



St Gregory the Great Catholic School – Secondary Phase

Music (KS4)

Examination Board: AQA
Specification: GCSE MUSIC



Course Description:

Studying AQA GCSE Music offers students the chance to study a wide range of musical genres, with more opportunities for practical learning. AQA recognise that every student has different learning styles and musical tastes, which is why the AQA GCSE Music course values all music styles, skills and instruments. There are three components which students focus on throughout the course – Understanding Music, Performing Music and Composing Music.

Students will have access to a wide range of resources to help them achieve the best possible grade in GCSE Music, including Apple Mac computers with Logic Audio software, a fully equipped recording studio, practice rooms, instruments, as well as online resources to develop music theory and listening skills.

Assessment:

AQA GCSE Music is assessed across the three components - Understanding Music, Performing Music and Composing Music. Understanding Music is a final written exam, and

the other two components are internally assessed coursework which is moderated by an external assessor.

Component 1: Understanding music - focuses on listening and contextual understanding.

How it's assessed:

- Written exam: 1 hour 30 minutes.
- Exam paper includes listening exercises using excerpts of music.
- Externally assessed by AQA.
- Section A – listening (68 marks).
- Section B – contextual understanding (28 marks).
- 96 marks in total (40% of GCSE).

Component 2: Performing music

How it's assessed:

- Two pieces, one solo and the other as an ensemble.
- Either through playing music, singing, or music technology.
- Total performance time must last four minutes minimum and seven minutes maximum (ensemble performance must be one minute minimum).
- Must provide recording of the performances, including accompanying evidence (a score, lead sheet, annotation, or guide recording).
- Internally assessed and externally moderated by AQA.
- 72 marks in total (30% of GCSE).

Component 3: Composing music

How it's assessed:

- Each student must compose two compositions.
- Composition 1: composing to a brief (36 marks).
- Composition 2: free composition (36 marks).
- Combined composition time must last three minutes minimum and four and a half minutes maximum.
- Internally assessed and externally moderated by AQA.
- 72 marks in total (30% of GCSE).

Why study GCSE Music?

Students will learn how music 'works', enabling them to reach their potential as a music artist. Students can choose to play any instrument, sing, DJ or use music technology for their performances. Students can compose and produce their own music in any style.

Music is a practical and challenging subject, which allows students to respond creatively to their own experiences, environment and culture. 60% of the marks awarded for the course are through coursework. The skills of team-work and creative thinking learned in GCSE Music are highly sought after by employers and can lead to a broad range of careers in the future.

Further information on GCSE Music can be obtained from Mr Sweeney – Subject Leader for Music and Performing Arts.