KS4 Curriculum Overview

Year 10 and Year 11

The BTEC First Award in Music is suitable for any pupils who are interested in any aspect of the Music Industry; not just performing, but also the technical side as well. Pupils choose specialist options based on their interests, this means the course is accessible to and suitable for musicians and non-musicians alike. Those who perform will excel in the performance unit, those who are interested in the technology will excel in the live sound unit.

The course is 75% practical coursework and 25% written exam. The nature of the coursework requires pupils to be independent, self-motivated, and have high levels of learner agency to produce the work required to hit the higher grades. Pupils are responsible for their own folders / e-portfolios for each unit and keeping them up to date with commentaries and evidence.

All pupils must complete the 2 compulsory core units:

- **Unit 1:** Written Exam on the Music Industry (60mins)
- **Unit 2:** Managing a Music Product (Planning a concert for the school)

Pupils then choose one of the following options depending on their interests and expertise:

- **Unit 3**: Live Sound
- **Unit 5**: Music Performance

All pupils then complete **Unit 6:** Music Recording, giving them the total of 4 units required to complete the course.

UNIT BREAK DOWN

Unit 1 – Written Exam

The 60min exam is about the different jobs, responsibilities and organisations involved in the Music Industry. There are 3 sections:

- **A:** Multiple choice questions (16 marks)
- **B:** Scenario 1 and extended answer (17 Marks)
- **C:** Scenario 2 and extended answer (17 Marks)

     TOTAL 50 MARKS

In section B and C pupils are expected to read and comprehend scenarios in the Music Industry, they must then answer an 8 mark question for each one. Plenty of curriculum time is spent working on the skills required to answer these questions to a high standard.

Pupils sit the written exam in Year 10 in May, they then have 2 opportunities to resit in Year 11: January and May.

Unit 2: Managing a Music Product (30 Learning Hours)

Throughout Year 10, in groups of approximately 6 - 8 pupils will take it in turns planning, developing, and delivering the school's 3 termly concerts. They are required to have regular meetings to discuss things like time/date, ticket prices, organising performances, and roles and responsibilities on the night. They choose the theme and decorate the stage as they please and are also responsible for contacting staff and/or outside agencies to enquire about various aspects of the event.

Other responsibilities include making a poster or radio advert to advertise the show, designing tickets and programmes, selling refreshments, and actively hosting the show by welcoming the audience and introducing the performers.

This is a core unit and must be completed to a high standard. The nature of the assessment criteria means pupils will achieve highly if they are consistently and significantly involved in the planning process, produce imaginative promotional material, and take on an active role at the concert itself.

Pupils must then evaluate the event to complete the unit, they must discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the concert whilst making references to their planning strategy.

Unit 3: Live Sound (30 Learning Hours)

Pupils are responsible for setting up, manipulating, and packing away all the live sound equipment at the school's concerts. They will learn how to use a mixing desk, set up an on-stage monitor mix, and how to effectively monitor and control the sound levels during a live event; before doing the real thing at our concerts. As part of the backstage techie team, they will have to set up and move various microphones between performances, demonstrating an awareness of health and safety for performers, themselves, and the audience.

Pupils will learn about the setup requirements for live events, including different types of cables, microphone placement, gain levels, phantom power, FX sends, and how to prevent feedback; and what to do when feedback occurs.

On the night of the concerts the Unit 3 techie team are issued with a black Hi-Viz with their names on the back to make the experience feel more professional for them.

Unit 5: Music Performance (30 Learning Hours)

Pupils must prepare 2 contrasting pieces to perform in one of our school's concerts. They only do this under Unit 5 guidelines for one of the concerts, for the other 2 concerts they are free to perform as and what they wish.

For Unit 5 requirements, pupils must spend valuable lesson time on their 2 contrasting pieces ensuring they are the best they can be ready for the performance. They are required to keep a rehearsal diary where they consistently monitor their progress and show their awareness of what they need to work on next time. Regular video evidence of rehearsals is also submitted alongside each diary entry.

Pupils are welcome to choose a different instrument for each performance if they are multi-instrumentalists. Band pieces are welcome but the Unit 5 candidate must ensure there is a part of the song where they have an opportunity to stand out with a solo.

Unit 6: Music Recording

In Year 11 all pupils study music recording, they learn how the recording process works and the basics of multitrack recording. They will learn how to position microphones on a drum kit, upright piano, and acoustic guitar, as well as techniques such as close-miking and direct injection.

To complete this unit pupils will independently record a song of their choice in the studio and must mix and master it afterwards to enhance its sound and make it as professional as possible. This unit does **not** require musical instrument skills and is not assessed on any element of performance, it is purely assessed on the candidate's ability to plan, setup, and manage a recording session using others in the class /other year groups who do play instruments. The final part of the assessment is based on how well the candidate has used music production software to enhance the mix by changing volume levels, panning, applying reverb, layering, eliminating background noise, adding MIDI instruments, using EQ, or even adding sound effects.