

Music Curriculum Plan 2025-26

Intent

Altrincham College Music Department champions the vision set out by Ofsted in the Model Music Curriculum, which expects schools to have “a music curriculum that is ambitious, well-sequenced, implemented well, and which leads to good musical outcomes for all students.”

All our students experience stimulating practical and creative musical activities, meeting the expectations of the Model Music Curriculum. We enthuse our students through engaging, relevant, topic-based musical activities which enable them to acquire and develop a range of confidence-building experiences, knowledge and skills that will lead to a lifelong appreciation and enjoyment of music.

Through varied practical and creative activities, alongside a well-balanced approach to listening material, all students are encouraged to acquire and develop their musical knowledge, skills and confidence, and rise to challenges presented across the three core components:

Listening & Appraising, Performing, and Composing.

Music Enrichment Activities

Lunchtime and after-school enrichment activities take place throughout the week. We encourage *everyone* to come along and have a go! Singing together is an amazing and uplifting experience for anyone... and being in a band or orchestra is a brilliant way to enjoy learning an instrument, make friends, and become an even better musician!

For 2025-26 these are:

Band Skills; Choir; Orchestra (instrumentalists above Grade 1); School Production Band for *Annie (by invitation)*; AMTC (Altrincham Musical Theatre Club – run jointly with Drama and Dance Departments).

The annual School Production is a great opportunity for collaboration between Drama, Dance, Music & Art Departments, engaging students from across the whole school (*Bugsy Malone 2022; We Will Rock You 2023; School of Rock 2024; High School Musical 2025; Annie 2026*).

Instrumental & Vocal Tuition at Altrincham College

We offer a wide range of instrumental and vocal music lessons in school. All our visiting music teachers are highly qualified, have a track record of excellent results with students, and have the enhanced DBS appropriate to working with young people. Lessons take place during the school day on a rota, to avoid the same curriculum lessons being missed.

All members of our team of visiting music teachers charge for lessons on the same basis, agreed annually and endorsed by school Senior Leadership.

We are determined that our offer should represent both excellent value for parents and carers, and favourable terms and conditions for our self-employed visiting teachers.

Implementation

KS3 Music

Our Schemes of Learning for Music enable delivery of stimulating practical, enjoyable and creative musical activities, allowing all students to experience the joy, and the sense of achievement, purpose and belonging, that music brings to life.

We have a 'spiral' curriculum in Music: core skills, concepts and knowledge are continually revisited through different topics and activities; grown and refined along the learning journey. Over time, and through a well-sequenced series of stimulating and engaging musical topics, pupils develop the core musical skills of performing, composing and appraising, and acquire familiarity and confidence with the Elements of Music, forms of Notation, and key Genres and Contexts.

Each topic includes summative assessment of students' performing/composing/listening work, as appropriate to the topic. We assess a range of musical performance skills in the classroom (e.g. keyboard, ukulele/guitar, percussion, singing, music technology), using our well-established 'Bronze, Silver, Gold' departmental assessment framework.

Literacy within Music as a discipline

Each topic has its own carefully designed Knowledge Organiser that explains the key musical concepts and terminology for that topic. A digital copy is always attached to the homework quizzes we set on Class Charts & MS Teams to provide regular subject-knowledge retrieval practice.

Musical literacy (including the understanding and use of stave notation) is developed through carefully sequenced activities that develop students' familiarity and confidence with reading and writing pitch and rhythm notation.

KS4 GCSE Music

Through varied practical and creative activities, all students are encouraged to acquire and develop musical skills, experience and confidence, and rise to challenges presented across all three core components of Performing, Composing and Appraising.

The Eduqas specification encourages an integrated approach to the three distinct disciplines of performing, composing and appraising through four interrelated Areas of Study. The four Areas of Study are designed to develop knowledge and understanding of music through the study of a variety of genres and styles in a wider context.

The Western Classical Tradition forms the basis of Musical Forms and Devices (Area of Study 1), and students explore these forms and devices further in the other three Areas of Study: Music for Ensemble (Area of Study 2) allows students to look more closely at texture and sonority; while Film Music (Area of Study 3) and Popular Music (Area of Study 4) provide an opportunity to explore contrasting styles and genres of music.

