

GCSE Music

Exam Board and Title: Edexcel Music

Lessons per week: 3 x 50 minutes

What is GCSE Music?

GCSE Music is an exciting course which covers a wide range different styles and approaches to music. Over two years students will look at music by a wide range of composers and songwriters: Jeff Buckley, Moby, Miles Davis, Capercaillie, Chopin, Mozart, Bernstein and others. There will be music from India and Africa, jazz and folk traditions and many other styles and parts of the world. There is an emphasis on practical work and performing, composing and the use of technology and computers form a major part of the course.

How will your Music studies be assessed?

There are three main elements:

- Performing (30% under controlled conditions)
- Composing (30% completed under controlled conditions)
- Listening (40% exam)

Performing

You will play or sing as part of an ensemble and as a soloist throughout your studies. These performances will be recorded, so it is important to prepare properly for them. Don't worry if you haven't taken practical music exams – a willingness to play and perform at any level in any style is what is important! However you will need to be regularly playing your instrument or singing, willing to bring this with you to school (yes even on the bus!) and to fully participate in the music-making which will be at the heart of every lesson.

Composing

Lots of different styles of music are explored, giving you a chance to experiment with different ideas and you can submit your music in any style. Often it will grow out of the composers and artists we look at in class, but there will be freedom to follow your own musical interests too! There will be a combination of group and solo work during lessons, but all compositions you write in class will need to be entirely your own work. Compositions must be recorded and written down, but there are good Music ICT resources in the Music Department to help with this. Computers can even help you perform your music!

Listening

As a GCSE musician you will be introduced to a variety of different musical styles, artists and composers through each area of study and this will help to develop your knowledge and understanding for the listening part of the course. This will be assessed through an exam in which you are played music from two CDs taken from the set works we will have studied together. You need to know a little music theory at this point, but this forms a part of lessons and there is usually an additional voluntary after school theory club for those who need a bit more help!

What about the department?

We are a very friendly department and there is always loads going on. Around 80 students regularly have instrumental lessons from our visiting team of around 15 peripatetic music staff. There are lots of extra curricula activities which have recently included: classical guitar ensemble, Bins junk percussion, recorder consort, flute choir, windband, choir, jazzband, string quartet, brass ensemble, guitar club, cello quartet, rock groups, jazz combos and more! There are regular workshops for GCSE students which have included the following to date: Bhangra drumming, mixing sessions, rock guitar masterclasses, African drumming. . . . Beauchamp students sometimes lead workshop sessions themselves in county primary schools. There have been a number of shows recently including Stepping Out, Blues Brothers and Guys and Dolls. There are also regular projects with the Philharmonia orchestra, with whom we are a partner school. These include exciting digital projects using cutting edge IT in music. All in all, there is loads to get involved with!