

Music Strategic Plan

Rotherfield Primary School 2025-2026

Data	Detail
School name	Rotherfield Primary School
Number of pupils	326
Number of pupils eligible for pupil premium	67%
Academic years our current plan covers	2025 -27
Date this statement was published	September 25
Date on which it will be reviewed	July 2027
Statement authorised by	Matthew Swain
Music Lead	Matthew Swain
Music Hub	Islington Music hub
Head Teacher	Nia Silverwood
Executive head	Paul Thomas

What does music look like at Rotherfield Primary?

Rotherfield and Newington Green primary schools work together as a federation and employ a full-time music specialist to work across both schools during PPA to ensure all children have access to high quality music lessons and help drive the schools aim of a rich and diverse curriculum.

Matthew, our music specialist, has been working with the federation since 2021. He is a multi-instrumentalist, holds a Bachelor of Music from the New Zealand School of Music and has 25 years' experience in music education, including SLT roles for London music hubs.

What does music look like at Rotherfield Primary?

Most curriculum music lessons are taught in a half termly rotation. This means every term, for one half term, children in nursery and year 1-6 receive music lessons from our music specialist. In the morning, lessons are 1 hour 45 minutes while afternoon lessons are timetabled for an hour. Morning and afternoon lessons are rotated fortnightly, ensuring children receive an even amount of time across the year. Music lessons take place in a dedicated space, where pupils can access a range of instruments and use the space flexibly to enable collaboration and ensemble play. Children in reception receive a 30-minute lesson from our music specialist every week of the school year. Every week, half termly, the music specialist spends an afternoon in nursery teaching music in a blend of free play and short focused carpet sessions.

In addition to curriculum music, the school has a weekly singing assembly for each key stage focusing on warmups and building shared repertoire. This is led by the music specialist and members of the senior leadership team. Half termly, the school has two additional hours with the music specialist. This time is used for whole year group singing, specialist SEND music groups and lunchtime choir.

Half termly, children can also access an after-school music club/choir and a lunchtime school choir.

Outside of our music specialist, Rotherfield has funding for a visiting performance artist from Artis, who work with children one day a week focusing on building children's confidence through performance skills in music, dance and drama.

Rotherfield partners with the Islington music hub to hire a visiting music tutor for small group instrumental lessons and a lunchtime school ensemble. Students are taught in 30 minute slots in groups of 4 during school time (on a rotating timetable) We have 2 piano groups and 2 guitar

groups with a total of 16 children. These children also attend the lunch time ensemble, run by the same tutor, built into the cost of the lessons. Parents pay £79 per term for ten lessons.

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.

Curriculum – At Rotherfield, we use a bespoke music curriculum, which has been further developed by our music specialist with support from an independent curriculum specialist and our local music hub.

Our scheme of work fulfils the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum (2014). The National Curriculum for Music aims to ensure 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
- Learn to sing and to use their voices, to create and compose music on their own and with others, have the opportunity to learn a musical instrument, use technology appropriately and have the opportunity to progress to the next level of musical excellence
- Understand and explore how music is created, produced and communicated, including through the inter-related dimensions: pitch, duration, dynamics, tempo, timbre, texture, structure and appropriate musical notations.

The intention is first and foremost to help children to feel that they are musical, and to develop a life-long love of music. Sequencing and progression are clear, and the curriculum is adapted to ensure every child has access and can enjoy music within our school.

We explore music through the inter-related dimensions of music: performing, listening, composing, the history of music. We focus on developing the skills, knowledge and understanding that children need in order to become confident performers, composers, and listeners. Children will develop the musical skills of singing, playing tuned, un-tuned and digital instruments, improvising and composing music, and listening and responding to music.

Rotherfield's music curriculum has been designed as a spiral curriculum with the following key principles in mind:

- Building shared repertoire; Pupils learn a shared repertoire of songs, first through singing and then revisiting these songs on instruments with increasing difficulty of motor skills.
- Spaced Practice: Pupils return to the same skills and knowledge repeatedly during their time in primary school.
- Increasing depth: Each time a skill or area of knowledge is revisited it, is covered with greater depth.
- Prior knowledge: Upon returning to a skill, prior knowledge is utilised so pupils can build upon previous foundations, rather than starting again.

