

# Music development plan summary: Furness 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	Michelle Larcombe
Name of school leadership team member with responsibility for music (if different)	Stephen Kelly (Deputy Head Teacher)
Name of local music hub	Cumbria Music Hub
Name of other music education organisation(s) (if partnership in place)	MiSST Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra

This is a summary of how our school delivers music education to all our students 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 students and parents or carers understand what our school offers and who we work with to support our students' 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 students can achieve.

### Overview Statement

At Furness Academy, we are committed to fostering a lifelong love of music by actively addressing the cultural inequalities that limit access to high-quality musical education.

Through our partnership with the Music in Secondary Schools Trust (MiSST), we ensure that every student at Key Stage 3 is not only introduced to classical music but becomes the proud owner of their own orchestral instrument. This inclusive approach removes barriers to participation, enriches cultural capital, and empowers students to take ownership of their musical journey. We aim to develop and nurture confident, reflective learners who develop creativity, discipline, and a strong sense of identity through music—skills that extend far beyond the classroom and into lifelong learning.

### KS3 Curriculum

All students at Key Stage 3 follow the Music in Secondary Schools Trust (MiSST) curriculum, a nationally recognised and transformative programme that guarantees equitable access to high-quality instrumental music education for all learners, irrespective of prior experience or socio-economic background. Through MiSST, every student receives sustained, weekly instrumental tuition over a three-year period, learning a classical orchestral instrument and developing the technical, musical, and personal skills associated with disciplined instrumental study.

This instrumental provision is underpinned by the explicit teaching of musical knowledge and concepts delivered by subject-specialist class teachers. Classroom learning is carefully aligned with instrumental tuition and is reinforced through close collaboration between the music department and highly skilled instrumental tutors. These tutors adopt and embed whole-school pedagogical routines within their specialist teaching, ensuring consistency in expectations, language, and learning behaviours across all music learning contexts. As a result, students develop a secure understanding of musical literacy, terminology, and theoretical concepts, which directly support and enhance their instrumental progress.

The MiSST curriculum at Furness Academy is structured around several key pedagogical strands in line with the National Curriculum:

- **Instrumental Performance:** Students receive structured, weekly tuition on their allocated orchestral instrument, with planned opportunities for independent practice, ensemble rehearsal, and performance. This approach develops technical proficiency, listening skills, and musical confidence.
- **Musical Theory and Literacy:** Lessons focus on the systematic development of musical notation, rhythm, scales, tonality, and harmonic structures, enabling students to read, write, and interpret music with increasing fluency and accuracy.
- **Vocal Performance:** Students participate in opportunities for ensemble singing, strengthening aural awareness
- **Cultural and Historical Understanding:** The curriculum explores a diverse range of musical genres, styles, and historical periods, including the social, political, and cultural contexts in which music is created and performed, thereby enhancing students' cultural capital and critical appreciation.
- **Composition and Creative Practice:** Students are provided with structured opportunities to begin to compose with appropriate notation and understanding.

The curriculum has been developed to be fully inclusive and responsive to individual learner needs. Provision includes adapted instruments, access to private and supported practice spaces, and targeted one-to-one intervention for students requiring additional support. This ensures that every learner can engage meaningfully with music education and experience success, progression, and a sense of belonging within the subject.

## **Key Stage 4 Music Curriculum (Eduqas GCSE Music)**

Students who choose Music as an option at Key Stage 4 follow the Eduqas GCSE Music specification and receive a carefully sequenced and ambitious curriculum designed to build directly upon the musical knowledge, skills, and cultural experiences developed through the MiSST programme at Key Stage 3. Music is timetabled for three lessons per week, providing students with regular and sustained curriculum time to deepen their understanding of musical concepts, refine practical skills, and engage critically with a wide range of repertoire and styles.

In addition to timetabled classroom lessons, all GCSE Music students receive a weekly peripatetic instrumental or vocal lesson delivered by specialist tutors. This provision supports the continued technical development of each student's chosen musical discipline and ensures that performance skills are taught with precision, accuracy, and progression. Students retain access to their MiSST instruments throughout Key Stage 4, allowing continuity of practice and removing potential financial barriers to participation. This enables students to maintain and extend their instrumental proficiency while preparing for the performance demands of the GCSE course.

Alongside their examination studies, GCSE Music students continue to engage with MiSST cultural enrichment opportunities, including ensemble rehearsals, orchestral and choral performances, workshops, and external concerts. These experiences reinforce the importance of music-making as a collaborative and culturally enriching practice, while also strengthening listening skills, stylistic awareness, and performance confidence required for success at GCSE level.

