

Pyrland School

Music

Curriculum Booklet for 2026 - 2027

Subject Lead: Mr Gannon

Midsomer Norton Schools Partnership

Music Curriculum Intent:

"Music is the universal language of mankind." **Henry Wadsworth**

Music is an important part of the broad and balanced curriculum provided by Pyrland School. Our belief is that all students should be able to access musical opportunities and be able to explore their creativity through performance, composition and listening. This is why, at Pyrland school, Music study is not confined to the classroom. Students are encouraged to get involved in the numerous opportunities available to them to take part in music making. We encourage students to develop their musical skills outside of the classroom by taking part in our annual musical production, or the instrumental lessons our peripatetic teachers deliver. Students can also attend one of several lunchtime clubs or spend lunchtime honing their musical skills in our practice spaces where students can express their love and passion for music, allowing them to live 'life in all its fullness'.

At Pyrland we see music as a way of breaking down cultural barriers as music is a universal language that transcends linguistic and cultural differences. It is important that we study a variety of musical genres from around the world as this enriches understanding of diverse cultures, fosters global awareness and enhances musical creativity.

Listening skills are essential to the development of a musician but also help students become good communicators. Through our study in both Key stage 3 and 4 students will explore the rich landscape of music across cultures and throughout time. This allows our students to experience cultures and lifestyles that they are not familiar and become more understanding and empathetic by answering questions such as 'How do instrument makers in African tribes use their natural resources to create effective musical instruments?' and 'How did a 1950's teenager listen to music without Spotify?'. By crossing our music curriculum with other subjects such as English, History and PSHE this allows students to build up stronger connections between experiences and knowledge in other areas of the curriculum.

Students are expected to develop their performance skills in Key Stage 3 on a variety of instruments including voice. This is extremely important as it helps our students to develop fine motor skills, dexterity and encourages communication skills, resilience and confidence.

Students will also have lessons exploring the development of their composition skills. Other invaluable skills including communication, problem solving, teamwork, organisation and time management will also be embedded in the curriculum.

Following their study of Music at Pyrland school, students will not only have become better musicians but will have also had the opportunity to become better learners developing lifelong transferable skills that will support them in their future studies in a wide variety of subjects. Our ambitious curriculum also prepares students who wish to move forward into the Music industry.

Music Curriculum Implementation:

Key Stage 3

In Year 7 students are introduced to the Elements of Music, which run through all aspects of our work throughout KS3 and create a wealth of musical language they can use within lessons. Students develop skills on instruments such as voice, keyboard and ukulele through performance and composition. And build up their listening and appraisal skills through the study of a variety of genres.

In Year 8 students are able to explore a wider variety of cultures and music styles through the study of African Music from its roots in African culture following it through history to see how it has influenced Jazz and Blues Music, Reggae Music and Popular music of today. This creates a foundation of knowledge and understanding of how music and musical features can develop and evolve over time and how the social, political and historical context has affected this development. Instrumental skills are also developed through the use of keyboards, drumming, ukuleles, guitars and composition software.

Year 9 provides an introduction to KS4 topics, building on composition skills, to develop a toolkit for students to use at GCSE/Vocational award level, as well as mastering performance techniques on a variety of instruments. Through the Genre Project at the end of year 9 students are prepared for both the GCSE Music course offered at Pyrland but also develop those transferable skills required for all GCSE Subjects such as in-depth research, analytical and communication skills.

Key Stage 4

At Key Stage 4 students complete the AQA GCSE Music course. This allows students to develop skills in Listening, Performing and Composing. Through Units 1 and 2 Students will develop practical musicianship skills in composition and performance while they will also undertake lessons in listening in preparation for the Unit 3 listening and appraising exam.

Assessment

Progress is monitored through listening activities each term and through end of term practical assessments based on the skills of performing or composing. There is opportunity at both KS3 and KS4 for students to complement their classroom music learning with instrumental lessons with our highly skilled and experienced peri teachers on the following instruments: guitar, ukulele, bass, piano and drums.

