

Music development plan summary: *St Thomas of Canterbury Catholic Primary School*

Overview

Detail	Information
Academic year that this summary covers	2026-2027
Date this summary was published	September 2026
Date this summary will be reviewed	September 2027
Name of the school music lead	Dr Joy Shore
Name of local music hub	Thurrock Music Services

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

At St Thomas' we follow a bespoke music curriculum which has been specifically written with our diverse pupils in mind, ensuring inclusivity throughout all areas of learning and across all year groups. The curriculum has been developed to enable our pupils to grow and develop as talented and creative musicians. Music curriculum lessons take place in a purpose built Music Studio.

All lessons are adapted to ensure that every pupil achieves to the best of their musical ability. Additional support is provided throughout the curriculum for those with special educational needs (SEND) to ensure that they develop their skills and flourish as musicians, such as through additional adult support, strategic pairing and scaffolding. Weekly SEND music sessions are delivered in our Music Studio, to help support those with additional needs and enhance their ability to access the music curriculum, throughout exposure to instruments and songs. Pupils working at expected age related levels and above levels of attainment are also supported to ensure that they are suitably stretched and challenged and continue to develop and strengthen their musical skills. An overview of our music curriculum can be found on our website, alongside a summary of skills progression and key music vocabulary at each key stage.

<https://www.stthomasofcanterbury.thurrock.sch.uk/page/?title=Music&pid=1777>

Music curriculum lessons take place weekly throughout the year, for EYFS, KS1 and KS2, ensuring that pupils acquire new musical knowledge and skills in short, manageable chunks and continue to develop them, week on week. The curriculum has been structured into units to achieve progression across all year groups, in four inter-linked musical skills including: **listening, singing, performing and composing**. Across all units we aim to develop pupil understanding of the **inter-related dimensions of music: pitch, duration, dynamics, tempo, timbre, texture, structure and appropriate musical notations**. Pupils are also encouraged to build their knowledge of key music vocabulary, so that they can understand and talk about music with confidence.

All year groups have opportunities to develop their instrumental playing skills, particularly during units which focus on performance. During EYFS and Year 1 performance lessons, pupils learn to play a number of untuned percussion instruments and in Year 2 pupils learn to play the ocarina and follow simple ocarina music. Year 3 pupils continue to develop their ocarina notation skills which provides a strong grounding for Year 4 when they learn to play the recorder and read basic Treble Clef notation. Year 5 and 6 pupils learn to play the keyboard and develop their Treble Clef skills further.

All lessons taught during the performance units take place as whole-class ensembles, for a term, to ensure pupils have enough exposure to instruments. This is particularly important in Years 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 to ensure that our pupils have sufficient time to develop their instrumental skills and are provided with opportunities to develop these skills further.

The choice of instruments in our music curriculum enable smooth progression through key stages, with the ocarina being an instrument that is manageable for all pupils and relatively straightforward to produce a tune on, following OcPix notation. Ocarina notation and instrumental skills acquired in Year 2 and 3 ensure a seamless progression onto the recorder and reading Treble Clef notation in Year 4, before moving onto more challenging Treble Clef notation when learning to play the keyboard in Year 5 and 6. Alongside the specifically chosen instruments for performance units, all year groups have opportunities to play an array of classroom percussion instruments (including glockenspiels and xylophones) across other parts of the curriculum, particularly during units which focus on listening and composing.

Part B: Extra-Curricular Music

Through our local Music Education Hub (Thurrock Music Services) we provide weekly one-to-one and small-group peripatetic lessons. Lessons are available for singing, keyboard, violin, guitar and drums, with sessions taking place in a music practice room. Pupils taking part in such lessons work through tutor books and have opportunities to work towards performance exams.

An external music education company called 'Rocksteady', attends our school weekly, providing our pupils with opportunities to join rock bands and perform using voices, keyboards, guitars and drums. Rocksteady bands rehearse together and perform a concert at the end of each term.

