

Music development plan summary: City Academy

Overview

Detail	Information
Academic year that this summary covers	2024-2025
Date this summary was published	06/09/2024
Date this summary will be reviewed	15/07/2025
Name of the school music lead	Mr Thomas Sissons (Head of Creative Arts, Teacher of Music)
Name of school leadership team member with responsibility for music (if different)	N/A
Name of local music hub	Services for Education
Name of other music education organisation(s) (if partnership in place)	Hippodrome Education Network

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.

Subject Vision:

Year 1 priorities:

- **Address gaps in foundational musical knowledge that students may have missed during primary school, ensuring they are equipped for secondary-level music education.**
- **Music tutoring/Peripatetic lessons are being delivered to students.**
- **Provide targeted professional development for staff to improve teaching in areas like music technology, notation, and instrumental skills.**

- Increase student engagement in classroom music and co-curricular activities by promoting participation in performances and clubs.
- Increase the facilities and equipment to keep up with the growth of music uptake in KS4 (Annual Priority).

Year 2 priority:

- Annually review and expand curriculum to ensure content is relevant and to include a wider range of musical genres, cultures, and history.
- Develop stronger relationships with external music organizations to enhance learning opportunities.
- Establish regular opportunities for students to provide feedback on their music learning experience, using their input to shape curriculum and co-curricular offerings.
- Increase the facilities and equipment to keep up with the growth of music uptake in KS4 (Annual Priority).

Year 3 priority:

- Create pathways for advanced students to pursue music qualifications, competitions, and higher-level ensemble work.
- Work with other departments to develop cross-curricular projects that use music to enhance learning in subjects e.g. Drama, History, Geography, etc.
- Create a state-of-the-art multi-media studio where students can engage in a wide range of creative projects, mirroring industry standards. This facility will support not only music production but also foley work, voice recording, sound design, and media projects such as film scoring and podcasting. The studio will serve as a creative hub for interdisciplinary learning, where students can gain hands-on experience with professional-grade equipment and software, preparing them for careers in both music and the broader media industry.

How do we support SEND and disabled students:

We are committed to ensuring that all students have access to a fully inclusive music education. We implement a range of strategies to support SEND and disabled

students, enabling them to actively participate and succeed in music lessons. Our approach includes:

- **Differentiated Instruction:** Lessons are designed to be flexible, catering to a range of learning styles and abilities. We provide differentiated tasks, allowing students to engage with music at a level that suits their individual needs and strengths.
- **Use of Assistive Technology:** We incorporate assistive technologies, such as music software and accessible instruments, to ensure all students can participate fully. For example, students may use adaptive musical instruments or digital tools like Logic Pro X to create music if they have physical limitations.
- **One Page Profiles (Personalised Support Plans):** Each SEND student has a 'one page profile' (personalised support plan) which is reviewed regularly. This ensures that any barriers to learning are identified and addressed, with tailored interventions in place where necessary.
- **Collaboration with Support Staff:** Teaching assistants and SEN specialists work closely with classroom teachers to provide 1:1 or small-group support. This allows us to scaffold tasks, helping students with additional needs to engage and succeed in music activities.
- **Accessible Resources:** We provide resources in a range of formats, including large print, simplified notation, and visual aids to support students who may have difficulties with reading or processing information.
- **Inclusive Performance Opportunities:** All students are encouraged to take part in performances, with adaptations made where necessary. This ensures that SEND and disabled students can share their musical achievements in a supportive environment.
- **Focus on Wellbeing and Confidence:** Music is used as a tool to support the emotional wellbeing of students. We create a positive and inclusive atmosphere in which all students feel valued, boosting confidence and self-expression through music.

Curriculum structure:

At our school, music education is a core 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 if students pursue music further. This structured approach ensures that all students, regardless of their prior experience, have the opportunity to

develop key musical skills and knowledge that will benefit them both in and beyond the classroom.

Throughout Key Stage 3, our curriculum is designed to build a strong foundation for those who wish to pursue music at Key Stage 4. By engaging with a wide variety of musical genres, developing their performance and composition skills, and using music technology, students are well-prepared for the more specialized study of music at Key Stage 4.

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

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

- Instrumental Performance: Students have frequent opportunities to perform on classroom instruments (e.g., keyboard, guitar, percussion) as well as any personal instruments they may play. 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 ensemble work supports the development of listening skills, timing, and collaboration, as well as providing a platform for students to experience different musical roles.
- Individual and Group Instrument Practice: 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.
- Singing Practice: In line with the MMC, students are encouraged to sing regularly in lessons, developing vocal technique, pitch accuracy, and expression. This includes whole-class singing as well as smaller group or solo opportunities, covering a range of styles and genres.

