Year 8 Options 2020

GCSE Music

Examination Board: AQA
Course Specification: 8271

What is GCSE Music all about?

GCSE Music is constantly evolving, inspiring creativity and expression in a way that no other subject can. This specification is relevant and contemporary which also offers the chance to study a wider range of musical genres, with more opportunities for practical learning. A passion for performing on your instrument should be the reason for taking GCSE music. Students must be able to have instrumental lessons on their instrument during the GCSE course. Each student has different learning styles and musical tastes and this qualification will allow students of all abilities and backgrounds to enjoy. The ability to read standard notation is not essential at the start of the course but students will be expected to read music by Year 11 due to the 40% weighting of the exam.

Course Structure:

Component 1: Understanding Music 40%

Students complete a written paper with listening exercises using excerpts of music. The paper is 1hr 30 minutes and there are two sections in the paper. Section A contains listening questions only and Section B contains contextual understanding questions.

Component 2: Performing Music 30%

Students give two performances on their instrument: one individually and one as an ensemble. There will be opportunities to use performances as a basis for workshops.

Component 3: Composing Music 30%

Students compose two compositions:
Composition 1: Composition to a brief set by the Exam Board (36 marks)
Composition 2: Free composition (36 marks)

How will I be assessed?

- Component 1 is an external exam which lasts 1 hour 30 minutes and is worth 40% of the GCSE Music Exam.
- Component 2 is internally assessed and is worth 30% of the GCSE Music Exam.
- Component 3 is internally assessed and worth 30% of the GCSE Music Exam.

The 3 Year GCSE

Year 1 – Students will complete a foundation year in the subject developing musical skills as a group and bridging any gaps in knowledge that students may have. It will involve practical lessons exploring different musical styles and learning how to compose using their specific musical features. Students will also develop analytical skills through extending their theoretical knowledge and applying it to studying set works. It will be expected that students are regularly practising their instrument at home.
Year 2 – Students will start the analysis of the set works as prescribed by the exam board and complete their first composition. They will complete a number of solo performances throughout the year to show their progress in musical performance.
Year 3 – Students will complete the analysis of the remaining set works and apply their knowledge to exam style questions in preparation for the examination in May/June. They will also complete their second and final composition and perform their solo and ensemble pieces for assessment in March 2018.

What could I do next with GCSE Music?

Music beyond the classroom is a very diverse field and there are many pathways you can follow. GCSE Music offers a solid foundation for progression to other music studies, including A-level Music, and often to a music-related career. Our course provides the opportunity for students to develop valuable transferable skills such as self-confidence, concentration, creativity, evaluation and team work