

The Music Curriculum

Our overriding intent is to give all students the opportunity to experience rich and varied musical experiences in their time at The Thomas Hardy School. This is not only through introducing them to a broad repertoire of music in timetabled lessons whilst also developing skills & knowledge, but also through an extensive co-curricular programme of activities. Our curriculum is designed to introduce them to the incredible range of music from the Western Classical tradition, as well as popular music and music from around the world. We aim to embed a life-long love of listening, learning, and making music. The music department also accommodates 20 specialist instrumental/vocal teachers who work in other Wessex MAT schools, as well as schools further afield. Many of these specialist teachers are top-level professionals working with orchestras such as the Royal Opera House, the BBC Philharmonic and more locally, the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra. Year 9 work on a project-based curriculum, building knowledge & skills to prepare students for GCSE music. Year 9 are not set homework, but are encouraged to listen to a wide variety of music, and take up and practice an instrument if possible. They are also strongly encouraged to take up the opportunity of joining one of the many extra-curricular music clubs on offer. Years 10, 11, 12 & 13 have a spiral curriculum, with musical vocabulary and knowledge revisited through a series of exam board prescribed set works, as well as wider listening. This allows students to learn to adapt and apply knowledge and skills to a wide variety of musical traditions and styles. We make links throughout our lessons to PSHE, particularly in reference to understanding of different cultures and practices. We also link to careers through our study of a wide variety of musicians, as well as the embedding of discussions regarding the modern music industry, such as performing, publishing, PRS/MCPS royalties, and self-publicity.

Year 9

We are working with the first & middle schools to develop a through-curriculum that develops knowledge and skills based on the new “Model Music Curriculum”, published in late-2021. This is still a work in progress, but at the heart of this new curriculum is an emphasis on singing skills, and giving students the ability to listen & appraise music using music-specific vocabulary. In year 9 our first unit incorporates singing, playing chords on the ukulele & use of musical vocabulary. Our second scheme of work is DAW (digital audio workstation) based, with students composing film music to accompany a trailer for an action film. The third unit builds on these sequencing skills with students creating their own EDM (electronic dance music) composition. The knowledge developed in term one, such as understanding of tonality, texture, harmony, melody & rhythm, is applied and built upon in this second and third unit of work. All three units are being constantly evaluated, adapted and updated to suit the wide range of abilities that we have between students, and also to accommodate the different education experiences in music that they have received at their respective middle schools.

Key Stage 4

In year 10, students begin the Edexcel GCSE music course. The course is designed so that students develop their skills in composition, and listening and appraising as the course progresses. The students also develop their skills in performance towards their final assessment often with the support of their specialist instrumental/vocal teachers. Students arrive with a wide variety of instrumental/voice skills. Students are strongly encouraged to have lessons with a specialist instrumental/vocal teacher at the school. Many students take up this offer. PP students taking GCSE music are offered fully-subsidised lessons to ensure that the

curriculum is as inclusive as possible. As our new curriculum model from KS1-KS3 feeds through, it is hoped that students will arrive with a more consistent knowledge base of musical vocabulary and musical styles. At present this can be variable, and the beginning half-term of year 10 is generally spent bringing students up to speed with their basic musical theory and vocabulary. This supports all aspects of their music GCSE, as well as building up the skills to give students the opportunity to continue their musical studies at A level. Composition is completed using Cubase and/or Sibelius software, and with relatively small class sizes students are given a large amount of one-on-one supervision on the development of compositional skills. After school and lunchtime one-on-one sessions are also offered for those who feel they need further guidance & support. The study of set works is usually completed by the end of Winter term in year 11, offering time for revision as well as performance recordings and completing compositions.

Sixth Form

In Year 12 we offer two courses, A Level Music and A Level Music Technology, both with Edexcel as this fits with the GCSE course. A Level Music follows the same course structure as GCSE Music, with performance, composition and the study of set works & wider listening. The course is designed so that teaching the set works, composition and performance aspects of the A level are taught alongside musical theory, and specifically chorale harmonisation. Chorale harmonisation in the style of J.S.Bach is one of the options within the compositional technique part of the course. We opt for this as it provides students with an extremely strong understanding of harmony & tonality, as well as requiring students to develop a real eye for detail. The complex rules governing chorale harmonisation and therefore the particular mathematical skills required are also well-known and highly regarded by universities and music conservatoires. Following completion of the summer task we advise students on how they should develop their instrumental/voice skills. Instrumental/vocal skills are worked on predominantly with instrumental specialists, however students are given regular performance opportunities. Composition is completed using Cubase and/or Sibelius software, and with small class sizes students are given a large amount of one-on-one supervision on the advancement of compositional skills. A large percentage of our students go on to study music at one of the country's top universities, colleges or academies.

A Level Music Technology is also offered to give students the best possible musical opportunities in the sixth form. This course can be taken separately or alongside Music A Level with a small number of specialised students doing both each year. The course focuses practically on recording skills through the capture and mixing of contemporary music within a recording studio as well as composing contemporary music using music technology. Students are examined on their understanding of the development of music technology and how it has shaped the sound of contemporary music, as well as their ability to produce music through the use of a DAW (Digital Audio Workstation) under exam conditions. Many of our students go on to study Sound Production, Music Technology or Contemporary Performance/Composition at one of the top universities and colleges in the country.

Enrichment

There is a rich and varied array of opportunities for enrichment at all levels, with 14 weekly cocurricular groups on offer. These include music in a wide range of styles, including choirs, an orchestra, concert band, big band, as well as smaller instrumental groups such as a folk group, string ensemble and a flute choir. Our ensembles have performed at the most prestigious

venues in the UK, including Westminster Abbey & St Paul's Cathedral. Regular performances are held locally and further afield; in the academic year 2022/23 there were over 20 concerts/performance organised by the music department. We also often collaborate with local and national organisations as well as the other schools in the Wessex MAT to take music into the community as well as giving the students the chance to play alongside adults and professionals. This year this has included performing an Opera with Destination Opera as well as performing an orchestral concert with the Dorset Chamber Orchestra. Alongside the dance & drama department we produce regular full-scale musicals which have recently included Our House, The Wizard of Oz (RSC), Little Shop of Horrors and We Will Rock You. This year we are performing Shrek The Musical. In addition to performing opportunities the department runs regular trips to watch professional music being performed. This year this has included two trips to see the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra as well as a trip to see Shrek The Musical.