



**St John Plessington
Catholic College
Music Development Plan 2025-26**



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Academic Year	2025–26
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Music Leadership in HFCMAT	Laurie Smith
Music Hub	Love Music Trust



**We're working
towards Artsmark**
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Our HFCMAT Vision

Our belief is that music learning works best when young people are actively involved in making music. All students across our schools will experience music as a normal, everyday activity. Students will make music through singing, performing, composing and listening to music. Our students will participate in musical performances as both performers and audience members. We want to help more young people from disadvantaged backgrounds to be able to access music making and have the opportunity to learn an instrument encapsulating our Trust principle that *a child's start in life need not determine their future*.

Our HFCMAT Goals

1. All students will experience excellent music teaching in the classroom, with a focus on practical music making, developing instrumental skills, musical knowledge and an understanding of how music works.
2. All students will have the opportunity to learn an instrument, with whole class instrumental tuition during curriculum music, opportunities to take this further through peripatetic lessons and to take part in bands, ensembles and choirs before school, during lunchtime and after school.
3. Students participate in a series of musical events throughout the year, from assemblies, concerts, Mass, whole school musicals, trips, and Trust wide events.



Part A – Curriculum

The music curriculum in HFCMAT schools is unashamedly ambitious. It has been meticulously planned to ensure we have considered ambition in terms of our students' musical development and how to spark their curiosity, rather than the range of musical opportunities on offer. The principal aim of the music curriculum is to develop students' musical understanding.

The three main strands of the curriculum are as follows: listening and responding, performance and composition, all of which are underpinned by a sound and comprehensive knowledge of the interrelated dimensions of music.

Each of these strands are interrelated and are ordered accordingly. By listening to an existing performance or recording of a piece of music it provides an essential grounding prior to any performance of that music. Once a child has listened and performed a particular style of music, this can then help inform and inspire the composition of their own new music.

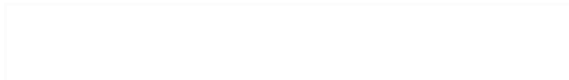
Our HFCMAT secondary curriculum builds on skills and each topic is clearly planned to continue the musical development of the child. Throughout KS3 students develop their musical habits through a broad range of topics, each one designed to build on skills learnt in the last one. By the end of KS3 students are equipped with the musical skills needed to succeed in KS4 and 5. An overview of our curriculum for KS3–5 at SJP can be found [here](#).

All students have 2 timetabled lessons per fortnight in years 7, 8 and 9. This is to ensure we are meeting the requirements of the National Curriculum. During year 9 students can opt to study the BTEC Tech Award in Music in KS4 and in KS5 we offer the BTEC National Award in Music Performance.

Throughout the KS3 curriculum students develop both singing and instrumental skills on the keyboard, ukulele, djembe and samba drums and gain confidence with music production techniques, using a DAW to create and manipulate sounds. Students are taught in 2 rooms that are fully equipped to teach music. Including computers, instruments and AV technology.

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An overview of our curriculum for KS3 at SJP can be seen below

