Music development plan summary: Easington Academy

Overview

Detail	Information
Academic year that this summary covers	2026-27
Date this summary was published	September 2026
Date this summary will be reviewed	August 2027
Name of the school music lead	Karen Wilkinson
Name of school leadership team member with responsibility for music (if different)	Hannah Whyman
Name of local music hub	Durham Music Service
Name of other music education organisation(s) (if partnership in place)	NELT Schools (Shottton Hall in particular), The Glasshouse Gateshead, Teaching Gadget and Musicfirst.

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.

An ambitious, carefully planned and structured curriculum is the foundation upon which excellent learning and development is built. At Easington Academy we believe our curriculum has the attributes to deliver this.

Music at Easington Academy leads students on a journey of creativity and self-expression through the exploration of core knowledge and skills and students receive 2 hours of Music per fortnight.

Students are encouraged to develop their skills through the use of both traditional and non-traditional instruments as well as the use of music technology to both perform and compose their musical ideas. Musical notation is discovered in its many forms and is applied to the abundance of practical opportunities that the music curriculum demands.
Students enjoy music because it is varied, fast-paced and fun. Every student is inspired to believe in their potential and to aim high. Throughout their musical career, students develop the ability to perform with accuracy, fluency and expression. They compose music for a range of

contexts, purposes and audiences and appraise familiar and unfamiliar pieces of music evaluating their impact, musical quality and purpose.
Across the key stages students explore and manipulate the use of musical elements to produce desired outcomes, perform from a range of notation developing both solo and ensemble performing skills and appraise a diverse range of music of increasing complexity.
Music is a valuable subject for all to study whether you are a gifted musician or have never engaged in music outside of school.

Students are always encouraged to read musical notation with differentiated tasks and levels suited to their prior learning and pace of development. Students are given the opportunity to improvise (and therefore compose) in the practical performance setting in topics such as the Blues. Compositionally, students write their own music for Horror scenes, Film Music and Game Music (as well as improvise). Music is for all and SEND students are supported to access music making according to their specific need with scaffolding support or physical adaptations.

KS4 offers GCSE with Eduqas and follows the three key areas, performance, composition and appraising, engaging the students in a high level of challenge. The Music GCSE covers a vast amount of music from 1650 to the present and demands high levels of technical skill vocally or instrumentally as well as the application of a deep knowledge in composition. These areas have been developed throughout KS3 in preparation for KS4 and this in turn (with transition work) prepares students for the challenges of KS5, A Level Music (also with Eduqas). These courses are key to students who wish to develop their musical skills further at university or in Further Education.

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.

Easington Academy is pleased to be able to offer the opportunity to register for instrumental and or singing lessons 2026-27 through Durham Music Service or our in-house singing teacher.

The ability to play an instrument is something that will stay with a child for the rest of their lives. Playing and singing will not only increase their understanding and enjoyment of music, but it can also: help social skills, build teamwork, increase self-confidence, give opportunities to perform, be a fulfilling hobby that can open up new opportunities and Give children a head start in music lessons. From primary school to GCSE, AS and A-level, research has shown that children who play an instrument also perform better in other subjects.

Lessons are available from six highly trained, professional performing, teaching musicians, in the disciplines of Vocal, Guitar, Drumkit, Woodwind, Brass and Strings.

Students are encouraged to sit external music exams with the main exam boards ABRSM, Trinity, RSL and LCM.

The school offers an extensive extra-curricular timetable in Music consisting of Wind Band, Choir, Rock Band String Group and our annual school musical which in 2026 is “Legally

Blonde". We have over 50 students participating in our show ranging from different year groups.

There are opportunities for each ensemble to perform in our concerts each year, one of which is a Trust-wide concert at The Glasshouse in Gateshead. Our students also perform in assemblies and local venues such as Beamish Museum.

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.

Easington Academy is proud to deliver high-quality musical experiences for our students.

Ensembles and soloists regularly perform in school assemblies, awards ceremonies, Christmas lunches, and other celebratory events throughout the year.

We hold our annual "Musician of the Year" competition in March where students from any year can apply. We cater to all types of disciplines and offer the following categories: Musician of the Year, Vocalist of the Year and Theatrical Performer of the Year. The final is held in our school auditorium, and we invite parents of those students and our staff. We also invite guest judges from the local area and most recently our guest judge was Elliott Smith, Head of Music at King James I Academy and founder of "Teaching Gadget".

Our concerts throughout the year offer a platform for all students within an ensemble and for soloists to perform to a large, supportive audience. Our school musical runs for three nights and we also perform to our local Primary schools.

Out with the school setting, our ensembles and soloists are engaged in our local community, performing in the community at Christmas and attending our feeder Primary schools to perform at their summer events. We also ask them to perform at the Academy at our annual "Primary Playday".

Some students perform in choirs and bands outside of school for example we have several students who now play with the local championship band Easington Colliery. Other students perform with Horden Brass and perform through the local cadet's programme. Many of our students also go on to study A Level Music at Durham Sixth Form or Performing Arts at local colleges. We have also had students leave us to join the forces band service.

We regularly take students to concerts in the local area and our recent trip to the theatre was to see the musical "Hamilton" at the Sunderland Empire.

We are taking students from our Choir String Group and Wind Band on a concert tour in July 2026 with our partner school The Academy at Shotton Hall. Students will perform in Germany for 5 days and get the opportunity to experience local culture and tradition. Our 2025 tour to Belgium was also a great success.

In the future

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

Easington Academy plans to maintain the commitment to give all students access to high-quality music making through timetable curriculum music lessons of two hours per fortnight.

We will continue to offer high-quality music lessons via our Instrumental & Vocal Programme as well as pursuing the continued development of our extracurricular groups.

We will continue to reflect on examination outcomes, reviewing practice to deliver the best outcomes for our students.

We plan to extend our relationship with partners including the hub and local organisations to further support musical experiences across the entire school.

Further information (optional)

Here are links to our musical partners.

Durham Music