



BEECHEN CLIFF

**A Level Music  
Curriculum Booklet  
2025 - 2026**

**Head of Subject: Mr P Calvert**

## Subject Curriculum Intent:

*“Music is what tells us that the human race is greater than we realise.”*  
— Napoleon Bonaparte

At Key Stage 5, we aim to nurture ambitious, well rounded, reflective and mature musicians with an extensive knowledge of many genres of music. This gives them the ability to analyse and understand music in great depth and to appreciate and understand its place in a social, cultural and historical context whilst continuing to foster the individual, resulting in a confident, engaged and creative musician.

The A-level music course builds on the knowledge and skills acquired at key stage 4, both in the classroom and through any practical musicianship that students may have been involved with (choir, orchestra, rock bands etc). Through the music lessons, students will explore a wide variety of genres and styles and will gain a deeper understanding and insight into a large repertoire of musical works. This will be explored through both academic study and practical work.

Students will undergo a ‘bridging unit of work’ to secure knowledge acquired at KS4 and to develop their music theory knowledge required to undertake the main focus of the syllabus. This will ensure students are well prepared and equipped for the requirements of A-level analysis.

Consequently, they will gain a broader awareness of a wide variety of music through analysing prescribed set works in a way which builds on their previous understanding and appreciation of music. This will deepen their knowledge of different musical styles through specific composing work which is designed to complement the academic study.

This qualification will support students in forming personal and meaningful relationships with music through the development of musical knowledge, understanding and skills, including performing, composing and appraising. Students will be encouraged to engage critically and creatively with a wide range of music and musical contexts, develop an understanding of the place of music in different cultures and contexts, and reflect on how music is used in the expression of personal and collective identities. This qualification will also allow students to develop particular strengths and interests, encourage lifelong learning and provide access to higher education and university degree courses in music and music-related subjects, as well as music-related and other careers.

## Subject Curriculum Implementation:

The A-level music course is divided into 3 main strands of music education: performing, composing and listening with appraising. There are 6 lessons a fortnight which are shared between 2 main classroom teachers. 4 of the lessons will focus on the academic units including listening and appraising and 2 lessons will develop students' knowledge, understanding and skill in composition work. The performing unit of the course will be monitored termly with students expected to maintain a regular practice routine and undertake weekly lessons on their principal instrument. Non-examined coursework forms a large part of the syllabus and this allows students to develop individually as musicians and focus on their bespoke talents.

In academic study, pupils will analyse 13 separate pieces of music with key subheadings of musical study: Structure, melody, harmony, tonality, rhythm, texture, performing forces and social/historical context. Study will begin in year 12 with a basic overview of the main theoretical and academic knowledge that students will need to apply to all 13 units. Students will use this knowledge to study music in the baroque era. Units of study will show how music has evolved through the centuries, including the classical, romantic and 20th century periods of musical history.

Composition work will begin with a revision of musical concepts studied at Key stage 4 (melody, harmony and structure) and will build on these skills throughout year 12.

Students will gain a deeper understanding of composition technique through studying advanced techniques including modulation (both melodically and harmonically) orchestration/instrumentation techniques including idiomatic writing and variations. Furthermore pupils will explore these skills through looking at different styles of music including, classical structures, popular structures and 20th century strands including impressionism and minimalism. The programme of study for composition work will often be in parallel with academic work so that students can interlink their musical skills and further their overall musicianship.

In year 13, the students will continue to develop their skills and understanding through building on the knowledge acquired in year 12 and analysing more complex musical works including composing tasks which deepen students' understanding in these areas.

The course is divided into 3 main units: performing, composing and listening/appraising. The first two units (performing and composing) are non examined coursework projects worth 30% each. The final 40% is a written and listening examination which takes place at the end of year 13.

