

Music development plan summary: Ridgeway Academy

The document below outlines the Music development plan for Ridgeway Academy for the academic year 2026-2028. This is a summary of how our school delivers music education to all our pupils across curricular and extra-curricular music. This information is to help students and parents and carers understand what our school offers and who we work with to support our student's music education.

I hope you enjoy reading this music development plan, and should you have any further questions, please feel free to email me at whitbreadf@ridgeway.aetrust.uk

Yours musically,

Miss Whitbread
Head of Music

Overview

Detail	Information
Academic year that this summary covers	2026-2027
Date this summary was published	July 2026
Date this summary will be reviewed	July 2028
Name of the school music lead	Francesca Whitbread
Name of school leadership team member with responsibility for music (if different)	/
Name of local music hub	Hertfordshire Music Service
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.

Secondary School Music Curriculum Summary

Our complete music curriculum for every year group is published on our website, outlining our progressive learning pathways from Key Stage 3 through to Key Stage 5. Our teaching at Ridgeway includes specific adaptive strategies, modified instruments, and tailored technology to increase access for disabled pupils and support pupils with special educational needs (SEND).

Time Allocation per Key Stage

Time for curriculum music is allocated across the academic year as follows:

Key Stage 3 (Years 7, 8 & 9): 1 hour per week of dedicated classroom music, delivered consistently across all terms and half-terms.

Key Stage 4 (Years 10 & 11 - Options): 5 hours per fortnight for pupils electing to study Music at GCSE.

Curriculum Frameworks and Pedagogy

Our Key Stage 3 music curriculum is heavily informed by the Model Music Curriculum (March 2021), alongside the statutory National Curriculum programmes of study. We use these frameworks to ensure a cyclical approach to learning that balances singing, listening, composing, and performing, seamlessly preparing students for the rigours of Key Stage 4 and 5 examination specifications.

Instrumental and Vocal Opportunities

At Ridgeway we believe every student should have the opportunity to make music practically during regular lesson time:

Vocal Development: Singing is embedded into Key Stage 3 classroom practice, our extra-curricular choir, focusing on vocal health, pitch, and multi-part harmony.

Whole-Class Ensemble Teaching: Every pupil partakes in term-long whole-class instrumental programmes. Students explore orchestral and contemporary instruments (such as brass, woodwind, or strings) to learn the basics of ensemble performance, section playing, and notation.

Classroom Instruments: Regular music lessons across Key Stage 3 integrate the continuous use of both acoustic and digital instruments, including keyboards, ukuleles, African djembe drums, and Music Technology software.

Partnerships and Hub Connections

We collaborate closely with Hertfordshire Music Service. Hertfordshire Music service and local recording studios to enrich our curriculum. Hertfordshire Music Service

provides our pupils with access to specialist visiting instrumental teachers, subsidised instrument loan schemes, and opportunities to audition for various groups and also take part in themed days.

Music Qualifications and Awards

For our year 10 and 11 students, we offer clear, high-quality pathways for academic progression in music. Pupils can study for and achieve the following qualifications:

All Key Stages: Graded music examinations (e.g., ABRSM, Trinity, RockSchool) facilitated on-site during school hours by visiting specialists.

Key Stage 4 (GCSE): Eduqas

Key Stage 5 (16 to 18): Offered via consortium- OCR

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.

Music Tuition

Beyond our core classroom curriculum, we offer an extensive programme of co-curricular music tuition delivered by a team of visiting professional instrumental and vocal specialists. Tuition is highly flexible and structured to meet the individual goals of our students, offering:

One-to-One Tuition: 20 or 30-minute individual weekly lessons for intensive, personalised development.

Small-Group Tuition: Structured for 2–3 pupils of similar ability, fostering collaborative learning.

Large-Group/Ensemble Tuition: Sectional masterclasses focusing on specific instrument families or vocal ranges.

Instruments Offered

We currently provide tuition across a comprehensive range of disciplines:

Brass: Trumpet, Cornet, French Horn, Trombone, Euphonium, Tuba.

Percussion & Rhythm Section: Drum Kit, Acoustic/Electric Guitar, Bass Guitar.

Keyboard: Piano, Electronic Keyboard.

Voice: Classical, Musical Theatre, and Contemporary Vocal styles.

Charging, Subsidies, and Remissions

While peripatetic music lessons incur a termly fee, we believe financial barriers should never stand in the way of musical talent.

Standard Fees: Detailed rates for individual and group lessons are updated annually on our parent portal.

Subsidies and Financial Support: Heavily subsidised or entirely free tuition is available for students meeting specific criteria, including those eligible for Pupil Premium funding, Looked After Children (LAC), or GCSE/ A Level students.

Choirs and Ensembles

We Ridgeway pride ourselves on a vibrant, inclusive ensemble culture that caters to all musical tastes and experience levels. These groups run before school, during lunchbreaks, and after school.

Vocal Ensembles: Choir

Contemporary Groups: Rock & Pop Bands

How to Join and Eligibility

Open Access: The majority of our ensembles operate on a turn-up-and-play basis with no auditions required, welcoming students from all year groups (Years 7–13).

Cost: All school-led choirs and ensembles are completely free of charge to attend for all pupils.

Practice and Rehearsal Spaces

Our music department is open to students out of lesson hours (from 8:20 AM until 5:00 PM daily). Pupils can reserve soundproof practice rooms equipped with pianos, drum kits, and amplifiers for individual practice or independent student band rehearsals.

Hertfordshire Music Service and Weekend/Holiday Provision

Through our formal partnership with the Local Music Education Hub, our students gain seamless access to broader regional provisions, including:

Saturday Music Centres: Regional hubs offering advanced orchestral and big band training on weekends.

