



The Purcell School  
*for young musicians*

# EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2013-16

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## Introduction

This plan represents a vision of how we hope education and welfare of pupils at The Purcell School will develop over the next three years. It is the product of a structured consultation process which involved staff, parents, and pupils, as well as drawing on recent ISI inspections. I am grateful to all those who have contributed to it.

During the consultation process, many suggestions were made or concerns raised by individuals. I have attempted to distil these ideas into a coherent whole, as well as adding my own ideas. Inevitably, I have focussed on areas where there is a clear consensus for change – please accept my apologies if your particular concern is not covered in this document.

The plan is by no means exhaustive – there are doubtless other initiatives which will need to be introduced during the lifetime of this document – or definitive, as some ideas put forward here may well prove to be unworkable. No attempt has been made to ‘second guess’ future changes which may be forced upon us by government legislation, especially in the area of the curriculum. However, it should give us an outline of the current situation, an idea of how we would like to progress in each given area, and how we might achieve that.

The school has undergone substantial change over the last five or so years. My aim for the future is evolution rather than revolution. I believe that this is a good school with many strengths, and the recent survey of parents supported that view. However, there are many areas in which we can improve and my aim will be to achieve that improvement without reducing or damaging in any way our existing provision.

This development plan falls into three sections: **Aims, Audit, Action**. Each should be self-explanatory. It is very much a working document and should be read as such.

This Development Plan covers the next three academic years. However, only the **Action** plan for 2013-14 has been finalised; the Action Plans for the future years will follow after we evaluate progress made each year.

D S Thomas  
Headmaster  
August 2013

## 1. AIMS

### Our Mission Statement:

The Purcell School exists to provide young musicians of exceptional promise and talent with the best possible teaching and environment in which to fulfil their potential, irrespective of their background.

We believe it is essential for all our young musicians to:

- Develop an appreciation of personal integrity and a spiritual dimension to life;
- Benefit from stimulating association with similarly gifted children, and opportunities for practising, performing and developing musicianship in a supportive context;
- Grow in self-confidence, accept their responsibility to the world community whatever career they follow, and develop an appreciation of the obligation to reach out and share their talent with others;
- Achieve levels of musical and academic achievement, personal security, adaptability and satisfaction that will sustain them throughout their lives.

### However ...

the aim of this Development Plan can be expressed rather more simply:

**that The Purcell School should be the first choice specialist music school in the UK.**

What do we mean by this? We mean that, in the long term, we would like to see:

- every pupil achieving his/her musical and academic potential.
- every pupil winning a place at her/his first-choice music college or university.
- a wide range of musical opportunities at the highest level.
- a curriculum appropriate to the needs of our students.
- the encouragement of independent learning, original thought, imagination and intellectual curiosity.
- opportunities for all pupils to develop culturally, morally and spiritually.
- all teaching staff enabled to teach to the best of their ability.
- high levels of job satisfaction for all staff.
- opportunities for all staff to acquire further skills and experience.
- excellent resources in all departments.
- the completion of our long-term building plan.
- a continuing programme of refurbishment around the school.
- good manners and behaviour throughout the school.
- a happy, caring, mutually supportive community.
- an appreciation of the school's cultural diversity.
- opportunities for pupils to acquire leadership skills.
- an understanding for all pupils of what it means to be a good citizen.
- more opportunities for parents to be involved in their child's education.
- the school integrated even more into the wider community.
- pupils leaving school well-mannered, articulate, confident, responsive, adaptable and independent.
- continued 'open access' to the school dependent only on ability, not means.

This is, of course, something of a 'wishlist'. Some of these aims are realistic; some are inter-dependent; some will certainly not be completed in the next three years. However, I feel that it is important to produce some picture of our ultimate goal.

