

Music

Overview of the Curriculum

Key Stage 3 (Years 7, 8 & 9)

Students follow a hybrid spiral and cumulative curriculum drawn up following input from all department staff. This is broadly divided into 18 half-termly topics across the three years and all topics incorporate tasks to grow four core skills:

- **Listening** - a range of repertoire from different time and place.
- **Appraising** - building critical understanding and awareness of some of the best examples of different types of music.
- **Composing** - responding creatively to techniques, genres and styles introduced.
- **Performing** - developing technical control, communication and expression.

At the start of Key Stage 3, learning is focused on ensuring all students acquire a minimum understanding of musical notation and specific 'elements of music' vocabulary, so that everyone can successfully engage with the curriculum core skills at a level appropriate to previous experience. This quickly makes it possible for every student to communicate in a musically literate way, whether orally or in writing, or through the practical music-making disciplines of performing and composing, and equips them with the necessary foundation to enjoy music classes and grow as musicians.

Each unit of work is structured to consolidate prior skills learnt (through re-engagement) and to introduce additional techniques that build on each student's present skill set, so as to enable consistent progress in the development of all 4 core music skills.

Students are exposed to different genres and styles of music from different places and periods in musical history, and these are used as vehicles for developing the four core skills. These are selected primarily for their suitability to the unit's learning objectives and to areas of study in the GCSE syllabus, but are also chosen to introduce students to a breadth of repertoire representative of the diversity of musicians and social change.

Music GCSE - Key Stage 4 (Years 10 & 11)

All KS4 students continue to build and grow the core skills focused on in KS3 by following the AQA GCSE syllabus. This syllabus provides an ideal balance between contextual study of a wide range of musical styles and genres, and the more analytical special focus subject content for the listening and understanding component; it also creates a natural progression to KS5 A Level. It is delivered through teacher-led directed learning, independent study and research in and beyond the classroom, and through composing exercises and class performance activities.

More complex composing techniques are introduced in Year 10, and students' composing coursework is then shaped by their creative implementation of learnt techniques combined with personal expression in Year 11.

Likewise, they are encouraged to take individual responsibility for the performing element of their coursework and are empowered to make their own choices relating to performance with the help of their specialist instrumental teacher; all students are also expected to take part and become strong contributors in co-curricular music-making in the Music department.

Music A Level - Key Stage 5 (Years 12 & 13)

In the Sixth Form, students continue to focus on the four core skills using the AQA specification. The listening and appraising content is a mix of compulsory analysis of set works from 1650-1910, and optional areas of study agreed between the teacher and the students; this is delivered in a similar way to KS4 but with a much greater level of detail. The classroom environment is very collaborative and students are encouraged to explore the selected optional topics themselves and research and develop their own resources in addition to those provided in class.

Preparation sessions for the composition component introduce new techniques to help students expand their composing toolkit, and the AQA syllabus encourages greater individual flair in writing music and the development of a strongly personal style.

Students largely take responsibility for their own performance preparation but, with a longer recital required than in GCSE, some class time is given to developing effective practice techniques and looking at how to create a balanced programme that displays a range of all the best attributes of the student as a performer; this also creates a valuable opportunity to work closely and build a working musical relationship with an accompanist.

A Level practical coursework accounts for 60% of the overall grade and typically our students are strong performers. The choice of AQA for A Level Music creates a logical and therefore smooth transition from AQA GCSE studies but also, significantly, AQA is the only exam board that gives a bias towards performing over composing (split 35-25%) and this favours our students.

In support of all aspects of this course relevant concert opportunities are suggested, students are made aware of external composing competitions or courses, and everyone is expected to contribute strongly (and to lead where appropriate) to the music-making in the department.

SMSC in Music

Spiritual development in Music is fostered through creativity, emotional expression and collaboration with others. Students are encouraged to explore a personal understanding of self through composition, performance and listening. Music provides a unique outlet for self-expression and reflection, and helps students to connect with their own feelings and those of others. Through experiencing the way music can inspire, uplift and communicate beyond words, students appreciate the power of music.

