

Saint Aidan's Church of England High School – Music Department

Curriculum

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SAINT AIDAN'S
Church of England High School

Saint Aidan's Church of England High School - Music Department

Key Stage 3 Music curriculum sequence overview

Year 7					
<i>Term 1.1</i>	<i>Term 1.2</i>	<i>Term 2.1</i>	<i>Term 2.2</i>	<i>Term 3.1</i>	<i>Term 3.2</i>
	Keyboard Skills	Singing and Ukulele Skills	Composing with Tech	World Music	Instruments of the Orchestra

Year 8					
<i>Term 1.1</i>	<i>Term 1.2</i>	<i>Term 2.1</i>	<i>Term 2.2</i>	<i>Term 3.1</i>	<i>Term 3.2</i>
Classical Remix	Band Skills 1		Song Writing	Delia and the Doctor	The Beatles

Year 9					
<i>Term 1.1</i>	<i>Term 1.2</i>	<i>Term 2.1</i>	<i>Term 2.2</i>	<i>Term 3.1</i>	<i>Term 3.2</i>
Film Music	Band Skills 2		Video Game Music	A Kind of Blue	Band Skills 3

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Year 7 Curriculum – unit overview

<i>Unit 1</i>	<i>Keyboard Skills</i>	This scheme of work is designed to introduce students to the foundational elements of keyboard skills and basic music notation. Students will develop the ability to read and interpret musical symbols, play simple melodies and chord progressions on the keyboard, and understand how these elements connect through music theory. By the end of the scheme, students should be able to perform basic pieces from sheet music and apply their knowledge of notation to simple compositions.
<i>Unit 2</i>	<i>Singing and Ukulele Skills</i>	This scheme will develop students' singing and ukulele playing abilities. Students will explore vocal ranges and techniques, sing contemporary songs, learn basic ukulele chord progressions, and eventually compose their own song. Each lesson will balance theoretical knowledge with practical application, leading to an end-of-term performance where students showcase their compositions.
<i>Unit 3</i>	<i>Composing with Technology</i>	This scheme of work is designed to introduce students to the basics of using a Digital Audio Workstation (DAW), specifically Soundtrap. Students will learn how to compose short pieces by using loops and samples, input and manipulate MIDI data with virtual instruments, and explore fundamental composition techniques using music technology. By the end of the scheme, students will create a short composition that showcases their skills in arranging, editing, and using a DAW creatively.
<i>Unit 4</i>	<i>World Music</i>	This scheme introduces Year 7 students to music from different cultures, focusing on Samba (Brazil), Gamelan (Indonesia), Chinese music, and Calypso (Caribbean). Students will explore cultural context, instrumentation, rhythmic patterns, and the unique sounds and traditions of each style. The unit will encourage performance, listening, and ensemble work, culminating in a performance project where students apply techniques from the various musical styles.
<i>Unit 5</i>	<i>Instruments of the Orchestra</i>	In this unit, students will explore the orchestral families (strings, woodwind, brass, and percussion) through listening, research, and performance activities. They will learn about the distinctive sounds, playing techniques, and roles of each instrument family within the orchestra. The unit culminates in the class performing a simplified version of a piece by a well-known composer (e.g., Beethoven's "Ode to Joy" or Grieg's "In the Hall of the Mountain King") as a group ensemble.

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Year 8 Curriculum – unit overview

<i>Unit 6</i>	<i>Classical Remix</i>	In this engaging scheme of work, Year 8 music students will explore the fusion of classical music and modern dance genres by creating an EDM remix of Pachelbel's Canon in D Major. Using the Soundtrap Digital Audio Workstation (DAW), students will develop foundational digital music production skills while deepening their understanding of musical structure, harmony, and remixing techniques.
<i>Unit 7</i>	<i>Band Skills 2</i>	Band Skills is designed to immerse music students in the experience of learning and rehearsing like professional musicians, using the informal learning model pioneered by the Musical Futures program. Students will select their main instrument (guitar, bass, drums, or keyboards), form bands, and work collaboratively to develop musical skills, ensemble playing, and performance techniques. They will engage in a hands-on, student-led learning process, focusing on learning by ear, peer collaboration, and real-world rehearsal experiences. The scheme will culminate in a live band performance on a professional stage with lighting and a PA system.
<i>Unit 8</i>	<i>Song Writing</i>	The Year 8 "Songwriting" scheme of work is designed to deepen students' understanding of music composition by guiding them through the fundamentals of creating their own original songs. Building on the musical skills and concepts introduced in Year 7, this scheme emphasises structured songwriting, allowing students to explore personal expression while gaining technical skills in harmony, melody, and lyrics.
<i>Unit 9</i>	<i>Delia and the Doctor</i>	This scheme of work introduces students to the iconic "Doctor Who" theme, arranged by Delia Derbyshire, and explores how she pioneered electronic music. Through this project, students will learn to play the theme using a combination of traditional and electronic instruments and technology. They will also gain an understanding of early electronic music production techniques, Derbyshire's innovative work with the BBC Radiophonic Workshop, and the impact of technology on music composition and sound design.
<i>Unit 10</i>	<i>The Beatles</i>	This scheme of work introduces Year 8 students to the music, innovations, influence, and cultural legacy of The Beatles, one of the most iconic bands in music history. Through a combination of listening, performance, analysis, and creative projects, students will gain an understanding of how The Beatles revolutionized music, transformed the recording industry, and shaped popular culture.

