

Part A: Curriculum music

At Knightsfield, a special school for students with deafness and other learning difficulties, the music curriculum is delivered in Key Stage 3 with one lesson per week. The school follows the curriculum plan from Monk's Walk School, which can be found online. From October to February, the focus is on preparing for the annual Music Awards evening in December, which celebrates the achievements of the previous academic year. This event includes musical interludes between presentations by each class, as well as some solo performances. After Christmas, the focus shifts to the Whole School Theatre production in February.

In Key Stage 4, students have the opportunity to opt for music, which is hosted at the neighbouring school, Monk's Walk. They can choose from a GCSE music course or a more vocational Music Practitioners course. Currently, the school has two Year 10 students taking the Music Practitioners course, and last year's Year 11 students achieved above their targets, earning Level 2 Passes.

Potential next steps:

- Explore opportunities to incorporate more deaf-friendly music-making activities and resources into the curriculum, such as using vibration-based instruments
- Consider developing a more tailored music curriculum that addresses the specific needs and interests of the students at Knightsfield, building on their existing strengths and experiences.

Part B: Co-curricular music

Knightsfield has a strong co-curricular music programme, with the school taking part in the 'Voice in a Million' event at Wembley in 2024. Additionally, the school has a weekly choir club.

Potential next steps:

- Explore the possibility of expanding the co-curricular music offerings, such as introducing instrumental ensembles or music technology clubs, to provide a wider range of musical experiences for the students.
- Investigate opportunities for the school choir to perform at more local events or community gatherings, helping to raise the profile of the school's music programme and celebrate the achievements of the students.
- Consider incorporating more opportunities for student leadership and ownership within the co-curricular music activities, empowering the students to take an active role in the planning and delivery of these experiences.

Part C: Musical experiences

Knightsfield places a strong emphasis on whole-school musical events, which play a significant role in developing the students' deaf identity and building a sense of community. The annual Music Awards evening in December is a prizegiving event that acknowledges the achievements of the previous year, with each class performing a musical piece between presentations and some students showcasing solo performances. Similarly, the Whole School Theatre performance in February features music and dance as integral components.

These events can be particularly impactful for the students, as they provide opportunities for them to showcase their talents and passion, often surprising their parents with their abilities.

Potential next steps:

- Explore ways to further incorporate the students' cultural and linguistic experiences into the musical performances, such as incorporating sign language or deaf-friendly choreography.
- Consider expanding the range of musical genres and styles represented in the school's performances, to ensure that the students have the opportunity to engage with a diverse repertoire and explore different forms of musical expression.

In the Future

Knightsfield is committed to continuing to prioritise the whole-school musical events, which are unique and special to the school community. These events play a crucial role in building the Knightsfield community, as many of the students travel considerable distances to attend the school and have limited opportunities to interact with their parents face-to-face.

Additionally, the school would like to see students take a Level 3 music course at the Post-16 stage, providing them with the opportunity to further develop their musical skills and knowledge.

Potential next steps:

- Consider ways to incorporate more student voice and agency into the planning and delivery of the whole-school musical events, empowering the students to take a more active role in shaping these experiences.
- Investigate opportunities for the school to forge stronger connections with local music hubs, universities, or other organisations that can provide additional support, resources, and expertise to enhance the school's music provision.