

Music development plan summary: Dixons Cottingley Academy

Overview

Detail	Information
Academic year that this summary covers	2025-2026
Date this summary was published	January 2026
Date this summary will be reviewed	January 2027
Name of the school music lead	Ms S Cimadoro
Name of school leadership team member with responsibility for music (if different)	Mrs K Radford
Name of other music education organisation(s) (if partnership in place)	Dixons Academy Trust

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.

Our DCO Music Curriculum

Our Music curriculum is designed to be broad, balanced and ambitious. It provides students with a rich and varied musical education that develops both practical and written skills, while building confidence, creativity and cultural awareness.

DCO Curriculum Intent

- Offers a wide range of musical topics, genres and techniques.
- Builds essential skills that support employability, with strong links to the music industry.
- Integrates SMSC, Character and Culture throughout all units of study.
- Ensures each key stage follows a challenging, carefully planned curriculum that prepares students for KS4 pathways.
- Is regularly reviewed and updated so that learning remains relevant, engaging and reflective of current developments in music and technology.

Staff Expertise

The department is staffed by three specialist music teachers, each bringing extensive knowledge and experience to the classroom.

Curriculum Structure

- **Year 7:** One timetabled music lesson per week, including whole year group singing.

- **Year 8:** One timetabled music lesson per week, with the option to select KS4 Music from Year 9 onwards.
- **Year 9:** Access to Music Technology lessons through Stretch provision, depending on teacher allocation. Students opting for KS4 Music begin their qualification in Year 9.

KS4 Qualification

Students who choose KS4 Music study towards the BTEC Tech Award.

- Three timetabled lessons per week.
- Two units are completed in Year 10.
- A larger final unit is completed in Year 11.
- The structure allows time for pupils to revisit and refine their coursework, supporting the strongest possible outcomes.

Progression and Assessment

The curriculum is sequenced from basic to advanced concepts, ensuring that new learning builds securely on prior knowledge. For example, in Year 7 students first develop rhythmic accuracy and ensemble skills before applying these in band-based work when instruments are introduced.

Assessment at KS3 is aligned with National Curriculum guidance in Performing, Composing and Appraising. Transferable skills link all topics, helping students connect ideas and develop as well-rounded musicians.

Learning Environment

Classrooms are designed to support all learners, with visual cues, key vocabulary and topic-specific displays that strengthen understanding and help students access subject terminology with confidence.

Cultural and Social Development

Students explore a wide range of musical styles, traditions and genres. Units encourage curiosity about the wider world and support the development of respect and appreciation for different cultures. Topics include themes related to protest, racism, religion and global musical traditions.

Celebrating Student Achievement

Celebration of success is a core part of the department ethos. Achievement is highlighted through:

- Social media posts
- Display boards in classrooms and corridors
- Whole-school reward systems
- Awards, a Board of Excellence and half-termly postcards.

Part B: Co-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.

Instrumental (Peripatetic) Provision

The school subsidises the cost of instrumental lessons to ensure all students have access to high-quality musical tuition. We currently have 4 peripatetic specialist teachers offering lessons in:

- Drums and Guitar
- Keyboard
- Singing
- Saxophone

Lessons are delivered 1:1, 2:1 or in small groups/ ensembles depending on performance needs and student pathways. Each lesson runs on a 20-minute rotating timetable, with schedules shared weekly through the staff bulletin to support high levels of pupil attendance.

To further promote progress, guitars are available for students to borrow and take home, enabling regular practice beyond the classroom.

Extra-Curricular Clubs and Activities

Our department offers a vibrant range of extra-curricular opportunities, open to all students who wish to extend their musical learning:

- Girl Band (two groups)
- Boy Band
- DCO Band
- Year 7 Singing

Attendance at all clubs is monitored through registers, helping us ensure students engage regularly and benefit fully from these enrichment activities.

Performance Opportunities

Students have the opportunity to take part in a variety of performances throughout the year. A key highlight is our annual participation in the Dixons Collaboration Concert, where singers from across the trust come together to perform as one ensemble.

Part C: Musical experiences / Opportunities

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.

Performance Opportunities

Students at DCO have the chance to participate in a wide range of performance events throughout the school year. Each year, approximately 75 students take part in productions and concerts that celebrate creativity, confidence and community engagement.

Whole-School Productions

Our annual whole-school productions are a major highlight, performed across two evenings to families and the wider community. Recent and upcoming shows include:

- Summer Jam 2024
- SIX the Musical – 2023
- Disenchanted the Musical – 2024
- Peter Pan JNR – 2025
- The Addams Family – 2026

These performances bring together students from Music, Drama, Dance and Art, showcasing the collaborative strength of the Creative Arts faculty.

School and Community Events

Students also take part in a range of other musical events, both in school and in the wider community:

- Sports Day Band Performances – 2023 and 2024
- Winter MADDfest (Music, Art, Drama and Dance) – 2024
- Dixons Music Collaboration Concerts – 2025 and 2026

These events give students authentic performance experiences and the opportunity to share their work with different audiences.

Partnerships and External Opportunities

Leeds Playhouse Partnership

We are proud to hold a partnership with the Leeds Playhouse. Through this collaboration:

- Students have taken part in an Evening of Performance at the Playhouse, providing live musical accompaniment.
- Musicians have worked closely with Drama and Dance at DCO to provide live music for dance pieces, enriching performances and strengthening cross-discipline learning.
- Students have had opportunities to perform to members of the local community as part of this partnership.

This connection provides unique industry-linked experiences that support students' development as confident, creative performers.

In the future

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

Future Development Priorities for Performing Arts at DCO

The Performing Arts Faculty is committed to continuous improvement, strengthening its profile across the MAT and wider community while expanding opportunities for students to develop as confident, skilled and culturally aware performers.

Raising the Profile of Performing Arts

- Strengthen the presence of Music, Drama and Dance across the MAT and within the local community.
- Develop partnerships with external companies, practitioners and arts organisations to enrich students' creative experiences.
- Expand opportunities for students to engage with the wider music and arts community through workshops, events and professional collaborations.
- Ensure collaboration across the MAT directly contributes to improved student progress and shared best practice.

Character and Cultural Development

- Embed character development into all aspects of learning to promote excellent attitudes, behaviour and engagement.
- Equip students with work-readiness skills relevant to the creative industries, preparing them for future academic or vocational pathways.
- Design tasks, events and topics that deepen students' cultural capital and broaden their understanding of diverse artistic influences and traditions.

Teaching and Learning Improvement

- Continue to enhance the quality of teaching and learning across the faculty through targeted CPD and shared practice.
- Maintain robust systems for monitoring and self-evaluation, including outcomes, teaching quality, marking and behaviour.
- Act swiftly on any areas of underperformance, ensuring rapid impact and reducing internal variation.
- Further develop curriculum sequencing, assessment and student support to increase numbers opting for KS4 Performing Arts pathways, ensuring these subjects remain aspirational, engaging and accessible to all learners.

Further information (optional)

National Plan for Music Education <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-power-of-music-to-change-lives-a-national-plan-for-music-education>

Model Music Curriculum

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/974358/Model_Music_Curriculum_Key_Stage_1_2_FINAL.pdf

National Curriculum for Music

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/239088/SECONDARY_national_curriculum_-_Music.pdf