

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 2025-26, published on 9th September 2025, and will be reviewed on 9th September 2026.

Overview

Detail	Information
Academic year that this summary covers	2025-26
Date this summary was published	9th September 2025
Date this summary will be reviewed	9th September 2026
Name of the school music lead	Marcus Wheatley
Name of school leadership team member with responsibility for music (if different)	Marcus Wheatley
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:

Year 7		
Term 1 Sonic Foundations Keyboard Skills Ground Bass Vocal Skills	Term 2 Notation Graphic Scores Staff Notation Programme Music Instruments of the Orchestra	Term 3 Music from around the world Gamelan Music Music from the Far East Samba Music
Year 8		
Term 1 History of American Music Topic 1: History of American Music Djembe Drumming Blues Rock and Roll Popular Music	Term 2 BBC 10 Pieces Contemporary Music Orchestral and Chamber Music	Term 3 Film Music Leitmotif Mickey Mousing Storyboards
Year 9		
Term 1 Music and Video Games Music for Adverts	Term 2 Electronic Dance Music	Term 1 Musical Legends Reggae Rock & Roll Britpop

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 builds 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 build on their understanding of pitch and duration by learning to read and apply staff notation. This allows them to develop greater musical independence and link prior rhythmic and melodic knowledge to written music. Alongside this, students continue to strengthen their instrumental and compositional skills and broaden their aural awareness through study of orchestral instruments.

The remainder of Year 7 applies these foundations across a range of musical traditions, concluding with World Music. Students explore music from Indonesia, the Far East and Brazil through practical and social music-making, experiencing how rhythm, pitch and texture differ across cultures. This unit follows earlier studies in Western Classical music, ensuring that students gain a broad and balanced experience reflective of Birmingham's diverse musical heritage..

Year 8

The aim of the Year 8 music curriculum is to equip students with the skills to make music independently beyond Key Stage 3. These include core keyboard techniques, staff notation, song-writing, and performing confidently from a chord sheet. The curriculum builds on the final Year 7 unit, extending these foundations into new musical genres and contexts.

Students develop rhythmic understanding by exploring triplets, syncopation, and swing rhythms, and advance from playing simple melodies or bass lines with one hand to performing both simultaneously.

The first unit, *History of American Music*, explores how the transatlantic slave trade shaped the music we hear today. Beginning with African traditions and moving through the blues to 20th-century popular styles, students develop awareness of musical heritage beyond the Western classical tradition.

The second unit, *BBC Ten Pieces*, revisits the great composers of the Western classical canon, challenging stereotypes and broadening students' musical horizons. Through practical music-making, students connect classical repertoire to modern genres and discover how these influences shape today's music.

The final unit, *Film Music*, draws on these links, exploring how classical composers have influenced cinematic scores. Students build performance and composition skills by playing famous leitmotifs and composing to film scenes using music technology. This sequence ensures clear progression, with each unit increasing in complexity and reinforcing prior learning.

Birmingham's rich musical culture, led by the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra (CBSO) and the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire, underpins this curriculum. Students are encouraged to appreciate and engage with their local heritage through music-making. The school's strong Black history movement further highlights the importance of celebrating shared cultural identity and the diversity of musical traditions.

Year 9:

The Year 9 music curriculum has two main aims. The first is to equip students with the skills needed to make music independently beyond school. The second is to give students an insight into how the knowledge and skills gained in previous years are applied in today's music industry, inspiring some to consider music as a future career path.

As in Year 8, students continue to apply and extend their existing musical understanding in new and forward-looking contexts. For example, they build on their knowledge of instruments and sonority from Year 7 by exploring how these are used to create specific effects in video game music.

The first unit, *Music and Media*, focuses mainly on performance while incorporating some composition projects. It highlights the vital role music plays across different media sectors and teaches students to respond to a brief like professional composers.

This is followed by *Dance Music*, where students develop compositional and production skills using both traditional processes and music technology. Through apps such as Mixcraft, students gain practical experience that can be continued independently outside school.

The final unit, Musical Legends, explores influential artists from past and present, chosen in consultation with a student voice panel to ensure engagement and relevance. Students consolidate their KS3 learning by examining how artists such as Bob Marley, Michael Jackson, and Elvis Presley used musical elements and techniques in their work.

Units are sequenced to ensure clear progression, with each stage requiring knowledge and skills from previous topics. For example, video game music—often based on repetitive ostinatos—demands less dexterity than performing songs by Michael Jackson, which require greater coordination and notation fluency.

In 2019, the UK music industry contributed £5.2 billion to the economy, with £2.7 billion generated from exports and almost 200,000 people employed full-time. Given its scale and influence, it is important that students understand how their musical learning links to real-world opportunities, and Year 9 provides this experience through practical, creative, and industry-informed study.

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 Notation 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.