

Music development plan summary: Erasmus Darwin Academy

Overview

Detail	Information
Academic year that this summary covers	2026-27
Date this summary was published	01/06/26
Date this summary will be reviewed	31/05/27
Name of the school music lead	Ethan Cruxton
Name of school leadership team member with responsibility for music (if different)	Christopher Briggs
Name of local music hub	Entrust (Staffordshire)

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.

At EDA, the KS3 Music Curriculum is designed to meet the aims and objectives of the National Curriculum. Although we do not follow the Model Music Curriculum, the curriculum is equally ambitious and built upon the development of key musical skills. Throughout KS3 we focus on developing student performance skills (primarily through the keyboard, alongside whole class singing), composition skills (with regular composition tasks), and listening skills (through frequent listening exercises).

In KS4 we offer GCSE Music (OCR) and in KS5 we offer A-Level Music (OCR). These courses are taught as a development of the skill sets built in KS3.

Full curriculum information can be found here:

<https://www.eda.staffs.sch.uk/Curriculum-Overviews/>

GCSE OCR syllabus: <https://www.ocr.org.uk/qualifications/gcse/music-j536-from-2016/specification-at-a-glance/>

A-Level OCR syllabus: <https://www.ocr.org.uk/qualifications/as-and-a-level/music-h143-h543-from-2016/specification-at-a-glance/>

Curriculum time:

Y7 – 1 hour lesson per week

Y8 – 1 hour lesson per week

Y9 – 1 hour lesson per week

Y10 – 3, hour lessons per week

Y11 – 3, hour lessons per week

Y12 – 9, hour lessons per fortnight (shared with Y13)

Y13 – 9, hour lessons per fortnight (shared with Y12)

Part B: Extra-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.

Music Tuition

At EDA we give every student the opportunity to buy into instrumental lessons. These are provided by an Entrust peripatetic team:

Brass – Mr. Stevens

Guitar – Mr. Walters

Keyboard / Piano – Mrs. Eccles

Percussion – Mr. Farmer

Strings – Mrs. Allen

Vocals – Mr. Walker-Harris

Woodwind – Mrs. Anderson

Lessons are 20 minutes long, occur throughout the school day, and are taught in either small groups or 1:1, depending upon the level of the student. EDA subsidises these lessons to support students to access them; parents are asked to pay the remaining £315 per year. This rate has had to increase this year, due to cost pressures. Students who are listed as Pupil Premium have their fees covered for 1 instrument.

Students may learn multiple instruments or just 1, depending on their interest. Participation in ensembles is strongly encouraged for students. During the 2025-26 year, over 125 students (roughly 10% of the school) engaged with instrumental lessons for part or all of the year.

For the majority of traditional instruments, Entrust offer a free instrumental hire service. This includes brass, string, and woodwind instruments. For larger instruments, students may rehearse in school with school equipment or purchase their own. In some circumstances, we can help with the loan of school keyboards or guitars. Although this is not guaranteed, families are invited to discuss possibilities with Mr. Cruxton. Extra support can be given to Pupil Premium students.

Where students wish to purchase an instrument, EDA facilitates an Assisted Purchase Scheme, which can reduce the final cost of the instrument. Families are encouraged to speak to Mr. Cruxton if they are planning to make a purchase.

Graded Exams

Students may wish to take Music qualifications as part of their instrumental studies. If so, they can discuss these steps with their peripatetic music teacher. These exams may be at any grade level through ABRSM, LCM, or Trinity exam boards. Often, once discussed and prepared within lessons, families will enter the student themselves directly via the exam board. This is most typical for exams taken digitally. EDA can facilitate this process for live performance exams. We encourage students and families to consult with the peripatetic team at all points through the process.

Ensembles

The EDA Music Department offers a range of musical groups across the year, catering to different musicians. The offer for 2026-27 will be finalised in September, and adjusted through the year as necessary, but will likely include:

- Year Band evening: A rehearsal night where bands with different year groups practice, facilitated by staff. This accounts for 5 different groups, mixed instruments and vocals.
- Woodwind Ensemble: Open to all woodwind players
- String Ensemble: Open to all string players
- Guitar Ensemble: Open to all guitarists
- New Voices: Open pop and musical theatre choir.
- Rising Voices: Y7 choir, pop music.