## Allocated Curriculum Time:

	Lower Sixth	Upper Sixth
Fortnightly lesson allocation	3	3

## Course Information

Exam Board: Edexcel

Specification: 9MU0

Term	Curriculum Foci Areas	Assessment
1	<p><b>Anthology/academic work</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General music theory</li> <li>• Basic analysing of set works</li> <li>• Wider listening</li> <li>• Film Music (Hermann, Elfman)</li> </ul> <p><b>Composition work</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General Composition technique</li> <li>• Melody writing</li> <li>• Using chords in composition</li> </ul> <p><b>Key Skills / Coursework / PSAs / Deadlines</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read background Anthology pages/Studying set works</li> <li>• Performance standard to be maintained-one formal performance lesson towards end of the term.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Performing Assessment</b></p> <p><b>Written assessment: Film music</b></p> <p><b>Listening skills assessment: Film Music</b></p>
2	<p><b>Anthology/academic work</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Popular Music and Jazz (The Beatles/Courtney Pine/Kate Bush)</li> <li>• Wider listening</li> </ul> <p><b>Composition work</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Modulation</li> <li>• Accompaniment ideas</li> </ul> <p><b>Key Skills / Coursework / PSAs / Deadlines</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read background Anthology pages/Studying set works</li> <li>• Performance standard to be maintained-one formal performance assessment towards end of the term</li> </ul>	<p><b>Composition assessment</b></p> <p><b>Written assessment: Pop Music and Jazz</b></p> <p><b>Listening skills assessment: Pop Music and Jazz</b></p>
3	<p><b>Anthology/academic work</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fusions (Shankar)</li> <li>• Wider listening</li> </ul> <p><b>Composition work</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Variation techniques</li> <li>• Idiomatic writing</li> </ul> <p><b>Key Skills / Coursework / PSAs / Deadlines</b></p>	<p><b>Performing assessment</b></p> <p><b>Written assessment: Fusions</b></p> <p><b>Listening skills assessment: Fusions</b></p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read background Anthology pages/Studying set works</li> <li>• Performance standard to be maintained.</li> <li>• Composition assessment</li> </ul>	
4	<p><b>Anthology/academic work</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fusions (Debussy)</li> <li>• New Directions (Saariaho)</li> <li>• Wider listening</li> </ul> <p><b>Composition work</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relating composition work to set works</li> <li>• Free style composing work</li> </ul> <p><b>Key Skills / Coursework / PSAs / Deadlines</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read background Anthology pages/Studying set works</li> <li>• Performance standard to be maintained-one formal performance lesson towards end of the term</li> </ul>	<p><b>Written assessment: Fusions</b></p> <p><b>Listening skills assessment: Fusions</b></p>
5	<p><b>Anthology/academic work</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New Directions (Stravinsky)</li> <li>• Wider Listening</li> <li>• Focusing on Listening techniques</li> </ul> <p><b>Composition work</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relating composition work to set works</li> <li>• Free style composing</li> </ul> <p><b>Key Skills / Coursework / PSAs / Deadlines</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read background Anthology pages/Studying set works</li> <li>• Performance standard to be maintained-one formal performance assessment towards end of the term</li> </ul>	<p><b>Written assessment: New Directions</b></p> <p><b>Listening skills assessment: New Directions</b></p>
6	<p><b>Anthology/academic work</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vocal Music (Bach)</li> </ul> <p><b>Composition work</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Revise, refine composing work</li> <li>• Prepare for a short recorded recital.</li> <li>• Preparatory work for composition techniques- basic 2 and 4 part writing</li> </ul>	<p><b>Mock Listening and appraising exam.</b></p> <p><b>Composing Assessment</b></p>

	<b>Key Skills / Coursework / PSAs / Deadlines</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read background Anthology pages</li> <li>• Studying set works</li> <li>• Performance standard to be maintained</li> <li>• End of year exam</li> </ul>	
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## Upper Sixth