Allocated Curriculum Time:

	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11
Lessons per fortnight	**2**	**2**	**2**	**6**	**6**

Year 7 Programme of Study

Term	Curriculum Foci	Formal Assessment
1	**Elements of Music** ● Understand how the elements of music are used to create music ● Aurally recognise the different elements of music and be able to describe these ● Understand how music is notated using graphic score ● Ensemble performance of a piece from a graphic score	**Baseline Assessment** **Time:** 40 mins
2	**Rhythm and Pitch Notation** ● Understand how rhythm and pitch (Treble clef only) are notated ● Aurally recognise different note lengths and be able to complete simple rhythmic dictations ● Sing basic melodic shapes as a class	**Assessment 1** Performance assessment in a group composition using rhythms **Marks:** 40 marks
3	**Instruments of the Orchestra and Sonority** ● Understand the importance of Sonority and Timbre in Music ● Aurally recognise the four main sections of the orchestra ● Use timbre and sonority in a group performance of 'Ode to Joy' using keyboards, classroom percussion and a variety of other instruments	**Assessment 2** Composition assessment of a piece of program music **Marks:** 40 marks
4	**Program Music** ● Understand how to create and develop short musical ideas using a variety of elements of music ● Understand how to place musical ideas into a coherent structure so that the Elements of music convey a story to an audience effectively ● Be able to compose and perform in a group	Listening assessment
5	**Folk Music** ● Understand the role Music plays in different cultures with a particular emphasis on the Folk music of the British Isles ● Develop performing skills in either Singing, Keyboard, Guitar, Ukulele and Drumming ● Be able to work as a music ensemble to create a performance of a Folk Song	**Assessment 3** Performance assessment of keyboard pieces **Marks:** 40 marks
6	**Keyboard skills** ● Understand the layout of the piano keyboard ● Understand the importance of warming up, performing technical exercises and effective practice ● Be able to perform on the keyboard a variety of pieces using correct technique ● Be able to perform and develop left hand technique for a performance with two independent parts.	End of Year listening assessment **Time**: 40 mins

Year 8 Programme of Study

Term	Curriculum Foci	Formal Assessment
1	**African Drumming** ● Understand how the rhythms learnt about in Year 7 can be developed using devices such as syncopation, cross rhythm and polyrhythm ● Understand the importance of Music in African ● Understand structural devices used in African music ● Understand the performing techniques used on a Djembe drum (bass, tone and slap) ● Be able to create an ensemble performance using the techniques learnt about	**Assessment 1** Performance assessment of a Blues piece incorporating African features **Marks:** 40 marks
2	**Jazz and Blues** ● Building on their understanding of how Music is important in African culture students should understand how Blues music was created ● Understand the history behind the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade and how this led into the creation of Blues Music ● Be able to perform a basic 12 bar blues piece using a variety of instruments	Listening assessment **Time:** 40 mins
3	**Hooks and Riffs** ● Understand how the idea of a Riff they learnt about in Jazz and Blues is used in other genres ● Understand the main types of Hook (melodic, rhythmic and lyrical) and how each are used in music ● Be able to perform a hook on the keyboards and then as an ensemble create a performance using a rhythmic hook	**Assessment 2** Performance assessment in a group of 'Three little birds' using a variety of instruments and including vocals **Marks:** 40 marks
4	**Reggae** ● Understand the links between African Music, Blues, hooks and Riffs and Reggae music ● Understand the how Reggae music was used to bring the Social and Political agenda of Jamaica to the world's attention ● Be able to take part in an ensemble performance of a Reggae song	Listening assessment **Time:** 40 mins
5	**Minimalism** ● Understand how Ostinati can be used as a structural device to create longer works through a variety of techniques ● Be able to perform a short piece using an ostinato and some additional layers of texture	**Assessment 3** Composition assessment using 'Frere Jacques' as the theme **Marks:** 40 marks
6	**Theme and Variations** ● Building on the knowledge from this year students should understand a variety of ways that a piece of music can be changed to create a new version. ● Be able to use a variety of compositional devices to create a set of variations based on a well-known tune.	End of Year Listening assessment **Time:** 40 mins

Year 9 Programme of Study

Term	Curriculum Foci	Formal Assessment
1	**Film Music (Performing)** ● Understand the main features of Film Music ● Understand how music and different musical elements can impact an audience's mood and enjoyment of a movie ● Be able to perform several Music Leitmotifs	**Assessment 1** Composition assessment using a short movie clip and adding a music and sound effects **Marks:** 40 marks Listening assessment **Time:** 40 mins
2	**Film Music (Composing)** ● Understand how different composers develop their ideas to reflect the ever-changing nature of the scenes they are composing for ● Understand the process a Film music composer goes through ● Be able to compose Leitmotif to fit a variety of characters ● Be able to compose background music to accompany these characters and organise these ideas to fit with a short piece of film footage	
3	**Electronic Dance Music** ● Understand how technology is used in the creation of Dance music ● Understand the main features of dance music and the compositional devices used, e.g. beat drop, layered textures, repetition ● Be able to compose a short piece of EDM using the knowledge gained and using a DAW (Garage Band)	**Assessment 2** Assessment of a composition, performance and a project on a genre of music **Marks:** 40 marks End of Year Listening assessment **Time:** 40 mins
4	**Rock 'n' Roll and British Invasion Music** ● Understand how Popular Music began to grow in the 1950's and look at the reasons why this happened ● Understand the developments in technology and instruments in the 1950's and 1960's ● Be able to perform a piece of music from the 1950's or 1960's as a solo or as part of an ensemble	
5	**Genre Project** ● Understand the Compositional and Sonic features of music ● Be able to identify the main features in at least two contrasting genres of music ● Develop confidence, analytical skills and communication skills	
6	**Musical Theatre** ● Understand the roles in Musical Theatre – Actor, Dance Captain, Musical director, etc... ● Combine and develop skills in all three main areas of Musical Theatre (Acting, Singing and Dancing) to create a short performance from a musical ● Be able to understand the meaning and context behind a given musical.	**Assessment 3** Performance assessment of a scene and song from a Musical **Marks:** 40 marks