Ensembles are led by either Mr. Cruxton or Mrs. Walker-Harris. Specialist ensembles are provided by the Entrust peripatetic team. Students are encouraged via curriculum

or peripatetic lessons to attend these groups, all of which are free to attend. Students are invited to speak to us if they have an interest in this or other musical opportunities.

EDA musicians are also given the opportunity to attend local area ensembles run by the Entrust Music Hub. Peripatetic staff provide encouragement and invitation for the opportunities to perform more broadly. Currently, EDA students are involved in Guitar, Jazz, Wind, and String groups, as well as the county orchestral courses.

The EDA Music team also provide vocal support for the Performing Arts production, helping with vocal coaching and general musical guidance. The show for 2026 has not yet been announced.

The EDA Music team also actively encourage students to form their own popular music bands. At present, we have three separate groups rehearsing and performing across age groups.

Individual Practice

The Music Department has four practice rooms, alongside the two primary teaching rooms. These rooms are open and accessible before school, after school, and during social times to allow students to practice. Any student can use the space to practice, either individually or with peers. Students access this with a pass system. Passes are available to all students via application to Mr. Crupton. Equipment is available to borrow for free.

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.

For the 2026-26 Academic year, we have a range of opportunities available to enhance student musical experiences.

Formal Concerts

- Autumn Recital Evening: Tuesday 20th October – Solo performances for Y7, Y12, and Y13.
- EDA Christmas Carol Service: Monday 14th December – All years groups, traditional Carol Service with performances by all ensembles
- School Production: Thursday 4th to Saturday 6th March, joint production with EDA Performing Arts Department

- Spring Recital Evening: Tuesday 23rd March – Solo performances for Y8, Y9, Y10, and Y11.
- Strawberry Jam (Summer Concert): Wednesday 6th July – All year groups, end of year concert featuring solos and all ensembles.

All opportunities to perform solos are open to all students. The recitals are advertised within the Academy Notices, and students are asked to speak to Mr. Cruxton. No limits of experience or regular participation are given, and students have the opportunity to practice with Mr. Cruxton.

We charge a small fee for the audience to attend the Recital Evenings, which proceeds going back into the Music Department's fund. The school production charges for tickets, with proceeds returning to the school production fund. The Carol Service is free to attend.

Smaller Opportunities

In addition to the above formal concerts, other events in the year give our students opportunities to perform, either in bands or as solos.

- EDA Open Evening, October
- Remembrance Service, November
- EDA Presentation Evening, July
- Primary school visits, various times

External Opportunities

The Entrust Music Hub provide concerts within the academic year. Students who attend their ensembles are invited to attend.

In the Spring, they will host the Staffordshire Young Musician competition again. We have seen students previously reach the finals and win so will encourage students at the higher experience level to enter this year too. Likewise, they host the Staffordshire Battle of the Bands, where we have had finalists in previous years.

We also enter students in the Rotary Club Young Musician of the Year competition. Last year, one of our entrants made it to the district heat.

External Concert Visits

All Y7 students are given the opportunity to attend a concert at Birmingham Symphony Hall to watch the CBSO. This incurs a charge (the ticket price) whilst the Music

Department pays for the coach fare. This includes an introduction to the orchestra and a chance to see a world class orchestra.

Related to their A-Level studies, the Y12 and Y13 A-Level Music classes are given the opportunity to attend a termly concert at Birmingham Symphony Hall. Tickets are at a reduced rate (£5) thanks to Symphony Hall's student scheme.

In the future

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

At EDA, we develop provision in part based on the students we have. Specific ensembles on offer will vary each year to be tailored more specifically to the students currently with us. This next year will see the start of 'Band Night' where we aim to increase extra-curricular participation with smaller, year based, focused bands. This will be evaluated across the year.

The year 9 curriculum hours are increasing this year (from a previous point of 1 lesson per fortnight). We will be expanding the curriculum offer to accommodate this, with further aspects of GCSE Music being taught in the summer term of Y9, to all students.

At A-Level, we are developing our Home Study programme and work on 10-mark answers, with a new prescriptive study programme integrated with our class work.

We will be continuing to evaluate and refine our approach to skills based Music education, ensuring that students fully understand the journey they are on and that skill development is clear across year groups.