

# Newlands Girls' School

## Music Development Plan

Detail	Information
Academic year that this summary covers	2025-26
Date this summary was published	October 2025
Date this summary will be reviewed	September 2026
Name of the school music lead	Mr C. Beach
Name of school leadership team member with responsibility for music (if different)	Mr. J. O'Connell
Name of local music hub	Berkshire Music Trust

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.

Our Key Stage 3 curriculum is broad and varied; we explore music from many styles, genres and cultures, igniting a passion for the subject through performing, composing, singing and listening. Students have one lesson of Music per week. All lessons last one hour. The curriculum is accessible to all but also ambitious for all, stretching students to exceed what they sometimes deem as their own capabilities. Learning is based on the National Curriculum. Please click here to view our KS3 road map and curriculum maps for Years 7,8 and 9: [Music - Newlands Girls' School \(newlandsgirlsschool.co.uk\)](https://www.newlandsgirlsschool.co.uk)

Students will encounter challenges in their practical music-making for which they will have to demonstrate perseverance and problem-solving skills. They will need to develop their communicative skills and collaborate with each other. They will be required to work independently and exhibit the determination to improve. By performing to one another, their self-confidence will flourish and through composition; they will need to be creative and think critically.

At Key Stages 4 and 5, students build on the fundamental skills and knowledge that they have developed in Key Stage 3. Results are excellent at both GCSE and A-level with a high percentage of students going on to study Music at university.

Our students follow the Eduqas specification for when opting for GCSE Music. This requires students to study a range of topics, building on the knowledge acquired at Key Stage 3 and developing their own opinions on the effectiveness of music from the 1600's to the present day.

The course is broken down into three components; Performance (30%), Composition (30%) and Appraising (40%). For the Performance component, students are required to perform for a minimum of 4 minutes and must play as part of an ensemble for part of this time. For Composition, students need to compose two pieces of music and one of these has to be written to a brief provided by the exam board. The Appraising component requires students to prepare for a 1h15 exam, made up of eight listening questions, two of which are focused on two pieces that students have studied during the course whilst the others will require them to have a wider knowledge of music.

Students who opt for A-Level music study the Pearson Edexcel A-Level music course. A-Level Music leads not only to traditional careers in teaching, composing and performing, but also working in what is now the second-biggest visible industry in the country. The course covers a wide range of musical styles, cultures and periods whilst developing your skills in composing, performing and analysis to the highest level.

This demanding course requires students to have a thorough knowledge of 13 set works as well as two compositions, one of which is a technical piece a Bach chorale and an 8-12 minute recital.

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Our universal offer is based on high quality teaching which emphasises high quality and inclusive teaching, including those with a SEND and those who are Disadvantaged. Where and when required, our Music teachers practise "Adaptive teaching" whereby "a change for one is for the good of all". Teaching practice is underpinned by the school's core values of the 3 Cs: Courage, Commitment and Compassion.

## **Part B: Extra-curricular 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.

Large numbers of students take up instrumental and vocal tuition, with over 150 lessons taking place every school week delivered by peripatetic teachers. There are others who choose to learn outside of school, often through our local music hub 'Berkshire Music Trust'. Whilst vocal lessons are most popular, with three full days of singing teaching taking place in small groups, many students study the piano, guitar,

drum kit, flute, clarinet, saxophone, bassoon, violin, cello, euphonium, trumpet, trombone & tuba in school. The cost of these lessons is subsidised for disadvantaged students by Berkshire Music Trust with the balance funded from the Pupil Premium.

At the beginning of the school year, our 'Have a Go' event allowed students from Year 7 to come and try out many of these instruments in order to engage them with the idea of learning an instrument. This was also a primary outreach event with parents of KS2 pupils invited along. There are also opportunities for students to sign-up for taster sessions on some instruments so that they can find out more about what it takes to commit to learning an instrument.

A new scheme named the 'Instrument Scholarship Scheme' was launched last year aimed at disadvantaged students. This saw 24 students receiving free instrument tuition on a brass instrument for the whole year, and they were loaned an instrument free of charge by the Music department. This has proven to be a great success, and the scheme will run again this year.

We offer an abundance of ensembles for students to join. Some of these require students to be learning an instrument already, including Concert Band, Swing Band, Junior Band, Guitar Group, Jazz Group, String Ensemble & Piano Ensemble. Others are open to everyone, including Djembe Ensemble & two Steel Pan groups.