Building Blocks 1 Singing/Notation/ Rhythm and Pulse	Building Blocks 2 Instrumental Skills	Building Blocks 3 Variations	Unit of work 4 Cultural Identity	Unit of work 5 Programme Music	Unit of work 6 Popular Music	Unit of work 7 Film Music	Unit of work 8 Music Production	Unit of work 9 Music Festival
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils will be able to use their voice musically as part of an ensemble • Pupils will be able to identify rhythmic notation, composing and performing rhythms in ensemble • Pupils will be able to identify the notes on a staff in order to perform pieces written in standard notation • Pupils will be able to describe the effect on music that compositional features have on the mood produced 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils will be able to use their voice and instruments musically on their own and as a member of an ensemble • Pupils will be able to use musical notation to produce an original melodic composition • Pupils will be able to perform chords and strumming patterns using a ukulele • Pupils will be able to describe the effect on music that compositional features have on the mood produced 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils will be able to understand how contrast can be created in pieces of music • Pupils will be able to perform pieces of music which feature variations • Pupils will be able to compose original music featuring variations • Pupils will know how to describe the compositional features of music in variation form from a range of musical genres 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils will be able to listen to Blues and Reggae Music and recognise features from the music. • Pupils will be able to compose using structure such as the 12 bar blues and will be able to create melodies using scales such as the pentatonic and blues scales. They will be able to develop improvisation skills and will improvise around the blues and pentatonic scales. • Pupils will know the culture and context in which these genres are performed and will understand how they are performed. • Pupils will be able to perform their compositions to the group and develop their appraising skills to refine and improve their own and others' work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils will be able to understand how contrast can be created in pieces of music • Pupils will be able to perform pieces of music which feature in Video Games • Pupils will be able to compose original music featuring programmatic elements • Pupils will know how to describe the compositional features of programmatic music from a range of musical genres 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils will be able to understand the key features of Music from different decades in the 20th Century • Pupils will be able to recognise key features in a range of music from each era • Pupils will be able to audit their own performance skills. They will be able to plan how to improve these skills • Pupils will be able to develop individual instrumental skills • Pupils will be able to develop ensemble playing skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils will be able to understand the stylistic features of a range of genres of film music • Pupils will be able to perform with increasing control and expression music from a range of film genres • Pupils will be able to understand the role of music within film and evaluate how music is used to reflect mood/emotion • Pupils will be able to compose their own piece of film music from stimuli 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils will be able to understand how music technology is used to create and communicate music. • Pupils will be able to use and understand the basic principles of a DAW. • Pupils will know how music technology can be used as a tool to create a piece of music • Pupils will be able to create their own piece of music using a sequencer. • Pupils will know how music technology has been used in both the Hip Hop and EDM genres 	<p>Pupils will be able to recognise music from different cultures and countries and explain how music can be used in celebrations across the globe.</p> <p>Pupils will be able to perform as part of a whole class ensemble as part of a samba band and West African drumming circle.</p> <p>Pupils will be able to compose their own rhythmic composition that uses the structure seen in samba music.</p> <p>Pupils will be able to perform as part of a musical ensemble, showing a good understanding of the rehearsal process needed when planning a musical performance.</p> <p>Pupils will know the different career paths within the live music industry and what skills are needed for each.</p>

A full progression map of skills students learn in KS3 can be seen below.

Strands of Learning						
	Performing	Composing and Improvising	Singing	Listening and Appraising	Music Production	Musical Styles, Genres and Traditions
Year 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read notation from middle C to F Perform and recognise semibreves, minims, crotchets, quavers and semiquavers Perform in 4/4 time and keep a steady pulse Perform confidently in C/Air NC3.1/NC3.3/NC3.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compose using semibreve, minim, crotchet, quaver and semiquavers Compose a melody using the scale of C major over a given chord sequence Use musical elements to enhance compositions and show expression NC3.2/NC3.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sing a variety of songs in unison Sing in up to 4 part rounds Introduce the concept of singing in harmony Perform together as a class ensemble and as a whole year group Observe phrasing, accurate pitching and dynamic contrast NC3.1/NC3.3/NC3.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and recognise common instruments Introduce the musical elements Identify how the musical elements are realised in sound NC3.4/NC3.5/NC3.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore the basic functions of how to record using a DAW Record a simple melody onto a DAW NC3.1/NC3.2/NC3.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How classical music has influenced modern music Great composers – Beethoven and Rachmaninov How included in western traditions are composed NC3.4/NC3.5/NC3.6
Year 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction of accidentals Chords, melodies and basslines using synoptation and swung rhythms Performing in C and G and their relative minors NC3.1/NC3.3/NC3.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compose chord sequences on the keyboard or guitar in C major, G major, A minor or E minor Compose simple basslines using the root note of each chord Compose melodies using vocal or instrumental improvisation, bearing in mind phrase structure Improvise new musical ideas over chord sequences or over a groove within a chosen key or keys NC3.2/NC3.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sing regularly from an extended repertoire with a sense of ensemble and performance Introduce singing chords/ harmony in two parts NC3.1/NC3.3/NC3.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop awareness of how the musical elements are used in music to produce stylistic features Recognise how the musical elements are used in different musical genres NC3.4/NC3.5/NC3.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Select appropriate sounds to represent characters and themes within their compositions Creating musical layers within a DAW Quantise notes into quavers Using basic editing techniques to manipulate sound NC3.1/NC3.2/NC3.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How the context of a piece of music can affect the way it sounds The development of popular music from the 1950s and how technological developments have shaped the development of popular music Recognising the sonic features of music from Jamaica and the USA NC3.4/NC3.5/NC3.6
Year 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Performing using different time signatures 2/4, 3/4 and 4/4 Follow staff notation/bass/chord charts Performing melodies adding bass notes/chordal accompaniment NC3.1/NC3.3/NC3.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chord sequences using C, G, F maj and relative minors Improvise Contrasting chord sequences Using structures appropriately Song form/Rondo Basslines using root notes with passing notes Rhythmic Accompaniment Melody based on lyrical and harmonic intentions NC3.2/NC3.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sing regularly from an extended repertoire with a sense of ensemble and performance Sing in 2 part harmony confidently Observe phrasing, accurate pitching and dynamic contrast in singing NC3.1/NC3.3/NC3.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use correct musical language to analyse and appraise the musical features in a range of different and contrasting musical genres Recognise the typical compositional features used in different genres of music Identify different genres of music by their compositional features Recognise the impact of the musical elements on a piece of music Understand how and why different elements are used and the effect they have on the music NC3.4/NC3.5/NC3.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confidently input notes into a DAW by recording and midi input Quantise notes up to 16ths Create a drum track using drum machine and midi editing Choose appropriate sounds to match the needs of the piece Using the mixing and editing features of the DAW to manipulate the sound Add basic effects such as reverb and delay to create the required sound Build layers of sound using a DAW NC3.1/NC3.2/NC3.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognise music from different cultures and parts of the world Recognise how music can be used to enhance the mood and atmosphere in film and performance Be conscious of how music can be used in celebration and festivals over the world NC3.4/NC3.5/NC3.6