The transition from Key Stage 3 to Key Stage 4 is purposeful and coherent. The MiSST curriculum equips students with a secure foundation in musical literacy, including fluent notation reading, rhythmic accuracy, ensemble awareness, and disciplined practice habits. As a result, students enter GCSE Music with a strong technical vocabulary, well-developed aural skills, and a clear understanding of instrumental technique and rehearsal processes. This prior learning allows students to access the GCSE specification with confidence, independence, and a heightened level of musical maturity.

### **Assessment**

At Key Stage 3, students are assessed against clearly defined levels of standard - through a combination of ongoing formative teacher assessment and termly summative evaluations in both theoretical knowledge and practical performance. These assessments are used to monitor progress, identify strengths and areas for development, and inform responsive teaching. This supports appropriate progression into Key Stage 4 pathways by ensuring students develop secure foundations in musical literacy, performance technique, and independent practice.

In addition, students are offered the opportunity to undertake a MiSST graded instrumental examination. This qualification mirrors the technical and musical rigour of established examination boards such as ABRSM but is delivered in a way that

removes financial barriers, ensuring equitable access for all students regardless of background.

At Key Stage 4, students are assessed in line with the Eduqas GCSE Music specification across its three assessed components: Performing, Composing, and Appraising. Assessment is supported by regular, structured formative assessment within lessons, enabling teachers to provide precise, actionable feedback to support improvement. Progress is communicated clearly to students and families, ensuring transparency and shared understanding of attainment and next steps, while assessment information is used to inform teaching, intervention, and exam preparation.

## Part B: Extra-curricular music

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

At Furness Academy, students benefit from extensive access to the music department throughout social times, including breaktimes and lunchtimes. This open-access provision enables students to engage in purposeful independent practice, as well as to participate in one-to-one and small-group instrumental tuition for those who wish to further develop their musical skills beyond curriculum lessons. This approach actively promotes independent learning, self-discipline, and increased musical confidence.

A wide range of instrumental tuition is available, delivered by specialist peripatetic tutors and designed to meet diverse musical interests and pathways:

- **String Tuition:** Violin, Viola, Cello
- **Woodwind Tuition:** Flute, Clarinet, Saxophone
- **Brass Tuition:** Trumpet, Trombone, Tuba
- **Rock Skills:** Structured sessions that enable students to work collaboratively as a band, developing ensemble performance skills, stylistic awareness, and stagecraft in popular music genres.

In addition to individual tuition, Furness Academy offers a broad and inclusive programme of weekly ensembles, running at lunchtimes and after school. These ensembles provide regular opportunities for students to apply their learning in a collaborative setting, strengthening musicianship, listening skills, and teamwork:

- Wind Band
- Orchestra
- Trust Choir (inclusive of Trust Primary Schools and students from KS1–KS4)
- String Group

- Flute Group
- Saxophone Group
- Brass Group
- Rock Bands

Performance is a core feature of the academy's musical offer. A programme of calendared performance opportunities is embedded across the academic year, enabling students to showcase their progress both as solo performers and as members of ensembles. These events support the development of performance confidence, resilience, and a sense of pride and achievement, while also strengthening community and parental engagement with the arts.

### **Extended and Community-Based Opportunities**

Beyond the academy, students are actively encouraged and supported to engage with wider musical opportunities in the local area. Students may join the **Furness Music Centre (FMC)**, where they can participate in the Junior Orchestra, and where appropriate, progress to the Senior Orchestra. FMC provision takes place every Saturday morning and includes regular concert performances, offering students valuable experience of large-scale ensemble music-making and exposure to a broader musical community.

In partnership with local cultural organisations, brass students are invited to rehearse with **Askam Town Band**, working alongside experienced adult musicians. This provides a pathway into community brass banding, develops advanced ensemble and sight-reading skills, and introduces students to competitive performance contexts. The long-term aim of this partnership is to support sustained participation in local brass bands, helping to secure the future of this important regional musical tradition.

## **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.

Throughout the academic year, students at Furness Academy are offered a wide range of progressive, high-quality musical experiences that extend learning beyond the classroom and deepen engagement with music as a cultural, collaborative, and aspirational discipline. These experiences are carefully sequenced across Key Stages to build musical confidence, ensemble skills, cultural understanding, and ambition, while ensuring inclusive access for all students participating in the MiSST programme.

