

MUSIC DEPARTMENT

We have a large suite of rooms for Music with good space for pupils to work. There are facilities for full classroom Music performance, individual instrumental lessons, small group + individual practice and access to the computer rooms. Pupils are encouraged to develop independence by knowing where and how to appropriately use musical instruments. The practice rooms are open at lunchtimes and after school for pupils to access the resources.

We use a variety of learning approaches, table discussions and pair work, interactive demonstrations, peer and self-assessment using the 'Two Stars and a Wish' method. We use the IT facilities to notate music and research music facts and history, and iPads to programme and record music on Garageband.

In the Autumn Term, we have a Winter Concert where we hear items from the singers, solo instrumentalists and ensembles. In the Spring Term, there is a School Production. We pride ourselves on the fact that the band for the production is made up of pupils from Years 7 to year 11. During the Summer Term, we have an Awards Celebration Event where we hear different musical items to accompany the prize giving and presentations.

We work hard to make sure that lessons are a place where pupils feel safe and confident to perform individually and in groups for the rest of the class. We believe that Music is for everybody to perform, appreciate and enjoy; anyone in the school who wishes to be involved in Music are welcome and we are able to arrange and compose to suit. We also make sure that there are opportunities for those pupils who are more advanced to stretch themselves and perform more difficult Music.

Programme of Study Overview:

Year 7:

Pupils are introduced to the three main areas of the Music curriculum: performance, listening and composition. They learn how to use the keyboards responsibly and to find the notes to perform pieces. In addition, they learn how to listen to Music critically and recognise the main elements. There is an introduction to notation using score making software, which is related to pieces of Music that have been played on the keyboard.

Later in the year, pupils learn how to play Music in groups, how to co-operate with each other and lead each other. We do this with Music from Indonesia and a range of untuned and tuned percussion. Pupils are also introduced to composition through analysis of Melody in Music. In the summer term, pupils put everything they have learned throughout the year together by composing and performing their own songs in groups. This is an opportunity for pupils who learn instruments outside the classroom to bring them in and use with their groups.

Year 8:

Pupils learn about the Blues and how it developed at the end of the 19th Century in the USA. They develop their group performance skills by forming Blues Bands - guitarists are encouraged to bring their instruments in for this unit.

Following this work, we learn about Rock 'n' Roll - the structure of this Music is closely related to the Blues, but the technical skills required are more advanced.

Later in the year the pupils learn about the compositional approach of Theme and Variations and how it is related to Mathematical Transformations - Music is closely related to Maths and we add some fun to this by making a competition to see who can incorporate as many of these Mathematical Musical Transformations as possible into a solo keyboard performance.

Pupils revisit Musical notation and learn about the Romantic Music Era and how to play Beethoven's Fur Elise.

At the end of Year 8, we introduce the iPads and Garageband to learn about Electronic Dance Music. This is an opportunity to develop the pupils' composition and arrangement skills and learn about contemporary approaches to Musical production.

Year 9:

Pupils learn about Hip Hop and how it grew from the USA in the 1970s to become a worldwide musical form today. Pupils develop their group work and composition skills while they are learning about Hip Hop and further develop their word-setting skills.

We then go on to make our improvisation skills more advanced when we learn about Jazz. Later in the year pupils learn about Music for Film and how different sounds can enhance on-screen action. We then use the iPads to create ever longer pieces of Music — this is important to pupils who wish to take GCSE as they will need to be able to compose longer pieces of Music. Pupils learn about Dubstep and how it has its roots in Jamaican Music. We also learn about Reggae and Ska when we do this and what a huge influence the Music of Jamaica has had on British Music. In the summer, pupils put everything they have learned throughout Key Stage 3 into an extended composition project. They are encouraged to add as many different styles and techniques as they can to the pieces. This provides a fitting end to Key Stage 3 and a springboard into the coursework they will have to do in practical subjects in Key Stage 4.

GCSE: What will your child be studying be studying?

Pupils will be building on the skills and knowledge they gained during KS3 in composition, individual and group performance, and listening and appraising music. The performance component is not under exam conditions and students can have multiple attempts to get the best possible outcome. Both of the performances can be made using Music technology as well as live performance. The listening exam is the most traditional part of Eduqas Music GCSE. Students will have to improve their Music theory knowledge and learn how to apply it under exam conditions. This isn't as hard as some people think — if you already enjoy listening to and performing Music, Music theory is just a question of learning the words to describe what you already know. The exam has been extended

from 2016 and now includes more questions about musical history and genres to go with the technical theory that was already included. Happily, we have been learning about musical history and styles throughout KS3. Above all, Music GCSE is an Art award — students should be ready to express themselves artistically.

How can you help your child?

Encourage them to play an instrument that they enjoy and feel comfortable with. This can include using music technology. There are a number of free music creation websites that students have successfully used for their coursework, including:

<https://soundation.com/> and <https://www.audiotool.com/>

You should encourage them to listen to music they might not normally listen to. Three of the pieces mentioned in connection to the new exam are The Beatles' Sgt Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band, Carlos Santana's Superstition and Aaron Copland's Hoedown. However, recognising the elements of any piece of music you have not heard before is useful - there are lots of different genres but music is all the same when it comes down to the elements.

Assessment Details

Music GCSE is 60% Coursework split over 30% composition and 30% performance. There are two compositions, one to a brief and one free composition. There are two performances, one solo and one group which are not under exam conditions and can also be made using the music technology that we have used during KS3. The other 40% is the Understanding Music Listening Examination. This is externally marked - we will be having plenty of practice throughout the two years as it comes right at the end of the course.