Long Term Departmental Planning Overview - Music						
YEAR 7	Half Term 1	HT2	HT3	HT4	HT5	HT6
Knowledge, Topic	Singing Together; Playing the keyboard; Using <i>BandLab for Education</i>	Elements of Music, Pitch Notation & Keyboard Skills	Samba, Pulse and Rhythm	Marches, Waltzes & Fanfares	Instruments of The Orchestra	Class Ensemble
Key Concepts	<p>Learn songs for Y7 Singing Showcase in last week of HT1.</p> <p>Introduction to the keyboard: learn the chord sequence and riff for Showcase song <i>I Gotta Feeling</i>.</p> <p>Sign up to Bandlab for Education (edu.bandlab.com) for access to the online Digital Audio Workstation we use for lessons in room G004.</p>	<p>The Elements of Music: <i>Pitch, Dynamics, Duration, Tempo, Texture, Timbre (Sonority), Structure, Silence</i></p> <p>Sounds & symbols: Graphic Score</p> <p>Solo/paired performing</p> <p>Focus on PITCH, through simple and familiar Christmas Songs, e.g. <i>Jingle Bells</i></p> <p>Introduction to stave notation (focus on PITCH notation in treble clef).</p> <p>Introduction to our Bronze, Silver, Gold (BSG) KS3 Assessment Model.</p>	<p>Difference between the main pulse/beat ('heartbeat'), and other rhythms.</p> <p>Introduction to RHYTHM notation</p> <p>Ostinato and Polyrhythms</p> <p>Cultural and contextual features of Samba music, including African origins via the Atlantic Slave Trade, and role in Brazilian society (e.g. carnival!).</p> <p>Class performance of 4-part samba polyrhythm</p> <p>Compose your own Samba polyrhythm, using word-rhythms, ('samba sentences') percussion and/or BandLab.</p>	<p>Embed and extend knowledge of staff notation (both pitch and rhythm)</p> <p>Marches, waltzes and fanfares as music for ceremony, dance and celebration.</p> <p>March & waltz time signatures: 4/4 & 3/4</p> <p>Model examples to perform on keyboard (<i>Imperial March</i> and <i>Hedwig's Theme</i>); also introduce guitar, through <i>612 Waltz</i>.</p> <p>Compose your own fanfare using triads and chords.</p> <p>Y7 Music trip to Bridgewater Hall: Hallé Concert for Schools – to inspire & prepare</p>	<p>Families (sections) and instruments of the orchestra: <i>Brass, Strings, Wind, Percussion</i></p> <p>...what they sound & look like; how they work & are played.</p> <p>Typical layout of an orchestra.</p> <p>Historical & cultural context: why particular instruments are/aren't found in an orchestra.</p> <p>Model example: Beethoven's <i>Ode to Joy</i></p> <p>Embed and extend knowledge of staff notation (pitch – C <i>major scale</i> and rhythm – <i>dotted rhythms</i>) through learning to play <i>Ode to Joy</i></p> <p>N.B. when HT5 is short, this topic may run over into HT6</p>	<p>Put musical knowledge and skills developed through Y7 into practice, in whole-class ensemble performances of 2 model songs: <i>Marry You</i> and <i>Next to Me</i></p> <p>Keyboard/xylophone: chords (triads) and chord sequences</p> <p>Ukulele/guitar: chords</p> <p>Steel pans/bass guitar: Bass notes</p> <p>Voice: melody, lyrics</p>

				students for HT5 <i>Instruments of the Orchestra</i> topic. Annually in early March.		
Subject-Specific Skills/ Techniques	<p>Keeping a beat</p> <p>Listening & watching</p> <p>Moving together</p> <p>Ensemble performing: singing together (Y7 Singing Showcase in October)</p> <p>Solo performing: Introduction to the electronic keyboard (piano)</p>	<p>Keyboard skills: correct finger shape and 5-finger pattern for C-G</p> <p>Start with 5-note melody <i>Jingle Bells</i>, then introduce more challenging options according to ability.</p>	<p>Perform 4-beat rhythms: Repeat one = ostinato Combine them = polyrhythm</p> <p>Write 4/4 rhythms with correct notation and knowledge of note lengths: <i>Quaver, crotchet, minim, semibreve</i></p> <p>Vocalise word-rhythms Body percussion Samba percussion Performing in pairs & fours</p>	<p>Building triads. Compose a triadic fanfare using CEG. Try out key composing techniques: <i>Unison, Harmony ...and extend with Canon, Inversion, Retrograde, Contrary Motion</i></p> <p>Model example of Fanfare: <i>20th Century Fox</i></p>	<p>Keyboard performance of model song <i>Ode to Joy</i> from <i>Symphony No. 9</i> by Beethoven.</p> <p>Reinforce correct finger shape and 5-finger pattern for C-G (links back to Jingle Bells at Xmas)</p>	<p>Keeping a beat</p> <p>Listening & watching</p> <p>Moving together</p> <p>Ensemble performing: singing and playing together</p>

