



Curriculum Newsletter

MUSIC

"With music, one's whole future life is brightened".

Music allows us to express ourselves creatively and it is a valuable subject for all to study whether you are a gifted musician or have never engaged in music outside of school. We foster young musicianship for all students, through a wealth of engaging and creative music-making opportunities. We have an integrated curriculum approach to **performing music** (as a soloist or in an ensemble), **composing music** (using traditional and ICT resources) and **listening to/appraising music**. Students will explore music from across the world with an appreciation of their own culture and heritage as well as the many influences that have shaped music across place and time. All students perform, compose, and study many different genres, styles, and musical traditions, broadening their outlook on life and the world.

Curriculum intent

Music is all around us and the music curriculum is fully inclusive. It encourages active involvement in different forms of music making, developing a sense of togetherness and achievement. Every student is inspired to believe in their potential and aim high. The curriculum is demanding and progressive so that all students can perform, compose, and appreciate styles of music with increasing confidence and self-esteem to hone their enjoyment, core knowledge and skills.

Students enjoy music because it is varied, fast paced and fun. Throughout their musical career, students develop the ability to perform with accuracy, fluency, and expression. They compose music for a range of purposes and audiences, and they study familiar and unfamiliar pieces of music looking at its features and purpose. Opportunities are built into every music lesson to secure the need to recall and retrieve previous learning so

that it can be embedded. This enables students to apply knowledge, skills, and musical understanding with increasing confidence. Students are encouraged to use their creativity to explore the ways in which music affects us all, and they become equipped with the skills to evaluate their own music making and the music making of others.

The staff that teach music are encouraging and supportive. Durham Music Service and Musicworks staff also visit daily to deliver instrumental/vocal lessons. We can offer lessons for upper strings, lower strings, woodwind, brass, guitar, drums, voice, and keyboard. Students can participate in a wide variety of extra-curricular activities which run on lunchtimes and after-school, including Voices (choir) in each year group, keyboard clubs, string and wind groups and musical productions. Students can also rehearse after school in any of our facilities if they wish to practise their instrument or work as an ensemble. Students are invited to take part in performances both inside and outside of school, including at The Sage, Gateshead and Lumley Castle.

Working with others while making music is key to developing a sense of community and students gain intangible experiences from working alongside other students in different year groups. Trust and school concerts, musicals and community events enable students to show case their many skills and talents.

By linking the learning from classroom to practice room to ensemble and beyond, the curriculum provides real, relevant musical experiences for all of our students.

Key Stage 3 Curriculum

In **Key Stage 3**, the curriculum develops practical music making in terms of musical **styles**, musical

genres, and musical **traditions**. This offers a progressive means of studying using a range of thinking skills:

- styles (closed thinking, for example a style of music such as Reggae which has specific musical characteristics/features and use of elements),
- genres (guided thinking, for example film music or dance music, which has a range of styles but is composed for a particular purpose) and,
- traditions (open thinking, such as ensemble performing or arrangements which cover ways of working and cut across both styles and genres).

Within each unit, the curriculum is delivered in either in a keyboard room, rehearsal room or an ICT Music based room. This enables delivery in a traditional, practical way (live performing and composing opportunities) and a 'studio-musician' way of working (with a midi keyboard and computer, suitable for pre-recording and multi-tracking compositions/arrangements).

Key Stage 4 Curriculum

For those that choose to study music for GCSE, we follow the **EDUQAS specification**.

In **Key Stage 4**, 'teaching to the top' is vital in music and particularly in musical analysis and appraising lessons. The content is ambitious.

The curriculum builds upon the knowledge and understanding of music theory, building the skills needed for composing individual pieces of work. Both solo and ensemble performing techniques and skills are improved, both in the classroom and practice room. The appraising curriculum covers a wide variety of genres and styles in a wider context. The **Western Classical Tradition** forms the basis of **Musical Forms and Devices** (area of study 1), and the curriculum explores these forms and devices further in the other three areas of study. **Music for Ensemble** (area of study 2) looks more closely at texture and sonority. **Film Music** (area of study 3) and **Popular Music** (area of study 4) looks at contrasting styles and genres of music. Detailed analysis of two set works – one from the western

classical tradition and one from the popular music culture allows for deep exploration.

In **Year 10**, students will develop their knowledge and understanding of music theory, building the skills needed for composing. They will develop independent practice skills as they prepare for solo and ensemble performances, and they will study the set works and Areas of Study.

In **Year 11**, students will complete all aspects of their performing and composing controlled assessments (60% of the final grade). They will complete analysing the set works and consolidate their knowledge and understanding of the set works studied in Year 10.

This coherent curriculum, designed by experienced music staff, allows learners to appreciate the diverse heritage of music, in order to promote personal, social, intellectual and cultural development.

Key Stage 5 Curriculum

For those that choose to study music for **A-Level**, we follow the **EDUQAS specification**.

The word "music" covers a huge range of different styles and genres, and each one of us has our own preferences and interests. The A-Level course recognises this through the varied areas of study and the choice of routes through the 2 years.

Similar to GCSE, the course has three components: Performing, Composing and Appraising (Listening).

- Areas of Study include the development of the symphony; a choice of Rock and Pop music, Jazz or Musical Theatre as well as music in the 20th and 21st century.
- Performing is assessed by a visiting examiner, allowing students to demonstrate their communication of the music to the listener, giving a real sense of occasion.
- Composition is assessed through two pieces: one written in a Western Classical Style in response to a brief, and one free piece which

can be in any style, allowing students to demonstrate and develop their personal specialisms.

- Students at A-Level can choose whether they wish to be assessed on a longer performance or submit a third composition, whichever they feel their strength as a musician lies.

Studying music can open doors ...

Employers and higher education value Music! It shows you have committed a lot of time to improving skills, have perseverance, have the confidence to perform in front of others and 'stand out from the crowd'. Not everyone has your talent! Studying music can give you a great mix of social, technical and business skills, which can all help in acquiring the seven skills that define employability; put together in the *working towards your future* report by the National Union of Students and the Confederation of British Industry. You will develop excellent performing skills, presentation skills, analytical skills, teamwork, self-confidence and a life-long appreciation of music. Dr Robert Adlington, associate professor of music at the University of Nottingham points out that: "While some of these skills are acquired by students of all subjects, for example, team-work, good communication and self-management, music students have an edge."

The music industry is a big business and offers a huge range of opportunities in many different careers. Equipped with an awareness of musical genres and styles; performing, listening and composing skills; and music technology proficiency, students will be well equipped to pursue a musical profession.