Walthamstow Academy – Music Curriculum Journey

Our Curriculum Intent

Music the soundtrack to our lives. Music connects us through people and places in our ever-changing world. It is creative, collaborative, celebratory and challenging. At Walthamstow Academy, music should bring our community together through the shared endeavours of singing; ensemble playing; experimenting with the creative process; listening to friends and fellow pupils, and, of course, performing. The sheer joy of music-making can feed the soul of a school community, enriching each student while strengthening the shared bonds of support and trust which make a great school.

Our Curriculum Progression Model

When sequencing material we aim to build students' performance, composition and listening skills though the 5 years, with each strand becoming more complex, and involving a wider range of musical knowledge as a student progresses.

KS3

- *In Year 7, students follow the United Learning KS3 curriculum in full sequence: Rhythm and Pulse, Singing and the Elements, Melody: Pitch and Patterns, and Hooks and Riffs. Drum kit, tuned percussion, singing, ukulele and Digital Audio Workstations. The range of instruments will help students understand how pitches and timbres can influence the experience of the listener, and how different instruments can require radically different techniques during performance. Fundamental music literacy is introduced to gear students towards a more all-rounded musician.*
- *In Year 8, students (who have only completed Rhythm and Pulse from Year 7) begin with Hooks and Riffs to complete their Year 7 curriculum, before progressing through the full Year 8 sequence: Tonality and Structure, The Ensemble Musician, and Black Music in America. The year builds from scale and chord theory through to ensemble performance and jazz improvisation.*
- *Year 9 functions as a dedicated GCSE foundation year. Students cover three Year 8 units they have not yet experienced (Tonality and Structure, The Ensemble Musician, Black Music in America) before moving into the two Year 9 units (What Makes a Good Song, Film Music). By the end of Year 9, students have composed to a brief using a DAW, performed in ensemble contexts, improvised over jazz changes, and completed analytical writing tasks that directly mirror GCSE appraising.*

KS4

- *Students in Year 10 and 11 who have chosen to pursue GCSE Music follow the EDUQAS specification. They find the foundations they have built at KS3 are significantly developed, and they are introduced to a much more rigorous application of musical theory and notation. Our KS4 curriculum prepares students for further studies, either at A-Level or Level 3 BTEC courses*

Half Term	Curriculum Content	Assessment(s) *(assessment title, duration and approx date)*	Extra-Curricular Options *(Places to visit; wider reading; clubs to join)*
Year 7 Curriculum Overview (2026–27): Year 7 follows the United Learning KS3 curriculum in full sequence. This range of instruments is chosen to help students understand how pitches and timbres can influence the experience of the listener, and how different instruments can require different techniques during performance**.** Basic music literacy such as music notation, dynamics, and pitch notation in treble clef is introduced through performance.			
Year 7 HT1	**Unit Title: Rhythm and Pulse** Students will cover: • Concepts: pulse, beat division, syncopation, dynamics, rhythm notation. • Instrument skills: chair drumming, samba ensemble, conducting, body percussion. • Set work: Connect It — Anna Meredith. • Outcomes: whole-class body percussion performance; syncopation compositions.	**Mid-unit listening and appraising check; KPI assessment: rhythmic fluency on two instruments**	Opportunities to perform at Agora Concerts
Year 7 HT2	**Unit Title: Singing and the Elements** Students will cover: • Concepts: interrelated dimensions of music — tonality, dynamics, tempo, articulation, structure, texture. • Set piece: By the Waters of London Town (performed in a round). Instrument skills: singing, analytical writing. • Outcomes: class performance in a round; written analysis of musical elements • Continuation of prior skills from HT1 • simple ostinato	**Mid-unit listening and appraising check; KPI assessment: use of elements vocabulary in written response** **In - Class performance recording**	Opportunities to perform in Winter concert events Sign-up opens for extra curricula groups
Year 7 HT3	**Unit Title: Melody: Pitch and Patterns** Students will cover: • Concepts: pitch notation, keyboard technique, ostinato composition, score reading, texture. • Instrument skills: keyboard (solo melody). • Set work: O Fortuna from Carmina Burana — Carl Orff. • Outcomes: solo keyboard performance; original ostinato composition.	**HT3 assessment week – Listening & Appraising + Knowledge test** **In - Class performance recording**	Opportunities to perform in Spring concert events

