

KS4 Curriculum: GCSE Music (AQA)

In Music and Music Technology we aim to nurture and inspire enquiring and creative minds. In the KS4 curriculum, alongside the GCSE specification requirements, we teach how Music works so that students are equipped for a lifetime of musical understanding. Our expectation is that everyone should be able to develop and feel challenged as a musician within the classroom every lesson regardless of their starting point and as such, we place no restrictions on who can access the GCSE course. Music Technology is used as a tool to develop the musician not as an end in itself and we are mindful to utilise technology to provide a pathway onto A Level study. Students study a range of repertoire from the four Areas of Study and beyond that enables them to encounter and explore music from a breadth of traditions and cultures.

We do not view classroom music lessons in isolation. Students are offered the opportunity to learn a musical instrument and engage with our co-curricular programme. Learning an instrument, playing and/or singing together beyond the classroom offers many benefits both in terms of developing as a musician but also supporting students to become part of our school community. Public performances allow parents and friends to see the difference that being part of the Music family makes to students in forming mature working relationships and lifelong friendships.

Homework

Homework tasks are set on a weekly basis and provide an opportunity at this level to:

1. Complete composition coursework under controlled conditions
2. Prepare for performance coursework either via instrumental/vocal practice or through developing their technology-based work.
3. Develop the skills, language and contextual knowledge required for the 'understanding music' paper.

Students may be expected to attend staff support sessions in order to complete composition coursework (30% of the course) and/or technology-based performance work.

It is also highly recommended that GCSE level Musicians attend at least one co-curricular music making rehearsal each week to develop ensemble playing skills; stamina; skills in sight-reading; development of intonation and tone and all the other benefits associated with group music making.

The Music department aims to provide opportunities to broaden understanding of the subject through participation and attendance at live music events in and beyond school.

Feedback & Assessment

Assessments are designed to support students to make progress towards exam board requirements.

Unit 1 – Listening and Understanding (40% of the course): Students will undertake mock exams in June (Year 10) and Feb/March (Year 11). There will be other opportunities throughout the course to undertake partial-papers to assess students understanding of the elements, areas of study, aural skills and set works that comprise this paper.

Unit 2 – Performance (30% of the course): Students will be assessed on a range of formal and informally recorded performances using exam board marking criteria. In particular, there are mock performance exams in June of Year 10 and ‘final’ performance exams in October of Year 11. We recognise that some students benefit from a formal exam or event recording whilst others prefer an informal approach to performance – we will always make accommodations for every student. We also fully utilise the technology-based options for performance which allow students who have less developed instrumental skill to access the full range of marks available.

Unit 3 – Composition (30% of the course): Students will be assessed on a mini-composition tasks as well as the two pieces they develop for their final submission.

Students receive feedback throughout the course in the following ways:

Verbal feedback is provided regularly to individuals throughout the creative process, it is always targeted and linked to student starting points and may also be given to small groups and the whole class based on shared needs. Students will typically receive feedback on some aspect of the course every lesson; during preparation for, and after each performance recording and after every composition coursework submission.

Written feedback may be provided via Teams, email or on paper. It will typically feature 3 areas to develop and improve composition and/or performance work. Whole group written feedback is often provided for listening papers focusing on common misconceptions and poorly answered questions. Written feedback will be provided as required for performance work and typically 3 times during the composing process.

Peer feedback is used to discuss work in progress; it is structured, modelled and connected to assessment criteria and the mark scheme.

How Can Parents Help

There are several ways in which parents can support learning in Music.

First and foremost we want students to be open-minded and willing to explore music that is both familiar and unfamiliar to them – there is a lot of music out there to enjoy and appreciate. We hope that as parents, you will be forthcoming in sharing your own musical interests with students, playing them the music you love and sharing with your children why you love it – and of course, if you get the opportunity to take your child to a concert, nothing beats live music.

We hope too that you might consider encouraging your child to learn a musical instrument. There are many benefits to learning an instrument beyond its impact on just a student’s musical abilities – you can find out more [in this video](#). For the parents of students who do learn instruments, encouraging your child to practise regularly also plays an important role. There is more information available about the instrumental tuition we offer at Huntington [on this page](#) of the Huntington School Music website.

There are lots of opportunities for students to get involved in our regular co-curricular programme as well as our special events (e.g. our annual Arts Festival). We hope you will encourage your child to be part of our regular weekly ensemble work - [click here](#) to see which ensembles our students can join.

Finally, as you will read below, we will set extended learning to enable students to develop their skills in performing, composing, listening and analysing. Supporting your child with this work and asking them questions about what they are learning will benefit them.

