The Polesworth School

ENSURING EXCELLENCE

Music Development Plan Summary 2026-27

OVERVIEW

Below is an overview that outlines some of the key information regarding music at The Polesworth School:

Detail	Information
Academic year that this summary covers	Academic Year 2026-2027
Date this summary was published	20th May, 2026
Date this summary will be reviewed	7th July, 2027
Name of the school music lead	Sarah Glover
Name of school leadership team member with responsibility for music	Oli Ford
Name of Local Music Hub	www.warwickshiremusichub.org

Music is delivered by two music specialists who are highly qualified and experienced teachers. The department is led by Sarah Glover – BA (Hons), QTS, ABRSM (CT), LTCL (F/T) and Emma Rowe – BA (Hons) PGCE (0.6). We also have a department technician – Tom Stokes.
The Music Department has two well-equipped rooms, three practice rooms resourced with piano, guitars, amplifiers and drum kits, an instrument storeroom and music office. Each classroom is equipped with sixteen keyboards, an electric drumkit, 32 ukuleles and a stage piano. Each classroom has a bank of laptops that has Charanga and Bandlab Education available for all students. We have a full classroom set of djembes, acoustic guitars, samba drums, Indian Dhol drums and a variety of pitched and handheld percussion instruments. We have examples of Chinese, Ghanian, folk and European instruments.
We currently have 6 bass guitars, 15 electric guitars, 25 acoustic guitars and a variety of amplifiers. Our practice rooms have 3 acoustic drumkits, 3 electric drumkits, pianos and an electric stage piano.

PART A: CURRICULUM MUSIC

At The Polesworth School, the music curriculum has its foundations based on the National Curriculum with elements from the, incorporating elements from the Model Music Curriculum (March 2021). These elements are integrated into our teaching framework, with adaptations to suit our learners and our specific educational setting.

Our KS3 Music Curriculum has been designed to engage, inspire and challenge students focusing on the National Curriculum threads of composing, performing, listening and appraising and to build upon prior knowledge at KS2. As students join us from a wide catchment area of different primary schools, our aims are to build confidence within the main 4 skills and to introduce the foundations of music theory, playing a variety of instruments and promote engagement and motivation during lesson time in a practical way.

By being creative, experimental and inventive, our students are encouraged to

work individually, in pairs or within a group ensemble to equip themselves with knowledge, understanding and skills within various genres/styles. Students also begin to understand and recognise how music shapes their daily emotions, whether being through diverse cultures, history or daily life.

CURRICULUM OVERVIEW

YEAR 7	
AUTUMN TERM	
Elements of Music Graphic Scores Simple note reading Simple rhythmic work – Bucket drumming Programmatic Music – Danse Macabre	Pictures at an Exhibition Structure in music Variation and theme
SPRING TERM	
British Folk Music – History of Polesworth The Midland and mining songs. Folk revivial	The Beatles – A musical phenomenon, chords, Ukulele and guitar basics
SUMMER TERM	
Yumu and Bandlab Education – DAW Composition unit – Cyclic rhythms, loops	Musical Futures – Instrumental unit Songwriting – 3 chord turn around
YEAR 8	
AUTUMN TERM	
Film Music – The impact of music in cinematography	Reggae Music – Exploring offbeat and syncopation. Mento through to Ska
SPRING TERM	
Chinese Music – Exploring the pentatonic scale. Festivals and traditional instruments	Club Dance Re-mix – DAW EDM development unit
SUMMER TERM	
Riffs and Loops – From 60's to present day	Musical Futures and song writing - Competition

YEAR 9	
AUTUMN TERM	
Jazz and Blues to Rock and Roll – Improvisation, blues scale, walking bass	Horror Music – Impact of music through DAW
SPRING TERM	
Hip Hop, Rap and Grime – Detroit rap style, UK grime scene, back beat	Music Through the Decades – 50's through to 2000's. Historical, social and musical timeline
SUMMER TERM	
Protest Song – Songs for a better world	Independent Pupil Project – Music industry scenarios

YEAR 7 – AQUIRING

The development of singing starts in the first term of Year 7, where students begin by singing as part of an ensemble during class lessons. Students also explore playing various instruments, both solo and as part of an ensemble. We are very aware of the difference in KS2 provision in our feeder schools, so the first term is spent looking at the orchestra, rhythm, basic notation and listening skills (elements). During this term we introduce students to a number of classical composers who predominantly use programmatic music. By the end of the first term, students will have created music in various ways, including a soundscape using graphic scores and simple notation.

