

Music Department Curriculum Intent

Through their study of music, especially in Key Stage 3, we aim to inspire and challenge students with a love and respect for music. We recognise that, while not all students will necessarily demonstrate a natural flair and talent for music, all students nevertheless have an entitlement to the rich cultural capital that is developed through a study of music, along with an understanding of the discipline and heritage of music as an art form.

We inspire and challenge students to communicate through music making and support their mental wellbeing by allowing them the opportunity to express their emotional states and experiences with stressful situations without words. They will develop transferable skills for their future, including (but not limited to), communication, teamwork, resilience, determination, and independence. As pupils progress, they should be able to communicate the intention of their performances and compositions in a more sophisticated and creative way. The curriculum is designed specifically to develop and extend the three core skills required to study OCR GCSE Music: Appraisal, Performance and Composition.

The aim of the music curriculum is to provide students with a creative form of self-expression, developing the prior learning skills that they have learnt in Primary School. The curriculum is also designed to recognise both strengths and any gaps in knowledge depending upon students' previous learning, which can vary from little, such as some singing in events and assemblies, alongside some music provision provided by Music Hubs during Year 5 taster lessons. Other students will, of course, have had a more in-depth experience, or indeed be developing their musical talents through tuition and lessons elsewhere. Our curriculum seeks to inspire all students, regardless of background and ability.

The art of music is mastered over time and therefore the curriculum is sequenced allowing students to revisit and build on their skills, expanding their musical vocabulary and techniques over the three years of compulsory study. Music has different strands and students are supported to learn new skills, explore a range of performance pieces, and most importantly create new and original composition work. We encourage critical analysis of own and professional work embedding and extending the knowledge learnt throughout KS3. Those who have a passion for music or enjoyment, which extends outside of their curriculum lessons, are offered enhanced opportunities through the extra-curricular timetable and the provision of additional performance opportunities. These include a range of peripatetic lessons, with visiting tutors carefully planning lessons to support the core requirements of the curriculum.

In Year 7 students begin their study focusing on two key units that embed the essential knowledge of musical elements required to develop initial composition ideas and appraise music using correct terminology.

These units are also used to quickly identify the skills and knowledge of students, with resources such as simplified notation tasks and prompts and extension work available.

Peripatetic lessons are utilised to help support the knowledge of lower-attaining students, and also provide tuition to students that have previously had instrument lessons with the intent of developing performance and appraisal skills and directing students towards ABRSM examinations as appropriate. Students are also directed towards an Academy Extra Curricular Music Ensemble as suitable.

The Year 7 curriculum introduces fundamental composition techniques such as drone, notation, chords and structure which feed into the rest of KS3 and beyond.

In Year 8 students continue to extend and develop their knowledge and understanding of the three key fundamentals of appraisal, composition and performance.

The first unit introduces the concept of playing in a larger ensemble setting with performers playing individual musical parts, one of the key areas of GCSE coursework. The key elements of music are extended using “Mad T-Shirt”, an acronym that is used to remember the key features of discussing and appraising music.

Composition skills are revisited and developed with the introduction of Ostinato patterns, timbre and structure. Students also study a range of music technology skills that allow them to record, extend and develop performances and compositions. This is particularly designed to support low ability students that do not have the technical skills to perform a composition by using pre-recorded samples and loops, but is also used to extend the abilities and learning of higher-attaining students by encouraging them to explore recording, mixing and multi tracking.

In Year 9 students follow a programme of units that are designed to give them a degree of freedom in the areas of music that they are interested in whilst retaining a focus on the three core aspects of performance, composition and appraisal.

Students begin with a unit studying “Blues” music, which recaps the core performance skills from year 8. The units are then structured to provide students with the framework of key skills and vocabulary to create a longer composition in a style of their choice, alternating with the study and performance of key works from these areas.

Appraisal skills continue to be developed and extended with students learning how to answer longer examination style appraisal questions, culminating in a music “test” that provides a baseline score for the start of the GCSE course in Year 10.

Year 9 culminates with a project of the students’ choice, which may include but is not limited to music video production, recording a CD, concert performances and artist presentations. This is a chance for students to express themselves individually or working with others, working to their own strengths and interests making it a positive and inclusive experience.