Moral development in Music involves consideration of the ethical issues related to compulsory musical content, cultural appropriation and intellectual property. Students are taught to recognise and understand society and religious conventions of the time composers and performers were working in at the time, and to think critically about the messages conveyed through lyrics, performances and musical choices. Through a study of protest songs, political music, or controversial artists, students are encouraged to reflect on how music influences attitudes and behaviours, and to consider their own moral stance on the issues raised.

Social development in Music is central to the collaborative and communicative nature of the subject. Students engage in group rehearsals, ensemble performance and peer evaluation, which develop teamwork, discipline and mutual respect. Music encourages active listening and cooperation, while providing opportunities for students to lead, follow and contribute meaningfully to group efforts. By participating in performances, school events and community projects, students experience shared achievement and develop social confidence and resilience.

Cultural development in Music is enriched through exposure to a wide variety of musical genres, traditions and practices from around the world. Students explore how music reflects different historical periods, societies and cultures, gaining an appreciation of diversity and heritage. Through studying music from different cultural backgrounds, places, faiths and communities, students develop cultural awareness and respect, and this is further supported through opportunities to perform in different places and environments, and in front of different audiences; Music is used as a medium to understand global connections, identity and the role of the arts in shaping and reflecting society.

Examples of Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development in Music include:

- Reflecting on emotional expression in music and how it can convey spiritual wellbeing.
- Collaborating in ensembles and bands, learning to listen actively and perform cooperatively.
- Studying music from a range of world cultures, such as Indian classical, African drumming, or Latin American music.
- Analysing the influence of place, time and social and political movements on musical styles, such as reggae, punk, or hip-hop.

Overview of schemes of work at each key stage

Key stage 3 By developing the core skills identified above, students' build specific learning and understanding as follows: ● fundamental elements of music terminology ● elementary knowledge of notation ● aural awareness and critical description and explanation ● music in context - historical, social and cultural (content/ topics link to GCSE syllabus) Year 7 Students are introduced to the elements of music and associated musical vocabulary. They study staff notation, orchestral instruments and instruments from other musical traditions. Students learn this through exploring music from a range of time, place and context as follows: 1. Music in Everyday Life 2. Musical Stories 3. Medieval music 4. Latin American music 5. The Beatles 6. Class Concert All units of work incorporate a focus on a whole class song with half-termly performance in Year group assembly.	Key stage 4 All students continue their development of the core skills focused on in KS3, through the AQA GCSE syllabus. Students use the 3 components of Understanding Music, Performing, and Composing, to develop a broad understanding of the connections between the knowledge, understanding and skills set out in the specification as a whole, and to demonstrate their understanding of the relationships between theory and practice. Although learning and preparation for the practical components takes place throughout the course, NEA coursework is completed in Year 11 and therefore there is a bias towards covering the Understanding Music content in Year 10. Year 10 Component 1: Understanding music Students learn about a range of musical styles and features taken from all 4 of the following areas of study: <i>AoS1 - Western Classical Tradition 1650-1910</i> <i>AoS2 - Popular Music</i> <i>AoS3 - Traditional Music</i> <i>AoS4 - Western Classical Tradition Since 1910</i>	Key stage 5 In the Sixth Form students continue to focus on the 4 core skills using the AQA specification which provides a natural progression from the GCSE course. Year 12 Component 1: Appraising music Students focus on all specified content for AoS1 - The Western classical tradition 1650-1910, including detailed analysis of the specified set works, before moving on to one of two optional areas of study. Students develop their aural perception, musical knowledge and understanding of this content and refine their appraisal writing with specific regard to the following categories: ● Melody ● Harmony ● Tonality ● Structure ● Sonority (Timbre) ● Texture ● Tempo, metre and rhythm ● Dynamics and articulation They also develop their listening skills with specific exam style dictation tasks, and their critical writing skills through comparative
---	---	---