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Year 9 Curriculum – unit overview

<i>Unit 11</i>	<i>Film Music</i>	The Year 9 "Film Music" scheme of learning immerses students in the world of film scoring, exploring how composers use various musical techniques to shape audience emotions, build atmosphere, and enhance storytelling. Centered around the analysis, performance, and composition of film music, this unit aims to develop students' understanding of key musical elements that make film scores impactful and memorable.
<i>Unit 12</i>	<i>Band Skills 2</i>	This 12-week scheme, the second in a sequence of three Band Skills units, builds upon the foundational skills established in Band Skills 1. Students will advance their instrumental techniques, musicianship, and ensemble skills while working on more challenging songs and complex arrangements. Using an informal learning model, students will engage in ear-based learning, collaborative rehearsals, and creative song arrangements. This unit aims to deepen musical understanding and confidence in live performance settings, culminating in a professional live performance.
<i>Unit 13</i>	<i>Video Game Music</i>	This unit explores the origins, evolution, and techniques of video game music from early 8-bit compositions to contemporary orchestral and electronic scores. Students will learn about the role of music in creating character identity, enhancing gameplay, and conveying mood. Through analysis and composition activities, students will gain insight into the techniques composers use to craft memorable video game music.
<i>Unit 14</i>	<i>Kind of Blue</i>	This scheme of work is centred around Miles Davis's <i>A Kind of Blue</i> (1959), a landmark jazz album that not only revolutionised jazz music but also influenced a wide range of music genres. Students will explore the beginnings of jazz, learn about Davis' contributions to the genre, and develop foundational skills in jazz performance and improvisation. The key focus will be on learning and performing the head for <i>So What?</i> and improvising over the chord progression.
<i>Unit 15</i>	<i>Band Skills 3</i>	In this final 7-week scheme of the Band Skills series, students in Year 9 will concentrate on refining their musical and ensemble abilities to prepare for a professional-level performance. Building on foundational skills developed in Band Skills 1 and 2, students will now focus on achieving precision, unity, and expression in their music, striving to perform like a professional band. They will tackle advanced repertoire and be expected to independently direct their rehearsals, developing a polished, cohesive setlist. The culmination of this unit will be a live performance where they will demonstrate mastery of their instrumental and ensemble skills, stagecraft, and professionalism. This scheme encourages Year 9 students to consolidate and elevate their musicianship through rigorous rehearsal, self-directed improvement, and a professional-level performance, equipping them with lifelong skills in collaboration, creativity, and personal expression.

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Key Stage 3 Music Curriculum Overview

Spiral Curriculum Model

The Key Stage 3 Music Curriculum at Saint Aidan's follows a spiral model where students revisit key concepts and skills at increasing levels of complexity and depth as they progress from Year 7 to Year 9. This design allows students to consolidate and build upon prior knowledge, gradually enhancing their technical and expressive abilities, critical thinking, and creativity. The curriculum is structured to facilitate sequential development in areas such as performance, music theory, composition, technology, and cultural awareness, ensuring students acquire a well-rounded music education. The curriculum is designed to deepen students' understanding of music gradually while fostering creativity, cultural appreciation, and performance confidence. Each unit serves as a stepping stone, building on prior learning and adding complexity in a carefully sequenced manner that enables students to engage with diverse musical skills and concepts. This approach ensures that students are well-prepared for more advanced music studies and able to appreciate music's multifaceted role in both history and contemporary society.

Sequencing and Skill Development

The topics are arranged to promote a natural progression of skills. Each unit builds upon previous learning while introducing new challenges, thereby reinforcing understanding and fostering continuous improvement. Below is an illustration of how the curriculum is sequenced across Key Stage 3, with an emphasis on the progression of skills and the revisiting of key concepts.

