

Heckmondwike Grammar School

Music Development Plan

Update - January 2026



Overview

Heckmondwike Grammar School has a thriving music department that has been established and developed over a number of decades.

Academic Year – 2025-2026

Update published - January 2026

Review – September 2026

School Music Lead – Graham Cole

SLT link – Nicola Thomas (deputy head)

Headteacher – Peter Roberts

Classroom teachers

Head of Music – Graham Cole

Teacher of Music – Lucy Broadbent (full time, but on maternity leave)

Teacher of Music – Natalie Fisher (part time)

Additional Classroom teacher and maternity cover – Pippa Gibb

Peripatetic Teachers

Employed directly by HGS

Singing - David Hall

Percussion – Lauren Rosborough

Guitar – Oliver Dunster-Sigtermans

Woodwind – James Russell

Bought in from the county music service 'Musica Kirklees'

Brass – Nick Dolling

Piano – Julia Dolling

Upper Strings – Alex Berry

Lower Strings – Joanne Worboys-Hodgson

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Curriculum Music

Classroom music is thriving with a clear curriculum in key stage 3 which follows the national curriculum and covers every aspect of the model music curriculum. There is every opportunity for students to showcase their own instrumental skills in lesson time, including formal assessments. All students have an access to a wide range of musical instruments during lesson time.

GCSE music uptake is high with two classes of over 30 in each year group, which is above the national and local average. A level music consistently runs, although this traditionally has small numbers which is in line with the national average. We are one of only 2 providers of A level music in Kirklees.

The details of termly topics and schemes of work can be found on the school website here – <https://www.heckgrammar.co.uk/school/curriculum/subject-overviews/music/>

Curriculum Music Provision

Key stage 3

Year 7 - 1 hour every week, taught in groups of 20

Year 8 - 1 hour every week, taught in groups of 20

The school operates 3-year GCSE options

Key stage 4

Year 9 – 2 GCSE groups – each group has 5 hours per fortnight

Year 10 – 2 GCSE groups – each group has 5 hours per fortnight

Year 11 – 2 GCSE groups – each group has 5 hours per fortnight

Key stage 5

Year 12 – 1 A level group – 8 hours per fortnight

Year 13 – 1 A level group – 8 hours per fortnight

Examinations

We currently enter students for the Edexcel Pearson GCSE music

We currently enter students for the Edexcel Pearson A level music

Organisation Attendance

The school is a designated 'Lead School' within the West Yorkshire Music Hub (WYMH). Graham Cole is a representative on the board for the WYMH and also attends all Kirklees hub meetings. Annual attendance is also undertaken at the music meeting for the Northern Grammar School Alliance. All of these are a chance to develop music.

- We are a lead school for music in the West Yorkshire Music Hub (termly meetings)
- Our local Music Hub is Musica Kirklees Hub (attending termly meetings)
- Northern Grammar Schools Alliance (annual music meetings).
- We are a recipient of the Music Mark award.

Extra-Curricular Music

Extra-curricular music is a real strength of the school with large numbers taking part in a wide range of musical ensembles, including large orchestras, smaller instrumental ensembles and three choirs catering for different years and styles. There are regular in-house concerts, external gigs by our Soul Band, a bi-annual whole school musical with a live pit-band and opportunities for all students in the school to take part in our annual house music competition. There are musical performances in every weekly assembly from year 7 to 11 and regular performances for open evenings and prize giving. Our ensembles have taken part in the Marsden Jazz Festival each year (from 1999 to 2025) and regularly perform at Music for Youth (including in 2025). Performances have taken place again within the last year at local elderly care homes and to a local primary school. We have undertaken a number of external joint concerts with the local music centre (Musica Kirklees) and we welcome in the Musica Orchestra to perform to our year 7 every year, which links to their curriculum lessons at that point in the scheme of work.

Extra-Curricular Provision

All of these performed at our Christmas Concert in December and are open to all students in all years in the in the school, unless otherwise stated (ie Junior/Senior choirs)

Larger ensembles

- Orchestra – approximately 50 members
- Senior Choir (y10-13) - approximately 50 members
- Junior Choir (y7-11) - approximately 25+ members *
- Senior Girls Choir - approximately 25 members
- Soul Band – approximately 20 members

Smaller ensembles

- Woodwind group
- Brass Group
- Percussion Group
- String Group

In addition, we have a Rock & Pop Club where various small rock bands meet and rehearse each week for our annual 'Rock Night'. Our bi-annual musical always features a live pit-band. In 2025, we had 20 musicians in the pit band for the production of Shrek, with a large company singing, acting and dancing on stage.

Some students have frequently created their own group (eg Sax quartets, small brass groups, vocal groups etc.). Currently we have 4 very strong string players in year 10 to 13 who have formed their own string quartet and are stretching themselves with music by Borodin etc..