## 2. AUDIT & KEY ISSUES

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Summary of present position</b>	<b>Key Issues for development</b>
<b>Teaching &amp; Learning (Music)</b>	All sources suggest that the quality of instrumental music teaching is very high, and has been maintained over the long term. Ensemble music is also strong, and concerts have consistently demonstrated high standards. However, there is further development that can and should take place. Opportunities for music-making for junior pupils are perceived by some parents as restricted, along with insufficient provision for theory teaching. Some students would like harmony to be introduced earlier. The Saturday morning programme needs additional resources. The annual pattern of concerts is due for revision, along with a more structured plan for workshops and masterclasses, and overseas tours should be considered.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Support for performance skills and preparation.<sup>3</sup></li> <li>▪ Performance/ensemble opportunities for younger pupils.<sup>3</sup></li> <li>▪ Theory training and harmony in the curriculum.<sup>3/4</sup></li> <li>▪ Review Saturday morning programme.<sup>2</sup></li> <li>▪ Annual music programme.</li> <li>▪ Overseas performances/tours.</li> </ul>
<b>Teaching &amp; Learning (Academic)</b>	Recent examination results and responses from the parental questionnaire (along with anecdotal evidence from prospective parents) reveal that this is perceived as the school's main weakness. This is partly due to low commitment from some pupils, especially in the Sixth Form, to the academic programme. This should be addressed through more active and frequent monitoring (including systematic work scrutiny), a strengthening of the tutorial system, more consistent assessment against target grades, and a Commendations scheme. An overhaul of the curriculum, especially post-16, is needed in order to ensure that we can offer suitable programmes to all students we accept. PE needs more curriculum time, and IT teaching needs to be introduced. The introduction of a VLE enabling students to study in their own time and to catch up on work missed would enhance provision further.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Introduce lesson registration (SIMS).<sup>2</sup></li> <li>▪ More frequent 'light-touch' assessment (via SIMS).<sup>2/3</sup></li> <li>▪ Stronger tutorial system.<sup>2</sup></li> <li>▪ Systematic work scrutiny.</li> <li>▪ Target grades.<sup>1</sup></li> <li>▪ Commendations scheme.<sup>1</sup></li> <li>▪ Supervised private study and detention for academic misdemeanours.<sup>2</sup></li> <li>▪ Curriculum review.<sup>2/3</sup></li> <li>▪ PE curriculum time.<sup>2/3/4</sup></li> <li>▪ IT teaching.<sup>3/4</sup></li> <li>▪ Virtual Learning Environment.<sup>3</sup></li> <li>▪ Fiction library.<sup>1/4</sup></li> </ul>
<b>Staffing &amp; Staff Development</b>	Training for staff is currently minimal. There has been only one INSET day in the last year, and few staff attend courses or visit other schools. Instrumental staff would benefit from additional training opportunities, particularly in view of recent scrutiny of the specialist music schools in general. A staff appraisal/review system needs to be re-established to provide both accountability and professional development. More graduate assistants or interns might provide a way of increasing our staffing in a cost-efficient way.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Re-establish staff appraisal/review.</li> <li>▪ Provide structured opportunities for in-service training.</li> <li>▪ Graduate assistants/interns.</li> </ul>
<b>Pastoral care &amp; boarding</b>	The recent boarding inspection found no areas of concern regarding pastoral care, and this was supported by the parental responses. However, improvements can be made regarding the tutorial system and weekend activities for boarders. Staffing in boarding houses should be reviewed, to ensure best practice. Little use is made of external speakers on pastoral issues, or of pupils to act as mentors to each other. Bonding and minor bullying issues amongst junior pupils could be improved, as could behaviour amongst some senior boy boarders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Review and strengthen the tutorial system.<sup>2</sup></li> <li>▪ Establish a more structured programme of weekend activities for boarders.<sup>1/2</sup></li> <li>▪ Review staffing of boarding houses.</li> <li>▪ Boarding handbook.<sup>1</sup></li> <li>▪ Peer Mentoring Service.<sup>2</sup></li> <li>▪ External pastoral speakers.</li> <li>▪ 'Bonding' weekend away for Avison.</li> <li>▪ Behaviour Policy and sanctions.</li> </ul>

Key: 1 = Raised at Inspection 2008 or 2012 • 2 = from Staff Working Groups • 3 = from Parental Questionnaire • 4 = from Student Council or other student discussions

