

Music development plan summary 2026-2027:



Arboretum Primary School

Overview

Detail	Information
Academic year that this summary covers	2025-2026
Date this summary was published	October 2026
Date this summary will be reviewed	October 2027
Name of the school music lead	Tara Wright
Name of school leadership team member with responsibility for music (if different)	Tara Wright, Sarah Ferguson, Helen Phillips (Head teacher)
Name of local music hub	Collins Hub - Music Express Rocksteady
Name of other music education organisation(s) (if partnership in place)	Young Voices Out Of The Ark Music Company

At Arboretum Primary School, we believe that music should develop the mind, body and spirit of each child. As a universal language, music embodies one of the highest forms of creativity. It allows children to explore their environment and the wider world to flourish within the ready, respectful and safe ethos.

We aim to develop a love of music and singing, through a wide range of genres, to inspire exploration and composition through voice and instruments. We aim to develop strong listening skills and build the self-confidence of learners. As children collaborate and rehearse for many performance opportunities, it provides them a sense of achievement and allows them to showcase their talent alongside others. Music at Arboretum engages and inspires learners to develop a love of music and their talent as musicians. Lessons enable children to develop their skills, appreciate a wide variety of music and begin to appraise a range of musical genres.

Curriculum music:

Music teaching at Arboretum Primary delivers the requirements of the National Curriculum through use of the Music Express scheme of work. Music Express is a complete and holistic scheme for primary class teachers. It offers a broad, deep, meaningful and practical experience for musically rich teaching and learning, in line with the statutory National Curriculum for KS1 and KS2, alongside suggested adaptations for children with SEND, to ensure all children can access and are engaged.

Music lessons are broken down into cross-curricular units (for example, exploring the seasons, poetry, languages and celebrations), and an emphasis is placed on musical vocabulary, allowing the children to talk and reflect on pieces of music using the correct terminology. Each unit of work has an ongoing musical learning focus and lessons usually follow a specific learning sequence:

- Listen and Appraise
- Musical Activities (including pulse and rhythm)
- Singing and Voice
- Playing tuned and untuned instruments
- Improvisation / Composition
- Perform and Share

Within the EYFS setting, music is an integral part of children's learning journey. Rhyme and rhythm are utilised throughout the learning of phonics, handwriting and mathematics. Children learn a wide range of songs and nursery rhymes, and develop skills for performing together. Singing and music making opportunities are used frequently to embed learning, develop musical awareness and to demonstrate how music can be used to express feelings.

We measure the impact of our curriculum through the following methods:

- Pupil discussions and interviewing the pupils about their learning (pupil voice).
- Annual reporting and tracking of standards across the curriculum through SONAR.
- Photo and video evidence of the pupils' practical learning/performances.
- Use of the assessment tools provided within the Music Express scheme.
- Dedicated music time with the class teacher.
- Key Stage performances, rocksteady performances and after school clubs.

Co-curricular provision:

During the Autumn and Spring terms, KS2 pupils have the opportunity to join the school choir and participate in the annual Young Voices concert. Through regular rehearsals and performances, pupils develop their vocal and musical skills, confidence, listening and teamwork. They explore a diverse repertoire, singing in unison, harmony and as soloists, while developing a love and appreciation of singing and performance.

In Autumn 2025, KS2 pupils had the opportunity to participate in an after-school hand bell club, while in Autumn 2026, KS1 and KS2 pupils have participated in an after-school dance club. These enrichment opportunities develop pupils' creativity, confidence, communication and performance skills, while encouraging collaboration, self-expression and physical development.

Alongside staff led instrumental teaching within Music Express, a peripatetic music teacher from Rocksteady has provided music lessons (keyboard, drums, electric guitar, vocal and base) to up to 30 KS2 pupils, during the school day. These music lessons take place all year round, with a final performance from each band at the end of each term. All children, staff and parents are invited to watch, to build the music culture within the community and allow the children to show off their talents. Furthermore, this company provides a weekly 30 minute virtual music lesson aimed at R-2, year 3/4 and year 5/6, focusing on a range of skills (such as composition, appraisal and performance.)

Performance is at the heart of musical teaching and learning at Arboretum, and pupils participate in a range of enrichment provision and performances during their school journey. These include an African drumming workshop (KS1), Tudor castle trip/music hall (KS2) and a Leavers performance (Year 6). Moreover, the children are able to see live musicians perform in school by Rocksteady musicians.

