

Music Development Plan

Academic year 2026–27

This is a summary of how Dene Magna teaches music, what pupils can do beyond lessons, and what we plan to change over the next two years. It covers the three areas the Department for Education asks schools to describe: curriculum music, co-curricular music and musical experiences. It is written for pupils and for parents and carers, so that you can see what is on offer and who we work with.

Overview

Academic year this summary covers	2026–27
Date published	15 September 2026
Date this summary will be reviewed	July 2027
School music lead	Chris Wynn, Head of Performing Arts (c.wynn@dms.fodt.co.uk)
Leadership team member with responsibility for music	Gemma Meek
Local music hub	GSW Music Hub (Gloucestershire, Swindon and Wiltshire). Lead organisation: Gloucestershire County Council
Other music education organisations we work with	Gloucestershire Music

Music at Dene Magna

The Forest of Dean has Very limited access to professional concert halls and theatres, and the nearest are a drive away. That shapes what this department is for. If a pupil here is going to play in an ensemble, sing in a choir, record in a studio or watch a live band at work, it will mostly happen because school made it happen.

Music at Dene Magna is not reserved for the pupils who are already musical. Every pupil in Years 7 to 9 gets an hour a week of it. The choir has no audition. Anyone who wants to perform at a soirée can. And when cost is the obstacle, we go after the funding rather than letting a pupil quietly drop out.

~90	10	9	~3
pupils in weekly instrumental or singing lessons	pupils with tuition funded by bursary this year	instruments taught, plus singing	school performances across the year

Part A: Curriculum music

What we teach in lesson time, how much time is spent teaching music, and the qualifications pupils can gain.

How much music, and when

Every pupil in Years 7, 8 and 9 has two music lessons a fortnight, an hour each: an hour a week, every week of the school year. That is the benchmark the national plan for music education sets for Key Stage 3, and we meet it for every pupil, not only for those who choose music.

Music and Drama make up the Performing Arts department at Dene Magna, and Year 7 also has a Drama lesson each fortnight. Music is taught in C2, the designated music room.

At Key Stage 4, GCSE Music runs for five lessons a fortnight, two and a half hours a week.

What pupils learn

Our full curriculum plan, including the intent, implementation and impact statement and the year-by-year sequence, is published on the school website. It is informed by the Department for Education's non-statutory guidance for teaching music from Key Stages 1 to 3 and by the Model Music Curriculum.

Pupils perform, compose and listen in every year of Key Stage 3. They work on class sets of keyboards and on a range of orchestral and world instruments, and Year 7 sings as a whole class. The repertoire covers film music, reggae, jazz and musical theatre among others, so that pupils leave Key Stage 3 having played and listened well beyond one tradition.

From time to time our visiting instrumental teachers run whole-class taster sessions in Year 7, so pupils get a proper go on an instrument before deciding whether to take up lessons. We would like this to be a fixture rather than an occasional one, which is covered under 'What we are planning' below.

GCSE Music (OCR specification J536) is offered in Years 10 and 11. Pupils learning with a visiting instrumental teacher can also work towards graded music exams through that teacher.

Pupils with SEND

Music asks pupils to read notation and keep time with other people while coordinating both hands, and they acquire those skills at very different rates. We adjust how a pupil works rather than lowering what we expect of them, and we do not wait for a formal diagnosis before making an adjustment.

- Ensemble parts written at more than one level of difficulty, so every pupil plays in the same piece.
- Keyboards and digital instruments used where an acoustic instrument is not manageable.
- Notation enlarged, colour-coded, or given alongside a recording to learn by ear.
- Extra time for performances and recorded assessments, and adjustments to what a performance has to contain.
- Practice rooms available to pupils who find the main room too loud or too busy.
- Teaching assistants working alongside pupils in music lessons where that is part of a pupil's support.

The music room, the practice rooms and both performance spaces are accessible.

Part B: Co-curricular music

Tuition, choirs and ensembles outside lesson time, and how pupils make progress beyond the classroom.

Instrumental and singing lessons

Close to ninety pupils across Years 7 to 13 currently learn an instrument or voice with a visiting specialist teacher. Lessons are weekly, 25 or 30 minutes long, and taught in school time. Lesson times rotate through the timetable week by week, so that no pupil repeatedly misses the same subject.

We currently offer singing, piano, guitar (acoustic, electric and bass), drums, violin, clarinet, flute, saxophone and bassoon. Nine instruments and voice, taught by working musicians, is a good range for a school of this size in a

rural county. Two of our visiting teachers currently come in for one pupil each, because that pupil wanted to learn that instrument and nobody else in the school was teaching it. If your child wants to learn something not on the list, please ask.