In the second term, students are now confident with using the keyboard for both composing and performing. Each unit we cover will have all 3 elements of the National Curriculum - Performing, composing and listening/appraising. Throughout their lessons we reinforce the elements of music through listening tasks and discussions about style and genre. We also introduce students to the social and historical context of the music, so they see the journey from Y7 to Y9 and how they all link together. We move onto folk music, particularly linked to local history and music from Polesworth and it's surrounding villages (mining, railways, canals). In this unit they are taught the basics on guitar and ukulele and have many opportunities to compose and perform folk songs/melodies. This links into the final unit of the spring term with a look at the Beatles and Beatlemania. In this unit we introduce students to Musical Futures and whole class instrumental tuition – chords, structure, bass line, form.
During the Autumn and Spring term, we rotate resources between classes, so students get to experience African drumming. In this short scheme students learn traditional Ghanian songs (link school in Pampawie) and create various cyclic rhythm patterns using the djembe.

By the third term, students further refine their skills by composing and creating music using one of two DAW programs – Bandlab Education or Yumu/Charanga. In this unit we look at a variety of styles (African/Samba/pop/descriptive) and music technology effects (Delay/reverb/echo/compression/distortion). This is a new unit for our students and is developed throughout the 3 years as students get more creative and inventive with their composing and mixing. This links into the option years, where students will be confident and secure in their music making.

During their first year at Polesworth, we create an environment where students grow in confidence and are not afraid of 'failing'. They end the year with a wide experience of different instruments and more diverse understanding of music and different career pathways in the industry (alumni).

YEAR 8 - DEVELOPING

In Year 8, students develop their instrumental and vocal abilities using the method of Musical Futures. They also develop their composing using Bandlab Education and Yumu/Charanga by creating their own pieces rather than just using loops and pre-recorded ideas.

During the first term, they explore the genre of film music and the impact music has on emotions and enhancing characters. Students learn different devices (diegetic/non diegetic, glissando, motif, dissonance, etc…) so they can create their own soundscape for a chosen film. They also look at key practitioners in film music and through listening tasks, they are able to talk confidently about how composers have created their music and why.

The music of reggae is a unit that students are assessed on, so they look at all aspects of the NC (performing, composing and listening/appraising). Students use a variety of instruments including drums, keyboards, guitars (bass and acoustic), and ukuleles. In this unit we also look at singing through sign language (3 Little Birds) as it coincides with deaf awareness week.

In the spring term, students focus on developing their music tech skills by creating and producing their own club dance re-mix. Students are encouraged to create their own EDM inspired melody and using current mixing effects, create a final mix down. Students use MIDI keyboards to record and compose their musical ideas instrumentally and also refining their sequencing techniques.

Part of our cultural program involves Y8 looking at the music of China and the pentatonic scale. They will have looked at pentatonic scales in their folk unit, so we are now developing this through improvisation and also creating an accompaniment. Students will experience the sounds of traditional Chinese instruments and why music is so important in Chinese traditions/festivals. We also look at shadow puppetry and create our own themes/motifs for a chosen Chinese legend or fable.

The summer term is focused on popular music – songwriting and developing instrumental skills further through whole class instrumental tuition (Musical Futures). We also look at the form of hooks and riffs and variation in popular music.

YEAR 9 - REFINING

In Year 9, Students are refining the different skills taught since Year 7. Students are now confident in using a variety of DAW sequencing programs and have all experienced a number of instruments within the classroom from different cultures and styles.

In September, students start to look at Blues/Jazz and the concept of improvisation over a blues scale. They are encouraged to explore using a range of instruments but predominantly it is done using the keyboard. Students are shown the link between Blues and rock and roll when looking at key performers and historical background.
The end of the Autumn term is about developing the film unit from Year 8 by looking at horror music and the power of music in cinematography. Each year we link into the English schemes and pick a text that has also appeared on TV, film or stage (Woman in Black, Macbeth, Dr Jekyll and Mr. Hyde). Students analyse the characters and trailer before creating their own score using their wider knowledge of musical devices and structures.

