

# Music development plan summary: Erdington Academy

This policy outlines Erdington Academy's commitment to delivering high-quality, inclusive music education that aligns with national standards. The music curriculum is sequenced from KS3 to KS4, providing a clear pathway to sixth form and career opportunities. Music education is central to the school improvement plan, supported by senior leadership with targeted CPD for music staff.

This summary covers the academic year 2024-25, published on 9th September 2024, and will be reviewed on 9th September 2025.

## Overview

Detail	Information
Academic year that this summary covers	2024-25
Date this summary was published	9th September 2024
Date this summary will be reviewed	9th September 2025
Name of the school music lead	Marcus Wheatley
Name of school leadership team member with responsibility for music (if different)	Marcus Wheatley / Jo Thom
Name of local music hub	Birmingham Music Services (Services For Education)
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.

Erdington Academy's music curriculum is designed to provide broad and balanced exposure to music. Lessons are timetabled for at least one hour each week of the school year for key-stage 3. Students are introduced to foundational skills, including rhythm, notation, and ensemble performance, progressing through to more complex themes such as world music, film music, and cultural diversity. Each stage builds upon essential music literacy, practical skills, and theoretical knowledge, ensuring students' musical understanding deepens progressively.

The Key Stage 3 music curriculum at Erdington Academy aims to:

- Deliver an engaging and meaningful curriculum that nurtures students' creativity.
- Broaden students' cultural awareness, building on their existing cultural experiences.
- Emphasise practical and collaborative music-making in lessons.
- Equip students with the essential musical skills and knowledge to pursue music beyond classroom learning and into the future.
- Foster the use of accurate terminology and vocabulary in students' musical language.

This is achieved through deeper technical, constructive and expressive understanding of music through work at the keyboard, in conjunction with a topic-led curriculum:

<b>Year 7</b>		
<b>Term 1</b> Pulse & Rhythm Latin Music	<b>Term 2</b> Ukulele and chords Music and Art	<b>Term 3</b> Caribbean / Reggae Music from the Far East
<b>Year 8</b>		
<b>Term 1</b> Blues and Jazz Indian Raga	<b>Term 2</b> Film Music Advertising	<b>Term 3</b> Minimalism The Music Industry
<b>Year 9</b>		
<b>Term 1</b> Game Music Christmas and the media	<b>Term 2</b> Dance Music Songwriting	<b>Term 3</b> Musical legends Personal project

**Year 7:**

The Year 7 music curriculum aims to equip students with foundational skills and knowledge, acknowledging that not all students at Erdington Academy have

prior music exposure. The curriculum provides diverse, hands-on music-making experiences to engage students.

The opening topics build a solid base in music vocabulary, singing and rhythmic notation, supporting future learning. Following this, students begin reading music, understanding duration and pitch, and starting to compose with improvisation. Key melodies and singing are introduced as students prepare for the festive season.

In Spring, students learn chords on the ukulele and keyboard, enhancing their grasp of harmonic structure across both instruments. The *Music and Art* unit focuses on chromaticism, deepening their understanding of dissonance.

The remainder of Year 7 applies initial skills across musical genres, concluding with *World Music*, where students explore Brazilian carnival music through practical sessions. This curriculum reflects Birmingham's multicultural environment, drawing connections to world music, rhythm and fusion. Following a whole-cohort CBSO concert, students are taught to recognise orchestral instruments in familiar media like video games and films as well as fusion genres.

### **Year 8:**

The aim of the Year 8 music curriculum is to equip students with skills that enable them to make music independently beyond Key Stage 3. These skills include foundational keyboard techniques, understanding string instruments, reading staff notation, and song-writing and performing from a chord sheet.

The Year 8 curriculum builds on the final Year 7 unit, applying foundational knowledge to various musical contexts and genres. For example, students advance from basic rhythms to exploring triplets, syncopation, and swing rhythms. Similarly, while Year 7 students play a melody or bass line with one hand, Year 8 encourages playing both simultaneously.

The first unit, *The Blues*, explores how the transatlantic slave trade influenced music today. Beginning with African music and progressing through blues to 20th-century popular music, this unit expands students' awareness of musical history beyond Western classical traditions.

The second unit, *Indian Classical Music*, continues these themes by celebrating musical commonalities across cultures. The third unit, *Film Music*, explores how Western classical composers influenced film scores, aligning with the national curriculum. This unit appears later due to its increased complexity.

In Film Music, students enhance performance and composition skills, playing famous leitmotifs and composing for film scenes using music technology. This sequence builds gradually to ensure that new skills build on previous learning.

According to UK Music ([www.ukmusic.org](http://www.ukmusic.org)), in 2022, the UK music industry contributed £6.7 billion to the economy, with £4 billion generated from exports, underscoring its significant role in the nation's economic landscape. The industry employed 210,000 people full-time, with many others engaged in various roles (Music Week). Given its impact, students benefit from learning about career paths within this industry, and the Year 8 curriculum offers this experience in the final unit.