Our curriculum introduces children to music from all around the world and across generations, thereby helping them to develop an understanding of the history and cultural context of the music that they listen to and teaching them to respect and appreciate the music of all traditions and communities.

Pupils are taught musical notation and how to compose music. Composing and improvising are embedded into every new skill, so children are taught to explore and play as their knowledge increases. Composing or performing using body percussion and vocal sounds is also part of the curriculum, which develops the understanding of musical elements without the added complexity of an instrument. Almost all new skills are taught through voice and body percussion, before instruments.

As children progress through the school, we expect them to maintain their concentration for longer and to listen to more extended pieces of music. Children develop descriptive skills in music lessons when learning about how music can represent feelings and emotions.

We teach them the disciplined skills of recognising pulse and pitch. We often teach these together. We also teach children how to work with others to make music and how individuals combine to make sounds. From nursery to year six, children are taught how to play together as an ensemble. Through singing and clapping/rhythm games, to playing pieces with multi-instruments and parts.

Through music, our curriculum helps children develop transferable skills such as team-working, leadership, creative thinking, problem-solving, decision-making, and presentation and performance skills. These skills are vital to children's development as learners and have a wider application in their general lives outside and beyond school. The school employs a visiting organisation 'Artis' to further help children build confidence and life skills through performing arts.

Implementation – In accordance with the National Curriculum, and using the model music curriculum for reference, we ensure that coverage of knowledge and skills is developed sequentially throughout the school. Music is taught as a discrete lesson once a week for half a term every term, alternating with computing. Morning lessons last one hour and 45 minutes, and afternoon lessons 60 minutes. Morning and afternoon lessons rotate fortnightly to ensure all pupils receive the same amount of time across the school year. In addition to this, children also attend a weekly singing assembly, split into phase and lead by both the music specialist, and deputy head teacher. Class teachers attend and model singing during assembly.

We take a holistic approach to music, in which the individual strands below are woven together to create engaging and enriching learning experiences:

- Performing
- Listening
- Composing
- The history of music
- The inter-related dimensions of music

Each lesson combines these strands designed to capture pupils' imagination and encourage them to explore music enthusiastically.

Our curriculum provides a classroom-based, participatory and inclusive approach to music learning. Throughout the scheme, children are actively involved in using and developing their singing voices, using body percussion and whole-body actions, and learning to handle and play classroom instruments effectively to create and express their own and others' music. Through a range of whole class, group and individual activities, children have opportunities to explore sounds, listen actively, compose and perform.

During music lessons, children are given opportunities to learn music-specific vocabulary in a meaningful context. The elements of music are taught in classroom lessons so that children are able to use the language of music to discuss it, and understand how it is made, played, appreciated and analysed. They will learn to recognise and name the interrelated dimensions of music - pitch, duration, tempo, timbre, structure, texture and dynamics - and use these

expressively in their own improvisations and compositions. The children are given opportunities to apply their skills and given a chance for collaboration through composition.

Lesson Delivery – Within each music session there will be the following elements:

1. A clear Learning Objective with focused Success Criteria (some of which may be one or two of the Unit Success Criteria) which is used by both the teacher and the children to assess the lesson's work;
2. A recap or introduction starter which addresses prior learning or a game. It could also include attention grabbing starters that introduce the children to the theme of the music unit.
3. The children then are exposed to new learning or learning in their sequence and how it fits within our theme of work.
4. The children are then prompted with various assessment questions and questions to get them thinking a little deeper about the skills they have learnt.

Over the course of a term, the lessons taught will include performance, composition, specific listening tasks, and giving and listening to appraisal and constructive criticism. At least part of each music session involves whole class activities with the opportunity for group work.

Our spiral curriculum allows for revisiting and consolidating skills. The lesson plans and resources help children build on prior knowledge alongside introducing new skills and challenge. Children progress in terms of tackling more complex tasks and doing more simpler tasks better, as well as developing understanding and knowledge of the history of music, staff, and other musical notations, as well as the interrelated dimensions of music and more.

