

Music

Examination Board: AQA

What is the course like?

The music course is ideal for pupils who enjoy playing and listening to a variety of music and who want to use their creative skills within a GCSE subject. Over the course pupils will develop their performance skills as a soloist and with others, they will learn techniques to develop themselves as composers and have a greater understanding of music. Many pupils take music because they have a passion for playing their instrument and 30% of the marks for this course are awarded for performance (this can be to an audience or just to the teacher). The course is largely practical and creative with much scope for individual choice in coursework tasks allowing the pupil to work to their strengths and interests. This performance and composition coursework is 60% of the overall mark. The 40% exam is based on the study and analysis of set works and different styles of music done throughout the course. Studying music will give breadth to pupils' GCSE choices, allows pupils to explore their creative side and to use their strengths and skills as musicians within a GCSE subject.

What is studied during the course?

The first part of the course will be based on skill building in the three main areas of music, initially working in groups, and then moving on to solo composition and performance.

Pupils will study a variety of music from the areas of study below through listening, performance and using techniques from these styles to compose. They will focus on set work from two highlighted areas to look at in more depth in preparation for the exam.

- Western Classical Tradition 1600 - 1910 (set works – Mozart concerto movement 1).
- Popular Music (set works – 3 pieces by Paul Simon).
- Traditional Music (set works – 3 pieces by Santana).
- Western Classical Tradition 1910 - present (set works – 2 pieces by Aaron Copland).

How is the course assessed?

The work assessed is 60% practical and 40% based on a final exam.

Unit 1: Understanding Music – 40%

This is a one hour 30-minute examination. Pupils will listen to music and answer questions based on the excerpts they hear. They will also answer detailed analysis questions about the set pieces they have studied.

Unit 2: Performing Music – 30%

The assessment will take the form of 4 minutes of solo and ensemble performance. Work will be recorded throughout the course and the best pieces will be submitted.

In November, pupils will be invited to take part in a Year 11 Performance evening (this is not compulsory but recommended). This performance to family and peers will be excellent preparation for their performance recordings in Term 3 of Year 11.

Unit 3: Composing Music - 30%

Two compositions will be submitted for assessment: one to a given brief and one free composition. The briefs allow for a wide variety of styles of music from rock to film to classical and pupils are encouraged to work to their interests and strengths. The two combined compositions must be a minimum of 3 minutes. All work is done as coursework.

Additional Information

While it is not a compulsory requirement, we do recommend that, where possible, pupils should have individual instrumental lessons to support their performance work.

For further information, please contact Mrs Hawkins.