



The **Thomas Mills High School & Sixth Form** Music curriculum aims to provide pupils with musical experiences that help them develop technical and expressive skills alongside musical knowledge. The course is designed to cover singing, the playing of various instruments, composing, improvising and critical appraisal of music. Assessment will focus on the following areas:

- 1) Technical knowledge - understanding and applying practical skills and techniques needed to perform, compose and appreciate music, e.g. the mechanics of playing various instruments, singing technique, basic notation skills and using a DAW (Digital Audio Workstation) to compose.
- 2) Constructive knowledge - understanding how melody, harmony, rhythm, texture and structure work so that pupils can construct (compose) music and deconstruct (analyse) music.
- 3) Expressive knowledge – understanding how different historical and social contexts impact music and how to compose and perform with creativity and feeling, using both technical and constructive knowledge.

The focus within KS3 music is firmly on practical music-making with plenty of opportunities to compose, perform, sing and listen to music. Pupils will learn 'in' music and not just about music.

Year 7			
Term	Topic	Knowledge and Skills	Useful Links
1	Music Lessons: Introduction to Rhythm	Students will learn about basic musical notation, including note values and time signatures. They will practise clapping the pulse in music and perform simple rhythms from notation using body percussion, such as clapping and stomping. They will also be introduced to a rhythm performance piece and perform this as a class and in groups. In groups, students will compose their own rhythmic piece through improvisation and begin to notate their	Rhythm - Music literacy - National 5 Music Revision - BBC Bitesize Pitch - Music literacy - National 5 Music Revision - BBC Bitesize



	Introduction to Pitch	rhythms. These layered rhythms will create more complex polyrhythms. Students will then be introduced to pitch by learning the notes of the treble and bass clefs. They will identify these notes on the keyboard and develop basic keyboard skills. Using words (e.g., "dead cabbage"), they will create a composition that combines their understanding of rhythm and pitch. They will notate their word composition to embed the connection between written notation and sound. Finally, students will end the term by learning and performing a piece as a class. The different parts will increase in difficulty, and students who play an instrument will have the opportunity to perform on their own instrument alongside the keyboards.	
	Music Technology Lessons: Introduction to GarageBand	In Term 1 of Music Technology, pupils will explore music technology through composing a short song using GarageBand. They'll learn how to use basic features such as saving, adding loops, recording, and layering tracks. Over the term, they will create compositions that include drum, bass, and melody lines, and build their understanding of musical structure using an ABA (ternary) format. Students will also learn to construct chord sequences in C major, record melodies with shape and repetition, and use arpeggiators for bass lines. Lessons gradually develop skills, beginning with selecting loops and adding drummer tracks, then	



	Mickey-Mousing	progressing to original compositions with contrasting sections. In the second half of Term 1, pupils will explore how music enhances film through a technique called 'mickey mousing', where music closely matches on-screen action. Using GarageBand, they'll compose original music for a short film clip, developing skills in sound selection, timing and mood. Pupils will study professional examples, experiment with loops, and learn to use drones and transitions effectively. They'll refine their work over several lessons with ongoing feedback, culminating in a final composition. The unit supports creativity, critical listening, and technical development.	
Assessments		There are three assessments this term. The first assessment is of the group percussion compositions and will evaluate pupils' ability to both perform and notate interesting rhythms, demonstrating both technical and expressive skills. The second assessment will focus on their word composition and will assess their ability to compose imaginative ideas and notate simple melodies. The third assessment will evaluate their keyboard skills, specifically their ability to play with accuracy and fluency. Pupils will be supported in these assessments by teacher and pupil modelling, whole class feedback and verbal feedback throughout the lessons.	
2	Music Lessons: Sonority- Instruments and Voices	During the first half term, pupils will prepare for a Year 7 Class Singing Competition. This takes place in the week before half term, where each class performs a song using harmonies and different parts for the rest of the year group. This activity develops their technical knowledge of how their voices work, particularly breath control, diction and intonation, as well as their expressive and performance skills. They will also learn	BBC National Orchestra of Wales - Strings - YouTube BBC National Orchestra of Wales - Woodwind BBC National Orchestra of Wales - Percussion BBC National Orchestra of Wales - Brass Holst: The Planets, 'Mars' - BBC Proms



