

Music Department

Curriculum Statement



Intent

The music curriculum at BGS aims to encourage all learners to actively participate in music. We cater for a wide ability range of students, from beginners to post-Grade 8, and want all of our students to work and play in the principal language; music. We start by introducing notation reading skills and basic performance skills on keyboard and popular music instruments in KS3. We also encourage singing in a dedicated lesson once a fortnight in Y7. Schemes of work are coherently planned and sequenced to build upon this base through towards the Edexcel GCSE and Music IB syllabi.

We want students to aspire to participate in all our opportunities for performance, not just in the classroom but also at one of our many events and extra-curricular clubs. We want students to understand what it is like to be a professional musician, and have a wide range of ensembles for students at all levels to participate in, including show and music tour bands. We also look to work and collaborate with arts organisations across the country, having previously been involved with Music for Youth and launching the BGS songwriter competition in 2019 in collaboration with ACM and Metropolis Studios.

Our work in the department is further supplemented with our strong team of peripatetic music teachers. We are privileged to work with many professional musicians in their own right, who serve as models for the students they teach. Our instrumental teachers regularly enter students for graded exams, for a variety of exam boards including ABRSM, Trinity, RockSchool and RGT. The school hosts 2 private ABRSM visits per academic year.

Implementation

a) Content & Skills

KS3 aims to build confidence in learners with standard notation and knowledge of music theory. We also embed singing into many of our lessons, building upon the singing lessons that all Y7s receive once a fortnight. We aim to ensure all musical skills are sequenced throughout KS3/4 and 5 to ensure progression of learning. We teach using a mixture of classroom instruments and music technology, available in MU1, MU2 and H13. All our work at KS3 aims to encourage students to develop these skills, working in solo and group contexts, as well as becoming familiar with a selection of music theory elements (equivalent up to ABRSM grade 3). Homework is set on a half-termly basis to help enforce theoretical concepts learnt in lessons.

[KS3 SoW outline](#)

[KS3 Homework](#)

We follow Edexcel GCSE Music syllabus, which requires learners to analyse music in standard notation (40%). Students are expected to write two compositions (30%) as well as to perform as a soloist and as part of an ensemble (30%).

We offer Standard Level and Higher Level IB Music, which further develops students' practical and analytical skills, preparing them for suitable progression to both music university departments and conservatoires.

b) Learning environment

We have three main teaching rooms: MU1, MU2 and H13. These rooms are supplemented with 6 practice rooms for breakout rehearsals and individual practice.

Every day there is something exciting happening around the music department - jazz band, chamber choir, junior orchestra and BGS Symphony Orchestra, to name just a few. We strike a balance with all our groups, with some open to all whilst others are by invite only to ensure stretch and challenge for our most able pupils by ensuring the standards of the ensembles.

c) Assessment & Feedback

At KS3 students receive verbal feedback throughout all their lessons as well as half termly feedback via assessment sheets. These demonstrate whereabouts in the continuum of learning they currently are. Students are encouraged to reflect upon their progress on their progress trackers after each project in order to focus upon specific improvements in following schemes of work.

At KS4 and 5, assessment is much more varied. Not only do we complete written tests at the end of each unit of analytical work, but we also provide feedback on students' creative projects as often as possible through tutorial-style classes. Students also receive feedback through composition and performance feedback documents.

[KS3 Assessment Policy](#)

d) Monitoring

At KS3, students are monitored via central spreadsheets that track their achievement over the course of each academic year. Observations take place as part of PM review as well as informal drop-ins: we are very much an open-door music department and regularly invite others in to observe our practice.

At our music department meetings we will regularly discuss individual classes to ensure all students are making the best possible progress. Any concerns are noted and further action is taken within the department and with the DoS/SaMs where appropriate.

Where students are demonstrating considerable talent, many of these are signposted to lessons with our team of peripatetic staff.

Impact

By the time students opt in to music at KS4 and 5, all have developed a passion for music that encourages them to achieve well at KS4 and 5. Previous years have seen many of our students study music at Russell Group universities as well as conservatoires.

Students at KS4 and 5 achieve above the national average in music qualifications. In addition, we have a number of students who are working towards ABRSM Grades 6-8, which reflects the strong peripatetic teaching in conjunction with our classroom teaching.

We hold large scale concerts at least 3 times per academic year with additional showcases for each key stage. Our Jazz Evening and an annual school music tour add to our opportunities. We have in excess of 200 students participating in some of our concerts, which shows how vibrant our music department is. We also have an annual school music production which many parents describe as being of 'West End quality'.

[Music Department Key Dates Calendar 2021-2022](#)

[Music Department Extra-Curricular Programme 2021-2022](#)

In 2017, we were awarded the ISM Bronze mark for 10% of our students in our cohort achieve A*-C. we have maintained this achievement every year. We also work with the PTI, striving to further improve and develop the department. We have a strong local reputation for music within the community.

If students choose not to study music after IB, we know that many keep their music making going.