

Music development plan summary: Arena 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	Miss Tanya Alam (Head of Performing Arts) Miss Darshae McKenzie (Music Teacher)
Name of school leadership team member with responsibility for music (if different)	Mr Abed Ahmed – SLT Link
Name of local music hub	Services for Education
Name of other music education organisation(s) (if partnership in place)	Hippodrome Education Network Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

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.

Curriculum structure:

In Key Stage 3 (Years 7, 8 and 9) students have one hour of Music per week. Full time Performing Arts specialists teach music lessons. The Music teacher in the department is a vocal specialist who provides 1:1 vocal coaching outside of school through her own vocal academy and is also a vocal coach and musical director at Stagecoach PA. Assessment in KS3 Music focuses on the development of musical performance and composition skills. Each Scheme of Learning includes a dedicated assessment in which students demonstrate the success criteria through a group, paired or solo performance.

In Key Stage 4 (Years 10 and 11) students have Music three hours a week. These classes work towards gaining a qualification in WJEC Performing Arts Technical Award

Level ½. Drama and Music are split into their chosen discipline so there is a specific Music class at KS4. KS4 Music classes are taught by the Music specialist. Assessment includes internally and externally assessed coursework enabling students to demonstrate their performance, creative and evaluative skills through practical work and written evidence.

- Students are exposed to a diverse and inclusive range of musical traditions, cultures, composers and artists to reflect both the MMC and a broad curriculum.
- Improvisation and composition are consistent throughout KS3 and KS4 with SOL covering songwriting, film music and Year 10/Y11 coursework (Units 1,2 &3).
- Technology is used for composing, recording and sequencing, enabling students to access contemporary music-making approaches.
- Composing is taught through DAW (music technology) which follows the MMC guidelines that states that the exploration of melodic composition should be touched upon.
- Repertoire from the MMC has been used in KS3 lessons, mainly for the Y9 film music topic.
- Popular musical styles are also covered including pop, rock, RnB, disco and HipHop.
- We make sure all pupils can access and enjoy the Music curriculum through quality first teaching. Lessons are broken into manageable chunks, seating and groupings are carefully planned and support is provided to help pupils work towards independence. Whole-staff CPD promotes inclusive classroom strategies for all pupils, including cold calling, effective questioning and other non-invasive approaches that encourage all pupils to take part.

Opportunities for singing –

- Our Music teacher is a vocal specialist and therefore we have an increased opportunities within schemes of vocal/singing learning.
- Singing, especially ensemble singing, is taught across both key stages and gives the opportunity for students to perform together through harmonisations and lead singing roles through the topic 'Singing & Vocal Techniques'.
- All schemes of learning encourage listening and an increased understanding of different world music through appraisal and listening skills.

Opportunities for performing and playing an instrument:

- Keyboard skills are embedded across KS3 SOL to develop melodic understanding, chord knowledge and practical independence. Subject knowledge is developed further with exploration of enharmonic equivalents and appropriate finger techniques.
- Listening and understanding music literacy is developed through rhythm reading, staff notation, chord symbols and musical terminology appropriate to each year group.

- Students have regular opportunities to perform solo and in ensembles; developing confidence, teamwork and stage presence.
- Expressive performance is also stressed, especially in KS4. The importance of performance with emotional expression is consistent.
- Ensemble djembe lessons are delivered by external practitioners to KS3, as suggested in the MMC.
- We were successful in securing funding from the Universal Music UK Sound Foundation, enabling us to purchase a new drum kit, electric guitars, bass amplifiers, headphones and a Bluetooth speaker to enhance classroom learning and support live performances in class and outside of class.
- Additional funding has significantly improved our instrumental resources. We are now equipped with upgraded keyboards and stands, a 30-piece samba kit, 30 African djembe drums and a set of bamboo tamboos which will compliment SOL in Key Stage 3 and open the opportunity for additional workshops.

Partnerships that support the curriculum –

We have a partnership with Services for Education, who provide weekly peripatetic Music lessons across a range of disciplines, including Guitar, Steel Pans, Keyboard, Drums and Voice. Peripatetic lessons began in September 2024 and have been successful in developing and supporting students' skills on their chosen instrument with roughly 100 participants involved and a waiting list.

We continue to offer weekly SoundLab sessions at the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire, where up to six students network with other young musicians and develop their performance skills on their chosen instrument. SoundLab has also provided additional opportunities for ensembles to rehearse together and perform at the Conservatoire.

We also have a partnership with Birmingham Hippodrome, which provides opportunities for students to watch theatre productions, all of which include music and musical direction. A Hippodrome practitioner works in school one day a week to support students in Drama and Music lessons, helping to develop their passion and interest in the Performing Arts. As part of this partnership, students have opportunities to participate in musical showcases, which have previously included singing, rapping, dancing and acting.

Our partnership with the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire has also provided a range of enrichment opportunities, including a Year 9 African drumming workshop, Year 8 Careers in Music workshops, a Year 10 "Band in a Day" workshop, Year 11 curriculum support for WJEC Unit 3, a live band performance for Year 8 and support with the COREus school choir. We will continue to work closely with the RBC to provide students with further ensemble workshop opportunities. The RBC has also supported the up-keep of instruments and learning environments within the department.

