



# Music



## STUDY LEVEL

**A level**

## CONTACT DETAILS

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This course is great if you enjoy playing and composing music and have a desire to learn more about how it actually works. You will enhance your performance and creative composition skills and develop your understanding and appreciation of a wide variety of musical styles and genres.

Music students can enjoy some of the best facilities available with dedicated practice rooms, a recital room, a range of musical instruments, recording studios and the latest computer technology. There are also opportunities to perform at prestigious venues across Cheshire.

### What will I study?

You will enhance your performance skills and composition skills and develop a deeper understanding of a number of specific musical styles and genres. These will include vocal and instrumental music; music for film; popular music and jazz; fusions; and new directions. Creative composition tasks will ultimately lead towards the compilation of a small portfolio of original work, and the development of practical performance skills will result in a showcase recital at the end of the course.

Classroom activities are necessarily varied. It is very important that wherever possible, new concepts and ideas are explored practically as well as theoretically, in order to enhance understanding.

### Co-curricular activities?

The concert band, choir, brass group and wind ensemble rehearse weekly and perform regularly. There are also opportunities for smaller chamber ensembles and groups to rehearse together. It is hoped that music students will contribute fully towards the extra-curricular musical activities available, both as performers and even as directors. Indeed, over the past two years students have led a brass ensemble, saxophone group and folk group, all of which have then performed at the main College concerts.

### Where might it lead?

Music is an incredibly diverse subject and allows you to develop a wide variety of highly marketable skills that will be of use in other subjects,

as well as in Higher Education and eventual employment. A number of past A level Music students have gone on to gain coveted places at specialist music colleges, conservatoires and Oxbridge, as well as highly competitive courses such as medicine.

An appreciation and understanding of music is also something, of course, that you can keep with you and enjoy for a lifetime.

## Course Breakdown

### Course Summary

- Exam board is Edexcel

Paper	Content	Marks	Duration	Weighting
Component 1	Performing	60	Externally marked coursework	30%
Component 2	Composing	60	Externally marked coursework	30%
Component 3	Appraising	100	2 hours	40%

### Summary of Content

#### Performing (coursework)

This component focuses on developing solo performance skills, (technical control, expression and interpretation), to be able to perform a public recital in March of year 13, lasting at least eight minutes. The set standard is grade 7 or equivalent (although it is possible to achieve strong marks with grade 6 pieces if required).

This component will encourage students to develop creative thinking, sensitivity, critical awareness, self-confidence, self-motivation and their own musical interests and skills, including the ability to make music individually and in groups, and to perform with control, using phrasing and dynamics appropriate to their chosen styles and moods of music.

#### Composing (Coursework)

This component focuses on developing skills in composition leading towards a free composition (or one to a set brief) lasting at least four minutes. (40 marks)

The component also involves developing skills in compositional technique (Bach chorale harmony) leading towards the completion of an exercise set by Pearson lasting at least one minute. (20 marks)

The total time across both submissions must be a minimum of six minutes.

The purpose of this component is to assess students' skills in composing music. It allows students to appreciate the process of creating music. Students will learn more of the processes involved in creating music through developing the technical and expressive skills needed by a composer.

#### Appraising (exam)

This component focuses on developing knowledge and understanding of the musical elements (melody, harmony, tonality, texture, dynamics, sonority, structure, tempo, metre and rhythm); contexts (social and cultural background, purpose, and style); and language (musical notation, harmony).

It includes the application of the knowledge above through the context of six areas of study, each with three set works, including Danny Elfman; 'Batman Returns' (opening sequence and credits), Stravinsky; 'The Rite of Spring', Berlioz; 'Symphonie Fantastique' and The Beatles; 'Eleanor Rigby', 'Here, There And Everywhere', 'I Want To Tell You' (from Revolver).

#### Suggested Preparation for September

Revise and develop your theory knowledge – especially treble and bass clef notation; note duration and time signatures; major and minor key signatures up to 4 sharps and flats; intervals. Have a look at [www.musictheory.net](http://www.musictheory.net) if you need support or revision in this area.

Listen to as many different styles of music as you can. Keep your GCSE Music notes and print off some manuscript paper from the internet. See the Music A level set works listed above – listen to them on YouTube and do some internet research into them if possible.