

Music - Position Statement

Context & Background

The music department at St Mary's RC High School consists of two full time Music specialists; one head of music who has been in post for four years, and one teacher of music who has been in post for 1 year and teaches another subject in the school. The department is also supported by a team of 10 peripatetic music teachers who are accredited with Encore Music service, teaching a wide variety of instruments.

All pupils in KS3 study music once per week and study *Eduqas GCSE Music* at KS4. Class sizes are 10 – 15 which matches average numbers nationally. For the past 4 years GCSE results for music have been very good, consistently above FFT20.

Music is a big part of school life at St Mary's. Pupils enjoy subject lessons, peripatetic lessons, extra-curricular clubs and many performance opportunities. As a Catholic school pupils also enjoy taking part in the musical aspect of mass, whether this be in the orchestra, choir, or playing the piano during Holy Communion.

Curriculum

In KS3 pupils have a 1 hour lesson in music per week. The focus on these lessons is practical and enjoyable learning that encourages students to make excellent progress with their skills and knowledge across a range of genres and instruments. To this end, lessons are mainly practical, though every lesson will contain a listening activity (usually at the start) to ensure pupils listen to a wide variety of music, can articulate their views musically and describe the music using subject specific vocabulary. Pupils then use this knowledge and vocabulary in their practical tasks, building on their skill on various instruments (most notably keyboard, voice, ukulele and percussion as well as their own instruments). Lessons throughout KS3 use a combination of composition and performance tasks, starting with simple rhythms and melodies in year 7, and building complexity in years 8 and 9. Pupils perform regularly to the class.

Pupils will study five units over a year, each of which will be assessed by a final performance or composition. Assessment performances are recorded (or converted to mp3 if on software) and assessed using a department assessment booklet which students will then receive to fill in a self-assessment and set targets for the next unit. The 2 subject teachers use their weekly department meeting to moderate once a month to ensure marking is consistent.

The curriculum is carefully planned to ensure pupils are given the opportunity to build on their skills and knowledge throughout the key stage, equipping them with the skills and knowledge with which to start KS4 music.

In KS4 pupils study *GCSE Eduqas* music. Performance, composition and analysis skills developed in KS3 are built upon through the four units (*Forms and Devices, Ensemble music, Film Music and Pop music*). Each of these areas of study is introduced in some way in KS3 (eg *Ground Bass for Forms and Devices, Blues for Ensemble music, Horror for Film music and Song writing for pop music*).

Since the Head of Music started in role there has been strong attainment and progress at KS4 with a good proportion of pupils furthering their music education post 16.

Please see related document – [Music Curriculum 2022-23](#)

Enrichment

Over the last four years music enrichment has become increasingly prominent at St Mary's.

Nearly 80 pupils receive peripatetic lessons in school from a team of 11 teachers who are accredited with Encore music service. Lessons are given in Flute, Oboe, Bassoon, Clarinet, Saxophone, Trumpet, Trombone, Violin, Piano, Drums, Guitar and Voice. This includes pupils who receive pupil premium funding to enable them to pursue an instrument, and pupils who receive a bursary from [Encore Music Fund](#) to receive lessons.

Music clubs run weekly throughout the year with many performance opportunities including a Christmas Carol Concert and Summer Concert. Pupils and groups are encouraged annually to take part in Herefordshire Performing Arts' Festival with a rising number of successes each year. The orchestra is a small group of musicians that perform regularly at mass, pupils are encouraged to join as soon as they feel able, with parts written to suit their level. The orchestra currently contains pupils from Grade 1 to Grade 8 with some teaching themselves instruments to be able to take part in orchestra. Choir is a consistent group of roughly 40 pupils, open to all who enjoy singing, who have taken part in [Young Voices](#) as well as the above events. Two smaller groups are run by peripatetic teachers weekly, string ensemble and single reeds ensemble.

Other enrichment opportunities are provided for the whole school, such as a '[Rise Up](#)' singing project for the whole of year 7, and singing for wellbeing provided for pupils with military backgrounds.

An annual production gives pupils opportunities to take part in a number of roles whether it be in the live pit band, backstage, in the lighting or sound tech team as well as on stage. 2023's successful production of [School of Rock](#) saw over 60 pupils take part which we hope to improve in 2024 with the next production.

At the end of every year there is an annual [Eisteddfod](#) run by the music department. This gives pupils the opportunity to compete for their house on stage through categories such as solo instrumental, group singing, dance and devised theatre. House Captains take ownership, organising participation in every category by all year groups, with the final performance days enjoyed by all students. Pupils can also enter competitions for every subject on a theme in advance of [Eisteddfod](#) for a chance to win points for their house.

Documents available in support of the above:

- i. Department Development Plan and Exam Analysis***
- ii. Music Curriculum 22-23***
- iii. Department Review Report***
- iv. Moderator's Reports***
- v. Cultural Capital Audit***
- vi. Extra-Curricular Music Participation***