parents of students not taking GCSE or A-level pay for 75% of the cost of the lessons, which this year is £300 with the school subsidising the rest. This can be paid using our online system in any combination of instalments throughout the year. This makes the lessons highly competitive in price compared to even the most reasonable private options.

That said, there is a 50% discount available for Pupil Premium students and additional support for parents who request it using our alumni fund. At McAuley, we do all we can to ensure money is not an obstacle to students participation in instrumental music at McAuley.

Instruments are provided by the Music Hub either free of charge or at a very reasonable hire rate. Wherever possible, we offer our own instruments from our own stock so that families do not incur any charges.

In addition, weekly instrumental ensembles are offered completely free of charge using our own staff volunteering their free time to prepare rehearsals. This includes Orchestra, Strings, Band, Percussion, Jazz and flute ensembles.

Instrumentalists are also encouraged to fully participate in the ensembles offered by the local Music Hub outside school time throughout the week.

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.

All students sing in assembly at least once a half term in order for them to be able to fully participate in our liturgies throughout the year.

This year we are planning four music concerts, our annual evening Advent Service, a 45 minute staged musical based on the Stations of the Cross and a fully staged musical for students in years 7-9.

Our concerts include performances from all our ensembles plus soloists whose commitment to our ensemble music making is an inspiration to others. Frequently these soloists perform music that they have been learning with outside music and theatre organisations locally.

As always, our year culminates in our annual Orchestra week, where our instrumentalists spend an intensive week rehearsing for a Sunday afternoon orchestra concert supported by 40 of our alumni musicians. During the week, the orchestra rehearse for the equivalent of nearly two years worth of lunchtime rehearsals making enormous progress as a result, not to mention the invaluable inspiration and support they receive from alumni musicians who return to play alongside them at the weekend.

In addition, the group take part in team-building experiences such as bowling and laser tag and spend one of the days visiting a city of culture including museums and a professional Musical Theatre performance.

This year we are committed to offering our students the chance to hear a professional orchestra at a nearby city. This is dependent on finding the right venue, programme and date which often clash with our own concerts, but this is something we will always aim to offer wherever possible. In addition, we work in partnership with our colleagues in the Drama Department who organise regular evening trips to see shows locally. As previously mentioned, our students take part in local shows every year such as iSing massed choirs event and the Stage Invasion programme's Big Gig at the Dome. Students are encouraged to participate and attend as members of the audience.

In a world of content creation and social media, we make every effort to share our music with high quality YouTube videos shared at least once every half term. Students make high quality recordings and then film creative videos to go with them that allow them to show off their skills up close. Recently, our string ensemble recorded a piece called 'Storm' which they then filmed themselves playing outside in a CGI squall complete with thunder and lightning. Such videos bring our music to a wider audience and serve as a valuable visual archive for parents and students to cherish as students leave the school.

In the future

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

McAuley is constantly seeking to enhance and improve its musical offer at all levels.

We will be reviewing our post-16 provision to take advantage of new reform qualifications which start teaching in September 2026. It is hoped that this will give our Key Stage 4 musicians wider scope to continue their music studies beyond the relatively narrow remit of A-Level music.

At Key Stage 4 we are improving our bank of composition tutorials to accommodate a much wider range of creative choices so that students can, for example, choose to compose a piece using traditional notation, or create one using a Digital Audio Workstation using the piano keyboard with both approaches running in the classroom simultaneously.

We are also investing time in improving our pedagogy at GCSE in order to help students improve their knowledge retention and independence, including how we use homework, for example.

At Key Stage 3, we are completely renewing our suite of computers in order to make full use of the latest cloud based software to help us teach composing and music theory. We hope this will also open doors for us to encourage students to use their own devices to work independently outside the lesson.

We continue our commitment to our 40 year legacy of having a school orchestra despite the major challenges of the current climate in education. This year, we will continue to refine our fund-raising strategy, enhance our profile with feeder schools and improve the way we recruit and retain new players.

Further information (optional)

The Department for Education publishes a [guide for parents and young people](#) on how they can get involved in music in and out of school, and where they can go to for support beyond the school.

The Doncaster [music hub](#) should also has a local plan for music education in place from September 2024 that should include useful information.