

A student's guide to the GCSE in

MUSIC



What is GCSE Music all about?

GCSE Music is about making and listening to music. It covers performing, composing and listening in a wide variety of musical styles - popular music, world music, and classical music. There are opportunities to use music technology such as sequencing and recording.

Will I enjoy this course?

You will enjoy this course if you want to study a subject that

- involves performing
- involves listening to all kinds of music
- involves composing or arranging music
- gives you the opportunity to play music with others in e.g., rock groups, bands, orchestras or local choirs
- gives you the opportunity to learn more about and use music technology



How does it follow on from what I have learned before?

You will improve your skills in performing and composing different types of music. You will listen to a wide variety of music and learn more about how and why it was written and/or performed.



What about exams?

There is one exam in the summer. You will listen to a CD and answer questions on the four Areas of Study which cover popular music, classical music and music from around the world.

Is there any coursework?

Yes. You will perform (play, sing or sequence) three pieces altogether. One of the pieces will be a solo in any style and on any instrument. The other two performances will be with other players. These performances may take place in the classroom, in school music groups or outside school. They will be recorded and marked by your teacher.

You may offer sequencing as part of your solo performing, and sequencing and recording for performing during the course.

You will also compose two pieces according to a brief written by the teacher or yourself. These will be in a form or style that you have chosen from a list which includes the 12 bar blues, reggae, African drumming, variations, rondo, experimental or electronic music and club dance remix. If you like, you could write a song for a musical.

If you are interested in music technology, you may use computer sequences, multitrack recorders, digital recording, and sampling in the preparation and presentation of compositions. You may also use technology to record work and to produce printed scores and extract parts.

What other skills might I develop?

As well as covering Music at GCSE level, the course will enable you to develop Key Skills in Communication and Information Technology which could be useful to you in whatever you do afterwards. In particular, GCSE Music offers opportunities to develop the wider Key skills in working with others (e.g. taking part in rehearsals, performing).

What could I do next with GCSE Music?

GCSE Music is a good preparation for further musical study and a solid foundation for the AS/A Levels in Music and Music Technology as well as BTEC National Diplomas (in Music, Popular Music and Music Technology) and the new Vocational A-Level in Performing Arts. You may wish to take a GCSE in Music for its own sake, perhaps to form the basis of a future interest. Alternatively, you may wish to go into a job where it is useful to have had experience of music or where you will need to use some of the skills developed during this course. These might include careers in the music industry, publishing, entertainment and teaching or any job which involves communication and expressive skills.