There are many choirs too, including Junior & Senior Choirs which are open to all, and Madrigal Choir & two Performing Arts Choir's which are both auditioned groups.

Many of these groups are student led, and our Ensemble Captains play a vital role in supporting the department during rehearsals and at events. There are also other leadership responsibilities, with our 'Newlands Amped Up' (Rock Concert) committee being made up solely of Sixth Form students.

The department is open to all students at breaktimes, lunchtimes and afterschool for them to practise. Sometimes, students choose to practise by themselves and at other times, students work in small groups either that they have put together in lessons to work on music they are learning in lessons or with other friends where they may just play for enjoyment. Because of the nature of the department and the large number of extra-curricular activities, this often means that students make friends with those in other year groups, creating a wonderful and harmonious culture.

## **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.

A number of large & small-scale concerts, events and shows fill the school calendar, all providing opportunities for lots of students to participate. The Winter Concert & Spring Concert take place in the school hall to sell-out audiences every year, each featuring

well over a hundred students. Our winter programme also sees us visit the local All Saints Church for our Carol Concert and we visit the Maidenhead Mencap Society, to sing carols at Christmas to those who have learning disabilities.

We also run two smaller scale recital concerts; one is our Autumn Recital which is an opportunity for our GCSE & A-Level musicians to perform in preparation for recording the performance component of the exam and the second is our Summer Recital.

'Newlands Amped Up' made its debut in 2024 as the school's first 'rock concert', which showed the diversity of students' musical talents at Newlands. This was led by a committee of senior students and has become a staple of the calendar moving forwards. We are proud that students who may not otherwise routinely engage in extra-curricular activities take part in this.

All Year 7 students take part in the Year 7 House Singing Competition, which sees all forms compete against each other whilst also giving some of the more experienced young musicians an opportunity to perform a solo in front of the rest of their year group. This along with the 'Inter-house Band Competition' are both examples of the inclusive events on offer.

Students also perform regularly as part of assembly, whether it be as a soloist or as part of a group. This has embedded music as core to the culture at Newlands, and this culture is celebrated at school events such as Open Evenings, where music plays a lead role in introducing prospective students & parents to Newlands.

Each academic year, a trip to is organised for GCSE & A-Level students to see a live music performance, which more recently has been a West End show.

Bi-annually, a music tour abroad is a part of the calendar, and last year we saw a hundred students setting off for Paris in July 2025 during Enrichment week. The tour involved three performances for the Swing Band and a Tour Choir made up of students from Years 8-13 put together purposefully for the trip. Students experienced a tour full of culture featuring the many landmarks that Paris has to offer and a day at Disneyland Paris. The cost of the tour was £950 for a week, and this was subsidised for disadvantaged students.

The school musical sets itself as one of the highlights of what the music and drama departments have to offer. Recent shows include Little Shop of Horrors & We Will Rock You, each of which have had over 150 students involved.

## In the future

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

Over the next few years, the department plans to introduce more technology into the classroom and department in general. Progress has been made with this with the introduction of computer projects at Key Stage 3, including Music Production and more

recently Film Music. A new suite of PC's in the department has made a positive impact. Investment in the school hall has meant there is the opportunity to learn about sound equipment and we are considering the benefits of a Music Technology course to run alongside GCSE Music.

Since COVID, fewer students have joined Newlands from primary school with prior knowledge and experience of playing musical instruments. It is a challenge for the department to maintain and increase the numbers of students learning musical instruments, and alongside this, making sure that the students who are learning instruments represent all backgrounds in what is a diverse school community. With this in mind, the department seeks to work more closely with local primary schools in order to support music-making.

## Further information (optional)

For queries relating to curricular & extra-curricular learning in school, please email [office@newlandsgirls.co.uk](mailto:office@newlandsgirls.co.uk)

For opportunities outside of school, please see the links below:

Berkshire Music Trust [Homepage - Berkshire Music Trust \(berksmusictrust.org.uk\)](http://berksmusictrust.org.uk)

Chiltern Music Academy [Welcome! - The Chiltern Music Academy](http://www.chilternmusicacademy.co.uk)

Taplow Choirs [taplowchoirs.org.uk](http://taplowchoirs.org.uk)

StageCoach [Performing Arts School in Maidenhead | Stagecoach](http://www.stagecoachperformingarts.co.uk)

Redroofs [Home | Redroofs School for the Performing Arts](http://www.redroofsperformingarts.co.uk)