

Music development plan summary: Atherton High School

Overview

Detail	Information
Academic year that this summary covers	2025 - 2027
Date this summary was published	July 2025
Date this summary will be reviewed	July 2027
Name of the school music lead	Mr James Sowter
Name of school leadership team member with responsibility for music (if different)	Mrs Victoria McNamara
Name of local music hub	Wigan Music Service
Name of other music education organisation(s) (if partnership in place)	N/A

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

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.

Students study music for one hour every week at KS3. If students choose to continue their studies in KS4 then they would study GCSE music for three hours a week, working towards a qualification awarded at the end of the course.

The curriculum has been carefully designed to meet the requirements of the national curriculum and follows the guidance of the model music curriculum set out by OFSTED. The curriculum is cyclical in design to enable students to become more musical. Students have carefully planned lessons so they can experience practical music through performing and composing, while developing theoretical knowledge and learning to apply this through listening and appraising.

KS3

Throughout KS3 students will build instrumental fluency primarily on the keyboard. They will learn to play with fluidity and strong technique, learn how to play melodies and chords, and develop the skill of playing with both hands independently.

Students will explore other instruments to introduce different options for students wishing to take study further.

Year 7

Students will begin their journey of learning with singing and drumming, experiencing and learning about making music as an ensemble using rhythm. Students sing new study pieces when they are introduced throughout KS3. Students will explore pulse and how to keep time while being creative with rhythm using djembe drums and learn the ukelele and guitar to discover concepts within harmony.

Year 8

In Year 8 students discover music from around the world, particularly that of North America with its roots in the traditions of West Africa and Europe. Students will make music with a range of percussion instruments and the keyboard through units of work focused on Reggae, Blues, and Latin American music.

Year 9

Students will develop their theoretical knowledge at the start of year 9, exploring the musical elements through study pieces in a range of genres. Students will be able to build their fluency on both the guitar and drums as they learn about popular music in the latter 20th century and will finish off their studies by examining the role of technology in music with units of work covering electronic and hip-hop music.

Teacher Development

Secondary schools in the local area hold regular network meetings enabling music teachers from across the borough to collaborate on planning and share good practice as well as building supportive connections for moderation.

Atherton High School also has Music Mark status which enables staff to discover events and training whilst also giving support on how to deliver a high-quality music curriculum.

Part B: Learning beyond the classroom in 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.

Atherton High School offers music tuition, lead by Wigan Music Service to all students in both KS3 and KS4 with a recommendation of one lesson per week if studying at GCSE level. This tuition is available on a wide range of instruments – including voice – on a one-to-one basis or in small groups. More information can be found in the links at the bottom.

There are opportunities for students to develop their skills in music and explore their own interests outside the classroom in the extra-curricular sessions that run. Music Enrichment is open to all students who are interested in making music, rehearsing a new song or forming a band with their friends. There is a drumming club available to all students and a choir where students will learn a variety of songs from different genres and eras of music. Rehearsals of the school rock band take place weekly, tailored to students playing instruments at a more advanced level. These clubs are available throughout KS3 and KS4 and free to all students.

There is a rehearsal space that can be booked by students to practice their music during lunchtimes and after school.

Information on when clubs take place or availability of booking the practice room can be found on the notice board outside of the classroom.

[Instrumental and vocal lessons \(wigan.gov.uk\)](http://wigan.gov.uk)

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.

During the school year opportunities are being planned for students in both KS3 and KS4 to take part in performances showcasing their talent or passion for playing instruments and singing, performing solo or as part of a band.

Students can find out about how to get involved in these performances from their music teacher.

A yearly educational visit is being planned to give students in both KS3 and KS4 the experience to observe professional concerts in an authentic environment and take part in practical workshops.

In the future

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

The curriculum is continuously being reviewed to ensure it is meeting the needs of our students and to confirm that Atherton High School is providing high quality music provision.

As students develop in musical ability, more performance opportunities and a wider range of ensembles will be offered to cater to students' interests.

In subsequent years there will be further planning for students to experience live performances beyond the classroom.

Further information

The Department for Education publishes a [guide for parents and young people](#) on how they can get involved in music in and out of school, and where they can go to for support beyond the school.

Below are some more useful links and contacts.

[Instrumental and vocal lessons \(wigan.gov.uk\)](#)

[Music – Atherton High School](#)

[Music Mark | Leaders in High Quality Music Education](#)