

What are the fundamental concepts of music?

Music at Key Stage 3 is built around several fundamental concepts that form the core of the subject. These include:

1. **Pitch** – Understanding melody, harmony, and how notes interact to create musical expression.
2. **Rhythm and Timing** – Learning about beats, patterns, and tempo to develop a sense of structure and coordination.
3. **Dynamics** – Exploring volume and how variations in sound contribute to mood and atmosphere in music.
4. **Texture and Timbre** – Recognising how different instruments and voices combine to create unique sounds and layers within music.
5. **Structure and Form** – Identifying how musical pieces are organised, such as verse-chorus structures or classical forms like rondo or sonata.
6. **Notation and Theory** – Developing an understanding of musical notation, scales, chords, and key signatures to support composition and performance.
7. **Cultural and Historical Contexts** – Learning about the origins and evolution of music from diverse traditions and periods, fostering a deeper appreciation of global cultures.

These concepts are taught through a blend of practical and theoretical activities, ensuring students gain a solid foundation in music. Whether performing in ensembles, composing their own pieces, or analysing famous works, students apply these fundamental ideas to develop their musical skills and understanding.

By mastering these concepts, students not only grow as musicians but also build transferable skills like pattern recognition, creative thinking, and effective communication, which are invaluable in other subjects and future careers.

What topics will the pupils be studying in each year?

Year 7	Year 8	Year 9
Elements of Music	Blues Music	Film Music
Rhythm and Pulse	Theme and Variation	Music For Dance
Keyboard Skills and Theory 1	Saharan Sounds - Djembes	Gaming Music
Keyboard skills and Theory 2	Hooks and Riffs	Minimalism
Orchestral Instruments	All about the bass	What Makes a good song
Folk Music	Reggae	Ensemble skills

GCSE Music: Years 10 & 11

Listening and Appraising

Areas of Study:

1. Western Classical 1650-1900 Coronation Anthems Beethoven, Mozart & Haydn Romantic Piano Music Requiem
2. Popular Music Music of Broadway 60's & 70's Rock Film and Gaming music Pop music 90's-present
3. Traditional Music Blues 1920-1950 Fusion inc African / Caribbean Contemporary Latin Contemporary British Folk
4. Western Classical 1900 – Present Aaron Copland Arnold, Britten, Maxwell-Davies and Tavener Kodaly & Bartok Minimalism

Study Pieces: From 2025

'Beethoven', Symphony No.1, Movement 1

'Queen'
Bohemian Rhapsody
Seven Seas of Rhye
Love of My Life

Performance

Pupils develop their performance skills through weekly instrumental lessons and regular practice at home.

Throughout Years 10 and 11, pupils prepare for several recordings. These sessions help them become comfortable with the recording environment and provide valuable experience in refining a piece to performance standard, ensuring the best possible success in their final recital.

Each pupil is required to prepare one solo piece and one ensemble piece. In doing so, they build independence by taking responsibility for organising rehearsal times and coordinating with other performers.

The key skills developed during this component include:

- **Technical Ability** – Mastery of the instrument and performance techniques.
- **Accuracy** – Precision in pitch, intonation, and rhythm.
- **Interpretation** – Understanding and conveying the character and style of the music.
- **Expression** – Communicating emotion and dynamics through performance.
- **Muscle Memory** – Developing automaticity in playing through consistent practice.
- **Performance Management** – Strategies to manage anxiety and perform confidently.

This comprehensive approach ensures pupils are well-prepared for both their assessments and future musical opportunities.

Composition (free and to a brief)

Pupils begin exploring the art of composition in Year 10, working in a variety of styles, structures, and settings.

They gain hands-on experience using music notation software and through live group performance activities. This practical approach helps them build confidence and creativity in handling musical ideas. Key skills developed include:

- Constructing Melodies
- Devising Harmonic Progressions
- Modulating to Related Keys
- Counterpoint
- Rhythmic Development
- Structuring Work

In Year 11, pupils apply these skills to compose a piece in response to a brief set by AQA, choosing from a selection of four options. This structured process allows them to refine their abilities while showcasing their creativity and technical proficiency.

What key skills will the pupils develop over time?

Music provides students with an exceptional platform to develop a wide range of transferable skills, enhancing both academic and personal growth. These include:

- **Analysis and Research** – Investigating cultural, historical, and theoretical contexts of music.
- **Problem-Solving** – Overcoming challenges in composition, performance, and collaboration.
- **Teamwork and Leadership** – Collaborating with peers in group performances and taking the lead in organising rehearsals.
- **Creativity and Innovation** – Responding imaginatively to briefs and exploring new ideas.
- **Fine Motor Skills** – Developing coordination and muscle memory through instrument practice.
- **Time Management** – Meeting deadlines for performances, recordings, and composition tasks.
- **Confidence and Resilience** – Performing under pressure and embracing new challenges.