/continued

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Summary of present position</b>	<b>Key Issues for development</b>
<b>Pupils' welfare, including Health &amp; Safety</b>	Day House needs to be provided with better facilities (see Premises below). Greater focus is needed on healthy eating habits and on 'fitness for life', including relevance to performing musicians. Our curriculum PE provision currently falls below the recommended minimum. (The appointment last year of a Resident Sports Assistant has already enhanced our provision, but there is more to do.) Some parents would like Alexander Technique and/or posture classes available as part of the curriculum, while others would like to see better psychological support for performance skills.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Day House facilities.</li> <li>▪ Healthy eating.<sup>2/3</sup></li> <li>▪ Fitness and exercise, including curriculum time.<sup>1/2</sup></li> <li>▪ Alexander Technique/posture classes for all students.<sup>3/4</sup></li> <li>▪ Support for performance skills and preparation.<sup>3</sup></li> </ul>
<b>Links with parents &amp; the community</b>	Communication with parents has been the subject of some criticism and, although improvements have been made (notably the weekly bulletin), further work remains. A Parents'/Friends' Association would help this process. Links with the community centre mainly on Outreach, which is effective in certain specific areas, but is felt to need more focus and increased management.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Communication with parents.</li> <li>▪ Parents'/Friends' Association.<sup>3</sup></li> <li>▪ Review focus and management of Outreach.</li> <li>▪ Relationship with local community, especially Herts Music Service.</li> </ul>
<b>Organisation</b>	Internal communication and organisation are old-fashioned, relying on informal systems and a rather 'hit or miss' approach. SIMS should be used to improve internal communication and to streamline systems, in order to save time. Pupils should be engaged more through email.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Better use of SIMS for internal communication.<sup>2</sup></li> <li>▪ Pupil use of school email.<sup>2</sup></li> </ul>
<b>Premises</b>	Recent major building programmes have been completed, resulting in excellent boarding and music provision. However, premises for academic teaching lag behind. The long-term building plan has the provision of new facilities for art and a multi-use sports/drama/music space as the next target, but general repairs and maintenance remain a significant issue due to lack of funds. Other issues are listed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Extension of Medical Centre.<sup>1</sup></li> <li>▪ Facilities for PE teaching.<sup>2</sup></li> <li>▪ Decoration of main school corridors and teaching rooms.</li> <li>▪ CP Hall lighting, stage, seating and acoustics.</li> <li>▪ Provision of more practice rooms.<sup>4</sup></li> <li>▪ Outdoor play area for Avison.<sup>3</sup></li> <li>▪ Relocation of Day House to West Wing.</li> </ul>
<b>Resources &amp; Facilities</b>	Recent changes to the IT infrastructure have resulted in a more robust system which can cope with future initiatives. The proposed introduction of a VLE (see above) may require further investment in hardware, or a leasing/HP scheme for pupils and/or staff to be provided with laptops or tablets. Other possible additions include more interactive whiteboards, more fitness equipment, and an on-site instrument repairer.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Tablets/laptops for staff/pupils.<sup>4</sup></li> <li>▪ Interactive whiteboards.<sup>4</sup></li> <li>▪ Fitness equipment.<sup>3/4</sup></li> <li>▪ Instrument repairs.<sup>4</sup></li> </ul>
<b>Management &amp; leadership</b>	Planned changes to the leadership team is the first stage in a process of distributing leadership more widely amongst staff. The establishment of development teams for each of the major aspects should extend this further. Clearer accountability and effective leadership and management at all levels are needed if the school is to make sustained progress over the years to come.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Establishment of new Development Teams.</li> <li>▪ Review of leadership &amp; management.</li> </ul>