Musical experiences:

Our music curriculum is planned to demonstrate progression by building on and embedding previously learned skills. We focus on the progression of knowledge and skills through the different musical components, for example taught vocabulary, appraising, using voice, composition and performance. Through this, the children are able to achieve the knowledge and skills in relation to the subject and effectively communicate and evaluate, to make good or better progress. We measure the impact of our curriculum through the following methods:

- Pupil discussions and interviewing the pupils about their learning (pupil voice).
- Annual reporting and tracking of standards across the curriculum.
- Photo and video evidence of the pupils' practical learning/performances.
- Use of the assessment tools provided within the Music Express scheme.
- Dedicated music time with the class teacher.

The impact of our music curriculum is also measured in the uptake of our Key Stage performances, rocksteady performances and after school Choir club.

Future developments:

Over the next academic year, Arboretum School aims to enhance its music program through a variety of initiatives:

- Continue Rocksteady music school (alongside PP bursary).
- Continue our afterschool club offer.
- Expand extra-curricular opportunities for KS1 and KS2 with a drama afterschool club.
- Increase communications with secondary school music leads.
- Provide more regular opportunities to sing and explore a range of composers through weekly assemblies.
- Develop enriching music experiences for various key stages, including:
 - EYFS – Hosting a musical performer, such as a singer or musician.
 - KS1 – Hosting a musical performer, such as a singer or musician.
 - LKS2 – Organising a trip to Derby Theatre.
 - UKS2 – Organising a trip to Derby Theatre.*Refer to Derbyshire Music hub events to support above.*

Part A: Curriculum music

Music teaching at Arboretum Primary delivers the requirements of the National Curriculum (September 2014) through use of the Music Express scheme of work. The essence of Music Express is to create a topic-based, cross-curricular approach to support children's learning in music. Written by leading experts in primary music education, Music Express has quality and engaging music lessons with careful progression built in, from Early Years to Age 11.

The English National Curriculum states 'That all pupils: perform, listen to, review and evaluate music across a range of historical periods, genres, styles and traditions, including the works of the great composers and musicians. Music Express includes many examples of different styles and genres from different times and places, including the classical Western canon. These are explored through the language of music via active listening, performing and composing activities, which enable understanding of the context and genre. Examples include vocal melodies from Medieval times, Tudor court music, Romantic ballet music, Twentieth century pop, as well as traditional and classical forms from across the globe.

This music scheme provides:

- **A Lesson Bank** – Accessible lessons for every age group, alongside SEND specific topic and/or adaptations. Year plans, unit plans, lesson plans and assessment sheets are also available to support teacher planning. Alongside the National Curriculum, these lessons are informed by the [model music curriculum](#) (March 2021.) [See school website for more details.](#)
- **A Song Bank** - Over 400 songs to learn and perform. On-screen karaoke-style lyrics give you a great way to teach a new song to a whole class, and full audio performances, backing tracks, and teaching tracks for specific sections.
- **Warm Ups** - Vocal warm ups, physical warm ups and focus builders.
- **Skill Builders** - Consolidate skills learned in the lessons or improve areas within Rhythm, Beat and Pitch.

By using Music Express, a steady progression plan has been built into the curriculum, both within each year and from one year to the next, ensuring consistent musical development. Alongside extra-curricular activities and weekly teacher-led assemblies (e.g. Rocksteady virtual lessons), music is taught throughout the year in EYFS and every other week [1hr lesson] during the Autumn, Spring and Summer term for KS1 and 2 (please see the Music Progression overviews below for more information.)

EYFS Music Progression:

