



GCSE Music

60% Coursework 40% Listening Exam

There are three parts to the GCSE course – Performing, Composing and Listening and Appraising.

Performing (30% coursework)

Students must be able to perform on an instrument or be prepared to sing. They will perform two pieces, one as a soloist and one as part of an ensemble (two or more players). The pieces are recorded, assessed by their teacher and then moderated by an external examiner.

Composing (30% coursework)

This involves creating two pieces of music based on styles of music, composers, eras and techniques studied during the course. Small tasks will be carried out alongside each area studied which can then be developed into a larger scale piece of work. Each student needs to submit two compositions which are assessed by their teacher and moderated externally.

Listening and Appraising (40% exam)

This is the examined part of the course which happens at the end of the two years. Students will listen to various extracts of music (they have studied) and comment on their features, style, structure and instrumentation. The exam is 1½ hours long.

BTEC Level 2 Extended Certificate in Music

The BTEC Music course is created from studying a number of units, which count towards the end grade of a Pass (C), Merit (M) or Distinction (A).

Three units have to be submitted for moderation, and one is an external exam set by Edexcel.

Units 1 and 2 are compulsory, and have to be studied and passed in order to gain a grade. Staff can then choose another two 30 credit units in accordance with the needs of the group in order to make up the full course.

Sample units for study

Unit 1 – The Music Industry

Compulsory unit – Externally assessed examination

Students look into the different areas and job roles within the Music Industry and find out how they relate to each other. Their understanding is assessed externally in the form of an exam.

Unit 2 – Managing a Music Product

Compulsory unit – coursework

Students plan, promote, develop and carry out a 'Music Product' – most recently the Kingswood Live Lounge. The work includes research into suitable venues, equipment, audience and health and safety whilst looking into teamwork, communication and logistical skills. The final 'product' is recorded and used as evidence along with an evaluation.

Unit 4 – Exploring Musical Composition

Optional unit – coursework

Students develop their compositional skills by working in a variety of styles to find their strengths. Simple starting points (melodies, rhythms, chord patterns) are extended and manipulated through the study of other composers to help create a fully formed piece of music.

Unit 5 – Introducing Music Performance

Optional unit – coursework

Students have the opportunity to demonstrate their performing ability as a soloist. They will learn about choosing suitable pieces for their instrument, ability and their audience as well as researching (and using) practise techniques before performing to an audience, and then reviewing their work.

Unit 7 – Introducing Music Sequencing

Optional unit – coursework

Students extend their sequencing knowledge through the composition of a computer based piece of music. They will develop their understanding of various techniques such as panning, quantizing, automation effects and creating their own synthesized sounds such as a wobble bass. This variety of studio techniques will allow them create music in the styles of Dance, Drum and Bass, R&B and Dub Step.