Special Educational Needs & Disabilities

At SJP, a commitment to inclusion and equity is integral to the curriculum. It is imperative that every student has access to the music curriculum and attains successful outcomes. However, it is recognised that certain students may require additional, often temporary, scaffolded to reach these outcomes. The [‘Supporting Every Student in Music’](#) document outlines potential barriers that students with special educational needs and disabilities may encounter in music lessons, along with specific strategies to overcome these barriers.



“Next to the Word of God, the noble art of music is the greatest treasure in the world”. Martin Luther



"Music is a moral law. It gives soul to the universe, wings to the mind, flight to the imagination, and charm and gaiety to life and to everything." Plato

Assessment in Music

Assessment in music lessons at SJP is continual, **formative** and focussed on supporting students to develop their musical skills. Teachers are supportive and encouraging during practical activities and in the moment feedback will often be the most effective form of developing students musical skills. Teachers often have formative, developmental dialogue, hearing what is going on in their classroom and adapting their teaching to suit the needs of the students. We believe that feedback should require the student to do more, not the teacher. We do not expect extensive written feedback to appear in KS3, verbal feedback does not need to be recorded, and there does not need to be photographic evidence of students playing musical instruments. This will distract the teacher from being able to give feedback which is actually helpful to the student on their musical journey.

Summative assessment should only be done for every 10–15 hours of music lessons. We expect this to be done once per term. At this point it would be good to capture students' work in an audio or video format. Summative assessment should be focussed on the intent of the curriculum and used by staff in schools and at Trust level to determine if students are learning the curriculum as we intended them to. This gives us the opportunity to test if our curriculum has worked – can students do what we had planned? If not, what do we need to change for next time? This ensures our curriculum is not set in stone, but a constant ongoing and evolving plan, clearly focussed on developing our students musical skills.

Curriculum Next Steps:

- Our recently updated curriculum will take another year for students to reach year 9 with the development of skills that we are hoping for. As this becomes more established across the College we want to develop our curriculum so it goes beyond the level of the National Curriculum and seeks to address social disadvantage by addressing gaps in knowledge, skills and experiences to enhance the curriculum.
- Continue to develop the compositional skills of our students
- Embed the use of music technology access KS3 to ensure students starting the BTEC course are equipped with the necessary skills to access the course.
- Develop adaptive teaching strategies to ensure all students are able to secure good progress in music.
- Ensure summative assessment fully informs our curriculum and that our curriculum evolves and develops to meet the needs of our students

Part B – Co-Curricular Music

Students at SJP are able to further their musical and instrumental skills by having an additional instrumental lesson each week. Instrumental tuition is currently available on the following instruments:

- WOODWIND (flute, clarinet, oboe, saxophone, bassoon)
- BRASS (trumpet, cornet, euphonium, tuba, french horn, trombone etc...)
- GUITAR (electric, bass, acoustic)
- STRINGS (violin, viola, cello, double bass)
- PERCUSSION (drum kit, orchestral percussion)
- PIANO and VOICE

Students receive a 20-minute lesson on their chosen instrument each week, with the lessons taking place during the school day. The tuition takes place on a rotation system to avoid students missing the same lesson each time. SJP have a team of self employed music teachers that support our instrumental provision, parents pay staff directly for the provision provided.