Term	Curriculum Foci Areas	Assessment
1	<b>Anthology/academic work</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vocal Music (Vaughan Williams)</li> <li>• Instrumental Music (Berlioz)</li> <li>• Studying basic 4 part writing including cadences</li> </ul> <b>Composition work</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General Composition technique</li> <li>• Relating composition work to the unit 3 set works</li> <li>• Form and Structure</li> <li>• Melodic Dictation</li> </ul> <b>Key Skills / Coursework / PSAs / Deadlines</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read background Anthology pages/Studying set works</li> <li>• Wider related listening</li> <li>• Performance standard to be maintained-one formal performance lesson towards end of the term</li> </ul>	<b>Written assessment: Vocal Music</b>  <b>Listening skills assessment: Vocal Music</b>  <b>Composition Techniques assessment</b>
2	<b>Anthology/academic work</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Instrumental Music (Berlioz/Schumann)</li> <li>• Advanced 4 part writing including Modulation</li> <li>• Wider Listening</li> </ul> <b>Composition work</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advanced harmony techniques</li> <li>• Writing for unfamiliar instruments</li> <li>• Arrangement</li> <li>• Orchestration</li> <li>• Extended melodic dictation.</li> </ul> <b>Key Skills / Coursework / PSAs / Deadlines</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read background Anthology pages</li> <li>• Studying set works</li> <li>• Wider related listening</li> </ul>	<b>Mock Listening and appraising exam.</b>  <b>Composition Assessment</b>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Performance standard to be maintained-one formal performance lesson towards end of the term.</li> </ul>	
3	<p><b>Anthology/academic work</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Instrumental Music (Schumann)</b></li> <li>• Studying Bach Chorales</li> <li>• Listening skills</li> <li>• Revision of Film music and Popular music and Jazz</li> <li>• Wider listening analysis</li> </ul> <p><b>Composition work</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arranging</li> <li>• Free style composing work</li> <li>• Continue formal work on composition coursework</li> </ul> <p><b>Key Skills / Coursework / PSAs / Deadlines</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Controlled conditions coursework on Composition units</li> <li>• Read background Anthology pages/Studying set works</li> <li>• Wider related listening</li> <li>• Performance standard to be maintained</li> </ul>	<p><b>Written assessment: Pop Music and Jazz</b></p> <p><b>Listening skills assessment: Pop Music and Jazz</b></p> <p><b>Performance assessment</b></p>
4	<p><b>Anthology/academic work</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Listening Skills</li> <li>• Wider listening analysis</li> <li>• Begin formal work on composition techniques coursework.</li> <li>• Revision of Fusions and New Directions</li> </ul> <p><b>Composition work</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Free style composing work</li> <li>• Continue formal work on composition coursework.</li> </ul> <p><b>Key Skills / Coursework / PSAs / Deadlines</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Controlled conditions coursework on Composition units to be completed</li> <li>• Read background Anthology pages</li> <li>• Studying set works</li> <li>• Wider related listening.</li> <li>• Deadline for Performance recordings by the end of term</li> </ul>	<p><b>Composition assessment</b></p> <p><b>Composition techniques assessment</b></p>
5	<p><b>Revision and Exams</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete formal composition technique work</li> </ul>	<p><b>Written assessment: 6 areas of study and wider listening</b></p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exam practice technique on all set works</li> <li>• Focusing on Listening technique</li> <li>• Controlled conditions coursework on Composition techniques to be completed</li> <li>• Revision of Vocal and Instrumental Music</li> </ul>	<b>Listening skills assessment: 6 areas of study and wider listening.</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>Unit 3 Examination.</b>	

## Reading List

### Academic reading

- The Edexcel GCE anthology of music
- Background notes on set works (Edexcel website)

### Background reading/wider listening

- The Cambridge music guide- Stanley Sadie & Alison Latham

## Studying/Revision Information

### Ongoing Studying

Students should regularly listen to recordings of all 13 set works in the academic unit. Annotated notes should be made in the anthology containing the scores of the set works and Overview sheets will be undertaken as part of class/homework and kept in folder/books.