Year 7 Overview:

The Year 7 curriculum provides foundational knowledge in reading music, performance, ensemble work, and cultural awareness. Units such as **Keyboard Skills** and **Instruments of the Orchestra** introduce core music theory and instrument knowledge, while **Composing with Technology** and **World Music** introduce students to different aspects of music creation and cultural diversity, setting the stage for more advanced applications in later years.

Year 7 – Foundations in Performance and Cultural Awareness

Unit	Focus	Key Skills & Concepts	Progression Links
1. Keyboard Skills	Introduction to notation and keyboard techniques	Basic music notation, rhythm, melody, chord progressions	Foundations in reading music notation, introducing keyboard skills
2. Singing and Ukulele Skills	Vocal and instrumental performance	Vocal techniques, pitch, ensemble skills, ukulele chords	Builds performance confidence and introduces ensemble playing; prepares for later units like Band Skills
3. Composing with Technology	Introduction to DAWs using Soundtrap	Basic DAW skills, arranging loops, MIDI input, creative composition	Lays the groundwork for further DAW work in Units like Classical Remix (Year 8)
4. World Music	Exploring diverse musical traditions	Cultural context, rhythm, group performance	Enhances listening and rhythm skills, broadening cultural understanding
5. Instruments of the Orchestra	Introduction to orchestral families and their sounds	Instrumental identification, listening, ensemble performance	Prepares students for ensemble work in Band Skills and listening analysis in later units

Year 8 Overview:

Year 8 deepens students' musical and technological understanding by introducing **remixing**, **songwriting**, and **ensemble performance**. Units like **Classical Remix** and **Delia and the Doctor** develop students' DAW and electronic music skills, while **Band Skills** and **The Beatles** build on performance and analysis skills, laying the foundation for more advanced performance and composition units in Year 9.

Year 8 – Expanding Skills in Composition, Performance, and Music Technology

Unit	Focus	Key Skills & Concepts	Progression Links
7. Classical Remix	Fusion of classical and EDM using DAWs	Structure, harmony, remixing, advanced DAW skills	Builds on DAW skills from Year 7, adds complexity in musical structure and harmony
8. Band Skills	Ensemble performance, informal learning	Instrument proficiency, teamwork, ear training	Builds practical performance skills, leading into Band Skills 2
9. Songwriting	Composition of original songs	Melody, harmony, lyric writing, personal expression	Builds on notation and melody knowledge from Year 7, essential for composing in Video Game Music and Film Music
10. Delia and the Doctor	Introduction to electronic music history	Early electronic music, synthesis, iconic sounds	Builds on music technology knowledge from Year 7; prepares for exploration of music production and sound design
11. The Beatles	Influence of The Beatles on music and culture	Melody, harmony, cultural impact, analysis	Enhances critical listening and prepares for the analysis required in Kind of Blue and Film Music in Year 9

Year 9 Overview:

In Year 9, students synthesise their learning in advanced **performance, composition, and improvisation**. Units such as **Film Music** and **Video Game Music** demand creative composition, while **Kind of Blue** introduces jazz theory and improvisation, allowing students to engage deeply with genre-specific skills. **Band Skills 2** and **Band Skills 3** push students to refine ensemble playing, ultimately preparing them for more complex musical endeavours.

Year 9 – Advanced Performance, Analysis, and Improvisation

Unit	Focus	Key Skills & Concepts	Progression Links
11. Film Music	Creating atmosphere and mood in music	Composition, soundscapes, thematic development	Builds on composition skills from Songwriting and DAW skills, introduces thematic scoring
12. Band Skills 2	Advanced ensemble performance	Instrumental proficiency, complex rhythms, dynamics	Builds on Year 8 Band Skills, enhancing ensemble cohesion and expression
13. Video Game Music	Composing for interactive media	Looping, theme creation, adaptive music	Expands compositional skills and sound design knowledge, building on Film Music and Songwriting
14. Kind of Blue	Jazz history, improvisation	Jazz theory, improvisation, modal scales	Reinforces improvisation and performance skills, explores a new genre and style
15. Band Skills 3	Final ensemble performance	Advanced ensemble techniques, performance analysis	Cumulative unit drawing on ensemble and performance skills built throughout Key Stage 3

Key Progression Themes Across Years

1. Performance Skills:

- **Year 7:** Keyboard, singing, and ukulele basics build foundational skills.
- **Year 8:** Ensemble work in Band Skills and exploration of formal/informal performance.
- **Year 9:** Complex ensemble playing and performance in jazz and advanced Band Skills units.

2. Music Theory and Notation:

- **Year 7:** Introduction to notation and music symbols.
- **Year 8:** Enhanced theory in classical remix and songwriting, focusing on harmony and structure.
- **Year 9:** Application in jazz theory (Kind of Blue) and scoring for media (Film and Video Game Music).