Year 10 Programme of Study
Exam Board: AQA
Exam Specification: AQA | Music | GCSE | GCSE Music

Term	Curriculum Foci	Formal Assessment
1	**Introduction to GCSE Music and Performing** ● Understand the key musical elements and musical terms that will be needed for GCSE ● Be able to use performance skills to create a short ensemble performance ● Be able to use listening skills to answer exam style questions.	**Assessment 1 – Listening** **Time:** 40 mins
2	**Area of Study 1 and Performing** ● Understand how to describe music using the musical elements and key music terminology ● Understand how these elements are used in Western Classical Music (AOS1) ● Be able to perform a short solo performance piece	**Assessment 2 – Listening** **Time:** 40 mins
3	**Area of Study 2 and Composing (Creating ideas)** ● Understand how to describe music using the musical elements and key music terminology ● Understand how these elements are used in Popular Music (AOS2) ● Be able to create short melodic, rhythmic and harmonic ideas	**Assessment 3 – Listening** **Time:** 40 mins
4	**Area of Study 3 and Composing (Developing ideas)** ● Understand how to describe music using the musical elements and key music terminology ● Understand how these elements are used in Traditional Music (AOS3) ● Be able to develop short melodic, rhythmic and harmonic ideas	**Assessment 4 – Listening** **Time:** 40 mins
5	**Area of Study 4 and Performing** ● Understand how to describe music using the musical elements and key music terminology ● Understand how these elements are used in Western Contemporary Music (AOS4) ● Be able to create short melodic, rhythmic and harmonic ideas	**Assessment 5 – Listening** **Time:** 40 mins
6	**Set work (Beethoven Symphony No 1, 1st Movement)** ● Understand how the musical elements are used in the set work for AOS1 ● Look at listening questions and exam style questions for each Area of Study.	**Year 10 Mock Exam** **Time:** 60 mins

Year 11 Programme of Study
Exam Board: AQA
Exam Specification: AQA | Music | GCSE | GCSE Music

Term	Curriculum Foci	Formal Assessment
1	**Set work (Queen – Bohemian Rhapsody, Love of my life)** • Understand how the musical elements are used in the set work for AOS2 • Look at listening questions and exam style questions for each Area of Study.	**Year 11 Mock Exam** **Time:** 90 mins **Performance solo recorded** **Composition 1 completed**
2	**Set work (Queen – Seven Seas of Rye)** • Understand how the musical elements are used in the set work for AOS2 • Look at listening questions and exam style questions for each Area of Study.	
3	**Performance 2 and Section A listening skills** • Understand how to describe music using the musical elements and key music terminology • Understand how these elements are used in all AOS • Be able to perform a group performance piece	**Year 11 Mock Exam** **Time:** 90 mins **Performance group recorded** **Composition 2 completed**
4	**Composition 2 and Section B revision skills** • Understand how to describe music using the musical elements and key music terminology • Understand how these elements are used in all Set works • Be able to create a second composition	
5	**Exam Practice** • Understand how to describe music using the musical elements and key music terminology • Understand how these elements are used in all AOS and Set works	
6	N/A	

Final GCSE Assessment Structure: For Year 11 completing AQA GCSE Music

Component	Weighting (%)	Content	Proposed Examination Date
1	40	**Understanding Music** Learners develop listening skills and their understanding of key musical elements and terms through the study of 4 areas of study and 2 set works (Beethoven and Queen)	Students sit a 1 hour 30 minutes exam paper in the summer of Year 11
2	30	**Performing Music** Learners will perform 2 pieces of music, one solo and one ensemble.	Both performances must be completed in the Year of certification
3	30	**Composing Music** Learners will create 2 pieces of music, one free composition and one composition to a given brief.	Both compositions must be completed in the Year of certification

Please see exam board websites for up-to-date information: AQA | Music | GCSE | GCSE Music