YEAR 8	HT1	HT2	HT3	HT4	HT5	HT6
Knowledge, Topic	Stand by Me (Songwriting 1)	Programme Music	Folk Music of the British Isles	Blues Music		Rock Music
Key Concepts	<p>4-chord songs</p> <p>Correct use of triad chords</p> <p>The 4 main layers of a song:</p> <p>Bass Riff, Chords, Rhythm, Melody</p> <p>Correct and consistent chord shapes for keyboard and ukulele (use tab notation for ukulele)</p> <p>Song structure: Intro, Verse, Chorus, Outro</p>	<p>Chromatic notes (sharps & flats), the chromatic scale, musical intervals (tone and semitone)</p> <p>Appreciate how music can create atmosphere and tension, and can tell a story...</p> <p>...Context of programme music from before invention of film/sound recording: concert, ballet, opera <i>N.B. seasonal Halloween link here to 'spooky music'!</i></p>	<p>What we mean by Folk Music; value of oral traditions.</p> <p>Key British folk genres, typical instruments and musical features.</p> <p>Focus on Sea Shanties, plus Ballads, Jigs & Reels</p> <p>Learn to sing & play model example of sea shanty <i>Drunken Sailor</i></p>	<p>Social and historical context of work songs and Blues</p> <p>Call & Response</p> <p>12-Bar Blues structure: AAB lyrics I, IV, V primary chord sequence</p>		<p>Growth of Rock and Roll out of Blues music: Rhythm & Blues</p> <p>Rock Riff 1: Smoke on the Water</p> <p>Rock Riff 2: Seven Nation Army</p> <p>Rock Riff 3: Sunshine of Your Love</p> <p>Sub-genres of Rock Music: Prog Rock – Pink Floyd Heavy Metal – Metallica Grunge – Nirvana Indie – Killers</p>
Subject Specific Skills/ Techniques	<p>Learn to perform each layer of the song on keyboard/ukulele/guitar/ percussion (Bass Riff, Chords, Rhythm, Melody)</p>	<p>Perform model example(s) of famous themes and leitmotifs: <i>In the Hall of the Mountain King, Swan Lake, Ride of The Valkyries</i></p> <p>Correct use of chromatic notes. Revise & extend pitch notation knowledge from Y7.</p>	<p>Minor scale and minor chords: recognise their sound & understand how to construct them.</p> <p>Recognise rhythmic feel of compound time (6/8) in lots of British folk music, e.g. <i>Scarborough Fair Greensleeves</i></p>	<p>12 Bar Blues</p> <p>Walking Bass</p> <p>Seventh Chords</p> <p>Blue notes Blues scale Improvisation</p> <p>Instrumental fills</p>		<p>Learn to perform classic Rock Riffs on guitar and/or keyboard, starting with simpler 4-note riff (Smoke On The Water), steadily building up to greater challenge of full Blues Scale in Sunshine of Your Love.</p> <p>Compose your own 4-bar Rock Riff using the Blues Scale.</p>

