Music development plan summary: Dixons Ashton Academy – Greater Manchester

This document is designed to give a summary of the high-quality music provision at this academy in curriculum music, co-curricular music and musical experiences, considering the key features in the national plan for music education:

- timetabled curriculum music of at least one hour each week of the school year for Key Stages 1 to 3
- access to lessons across a range of instruments, and voice
- a school choir or vocal ensemble
- a school ensemble, band or group
- space for rehearsals and individual practice
- a termly school performance
- opportunity to enjoy live performance at least once a year

Overview

Detail	Information
Academic year that this summary covers	2026/27
Date this summary was published	October 2026
Date this summary will be reviewed	October 2027
Name of school music lead	Alex Johnson
Name of academy leadership team with responsibility (if different)	Theresa James
Name of local music hub	Tameside Music Service
Name of other music education organisation(s) (if partnership in place)	Dixons Academies Trust, Director of Music, Tamsin Rafnsson

This is a summary of how our academy delivers music education to all students across three areas - curriculum music, co-curricular provision and musical experiences - and what changes we are planning for future years. This information is intended to help students and parents or carers understand what our academy offers and how students can engage with music in and beyond the classroom.

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 students can achieve.

- All students at Key Stage 3 are timetabled to have music for one hour each week.
- More details about the intentions of our curriculum, the skills students develop and the curriculum overview can be found on the Dixons Ashton Academy curriculum pages.
- The curriculum is informed by the national curriculum for music and aims to enable students to develop a love of music, develop their knowledge and skills as musicians, and engage critically with a broad range of music.
- Aligning with our trust's focus on the joy of learning, we focus on high-quality teaching and an excellent culture in lessons. This includes opportunities for success and appropriate challenge, underpinned by clear routines, positive behaviour and strong relationships.
- Students develop their musical knowledge and skills through performing, composing, listening and appraising. By the end of Key Stage 3, we aim for students to be able to describe music accurately using appropriate musical vocabulary, perform pieces of music on instruments both individually and with others, and use their musical knowledge to create and develop their own musical ideas.
- The curriculum is designed to build incrementally, with musical knowledge and practical skills revisited and developed over time. Students encounter a broad range of musical styles and traditions, including African drumming, baroque and classical music, Indian classical music, minimalism, samba, reggae, blues, film music, romantic music and popular music.

- At Key Stage 3, students develop practical skills using keyboards, percussion, guitars, bass guitar, drum kit and voice. Students also have opportunities to create, arrange and develop music using music technology, including BandLab.
- We maintain high expectations for all students. Adaptive teaching and forward planning with the SEND department enable students with a wide range of needs and starting points to access the curriculum successfully. Teachers use information about individual students to anticipate potential barriers and make appropriate adaptations to teaching, resources and delivery, while maintaining ambitious curriculum expectations.
- Equity, diversity and inclusion are considered throughout the curriculum. This includes the selection of repertoire that represents a variety of genres, cultures and music from around the world, alongside performance, composition and listening experiences that reflect the breadth and diversity of music.
- At Key Stage 4, students can study the Pearson BTEC tech award in music practice. The qualification enables students to develop and apply musical knowledge and technical skills through areas including music performance, music creation and music production. Its practical and skills-based approach also develops students' ability to plan, develop and reflect upon their musical work.
- Students studying music at Key Stage 4 are encouraged and supported to access instrumental or vocal tuition to further develop their skills on their chosen instrument or voice.

Part B: co-curricular music

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

- In addition to curriculum music lessons, students have access to a wide range of fully funded instrumental and vocal tuition. Approximately 120 students currently access this provision. The academy works directly with specialist instrumental and vocal teachers, enabling us to manage provision closely and maximise the amount of specialist tuition available to our students.
- Instrumental and vocal lessons take place weekly and are generally taught individually or in pairs. Lessons last for 20 minutes and enable students to develop their technical and musical skills with specialist instrumental and vocal teachers.
- There is no charge to students or families for instrumental and vocal tuition. This enables students to access specialist music tuition regardless of financial circumstances and helps to remove potential barriers to participation.
- The instrumental and vocal tuition currently offered includes guitar, bass guitar, keyboard, drum kit and voice.
- Students studying music at Key Stage 4 are encouraged and supported to access tuition on their chosen instrument or voice, enabling them to develop the practical skills required for their BTEC music studies.
- We offer a range of free extra-curricular music activities, including guitar club, keyboard club, karaoke club and vocal group. These provide opportunities for students to develop their musical interests and skills beyond curriculum lessons and to make music with students from across the academy.
- Students can access and book the academy's practice rooms during lunchtime, with appropriate supervision, providing additional opportunities for independent and collaborative practice.
- Where appropriate, students receiving instrumental or vocal tuition can work towards recognised external music examinations. This is available to students who wish to pursue formal accreditation as part of their musical development.
- Through our co-curricular provision, we aim to remove barriers to participation and enable as many students as possible to experience the enjoyment of making music, develop their musical skills and pursue their individual musical interests.

Part C: musical experiences

This is about the wider musical events and opportunities that we organise, enabling students to perform, collaborate and experience music beyond their curriculum lessons.

- Academy open evening - students have opportunities to perform and represent music at the academy's annual open evening, showcasing their musical skills and the opportunities available within the department.
- Winter showcase - students from across the academy have the opportunity to perform to an audience in our annual winter showcase. Performances provide opportunities for soloists, vocalists and instrumentalists to share work developed both within and beyond curriculum music.
- Summer school production show - music contributes to the academy's annual summer production, providing students with opportunities to develop their performance skills as part of a larger collaborative production.
- Trust-wide musical opportunities - students have opportunities to participate in events across Dixons Academies Trust, including the annual collaboration concert, enabling them to perform alongside and collaborate with students from other academies.
- Community performances - we are continuing to develop opportunities for students to perform beyond the academy. During 2026/27, we are planning for students to represent Dixons Ashton Academy through performances at two community events, providing authentic performance experiences and strengthening links between the academy and its local community.

In the future

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

We continually review our music provision to ensure that students have access to high-quality musical opportunities. The following are areas we are planning to develop this year and beyond, while maintaining and building upon our current provision.

Curriculum

- We will continue to develop the Key Stage 3 curriculum by incorporating relevant contemporary musical examples that help students make connections between their learning and the music they encounter beyond the classroom.
- We will introduce whole-class guitar into the Key Stage 3 curriculum, using the academy's recently acquired class set of acoustic guitars to broaden students' opportunities to develop instrumental and ensemble skills.
- We will continue to strengthen progression between Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4, supporting students to develop the knowledge and practical skills required to progress successfully onto the BTEC tech award in music practice and maintaining strong participation in music at Key Stage 4.

Outside the classroom

- We will continue to develop our extra-curricular provision, including opportunities for students to participate in bands and a school ensemble, alongside our existing programme of music clubs.
- We aim to maintain and expand our fully funded instrumental and vocal tuition, enabling more students to develop specialist skills beyond curriculum lessons.
- We will continue to increase the range of performance opportunities available to students, both within the academy and through performances in the wider community.
- We will explore opportunities for students to experience live music and engage with professional musicians through visits, workshops and visiting performers.
- We will continue to develop the department's instruments, music technology, recording and live-sound resources and practice facilities, supporting an increasingly broad range of musical experiences.