

The Music Curriculum

South Axholme Academy delivers music as part of its curriculum throughout Key stages 3 and 4. For the last four years, music at the school has grown exponentially and there are many plans to develop the subject further.

Music is taught on rotation with other creative subjects. This means that students study music for one term in each academic year and lessons last for 50 minutes. School management is aware that this does not align with the guidance in the Model Music Curriculum published by the DfE, however the current approach is necessary due to a number of factors, including teaching capacity. The Performing Arts department has one specialist music teacher who teaches all lessons, therefore preserving lesson quality and depth of content.

The content covered across years 7, 8 and 9 has been carefully selected to cover all aspects of the National Curriculum and to lay foundations for our chosen GCSE specification: Eduqas. Each unit lasts for a half term and designed to create opportunities to explore different types of music, learn to perform on multiple instruments and experience group composition. The elements of music are vital and explored in every unit throughout KS3 to allow students to become really confident with the terminology and gain musical analysis skills. All students have the opportunity to explore voice, percussion, djembes, ukuleles and keyboards during Key Stage 3. Home learning in Key Stage 3 is based on knowledge retrieval, using online quiz platforms. Optional practical home learning is set but not all students have the facilities at home to be able to access this.

Each year, South Axholme Academy bids for additional funding through UKUMSF - a charity supporting music education in the UK. Historically we have been successful in this bid and any monies awarded to the school in this way are used to provide instrumental lessons for students who are disadvantaged and unable to financially access 1:1 tuition.

Year 7:

Introductory unit: The Elements of Music

In this first project, we pick up where the KS2 National Curriculum for music leaves off with exploring the interrelated dimensions of music, with a focus on pulse, rhythm, tempo, structure and dynamics whilst also touching on pitch, melody, harmony and texture. Students explore using voice, body percussion and boomwhackers, and we introduce the basics of rhythmic notation. Student learn a formula for recognising and decoding basic durations, and students explore these skills by composing ostinatos independently and in groups. Assessment is formed from a combination of both performance and composition activities.

Sea Shanties

This project is an exploration into folk music, with a focus on shanties from the British Isles and around the world, wherein students are introduced to the keyboard whilst also learning contextual and historical information on the style. Traditional notation is introduced alongside further exploration of rhythm, pitch, metre, melody and harmony. Students learn to sing two sea shanties and then transfer the internalised melodies on to keyboard with a focus on developing right hand playing. Assessment in this project is based on performance.

Year 8:

Ukuleles

An introduction to the world of popular music alongside whole class instrumental tuition on the ukulele. Students all learn to fingerpick and strum as well as the basic chords of C, G, Am and F before progressing on to more complex chords. Students learn to play in time as a large ensemble and follow play-along videos with the teacher in the role of conductor. Students are taught to read ukulele chord symbols and tablature, introducing them to another form of notation. Once students are confident with basic playing techniques they progress to working in groups to create their own chord progressions within a given song structure. Assessment in this project is both performance and composition based.

Piano and the Western Classical Tradition

An introduction to piano music from the Western Classical Tradition. Students build upon their keyboard skills gained in Year 7 to begin to play melodies that are more complex and explore two-handed playing. Students can choose the pieces they play and have multiple access points to the learning depending on their current skill level. Students have the opportunity to play on both electronic keyboards and upright pianos. There is a focus on developing notation reading skills and recognising musical symbols. Students begin to explore tonality, harmony and melodic analysis in this project, learning to identify conjunct and disjunct movement within well-known pieces. There is a discussion of programme music and debate around how music can tell a story through manipulation of the elements. Assessment in this project is based on performance.

Year 9:

West African Drumming

A continuation of rhythmic skill acquisition, this unit begins with whole class djembe tuition followed by large ensemble performance and composition workshops alongside the acquisition of key cultural and contextual knowledge. Students then split into smaller groups to compose their own pieces using what they have learned. All students explore creating ostinatos, polyrhythms, canon and call and response patterns in their pieces, and students are challenged to add changes to tempo, texture and dynamics to their work. Assessment in this project is both performance and composition based.

Film Music

An introduction to the key features of film music, this unit begins with listening and analysis, and progresses on to keyboard performance. Students can choose a variety of different themes from well-known films to learn to play in order to improve their keyboard skills. The themes are differentiated to allow for multiple access points to the learning and students have autonomy as to what they play. Students choose whether they play right hand only or two hands together. Listening takes place through group analysis of film clips and new terminology specific to film music is introduced. Assessment in this project is performance based.