These skills align closely with the Millom Learner, linking fundamental musical concepts to key capacities:

Determined - Learning to play an instrument, mastering techniques, and building muscle memory requires patience, persistence, and self-motivation. Pupils work on a variety of instruments—keyboard, guitar, bass, drum kit, and more—developing the discipline needed to set and achieve goals. This determination helps foster self-belief and resilience, preparing pupils to meet challenges head-on.

Communicator - Music is a universal language, and pupils become proficient in expressing themselves through performance, composition, and analysis. They learn to use specialist musical vocabulary to articulate ideas clearly, broadening their verbal and literacy skills while understanding complex musical concepts.

Positive - Group activities in music encourage students to remain optimistic, even when facing challenges. Whether rehearsing in ensembles or problem-solving in composition, staying positive helps pupils build the social skills and perseverance needed to work collaboratively and support one another effectively.

Understanding - Exploring music from different cultures and historical periods broadens pupils' perspectives and deepens their empathy. They study global music traditions as well as iconic British works, from Handel's Coronation Anthems to the global influence of The Beatles. This fosters a richer appreciation of diversity and national identity.

Independent - Music demands independence and accountability. From organising rehearsal schedules to developing compositions, pupils take ownership of their progress. Independent practice, meeting deadlines, and delivering polished performances build self-reliance and prepare pupils for future challenges.

Collaborator - Music thrives on collaboration. Pupils work together in ensembles, group compositions, and cross-disciplinary projects with other art forms like film, animation, and creative writing. Respecting diverse ideas and combining individual efforts teaches teamwork and adaptability.

Investigator - Music nurtures curiosity and research skills. Pupils explore composers' biographies, historical movements, and global influences, learning to critically evaluate sources and present findings effectively. By connecting music to global events, they develop a layered understanding of its evolution and relevance.

Music education not only cultivates musicianship but also builds well-rounded individuals equipped with the skills to succeed in diverse contexts, both academic and professional.

How are all pupils learning in music?

In music, we are committed to ensuring that every pupil can access and benefit from a high-quality, inclusive education. Lessons are carefully designed to engage, challenge, and support students of all abilities, including those with special educational needs (SEN), as well as providing opportunities to stretch and challenge more able musicians.

We use a variety of teaching strategies to meet the diverse needs of our students. These include:

- **Practical Demonstrations** – Teachers model skills and techniques, breaking down complex tasks into manageable steps.
- **Audio and Visual Media** – High-quality resources engage multiple senses, making learning accessible for all.
- **Aural Transmission and Call and Response** – Techniques that support auditory learners and help students internalise rhythms and melodies.
- **Differentiated Worksheets and Notation** – Materials are adapted to reflect a range of abilities, ensuring that every pupil can engage with the content.
- **Teacher Guidance and Independent Activities** – Lessons strike a balance between guided practice and opportunities for pupils to work independently, fostering both confidence and autonomy.

For SEN pupils, we provide additional scaffolding, such as:

- Alternative knowledge-based units for students who may find practical work overwhelming.
- Adapted assessment criteria to provide meaningful opportunities for success.

Gifted and talented pupils are encouraged to excel through:

- Formal instrumental lessons and graded music examinations.
- Participation in concerts within the school and wider community.
- Auditions for local, county, and national ensembles and competitions.

- Opportunities to take part in leadership roles, such as supporting peers in group work or mentoring less experienced students.

Our lessons are designed with research-informed practices that support all learners:

1. **Activating Prior Knowledge (APK):** Each lesson begins by connecting to what pupils already know, ensuring they feel confident as they build on existing skills.
2. **Guided Practice:** Teachers provide clear instructions and demonstrations, gradually releasing responsibility to the pupils as their confidence grows.
3. **Reflection:** At the end of lessons, pupils evaluate their progress and discuss how well they completed tasks, reinforcing self-awareness and critical thinking.
4. **Independent and Collaborative Work:** Lessons include a mix of individual activities and group-based tasks, allowing pupils to develop both independence and teamwork skills.

Through adaptive teaching, a focus on inclusivity, and enrichment opportunities, music at our school ensures that every pupil has the opportunity to achieve their potential and thrive

How are pupils assessed in music?

Assessment in music is designed to monitor and support pupil progress at every stage, with a mix of formative and summative methods. These assessments ensure students develop the knowledge, skills, and understanding necessary to achieve their full potential.

Pupils are assessed in multiple ways to capture a broad range of skills and abilities:

- **Practical Assessments:** Performances as individuals or in groups, and original compositions.
- **Knowledge-Based Assessments:** Quiz-style questions, research tasks, and theory tests.
- **Aural Perception Assessments:** Listening exercises and notation-based tasks, tailored to varying levels of difficulty.
- **Evaluative Assessments:** End-of-unit evaluations and ongoing self-assessment through Assessment for Learning grids.

