

Music development plan summary: Holy Cross Catholic Primary Academy

Overview

Detail	Information
Academic year that this summary covers	2025-2026
Date this summary was published	November 2025
Date this summary will be reviewed	October 2026
Name of the school music lead	Ms S Dodd
Name of school leadership team member with responsibility for music (if different)	Ms S Dodd (Deputy Headteacher)
Name of local music hub	Essex Music Hub
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.

At Holy Cross Catholic Primary Academy, music plays a central role in our creative curriculum and Catholic mission. We believe that music is a vital part of a well-rounded education, allowing pupils to express themselves, collaborate with others, and connect emotionally and spiritually through sound and song.

We use Sparkyard, an online platform that provides a progressive music curriculum covering Reception to Year 6. Each year group follows a clear sequence of learning that builds on prior knowledge and develops discrete musical skills in listening, appraising, composing, improvising, and performing. Each term is designed around a distinct musical topic or focus, ensuring that pupils can embed core skills and deepen their understanding of rhythm, pitch, dynamics, notation, and musical structure.

Teachers use Sparkyard's comprehensive planning and assessment tools, with progress recorded on Sonar Tracker, to monitor and support accurate formative

assessment. This approach provides a clear picture of each pupil's developing musicianship over time. Lessons are designed to be inclusive and engaging, enabling all children to access, enjoy, and succeed in music through a variety of learning opportunities, instruments, and group activities.

We are proud to have singing at the heart of our school. Singing is woven throughout our curriculum and wider school life, forming an integral part of our Catholic prayer, worship, and liturgy. Pupils regularly sing as part of collective worship, class prayer, and liturgical celebrations, helping them to connect faith and creativity.

Our curriculum also provides opportunities for performance, both within the classroom and through wider school events. Singing assemblies, concerts, and liturgical services give children the chance to perform confidently for an audience, developing both skill and self-belief.

Part B: Co-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.

At Holy Cross Catholic Primary Academy, we are proud to provide a rich and varied programme of specialist teaching and co-curricular opportunities that enhance and deepen pupils' musical learning beyond their weekly classroom lessons.

We are fortunate to work with a specialist music teacher every Wednesday morning, who brings expertise, enthusiasm, and professional musicianship to our school. This teacher works closely with the Deputy Headteacher to ensure that music teaching is appropriately pitched, progressive, and engaging across all year groups. Together, they plan and deliver sessions that focus on developing vocal technique, accurate pitch, diction, rhythm, and expression, helping pupils to grow in confidence as singers and performers.

Our strong partnership with the Essex Music Service further enriches our provision. Pupils in Years 4, 5, and 6 receive whole-class instrumental tuition that introduces them to a variety of instruments and musical skills. Last year, pupils learned to play the Toot, developing their understanding of pitch, breath control, and ensemble playing. This year, they are building on that foundation by learning to play the glockenspiel, which allows them to extend their knowledge of melody, notation, and rhythm. These sessions not only strengthen technical and performance abilities but also give children the opportunity to experience the joy of making music together as part of a group. At the end of each teaching block, pupils are invited to showcase their new skills in a small performance, sharing their learning with peers, parents, and staff, and celebrating musical achievement and effort.

A visiting music specialist also works with one phase per term, delivering high-quality sessions that focus on singing, rhythm, and musical progression. Class teachers are encouraged to remain in lessons, observing and actively participating to strengthen their own understanding of music pedagogy. This model of embedded CPD allows teachers to develop confidence in leading singing, managing rhythm work, and delivering Sparkyard lessons independently. The flexible and collaborative approach between class teachers and the visiting specialist ensures that pupils across all year groups benefit from expert guidance, creating a broad, balanced, and inspiring music curriculum.

We also have a thriving school choir, which meets every Tuesday after school and is run by members of our wider staff team. The choir provides pupils with an exciting opportunity to develop their vocal skills, perform as part of an ensemble, and experience the joy of communal singing. Each year, the choir performs a summer concert for parents and represents the school at Voice in a Million during the spring term — an unforgettable experience where pupils join thousands of others to form a large-scale choir at a major venue. Participation in the choir is open to all, and disadvantaged pupils are supported to attend so that financial circumstances are never a barrier to accessing musical enrichment opportunities.

Importantly, having access to specialist music teaching and co-curricular provision helps to close the gaps that some disadvantaged pupils may face, ensuring equal opportunities for all children to develop musical skills, creativity, and confidence. The inclusive and practical nature of music allows every pupil, regardless of background or ability, to participate fully, achieve success, and experience the collective joy of performance.

Through these combined efforts—expert teaching, structured progression, inclusive opportunities, and strong partnerships—Holy Cross Catholic Primary Academy ensures that every child has access to a high-quality, engaging, and inspiring music education that nurtures both skill and joy in musical expression.

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.

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In the future

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

1. Strengthen Assessment and Moderation

This year, we are embedding the use of Sonar Tracker to record and monitor pupil progress in music. Staff will receive support to ensure consistent and accurate use of the system, with opportunities for termly moderation to agree standards and track progression across year groups. This will help to identify next steps in learning and ensure that all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, make strong progress in developing their musical skills.

2. Deepen Staff Confidence and Broaden Participation

We will continue to build staff confidence through in-class CPD led by visiting specialists, ensuring all teachers feel equipped to deliver high-quality music lessons using Sparkyard. Alongside this, we aim to broaden pupil participation in music through choir, instrumental tuition, and performance opportunities, ensuring that finance is never a barrier to involvement.

Genres/ Performance 26-27

Further information (optional)

- At Holy Cross Catholic Primary Academy, we are proud to work closely with both the Essex Music Service (EMS) and Sparkyard to enhance the quality, reach, and impact of our music provision. These partnerships enable us to provide an ambitious, inclusive, and faith-filled music curriculum for all pupils.
- Through our partnership with the Essex Music Service, we:
- Access whole-class instrumental tuition for pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6, delivered by EMS specialists.
- Receive ongoing CPD and advisory support for staff to ensure that our teaching remains progressive and aligned with the National Plan for Music Education.

- Benefit from access to local ensembles, workshops, and events, giving pupils opportunities to perform beyond school.
- Work closely with EMS to ensure financial barriers do not prevent participation, with subsidised or free tuition available for disadvantaged pupils.
- Promote the Essex Music Service “Music for All” initiative, which supports young musicians across the county in accessing instrumental tuition and performance opportunities.
- We are also proud to be part of the Sparkyard Singing School network — a national initiative celebrating schools that prioritise singing as a core part of daily life. Through this, we have access to a wealth of high-quality repertoire, vocal warm-ups, and CPD materials that support both teachers and pupils in developing confident, expressive singing throughout the school day and within collective worship.
- [Sparkyard Singing School](#)
- [Essex Music Education Hub](#)
- The Department for Education also publishes a helpful guide for parents and young people on how to get involved in music both in and out of school: [The Power of Music to Change Lives – A National Plan for Music Education \(DfE\)](#)