

Music development plan summary: The Gilbert School

Overview

Detail	Information
Academic year that this summary covers	2025-26
Date this summary was published	February 2026, updated April
Date this summary will be reviewed	September 2027
Name of the school music lead	Ryan Hanlon
Name of school leadership team member with responsibility for music (if different)	Amanda Bird
Name of local music hub	Essex Music Hub
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.

At the Gilberd School we believe that all students should access a wide range of highquality practical music making, regardless of their experience and based around the Model Music Curriculum. Students develop their skills in the three disciplines of performing, composing, and listening and analysis of a range of historical periods, genres, styles, and traditions. Our aim is to revisit skills that students can build on over time through examination of the key elements of rhythm, melody, metre, texture, harmony, tonality, dynamics, and tempo. During Key Stage 3 students will explore a range of genres in the Western Classical tradition as well as Reggae, Pop Songs, Samba, West African Drumming, Blues and Music for Gaming and Film.

Students will be taught instrumental skills for keyboard, ukulele, and guitar, and perform solo as well as part of a whole-class ensemble. Singing is an integral part of the curriculum and is woven throughout students' musical journey. All students have access to Digital Audio Workstations to develop composition ideas which we revisit throughout the Key Stage.

SEND

Music education has the power to bring people together, to foster creativity and self expression, and to promote understanding and empathy. The music department is an inclusive learning environment for all students. Teaching and learning resources are adapted to make the curriculum accessible to all students enabling them to create, perform and analyse musical ideas. Students with additional needs may have some support from additional staff within the classroom.

Our Partners

We have a strong relationship with Essex Music Hub who provide us with ten specialist instrumental and vocal teachers. This year we are working on an "endangered instruments" project with them to increase uptake of brass tuition as well as providing us with specialist workshops to enhance provision for our aptitude students. We also have links with the Colchester Youth Arts Partnership who run a secondary schools Prom annually, the Colchester Army Band and West Bergholt Wind Band who run an annual workshop, the Local Cultural Education Partnership, and the Roman River Music Festival.

Qualifications

We currently follow the AQA GCSE Music course and enter students for instrumental exams with the Associated Boards of the Royal Schools of Music (ABRSM) and Rockj School.

Lesson Allocation

Students study music for one hour per week at Key Stage 3 and five hours a fortnight at GCSE level.

Music Aptitude Students

Our music aptitude students will be offered additional workshops this year to extend and develop their skills in composition and performing as well as presentations on career pathways in the music industry.

Lead School for Music

As a designated Lead School for Music, the school plays a proactive role in shaping and supporting high-quality music education across the local area. This year, we have strengthened collaborative practice by hosting a networking event for local schools, providing a forum for the sharing of expertise, resources and effective approaches to music teaching and learning. In addition, we have completed a case study examining the impact of enhanced composition teaching within our KS3 curriculum, evidencing improved pupil engagement, creativity and musical understanding. Looking ahead, we plan to extend our outreach through a summer-term instrumental day for primary pupils, offering them the opportunity to rehearse and perform side by side with our orchestra. This initiative is designed to raise aspirations, support progression and strengthen transition into secondary music 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.

Instrumental Tuition

Instrumental tuition is provided by Essex Music Hub, and we are proud of our strong uptake in this area with 250 students currently having a vocal or instrumental lesson.

We offer lessons in violin, viola, cello, flute, oboe, clarinet, saxophone, trumpet, trombone, French horn, euphonium, classical, electric and bass guitar, drums, vocals and piano. Some students may be eligible for subsidised lessons under the Essex Music Hub voucher scheme

[Financial assistance - Essex Music Service.](#)

At the Gilbert School we believe that all students, regardless of prior experience, should be able to access GCSE Music. Consequently, all GCSE Music students are offered a 15 minute one to one lesson funded by the school.

Instrument Loan

We hold some instruments that students may loan free of charge. Students can also hire instruments through Essex Music Hub: [Instrument Hire - Essex Music Education Hub](#)

Practice Spaces

We have a practice room booking system for students to use the available spaces to rehearse by themselves or with others. Students are welcome to book these rooms for private or ensemble practice.

Ensembles

We offer students a wide range of ensembles to participate in. All of these, with the exception of our Advanced Vocal group, are open to all students to attend. Students can choose from Pop Choir, Boys Vocals, Flute Ensemble, Clarinet Ensemble, Guitar Ensemble, Brass Ensemble, Orchestra, String Ensemble and Woodwind Ensemble. We have also begun an Or-KEY-stra this year to encourage more pianists to join an ensemble. These groups perform in our biannual concerts in December and July and also have the opportunity to perform at the Colchester Schools Prom as well as many other events in the locality.

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.

There are plenty of opportunities for students to experience music outside of the classroom at the Gilbert School.

Our two biggest events are our Winter and Summer concerts which involve students from all our ensembles as well as invited soloist performers. These will frequently involve around 150 students. In addition, we hold a Year 11 Recital Evening to allow our senior students the opportunity to perform their exam pieces.

Students also regularly perform in assemblies, and at the annual Colchester Schools Prom at the Charter Hall. We hold workshops with the Colchester Army Band which allows students to rehearse and perform with professional musicians and have also hosted workshops with Britten Sinfonia for our String players across Essex.

We have also extended opportunities for our advanced pianists, running a masterclass with Richard Meyrick (The Pianoman) who is now making this a regular event. Richard offers students the opportunity to win a scholarship to study piano with him.

In our production of Les Miserables this year, we invited some ex-Gilberdians and GCSE students from Year 11 to play in our 14-piece band.

In the future

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

The Music Department intends to continue to review the curriculum and co-curricular opportunities for students and to build on its success in the coming years. We hope to extend the provision offered to our aptitude students to include a termly workshop as well as recital opportunities. We are also looking forward to extending our links with feeder primary schools and offer some workshops in partnership with them (see above for more information on our Instrumental Day).

We would like to enhance links with local further education providers to allow students to gain experience of further study in Music at KS5 and beyond. We are also keen to maintain and extend the breadth of our co-curricular provision.