	P21/P22 Lessons	P23 Lesson	Assessment
Term 1	Unit 2: Ensemble Skills (5 lessons) Students revisit 'These Days' from year 9 and work in small groups to arrange, rehearse, refine and perform a cover version of the song.	Unit 2: Sequenced Realised Performance (7 lessons) Students sequence a performance of Billie Jean, developing skills in score-reading, aural perception, sequencing, mixing and analysing.	Ensemble performance. Billie Jean performances.
	Unit 1: Elements 1 (7 lessons) Students revise and develop their understanding of the following musical elements: Forces, Tonality, Harmony (1-3) and Melody. Lessons focus on contextualising musical language in sound.	Unit 3: Comp Skills 1 (5 lessons) Students explore basic composition skills through the completion of mini-composition tasks focussing on timbre, designing chord sequences, writing basslines, melody and counter melody lines and writing idiomatic drum kit parts.	Listening assessment (Elements 1). Comp mini-task. Solo Performance
Term 2	Unit 1: Elements 2 (7 lessons) Students revise and develop their understanding of the following musical elements: Metre and Tempo, Dynamics, Texture, Rhythmic Devices, Voices, MT Effects. Lessons focus on contextualising musical language in sound	Unit 3: (Free) Comp to a Brief (7 lessons) Students undertake workshops based on composing to a brief. Compositional devices relating to each brief are explored: Crime Theme: metre, modes, pedal notes. EDM: minor chord progressions, rhythmic part writing, synth tricks	Listening assessment (Elements 2) Comp mini-brief outcomes
	Unit 3: (Free) Comp to a Brief (5 lessons) Students undertake workshops based on songwriting by looking at lyric writing, developing chord progression through harmonic rhythm and chord inversions, vocal melody writing and arranging.	Unit 2: Technology Based Ensemble (5 lessons) Students undertake a small-scale multi-track recording through sequencing and recording parts for the song Clocks.	"Clocks" recording Ensemble Performance
Term 3	Unit 1: Areas of Study (6 lessons) Students explore 6 areas of study: Classical orchestral works; Rock Music of 60s/70s; Pop Music since 1990; African Fusion; Latin American Music and Minimalism.	Unit 3: Free Composition (6 lessons) Students begin work on a free composition of their own choice although they are encouraged to continue to explore the TV Theme; EDM and Songwriting briefs.	Composition Draft #1
	Unit 1: Exam Preparation (6 lessons) Students complete their year 10 listening exam and mock performances. Lessons will focus on revision and developing skills for particular styles of question (e.g. pitch dictation) as well as post exam feedback and practice.	Unit 3: Free Composition (6 lessons) Students continue to work on their free composition.	Year 10 listening exam Mock Performances Free Composition

	P21/P22 Lessons	P21-23 Lesson	P23 Lesson	Assessment
Term 4	Unit 1: Set Works (6 lessons) Students explore how Mozart's Clarinet Concerto 3 rd movement works. Students examine the context and Mozart's use of elements, before building skills in tackling exam-style questions.	Unit 3: Comp to a Brief (8 lessons) Students explore the exam boards' composition briefs by undertaking workshops looking at models, use of musical elements and related compositional devices. Towards the end of this process students should be in a position to make a choice about which brief to choose.		Set works practice questions Performance exams
	Unit 1: Set Works (6 lessons) Students explore how the 3 selected songs from Paul Simon's Graceland album work. Students examine context and use of the musical elements before tackling exam-style questions.	Unit 1: Area of Study (8 lessons) Students explore 8 areas of study: Handel Anthems; Romantic Requiem; Broadway; Film & Gaming Music; Blues; Folk; Copland and Bartok/Kodaly	Unit 3: Comp to a Brief (8 lessons) Students work on their chosen composition to a brief.	Composition draft #1 Set works practice questions
Term 5	Unit 1: Areas of Study (6 lessons) Students explore the remaining areas of study: Chopin/Schumann; British Folk; Reggae; 20 th Century Brits.	Unit 2&3: Paperwork (6 lessons) Students work on completing	Unit 3: Comp to a Brief (6 lessons) Students complete work on their chosen composition to a brief.	Composition Final Coursework Paperwork
	Unit 1: Set Works (6 lessons) Students revise Mozart and Paul Simon set works focusing on developing writing skills for extended answers.	Unit 1: Elements (6 lessons) Students revise musical "elements 1" and also practice key aural skills such as melodic/rhythmic dictation.	Unit 1: Areas of Study (6 lessons) Students revise Areas of Study covered in Year 10.	Year 11 mock exam
Term 6	Unit 1: Set Works (6 lessons) Students continue to revise Mozart and Paul Simon set works.	Unit 1: Elements (6 lessons) Students revise musical "elements 2" and also practice key aural skills such as melodic/rhythmic dictation.	Unit 1: Areas of Study (6 lessons) Students continue to revise Areas of Study covered in Year 11.	Practice papers (as required)
	Final Revision			