

Music

(Exam Board: AQA)

Subject Leader:

Mr A Ward

What do I need?

The course is suitable for those who have an enthusiasm for creating (performing and composing) and listening to different styles of music and who wish to broaden their experience and enhance their understanding of both live and recorded music.

Normally students beginning the course will have taken GCSE Music and have achieved a grade B or higher. Exceptionally, students without a GCSE in Music, who are excellent performers, read music fluently and have a good general knowledge of music, may, at the discretion of the Head of Department, be permitted on the course. You will need to be capable of playing or singing music to the level of at least Grade 5 by the end of the AS course and at least Grade 7 by the end of A2 to access the highest marks.

What will I learn?

You will improve your skills in performing and composing in a wide range of styles. You will listen to a wide variety of music and develop a more informed appreciation of how and why it was written and /or performed. The course continues to develop your musical skills and knowledge in relation to the core activities of listening and appreciation, composing and performing.

AS Level

At this level you will develop a more sophisticated understanding of the organisation of sounds, the context of music, and musical styles and genres. You will create musical ideas with greater technical control and expressive understanding, making creative use of musical devices, conventions and resources. You will give two performances of your own choice of music at Grade 5 standard or above. These can be solos, ensembles and / or technology based performances. You may perform your own compositions.

Unit 1 (Appraising Music) covers the exploration and application of musical language and context through the investigation of pieces of Western Classical Music and Jazz from the 1920s. This unit is worth 40%.

Unit 2 (Performing) includes two performances from within the categories of solo, ensemble and technological performance. The minimum grade at AS level is Grade 4, but to access the higher marks Grade 5 or above is required. A total of 6 minutes is required at this level. This unit is worth 30%.

Unit 3 (2 Compositions) offers a choice of either compositional techniques or free composition / pastiche composition or arranging music in response to a brief set by the examination board. This unit is worth 30%.

A Level

The skills and knowledge developed at AS Level are continued to higher levels in A2.

Unit 4 (Appraising). There are seven areas of study:

1. Western classical tradition 1650–1910 (compulsory)
2. Pop music
3. Music for media
4. Music for theatre
5. Jazz
6. Contemporary traditional music
7. Art music since 1910.

Students **must** study Area of study 1: Western classical tradition 1650–1910 and choose **two** from Areas of study 2–7. (i.e. you would carry on the JAZZ covered in Y12 and choose another AOS) This unit is worth 40%.

Unit 5 (Performing) includes a choice of performing as a soloist or performing using music technology or a combination of the two. The minimum grade at A2 is Grade 5 but to access the higher marks Grade 7 or above is required. A total of 10 minutes of playing time is required. This unit is worth 35%.

Unit 6 (2 Compositions) offers a choice of either compositional techniques or free composition / pastiche composition or arranging music in response to a brief set by the examination board. This unit is worth 25%. Typically in Y12 students would finish the free choice composition and in Y13 undertake the composition set by the board.

Is there anything else I need to know?

Subjects such as English, Modern Languages, History, Art, Theatre Studies and vocational courses in Media Studies or Performing Arts complement GCE Music very well. Some students choose to combine GCE Music with Physics or Mathematics so that they can apply for higher education courses in Music Technology.

The Advanced GCE qualification is a gateway to further study for a first degree or diploma at a music college, university or conservatoire. It may also provide a useful starting point for a career in the music industry, the media, arts management, teaching and the theatre.