



The Music Department Curriculum at Queen Elizabeth Grammar School



Why should all students learn music? (If relevant, why at QEGS)

Music is a universal language that embodies one of the highest forms of creativity, primarily concerned with the vast field of human culture, thought and feeling. The three core aspects of music - listening (analysing), composing (creating) and performing (producing) - embrace some of the most natural processes of human existence. Studying music at QEGS equips pupils with the knowledge and understanding of the ways in which humanity has responded to these processes from civilisations across the globe through time. In studying music, students deepen their understanding of their own culture, whilst also being confronted with music from different cultures. This broadens the horizons of their own preference in music and trains them to empathise with music different to their own culture.

All students are given the opportunity to engage with and develop a love of music as well as their talent as musicians. This increases their self-confidence, creativity and sense of achievement. As pupils progress, they develop a critical engagement with music, allowing them to compose, to listen to and to perform music confidently. Studying music equips pupils with evaluative skills helping them construct well-reasoned arguments and defend positions.

Research has also shown that pupils who study music tend to do better in other academic subjects on average.

In line with the national curriculum, pupils at QEGS:

- perform, listen to, review and evaluate music across a range of historical periods, genres, styles and traditions, including the works of the great composers and musicians.
- learn to sing and to use their voices, to create and compose music on their own and with others, have the opportunity to learn a musical instrument, use technology appropriately and have the opportunity to progress to the next level of musical excellence.
- understand and explore how music is created, produced and communicated, including through the inter-related dimensions: pitch, duration, dynamics, tempo, timbre, texture, structure and appropriate musical notations.

In extension of the national curriculum, pupils at QEGS:

- learn at least two musical instruments as part of Key Stage 3.
- have the facility to be involved with School Choir, Chamber Choir, Orchestra, School Show and other ensembles.
- have the opportunity to perform in public regularly, either as a soloist or as an ensemble.
- learn musical literacy and theory in line with ABRSM syllabi.

What is the core knowledge in music?

The core knowledge of music across Key Stages 3, 4 and 5 can be broken down into the following components:

Musical Literacy (Theory): How to notate and read music using conventional, western systems, as well as systems from other parts of the world. How to describe and write about music critically using focused and appropriate terminology.

Performing (Producing): How to physically produce music either on an instrument or by voice. At Key Stage 3, pupils develop their skills in recorder, singing and keyboard and specialise in their preferred methods at Key Stage 4 and 5. Pupils are taught how to evaluate their performance abilities in line with GCSE, A Level and music exam board criteria.

Composing (Creating): Knowledge and understanding of how to write original music, often in the style of music studied through the Key Stage. How to draw on knowledge studied in musical literacy, performance and listening to influence the creative process.

Listening (Analysing): How to critically analyse music that is heard. The ability to draw on theoretical concepts and identify them correctly and intuitively in performed music. How to describe and term music that is heard, often through the identification of pitch, dynamics, tempo, timbre, texture, structure and appropriate music terminology.

What do students do with their knowledge to demonstrate proficiency?

To demonstrate their musical proficiency, students are given the opportunity to engage in several tasks. They will perform music live, engaging in self, peer and teacher feedback/marking and analysis. They will write about and critique the performances of others using appropriate musical terms. They will compose music and notate it on paper, using the knowledge and understanding that they have learnt from studying existing music correctly. They will write about and critique the compositions of others using appropriate musical terms. They will listen to music extensively, applying correct theoretical knowledge and terminology, often debating and defending their deductions with others. They will write extensively about pieces of music, using correct theoretical knowledge and terminology.