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.

Singing/ Choirs

- We have previously offered a weekly after-school singing club led by the Music teacher. Students rehearsed as a vocal ensemble whilst also receiving opportunities for small-group and solo vocal coaching to support performances in school showcases and community events, including performances at local elderly care homes during the Christmas period.
- We offer weekly one-to-one singing lessons in school, delivered by our peripatetic vocal coach, for students who have expressed an interest in developing their singing skills.
- For the past four years, students have participated in the trust-wide choir, COREus, involving pupils from across all schools within the academy trust rehearsing and performing together at public events. This provision has also developed through partnership work with Black Voices, providing students with opportunities to engage with professional musicians.
- Students involved in COREus will continue to access wider performance opportunities, including trust events and performances linked to whole-school and trust celebrations.

Bands / Instrumental Provision

- Peripatetic instrumental lessons are offered in guitar, strings, drums, keyboard, voice and steel pans. These lessons provide students with specialist tuition, opportunities for progression and pathways towards graded music examinations and musical engagement. Instrumental tuition is funded through the trust in partnership with Services for Education, ensuring accessibility for students across all year groups. Student uptake for instrumental lessons continues to increase, with waiting lists in place due to high levels of interest.
- Students receiving instrumental tuition are encouraged to apply their learning within classroom music, ensemble performance and school showcases.
- Although we do not currently offer weekend or holiday provision, students are able to access rehearsal spaces/practice rooms and instruments during break-times and lunchtimes to support independent practice and rehearsal. A timetable each week is hung outside of the Music classroom in which students reserve their preferred time slot in the week.
- We provide a range of musical workshops that enable students to develop new skills, collaborate with their peers as well as explore a variety of musical instruments. These workshops include African drumming samba and djembe and violin which enriches students' musical understanding and appreciation.

- We will be launching Charanga - YuStudio to enhance students' musical learning both in and beyond the classroom. The platform will be embedded into the Key Stage 3 curriculum through creative projects and homework tasks, giving students opportunities to develop their composition skills.

Student Leadership / Ambassadors

- We have a Music Ambassadors programme to develop student leadership within the Performing Arts faculty. Music Ambassadors support departmental events, performances and enrichment activities whilst contributing ideas towards future music initiatives.
- The programme encourages students to take ownership of the musical life of the school and develop confidence, leadership and organisational skills.

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.

- Each year the school hosts both a Winter Showcase and Summer Showcase, providing students with opportunities to perform music, dance and drama to live audiences. Students from both KS3 and KS4 are encouraged to audition and participate, promoting inclusivity. Showcase performances include solo acts, vocal ensembles, instrumental groups and student-led bands.
- Students are regularly provided with opportunities to perform within year group assemblies and end-of-term rewards events, allowing them to develop confidence, stage presence and performance experience in front of a wider audience of peers.
- We have previously staged productions of Hairspray and Matilda, allowing students to develop skills in singing, acting, ensemble performance and confidence. School productions will continue to provide opportunities for students to engage in large-scale collaborative performance experiences both onstage and backstage.
- Students are also given opportunities to attend live performances, concerts and theatre visits to broaden their cultural capital and deepen their appreciation of live music and musical theatre. Students have previously been able to attend performances such as CBSO KS3 School's Concert, Mamma Mia, Matilda, Phantom of the Opera and many more.

In the future

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

- We aim to offer further opportunities for students across all year groups to attend live music events in order to experience professional performance settings. These experiences will continue to support students' cultural capital, deepen engagement with the subject and broaden awareness of careers within the music.
- We also aim to renovate the Music classrooms and practice room to create a more suitable, engaging and inspirational environment for teaching, rehearsal and performance. Planned developments include a larger rehearsal/practice space to better accommodate ensemble and band rehearsals, allowing students to develop collaboration, stage presence and performance confidence more effectively. We would also aim to develop a designated performance area within the classroom, including basic stage lighting and PA equipment, to support live performance opportunities and showcase work more professionally.
- Further improvements to equipment and resources would include purchasing recording equipment such as audio interfaces, microphones and studio accessories to enable high-quality recording of student performances and compositions.
- Upgrading Macs and music software consistently would ensure students can continue to access contemporary music technology provision and develop industry-relevant digital music skills.
- Creating clearer progression pathways for students post-Year 11 by strengthening guidance around further study and careers within music and the creative industries. This could include promoting routes into A Level Music, Music Technology, Performing Arts courses, apprenticeships and vocational pathways, as well as increasing students' awareness of careers in performance, production, composition, sound engineering, teaching and arts management.
- Developing alumni links with former students who have progressed into music, performing arts or wider creative industries in order to inspire current students and strengthen career awareness within the department. Alumni could support through workshops, talks, mentoring opportunities or performance demonstrations, allowing students to gain insight into real industry experiences and possible progression routes.

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)

[Our Strategy 2025 – 2028 - Services For Education](#)

[Annual Review 2025 - Services For Education](#)

[Charanga Secondary, a dedicated programme for secondaries](#)

[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 \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

https://www.wjec.co.uk/qualifications/level-12-vocational-award-in-performing-arts/#tab_keydocuments

If your school is part of a multi-academy trust with a trust-wide music development plan, you may also want to include a link to any published information on this plan.