Subject: Music – Curriculum Overview (Years 7–13)

Our Vision

Our music curriculum is designed to nurture creativity, develop musical skills, and build a lifelong appreciation of music. Students will explore performance, composition, theory, and music technology in a broad and engaging programme.

Key Stage 3 (Years 7–9): Building the Foundations

Year 7 – Getting Started

Listening & Appraising: Students learn to describe music using terms such as pitch, dynamics, tempo, and texture. They begin identifying instruments and learning how music creates mood and emotion.

Performance: All students learn the keyboard, and many try guitar, bass, or drums. Simple songs and rhythms help build coordination and confidence.

Composition: Students write short pieces using basic chords and melodies. They explore musical structure and rhythm through creative tasks.

Technology: Students use GarageBand to create digital music, combining melody, rhythm, and harmony.

Score Reading: Basic notation, chord symbols, and treble clef reading are introduced.

Year 8 – Exploring Styles and Harmony

Listening & Appraising: Focus on the elements of music with an introduction to jazz and blues styles. Students build their musical vocabulary and listening skills.

Performance & Improvisation: Students perform blues and jazz-inspired pieces, learning 12-bar blues structures and simple improvisation.

Composition: Use of primary chords, riffs, and blues scales encourages more advanced writing and understanding of harmony.

Technology: Continued use of GarageBand for creating full compositions with layered parts.

Score Literacy: Students learn more complex rhythms, bass clef, and time signatures.

Year 9 – Preparing for GCSE

Styles & Contexts: Students explore a wide range of styles including film music, classical, and pop. They gain insight into how music reflects cultural and historical contexts.

Performance: Students perform more complex music with greater technical and expressive demands.

Composition: Students use advanced harmony (e.g., dissonance, leitmotifs) to write expressive pieces.

Score Reading & Appraising: Focus on reading musical scores and using subject vocabulary to describe music, preparing students for the demands of GCSE.

Technology: Students create structured compositions using GarageBand, developing skills in MIDI and audio editing.

Key Stage 4 (Years 10–11): GCSE Music (Eduqas)

Year 10 – A Strong Start

Listening & Analysis: Students study different genres including classical, film, and popular music. They begin detailed analysis of set works.

Performance: Regular solo and ensemble performances build technical skill and musical expression.

Composition: Students develop their ideas using harmony, melody, and structure. Techniques such as thematic variation and counterpoint are introduced.

Theory: Students deepen their understanding of key signatures, time signatures, and musical terms to support analysis and composition.

Year 11 – Mastering the Skills

Set Works & Appraising: Students analyse their GCSE set works in detail, understanding structure, harmony, instrumentation, and context.

Performance Coursework: Students refine and record their solo and ensemble pieces for assessment.

Final Composition: Students complete two original compositions that show creativity and technical control.

Stylistic Understanding: Students develop a deeper grasp of musical styles and apply this knowledge in appraising and composing tasks.

Key Stage 5 (Years 12–13): A-Level Music

Year 12 – Advanced Techniques

Listening & Analysis: Focus on more complex harmonic techniques such as chromaticism, secondary dominants, and augmented sixths.

Composition: Students use advanced forms such as variation and counterpoint, developing their musical voice and technique.

Performance: Students work on increasingly challenging pieces, refining articulation, phrasing, and stylistic awareness.

Genre Studies: In-depth exploration of Baroque, Classical, and 20th-century styles builds analytical and contextual knowledge.

Year 13 – University-Level Musicianship

Musical Analysis: Students carry out detailed comparisons between set works and unseen pieces. This includes analysis of forms like sonata and fugue.

Composition: Students apply techniques such as modulation to remote keys and extended harmonies, producing highly original work.

Performance: A final public recital showcases their technical skill, interpretation, and artistic confidence.

Contextual Understanding: Students connect cultural, historical, and social influences to their performance and composition work, gaining a holistic understanding of music.