

MUSIC CURRICULUM

The music department at Great Academy Ashton is dedicated to fostering personal, emotional, intellectual, and social development through the power of music. We believe that every student has the potential to engage with music meaningfully, and our mission is to create an environment where creativity, expression, and technical proficiency can flourish. By exploring a wide variety of musical styles, traditions, and genres, students develop not only musical skills but also a deep appreciation of music’s ability to inspire, connect, and communicate.

Our Key Stage 3 curriculum is designed to develop well-rounded musicians by focusing on key musical concepts that integrate performance, composition, improvisation, and critical listening. Each year builds on foundational musical experiences, allowing students to expand their skills and understanding across different areas. **Key Concepts that are present in the music department’s offer are:**

Singing

Students develop vocal techniques, learning to hold melodic lines and harmonize within an ensemble. They build confidence and expressive skills, understanding their voice’s role in creating a cohesive performance.

Composing

Students compose original music, drawing on a variety of structures, genres, and styles. They learn to combine melody, harmony, rhythm, and dynamics, using both traditional methods and CUBASE software to reflect diverse influences.

Improvising

Through jazz, blues, and world music, students explore chord progressions, tonalities, and rhythms, creating spontaneous musical ideas within a framework. This enhances their creativity and adaptability in real-time performance.

Performing

Students perform solo and in ensembles, focusing on fluency, control, and expression. They learn to convey musical intent through dynamics and phrasing while developing collaborative skills in group settings.

Critical listening and engagement

Students listen critically to a wide range of music, analysing how elements like melody, harmony, and rhythm create style and mood. They explore music’s role in different cultures and periods, developing skills in thoughtful critique.

Musical expression and intention

Students explore how musical elements such as tempo, dynamics, and phrasing express emotion and mood. They learn to use these tools in both performance and composition to create meaningful connections with their audience.

Musical context and styles

Students are introduced to various genres and historical periods, learning how music evolves and reflects cultural and societal changes. This broadens their understanding of music’s global significance.

Notation

Students learn to read and write standard musical notation and other systems like tablature. This helps them interpret and communicate musical ideas clearly in both composition and performance.

Our Key Stage 3 curriculum offers a variety of rich musical experiences across different traditions and genres, encouraging students to develop their musical identity. Throughout the three years, students engage with practical and theoretical aspects of music. The curriculum is structured to cover the following:

Year 7 introduces students to the basics of **keyboard skills and music theory**. Students also explore music for film, particularly focusing on horror soundtracks, and work on an arrangement of **Pachelbel’s Canon**.

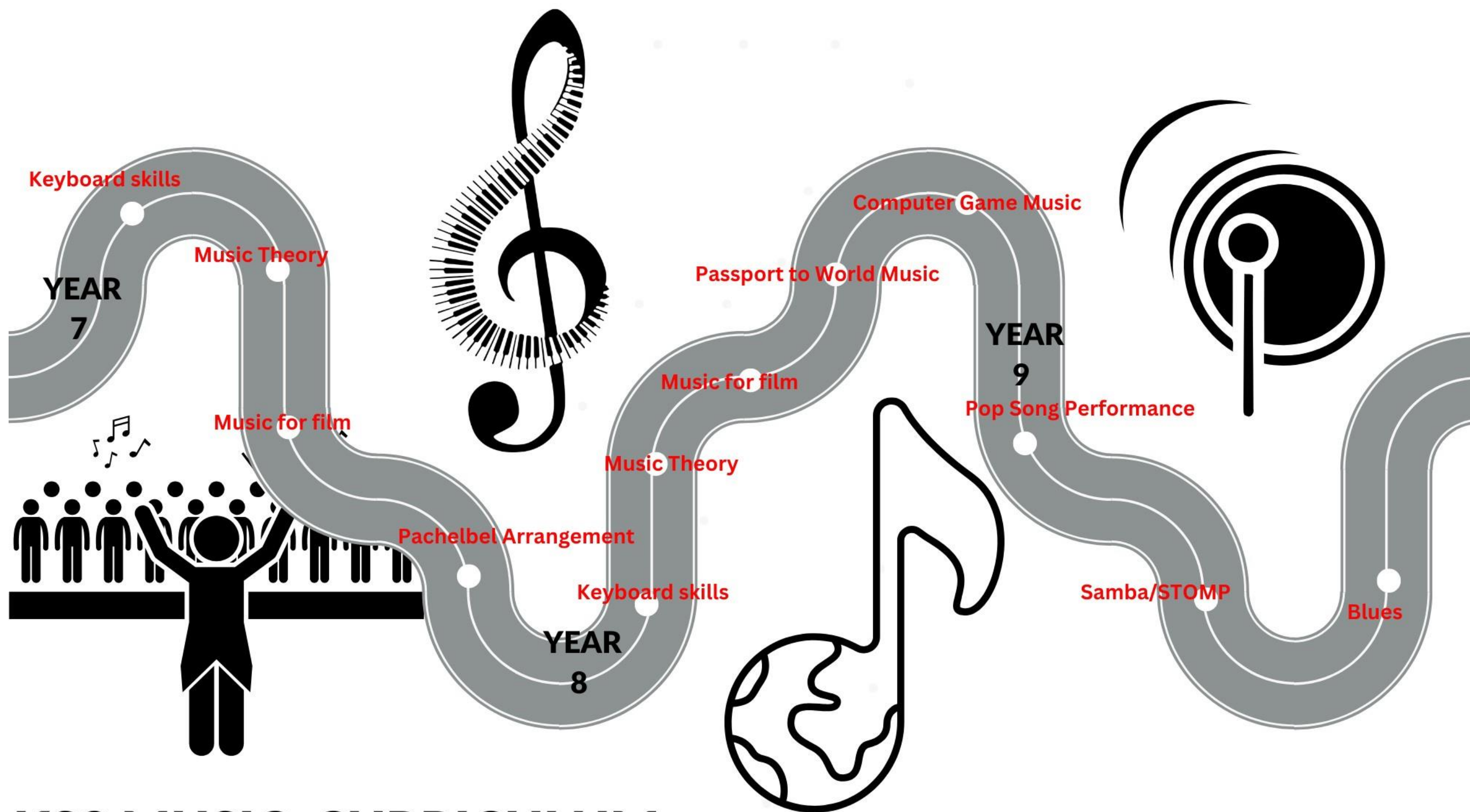
In **Year 8**, students build their **keyboard skills and music theory**. They also embark on a musical journey around the world in the ‘**passport to world music**’ module and explore composing for interactive media with the **computer game music** unit.

