



**St Margaret Ward
Catholic Academy**

Little Chell Lane, Tunstall, Stoke on Trent, ST6 6LZ

Principal: Mr. D. McKenna B.Soc.Sc MA. PGCE. NPQH



“Music sparks creativity”

X: @MusicSMW

Instagram: music_smw and smwvoicebox

Overview

Detail	Information
Academic year that this summary covers	2025-26
Date this summary was published	January 2026
Date this summary will be reviewed	September 2026
Name of the school music lead	Miss R Hayes
Name of school leadership team member with responsibility for music (if different)	Mr M Dodd
Name of local music hub	Stoke-on-Trent City Music Service



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Part A: Curriculum Music

Music is the universal language of all mankind and surrounds our everyday lives. It sparks creativity, connects us and gives us confidence.

Studying music:

- **increases confidence and self-esteem** – which has a knock-on effect in all areas of their life and learning
- **improves health and wellbeing** – reducing stress, increasing a sense of wellbeing and happiness
- **provides important life and social skills** – such as listening, concentration, working as a team
- **develops creativity and self-expression** – helping young people to think differently and develop their power of imagination
- **improves cognition, literacy and numeracy** – recent neuroscience research has shown that children who learn an instrument have higher levels of cognitive capacity, specifically in their language acquisition and numerical problem-solving skills
- **can be the key to unlocking potential** – particularly for young people who are strongly creative, or who struggle to engage with other areas of learning

Our aim is to ensure that all students gain enjoyment, satisfaction and an understanding of music through composing, performing, listening and appraising. We aim to engage and inspire students to develop a growing love of music whilst developing their talent as musicians and critical engagement with music. Through this all of our students will be able to enjoy and appreciate music as an essential part of their lives and we will also be creating the musicians and educators of tomorrow.

At St Margaret Ward Catholic Academy, the music curriculum is designed to develop confident, creative, and knowledgeable musicians. Students experience a broad and ambitious curriculum that builds progressively from foundational musical skills in Key Stage 2 and 3 to advanced analytical, performance, and compositional expertise at GCSE and A Level. The curriculum promotes cultural capital through exposure to a wide range of genres, styles, and historical periods.

In year 7, 8 and 9 there is an hour of timetabled music every week. Students can choose music as a GCSE option followed by A level Music.



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Implementation

- Listening & Appraising: Structured listening across all key stages, developing musical vocabulary, stylistic awareness, and analytical skills.
- Performance: Regular solo and ensemble performance opportunities, with increasing technical and expressive demands.
- Composition: Progressive compositional tasks that move from guided structures to independent, extended compositions.
- Knowledge Progression: Clear sequencing of musical elements, harmony, form, and genre.
- Inclusivity: Adaptive pathways (SEND, Standard, HAL) ensure access and challenge for all.
- Retrieval & Practice: Regular listening starters, revision lessons, and mock assessments reinforce learning.

Impact

- Students demonstrate secure musical understanding through confident performance, accurate analysis, and purposeful composition.
- Outcomes at GCSE and A Level reflect strong musical literacy and independent learning skills.
- Students leave with transferable skills including teamwork, creativity, resilience, and self-expression.
- Many students continue music into KS5 and beyond, engaging with music as performers, composers, and informed listeners.

Music Curriculum Overview (Year 6–13)

Year Group	Listening & Appraising	Performance	Composition	Key Skills & Progression
Year 6	Identify structure, style, instruments, purpose and context of music	Sing in harmony; perform from notation and memory; lead performances	Compose in simple forms (12-bar blues, ternary, song form)	Musical vocabulary, confidence, leadership
Year 7	Elements of music; rhythm, pitch, form; Music Through Time (Medieval–20th Century)	Keyboard and ukulele basics; ensemble performance	Melodies, chord progressions, variations, programmatic music	Notation, rhythm, pitch, ensemble skills
Year 8	Blues, Jazz, Pop and Video Game Music; stylistic features	Keyboard, guitar/ukulele, singing, group performance	Ostinato compositions, blues improvisation, game music	Improvisation, resilience, collaboration
Year 9	Popular and film music; song structure, harmony, leitmotifs	Band skills; performing from lead sheets	Arrangements, covers, mashups; film trailer composition	Music technology, teamwork, creativity



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Year 10	GCSE set works; Theory; History of Music; Wider listening	Developing solo and ensemble performance	Free composition; introduction to brief composition	GCSE foundations, technical accuracy
Year 11	GCSE set works; Wider listening	Final solo and ensemble recordings	Complete free and brief compositions	Exam readiness, independence
Year 12	Haydn Symphony No.104; Mendelssohn Italian; Music for Theatre	Recital preparation and mock performances	Extended composition planning and development	Advanced harmony, analysis
Year 13	Poulenc Trio; Debussy Nuages; full AoS revision	Final recital recordings and sign-off	Complete and submit both compositions	Independent musicianship, evaluation