Music in EYFS - We teach music in Foundation Stage as an integral part of the topic work covered during the year and as part of the specific area, Expressive Arts: Being Imaginative, identified in the Foundation Stage Framework (2014). We relate the musical aspects of the children's work to the objectives set out in the Early Learning Goals (ELGs). Music contributes to a child's personal and social development.

Music is taught both as carpet sessions, learning chants, nursery rhymes, simple pitch, movement to music and rhythm, as well as free play sessions where children explore music making both outdoors during play with the music specialist, and exploring instruments in free play sessions. Children learn counting songs, songs in Spanish to support specialist Spanish lessons, and songs to support their termly topics. Children prepare and perform a Nativity production to the school community once a year.

Model music curriculum - The DfE's Model Music Curriculum 2021 states that: 'In Years 3 or 4, it is recommended that each class should start a whole-class instrumental programme lasting a minimum of one term. In addition to singing and general music skills from nursery to year six, we exceed this by starting children on untuned and tuned percussion in year 2, melodica in year 3, Ukulele in year 4/5/6, music production in 5/6 and ensemble playing in year 6. Our music specialist delivers these lessons.

Planning - Our medium-term plans show which of the lessons cover each of the national curriculum attainment targets, as well as the strands within it, and which units cover which development matters statements and early learning goals for both prime and specific areas in EYFS. The medium-term plans also detail the progression of skills and knowledge within each year group to ensure that attainment targets are securely met by the end of EYFS, key stage 1 and key stage 2.

Adaptation - We recognise that there are children of widely different musical abilities in all classes, so we provide suitable learning opportunities for all children by matching the challenge of the task to the ability of the child. We achieve this in a variety of ways by:

- Setting open-ended tasks which could have a variety of responses;
- Setting tasks of increasing difficulty (not all children complete all tasks);
- peer to peer learning -Pairing up more able learners to work one to one with others
- Providing resources depending on the ability of the child. This includes adapted instruments and instruments with less complex fine motor skills

- Using classroom assistants to support the work of individuals or groups of children

SEND - We will strive to remove barriers to learning for pupils with SEND. Adopting a positive and proactive approach will ensure that children with SEND are able to express themselves and take an active part in lessons. Explicit instructions and scaffolding will enable all pupils to achieve and succeed in music. Recently the music specialist, bringing prior knowledge and research from London music hubs, has created a SEN/d music orchestra for key children. This happens once a week half termly. Key children attend with their one to ones and adults learn how to better support key children in curriculum music lessons.

Assessment - On-going Assessment for Learning (AfL) practices within class sessions, including the sharing of and reference being made to Learning Objective and Success Criteria and self and peer assessments of understanding, outcomes and progress. Key skills are filmed at the end of each term to ensure teachers can assess the children progress. Children who are showing a greater depth of understanding are also pushed further and signposted to external musical programmes, such as afterschool club, lunchtime choir, and the local music hub.

Assessments are used diagnostically by teachers to evaluate learning and inform teaching and by teachers and senior leaders within the accountability process to evaluate individual and groups of children's standards and achievements and provision and to inform future provision and school development.

At the end of the year, the teacher makes a summary judgement about the musical skills and development of each pupil in relation to the National Curriculum or Foundation Stage Framework which is recorded in the end-of-year report. Formative assessments are recorded on our subject specialist assessment trackers.

Resources – Rotherfield primary has a shared specialist space for music and computing. Children have access to:

- a large selection of accessible untuned hand percussion from around the world. From Brazilian Ganza's, ago go tamborims, pandero and Caixa, to vibraslaps, wave drums, pagngi shakers, clave, triangles, cymbals
- tounge drums
- a large selection of accessible xylophones & glockenspiels including adapted instruments
- keyboards & two pianos
- a class set of Djembes, set of Surdo and two Cajon
- class set of laptops and ipads, quality headphones, and subscriptions to Charanga YUMU
- 6 acoustic guitars, a guitar and amp, and PA speaker all Child sized
- 3 sound systems with microphones for use for performances (one outdoor)
- double class set of ukuleles
- class set of melodicas
- Access to the subject hub
- class set of recorders
- miscellaneous clarinets, violins
- recorders
- drums
- Guitars/ ukulele
- Young Voices resources

Pupils with additional needs can participate and progress well (supported by technology, tools and adapted instruments). Space and resources allow breadth of curriculum for all students, including music technology. The school iPads are installed with applications which enable them to be used as instruments and for composition.