Assessment materials are differentiated, with multiple versions of tasks available to suit varying ability levels. This ensures all students are both supported and challenged appropriately.

Key Stage 3 (Years 7–9)

Assessments are structured to develop core musical skills and prepare pupils for the rigour of GCSE Music.

- **Formative Assessment:**

- Low-stakes quizzes to assess theoretical knowledge.
- Ongoing performance and composition feedback during lessons.
- Self and peer evaluations using structured criteria.
- **Summative Assessment:**
 - Performance tasks as individuals or in groups.
 - Composition assignments showcasing creativity and theoretical understanding.
 - Listening and analysis tasks based on studied works or genres.
- **Homework Expectations:**
 - Regular tasks to consolidate theory, such as completing worksheets or online exercises.
 - Practice logs to encourage consistent instrumental practice.
 - Research projects exploring musical genres, styles, or composers.

If students are not meeting expected standards, interventions may include:

- Targeted teacher support in lessons.
- Access to differentiated resources or simpler versions of performance tasks.
- Additional practice sessions during lunchtimes or after school.
- Focused theory workshops to address gaps in knowledge.

Key Stage 4 (Years 10-11: GCSE Music)

The curriculum builds on the skills from Key Stage 3, with an emphasis on performance, composition, and listening. Assessments follow the GCSE specification and mirror the structure of the final exam.

- **Formative Assessment:**
 - Regular teacher feedback on compositions and performances.
 - Mock exams for listening and analysis to prepare for formal assessments.
 - Group critiques to refine work-in-progress compositions.
- **Summative Assessment:**
 - Solo and ensemble performance recordings assessed using GCSE criteria.
 - Submission of compositions for grading, including free compositions and responses to set briefs.
 - End-of-topic listening exams to evaluate theoretical knowledge and aural skills.
- **Homework Expectations:**
 - Instrumental practice or composition tasks to refine coursework.
 - Theory exercises aligned with AQA's listening exam expectations.
 - Research assignments linked to areas of study, such as musical traditions or iconic works.

If students are not meeting expected standards, interventions may include:

- One-to-one support for practical skills or composition challenges.
- Guided practice plans for instrumental improvement.
- After-school or lunchtime revision sessions focused on theory and listening.
- Peer mentoring from more able musicians.

How can students progress in music?

The Key Stage 3 curriculum is carefully designed to build the foundations for GCSE Music, equipping students with essential theory, vocabulary, and practical skills. These skills naturally transfer to Key Stage 4, where students refine their ability to perform, compose, and evaluate music at a higher level.

Success at GCSE Music opens doors to Post-16 pathways, including A-levels, BTEC Diplomas, and vocational courses. These qualifications lead to further education in music or related careers, from performance and composition to roles in music technology, education, and beyond. Moreover, the transferable skills gained in music—such as creativity, discipline, and teamwork—are highly valued by employers and educational institutions in any field.

Music is a dynamic and diverse subject that offers students multiple pathways for progression both academically and professionally. Starting from Key Stage 4, pupils develop the foundational skills required for success in higher education and the music industry. The subject offers various opportunities at Key Stage 4, Key Stage 5, and beyond, while also supporting Careers Education, Information, Advice, and Guidance (CEIAG), opening up a wide range of career opportunities in the music sector and related industries.

At Key Stage 4, students can opt for GCSE Music, where they develop essential skills in performance, composition, and music theory. This prepares them for further study at Key Stage 5 or progression into the music industry. The GCSE curriculum emphasizes practical and creative skills, which are transferable to numerous career pathways. Pupils who excel in Key Stage 4 may consider pursuing more specialized music qualifications such as:

- **A-Level Music:** This offers a two-year study option, with a focus on performance (30%), composition (30%), and a listening paper alongside set works (40%). This qualification allows students to deepen their understanding of music theory, composition techniques, and historical contexts, and provides a strong foundation for university study or vocational training in the music industry.
- **Level 3 BTEC Diploma in Music:** Equivalent to three A-Levels, this qualification is an excellent alternative for those who prefer practical learning. Students will explore areas such as music performance techniques, ensemble studies, music business, composition, music technology, and live sound engineering. This two-year course includes opportunities for hands-on

experience, such as a residential visit and the development of enterprise and presentation skills. Achieving top grades in the BTEC Diploma can earn up to 168 UCAS points, providing access to higher education.

- **Apprenticeships:** The music industry offers various apprenticeship opportunities, such as in production, sound engineering, marketing, digital media, and music business administration. These practical, industry-focused roles allow students to earn while they learn, gaining direct experience in areas such as music production, digital marketing, live sound engineering, and music business management.

