WHITGIFT

MUSIC CURRICULUM

Teaching and Learning Policy

The teaching and learning policy of the department is in line with that of the whole-school policy which is to be found centrally in the School Policy Bank.

Classroom expectations

Teachers are required to set high expectations of pupil's conduct and quality of work, in line with school policies. The practical nature of music requires pupils to be reminded additionally of the following: respect for classroom equipment; respect for others working in the building (noise levels); good conduct when working remotely in a group; mutual respect and support for each other's creative endeavours.

LOWER SCHOOL

Ethos and nature of the curriculum

The Music Curriculum at Whitgift is a progressive curriculum where our aim is to develop pupils' musical understanding through engagement with real musical tasks via skills based projects. Musical understanding is thus developed as a combination of knowledge and skills via practical music-making wherever possible and the opportunities available as part of the co-curricular program form a reciprocal and natural link to classroom work.

Knowledge and skills are best gained through experience: sound before symbol. Yet for pupils to be able to successfully appraise what they hear they must gradually develop a firm knowledge of the musical concepts that they are experiencing and with which they are engaging. They must develop good listening skills and be able to relate what they hear by reference to knowledge via the application of proper musical vocabulary. The ability to describe and appraise can therefore form a link between the essential musical skills of listening, performing and creating. This is also essential for refinement and improvement and as part of assessment for learning.

Skills and knowledge

The aim is to make the pupils be musical, to understand music, to work as musicians. However, we are required in some way to try and measure both their attainment with musical skills and their musical knowledge. To this end there are skills objectives for each project. In addition there is a Lower School overview document which is designed to break-down topics into their assessed elemental components in such a way as to aid the measurement of the knowledge of these elements. The musical tasks within the projects deal with real musical situations wherever possible and the pupils gain knowledge by engaging with music, not with abstract concepts.

By the end of KS3 pupils should have an understanding of the complex interaction of all the elements and their expressive potential and be able to talk about them with clarity and confidence. At all stages we aim to foster in the pupils the ability to reflect expressively and in an articulate manner with specific reference to the music they create, hear and play. So in every year and as much as possible pupils either consciously or unconsciously will engage with all the elements via their explorations of music as an expressive medium.

Thus there are core areas of focus for each year and then new ones added in the next year:

Year	Core areas of focus
Lower 1st Form	Timbres, pulse and rhythm, simple dynamics, vocal skills, rhythmic notation
1st Form	Melody, simple improvisation, call and response, staff notation, singing, keyboard skills, more complex rhythms and textures
2nd Form	Chords and harmony, influence of elements on mood, scales (Western and non-Western)
3rd Form	Effective structures in composition, song structures, techniques for music and the moving image, Music and technology, reinforcing ability to talk about the expressive nature of elements and their combinations as developed over the past two or three years

It is intended that pupils will still engage with all the elements in every year and in almost all projects - they must because we aim to engage with real musical situations as much as possible. Also, the areas of focus are not intended as a limit but rather a foundation and so extension to other areas is always acceptable, indeed this will be necessary as part of differentiation and to stretch the most able. The thinking behind the focus areas is that there is a development of musical understanding as follows:

Sounds → Rhythm → Melody → Harmony → Integration via structures



Projects

The course is delivered in projects which cover a variety of musical genres and cultures and promote the development of musical skills: listening; performing; composing and arranging. Within the projects pupils will have the opportunity to use Music Technology and ICT, to engage with notations, to sing and perform on a variety of instruments and to improvise and compose their own music in a variety of contexts. The projects therefore focus on musical skills with reference to the overall areas of focus for the given year. The skills objectives are absolutely fundamental. They will be assessed at the end of each project in a summative fashion, and developed with the aid of formative assessment during the course of the project. The order of projects is shown here:

Year	Term	Project name	Weeks
L1	M1	Rhythm and Pulse/Singing	6/7 weeks
	M2	Instruments of the Orchestra/Singing	6/7 weeks
	L1	Singing/BBC Ten Pieces	5/6 weeks
	L2	Singing/BBCTen Pieces	5/6 weeks
	T1	Listening skills/revision and exam	1 week
	T2	Programme Music	4 weeks
1*	M1	Building Bricks/Singing	6/7 lessons
	M2	Keyboards/Singing	6/7 lessons
	L1	Melodic composition	5/6 lessons
	L2	Pachelbel's Canon	5/6 lessons
	T1	Samba	5/6 lessons
	T2	Exam	1 week
	T2	Jazz and Improvisation	4 lessons
2	2	Mood and Music: The Planets	Half term each
	M1	Mood and Music: Moonscape/Carol arrangement	
	M2	The Blues	
	L1	Salsa	
	L2	Variations/Exam	
	T1	Electronica	
	T2	Music and the Moving Image: Soundtracks	
3	3	Music and the Moving Image: Idents, Adverts	Half term each
	M1	Composing to a brief	
	M2	Fusions (ICT)	
	L1	Musical Theatre	
	L2	Fanfares/exam	
	T1	Composing to a brief	
	T2	Half term each	