Part B: Extra Curricular Music and Enrichment

Rotherfield offers a one-hour afterschool music club with our music specialist every second half term. The club focuses on singing but caters to the needs of the pupils attending (children can bring in the different instruments they are learning) Rotherfield also offers a lunch time choir every second half term.

Every second term Rotherfield runs a SEN/d orchestra for key children and the adults that work with them. Children learn skills to help them better access curriculum music lessons and adults learn best practice when supporting children in curriculum music lessons. This usually runs for one hour, with a soft start and finish.

A performing arts specialist through Artis come to the school for a whole day once a week and help different year groups gain confidence and life skills through performing arts, which includes music. Children perform in class assemblies throughout the year.

Every week children attend a half hour singing assembly lead by both our music specialist, and the deputy head teacher.

Rotherfield are in the process of employing a tutor through the Islington music hub to come to the school and teach instrumental lessons at the school. The tutor will teach 20min group lessons for 2 hours and take a school lunchtime ensemble.

Aside from singing assemblies, which take place in our school hall with tiered seating, sound system and piano, all our extracurricular music activities take place in our dedicated specialist room.

Part C: Extra Curricular Music and Enrichment

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.

All children at Rotherfield take part in Christmas concerts towards the end of the autumn term. Each year group performs a half hour showcase of their work, and sing festive songs to parents/caregivers, and members of the community. Children perform on drums/melodica, ukulele. Children who have prepared pieces in their music tuition are also invited to perform.

Children in nursery and reception prepare and perform a Christmas nativity play to parents/caregivers and the community. Children are also supported by members of the choir, who role model songs to the younger children.

All children attend weekly singing assembly lead by the music specialist and our deputy head teacher. Children are given the opportunity to prepare and perform pieces to play to their peers at the beginning of assembly and are invited to sing solo. The music specialist also regularly performs to pupils on drums, piano, guitar bass and voice.

Children perform class assemblies, where they prepare a show about a topic, they are learning using spoken word, music dance and drama. In addition to their class teacher who leads, they are assisted by our performing arts teacher from Artis and the music specialist.

Children in year three attend a Christmas pantomime and selected children attended a performance at the Royal Opera House.

Every child in year 5 and 6 is taught beat making using YUMU on charanga. Each child has access to their own Charanga login through the Islington music hub, so they can access music making in the home.

Year 5 pupils were selected for a special music project in summer term 25. Working with the music tutor once a week, children composed a song on voice and ukelele and performed at the Islington music hub's summer event at guildhall. The song has been added to the federation's list of child lead music repertoire and is taught to y1-6 across Rotherfield and Newington green. Plans are in place for a similar project in summer 2026

In 2025, Year 6 performed a version of Matilda to a non-paying audience of staff and children, which included 2 songs from the musical. Class teachers mainly oversee the production and due to the positive impact on confidence and performing skills, this will become a yearly expectation for year 6 pupils at Rotherfield.

Children also perform at other events such as Eid celebrations, the Christmas and summer fairs. Opportunities are used for musical experiences through a range of activities in other subjects to enable children to apply and use Music in real life and academic contexts e.g., History

In the future

The music hub offers a weekly music centre where children attend a choir, instrumental lessons and learn general music skills. If the school commits an adult to walking children down to the centre, and attending, the cost is greatly reduced for parents, and children with pupil premium can attend for free. Working with our partner school Newington green, we will sign post children to the music centre and see if sharing the commitment of a staff member is a possibility.

The music strategy has highlighted a need for children at Rotherfield to experience more music performances to enrich their curriculum. Islington music hub offers access to large scale high-quality music experiences, through Guildhall, Barbican, and other partner organisations. We will work closer with the hub to offer more opportunities for our students to attend performances.

The music hub runs three events during the year. We will aim to take select year groups to at least two of these events.

We will identify and support other musical members of staff to lead groups to mitigate choirs being on termly rotation with Newington green.

Future planning will ensure class assemblies fall on days when the music specialist is in, so assemblies can showcase more of the children's instrumental learning

Rotherfield also aspire to take a group of children to the young voices event at the London 02