Studying music opens doors to a wide variety of careers, both creative and technical. Key career pathways include:

- **Performing:** Careers as a solo artist, in a band, or as a session musician are viable for students who excel at performance and are passionate about creating music.
- **Composing and Songwriting:** Students can become composers for TV, film, radio, video games, and advertising. Songwriting opportunities are also abundant in the popular music industry.
- **Music Production and Engineering:** As music producers, sound engineers, or recording engineers, students can work in studios or live events, producing and mixing music.
- **Music Education:** Many students progress to become instrumental teachers, music educators in schools, or even music lecturers at higher education institutions.
- **Music Business and Technology:** Roles in music marketing, digital distribution, event management, A&R (Artist and Repertoire), and music technology are crucial in the modern music industry.
- **Music Therapy:** For those interested in the therapeutic power of music, music therapy offers a rewarding career helping people with emotional, psychological, and developmental needs.
- **Other Careers:** A diverse range of roles exists, including music journalists, PR managers, legal advisors specializing in copyright and intellectual property, and music software development.

The study of music provides a broad understanding of various career opportunities in both creative and technical fields. Music programs actively link students with the real-world demands of the industry through:

- **Collaborative Projects:** Group performances and composition tasks provide opportunities to develop teamwork and leadership skills, crucial for careers in live performance, event management, or music production.
- **Industry Insights:** Guest speakers, workshops, and trips to music venues, recording studios, and festivals expose students to the inner workings of the music industry.
- **Apprenticeships and Work Placements:** Pupils are encouraged to pursue apprenticeships or work placements in music-related fields, providing hands-on

experience in roles such as sound engineering, music marketing, and event promotion.

- **Vocational Pathways:** The BTEC Diploma in Music offers a practical approach to learning, equipping students with industry-specific skills that lead directly to careers in music production, technology, and business management.

Overall, the subject of music offers students a broad range of academic and career opportunities, both within the arts and in related fields. The skills learned (creativity, discipline, communication, and technical expertise) are highly valued in a variety of sectors, making music an excellent foundation for further study or a career in numerous industries.

How can pupils enrich their knowledge and understanding in this subject?

There are many ways in which pupils can enhance their musical knowledge and skills beyond the classroom. Through a wide range of enrichment activities, extracurricular opportunities, and real-world experiences, students can deepen their understanding of music, develop their talents, and gain insight into various professional and creative fields. These opportunities allow students to engage with music in a dynamic and hands-on way, fostering both personal growth and academic development.

The school offers a variety of extracurricular activities for students interested in music. Pupils are encouraged to participate in after-school clubs, such as:

- Thursday Lunchtime "School of Rock" Band: A band for students to come together and perform popular rock music.
- Choir – For those who love to sing
- Student-Directed Groups: Pupils have the opportunity to form and direct their own music groups. Rehearsal spaces and supervision are provided to support these student-led initiatives.

These groups offer students an opportunity to collaborate with peers, build confidence in performance, and practice leadership and organisational skills.

To further enhance their musical abilities, students can also access peripatetic lessons in a variety of instruments, including guitar (acoustic, electric, and bass), piano, keyboard, drums, and wind instruments. These lessons are tailored to the individual needs of each student, allowing them to progress at their own pace with expert guidance.

Pupils have had the opportunity to participate in workshops with visiting musicians from prestigious institutions such as The Royal Northern College of Music. These workshops allow students to engage with professional musicians, learn from their expertise, and gain insight into different styles and approaches to music.

Music is a live experience, and we encourage students to attend concerts and performances both locally and further afield. In-school concerts, such as our annual

concerts and recitals, offer students a platform to showcase their talents. Students also perform at events like Remembrance services, and presentation evenings.

Locally, there is a vibrant scene for pupils to experience live music, including regular concerts at Ulverston Coronation Hall, The Forum in Barrow, The Brewery Arts Centre in Kendal, and The Sands Centre in Carlisle. Nationally, pupils can visit larger venues such as The MEN Arena and Bridgewater Hall in Manchester, Royal Philharmonic Hall in Liverpool, and renowned venues in London such as The West End and Southbank Centre. These events help students connect with the wider music industry, gain cultural exposure, and experience diverse genres and performances.

We also encourage students to engage in wider research and explore music-related topics outside of the curriculum. This could include reading about composers, music history, or new trends in the music industry. Students are encouraged to broaden their musical horizons by listening to different genres and studying various music traditions from around the world.

Pupils are also advised to seek out high-quality live music outside of school, attending open mic nights, concerts, and music festivals. These experiences provide invaluable exposure to live performances, helping students to understand the nuances of stage presence, audience interaction, and the practical aspects of music production.

By taking advantage of these enrichment opportunities, students will not only improve their technical musical skills but also gain a deeper appreciation of music's cultural, social, and emotional significance. These experiences empower students to become well-rounded musicians, capable of applying their knowledge and skills in diverse professional settings