Year 8 Further aspects of staff notation are introduced and the use of musical terminology is developed. The concept of harmony is introduced through the exploration of intervals and chords and students learn about the setting of words to music. This is learnt through further exploration of music from time, place and context as follows: 1. Electronic Dance Music 2. Word Setting 3. Pop Songs 4. Jazz 5. Baroque music 6. Protest Songs Year 9 Further aspects of staff notation are introduced and the use of musical terminology is extended. The concept of harmony is developed through the exploration of chord functions and common progressions, and students learn about instruments from other cultural traditions. This knowledge is acquired through an introduction to music from time, place and context as follows: 1. Reggae 2. South Asian Fusion 3. The Blues 4. Variations 5. Chord Progressions	Students develop their aural perception, musical knowledge and understanding of the following: ● The use of musical elements, devices, tonalities and structures and the characteristic features of each style of music ● The use of resources, conventions, processes and relevant notations including instruments, voices and ICT ● The contextual influences which affect the way music is created, performed and heard ● Comparison of different examples of a style or genre ● Listening to unfamiliar music from all four areas of study to identify and accurately describe musical elements, musical contexts and use appropriate musical language Students also learn to critically appraise music from two special study pieces using knowledge and understanding of: ● The effect of audience, time and place on how the study pieces were created, developed and performed ● How and why the music across the area of study has changed over time ● How the composer's purpose and intention for the study pieces is	essay writing in response to exam style questions. Component 2: Performing music Preparation of performance coursework takes place mainly within students' specialist instrumental lessons. As this coursework component has a slight bias over the other, class time is used for examining the AQA assessment criteria against exemplar recordings, and ideas about productive practising of their instrument and effective programming are also explored through discussion and monitoring exercises. Students are expected to take part in an A Level recital evening in the spring term and complete a full mock recital in the summer term. Component 3: Composing music Two compositions are prepared for individually, although progress towards one will often impact on progress towards the other. In Year 12 composing exercises are used to expand students' knowledge of theory and focus on the following compositional techniques: ● Keys – signatures and chords ● Chord construction ● Inversions ● 7ths ● Cadences ● 4-part harmony rules
---	--	---

6. Showcase review and celebration of Music at KS3	reflected in their use of musical elements • Relevant musical vocabulary and terminology Component 2: Performing music Preparation of performance coursework takes place mainly within students' specialist instrumental lessons, although assessment criteria is examined in class as part of the performance preparation and advice on selection of repertoire is also frequently discussed. In addition, opportunities for ensemble playing of different styles of music as encountered within the understanding music component support preparation for this component, and all students are expected to take part in at least one regular weekly co-curricular music activity. Component 3: Composing coursework At the very start of the course students are encouraged to consolidate and build on their composing skills from KS3 through an extended composing project. Students then focus on more specific compositional techniques for melody writing and melodic development, and develop their understanding of harmony in preparation for completing NEA coursework in Year 11. In the summer	• Melodic decoration • Part writing • Modulation Year 13 Component 1 Students finish their learning of the two optional areas of study content for the Appraising music examination. This is followed up with time spent revising and practising exam technique. Component 2: Performing music Opportunities continue to be used for peer and formative assessment. Assistance with finalising students' recital programme is given in preparation for and following an A Level recital evening in January and coursework is recorded in March. Component 3: Composing music Following completion of the technical composition students focus more on melody writing and motivic development for their free composition task.
---	---	---

	term students plan for and begin work on their 'free composition'. Year 11 Component 1: Understanding music Students continue their learning in preparation for the Listening examination at the end of Year 11 by learning about the remaining musical styles in the AQA specification, and time is spent revising and practising exam technique. Component 2: Composing music Students plan, develop ideas and write their 'composition to a brief', and then complete their 'free composition'. Component 3: Performing music Students record their solo performance early in Year 11 and then prepare and record their ensemble performance in the spring term. Advice is often given in relation to options for ensemble performance and opportunities for students to work together are sometimes enabled if appropriate.	
--	--	--