
Course highlights:

GCSE Music is a flexible course, offering a broad range of musical styles to analyse and appreciate. It allows for the use of music technology and encourages all to evaluate their own and others' music. It looks to inspire and engage students in music making and performing (as soloists and with others) and allows independent skills to be developed. These are transferable to other curriculum areas.

Learning styles used:

This course will suit students who enjoy learning in a variety of different ways. Both practical, hands on based tasks as well as more traditional theory based activities are undertaken, including how to compose using Logic Pro 9 and Sibelius 6 software on Apple iMac platforms. Understanding how to read and analyse music from a range of different cultures / periods of history is a significant part of the course.

How is it assessed?

Non-examined assessments (NEA coursework) form part of the course and these can be conducted at any point during the three years, but are submitted in the summer of the final year.

There are three main assessment areas; Component 1 is performance based (worth 30% of the total grade), Component 2 is composition based (worth 30%) and Component 3 is a written examination (worth 40%).

For the performance aspects, students are required to demonstrate both solo and ensemble playing skills. The creation of two compositions will form a small portfolio. Eight 'Set Works' across four Areas of Study are analysed over the duration of the course and questions relating to these alongside other theoretical tasks form the written examination.

Other Information:

It is essential that students who opt for GCSE music are currently taking instrumental lessons (either in school or out of school). Grade 2/3 standard on any instrument at the start of the course is a requirement. The minimum standard expected by Year 11 is Grade 4.

A team of visiting instrumental teachers from Services for Education (Birmingham Music Service) offer drum kit, acoustic and electric guitar, keyboard/piano, vocal, strings, brass and woodwind lessons. Lessons in school are partly subsidised by the Academy to encourage full and active participation.

Sixth form pathways & careers available from this course:

The GCSE Music qualification leads directly onto A-Level / vocational music courses. Careers in the music industry are varied and include performers, composers, technicians and management roles.

Employability Skills:

The multi-disciplinary skills taught are much sought after by employers and music graduates make up a large proportion of many key sectors including finance, law and consultancy.

A range of skills are developed during the course, including working as a team (in musical ensembles), the application of IT (music software) and communication and literacy (analysis of musical scores and being able to write descriptively about music). Regular opportunities are also created for reflection (self and peer assessment of work).

Course combinations:

Any other subject would link well with this course, but particularly the Creativity & Design GCSE subjects.

Please see Mr Davie or Miss Tolley in E1 to discuss this course.