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

We have a partnership with Services for Education who will provide peripatetic Music lessons for a range of disciplines (drums, guitar, DJ/Music tech, keyboards) starting September 2024. We will also use their services as the Music Hub to engage in further music showcasing and experiential opportunities. We will also have a trust wide choir developed in partnership with Black Voices who will have two full days of rehearsals in Autumn term with two public performances and then meet weekly and perform half termly in the Spring and Summer terms. We are continuing to offer SoundLabs sessions at the RBC where students can network with other young people and develop their performance skills.

We also have a partnership with the Hippodrome Theatre in Birmingham and this provides opportunities to experience theatre productions, all of which include music and musical direction. We have a Hippodrome practitioner in one day a week to work with students in lessons and on workshops including songwriting and singing (She is a vocal specialist). For this upcoming year, we have planned for a group of 10 students to take part in the Tina Turner project with the Hippodrome and these students will be able to watch the theatre show as well as work with our Hippodrome practitioner to prepare a performance. This performance will be recorded for the Hippodrome showcase event. In addition, we are hoping to launch our first school production this year, Hairspray, so music students will be creating performance acts related to this show and will work with our Hippodrome practitioner when preparing their vocal acts.

Music qualifications at KS4 and other awards:

In Key Stage 4, students study BTEC Level 1 / 2 Tech Award in Music Practice. Students studying music in Year 10 and 11 are timetabled 3 hours on a weekly basis. The BTEC Level 1/2 Tech Award in Music Practice is a hands-on course that allows students to develop practical skills and knowledge across various areas of music. The course is divided into three main components:

1. 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.

2. 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 specialize in and work on personal goals to improve their musical abilities.

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

3. Component 3: Responding to a Commercial Music 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.

Throughout the course, students develop not only technical skills but also key transferable skills such as creativity, collaboration, and communication, all of which are essential for a career in the music industry but also elsewhere in the wider world.

There is the additional possibility that students will be able to become graded in an instrument if they progress whilst taking peripatetic lessons within school.

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.

At our school, we offer a wide 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 Music Club:** Our after-school music club provides 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.

- **Choirs, Ensembles, and Bands:** We offer a range of vocal and instrumental groups, including choirs, orchestras, and rock bands, 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.
- **SoundLabs:** We are proud to be involved in SoundLabs, a collaborative initiative for young people across Birmingham. This program provides students with the opportunity to learn and perform music in a group setting, working with other talented young musicians from across the city. SoundLabs 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.
- **Musicate App:** We use the **Musicate** app to help students develop essential music skills, including ear training, music theory, and reading notation. This online platform is a valuable tool for students to practice and enhance their understanding of music outside of lesson time, at their own pace.
- **Listening Groups (Music Appreciation Society):** We have introduced **Listening Groups** during break time and lunch time, where students come together to listen to, analyse, and discuss music from various genres. These sessions foster a deeper appreciation for music and encourage critical listening and analysis skills, as well as stimulating musical discussion among peers.

For the past four years we have had a trust wide choir (COREus) led by an RBC practitioner which involved students from all four schools in our academy trust rehearsing and performing together at public events and at the RBC. This academic year we will work with Black Voices to develop a school choir that will rehearse on a weekly basis in school and then perform once a half term with students from the other CORE schools. We will start to work with Black Voices this Autumn on two full day rehearsals and two public performances.

In September 2024 we will be introducing peripatetic music lessons for three disciplines (Guitar, Drums and Keyboards). This will provide 6 hours of focused learning and practice for students and will support more students in working towards music grades and becoming lifelong players. Our peripatetic music lessons will be paid

for by the trust through our school partnership with Services for Education and students from all year groups have been selected for these lessons.

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 the regular curriculum and co-curricular activities, our school provides a range of musical experiences designed to inspire, engage, and broaden students' musical horizons. These experiences allow students to immerse themselves in performance, professional music environments, and creative exploration.

- **Access to Music Practice Rooms:** Students have access to our fully equipped music practice rooms before, during, and after the school day. This open access encourages independent practice, helping students hone their instrumental and vocal skills at their own pace. Whether preparing for a concert, practicing new techniques, or collaborating with peers, this resource gives students the time and space they need to develop their musicianship beyond lesson times.
- **Winter and Summer Concerts:** Our **Winter Concert** and **Summer Concert** are highlights of the school year. These performances give students the chance to showcase their musical progress in front of their peers, parents, and the wider community. By participating in these events, students gain valuable performance experience, build their confidence, and celebrate their hard work in a professional and supportive environment. These concerts provide an opportunity for students to engage with the school community through music and foster a sense of accomplishment.
- **Creative Arts Opportunity Day:** We organize an annual **Creative Arts Opportunity Day**, where students have the chance to attend workshops led by professionals from the music industry. This exciting event exposes students to the creative processes behind different musical careers, offering insights into songwriting, music production, performance, and more. These workshops inspire creativity, provide networking opportunities, and give students a deeper understanding of the range of careers available within the music industry.