What lessons cost, and the help available

Tuition costs between £160 and £180 a term depending on the instrument, paid directly to the visiting teacher. No pupil should miss out on lessons because of cost, and we put real effort into making sure none does. This year the school has secured £5,280 of external funding for pupils' lessons. There are four routes to help:

- **A GSW Music Hub bursary, administered by Gloucestershire Music.** Worth up to £600 per pupil per year. Ten Dene Magna pupils are funded this way in 2026–27, totalling £5,280.
- **A pupil premium supported place.** The family pays two thirds of the termly fee and the school pays the rest.
- **Full funding for looked-after children** who want to learn.
- **A £50 termly contribution** from the school towards tuition for pupils taking GCSE Music.

Choirs, ensembles and practice

The school choir is open to any pupil in Years 7 to 13. There is no audition and no charge. In some years a jazz band runs alongside it, depending on which instruments the current players are on.

Three sound-proofed practice rooms are available at break and lunch for pupils to rehearse in groups or work on their own. Instruments can be hired through Gloucestershire Music for families who do not have one at home.

Part C: Musical experiences

Concerts, shows and trips — the occasions pupils perform in and the performances they go to see.

Performing

- **The school production.** Disney's Beauty and the Beast JR. runs from Wednesday 9 to Friday 11 December 2026 in the main hall. It is open to every year group, on stage and backstage.
- **Soirées.** Informal concerts through the year, free to come to. Any pupil who wants to perform can, whatever stage they are at: a pupil one term into lessons and a sixth-former who has been playing since primary school will appear on the same programme.
- **The Dene Magna Talent Show.** Held in the spring term, and open to the whole school.

Between them, that gives a school performance in the autumn, the spring and the summer, and a pupil who wanted to could perform in all three.

Watching and recording

We run theatre trips each year for GCSE Music and Drama pupils, and there is a Year 8 trip to a musical during the school's timetable suspension week. Past trips have taken pupils to The Lion King, Wicked and Frozen the Musical. Our aim is that every pupil sees at least one live professional performance during their time here, whether or not they study music.

GCSE Music pupils record their coursework at Berry Hill Studio, using professional facilities.

How the offer measures up

The national plan for music education sets out seven features of high-quality school music provision. This is where Dene Magna stands against each.

Feature	Where we are
An hour of curriculum music a week at Key Stage 3	Met. Two lessons a fortnight in Years 7, 8 and 9.
Lessons across a range of instruments, and voice	Met. Nine instruments and singing.
A school choir or vocal ensemble	Met. Years 7 to 13, no audition, no charge.
A school ensemble, band or group	Met. Jazz band in some years, plus student-led bands.
Space for rehearsal and individual practice	Met. Three practice rooms, open at break and lunch.
A termly school performance	Met. Production, talent show and soirées.
Live performance to enjoy at least once a year	Met. Trips run yearly for GCSE Music, GCSE Drama and A-level Drama pupils, plus others where places allow.

What we are planning

The changes we are working on for the next two years.

1. Making the bursary easier to get. From the 2027 entry onwards the bursary will be explained at the Year 6 transition evening and at the Key Stage 4 options evening. Families will be offered help completing the form and it will be followed up if not returned.
2. Holding on to players through options. Instrumental tuition currently peaks in Year 8, at twenty-seven pupils, and falls to twelve by Year 11, a drop of more than half. Most of that happens when pupils choose their GCSEs: a pupil decides against GCSE Music and gives up their instrument at the same time, as though the two decisions were one. Learning an instrument is worth doing whether or not it is being examined, and we would rather pupils kept playing either way. From 2027 we will raise this with players and their families before options rather than after, so that carrying on with lessons is a decision in its own right, and we will make sure players know that the soirées, the choir and the production stay open to them whether or not they take GCSE Music.
3. Whole-class instrumental teaching in Year 7. Taster sessions with our visiting teachers already happen from time to time and work well. We are looking into how this could be done through a sustained block of whole-class tuition on one instrument for every Year 7 pupil, so that taking up an instrument is a decision made after trying one, not before.
4. A music course after GCSE. Dene Magna does not currently teach music beyond Key Stage 4. We are considering both A-level Music and a Level 3 vocational route. Which of the two, and whether either is viable, depends on a variety of factors, and we will say more once that is settled.
5. A trust-wide plan. As the Forest of Dean Trust grows, we would like to see a shared music development plan across its schools, so that pupils arriving at Dene Magna have had a consistent musical education behind them.

Further information

GSW Music Hub. Our local music hub, covering Gloucestershire, Swindon and Wiltshire and led by Gloucestershire County Council. It publishes a local plan for music education: gloucestershire.gov.uk/gsw-music-hub

Gloucestershire Music. Our partner for bursaries, instrument hire and county ensembles: gloucestershiremusic.co.uk

The Department for Education's guide for parents and young people. How to get involved in music in and out of school: gov.uk/government/publications/music-education-information-for-parents-and-young-people

The National Centre for Arts and Music Education. Operating from September 2026, the Centre holds the funding for the music hub programme and promotes arts and music opportunities for young people nationally.

Questions about anything in this summary are welcome, and so is a pupil who fancies having a go. If your child wants to start an instrument, join the choir, audition for the production or ask about a bursary, email Chris Wynn at c.wynn@dms.fodt.co.uk.