Birmingham's music scene, led by the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra (CBSO) and Royal Birmingham Conservatoire, highlights the importance of students engaging with local musical heritage. Erdington Academy's strong Black history movement further underscores the importance of celebrating this shared cultural legacy through music.

### **Year 9:**

There are two aims of the Year 9 Music curriculum. The first is to provide students with the skills required to independently make music outside of school in the future. The second aim is to give students insight into how the knowledge they have learnt in previous years is being used currently in the music industry. It is hoped that this insight might inspire some students to consider music as a future career or prospect.

As in Year 8, the Year 9 curriculum applies previous knowledge and skills to different musical contexts. For example, in Year 9 students take their knowledge learnt in Year 7 about instruments and sonority and learn about how these are used to create certain effects in video game music. However, the emphasis in Year 9 is on contexts which are forward looking, and students are exposed to through their enculturation.

The first two units, Computer and Video Game Music and Music for Adverts mainly develop students' performance skills, however, there are some composition projects. The purpose of these two units is to highlight the importance that music plays in these sectors and for students to understand how to work with a brief like a professional composer.

This is followed by two units where the emphasis is on composition, Dance Music and Song writing. Students will learn and develop skills used by professional composers now using music technology and traditional compositional processes. From this, students will gain an understanding of how the music they encounter is composed and students will be able to continue their skills outside of school using apps such as Mixcraft if they wish to.

*At the end of Year 9, students explore 'Musical Legends' from past and present, chosen with input from a student voice panel to ensure relevance and engagement. This unit allows students to take ownership of their curriculum and see its connection to their interests. They apply their accumulated KS3 skills and knowledge, reflecting on how legends like Bob Marley, Michael Jackson, Beethoven, and Ed Sheeran used these elements in their music. Students complete GCSE-style projects as preparation for KS4.*

*Units are sequenced to build on skills and knowledge progressively, ensuring each concept is grounded in prior learning, like advancing from basic video game music on the keyboard to more complex compositional tasks.*

### **Year 10:**

The Year 10 curriculum initiates students' transition from classroom music to an introduction to music careers and professional knowledge. This inclusive course enables all students to achieve positive outcomes, with a focus on practical NEA (60%) and a "Listening and Appraising" exam (40%), which supports current students' learning styles. The curriculum engages students in practical and social music-making, balanced with academic study, and builds on skills from Key Stage 3. The OCR GCSE specification is chosen for its balanced inclusion of world, pop, and classical music.

Year 10 covers all specialist GCSE units, starting with a short composition unit based on a brief and using music technology. Students will learn to create music through DAW software, editing to realise their work, and will develop their emerging compositional style. They will also study "The Concerto Through Time" (AOS2), learning key composers, historical periods, and orchestra evolution.

In the second half-term, students focus on Music Ensemble Performance through workshops, exploring skills needed for a performance. They also study 'Rhythms of the World' (AOS3), which aligns with the ensemble focus.

In January, students begin a 'free' composition with teacher guidance, building on genre exposure and techniques like sequence, imitation, and inversion. By the end of this unit, students should have drafts of two compositions. Theory lessons complement this with "Conventions of Pop".

In late spring, focus shifts to individual performance. Students practise with coaching, revisit AOS2 with emphasis on the concerto, and refine exam technique for the end-of-year mock. After Easter, having observed Year 11's exam preparations, Year 10 students aim to complete drafts of their "Free" composition. Theory lessons cover extended response questions in AOS4 "Film Music," developing aural skills and written answer structure.

The year ends with recordings of performances, a valuable step for reflection and progress. A performance workshop day may be scheduled for practice

takes, and students will sit a mock exam on familiar study areas. Ideally, this gets much coursework completed ahead of Year 11.

During KS4, students will have opportunities to visit FE institutions and professional workplaces, connecting GCSE music with real-world industry roles and inspiring consideration of music beyond KS4.

## **Year 11**

By Year 11, students have covered all course areas and are ready for deeper learning. With the OCR briefs released in September, students begin analysing and adapting their prepared ideas to meet the brief's demands, with a greater focus on development. Theory sessions continue with AOS4 "Film Music," exploring composers and techniques. Out-of-school learning encourages performance preparation.

After October half-term, focus shifts to exam preparation, especially on comparison and extended-response questions, culminating in a mock exam. Concerts and performance opportunities, such as the FMAT show, offer confident performers a chance to perform live for assessment.

In early spring, alongside mock exams, students complete any remaining composition coursework, adding details, scores, and recordings. Theory sessions address gaps in knowledge and consolidate understanding.