Instrumental/Vocal Music Tuition

- There are currently 225 students undertaking peripatetic lessons at HGS (plus 2 non-music department staff having lessons!).
- Provision is for all disciplines in woodwind, brass, percussion, strings, guitars, piano and singing.
- All lessons are subsidised via the Governing Body.
- Pupil premium students receive free lessons if they are in year 7 or 8 or take GCSE or A level music.
- Pupil premium students in year 9-13 who do not take GCSE/A level music receive half-price lessons.
- As we 'buy in' half of our peripatetic team from the music centre, we have strong connections with them.

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- With 4 of our own peripatetic team employed by HGS, we are able to be much more flexible with how they work with our students. This includes running extra-curricular activities, workshops (eg Jazz improvisation with y12), GCSE/AL performance one-to-one support work.

Further details, including prices and terms and conditions can be found here-

<https://www.heckgrammar.co.uk/music/>

Examinations

All students can access ABRSM and Rock School exams through the school. We have regular small entries in the winter and spring sessions and a large entry in the summer with a visiting examiner.

About 50 students undertake these via HGS each year.

Facilities

We have a fantastic music environment in which students can really involve themselves with music making and practice time. We have a total of 10 rooms dedicated to music, with a large hall for concerts and rehearsals next door.

We open the main music room every morning before school for personal practice, there are rehearsals and bookable rooms during each lunchtime.

The Curwen Music Room

Includes 1 large classroom with a high-spec Yamaha Clavinova digital piano, keyboards, PA with radio mics, drum kit, a store area and 3 practice rooms each with full size digital pianos and a range of amps and guitars.

Music Computer Lab

A 32 PC music lab with Sibelius Ultimate & Cubase installed. Each PC has a MIDI keyboard and a Focusrite Scarlett audio interface.

A Level Music Study Room

This dedicated A level music room is perfect for students to study, work on coursework or complete further listening and discussion. It has 4 A level music specific PCs and a range of musical study scores.

A Level Practical Room for Music and Drama

Shared with A level drama students, this room is ideal for all small rehearsals and musical experimentation. The room has a baby grand piano, a large area for rehearsing and 6 more general PCs.

Recording Studio

This is built around a Steinberg professional digital multi-track recording system and a wide range of professional microphones. The area includes a control room, a separate live room, a full drum kit, digital piano, guitars and amps. There is another practice room next door with 2 digital pianos.

Swann Hall

Many of our concerts, recitals and some rehearsals take place in our main hall just next door. It has a beautiful acoustic, a Steinway grand piano and a brand-new digital sound and light installation for 2025!

Further Equipment

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In addition to a full range of general classroom keyboards and percussion we have a variety of guitars and amplifiers, a full set of Samba drums and African drums. There is also a professional xylophone, glockenspiel, tubular bells and 6 timpani.

Reference

There are a wide range of reference resources available from textbooks, scores & audio libraries - to online resources linked to Teams and Spotify. Along with a traditional text-book we also subscribe to both online resources of Focus on Sound and Mastering A Level music for students to access.

Musical experiences

This year we will continue to provide excellent performance opportunities for students, both within HGS and in the community.

The current schedule is as follows, but traditionally more are added.

- Marsden Jazz Festival – External festival performance featuring our Soul Band
- Remembrance Performance – community event in Heckmondwike with music from our wind/brass group (mixed year groups)
- Christmas Showcase Concert – featuring our main musical groups (features all year groups)
- Senior Prize Giving Performance – a one hour set at the Town Hall by the Soul Band as people are arriving, then 2 showcase performances during the ceremony, from the Soul band and then a featured soloist (usually y12 or y13)
- Visiting Musica Orchestra – this semi-pro adult orchestra gives a one-hour performance to our year 7 students, which ties in nicely with their curriculum topic of the Orchestra. The visiting orchestra encourages a small number of our students to join in (20 this year!!). These are from y8-13.
- Local care home performances – we take a small group of the senior choir to perform to residents at the local care home at Christmas.
- Carol Service – a community performance in the local church. It features our choirs and orchestra (all year groups).
- Rock Night – featuring our rock and pop groups (features all year groups)
- Spring Showcase Concert – featuring our main musical groups (features all year groups))
- Junior Prize Giving Performance – each year group (7-10+12) will have a featured musical performance during the ceremony.
- Summer themed concert. We alternate this annually with the whole school musical. Summer 2025 was the musical Shrek, 2024 was a Big Night of Musicals. Summer 2026.... Wait and see! (features all year groups)
- TBC – joint community concert.

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Assembly

Each fortnightly cycle we have a year group assembly for years 7 to 11. Every assembly starts with a musical performance. This is open to volunteers from all year groups.

Open Evenings and School Events

We traditionally have a musical performance for all open evenings before the head teachers speech. This can be a pianist or a singer/guitarist.

HGS Music Competition

House Music is our Annual Music Competition open to all students. This runs every July with about 100 entries from all year groups.

NB – only the Showcase Concerts are charged for the audience. No charge for students participating.

Future Plans

1. Continue the outstanding musical events and atmosphere at HGS.
2. As a Lead School for Music in the West Yorkshire Music Hub, continue to develop music across the region.
3. Review access to music instrumental/vocal lessons for pupil premium students. This year we have moved from half-price lessons for all PP, to free lessons for y7+8, plus GCSE/A level music students. Can this be increased to all PP?