3. Composition and Creativity:

- **Year 7:** Basic composition through technology (DAW).
- **Year 8:** Expanded creative control in Songwriting, Classical Remix, and Delia Derbyshire's techniques.
- **Year 9:** Advanced compositional projects in Film Music and Video Game Music, emphasising mood and theme.

4. Cultural and Historical Awareness:

- **Year 7:** Introduction to different cultures in World Music.
- **Year 8:** Exploration of The Beatles' cultural impact and Delia Derbyshire's electronic music contributions.
- **Year 9:** Deep dive into jazz history in Kind of Blue and contextual influence in Film and Video Game Music.

Key Stage 3 Music Curriculum Roadmap

The following roadmap provides an overview of the specific skills that students will acquire and develop throughout Key Stage 3. Each stage represents a progressive building of skills across three main areas: **Performance Skills**, **Composition & Creativity**, and **Cultural & Historical Awareness**.

Year	Unit	Skills Acquired	Skills Developed
7	Keyboard Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Basic music notation (treble clef reading, note values, simple rhythms). - Foundational keyboard technique (hand positioning, posture, finger placement). - Simple melody and chord progression performance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Understanding of musical symbols and their function in reading and interpreting music. - Introduction to ensemble playing and following tempo.
7	Singing and Ukulele Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Basic vocal techniques (breath control, pitch matching, projection). - Ukulele chords (C, G, F, Am) and basic strumming patterns. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensemble performance skills (singing and playing in time with others). - Understanding of harmony and chord progressions. - Early composition and songwriting (simple lyrics and melody).
7	Composing with Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Basic use of a Digital Audio Workstation (DAW) with Soundtrap. - Loop arrangement and MIDI data manipulation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Creative exploration of musical ideas through technology. - Foundation in structuring compositions with layers and arranging different sounds.
7	World Music	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Exposure to world music styles (Samba, Gamelan, Chinese music, Calypso). - Rhythmic patterns unique to each style. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cross-cultural listening and rhythm matching. - Ensemble coordination in world music performances.
7	Instruments of the Orchestra	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identification of orchestral instrument families (strings, woodwind, brass, percussion). - Basic knowledge of instrument roles and sound characteristics. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensemble performance of a simplified orchestral piece. - Deepened listening skills to recognize timbres and textures.
8	Classical Remix	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Basic remixing techniques and DAW editing. - Understanding harmony and structure in classical music (Pachelbel's Canon). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Creative adaptation of classical music to modern genres. - Introduction to remixing concepts, arranging loops, and experimenting with structure.
8	Band Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Instrumental skills in chosen band instruments (guitar, bass, drums, keyboards). - Informal learning techniques (learning by ear, improvising within the group). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensemble playing with peer-led practice sessions. - Developing collaboration and performance confidence through band rehearsals.

Year	Unit	Skills Acquired	Skills Developed
8	Songwriting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Melody and harmony creation, lyric writing. - Structure of a song (verse, chorus, bridge). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Personal expression through composition. - Advanced songwriting skills, including lyrical and melodic development.
8	Delia and the Doctor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Knowledge of early electronic music and sound design (Delia Derbyshire's contributions). - Playing an iconic theme (Doctor Who) using both traditional and electronic instruments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Familiarity with synthesis and sound manipulation. - Understanding the role of technology in composition and performance.
8	The Beatles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Listening and analysis of popular music innovations (melody, harmony, song form). - Contextual understanding of The Beatles' influence. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ability to analyse popular music critically. - Appreciation of cultural and historical contexts in shaping music.
9	Film Music	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Thematic composition for creating mood and atmosphere. - Structuring compositions with soundscapes and thematic development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Advanced sound design for storytelling. - Compositional techniques for evoking emotional responses.
9	Band Skills 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mastery of instrumental parts, complex rhythms, and dynamics. - Ensemble coordination and performance refinement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Expressive performance in a group setting. - Advanced ensemble cohesion and stage presence.
9	Video Game Music	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Composing music with looping and adaptive elements for interactive media. - Use of compositional techniques suited for video game scoring. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Advanced use of structure and thematic development in music. - Adaptability in composition to create responsive soundscapes.
9	A Kind of Blue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Jazz theory basics, including modal scales (Dorian mode). - Jazz improvisation techniques and performance of "So What?" head. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improvisation and creative self-expression. - Critical listening skills specific to jazz styles and understanding of jazz as a genre.
9	Band Skills 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Final mastery of ensemble performance techniques. - Advanced dynamics, phrasing, and expressive performance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - High-level performance skills, preparing students for future music endeavours. - Real-world performance experience with collaborative and independent rehearsal skills.