EYFS Curriculum – Early Learning Goals (<i>Additional Progression Guidance where appropriate in Italics</i>)	National Curriculum Objectives Year 1	Additional Progression Guidance Year 1 (where appropriate)
<p>Expressive Arts and Design: Being Imaginative and Expressive</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sing a range of well-known nursery rhymes and songs. • Perform songs, rhymes, poems and stories with others, and (when appropriate) try to move in time with music. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use their voices expressively and creatively by singing songs and speaking chants and rhymes. • Play tuned and untuned instruments musically. • Listen with concentration and understanding to a range of high-quality live and recorded music. • Experiment with, create, select and combine sounds using the inter-related dimensions of music. 	<p>Perform:</p> <p>Using their voice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children should use their voice expressively and creatively by singing songs and speaking chants and rhythms • Match notes played on a chime bar to find their singing voice. • Follow the shape of a melody. • Sing songs matching the pitch as they do so. • Recognise phrase lengths and know when to breathe with an attention to posture. • Use movement to show phrases. • Perform each phrase in a different way <p>Instruments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Play tuned and un-tuned instruments musically <p>Compose</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experiment with, create, select and combine sounds using the inter-related dimensions of music. <p>Listen, Developing Knowledge and Understanding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen with concentration and understanding to a range of high quality live and recorded music. • Recall and perform rhythmic patterns • Use instruments to copy back a rhythm • Play a chime bar • Use movement and dance to reinforce the enjoyment of music. • Respond to long and short sounds. • To talk about high middle and low sounds. • Sing back melodic phrases. • Express thoughts and feelings about music.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify a variety of instruments that can be heard and describe sounds. • Identify the pulse in music. • Tap knees in time with steady beat music • Sing back melodic phrases from known sounds. • Listen to different sounds in the environment. • Identify features of music. • Recognise long and short sounds and make longer and shorter sounds with their voices. <p>Improvising and Experimenting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experiment with, create, select and combine sounds using the inter-related dimensions of music. • Explore different sounds using body percussion • Make various sound effects. • Suggest which instruments make which sounds. • Select sounds sources carefully in response to a story suggest what sounds could be added. • Make own short sequence of sounds using symbols as support • Make sounds and recognize how they can communicate ideas. • Create a sound story. • Create rhythmic patterns • Make up simple dance patterns – keeping in time to the pulse and rhythm. • Use voices to provide sound effects. • Create long and short sounds on instruments. • Find and play by ear phrases of well known songs on tuned instruments. • Make up 3 notes independently • Record own tunes <p><i>Children should:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experiment with different timbres • Explore concepts of low/quiet/fast/slow • Explore the effect of silence • Experiment and change sounds • Make flash cards with symbols to help children remember the different sections of composition • Experiment to improve the intended effect • Give the composition a title.
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Year 1 – 6 Music Progression (Music Express):

Cycle A – 2025-26					
	Nursery	Reception	Yr1, Yr2	Yr3, 4	Yr5, 6
Autumn	Sing a range of well-known nursery rhymes and songs; Listen to songs and music and say if I like it. Begin to say why.	Perform songs, rhymes, poems and stories with others, and – when appropriate – try to move in time with music. Listen to music attentively and respond to what they hear with relevant questions, comments Play untuned instruments to make music	Music Express – Autumn 1 – Ourselves Autumn 2 – Our bodies	Music Express – Autumn 1 - Sounds Autumn 2 - Communication	Music Express – Autumn – Our community (Yr5) – Journeys (Yr6)
Spring	Make music using untuned instruments		Music express – Spring 1 - Our School (Yr1)/Our land (Yr2) Spring 2 - Animals	Music Express – Spring 1 - Ancient worlds Spring 2 – Mountains (Yr 3)/Around the world (Yr4)	Music Express – Spring – Life cycles (Yr5) – Growth (Yr6)
Summer			Music express – Summer 1 – Water Summer 2 – Pattern	Music Express – Summer 1 – Time Summer 2 – Human body (Yr3)/Recycling (Yr4)	Music Express Summer – Keeping Healthy (Yr5) – Class Awards (Yr6)
			<i>X3 lessons per unit. Two units per year group each term.</i>	<i>X3 lessons per unit. Two units per year group each term.</i>	<i>X6 lessons per unit. One unit per year group each term.</i>
Cycle B – 2026-27					
	Nursery	Reception	Yr1, Yr2	Yr3, 4	Yr5, 6
Autumn	Sing a range of well-known nursery rhymes and songs; Listen to songs and music and say if I like it. Begin to say why.	Perform songs, rhymes, poems and stories with others, and – when appropriate – try to move in time with music. Listen to music attentively and respond to what they hear with relevant questions, comments Play untuned instruments to make music	Music Express – Autumn 1 – Weather Autumn 2 – Seasons	Music Express – Autumn 1 – Poetry Autumn 2 – Environment	Music Express Autumn – Solar system (Yr5) – Stronger together (Yr6)
Spring	Make music using untuned instruments		Music Express – Spring 1 – Number Spring 2 – Machines (Yr1)/Toys (Yr2)	Music Express – Spring 1 – Singing French (Yr3)/ Singing Spanish (Yr4) Spring 2 – In the past	Music Express Spring – At the movies (Yr5) – World unite (Yr6)
Summer			Music Express – Summer 1 – Story time Summer 2 – Travel	Music Express – Summer 1 – Building Summer 2 – Food and drink	Music Express Summer – Celebration (Yr5) – Moving up (Yr6)
			<i>X3 lessons per unit. Two units per year group each term.</i>	<i>X3 lessons per unit. Two units per year group each term.</i>	<i>X6 lessons per unit. One unit per year group each term.</i>