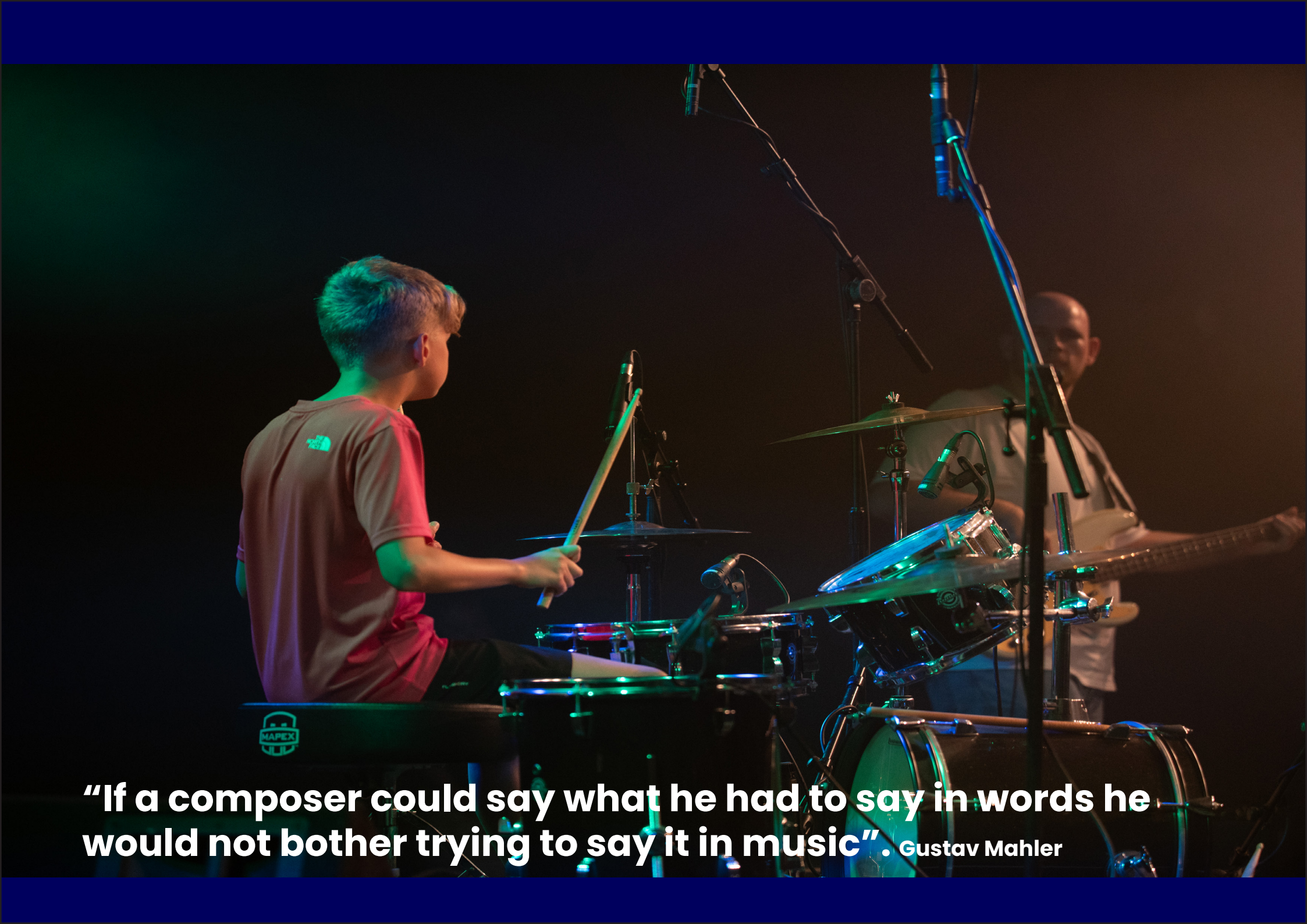
In addition to the lessons taking place in school time, our students also have access to the Wirral Schools' Music Ensembles that take place during evenings and weekends. Learning to play a musical instrument has many proven benefits, such as;

- Improving hand eye coordination & fine motor skills
- Improving maths, reading and comprehension skills
- Encouraging responsibility, perseverance and discipline
- Encouraging self-expression
- Building self confidence
- Providing a constructive outlet for stress



"I think music in itself is healing. It's an explosive expression of humanity. It's something we are all touched by. No matter what culture we're from, everyone loves music."