- **City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra Live Concert (School Trip):** As part of our commitment to exposing students to professional live music, we arrange a school trip to see the **City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra** perform. This concert is an invaluable experience for students, allowing them to witness the expertise and passion of world-class musicians. Attending such a concert enhances students' understanding of orchestral music, broadens their cultural awareness, and offers a real-life glimpse of professional music performance in an inspiring setting.
- **Student Performances to Peers and the Wider Community:** Throughout the school year, students have opportunities to perform both informally and formally for their peers and the community. Whether it's performing at assemblies, special events, or local community gatherings, these experiences are essential for developing students' stage presence, self-discipline, and teamwork. Performing in front of different audiences helps students to grow as musicians and connect with others through music.
- **Hippodrome Education Network (HEN):** As part of the **Hippodrome Education Network**, our school benefits from having a resident professional who delivers engaging performing arts workshops to students. This partnership not only enriches our students' learning experience but also provides opportunities for them to visit the Hippodrome Theatre. Students can participate in live theatre performances, allowing them to showcase their talents on a professional stage. This experience fosters collaboration, creativity, and a deeper appreciation for the performing arts, enhancing their overall musical education.

In the future

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

Ongoing:

As we look to the future, I am pleased to see the current plans coming to fruition, particularly the successful implementation of peripatetic lessons with all timeslots effectively filled, ensuring that all students who wish to receive additional instrumental tuition have the opportunity to do so. This has contributed significantly to the increasing uptake of KS4 music, which has been remarkably successful this year (19 students studying music in Year 10). Moving forward, the focus is on continuing to build on this momentum by expanding the range of practical instruments available in the department, including a wider variety of instruments e.g. cellos, violin, saxophone, bandoneon, boom whackers, steel pans, etc. This is in addition to a request for more

guitars, an electric drum kit, and sample pads. These enhancements will further support student engagement and practical musicianship, ensuring that our music department continues to grow and thrive.

Year 1:

In Year 1, our focus is on building a strong foundation by addressing gaps in student knowledge, particularly for those transitioning from primary to secondary school. We aim to ensure that all students have a solid understanding of basic musical concepts, making sure that no one is left behind. This will be achieved through targeted interventions, diagnostic assessments, and differentiated lessons that cater to the varied levels of students' prior learning.

A key priority this year is successfully implementing peripatetic lessons, ensuring that every available timeslot is filled with engaged students. We want to expand students' access to specialized instrumental tuition, and the focus is on encouraging regular participation. Additionally, we will begin to introduce more practical instruments into the music department, including guitars, an electric drum kit, and sample pads, which will help broaden the scope of students' practical learning experiences. Another important goal is increasing student uptake in KS4 music, building on this year's successes by strengthening the KS3-to-KS4 transition with engaging, practical lessons that showcase the depth and breadth of music education..

Year 2:

Year 2 will focus on expanding the musical offering and raising the quality of music provision across the school. Having established a strong foundation, this year will see a growth in extracurricular and co-curricular activities, with more opportunities for students to engage in performance and ensemble work outside the classroom. This will include expanding after-school music clubs and ensembles to cater to a wider range of student interests, ensuring they have opportunities to pursue their passions beyond the core curriculum.

By Year 2, the integration of new instruments will be complete, and the department will prioritize using them in innovative and diverse ways, particularly in student-led compositions and performances. The plan includes continued growth in the uptake of KS4 music through strategic communication with students and parents about the value of music qualifications, as well as showcasing success stories from the previous year. We will also focus on deepening student engagement by launching a new series of music workshops and collaborations with external partners, including the expansion of partnerships with programs like SoundLabs, ensuring that students have access to inspiring and professionally led musical experiences.

Year 3:

By Year 3, the music department aims to be recognized as a leading example of comprehensive, high-quality music education. Our long-term vision includes the creation of a multi-media studio where students can work not only on music but also on foley work, voice recording, and other media projects, giving them access to professional-level facilities. This facility will allow students to gain practical skills in both music production and media, expanding their creative possibilities and better preparing them for future music and media pathways.

The department will also work towards establishing music as a highly desirable option for KS4 students, by embedding a culture of performance, collaboration, and creativity throughout all Key Stages. This will be achieved through regular showcases of student work, high-quality performances, and continued partnerships with external professionals from the music industry. By the end of Year 3, we will have solidified our status as a department that offers a holistic, forward-thinking music education, preparing students not only for academic success but also for real-world applications of their musical skills.

Further information (optional)

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

[Royal Birmingham Conservatoire | Birmingham City University \(bcu.ac.uk\)](http://bcu.ac.uk)

[Strategy 2025 | Services for Education | Birmingham](#)

[Annual Review 2023 - Services For Education](#)

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

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

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