SEND – see specific topics and adaptations alongside each Music Express lesson - <https://www.collinshub.co.uk/>

SEND and PP considerations:

Music Express is primarily aimed at mainstream settings and promotes inclusive values by including SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) comments ('SEND notes') alongside the activities to offer teachers support. The aim is to give teachers suggestions for diversifying music activities with the purpose of improving inclusivity in the classroom.

The intentions of the SEND notes are to include as wide a range of additional needs as possible. Suggestions are made for how teachers can approach different barriers to learning with an inclusive lens. Focussing on barriers to learning instead of specific needs avoids categorising types of SEND, which can sometimes have preconceptions of what a child can or cannot achieve. Some children with additional needs have multiple learning needs.

All pupils have access to high-quality musical instruments and an inclusive practice to include every child, no matter their need or background. This could mean creating extra roles and music parts at an appropriate level to suit the needs of a child to enable them to join in with the whole class, while still setting high expectations for achievement. Musical experiences for all are also continued through extra-curricular and performance opportunities, for example by providing bursaries.

Partnerships and Qualifications:

Through the Rocksteady Music partnership, children taking part in Rocksteady music lessons can work towards a qualification in their chosen, learned instrument. Parents can opt in to allow their child to be awarded by the Trinity College London (TCL) exam board. As the qualification skills are observed during lesson performances and the end of term performance, by the peripatetic music teacher, this qualification is designed to be more inclusive and accessible for primary school aged children.

Part B: Co-curricular music

At Arboretum Primary, pupils can make progress in music beyond the core curriculum. Throughout the year, there are a range of different opportunities to sing and play music, such as, a school choir, instrument bands, afterschool clubs and performance opportunities.

School Choir:

During the Autumn and Spring term, 30 KS2 pupils have the opportunity to join the school choir and participate in the annual Young Voices concert. The Young Voices choir is extremely popular with KS2 pupils who are enthused by the opportunity to learn and share a wide range of songs with others in school. This opportunity is advertised to all pupils, of which 3 pupils from each class are then chosen. Other pupils who wish to partake in this experience are then on a waiting list for any cancellations.

This trip and activity is funded by the school, to allow pupil premium children to participate in outstanding, extra-curricular activities. It provides them with access to enriching musical opportunities that they may otherwise have limited opportunities to experience. It helps to promote equity of access to cultural and musical experiences, broaden pupils' horizons and ensure that all children have the opportunity to engage with and benefit from high-quality musical enrichment. The school choir takes place on a weekly basis, ran by the music lead, with the average number of pupils being in the range of 20-30. Pupils in the school choir meet after school and focus on singing in unison, developing harmony, solo performances and having fun!

The YV concert takes place during term time, at Birmingham arena, alongside hundreds of other schools. In this, they witness celebrity performers, hear a range of different genres and instruments, and perform their learned songs to a large crowd. Parents are invited to come and watch the concert with the children. The transport for this trip is subsidised by school funding and PP children are offered a free packed lunch to take with them on the trip. The school additionally fund other items to ensure the children have an amazing experience, for example light torches and a school banner to allow parents to find them in the crowd.

Instrument lessons:

During the Spring and Summer term, pupils in KS2 had the opportunity to learn how to play the handbells during an after-school club of around 5-10 pupils, led by a member of staff who plays the instrument in the school library. This was offered to all KS2 pupils free of charge. Instruments were provided by the school.