Billy Joel – songwriter



"If a composer could say what he had to say in words he would not bother trying to say it in music". Gustav Mahler

We are passionate about improving the number of students learning to play an orchestral instrument at SJP. In partnership with our music hub, we are offering 70 students the opportunity to learn to play an orchestral instrument. These students are currently learning to play violin, viola, cello, trombone, cornet, flute, clarinet and saxophone. Each of these students receive an hour of instrumental tuition in a group lesson each week, this takes place during the school day and the timetable rotates to ensure that students are not missing the same lesson each week.

Music is an extremely important part of school life at SJP and our students have many opportunities to enhance their musical experiences outside of the classroom. Each week the department runs a number of extracurricular activities such as choir, the school musical, bands, orchestra and samba band. These activities take place during lunchtime and after school and are popular with our students. All extra curricular activities are free of charge and students are encouraged to attend as many of these as they would like.

Each year the students have the opportunity to take part in a whole school musical, which is performed at a professional, 450 capacity, professional theatre. This is an extremely popular activity, with many of our students taking part. We also encourage our instrumentalists to perform in the pit band for the production, giving them the opportunity to develop their ensemble skills.

Each term we co-host 'Friday Night Live' with St Mary's Catholic College, again, this takes place in a professional venue, giving our students the opportunity to perform outside of the school building.

Our 60 strong school choir regularly perform both in school and in the local community, supporting liturgical celebrations, concerts and also perform at the HFCMAT Christmas celebration at Metropolitan Cathedral in Liverpool.

Students who wish to rehearse or practise are encouraged to book a space in the music department at breaks and lunchtimes so they are able to develop their skills. There are several rooms available during these times.

Co-Curricular Next Steps:

- Provide opportunities for the students learning orchestral instruments to perform in an ensemble together.
- Provide further opportunities for students from disadvantaged backgrounds to access instrumental tuition
- Increase the number of students taking part in extra curricular activities in the music department.
- Increase the number of students learning to play an orchestral instrument
- Increase the variety of musical styles and genres within out extra curricular provision

Part C – Musical Experiences

Throughout the year our students have the opportunity to perform at a number of live music events and musical experiences, a calendar of the events planned for this academic year are below.

We are proud to work in partnership with the Liverpool Empire and our students have taken part in workshops and performances as part of this. Students have also had the opportunity to see live theatre performances as part of our partnership.

In addition to formal mass' throughout the year, students sing regularly during their weekly scheduled worship sessions. Participation in these events creates a sense of unity, rooted in faith, yet accessible to students of all cultural backgrounds. We are passionate that music is a universal language that allows our students to express their faith, reflect on spiritual values, and participate fully in the ethos of our school.

September – Instrumental recruitment / Creativity Conference Performance / Rehearsals and workshops for Chester Zoo performances

October – Year 7 singing rehearsals for Welcome Mass / Year 7 choirs established / Welcome Mass / Friday Night Live 1

November – Rehearsals across all schools for Trust Christmas celebration at Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral

December – HFCMAT Carol Service / SJP Carol Service

February – Whole School Musical at the Gladstone Theatre / Friday Night Live 2

March – Rehearsals across all schools for Trust Easter celebration / End of Term concert

April – Trust Wide Easter song recorded

June – Friday Night Live 3 / World Music Day

July – HFCMAT Summer Arts Festival / Year 6 transition activities / End of term concert

Musical Experiences Next Steps:

- Develop our partnership with our hub 'Love Music Trust' to give our students wider opportunities to play in musical ensembles that differ to those on offer at school
- Develop further links with other schools and cultural organisations to develop our enriching opportunities for young people
- Increase the number of students taking part in countywide musical ensembles
- Develop opportunities for the parents and wider community to get involved in music making
- Develop links with further education establishments to signpost students to musical progression routes.

For 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 for support beyond the school. Please find this [here](#).





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