Later in spring, final performance takes are recorded, with scores submitted. The course reviews AOS2 "The Concerto Through Time" and AOS3 "Rhythms of the World" for a balanced experience of Western classical and world music.

The summer term focuses on the Listening and Appraising exam, reviewing AOS1, AOS2/3, and AOS4 "Film Music" with AOS5 "Conventions of Pop" to integrate connections with previously studied music.

Enrichment opportunities include visits to Birmingham music venues to understand staff roles and responsibilities, helping to build schema for the exam and enhance outcomes.

## **ICT:**

Digital Audio Workstations (DAWs) are introduced selectively in Key Stage 3 projects, such as Film Music and Songwriting, allowing students an early experience in music production. At Key-stage 4, Students have the option to engage with DAWs and score-writing tools as they develop composition skills, supporting their readiness for OCR GCSE Music.

**Time allocated:**

Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11
1 x 60 minutes	1 x 60 minutes	1 x 60 minutes	3x 60 minutes	3x 60 minutes

**Inclusion - Special Educational Needs and Disabilities:**

Erdington Academy employs inclusive practices to ensure full curriculum access for all students, including those with SEND. Lessons are adapted with visual aids, targeted resources, and scaffolding to support accessibility. Teachers follow individual learning plans, adapting activities as necessary to meet each student's needs effectively. Staff participate in regular CPD to maintain expertise in National Curriculum and GCSE standards. Assessments are data-driven to support EAL and SEND students, with targeted interventions to enhance their musical progression.

**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.

During their five years at Erdington Academy, students have the opportunity to engage in a variety of weekly extracurricular activities, including Choir, Bands, and rehearsal time, along with concerts. These activities allow students to build upon the knowledge and skills they gain in the classroom and apply them in a more practical context. Such opportunities are particularly valuable, as many students might not have access to them outside of school due to social and economic circumstances. Additionally, students request extra music lessons provided by our school music subject-specialists, enabling them to deepen their understanding of music and specialise in specific areas beyond the standard curriculum.

Erdington Academy offers a range of co-curricular music opportunities that extend learning beyond the classroom. The music department has two dedicated classrooms with shared space where students can rehearse during breaks and after school. In-house music staff deliver instrumental lessons and run clubs such as Guitar Club, Drumba, and vocal ensembles, providing wider access and personalised support to nurture emerging talents, including those eligible for Pupil Premium (PP). Students are also encouraged to participate in

activities like Choir, Rock Band, and dedicated rehearsal sessions, fostering a sense of community and collaboration. The school places a strong emphasis on community engagement, working with local musicians and the Music Hub to organise events that strengthen civic connections. Performance is a central aspect of the programme, with events like Culturefest, winter and summer concerts, and performances at local venues, all aimed at building students' confidence and cultural engagement.

## **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.

Erdington Academy is committed to providing a wide range of musical experiences that enrich students' cultural capital and civic engagement. Throughout the academic year, students have opportunities to perform at various community venues, helping to raise their aspirations by allowing them to experience iconic settings and consider future careers in music. Enrichment days include visits to further education institutions and professional workplaces, further boosting students' aspirations and cultural awareness. The school-wide Subject Colours rewards system recognises achievements in areas such as civic, moral, performance, and intellectual engagement, encouraging students to get involved. Singing is introduced as a core activity from Year 7 to promote expressive development.

The academy also organises school trips to significant cultural events, such as taking the entire Year 7 to Symphony Hall to see the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra every spring. These trips are crucial in broadening students' appreciation of music and its societal role, building social capital, and fostering aspirations for careers in music. Regular performances, termly concerts, community events, and assemblies featuring live music are all part of the school's commitment to providing diverse musical experiences. These activities not only support students' cultural and social development but also offer them platforms to showcase their talents and engage with the wider community.



## In the future

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

Starting from Year 7, additional vocal training and targeted support for MPA and SEND students reflect our mission to provide an inclusive, high-quality music education. The school is committed to expanding access to a wider range of instruments and integrating technology to prepare students for the modern music industry. Future commitments include a weekly KS3 music lesson-duration of at least one-hour, fostering partnerships to create more live performance opportunities, and embedding digital skills like composition and arrangement into the curriculum, ensuring students are well-equipped for industry practices.

The school also plans to integrate more technology into music education, supporting students' skills in digital composition and arrangement, preparing them for modern music industry practices.

Erdington Academy is focused on strategic improvements such as monitoring and reviewing syllabi at key-stage 4 to meet the demands of our students. A comprehensive CPD plan strengthens staff expertise in KS3 and GCSE standards, addressing moderation feedback and promoting continuous improvement. The academy's plans include expanding instrumental options, and deepening community partnerships to enhance student learning experiences.

## Further information

For more details on Erdington Academy's music programme, please visit the school's website. Additional information on the national plan for music education is available from the Department for Education.