Alongside staff led instrumental teaching, a peripatetic music teacher from Rocksteady has provided music lessons (keyboard, drums, electric guitar, vocal and bass) to up to 30 KS2 pupils, during the school day. Children are then organised into 'bands' and taught to use the instruments, provided on loan, by the company. This opportunity was offered to

parents to purchase through the company. Additionally, through a monetary donation and matched-funding scheme from Rocksteady, the school has provided another 13 places for pupil premium children to take part. Funding is in place for this to continue into the next academic year 2025-2026. These music lessons take place all year round, with a final performance from each band at the end of each term. All children, staff and parents were invited to these performances, to build the music culture within the community and allow the children to show off their talents. Furthermore, this company provide a weekly 30 minute virtual music lesson aimed at R-2, year 3/4 and year 5/6, focusing on a range of skills (such as composition, appraisal and performance.)

Through the Rocksteady Music partnership, children taking part in Rocksteady music lessons can work towards a qualification in their chosen, learned instrument. Parents can opt in to allow their child to be awarded by the Trinity College London (TCL) exam board. As the qualification skills are observed during lesson performances and the end of term performance, by the peripatetic music teacher, this qualification is designed to be more inclusive and accessible for primary school aged children.

After school provision:

In Autumn 2025, KS2 pupils were given the opportunity to participate in an after-school hand bell club, developing their musical skills, coordination and ability to perform as part of an ensemble. In Autumn 2026, pupils in both KS1 and KS2 will have the opportunity to participate in an after-school dance and/or drama club.

These enrichment opportunities complement the school's wider music curriculum by enabling pupils to develop their creativity, confidence, communication and performance skills. Through participation in music and dance, pupils are encouraged to express themselves, work collaboratively and develop their understanding of performance techniques. Such experiences also support pupils' physical development, self-expression and ability to perform confidently to an audience, while broadening their cultural and creative experiences beyond the classroom.

Part C: Musical experiences

Performance is at the heart of musical teaching and learning at Arboretum, and pupils participate in a range of performances during their school journey.

These include an African drumming workshop (KS1), Tudor castle trip/music hall (KS2) and a Leavers performance (Year 6). Performances are created by staff, bespoke to each year groups learning and talents. These shows provide children opportunities to sing, dance, act, utilise sound effects/instruments and/or create props. Pupils, who are confident, are encouraged to perform in solo performances. All year groups, staff and parents are invited free of charge to watch these performances.

KS2 children in the Young Voices Choir attend the concert at Birmingham arena, alongside hundreds of other schools. In this, they witness celebrity performers, hear a range of different genres and instruments, and perform their learned songs to a large crowd. Parents can attend the concert for a charge set by the Young Voices organisers.

The transport for this trip is subsidised by school funding and PP children are offered a free packed lunch to take with them on the trip. The school additionally funds other items to ensure the children have an amazing experience, for example light torches and a school banner to allow parents to find them in the crowd.

Moreover, the children are able to see live musicians perform in school. For example, a Rocksteady performer shared and advertised the instruments with the children before the Rocksteady lessons took place. At the end of each term, the Rocksteady bands carried out a performance. KS2 classes, staff and parents of those performing were invited to watch the performances free of charge. This helped to build the music culture within the community and allow the children to show off their talents.

Future developments:

Over the next academic year, and the following two years, accounting for the maternity leave of the music lead, Arboretum School aims to enhance its music program through a variety of initiatives:

- Continue Rocksteady music school (alongside PP bursary).
- Continue our afterschool club offer.
- Expand extra-curricular opportunities for KS1 and KS2 with a drama afterschool club.
- Increase communications with secondary school music leads.
- Provide more regular opportunities to sing and explore a range of composers through weekly assemblies.
- Develop enriching music experiences for various key stages, including:
 - EYFS – Hosting a musical performer, such as a singer or musician.
 - KS1 – Hosting a musical performer, such as a singer or musician.
 - LKS2 – Organising a trip to Derby Theatre.
 - UKS2 – Organising a trip to Derby Theatre.*Refer to Derbyshire Music hub events to support above.*

Further information:

Please see below for a range of useful links related to Arboretum Primary's music curriculum and offer to pupils:

Music Express – <https://www.collinshub.co.uk/>

Young Voices – <https://www.youngvoices.co.uk/>

Rocksteady – <https://www.rocksteadymusicschool.com/>

Opportunities for children and parents - <https://www.derbyshiremusic hub.org.uk/>

Arboretum Website: Music - <https://www.arboretum.derby.sch.uk/music/>