



The **Thomas Mills High School & Sixth Form** GCSE Music Curriculum is based on the Edexcel course. The Edexcel GCSE Music curriculum aims to develop well-rounded musicianship by integrating **technical, constructive and expressive knowledge** through **performing, composing and appraising**.

- **Technical knowledge** focuses on understanding how music is created, including skills in performance, composition and the use of musical notation and technology. Students learn how to play or sing with accuracy, fluency and control.
- **Constructive knowledge** involves understanding how musical elements—such as melody, harmony, rhythm, texture, tonality, structure, sonority, tempo, dynamics and articulation—are combined to create coherent and purposeful compositions. This knowledge enables students to analyse and construct music across diverse genres and contexts as well as analysing the 8 different set works.
- **Expressive knowledge** emphasises communication and interpretation, enabling students to make informed artistic decisions that convey mood, character and intention in both performance and composition.

Together, these areas ensure that students become confident, creative and analytical musicians, capable of engaging critically with a wide range of musical styles. The main assessments this year are centred around the three important elements of the GCSE examination: performing, composing and appraising. The final GCSE exam comprises all the elements with 30% for performing (solo and ensemble), 30% for composing (free composition and brief composition) and 40% for the appraising paper.

Year 9			
Term	Topic	Knowledge and Skills	Useful Links
1	Performing	In the Autumn term, students focus on solo performance, developing technical and expressive skills to perform fluently and confidently. They are supported with this through regular practice sessions and advice on how to rehearse and improve.	Musical performance - Musical performance - Edexcel - GCSE Music Revision - Edexcel - BBC Bitesize
	Appraising: Killer Queen and Music for a While	They explore vocal set works (<i>Killer Queen</i> and <i>Music for a While</i>), enhancing their listening and analytical skills	Killer Queen - Queen: Killer Queen - Edexcel - GCSE Music Revision - Edexcel - BBC Bitesize



	Composing: Exercises	and embedding their knowledge of the key musical elements (harmony, melody, rhythm, etc.). The pupils also build on prior composition knowledge through structured exercises, reinforcing musical concepts and encouraging creativity. Students also learn key musical vocabulary and apply it in context through listening tests. This foundation prepares students for GCSE expectations. The curriculum supports cultural development and social interaction through shared music-making.	Music for a While - Purcell: Music for a While - Edexcel - GCSE Music Revision - Edexcel - BBC Bitesize
Assessments		There are three areas for assessment this term. The first is a baseline solo assessment to gauge their ability as performers with the GCSE exam criteria. The second is submission of a series of composition exercises, which they have been supported to develop over the term. The third assessment are listening tests based on <i>Killer Queen</i> and <i>Music for a While</i>, which are from GCSE exam papers. Pupils will be supported through these by going through the questions in advance as a class.	
2	Performing: Solo and ensemble performance Composing: Free Composition Appraising: Essay writing	This term centres on ensemble performance, where students learn to communicate musically as a group. They prepare for a class concert, enhancing cooperation and performance confidence. Free composition begins, using digital tools such as GarageBand and Logic, to create original music with guidance and individual feedback. Pupils have the opportunity to use the Gingerbread studios for their compositions. Appraising skills are developed further through analysis of the set works and wider vocal music, with an	Writing your own music - starting points - Writing your own music - Edexcel - Revision - BBC Bitesize



		emphasis on applying musical terminology and comparative listening.	
Assessments		Pupils will be assessed on another solo or ensemble performance in a class concert. They will have access to the exam criteria and be supported in how to approach their practice sessions before the concert. Pupils will submit a draft of their first free composition and be given specific written and verbal feedback to guide them with this. Pupils will write a comparative essay on <i>Killer Queen</i> and <i>Music for a While</i>. They will be assisted by a writing frame and clear guidance on what to include in each paragraph.	
3	Performing Composing: The commentary Appraising	In the Summer term, students continue refining their performance skills, either solo or in ensembles, guided by instrumental or vocal teachers. The free composition project is completed, with an accompanying written commentary that reflects on compositional choices. The focus shifts to stage and screen music, analysing <i>Defying Gravity</i> and <i>Star Wars</i>, and comparing them with wider listening examples. Appraising skills are tested through listening tests and extended writing. Pupils will also be introduced to the 'unfamiliar' listening question as well as melodic and rhythmic dictation.	Defying Gravity and Wicked - Stephen Schwartz: Defying Gravity from Wicked - Edexcel - GCSE Music Revision - Edexcel - BBC Bitesize Star Wars - John Williams: Star Wars - Edexcel - GCSE Music Revision - Edexcel - BBC Bitesize
Assessment		Pupils will be assessed on another solo or ensemble performance in a class concert. They will have access to the exam criteria and be supported in how to approach their practice sessions before the concert. The second assessment will be on the pupils' 'unfamiliar' listening and melodic and rhythmic dictation. Lots of practice examples will be modelled to the class. The final assessment will be of the written commentary and the pupils are supported with model examples.	