## **Year 7**

In Year 7, students are introduced to large-scale ensemble music-making through participation in two MiSST Play Day events. These events bring together students from partner schools within the MiSST network to rehearse and perform in orchestras of up to 120 students. Through this experience, students develop an understanding of sectional rehearsals, conductor-led practice, and the structured rehearsal processes required to realise a high-quality performance. This provides an early and powerful foundation in ensemble discipline, listening skills, and collective responsibility.

Students also work with a Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra (LPO) Musician in Residence, gaining first-hand exposure to professional musicianship, instrumental technique, and performance practice. In addition, students attend a variety of live concerts and performances, broadening their musical horizons and supporting the development of cultural literacy and critical listening skills.

## **Year 8**

In Year 8, students further consolidate their ensemble and performance skills through participation in one MiSST Play Day, with increased musical challenge and independence. Students also have the opportunity to take part in the Annual MiSST National Concert, a prestigious event held in major professional venues across London. Previous venues have included the Theatre Royal Drury Lane, the Camden Roundhouse, the Barbican Centre, and, most recently, Westminster Concert Hall. Performing in such spaces raises expectations, enhances motivation, and provides students with an authentic professional performance experience.

Continued work with the Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra Musician in Residence supports technical refinement and artistic development

## **Year 9**

In Year 9, students participate in one MiSST Play Day, further strengthening ensemble awareness, sight-reading, and rehearsal independence.

A key enrichment opportunity at this stage is the MiSST Residential at Gresham's School, Norfolk, where students work intensively over three days to rehearse, collaborate, and perform with peers from across the country who are also engaged in the programme. This residential experience promotes musical resilience, teamwork, independence, and social development, culminating in a high-quality concert performance.

## **Year 10**

In Year 10, students may participate in one MiSST Play Day, as well as an additional advanced music residential at Gresham's School and in London, where they rehearse and perform as part of the MiSST Symphony Orchestra. Working intensively over three days, students collaborate with highly skilled musicians from the London based schools

involved in the programme, to deliver technically demanding repertoire at a high performance standard.

Students can also gain access to MiSST mentorship pathways, offering structured guidance on music-related career routes, progression into higher education, and pathways into conservatoires, universities, and the creative industries. This supports informed decision-making and raises aspirations for post-16 and post-18 progression.

In addition, Year 10 students are given opportunities to develop their own leadership and pedagogical skills by supporting Year 7 instrumental learners and ensemble rehearsals, reinforcing their own musical understanding while contributing positively to the musical life of the Academy.

## In the future

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

Building on the strong foundations of inclusive curriculum provision, co-curricular enrichment, and partnership working, Furness Academy is committed to further developing its music offer to ensure sustained access, progression, and cultural enrichment for all students.

Future developments will focus on increasing participation, strengthening transition pathways, and embedding music more deeply within the life and identity of the Academy and wider community.

We are aiming to introduce a specialist music-focused Form Time, designed to increase access to instrumental ensembles for a broader cohort of students. This provision will enable students who may not otherwise be able to attend lunchtime or after-school rehearsals to participate in structured ensemble music-making within the school day. By reducing timetable and pastoral barriers, this initiative will further support inclusion, regular practice, and ensemble progression, particularly for students balancing multiple commitments.

In order to strengthen continuity and transition across phases, the music department will start to invite Trust primary classical musicians, to access a newly established Junior Orchestra that will be based at the academy. This ensemble will provide younger students with early exposure to high-quality ensemble rehearsal and performance, support smooth transition into Key Stage 3 MiSST provision, and foster a strong sense of musical identity and aspiration from an early age.

Furness Academy will sustain and deepen its collaboration with the Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra Musician in Residence, both through curriculum delivery and by supporting the development and delivery of a concert series for the local community. This work will enhance access to live music locally, strengthen community

engagement with the arts, and provide students with meaningful insight into professional music-making and cultural careers.

To further raise the profile of music across the whole school, the department is planning on establishing an annual House Music Competition. This event will provide additional performance opportunities across a wide range of musical styles, encourage participation from students beyond those already engaged in instrumental study, and promote creativity, teamwork, and school identity through healthy competition.

The music department will seek for local sponsorship for an annual bursary for a Musician of the Year award. This monetary award will be to enhance and continue their musical journey and encourage continuous development of their skills.

Together, these future developments reflect a clear strategic commitment to inclusion, progression, cultural enrichment, and community engagement, ensuring that music continues to play a central role in shaping confident, skilled, and culturally literate young people at Furness Academy.