Students must maintain a daily practice routine on their chosen instrument and follow guidance/advice from instrumental teachers in order to further their performing ability.

### Revision

Students should revise work on all 13 set works and use both sources (anthology and class notes) as mentioned above when revising.

Performance assessments will take periodically throughout the course.

Useful resources:

Recommended revision guide, websites, textbooks etc. (give as bullet points)

- Edexcel A-level music study guide. published by Rhinegold
- Edexcel A-level music revision guide published by Rhinegold



### Final Assessment Structure:

Component	Weighting (%)	Content	Proposed Examination Date
Unit 1 Performing	30%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Coursework unit</li><li>• 8 Minute recital to be recorded.</li></ul>	Coursework to be completed by April 30th in year 13
Unit 2 Composing	30%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Coursework unit</li><li>• 2 composition tasks.</li></ul>	Coursework to be completed by May 5th in year 13
Unit 3 Listening and appraising	40%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Written examination</li><li>• Based on study of 13 set works of music.</li></ul>	Exam- Term 6 (year 13)

Please see Exam Board websites for up to date information:

<https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/qualifications/edexcel-a-levels/music-2016.html>

## Careers in the Curriculum

Music is more than just a subject – it's a gateway to a wide range of exciting and creative careers. At Key Stage 5, our Music curriculum is designed not only to develop students' musical knowledge and performance ability, but also to equip them with the key professional skills and experiences that open doors to a wide range of careers—both within and beyond the music industry.

Year	Careers Education in Music
12	<p><b><u>Year 12: Professional Musicianship Skills</u></b></p> <p>Understand how existing musical skills apply to professional contexts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Performance:</b> Students are expected to practise their instrument regularly, with scheduled 'performance' lessons where subject teachers can check in on progress and development of key performance skills.</li> <li>- <b>Composition:</b> Exposure to different genres and the use of DAW/notation software introduces pathways to composing for media (film, TV, games) or songwriting.</li> <li>- <b>Musical analysis:</b> Analysis of set works/score reading helps to build understanding for orchestration, arranging as well as musicology pathways.</li> </ul> <p>Students studying music at KS5 are expected to take a lead in supporting the many music ensembles within the department: concert band, swing band, choir, folk group, saxophone group, guitar group. All provide invaluable ensemble and performance experience that will help to equip students with the necessary skills needed to step into a professional performance/rehearsal environment.</p>
13	<p><b><u>Year 13: The World of Music</u></b></p> <p>Whether intending to continue music studies at university or not, students will have an understanding of the paths available to them within the music industry and how what they have learned throughout the A Level will equip them to step into the professional world:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Professional Composition:</b> Composition work reflects industry briefs, preparing students for freelance or in-house roles in media, advertising, or theatre.</li> <li>- <b>Music Business &amp; Entrepreneurship:</b> Coursework projects develop a portfolio of performance and composition work, crucial for self-employed musicians seeking freelance work.</li> <li>- <b>Academic Pathways:</b> Students continue to explore musicology and research skills through set work analysis, forming the basis for further study in music or related humanities subjects.</li> </ul> <p>In addition to the extra-curricular opportunities as mentioned above, students intending to study music at university/conservatoire level will receive support and advice from music staff with regards to applications and auditions.</p>

### Possible careers in Music

- Composer (Film, video game, tv etc.)
- Teacher (Instrumental or classroom)
- Arranger
- Audio engineer
- Musical director/conductor
- Events/venue manager
- Performer
- Instrument technician
- Music journalist
- Music therapist

Aspiration

Compassion

Independence

Respect

### Careers links

- [Careers in Music UK](#)
- BBC Bitesize Music Careers
- [UCAS: Music Degree Information](#)
- [Youth Music](#) – Find projects and funding opportunities for young musicians