

Music

What will I study and learn?

The A level Music syllabus offers a varied and academically rigorous course of study, allowing musical development in the three core areas: performing, composing and listening/analysis. This approach offers a smooth transition from the GCSE course. There is one compulsory area of study – The Western Classical Tradition – and, as a class, you will then choose two others from: Pop Music, Music for Media, Music for Theatre, Jazz, Contemporary, Traditional Music, and Art Music since 1910.

Lessons vary in style and include: analysing music by ear or from a score; exploring its effect on the listener; composing on a computer, keyboard or your instrument; undertaking independent research and exploring music performance, both practically and analytically.

What skills should I have and what will be developed?

The Music A level encompasses all genres, skills and instruments, catering for different learning styles and musical tastes. You will have the opportunity to build on your musical knowledge and experience gained from the GCSE course and from your musical activities outside of the curriculum. You will take a multidisciplinary approach, developing creativity and self-expression as well as analytical and critical thinking. You will need sound music theory and notation skills or be prepared to develop these. Please let us know if you need support with this.

Beyond the classroom

Your musical activities outside of your formal studies will undoubtedly help you to succeed, and you will be expected to take advantage of the many opportunities that BGS and the local area has to offer.

There are currently over 25 musical ensembles, clubs and activities running before and after school and at lunchtimes. A large number of Sixth-form students take part in these, and frequently take on roles as 'student leaders' within the ensembles. There are also many smaller student- and staff-led groups including chamber groups and rock bands. Students benefit from regular formal and informal performance opportunities in the school's recital room and theatre, at prestigious venues in Bristol, further afield, on tours and in the biennial School musical. There are also concert trips and workshops led by professional musicians covering a variety of genres.



Want to know more?

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Exam Board:
aqa.org.uk

How will I be assessed?

Paper 1

40%

Appraising music

Listening exercises, written questions using excerpts of music, and an essay.
2 hours 30 minutes.

Paper 2

25%

Performance

Instrumental/vocal solo or ensemble, via music technology or a combination of the above.
10 minutes minimum.

Paper 3

35%

Composition

Two pieces – either instrumental/vocal composition or music production. One free and one to a brief.

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

Students normally have a grade 7 in Music GCSE or equivalent. For A level Music, an audition or performing exam certificates may be required to ascertain suitability for the course if this is not the case. You will need to be an advanced performer on an instrument, voice or via music technology.