

Music development plan summary: City Academy

Overview

Detail	Information
Academic year that this summary covers	2026-2027
Date this summary was published	01/09/26
Date this summary will be reviewed	11/09/26
Name of the school music lead	Currently overseen by Marie Lowndes-Ford (Trust Director of Music and Arts Education) Shiloh Clarke – Music Teacher
Name of school leadership team member with responsibility for music (if different)	Mr Andrew Payne – School SLT Link Marie Lowndes-Ford – Trust Director of Music and Arts Education
Name of local music hub	Services for Education
Name of other music education organisation(s) (if partnership in place)	Services For Education (SFE); B:Music; Birmingham Hippodrome; National Youth Music Theatre; Royal Birmingham Conservatoire; other Trust schools, Restore the Music UK, Clod Ensemble, Ex Cathedra, other professional musicians

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.

Purpose and strategic vision

The Music Department will develop a coherent, ambitious and inclusive three-year music strategy that strengthens curriculum music, increases participation in instrumental and vocal music, raises the profile of music across the school and Trust, and creates clear pathways from first access through KS3, GCSE and beyond. The plan is designed to improve musical outcomes while widening access, particularly for pupils currently under-represented in music and at KS4.

The strategy is aligned with the National Curriculum expectation that pupils should perform, compose, listen and use music technology, and with the National Plan for Music Education vision that all children and young people should be able to learn to sing, play an instrument and create music together, with opportunities to progress their musical interests and talents.

National context and policy alignment

- The current statutory KS3 Music curriculum remains the foundation for curriculum planning: performing, composing, listening/appraising, notation, musical dimensions, repertoire and musical context.
- The DfE Model Music Curriculum is used as a non-statutory reference point for sequencing knowledge and skills and for strengthening progression from Year 7 to Year 9.
- The 2025 Curriculum and Assessment Review recommends revised KS1–3 music programmes of study with clearer progression in the technical, constructive and expressive pillars of musical understanding, alongside broader repertoire.
- Government has confirmed that a reformed National Curriculum is intended to be taught from September 2028 and that revised GCSEs will begin to be phased in from September 2029. The department will therefore keep the KS3 and KS4 curriculum under annual review so that the school is ready for national changes.
- The department will maintain awareness of the emerging National Centre for Arts and Music Education, the developing Music Hub arrangements, qualification reform and national developments in music education.
- Music staff will use annual CPD time to remain abreast of curriculum reform, qualification developments, assessment changes, inclusion, music technology and evidence-informed approaches to progression.

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 City Road Academy, music education is an essential part of the Key Stage 3 curriculum, with all students in Years 7, 8, and 9 receiving 1 hour of music lessons per week. During this time, students engage in a wide range of musical activities designed to build foundational skills, foster creativity, which in addition helps to prepare them for further study in Key Stage 4 should they wish. This structured approach ensures that all students, regardless of their prior experience, can develop key musical skills and knowledge that will benefit them both in and beyond the classroom.

The curriculum for this academic year has been redesigned as a clear progression model from KS3 to KS4. The emphasis has been placed on musical skill development rather than isolated projects, with explicit endpoints in performing, composing, listening/appraising, notation, theory, ensemble skills, and music technology.

Regarding links to the model music curriculum and opportunities within lessons for performance and ensemble work please refer to the following points:

Opportunities for singing, performing and playing an instrument in lesson times:

- Instrumental and Singing-based Performance: Students have frequent opportunities to perform on classroom instruments (e.g., keyboard, guitar, percussion) as well as any personal instruments they may play in addition to singing and rapping. These performances may be solo, paired, or in ensemble settings, helping students build confidence and musical technique.
- Whole-Class Ensemble Work: Lessons incorporate whole-class ensemble activities where students work together to perform a piece of music. This work supports the development of listening skills, timing, and collaboration, as well as providing a platform for students to experience different musical roles. Within lesson time, students regularly engage in independent practice and group rehearsals, allowing them to develop instrumental skills with guidance from the teacher. This mirrors the MMC's focus on honing technical skills through practice.
- Singing and Playing Across a Range of Styles: Students experience a variety of musical styles, from classical to contemporary, when singing or playing an

instrument. This diversity helps to deepen their understanding of different genres, fostering musical versatility.