Year 7 HT4	**Unit Title: Elements** Students will cover: • Concepts: hooks, riffs, ostinati, minimalism, repetition across genres. • Set works: Sweet Dreams (Eurythmics), Word Up (Cameo), Boléro (Ravel), Habanera (Bizet), Music for 18 Musicians (Reich). • Outcomes: class ensemble performance; minimalism composition. Scope for extended performance showcase. • , recording of performance skills.	**HT4 assessment week – Listening & Appraising + Knowledge test** **In - Class performance recording**	Opportunities to perform in Spring concert events
Year 7 HT5	**Unit Title: Extension, Assessment and Performance Showcase** Students will cover: • Lessons used for: extended class performances building on Hooks and Riffs repertoire; assessment catchup; individual extension tasks; DAW composition extension.	**HT5 assessment week – Listening & Appraising + Knowledge test** **In - Class composition recording**	Sign-up opens for extra curricula groups
Year 7 HT6	**Unit Title: End-of-Year Performance Showcase** Students will cover: • Students rehearse and perform polished class pieces drawing on material from across the year. • Opportunities to perform at summer concert events (Agora Concert).	**End-of-year listening and appraisal exam; KPI end-of-year assessment** **In – Class performance / recording**	Opportunities to perform in summer concert events
Term	**Curriculum Content**	**Assessment(s)** ***(assessment title, duration and approx date)***	**Extra-Curricular Options** ***(Places to visit; wider reading; clubs to join)***
Year 8 Curriculum Overview (2026–27): Year 8 students open with Hooks and Riffs (the Year 7 unit they missed) before progressing through Tonality and Structure, The Ensemble Musician, and Black Music in America. Approximately 8 spare lessons are used for polished ensemble performances and assessment. Swing and shuffle impact the rhythmic feel in music of different eras and genres. Similarities and difference in world music's are explored through the practical application of ensemble playing and individual compositional ideas. Core skills introduced in year 7 on ukulele, percussion and keyboard are developed in whole class band and ensemble playing with the introduction of the bass guitar and guitar allowing students to further their instrumental skills and experience. Tonality is explored through Improvisation styles using pentatonic and blues scales which are investigated when playing by ear. Students are given notation in the form of TAB, staff and commonly used strumming patterns. Students start to score their own layered compositions and discover how professionals record and edit ideas in DAW software.			
Year 8 HT1	**Unit Title: Hooks and Riffs (Year 7 catch-up)** Students will cover the following:	**Mid-unit listening and appraising check; KPI**	

	• Concepts: hooks, riffs, ostinati, minimalism, repetition across genres. • Set works: Sweet Dreams (Eurythmics), Word Up (Cameo), Boléro (Ravel), Habanera (Bizet), Music for 18 Musicians (Reich). • Outcomes: class ensemble performance; minimalism composition. Confident accessible start to Year 8.	**assessment: rhythmic fluency on two instruments**	Opportunities to perform at Agora Concerts and winter events
Year 8 HT2	**Unit Title: Tonality and Structure (Part 1)** Students will cover the following: • Concepts: major and minor scales, chromatic and pentatonic scales, binary and ternary form. • Instrument skills: keyboard (solo melody). Set works: In the Hall of the Mountain King (Grieg), New World Symphony 2nd movement theme (Dvořák). • Outcomes: solo keyboard performance of Grieg/Dvořák themes; melody writing tasks.	**Mid-unit listening and appraising check; KPI assessment: use of elements vocabulary in written response** **In - Class performance recording**	Opportunities to perform in Winter concert events Sign-up opens for extra curricula groups
Year 8 HT3	**Unit Title: Tonality and Structure (Part 2) + Theme and Variations** Students will cover the following: • Concepts: variation form, performance directions, articulation, theme and variations composition. • Instrument skills: keyboard. Set works continued: Grieg, Dvořák. • Outcomes: theme and variations composition; polished solo keyboard performance.	**HT3 assessment week – Listening & Appraising + Knowledge test** **In - Class performance recording**	Opportunities to perform in Spring concert events
Year 8 HT4	**Unit Title: The Ensemble Musician (Part 1)** Students will cover the following: • Concepts: chord construction, primary chords, major and minor chords, harmonic rhythm, syncopation. • Instrument skills: keyboard and ukulele. Repertoire: Take Me Back to Jamaica (mento), Jammin' and Three Little Birds (Bob Marley). • Outcomes: keyboard/ukulele ensemble performance of mento and reggae material.	**HT4 assessment week – Listening & Appraising + Knowledge test** **In - Class performance recording**	Opportunities to perform in Spring concert events
Year 8 HT5	**Unit Title: The Ensemble Musician (Part 2) + Black Music in America (intro)** Students will cover the following: • Concepts: chord inversions, secondary chords, contemporary song structures; introduction to blues.	**HT5 assessment week – Listening & Appraising + Knowledge test** **In - Class composition recording**	Sign-up opens for extra curricula groups