In the spring term we look through the decades following the theme of 'What would life be like for a teenager in……' In this unit we re-create stylistic pieces in small ensembles or as a whole class. We focus on the development of ensemble playing skills and encouraging active listening and cooperation among students. This unit has lots of listening and discussions about the social and historical context, also looking at the lives and careers of key performers and producers. In this unit we also look at the cultural background and political message of hip hop, grime and rap.

At the start of the summer term, students work on the creative process of songwriting, applying their vocal/instrumental skills within various musical contexts. This provides a platform for students to explore lyrics and the meaning behind the song. We also launch a department competition to end the year where the winning set of lyrics is turned into a complete song and recorded. This year the theme will be protest.

For the remainder of the year, students are offered a variety of tasks attached to real life scenarios. This term gives the students the freedom to choose a pathway that interests them and open possible thoughts about careers in the creative arts. Some of the tasks are linked to:

- Events management
- Video game creator
- Recording technician
- Lyric/song writing
- Create a band
- Mad about musicals
- Festivals and concert management

YEAR 10 & YEAR 11

In Years 10 students will be studying Pearson BTEC Technical Award Level ½ in Music Practice and 11students undertake the WJEC Level 1/2 Technical in Performing Arts, a vocational qualification designed to equip students with practical skills in music performance. Both courses offer students extensive opportunities to develop their abilities both as solo performers and ensemble musicians. Throughout the courses, students explore a diverse range of musical genres and styles, gaining insight into the conventions, as well as the melodic and rhythmic characteristics, inherent to each style.

Additionally, students benefit from dedicated time and structured guidance to enhance their instrumental proficiency on a chosen song, as outlined by the exam board's specific brief. This focused approach allows students to engage in thorough practice and rehearsal, facilitating their musical growth and readiness for assessment.

TIME ALLOCATED

At The Polesworth School we follow a two-week timetable with 60-minute lessons, and so the time allocated for each subject is **per fortnight**.

Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11	Year 12	Year 13
2 X 60 minutes	2 X 60 minutes	2 X 60 minutes	5 X 60 minutes	5 X 60 minutes	10 X 60 minutes	10 X 60 minutes

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS & DISABILITIES

At The Polesworth School, a commitment to inclusion and equality 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, scaffolding to reach these outcomes. Teachers work alongside the school SENCO and inclusion team to ensure that individual needs are understood, and strategies are applied, particularly those with sensory needs.

LINKS TO LOCAL MUSIC HUB

Polesworth School has historical links with the Warwickshire Music Hub. Instrumental lessons were purchased through them, and we also had several regional ensembles based at the school.

Recent communications have seen our students being involved in an area singing workshop led by Warwickshire staff. This is something I am passionate about developing in the far north of Warwickshire as we have higher levels of deprivation. Some of our local areas ranking in the 30% most deprived nationally.

MUSIC QUALIFICATIONS

The Polesworth School offers students the opportunity to pursue the vocational WJEC Performing Arts Level 2 Award during Key Stage 4 or Pearson BTEC Technical Award in Music Practice. We also offer RSL Subsidiary Diploma Level 3 during Key Stage 5.

In addition to this, students across all key stages have the option to undertake graded music examinations with their peripatetic teachers. Currently we offer graded exams in ABRSM, Guildhall and Trinity.

The Arts Award is also offered to students and has been an integral part of our KS4 course. An extracurricular club is available for students and tasks are offered to KS3 in the Summer term as part of a carousel unit. Our Head of Department is also a Warwickshire assessor for the Arts Award.







PART B: CO-CURRICULAR MUSIC

This section addresses the opportunity pupils at The Polesworth School have to sing and play music outside of lesson time. Our students have access to several opportunities to make, create, perform and play music, this is through a variety of ensemble or instrumental groups, as well as co-curricular clubs that allow students to make progress in music beyond the core curriculum.

INSTRUMENTAL & VOCAL GROUPS & CLUBS

The Polesworth School offer a range of instrumental and vocal groups as well as clubs that are offered free of charge which are open to all students across all year groups. Rehearsals and clubs take place in specialist music areas such as the music department, the peripatetic instrumental rooms, or the Drama Studio where appropriate.

Rock Star Academy

Is an invitation only group where instrumentalists come together to develop their ensemble skills. This gifted and talented group of students work collaboratively to produce performances on their chosen discipline. Opportunities to perform throughout the year at school and public events.