YEAR 9	HT1	HT2	HT3	HT4	HT5	HT6
Knowledge / Topic	Reggae	Electronic Dance Music (EDM)	Film Music 1: Famous Themes & Leitmotifs	Film Music 2: Compose Your Own Soundtrack	Ground Bass	Compose your own song (Songwriting 2)
Key Concepts	<p>Key features of Reggae: Subject material Instrumentation Rhythmic feel (off-beat/syncopated chords)</p> <p>History & Context: Slavery; Jamaica – UK links through (post-War) immigration</p>	<p>Purpose of EDM as music for dancing, with focus on drum beats and electronic (not acoustic) instruments, e.g. drum machines and synthesizers.</p> <p>Through study of model examples, learn how EDM uses:</p> <p>Drum rhythms Chord Sequences Bass Lines Riffs Samples</p>	<p>How composers use the elements of Music for a specific purpose/effect.</p> <p>Understand the key features of different genres of film music (e.g. types of instrumentation – brass for heroic, legato strings for romantic or extremes of pitch for horror)</p>	<p>Focus on music for Sci-Fi genre, leading to composing project: Compose your own soundtrack to a short clip from <i>The Abyss</i>:</p> <p>edu.bandlab Assignment ‘Y9 Sci-Fi Movie Music’</p>	<p>Ground Bass Variations Longer (8-bar) bass lines and chord sequences Primary and secondary triads</p> <p>Musical connections (similar techniques) between old and new (classical and modern) musical styles: <i>Pachelbel - Canon</i> <i>Coolio – I’ll c u when you get there</i> <i>Maroon 5 - Memories</i> <i>The Farm – Alright Now</i></p>	<p>Using knowledge & skills from KS3 model examples, compose your own song/instrumental piece, with:</p> <p>Correct use of triad chords</p> <p>The 4 main layers of a song:</p> <p>Bass Riff, Chords, Rhythm, Melody (and optional lyrics)</p> <p>Correct and consistent chord shapes for keyboard and ukulele</p>
Subject Specific Skills/ Techniques	<p>Model songs by Bob Marley: <i>Buffalo Soldier</i> <i>Three Little Birds</i> Both songs contain 3 Musical Layers: Melody, Chords, Bass line N.B. spiral reinforcements in chosen model songs: <i>Buffalo Soldier</i></p>	<p>Compose your own EDM track using BandLab.</p> <p>Creating an EDM beat using the drum machine in BandLab, or Roland Studio (online web app) <i>Model example: Avicii – Levels</i></p> <p>Creating a 4-chord EDM chord sequence</p>	<p>Solo and ensemble performance of famous film themes (leitmotifs: links back to Y8 HT1), including James Bond – 007 Theme Star Wars – Imperial March Harry Potter – Hedwig’s Theme</p>	<p>Develop confidence and skill in using BandLab to create a soundtrack for film clip, with appropriate melody, rhythm, texture, timbre and tempo, dynamics.</p> <p>Use the project planning sheet to help plan the actions and timings of your soundtrack.</p>	<p>Learn to play multiple parts (layers) of Pachelbel’s Canon Know how to play all 6 primary and secondary (major and minor) triads in C major: I ii iii IV V vi</p> <p>Recognise Bass Clef notation for low pitch.</p>	<p>Show you can compose a chord sequence, then add a bass riff, then a melody. Show you understand song structure (Intro, Verse, Chorus, Outro)</p>

	<p>reinforces major/minor chord contrast.</p> <p><i>Three Little Birds</i> reinforces black notes (sharps) from HT1 [key of A major good for guitar]</p>	<p><i>Model example: Gala – Freed from Desire</i></p> <p>Adding a Bass Line <i>Model example: Bjork – Army of Me</i></p> <p>Composing an EDM riff <i>Model example: Fat Boy Slim – Right Here Right Now</i></p> <p>Using and Editing Samples <i>Model example: Prodigy – Breathe</i></p>			<p>Melody & counter-melody</p> <p>Polyphonic textures: Canon/Round</p> <p>Composing activity in BandLab: 'Pachelbel's Remix'</p>	
YEAR 10	HT1	HT2	HT3	HT4	HT5	HT6
GCSE MUSIC (Eduqas)	<p>Performing: Ensemble Improvising</p> <p>Composing: Introduction to Muse Score music-notation software.</p> <p>AABA melody with diatonic chordal accompaniment. Primary & secondary triads.</p> <p>Appraising: The Elements of Music Forms & Devices (1)</p>	<p>Performing: Solo performance, and ensemble for Christmas Concert</p> <p>Composing: 32-bar Standard Form</p> <p>Appraising: Popular Music (1) Toto: Africa (1)</p>	<p>Performing: Preparing for 'Live Lounge'</p> <p>Composing: exploring other keys and tonalities, e.g. G major (dominant), A minor (relative minor)</p> <p>Appraising: Music for Ensembles (1)</p>	<p>Performing: Live Lounge solo/ensemble performances</p> <p>Composing: Setting words to music</p> <p>Appraising: Film Music (1) <i>How to answer 10-mark extended writing questions.</i></p>	<p>Performing: practise SOLO performance for end-of-year exam</p> <p>Composing: Y10 Summer Exam Composing Assignment</p> <p>Appraising: Forms & Devices (2) Popular Music (2) Music for Ensemble (2) Film Music (2)</p>	<p>Performing: record SOLO performance for end-of-year exam, plus ENSEMBLE preparation for Summer Concert performance. Composing: Planning your Composition 2 ('Free' Composition)</p> <p>Appraising: Prepare for Y10 Summer Appraising exam (past paper minus Set Works questions).</p>