Holiday Courses: Intensive 3–5 day music camps during the half-term and summer breaks.

Regional Ensembles: Opportunities to audition for county-level youth orchestras, brass bands, and wind ensembles.

Qualifications and Awards

Students participating in extra-curricular music are fully supported in tracking and celebrating their progress through formal certifications:

Graded Music Exams: Recognised boards including the ABRSM, Trinity College London, and Rockschool (RSL).

Performance Awards: Performance milestones are recognised internally through school achievement awards, subject awards, alongside supporting evidence for the skill section of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award (DofE).

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.

A core philosophy of our music department at Ridgeway is that music is a live, shared experience. Throughout the academic year, we provide a diverse calendar of performance opportunities, events, and trips designed to inspire both performers and audience members across all year groups.

Regular In-School Musical Experiences

Musical expression is woven into the daily fabric of school life, ensuring every student engages with music regularly:

Live Spotlights: Live performance nights take place in the school hall giving soloists and small student bands from any year group an informal platform to perform for their peers and parents. 'Battle of the Band' competition with a winning prize at a local recording studio.

How Pupils Get Involved

Participation in our main concerts is driven through attendance at our extra-curricular clubs (see Part B). For the Annual School Musical, auditions for cast members and sign-ups for backstage crew take place early in the academic year.

Partnerships Supporting Musical Experiences

Our event calendar is greatly enriched by our professional network:

Visiting Artists & Workshops: Through partnerships with organisations like Live Music Now and independent professional musicians, we occasionally host in-school workshops and masterclasses. These industry professionals deliver exclusive performances and Q&A sessions for our students.

Charging, Subsidies, and Financial Support

We ensure that financial circumstances do not dictate a student's ability to participate in or experience live music:

In-School Concerts: Tickets for parents and carers to attend our concerts are kept at a nominal fee to cover licensing costs. Tickets for pupils serving as audience members for in-school events during the day are always free.

The School Musical: Tickets are priced commercially to cover rights and staging costs.

External Trips: Subsidies are provided for all educational trips. For students eligible for Pupil Premium funding, the cost of tickets and transport for external concert trips is subsidised.

Note for Parents/Carers: If you are experiencing financial hardship and your child wishes to participate in a ticketed musical excursion or production, please contact the Music Department or the Finance Office in confidence to arrange support.

In the future

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

We are committed to continually refining and expanding our music provision. In alignment with the National Plan for Music Education's 7 features of high-quality music provision, we have established a clear roadmap for improvements over the next two academic years to further enhance our curriculum, co-curricular offerings, and live performance experiences.

Phase 1: Academic Year 2026/27

1. Integration of New Classroom Instrument Families

The Plan: To further diversify our practical curriculum, we will introduce specialised Music Technology schemes of work (using iPads and modern DAW software) into Year 8, alongside a new West African Djembe drumming unit in Year 7.

Quality Feature Addressed: Feature 4: A range of musical traditions and genres.

2. Enhancing Progression Tracking in Key Stage 3

The Plan: Students will record audio snippets of their performances and compositions each term, allowing them to visibly track their own skill development across singing, composing, and improvising from Year 7 through to Year 9.

Quality Feature Addressed: Feature 2: Sustained musical progression pathways.

3. Standardising Termly Performance Milestones

The Plan: While we currently host events, we will introduce a Concert series at the end of every term. These will be low-stakes, informal performance opportunities specifically designed to give beginner instrumentalists and Year 7 pupils their first taste of performing in front of a supportive audience.

Quality Feature Addressed: Feature 5: Regular performance opportunities.

Phase 2: Academic Year 2027/28

4. Protecting and Expanding Curriculum Time

The Plan: Ensure students receive a guaranteed, unbroken one hour per week of music across all three terms. This ensures uninterrupted continuity before choosing Key Stage 4 options.

Quality Feature Addressed: Feature 1: Sufficient curriculum time (minimum 1 hour per week).

5. Expanding Subsidised Instrumental Tuition

The Plan: In partnership with Hertfordshire Music Service, we would like continue and expand our "Shortage Instrument Initiative" with more instruments particularly from the woodwind section.

Quality Feature Addressed: Feature 3: Accessible instrumental and vocal tuition.

6. Broadening Our Network of Professional Partnerships

The Plan: We aim to launch a Professional Workshop Series, inviting a touring musician, commercial songwriter, or industry producer into the school for intensive, day-long workshops each term. These visiting professionals will run hands-on masterclasses, providing our GCSE and BTEC students with real-world feedback on their compositions, performances, and production techniques.

Quality Feature Addressed: Feature 7: Strong links with the wider music industry and hub.

Further information (optional)

To ensure our Music Development Plan remains dynamic and deeply integrated with the wider community, we work alongside a network of music organisations. Parents, carers, and students are encouraged to utilise these external resources to further support their musical journeys.

Our Trust Partnership

Multi-Academy Trust (MAT) Music Vision: As part of our wider school trust, our music provision aligns with a trust-wide commitment to excellence in the arts. This framework enables cross-school collaborations, shared moderation, and large-scale trust performance events.

National Governance and Support: The Department for Education (DfE) provides comprehensive guidance designed to help families navigate music education opportunities both inside and outside the classroom.

Download the official guide here: [DfE Guide for Parents and Young People: Getting Involved in Music](#)

Departmental Contacts and Support

For questions regarding instrument lessons, financial subsidies, or ensemble sign-ups, please reach out to:

Head of Music: WhitbreadF@ridgeway.aetrust.uk