Year 9 focuses more on performance and musical interaction. Students engage in **pop song performance**, delve into rhythmic techniques through **Samba** and study the origins of improvisation with the **Blues** unit.

By the end of Key Stage 3, students will have developed a broad set of skills, enabling them to compose, perform, and critically analyse music in a variety of contexts. They will also have a deep appreciation of music’s role in culture and society, preparing them for further musical studies or simply a lifetime of enjoying and engaging with music.

Though formal instrument lessons are not part of the core curriculum, students are encouraged to extend their musical learning through Extra-curricular: opportunities. We offer school ensembles, performance showcases, and musical productions that help students apply their skills in real-world contexts. These performances allow students to build confidence and resilience, while also giving them the opportunity to share their musical achievements with their peers, family, and the wider community.

Our overarching aim is to inspire a love of music in every student. By focusing on both technical skills and creative exploration, we encourage students to engage with music as both performers and critical listeners. Through their journey in music, students will not only develop their musicianship but also their ability to think critically, collaborate, and express themselves confidently. We believe that music education is about more than learning notes—it’s about understanding music’s power to inspire, communicate, and connect people across cultures and time.



KS3 MUSIC CURRICULUM



Great
Academy
Ashton
Inspiring Greatness

KS4 MUSIC CURRICULUM



COURSE ASSESSMENT

Music assessment.

The course is assessed through three main components:

- Integrated Portfolio (30%): Students perform a solo piece and compose one original composition. This portfolio showcases their technical and expressive skills in performance and creativity in composition.
- Practical Component (30%): In this component, students perform as part of an ensemble and compose another piece based on a set brief.
- Listening and Appraising (40%): This is an externally assessed written exam, focusing on students' understanding of different areas of study, including classical music, world music, and popular genres. The exam lasts 1 hour and 30 minutes.

COURSE DETAILS

Course: OCR GCSE Music

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The OCR GCSE Music (J536) course is a dynamic qualification that allows students to engage with music through performance, composition, and appraisal. Here's a detailed breakdown:

The course is designed to develop key musical skills in performing, composing, and listening. It explores five areas of study:

- My Music: Students explore music they perform.
- The Concerto Through Time: From the Baroque to the Romantic period.
- Rhythms of the World: Focuses on traditional music from different global cultures.
- Film Music: Examines the use of music in film and gaming.
- Conventions of Pop: Looks at the development of popular music.

This broad approach ensures students have a well-rounded understanding of both practical and theoretical aspects of music.

PROGRESSION ROUTES

- A-Level Music or Music Technology.
- Vocational qualifications in performance, composition, or music production.
- Careers in performance, teaching, composition, or music production are also viable, thanks to the technical and analytical skills developed in the course.