Mad about Musicals

This is a group open to all students and staff. The focus is developing vocal skills and ensemble/part singing but mainly making singing accessible and fun! There are opportunities to work alongside the drama and dance department when looking at large ensemble numbers and this group also feeds into our annual production.

School Production Ensemble

We have an annual production that is by audition only. We involve students in all aspects of the technical elements, and we currently have a technical team to design and control the lighting rigs and sound equipment.
Past productions include Little Shop of Horrors, The Addams Family, Grease and Elf the Musical.

School of Rock

Students are given the opportunity to form their own bands with peers, supported by dedicated teacher guidance. Practice room space is made available to facilitate the development of their ensemble, instrumental, and vocal skills. This structured environment encourages students to refine their musical abilities and collaborate effectively, preparing them for performances and further musical pursuits. This group is open to all year groups.

Polesworth Pulse Radio

At Polesworth we have our own dedicated school radio called Polesworth Pulse. Students of all year groups run it. KS4 and 5 are encouraged to take a leadership role and mentor the younger years. Students completing the Duke of Edinburgh award are also offered the radio as one of their skills/leadership.
Podcasts are recorded and uploaded to Mix cloud, and a further community newspaper is currently under development.





PERIPATETIC OFFER

Polesworth School offers 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 in a variety of instruments, fostering a diverse and enriching learning environment on a one-to- one basis.

Instrument Choices

Flute
Clarinet
Saxophone
Piano and keyboard
Drumkit and orchestral percussion
Guitar – Lead/bass/acoustic/ukulele
Vocal tuition

CHARGING AND REMISSIONS INFORMATION

Instrumental lessons are taught by specialist teachers who work on a self-employed basis. All invoices and payments are dealt with directly with the teacher; however, we support by following up on attendance issues and parental enquiries.

Free Lessons: In certain circumstances, such as for students that access free-school meals, or those in care, music tuition is offered free of charge. Parents or carers can apply for this support through the music department.

APPLICATION AND SUPPORT

Parents or carers interested in enrolling their child in peripatetic music lessons should get in touch with the Head of music s.glover@thepolesworthschool.com

Peripatetic lessons at Polesworth School are designed to nurture students' musical talents and foster a lifelong appreciation for music. Through these lessons, students receive high-quality instruction tailored to their individual needs, ensuring that every child has the opportunity to develop their musical abilities to the fullest.

There are further options to take instrumental exams alongside their peripatetic lessons. These carry UCAS points and count towards the Progress 8 results of the school. We currently offer Rock school, Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music, Trinity College London and Arts Award

PART C: MUSICAL EXPERIENCES

This section covers additional musical events and opportunities that we organise, such as concerts, shows, trips and events.

Within the academic year there are several additional musical opportunities that take place.

- Westend trip to see Our Country's Good at the Lyric Theatre, London
- Theatre trip to The Curve, Leicester to see Six, 2.22 and The Wizard of Oz
- Theatre trip to the Birmingham Repertory Theatre to see Blue Beard
- Theatre trip to see Boy with the Pig Heart at the Curve, Leicester
- Theatre Trip to see Frantic Assembly and Complicite
- Wicked Singing Workshop to Warwick University
- Community concerts at Linden Lodge, Warton. Polesworth Abbey, Polesworth. Tamworth Assembly Rooms, Tamworth
- Trips to our feeder schools and workshops with Y5 and 6
- Christmas Pantomime
- Masked Singer at Christmas
- Performance opportunities at our Summer Festival
- School production – Elf the Musical (2025), Matilda (2026) and Mary Poppins (2027)
- Annual Talent Show across all disciplines
- Polesworth Pulse Radio workshops
- Summer Extravaganza (Performing Arts)

PART D: IN THE FUTURE

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We are constantly exploring opportunities for our students to experience and learn about Music.

- More visits and trips to local theatre and music hubs – workshops and festivals
- Expanding our range of extra-curricular activities, expanding our capacity to include more students in creative music making.
- Developing further links with local primary schools is also being explored to have greater continuity in terms of students taking instrumental/voice lessons.
- More links with our community, including local musicians and composers
- Develop our music technology curriculum allowing students to experience other job roles and career paths in the industry
- Developing leadership within each year group to encourage independence and autonomy
- Developing a program celebrating our Alumni – 'Where are they now!'

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Polesworth_creative_arts

Email: s.glover@thepolesworthschool.com