	• Instrument skills: keyboard, ukulele. Repertoire: Wake Me Up (Avicii), Blinding Lights (The Weeknd), Swing Low Sweet Chariot (spiritual), 12-bar blues in C. • Outcomes: contemporary ensemble performance; first 12-bar blues performance.		
Year 8 HT6	**Unit Title: Black Music in America (The Creative Musician)** Students will cover the following: • Concepts: jazz history (Spiritual → Ragtime → Blues → Jazz → R&B → Rock and Roll), dominant 7th chords, structured improvisation. • Set works: C Jam Blues (Ellington), Cantaloupe Island (Herbie Hancock). • Outcomes: class head arrangement of Cantaloupe Island with improvised solos; end-of-year ensemble performance.	**End-of-year listening and appraisal exam; KPI end-of-year assessment** **In – Class performance / recording**	Opportunities to perform in summer concert events
Term	**Curriculum Content**	**Assessment(s)** *(assessment title, duration and approx date)*	**Extra-Curricular Options** *(Places to visit; wider reading; clubs to join)*
Year 9 Curriculum Overview — GCSE Foundation Pathway (2026–27): Year 9 students have only completed Rhythm and Pulse from their KS3 journey. As the same teacher will lead Eduqas GCSE from Year 10, this year is an intentional GCSE foundation year. All five units are delivered at trimmed lesson counts (40 lessons total) to systematically build composing, performing and appraising skills. Sequence: Tonality and Structure (8L) → The Ensemble Musician (7L) → Black Music in America (7L) → What Makes a Good Song (10L) → Film Music (8L).			
Year 9 HT1	**Unit Title: Tonality and Structure** Students will learn about/ develop skills of: • Concepts: major, minor, chromatic and pentatonic scales; binary, ternary and variation form; theme and variations composition. Set works: In the Hall of the Mountain King (Grieg), New World Symphony (Dvořák). Outcomes: solo keyboard performance; theme and variations composition. • Reading a lead sheet in creating a Musical Arrangement of a Popular Song • Diatonic chords, major/minor/diminished triads • Outcomes: rehearse and perform a cover version of a song	**Mid-unit listening and appraising check; KPI assessment: rhythmic fluency on two instruments**	**Listen to favourite songs, identify the structure of the song**
Year 9 HT2	**Unit Title: The Ensemble Musician** Students will learn about/ develop skills of: • Concepts: chord construction, primary and secondary chords, inversions, harmonic rhythm. Instrument skills: keyboard and ukulele. Repertoire: Jammin', Three Little Birds (Bob Marley), Wake Me Up (Avicii), Blinding Lights (The Weeknd). Outcomes: keyboard/ukulele ensemble performance. • Hooks, riffs and motives • Musical intervals and their usage in choruses	**Mid-unit listening and appraising check; KPI assessment: use of elements vocabulary in written response** **In - Class performance recording**	**Listen to favourite song, analyse what aspects of the song make it attractive.** Opportunities to perform in Winter concert events

	• Creating a remix • Rudimentary understanding music copyright • Explore the impact of AI • Outcomes: rehearse and perform a cover version of a song		Sign-up opens for extra curricula groups
Year 9 HT3	**Unit Title: Black Music in America** Students will cover the following: • Concepts: jazz history (Spiritual → Ragtime → Blues → Jazz → R&B → Rock and Roll), 12-bar blues, structured improvisation. Set works: C Jam Blues (Ellington), Cantaloupe Island (Hancock). Outcomes: blues performance; improvised solos; cultural context of Black American music. • Notating Through: Full Score / Parts / Diagrams and Rhythm Notation • Instrumental Skills: Band Instruments / • Outcomes: Mini Orchestral Score set to film, Live improvised performance to Film	**HT3 assessment week – Listening & Appraising + Knowledge test** **In - Class performance recording**	**Rewatch favourite film paying particular attention on how the music enhances the scene / support certain character.**
Year 9 HT4	**Unit Title: What Makes a Good Song** Students will cover the following: • Concepts: song structure, cadences, primary/secondary chords, texture, intervals, hooks, riffs, motifs, lyrics and rhythm in rap. Song analysis: Feel So Close (Calvin Harris), Stay With Me (Sam Smith), Bad Romance (Lady Gaga), Safe and Sound (Capital Cities). Outcomes: extended written song analysis — GCSE appraising preparation. • Notating Through: Timeline / Graphic scores / Full Score • Instrumental Skills: Keyboard / Midi Controllers / DAW • Outcomes: Video Game composition set to gameplay footage – journal outlining process	**HT4 assessment week – Listening & Appraising + Knowledge test** **In - Class performance recording**	Analyse the elements of sound and music found in video game of your choice
Year 9 HT5	**Unit Title: Film Music (Part 1) — GCSE Foundation** Students will cover the following: • Concepts: mickey mousing, leitmotif, soundscape, fanfare, diegetic/non-diegetic sound, sci-fi timbres, horror techniques. Set works: Steamboat Willie, James Bond Theme, Hedwig's Theme (Williams), Doctor Who Theme (Derbyshire), Stranger Things (Dixon/Stein). Outcomes: short stylistic composite tasks; DAW composition sketches. • Notating through: Staff notation / TABS / Diagrams • Instrumental Skills: Band instruments / Voice / DAW • Outcomes: Performance of a song, composing ideas promoting social justice	**HT5 assessment week – Listening & Appraising + Knowledge test** **In - Class composition recording**	Sign-up opens for extra curricula groups