Internally we also run a Junior and Infant Choir, with rehearsals taking place after school (KS2) and during lunch times (KS1), in our Music Studio. Both choirs are open to all pupils, with sign-up required through Arbor. The choir ensembles provide our pupils with opportunities to enhance and extend their singing and performing skills developed throughout the curriculum. Regular choir performances include singing for celebration assemblies, a local care home and the Junior and Infant Music Festivals, in Thurrock. We also run an internal Year 3 and 4 Ocarina lunch time ensemble.

Further information regarding instrumental hire, orchestras, ensembles and after school/holiday music lessons can be found by contacting Thurrock Music Services.

Part C: Musical Experiences

As a Catholic school music plays a vital role across all year groups, during times of Class Worship and Celebration of the Word, where pupils regularly perform hymns and liturgical responses. During Musical Celebration of the Word, in particular, we prepare hymns for worship and masses and our pupils are encouraged to draw upon skills developed in the music curriculum. When rehearsing and performing hymns and responses, pupils often explore the use of the inter-related dimensions of music (i.e. pitch, tempo and dynamics). Pupils also experience live piano music on entry to religious gatherings and are encouraged to develop their listening skills further. Other recorded classical or gentle piano music is experienced during class worship.

At Christmas, EYFS, KS1 and Year 5 and 6 develop their singing skills and perform nativities and carol concerts to all other year groups and parents/carers. The Year 3

and 4 pupils also enhance their singing skills and perform an Easter Passion play for all other year groups and parents/carers.

In June, the whole school join together to celebrate World Music Day. Pupils are taught to perform a selection of songs, combining sign language, instruments and voice, to celebrate the day. This provides an opportunity for pupils to develop their performing skills and to celebrate with different year groups.

The Junior and Infant Choirs perform to all year groups in the school at the end of every term, in assembly. Both choirs also perform a set repertoire of songs with other schools for the Thurrock Music Festival, which is organised free of charge through the local music hub, Thurrock Music Services. For the festivals, the choirs perform in front of a large audience of parents/carers (small fee for audience tickets). The Junior Choir pupils also perform for the local community, at Christmas, Easter and in the Summer Term. Rocksteady concerts take place at the end of every term, with our pupils performing for the whole school, as well as parents/carers.

At the beginning of every academic year St Thomas' take part in the Christus Catholic Trust (CCT) new term mass, at Brentwood Cathedral. A few pupils are selected to sing as members of the CCT Children's Choir, performing alongside pupils from other Trust schools. This provides our pupils with an opportunity to develop their singing and performance skills further and the opportunity to perform at a prestigious venue, in front of a large audience of parents/carers and other teachers from the Trust. Also, a few children from St Thomas' join with other schools in the Trust to perform a Christmas nativity, in collaboration with De La Salle Secondary School. The children perform a number of Christmas songs for a large audience of parents and school children and staff.

Pupils have the opportunity to become a Music Ambassador, with each class nominating a representative for music to help setting up music resources, model good instrumental and singing technique, promote positivity in music lessons and help support World Music Day activities. In order to become an ambassador, pupils are encouraged to submit a musical entry to demonstrate their love of the subject and once selected are music representatives for a whole academic year.

In the future

Over the coming few years we intend to continue embedding the music curriculum. Music units and lessons will continue to be reviewed regularly to ensure our music provision suits the needs of all of our pupils. We will continue to focus on reinforcing music vocabulary across all year groups as well as reviewing pupils' understanding of the inter-related dimensions of music. This will enable our pupils to continue developing as talented and creative musicians.

We will research opportunities to collaborate with schools in our Trust and wider, to explore other performance avenues for our pupils. Working with the Royal Ballet and Opera (Cultural Champions) we also look to explore how the creative arts can be used to support disadvantaged pupils and encourage pupils with SEND and SEMH to become more confident musicians. We will also explore extending our music provision into the new nursery, as well as expanding our Makaton repertoire across the school.

Further information (optional)

Thurrock Music Services <https://thurrockmusic.co.uk/>

Rocksteady <https://www.rocksteadymusicschool.com/>

'Music education: information for parents and young people'

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/music-education-information-for-parents-and-young-people>