- **Performance as a Learning Tool:** Performances are built into lessons as a way of consolidating learning. Whether as part of a class assessment or informal sharing, students regularly showcase what they have learned in both vocal and instrumental formats, aligning with the MMC's focus on practical music-making.
- **Use of Music Technology in Performance & Composition:** Lessons include the integration of music technology, such as using DAWs to accompany performances or to compose. This gives students a modern understanding of how technology can enhance creative flow.
- In line with the MMC, students are encouraged to sing regularly in lessons, developing vocal techniques, pitch accuracy, and expression. This includes whole-class singing as well as smaller group or solo opportunities, covering a range of styles and genres.

Music qualifications at KS4

In Key Stage 4, students studying music are allocated 3 timetabled lessons of classroom study per week. In Year 11, students study for the BTEC Level 1/2 Tech Award in Music Practice. This is a predominantly practical course that allows students to develop their instrumental, vocal and production skills and knowledge across various areas of music. The course is divided into three main components:

- **Component 1: Exploring Music Products and Styles.**

Students investigate different genres and styles of music, including pop, rock, classical, and world music.

They explore the development of various music products (e.g., live performance, recorded music, media music) and how they are created.

Students analyse the characteristics of these products and learn how different techniques are used to produce and perform music in different styles.

- **Component 2: Music Skills Development.**

In this component, students focus on improving their practical music skills, which may include performance, composition, or production.

They select a discipline to specialise in and work on personal goals to improve their musical abilities.

This component emphasises regular practice and reflection, helping students refine their technique, creativity, and overall musicianship.

- **Component 3: Responding to a Music Commercial Brief**

For the final component, students apply their skills to create a piece of music in response to a given brief, much like in the professional music industry.

They may work in a variety of roles such as a performer, composer, or producer to create music that fits the brief's requirements.

This component focuses on creativity, problem-solving, and meeting deadlines, simulating real-world music industry practices.

In Year 10, we have recently introduced the OCR G.C.S.E Music course.

This qualification allows students to further develop their performance, composition, listening and appraising skills while studying a broad range of musical styles and traditions. Building on the foundations established at Key Stage 3, students develop as performers, composers and informed listeners.

The course is divided into three main areas:

Performance

Students develop their instrumental or vocal skills through both solo and ensemble performances, building confidence, technique and musical expression.

Composition

Students create their own original music using a range of compositional techniques and music technology, developing creativity and musical understanding.

Listening and Appraising

Students study music from different periods, genres and cultures, learning to analyse and evaluate music using appropriate musical terminology. The broad areas of study expose students to a wide range of musical traditions, including Western classical music, popular music, film music and world music. Students are encouraged to make connections between the music they study and their own musical experiences, backgrounds and cultures, fostering a greater appreciation of diversity and the role music plays in communities around the world.

The OCR GCSE Music course has been introduced to provide students with a balanced qualification that combines academic study with practical musicianship. It supports progression to post-16 music and performing arts courses while developing valuable transferable skills such as creativity, collaboration, communication and critical thinking. As a result, students leave the course as confident, well-rounded musicians who are prepared for further study and future opportunities within the creative industries and beyond.

How do we support SEND and disabled students?

We are committed to providing an inclusive music education where all students can participate and succeed. We support SEND and disabled students through:

- **Differentiated teaching** and flexible tasks matched to individual needs and abilities.
- **Assistive technology and accessible instruments** to enable full participation in practical and creative music-making.
- **One-page profiles** that identify individual needs and inform personalised support.
- **Close collaboration with support staff**, including teaching assistants and SEND specialists, to provide targeted support and scaffolding.
- **Accessible resources**, such as visual aids, simplified notation and adapted materials.
- **Inclusive performance opportunities** with appropriate adaptations where needed.
- A strong focus on **wellbeing, confidence and self-expression**, ensuring all students feel valued and successful in music.

Summary of Partnerships which support our Music curriculum/co-curriculum:

We have a partnership with Services for Education who provide peripatetic music lessons for a range of musical instruments and our provision for the new academic year as increased. We will also use their services as the Music Hub to engage in further music showcasing and staff CPD opportunities. We also have a Trust wide choir COREus who engage regularly with the wider community and perform at events in Birmingham. We are continuing to offer SoundLab sessions at the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire where students can network with other young people and develop their performance skills. Further partnerships linked to musical theatre are also in place with Birmingham Hippodrome and the National Youth Music Theatre.

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.

We offer a range of co-curricular opportunities to support students in developing their musical interests and skills beyond the classroom. These opportunities allow students to sing, play instruments, collaborate with peers, and explore different genres of music.

