

Music development plan summary:

The Downs Primary School and Nursery

Overview

Detail	Information
Academic year that this summary covers	2026-2027
Date this summary was published	July 2026
Date this summary will be reviewed	October 2027
Name of the school music lead	Teodora Stoyanova / Gemma Baugh
Name of school leadership team member with responsibility for music (if different)	Rebecca Eldridge
Name of local music hub	Essex Music Hub
Name of other music education organisation(s) (if partnership in place)	Rocksteady Music Charanga

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

The Aims of Our Music Curriculum

Our music curriculum aims to provide children with high-quality music education which inspires engagement, performance and expression and focuses on enhancing communication and language development. We recognise that many children at The Downs need opportunities to supplement their language and communication needs. Every young person has the right to be successful and achieve no matter what their socio-economic background is. By offering a broad and balanced music curriculum we can ensure that pupils can progress in their knowledge, skills and understanding of music. It also helps in building confidence and resilience. Our Music curriculum has been developed to support pupils to:

- Sing and use their voices individually and in a group
 - Create and compose music on their own and with others
 - Use technology appropriately when composing
 - Have opportunities to learn a musical instrument
 - Understand and explore how music is created, produced, and communicated

- Listen to, review, and evaluate the work of great composers and musicians from a range of historical periods, genres, styles, and traditions
- Enjoy and have an appreciation of a range of different musical styles e.g., Classical, Jazz, Hip Hop, Pop, Rock etc.
- Use and understand musical language and include musical features in their own work
- Make judgements about the quality of music
- Have opportunities to play a wide variety of instruments
- Have different opportunities to take part in performances

The music curriculum is taught through the Charanga Music scheme of work which is in line with the National Curriculum and the Model Music Curriculum. Every year group have weekly lessons over a 3- or 6-week unit, with EYFS having 30-minute lessons, KS1 40 minutes and KS2 50 minutes. The Charanga Music scheme of work ensures students sing, listen, play, perform, compose, improvise and evaluate. This is embedded in classroom activities as well as focussed singing assemblies – such as harvest, Christmas and special festivals, various concerts and performances, the learning of instruments, and the joining of extra-curricular activities. The elements of music are taught in classroom lessons so that children can use the language of music to discuss it, and understand how it is made, played, appreciated and analysed. In the classroom students learn how to play various un-tuned and tuned percussion instruments and as a class learn how to play the ukulele – normally in Year 5. In doing so they understand the different principles of creating notes, as well as how to devise and read their own musical scores and basic music notation. They also learn how to compose focussing on different dimensions of music, which in turn feeds their understanding when listening, playing, or analysing music. Composing or performing using body percussion, vocal sounds and technology is also part of the curriculum, which develops the understanding of musical elements without the added complexity of an instrument.

We also partner with Essex Music Services to support musical opportunities for our pupils through workshops and lessons.

Part B: Co-curricular music

Rocksteady Music - Rock Steady are an inclusive music provider that fits into the school day and routines. Children don't have an instrument loaned to practice on, there's no experience necessary and all instruments are provided, so it is inclusive and accessible. Children can choose from vocals, keyboard, drums, bass, or electric guitar. They join their bandmates for a weekly 30-minute lessons, where they learn some popular songs. Children and family members can proudly hear the children perform in end of term concerts, showing how far they have come. Parents contribute the cost of tuition but there is one bursary space available for children at The Downs which is allocated to a child showing a musical interest who might not have the means to try a musical club or activity. We currently have 35 children that take part, making up 5 bands. Of these 35 children there are 20 boys and 15 girls, 8 PPG children and 4 SEND children.

Choir – This opportunity is for children in Y3-6 to take part in weekly choir club. They will perform at the Young Voices concert every other year at the O2. The school subsidises the cost of taking part with families contributing towards the cost of t-shirts.

Parents can choose if they wish to be a part of the audience. During the alternate year the Choir have an opportunity to carol sing in the community and perform in a range of local events. All local events that take place are arranged and paid for by the school. The Choir also sing in a yearly Harlow Music Festival involving approximately 10 other primary schools in the town. Other opportunities to perform include carol singing, at the school fetes and in assemblies.

Ukulele lessons – The Downs has a professional musician on the teaching staff who provides whole class instrumental tuition in Year 5. At the end of the sessions, children showcase their learning to the rest of the school and to parents in a variety of performances. We have our own set of instruments, giving the pupils an opportunity to practise their skills, at school, in between lessons.

Essex Music Services – Pupils are able to access financial assistance from Essex Music Services for music lessons, instrument hire and county-led ensembles, through local Music Schools. They are also able to access instrumental tuition and ensemble activities outside of the school day through Essex Music Services. This information is sent out to parents termly.

Secondary school workshops – Through our trust secondary school, we have been able to offer African drumming workshops to a small group of children for the last few years. They do these sessions after school for a term, and then they take part in their Christmas concert.

Part C: Musical experiences

Pupils perform the following performances:

Choir – weekly practise for pupils in KS2, Young Voices concerts, Harlow Music Festival, Carol singing, singing at school events.

Class assemblies – Children get a chance to perform either singing or playing instruments in their class assemblies that happen once a year.

Singing Assemblies – Weekly singing assemblies take place for the whole school to sing a variety of songs together.

Music Sharing assemblies – Pupils get the chance once a year to share something that they have been learning in their music lessons in front of the rest of the school. This gives them a chance to perform in front of an audience.

Celebration assemblies – The whole school sing together every week to sing a celebration song as they come in to assembly.

Rocksteady – All Rocksteady members perform a termly concert to the whole school and parents to share what they have been doing in lessons.

Ukelele Lessons – All children in Year 5 receive ukelele lessons, delivered by an in-house specialist.

Christmas Performances

Reception perform a Christmas nativity play to the whole school and parents.

Years 1 and 2 perform a carol concert performance to parents.

Years 3, 4, 5 & 6 perform a concert outside to all school users.

Leavers assembly – Year 6 children rehearse and perform their leavers assembly every year. This is a mix of speaking, singing, performing and presenting. This is watched by the whole school and parents.

Year 5 Ukulele performance – Children share what they have learnt in their ukulele lessons to the school and parents.

Community-orientated tasks – A variety of opportunities to sing in the local community are being embedded, such as singing at a local care home.

Pupils watch the following performances:

Rocksteady – All children get the opportunity to watch the Rocksteady bands and leaders perform.

Dress rehearsals – All children get to watch dress rehearsals of other classes performances.

Young Voices – At the Young Voices concert, not only do the choir get to perform at a world-class venue, but they also get the chance to experience a live band and singers.

Some singers are well-known for example from Britain's Got Talent and the X Factor.

They also get to watch these artists perform during rehearsal and the live concert.

In the future

Over the last few years our multi-academy trust has expanded to include more primary schools, meaning we have more opportunities to work together in the trust to develop music.

In the future we would like to:

- Begin to offer trips into London to experience live theatre and performances and look at how we can increase this offer to other year groups by lowering cost, for example travelling by train instead of coach.
- Look at starting a recorder/ukulele/guitar club with other staff members, especially to include KS1.
- Continue to work with Essex Music Services to access their workshops through LAC/PLAC funding.
- Look into how we can use our trust secondary schools (Passmores/Stewards) to offer some more G&T workshops and sessions to pupils.
- Work with our partner primary schools to start a trust music concert, where each school can share, and come together to perform pieces.