

GCSE Music

Why should I choose GCSE Music?

GCSE Music is an absolutely fantastic course to study. If you are an instrumentalist or a vocalist, this course is for you. Plenty of opportunity for playing and coming together as an ensemble or as a soloist.

How is the coursework assessed?

GCSE Music is assessed mainly through practical work, which is fantastic. It is made up of 60% coursework, which consists of a solo performance and a composition that you write for your own instrument or voice. Then also, a second composition that is set by the exam board and an ensemble performance where you perform with at least one other live player.

How is the exam structured?

The other aspect to the course is a listening test exam, that is worth 40% of the marks – it is 1 ½ hours long.

What kinds of questions are in the listening exam?

The listening exam consists of multiple choice questions, short answer questions, compare and contrast questions and long answer questions.

What musical extracts are used in the listening exam?

The extracts are all taken from the genres studied from the Areas of Study; each genre will be covered over time (not all in the paper each year)

What units are studied?

There are five Areas of Study:

AoS 1: 'My Music': *It is all about you as a solo musician. It is about you being able to perform and write a composition for your main instrument - this can also be your voice. You will also learn how to write a composition in a specific genre or style through one or more of the AoS 2, 3, 4 and 5. To complete this, you will perform as part of an ensemble; this can be with your private one-to-one instrumental or vocal teacher, your main classroom music teacher or another musician in your school.*

AoS 2: 'The Concerto Through Time' *This is a more traditional part of the course and we learn about music from the Baroque, Classical and Romantic eras when a solo instrumentalist plays with the support of an orchestra.*

AoS 3: 'Rhythms Around the World' *This is a very, very exciting part of the course and something that students thoroughly enjoy. We study and play music from four geographical areas:*

- *Central and South America - playing Samba Band music and Calypso music with Steel Pans*
- *Africa - learning about African Vocal music and performing on African Drums*
- *Eastern Mediterranean and Middle Eastern Music - Experiencing Greek, Palestinian and Israeli music*
- *India - We have much fun with learning about Indian Classical music and Bhangra - a type of Indian Pop music*

AoS 4: Learning about Film music: *This includes music that has been created specifically for a movie as well as pre-existing music that has been selected from the Western world and used in a movie, also computer gaming music!*

AoS 5: The Conventions of Pop: *You will study a range of popular music from the 1950s to the present day, focussing on:*

- *Rock 'n' Roll of the 1950s and 1960s*
- *Rock Anthems of the 1970s and 1980s*
- *Pop Ballads of the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s*
- *Solo Artists from 1990s, 2000s, 2010s through to the present day*

What skills are needed to study GCSE Music?

If you are considering the GCSE music course, you may find it useful to speak to Miss Nicklin (Head of Music) as this will help you know if you are working at the entry standard that you need to be at to be able to cope with the GCSE material. We recommend that you are Grade 3 or the equivalent of Grade 3 on an instrument or voice and this will give a good insight into how you will cope on the course.

What skills will be developed through studying GCSE in Music?

During the course you will be given lots of time in class and in your one-to-one private instrumental or vocal lessons to develop your solo performance skills, and also, your ensemble performance skills. You will get the help you need to compose in certain styles, genres and across periods of time, and how to reflect that in your work. You will also work on developing your listening skills and how to apply theory, knowledge and understanding for what you will hear in the exam.

What could I do in Post-16 with a qualification in Music?

There are all sorts of things that you can go into with music. A lot of people often think, music teacher, performer, composer or conductor, but there's a whole lot more than this; such as military band, producer, librarian, critic, disk jockey, film scoring, jingle writer, managing artists, music publishing, music therapist, orchestra member, lyricist, sound engineer, singer, arranger, instrument maker.

Do I have to be able to play an instrument?

Yes, you should be able to play an instrument/sing. In addition, we recommend that you have private one-to-one lessons.

Do I have to read music?

It is not essential that you read music fluently, yet it really does help you if you have an understanding of the basics.

What kinds of homework are set?

Usually, you are set one to two pieces of homework per week. This could be 'practice time' on a piece of music that you are learning, 'development' of a composition that you are working on, a practice 'listening exercise', some reading or research or an online 'quiz'.

Do I have to perform in front of everyone?

No, however, our GCSE Music classes are very small and are made up of other like-minded musicians who wish to see you succeed as much as you do. Ensemble (group work) is a very enjoyable part of the course!