Delivery and timetable

In the Lower First, pupils receive one 90 minute lesson per week. First and Second Form pupils receive one 45 minute lesson per week. In the Third Form Music is an optional subject (pupils must select two choices from Art, Drama, Music, and Design and Technology) but those who do choose it receive one 90 minute lesson per week.

There are three terms in each year and from year to year the exact length of each term may vary but as a rule of thumb there are normally 36 calendar weeks in the school year.

Two teaching weeks are always lost each year due to internal exams – the final week of Trinity 1 when pupils take their Music exam, and the first week of Trinity 2 when they are off timetable taking other subject exams.

Assessment

The majority of assessment in the department is formative and this forms a natural part of the teaching. It is also imperative that pupils themselves engage in providing formative assessment to each other and for themselves by self-assessment. These activities are built into the schemes of work. Self- and peer-assessment can be done in the lesson (or from home, provided audio/video files are uploaded to Firefly/OneNote).

The Music Department continues to issue grades for attainment and effort to all pupils every half-term. These are on the Whitgift scale of A-E. These grades may also be used for written homework for KS3 within the department.

Targets are issued just after the halfway point in a project. At the end of each project a summative assessment must be made and this is done with reference to the specific tasks set. Therefore, there is a level playing field for summative assessment and it is clear how the criteria for assessment can be applied to the task fairly for all pupils. The mark received for Performing and Composing is then converted into a Whitgift Grade.

The effort grade should take into consideration the potential of the pupil and thus can show where a pupil of considerable talent has simply coasted through (e.g. E), or for example, where a pupil with lower ability has actually done really well given his potential (e.g. A).

All schemes of work for Y6 – Y9 are kept on Sharepoint. Throughout KS3 work is project based with one project normally lasting one half-term. Resources are also kept on Sharepoint and teachers are expected to download and print their own resources where appropriate.

Each year there are internal examinations normally in the first week of the last half-term of the year. The papers are set internally and written by the music staff. Papers and mark-schemes are kept on Sharepoint.

GCSE

The Edexcel Board GCSE is taught to two groups in each of years 10 and 11. These groups are of mixed ability the members of each being decided simply by option block selection. The current average is around 20 boys per year taking GCSE Music.

All pupils are following the same specification.

Syllabus

The syllabus comprises of Composing, Performing and Listening. These elements are explored through four areas of study:

> Instrumental Music

> Vocal Music

> Music for Stage and Screen

> Fusions

Pupils study a selection of set works for each area of study, ranging from extracts of Bach and Purcell, to John Williams and Afro Celt Sound System.

For the coursework, candidates must compose and submit two compositions related to different areas of study. In performance they must play one solo piece and one ensemble piece both of about grade 4 in standard or higher. The Listening is assessed through a written paper based on recorded extracts of the set works, which are also used as the basis for longer questions testing more detailed knowledge.

In the Lower Fifth, the areas of study are examined and explored and the students compose in a variety of styles and learn to listen analytically. They also perform music, taking part in solo and ensemble performances. The Upper Fifth concentrate on refining the compositions for submission and preparation for the performances and listening examination.

The course is wide and varied, giving boys the opportunity to explore a variety of music as well as develop their musicianship. There is also extensive use of Music Technology and Sibelius 4 notation software is used to produce the compositional scores. In addition Mac computers running Garageband and Logic are available in the Music ICT suite for composition. GCSE Music is a vital stepping stone to the study of Music and Music Technology in the Sixth Form.

SIXTH FORM

In the Sixth Form pupils have the option to pursue Music via the International Baccalaureate or A level. Music Technology is not currently available as an A level course but can also be explored as part of the IB, where composition and performance using Music Technology are options.

Use of ICT in Music Curriculum

Students are actively encouraged to use notation software (Sibelius Ultimate, Noteflight) and sequencing software (Logic Pro, Soundtrap) in composition and arranging projects. Academic Music Teachers are able to advise on the most appropriate platform for the students and given task.

All students have access to a school laptop, enabling ICT to be fluently embedded in the Music Curriculum.