YEAR 11	HT1	HT2	HT3	HT4	HT5	HT6
GCSE MUSIC (Eduqas)	<p>Performing: Practise ensemble & solo coursework pieces/songs</p> <p>Composing: Begin Composition 1 (Composing to a given brief) <i>Briefs released by Eduqas at start of September</i></p> <p>Appraising: Forms & Devices (3) Music for ensemble (3) Bach: Badinerie (1)</p>	<p>Performing: Practise ensemble & solo coursework pieces/songs</p> <p>Composing: Complete Composition 1 by end of November, then begin Composition 2</p> <p>Appraising: Popular Music (3) Toto: Africa (2) Film Music (3)</p> <p>Mock Exam Nov = Appraising past paper (complete paper)</p>	<p>Performing: Preparing for Live Lounge. Begin recording NEA Solo & Ensemble Performing</p> <p>Composing: Composition 2</p>	<p>Performing: Complete recording of all Solo & Ensemble Performing. Live Lounge concert in March.</p> <p>Composing: Complete Scores/Leadsheets/Annotated Screenshots, Audio Recordings & Composing Logs For BOTH Compositions 1 & 2, by internal submission deadline: March 20th 2026</p>	<p>Performing & Composing: <i>Internal marking of all Performing and Composing NEA coursework must be completed, and all work ready for online submission, by 5th May</i></p> <p>Appraising: Revision of all Areas of Study and Set Works for final Appraising Examination in June.</p>	<p>APPRAISING EXAMINATION in mid-June</p>

How can studying Music help me now and in the future?

According to the World Economic Forum, creativity is one of the most important and in-demand skills at work. When business leaders across the world were surveyed, they voted creativity as the most important workplace skill to help their businesses survive and grow. This means that the study of creative subjects like Music is even more important and relevant to young people to give them the chance to succeed – whatever their ambitions. At the same time, they will find many opportunities to develop and improve personal wellbeing both independently and as part of a wider community.

What skills will I gain?

The practical skills of performing and composing music demonstrate creativity, reflection and resilience, as well as developing confidence and presentation skills. Studying music gives opportunities for higher-order thinking, by considering ideas which go beyond language. This is great brain-training which helps in other areas too.

You will gain a deep understanding of a number of transferable skills and practise applying these to new situations, developing analytical and problem-solving skills.

Through studying music, you will be equipped with the skills to succeed in your next steps.

What could I do next?

The possibilities are endless. Music will enable you to demonstrate many skills which employers, colleges and universities are looking for. It can also give you opportunities to travel, meet people and get the most out of life!

Careers in Music

In terms of career options, singers and musicians may be the most visible jobs in music, but you could carve out a career in a number of areas including performing, songwriting, composing, live music entertainment, music education, music production, artist management, marketing and PR, or music journalism.

Portfolio careers are common in the music business. This means having several streams of income at the same time, often combining jobs with freelance work. For example, session musicians could also make money as music teachers, and with the right knowledge and experience, DJs and recording engineers can move into music production, while concert promoters can move into marketing and PR roles.

Useful links to further information on Careers in Music:

www.prospects.ac.uk/jobs-and-work-experience/job-sectors/creative-arts-and-design/careers-in-music

www.careersinmusic.com/music-careers