Inclusive Practice

In line with our curriculum driver *“Music sparks creativity”* and our spiritual driver *“Finding harmony through hope, compassion and courage”*, the music department is committed to inclusive practice that enables every student to develop and express their creative potential. Rooted in Catholic Social Teaching, we uphold the dignity of every individual, recognising creativity as a God-given gift to be nurtured in all learners (**Human Dignity**). Teaching is carefully scaffolded to remove barriers to learning, ensuring all students can participate fully and experience success (**Subsidiarity**).

Through practical music-making, we foster **hope** by enabling students to achieve and flourish, **compassion** through collaborative ensemble work, and **courage** as students take creative risks and perform with confidence (**Participation** and **Solidarity**). In doing so, students learn to work together in harmony, valuing one another’s contributions within a supportive and inclusive musical community.

Partnerships

We work closely with the Stoke-on-Trent City Music Service (CMS) to enrich both curriculum and extra-curricular music provision and we are currently the Lead School for Music in Stoke-on-Trent. Visiting peripatetic teachers from the City Music Service, alongside a privately employed tutor, deliver instrumental and vocal tuition and support a wide range of enrichment opportunities for students. The Music Service in partnership with Entrust and The Music Partnership also provide high-quality musical experiences both in and beyond the classroom, which we actively engage with. We have performed with the Hallé Orchestra, perform at the annual Recorder Festival and MusicShare projects with Lichfield Cathedral. Students also enter the Stoke-on-Trent Young Musician of the Year competition, and we currently have one student who is studying at the Junior RNCM and one who is a member of the National Youth Children’s Brass Band of Great Britain. We also access a wide range of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) opportunities through the CMS and exam board work.



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Qualifications, Progression and Careers

Alongside GCSE and A Level Music, students are provided with regular opportunities to undertake instrumental and vocal examinations throughout the academic year. These nationally recognised qualifications support informed progression into further and higher education, conservatoires, apprenticeships and employment within the creative industries.

Provision is aligned with the Gatsby Benchmarks, particularly:

- Benchmark 2 (Learning from Career and Labour Market Information): Students gain insight into the range of careers available within music and the creative industries, including performance, composition, production, teaching and arts management.
- Benchmark 4 (Linking Curriculum Learning to Careers): Instrumental and vocal qualifications complement classroom learning, demonstrating how musical skills and discipline translate into professional pathways.
- Benchmark 5 (Encounters with Employers and Employees): Engagement with peripatetic teachers and visiting professionals provides real-world insight into careers in music.
- Benchmark 7 (Encounters with Further and Higher Education): Examination routes and performance opportunities support progression to music colleges, conservatoires and university-level study.

Part B: Extra-Curricular Music and Personal Development in music

St Margaret Ward Catholic Academy offers weekly peripatetic music lessons delivered by specialist instrumental teachers designed to enhance students' musical education through individualised instruction. This offer provides opportunities for students to receive tuition on a variety of instruments, fostering a diverse and enriching learning environment.

Instrumental choices include:

- Woodwind – flute, clarinet, saxophone, oboe, recorder and bassoon
- Brass – trumpet, cornet, trombone, French horn, baritone, euphonium, tuba
- Strings – violin, viola, cello and double bass
- Guitar – acoustic, electric and bass guitar
- Piano
- Drum-kit
- Voice

For the current academic year lessons are charged at £26 per month, which is heavily subsidised.



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Part C: Musical Experiences

Below is an outline of all extra-curricular ensembles available to all students throughout the year at lunchtime and after school. Rehearsals for these ensembles culminate in the annual Christmas and Summer concerts as well as other opportunities throughout the academic year, such as the annual Recorder Festival; our Awards and Recognition Evening; Masses and Liturgies and performances in the local and wider community.

Recorder Consort

Flute Choir

Brass Ensemble

Junior Orchestra

Senior Orchestra

Jazz Orchestra

Voicebox

Liturgical Music

Students are also encouraged to join a variety of ensembles that are offered by the City Music Service.

Part D: In the future

This year we aim to strengthen and grow our music provision by exploring an alternative vocational Level 2 qualification for students who have a passion for music but may find the appraisal elements of GCSE courses challenging or simply prefer a different approach.

We also plan to include all sung parts of the Mass in school celebrations. With the aim that the liturgy within our school reflects the fullness and authenticity of the Mass as experienced in our local parishes, fostering a deeper sense of reverence and participation among students and staff.

In addition to this we will continue to work with schools in our region to strengthen music across the CMAT.