Music development plan summary: Altwood

Overview

Detail	Information
Academic year that this summary covers	2026-2027
Date this summary was published	
Date this summary will be reviewed	July 2027
Name of the school music lead	Ms. A Rankine
Name of school leadership team member with responsibility for music (if different)	Mr. A. Lawson
Name of local music hub	Berkshire Maestros Musicly
Name of other music education organisation(s) (if partnership in place)	

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.

Every student in Key Stage 3 at Altwood schools receives music lessons. Year 7s receive lessons once a fortnight and Year 8's and 9's twice a fortnight. Altwood's Key Stage 3 music curriculum has been designed with the model music curriculum in mind. Year 7's focus on building basic skills in performing, composing, and listening, by focusing on skills such as notation, rhythm, and elements of music. Students have the opportunity in year 8 to study a variety of genres such as film music, world music, and

Altwood
Church of England School

Music development plan summary: Altwood

rap music. Finally, year 9 students learn to develop their skills through ensemble work such as song work, music technology, covering song covers. Each lesson has an element of listening, performing, and composing.

The music department is located on the ground floor has with large 3 practice rooms and a large music room filled with keyboards for every student. Practice rooms are used to during ensemble exercises so students have the freedom to create and perform. A baseline test is done at the beginning of Year 7 and students fill out a survey, so music teachers have a clear of idea of what students likes and interests are, their ability in music, and if they receive any additional music lessons outside of class time. Therefore, classes are adapted to every student needs and abilities with a Thinking Harder activity so students can extend their knowledge in activities and have an additional challenge.

Students have the opportunity to learn instruments such as keyboard, vocals, ukulele, and percussion in a whole group setting, this is done in class. Students also have the opportunity to take additional one on one lessons with our local music hub Berkshire Maestros where we currently offer piano, clarinet, flute and Saxophone lessons. Or take lessons with our more pop focused hub, Musicly. This company will help students to learn bass guitar, vocal lessons, piano, and guitar. Pupil premium students have the option to take these lessons and are supported by our school. After Key Stage 3, students have the option to take GCSE music at Key Stage 4. GCSE Music uptake at Altwood (17%) is 10 percentage points higher than the national average.

Key Stage 4 Music is delivered over six lessons per fortnight and follows the Eduqas GCSE specification. In Year 10, the curriculum is carefully structured to support progression, with an initial focus on building core musical vocabulary and understanding during the first term before moving into the study of the set Areas of Study. Practical and compositional skills are developed alongside this, with students completing practical performance work once a fortnight and composition activities once a fortnight. This balance ensures that students build confidence in performing while also developing their creativity and understanding of musical structure in preparation for the course requirements.

Music development plan summary: Altwood

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.

Currently Berkshire Maestros and Musicly offer 1:1 lessons at Altwood in clarinet, saxophone, guitar, bass guitar, vocal and piano. Specialist teachers in these instruments come in to teach these lessons during lesson time. Students can continue these lessons from Primary schools or students from any year group can choose to apply to do these lessons at any time. Lessons are subsided by the school so represent quality teaching at a discounted price to families. Taster sessions take place throughout the year so students can try it out before committing to signing up to these lessons. In our lessons they will have the opportunity to study a variety of genres and take grades in their chosen instrument.

All year groups have the opportunity to join any of our ensemble extracurricular music activities. Altwood currently has a choir where students get to perform a number of genres such as classical, popular music, and jazz. Orchestra is offered to students who want to practice their chosen instrument in an ensemble setting. Currently we have violins, cellos, clarinets, drums, saxophone, piano, and guitar but are always looking to expand on our range of instruments. Our highly popular musical theatre is offered after school on a Wednesday where students get to perform musical theatre pieces through singing, acting, and dancing. Students are encouraged to share ideas and opinions in every music extra-curricular. 6th from students help out in our extra-curricular events which gives them to the opportunity to help run and teach. Each member of our extra-curricular is encouraged to take part in productions throughout the year.

Students have access to rehearse and practice ensemble or solo pieces in our practice rooms or music room at set lunchtimes and before and after school. Here they can rehearse pieces they have been practicing in class, outside of school, or from our extra-curriculars.

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.

Music development plan summary: Altwood

Altwood offers a wide range of musical productions and performance opportunities throughout the academic year. One of the highlight events is the annual Carol Service, which involves over 100 student performers. This event is free to participate in, with voluntary donations collected each year in support of a local charity. Year 7 students rehearse a song as part of their curriculum learning, with the option to perform at the carol service, often accompanied by the school orchestra, who prepare and perform ensemble pieces. Key Stage 5 students also contribute to the carol service, alongside the Musical Theatre group and the school choir, who perform a variety of pieces. In addition, solo performance opportunities are offered to students who demonstrate strong musical ability and wish to further challenge themselves by performing independently.

At the end of the academic year, students take part in a large-scale production. For example, a recent school musical was performed at Norden Farm, and following its success, end-of-year musicals will continue to form a key part of the school's provision. For these performances, ticket charges are applied to cover venue hire and licensing costs.

The school maintains strong links with All Saints Church, reflecting its identity as a Church of England school. The school choir performs at termly Sunday services alongside the All Saints choir. In addition, the school has collaborated with the church to host community events, such as a community fair where students performed and helped raise funds for the Performing Arts department.

Students are also encouraged to engage with the wider community through music. This includes performing at local care homes during the Christmas period, participating in carol singing within the local area, and contributing to annual community lunches.

Within school, students regularly perform in assemblies as part of the choir and orchestra. Music is also integrated into wider school life through events such as fundraising bake sales and inter-house competitions, including Altwood's Got Talent and Sing It to Win It, which promote participation and healthy competition.

All students have the opportunity to take part in or attend musical events and performances, with most activities offered at no cost. Where appropriate, voluntary donations are encouraged to support the continued development of the Performing Arts provision.

In addition to performance opportunities, students benefit from a programme of educational visits. These include trips to local performing arts venues to experience live

Altwood
Church of England School

Music development plan summary: Altwood

choirs, orchestras and theatre productions. Annual theatre visits are offered to Key Stage 4 music students and are also made available to Key Stage 3 students, enriching their understanding of live performance and the wider music industry.

In the future

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

Altwood aims to increase curriculum time for Year 7 music to two lessons per fortnight, in line with the intended curriculum design. We currently have 2 lessons a fortnight for Year 8 and Year 9. We also plan to strengthen the integration of music theory at Key Stage 3 to better prepare students for GCSE study at Key Stage 4. The curriculum will remain under regular review to ensure it is both relevant and appropriately challenging for all learners.

At Key Stage 5, we intend to introduce a Performing Arts BTEC course, providing students with opportunities to further explore both music and drama. Alongside this, we aim to increase engagement from Key Stage 5 students in the wider musical life of the school.

We are also seeking to expand our instrumental provision, particularly in woodwind, and to increase the number of music assemblies to promote instrumental learning and participation across the school.

We will also continue to develop events such as Altwood's Got Talent, providing students with further opportunities to perform in front of parents and the wider school community.

Finally, we aim to establish the school musical as an annual, large-scale production, with students auditioning and rehearsing throughout the academic year, further enhancing performance opportunities and student involvement in the performing arts.

We will continue to support this development through ongoing fundraising activities, enabling us to further invest in resources, opportunities and facilities for music across the school.