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### 3. ACTION PLAN 2013-14

LT = Leadership Team

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>By</b>
<b>Teaching &amp; Learning (Music)</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Investigate available training for performance skills and preparation, and trial pilot scheme.</li> <li>2. Review annual music programme, including all concerts and performance opportunities.</li> <li>3. Establish annual programme of masterclasses and workshops.</li> <li>4. Review performance/ensemble opportunities for younger pupils.</li> <li>5. Develop Theory training further</li> <li>6. Review Academic Music schemes of work, and consider earlier introduction of traditional harmony.</li> <li>7. Review Saturday morning programme.</li> <li>8. Consider an additional practice supervisor.</li> </ol>	<p>Music Dept</p> <p>Music Dept/Concerts Manager</p> <p>Music Dept/Concerts Manager</p> <p>Music Dept</p> <p>Head of Academic Music Head of Academic Music</p> <p>Music Dept Music Dept</p>
<b>Teaching &amp; Learning (Academic)</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Move to SIMS-based registration, including in all academic lessons.</li> <li>2. Introduce new assessment pattern with more frequent 'light-touch' assessment via SIMS.</li> <li>3. Revise tutorial system to enhance role of Tutor and Houseparents, clarify communication lines, and provide better support network for pupils.</li> <li>4. Introduce systematic work scrutiny.</li> <li>5. Explore better use of target grades.</li> <li>6. Introduce pupil Commendation scheme.</li> <li>7. Introduce supervised private study for Y10-13.</li> <li>8. Establish school detentions.</li> <li>9. Introduce Drama at GCSE and Geography at A-level.</li> <li>10. Increase curriculum time for PE.</li> <li>11. Begin comprehensive curriculum review for 2014-15, including possible introduction of Extended Project Qualification and other options for post-16 study, and introduction of IT into the curriculum.</li> <li>12. Explore possibilities for Virtual Learning Environment.</li> <li>13. Re-establish a Fiction library.</li> </ol>	<p>LT/IT Manager/School Office</p> <p>LT/IT Manager</p> <p>LT/Houseparents/Academic staff</p> <p>LT</p> <p>LT/Academic HoDs</p> <p>LT</p> <p>LT</p> <p>LT</p> <p>LT</p> <p>LT</p> <p>LT</p> <p>LT/IT Manager</p> <p>Librarian</p>
<b>Staffing &amp; Staff Development</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Re-establish staff appraisal/review.</li> <li>2. Provide structured opportunities for in-service training.</li> <li>3. Consider employing more graduate assistants or interns.</li> </ol>	<p>LT</p> <p>LT</p> <p>LT</p>
<b>Pastoral care &amp; boarding</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Revise tutorial system (see above).</li> <li>2. Establish a more structured programme of weekend activities for boarders.</li> <li>3. Review staffing of boarding houses.</li> <li>4. Review Behaviour Policy, including clearer policy of sanctions and their implementation.</li> <li>5. Prepare combined Boarding handbook.</li> <li>6. Investigate establishing a Peer Mentoring Service.</li> <li>7. Consider greater use of external speakers for PSHE.</li> <li>8. Organise a weekend away for Avison.</li> </ol>	<p>LT</p> <p>LT/Houseparents</p> <p>LT/Houseparents</p> <p>LT</p> <p>LT</p> <p>LT/Counsellor</p> <p>LT/PSHE Co-ordinator</p> <p>P Banks</p>

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Notes</b>
<b>Pupils' welfare, including Health &amp; Safety</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Improve Day House facilities (see below).</li> <li>2. Consider strategies to encourage healthy eating.</li> <li>3. Increase curriculum time for PE (see above).</li> <li>4. Increase other opportunities for exercise.</li> <li>5. Investigate Alexander Technique/posture classes for all students.</li> <li>6. Investigate available training for performance skills and preparation, and trial pilot scheme (see above).</li> </ol>	<p>Bursar LT/School Council LT LT Music Dept Music Dept</p>
<b>Links with parents &amp; the community</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Continue to investigate ways to improve communication with parents.</li> <li>2. Launch a Parents' and Friends' Association.</li> <li>3. Review focus and management of Outreach, including better integration into annual music programme.</li> <li>4. Establish stronger relationships with local community, especially Herts Music Service.</li> </ol>	<p>LT LT/Parents LT/Music Dept/Concerts Manager/ LT/A Cox LT/Music Dept</p>
<b>Organisation</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Make use of SIMS for internal communication, including calendar and daily messages.</li> <li>2. Devise system to encourage pupil use of school email.</li> </ol>	<p>LT/IT Manager/School Office LT/IT Manager/School Council</p>
<b>Premises</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Extend Medical Centre (when funds permit).</li> <li>2. Consider ways to improve facilities for PE teaching, or to gain access to external facilities.</li> <li>3. Plan for redevelopment of West Wing (old Gardner), to include relocation of Day House and provision of office space and practice rooms.</li> <li>4. Devise 2/3-year programme to decorate main school corridors and teaching rooms.</li> <li>5. Draw up plans to improve CP Hall lighting, stage, seating and acoustics, and explore funding.</li> <li>6. Provide outdoor play/exercise area for Avison.</li> </ol>	<p>Bursar Bursar Bursar Bursar Bursar/Music Dept Bursar/Parents</p>
<b>Resources &amp; Facilities</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Consider ways to provide additional fitness equipment.</li> <li>2. Consider installing more interactive whiteboards.</li> <li>3. Investigate provision of tablets/laptops for staff/pupils, including leasing/HP schemes.</li> <li>4. Assess feasibility of on-site instrument repairer.</li> </ol>	<p>Bursar LT LT Bursar/Music Dept</p>
<b>Management &amp; leadership</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Establish new Development Teams.</li> <li>2. Review effectiveness of leadership and management across the school.</li> </ol>	<p>LT LT</p>