- **After-School and lunchtime Music Clubs:** These clubs provide a space where students can focus on their individual musical interests and receive additional support to develop their skills. Whether students are interested in composing, playing an instrument, or exploring music technology, the club offers the flexibility to pursue areas that may not be covered in regular lessons. It's a great way for students to work on personal projects and collaborate with others who share their musical passions.
- **Choir, Ensembles, and Bands:** We offer a choir and instrumental groups, open to students of all abilities. These groups meet regularly to rehearse and perform, giving students the chance to develop their ensemble skills, build confidence, and experience the joy of performing live music. Our ensembles perform in various school events and community concerts throughout the year.
- **SoundLab:** We are proud to be involved in SoundLab in partnership with the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire. This programme provides students with the opportunity to learn and perform music in a group setting, working with other talented young musicians from across the city. SoundLab culminates in an annual concert, where students showcase their musical growth and creativity in a professional setting.
- **Winter and Summer Concerts:** Our students prepare and perform pieces of music for our **Winter Concert**, which offers them a chance to demonstrate their skills and hard work to an audience. The **Summer Concert** is another key event in our calendar, where students of all year groups come together to perform in a wide range of styles and ensembles, celebrating their musical achievements across the year.

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.

In addition to curriculum lessons and co-curricular activities, students benefit from a range of musical experiences designed to develop their skills, confidence and aspiration.

- **Music Practice Rooms:** Students have access to fully equipped music practice rooms before, during and after school, encouraging independent practice and musical development.
- **Winter and Summer Concerts:** Our annual concerts provide opportunities for students to perform for peers, families and the wider community. These events help students develop confidence, performance skills and a sense of achievement.
- **Creative Arts Opportunity Day:** Students take part in workshops led by professional musicians and industry specialists, gaining insight into areas such as performance, songwriting, music production and careers in the creative industries.
- **Live Music Experiences:** Students have opportunities to attend live performances, including visits to see the **City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra (CBSO)**, helping them experience high-quality music-making and broaden their understanding of different musical styles.
- **Performance Opportunities:** Throughout the year, students perform in assemblies, school events and community activities. These experiences help develop stage presence, teamwork, resilience and self-confidence.
- **Hippodrome Education Network (HEN):** Through our partnership with the Birmingham Hippodrome, students access professional performing arts workshops and enrichment opportunities, including visits to one of the city's leading arts venues.

These experiences enrich the music curriculum, inspire students to engage with music beyond the classroom and support their musical, personal and cultural development.

In the future

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

At City Academy, in the future we aim to build a vibrant, inclusive and high-quality music department that enables all students to develop as performers, composers and musicians. Through curriculum development, enriched musical opportunities and strong partnerships, we aim to create clear pathways for participation, progression and achievement in music.

Over the next three years, we will strengthen music provision through curriculum improvement, expanded instrumental and vocal opportunities, enhanced assessment systems and a wider range of enrichment experiences. Students will benefit from a progressive and inclusive curriculum, increased opportunities to perform and participate in ensembles, stronger pathways into GCSE Music, and partnerships with leading music and arts organisations. Our aim is to increase participation, raise standards, broaden musical experiences and ensure all students can access high-quality music education.

Year 1

- Review and strengthen curriculum, assessment, enrichment, resources and partnerships.
- Redevelop the KS3 curriculum and introduce Music Progress Booklets.
- Introduce GCSE Music in Year 10 and improve assessment and progress tracking.
- Expand instrumental tuition, particularly brass and woodwind, and increase choir and ensemble opportunities.
- Implement the £20,000 equipment and resource improvement plan.
- Increase music trips, workshops, live performances and external partnerships.

Year 2

- Fully embed and refine the KS3 curriculum and strengthen GCSE delivery.
- Increase participation in instrumental lessons, ensembles, choirs and Trust-wide projects.
- Expand performance opportunities through concerts, trips, workshops and industry experiences.
- Use progress data to provide targeted support and stretch for students.
- Develop collaboration, coaching and moderation across the Trust.

Year 3

- Evaluate the impact of the plan on participation, attainment, progression and inclusion.
- Refine KS3 and KS4 curriculum planning in response to emerging developments.
- Embed sustainable instrumental, ensemble and choir programmes with clear progression pathways.
- Strengthen the Trust-wide music identity through collaborative performances and projects.
- Establish priorities for the next phase of music development.

Further information (optional)

[What We Do | B:Music \(bmusic.co.uk\)](http://bmusic.co.uk)

[Music Services in Schools | Services for Education | Birmingham](#)

[Royal Birmingham Conservatoire](#)

[The power of music to change lives: a national plan for music education - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[What the national plan for music education means for children and young people - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[Teaching music in schools - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[Turn It Up: Our plan for music - GOV.UK](#)

[EX CATHEDRA | Inspiring singing](#)