Key Stage 4:

South Axholme Academy offers Eduqas GCSE Music as an option for all students who wish to continue their music education. The Key Stage 3 curriculum feeds directly into the areas of study for this specification with all units linking directly to a different topic:

Area of Study	Linked KS3 Unit
Area of Study 1: The Western Classical Tradition	Year 7: The Elements of Music Year 8: Piano and the Western Classical Tradition
Area of Study 2: Music for Ensemble	Year 7: Sea Shanties Year 8: Ukuleles Year 9: West African Drumming

Area of Study 3: Film Music	Year 9: Film Music
Area of Study 4: Popular Music	Year 8: Ukuleles

Students continue to develop as performers and composers when completing the coursework aspects of the GCSE. Our team of peripatetic staff work with our GCSE students to support their performances and most students manage the expected standard of grade 3 or above for their solo and ensemble performances. Musical analysis features in all lessons and music theory is covered in great depth in the first term of Year 10 to ensure students can progress on to composition.

Performance:

All students complete solo and ensemble performances during Year 11 after completing two mocks in Year 10. Students also have the opportunity to perform solo in the annual concerts.

Composition:

Students complete two compositions across the course, and have a choice of using Flat.io or Soundtrap to complete their work.

GCSE Recruitment:

Music is always represented at the GCSE options evening and the variety of extra-curricular opportunities help to encourage students to opt for the subject. Students who opt for music are carefully considered to ensure that the subject is viable for them and most students who opt play an instrument before Year 10.

Music and SEND:

All students with SEND in South Axholme Academy participate in music education. Staggered differentiation of practical activities allows for multiple access points so students of all abilities can experience an appropriate level of challenge in music lessons. The teacher and/or TA will direct students with SEND to the most suitable task. We have a large number of students with SEND attending 1:1 peripatetic music lessons and ensembles, with a small number opting for GCSE music.

Extra-curricular Music

Peripatetic Music Lessons

Students can opt to take 1:1 music tuition with one of our specialist visiting teachers if they want to further their musical abilities. The instruments currently on offer to students are:

- Guitar
- Piano
- Woodwind
- Brass
- Strings
- Drums
- Vocals

Our tutors are self-employed and set their own rates of lessons, meaning students pay for lessons privately and there are currently no subsidies in place (with the exception of UKUMSF funding – see introductory section).

Choirs and Ensembles

South Axholme Academy offers a variety of extra-curricular opportunities for musicians of all levels:

- Choir (non-auditioned and open to all)
- Wind Band (open to students who have lessons in/out of school)
- Rock Band (open to students who have lessons in/out of school)
- Ukulele Club (non-auditioned and open to all)
- Production Club (auditioned but open to all)
- Open Rehearsal (open to students who book time in the practise rooms)

As capacity within the department increases, there are plans to form further opportunities:

- Music Theory and Composition club – to support students in KS3 in further developing their skills and knowledge in preparation for GCSE
- Keyboard club – a space for students to practise their keyboard skills in between lessons.

Musical Events and Opportunities

There are multiple opportunities for performance throughout the school year at South Axholme Academy, including:

- Christmas Concert (annually in December)
- Carol Concert (annually in December)
- School Production (annually in the Spring term)
- Summer Showcase (annually in the Summer term)

Our in-school concerts are ticketed events, the proceeds of which go towards buying new resources for our ensembles. We charge £4 for adult tickets and £2.50 for child/student tickets. Performers include students of all abilities and across all year groups and non-performing students often attend to support their peers. At the Christmas Concert, we award three trophies to students who have demonstrated exceptional progress, dedication and resilience in music.

In addition to the above, the school choir regularly visit a Dementia support choir within the local community.

The Performing Arts department run multiple trips to theatre shows each year, including a residential trip to London to watch performances in the West End.

Future plans for Music at South Axholme Academy:

- Expanding the extra-curricular music provision to include keyboard club (open to all) an auditioned choir to challenge our more confident singers and a music theory/composition club for students who are unable to access GCSE music.
- Finding ways to explore music technology and increasing resources within the department.
- Creating more opportunities for our ensembles to perform in the community.
- Eventually increasing the KS3/KS4 provision as numbers for GCSE increase.
- Finding more opportunities for students to experience live music.