

Music

Music is a major strength of Parmiter's and musical aptitude is one possible criterion for entry to the school. Many students join in one or more of the groups in the department's flourishing extra-curricular programme; these provide opportunities for students to participate in many different types of performances within school, in the local community and in a variety of external venues.

At Key Stage 3, all students study a range of musical styles through the interrelated skills of composing, performing, listening and appraising. They take part in individual, paired and group activities using a variety of instruments and sound sources. At all levels, students are encouraged to refine their performances and compositions by appraising and evaluating their own and others' work.

The current GCSE Music course provides structured opportunities for students to develop their musical understanding through the interrelated activities of performing, composing, listening and appraising. The flexible assessment structure is tailored to the needs of candidates whatever their musical background. The areas of study include a range of music from the past and present, including popular, western classical and music from other world cultures.

Instrumental and vocal lessons are provided by a team of specialist peripatetic teachers. ABRSM examinations take place in the department two or three times a year and many students choose to enter other examinations (e.g. Trinity Guildhall, Rock School).

Extra-curricular musical opportunities include a variety of different ensembles which cover a range of abilities - from beginner level through to accomplished performers - and, although most groups are not auditioned, repertoire is varied and often ambitious. Senior musicians often take leading roles and support younger musicians and we are proud of our long-standing tradition of joint music-making with Breakspeare School. A significant number of students also take advantage of the individual tuition available for voice and a wide range of instruments.

There are currently two wind bands, a symphony orchestra, two string groups, three choirs, a big band, a recorder group, saxophone ensembles, a jazz workshop, a guitar ensemble, a percussion ensemble, flute ensembles, clarinet and double reed ensembles, a brass group, a Music Technology club, as well as several smaller ensembles. The music ensembles perform regularly at school concerts, events within Hertfordshire and at local and national music festivals. Students are encouraged to audition for county and national ensembles and many are awarded places.