		about performance etiquette, including how to behave in a concert and how to perform professionally on stage. Alongside preparing a song, pupils will learn about the instruments found in an orchestra: how they sound, the mechanics of the instruments, and to which family of instruments they belong. They will also further their constructive knowledge of musical elements and apply their understanding of musical instruments to a listening assessment based on Holst's 'The Planets'.	
	Samba – Music as Celebration	During the second half term, pupils will explore how music is used in celebration. They will learn about the culture of Brazilian Samba music and key musical features such as call and response, polyrhythm and cyclic patterns. As a class, they will learn to perform Samba Batucada and will be introduced to key instruments including: surdo, caixa, tamborim, agogô, repinique, ganza, and whistle (apito). They will study the structure of Samba: introduction, groove, break, call, response and ending, and will learn to follow the leader using whistle cues. Finally, pupils will create their own Samba rhythms in groups, incorporating all the key features they have learned.	<u>Basic Samba Batucada Lesson with Marcus Santos</u>
	Music Technology: Advert Music	This term, pupils will create music for a fictional advert, learning how sound shapes mood and message. Using	



	Minimalism	GarageBand, they will write and record a voiceover script, compose music using major and minor chords to reflect changing emotions, and add sound effects using a technique called Foley. Pupils will also create a short, catchy jingle featuring their product's name. Throughout the unit, they will explore how rhythm, harmony and instrumentation influence audience response. Pupils will then explore the genre of minimalism in music. They will learn about its origins and key characteristics, such as repetition, layering of short ostinatos, looping, phase shifting, modulation and note addition/subtraction. Pupils will compose their own minimalist pieces using these techniques and identify them in the works of others. Key resources include pieces by Terry Riley, John Adams and Steve Reich.	
Assessments		There are two assessments this term. The first is a written appraisal task about Holst's 'The Planets' with focus on the musical elements. This assessment includes written feedback from the teacher and an opportunity to develop from that feedback. Pupils will be supported with this assessment by working through some examples as a class, teacher and pupil modelling, key word banks and sentence starters. The second assessment will be of the student's samba performances and their ability to play with fluency, accuracy and with a sense of style. Pupils will be given plenty of verbal feedback as individuals and in groups.	
3	Programme Music – Storytelling in music	The first half term will focus on programme music, including repertoire such as Mussorgsky's 'Pictures at an Exhibition', Saint-Saëns' 'Carnival of the Animals' and Vivaldi's 'Four Seasons'.	Modest Mussorgsky: Pictures at an Exhibition (orch. Ravel) Composing music for film - KS3 Music - BBC Bitesize



	Folk Music – Storytelling in music	Students will create an Enchanted Forest composition on keyboards and their own instruments that includes leitmotifs (musical ideas to represent a character or theme) and begin to think about the structure of this piece. They will build on their understanding of sonority, such as the effect of the sound of different instruments, and aim to incorporate a balance of repetition and contrast in their music. Pupils will learn about the key features of British and Irish folk music, particularly the use of different metres (e.g. jigs in 6/8 and reels in 4/4) and different scales (e.g. pentatonic and modal scales). They will learn a simple piece of folk music in small groups and begin to consider phrasing and structure. Pupils will have the opportunity to experiment with guitar, as well as keyboard and voice. They will also go on to develop their own folk-style melodies, using some of the features they have learned including simple harmonies, call and response melodies and drones.	Musical journeys: Folk music - BBC Bitesize
	Music Technology: Ground Bass and Music for a battle	Pupils will focus on creating a Ground Bass and a Battle scene compositions. They will learn about the features of ground bass, such as repetition and bass parts, and how to compose their own using the pentatonic scale. Pupils will combine all of the techniques they have learnt about melody, harmony and loops to create a	



	Musique Concrete and Remix	composition representing a gang fight between two different gangs. In the musique concrete and remix unit, pupils will learn about the development of musique concrete and remixing. They will discuss the nature of music, use techniques like splicing and reverse playback, and create compositions using everyday sounds. Pupils will learn how modern-day remix also uses similar processing techniques and learn to transpose and match loops to fit vocal samples for their remixes.	
Assessment		There will be two assessments this term. The first is an assessment of their group compositions, particularly looking at how successfully their ideas match a theme/character. Teacher and pupil models will be used as well as verbal feedback throughout the composition process. The second assessment will be of the group folk composition, with particular attention to whether pupils have included the key musical features of the genre. They will be reminded of these key features and there will be frequent use of teacher and pupil models, as well as verbal feedback.	