Year 9 HT6	**Unit Title: Black Music in America (The Creative Musician)** Students will cover the following: • Concepts in: Music for occasion / ensemble rehearsal and/or production • Notating through: Staff notation / TABS / Diagrams • Instrumental Skills: Band instruments / Voice / DAW • Outcomes: Ensemble performance and/or recorded music	**End-of-year listening and appraisal exam; KPI end-of-year assessment** **In – Class performance / recording**	Opportunities to perform in summer concert events
Term	**Curriculum Content**	**Assessment(s)** ***(assessment title, duration and approx date)***	**Extra-Curricular Options** ***(Places to visit; wider reading; clubs to join)***
Year 10 Curriculum Overview: *Students are introduced to the three components of GCSE music assessment (performing, composing & appraising) through integrated lessons. They cycle through concepts approached in ks3 and gain greater depth whilst relating these to new concepts introduced through the course content. They start to practice and prepare performances and compositions which will be recorded in Y11 and will carry 60% of their final grade. Achieving a 15% during year 10 through their free choice composition work and accruing skills towards working to brief in Y11. They will cover one of the two set works which feature in the exam.*			
Year 10 HT1	**Unit Title: Film Music (AOS3)** Students will learn about/ develop skills of: • Concepts in Film Music • Compositional Devices used in Film Music that link to Classical, Contemporary and Global composition styles • Orchestral Arranging • Start to develop a composition log and portfolio • Start to develop a practice and rehearsal schedule • First steps to performing (classroom and/or Agora)	**In lesson and online mini assessments and submissions**	**Instrument lessons** **Rehearsals & Studio Sessions** **Online Learning Platforms**
Year 10 HT2	**Unit Title: Film Music (AOS3)** Students will learn about/ develop skills of: • Extending compositional ideas • Creating a guide score • Working with automation to shape musical elements inside a DAW Start to • develop a composition log and portfolio • develop a practice and rehearsal schedule • performing (classroom and/or Agora/Main Hall)	**Composition Submission**	**Instrument lessons** **Rehearsals & Studio Sessions** **Online Learning Platforms**

Year 10 HT3	**Unit Title: Music for Ensemble (AOS2)** Students will learn about/ develop skills of: • Diverse musical styles composed for ensemble, including ○ Jazz and blues ○ Musical theatre ○ Chamber music	**Music PPE Paper AOS1 / Unheard pieces**	**Instrument lessons Rehearsals & Studio Sessions Online Learning Platforms**
Year 10 HT4	**Unit Title: Set Work 2 – Toto - Africa** Students will learn about/ develop skills of: • Score reading • Applying musical analysis to a popular music genre	**June PPE**	**Instrument lessons Rehearsals & Studio Sessions Online Learning Platforms**
Year 10 HT5	**Unit Title: Conventions of Pop (AOS4)** Students will learn about/ develop skills of: • The development of pop music from 1950's RnB to present day. ○ Use of voices, guitars and synthesisers in pop music.	**June PPE**	**Instrument lessons Rehearsals & Studio Sessions Online Learning Platforms**
Year 10 HT6	**Unit Title: Conventions of Pop (AOS4)** Students will learn about/ develop skills of: • The development of pop music from 1950's RnB to present day. ○ Use of voices, guitars and synthesisers in pop music.	**NEA Component 2 Composition [Free Choice] Submission (15%)**	**Instrument lessons Rehearsals & Studio Sessions Online Learning Platforms**
Term	**Curriculum Content**	**Assessment(s)** ***(assessment title, duration and approx date)***	**Extra-Curricular Options** ***(Places to visit; wider reading; clubs to join)***
Year 11 Curriculum Overview: *Students will cover the final unit and second of the two set works allowing access to all the questions in the Jan PPE. In HT1 & HT2 they will complete their second composition by working to the EDUQAS composition briefs released in September. They will rehearse for their performance recordings to take place in HT3 and HT4 and will have the opportunity to up the calibre of their compositions through out of hours intervention sessions. From HT3 they will cycle through course content and concepts framed as "Music through the ages" to allow greater depth and revision to take place in lessons and in homework.*			
Year 11 HT1	**Unit Title: Musical Forms & Devices (AOS1)** • The development of classical music through the ages **Unit Title: Ensemble Performance NEA and Composition NEA**	**NEA Component 2 Composition [To EDUQAS Brief] (15% of grade)**	**Performance opportunities at Agora and Winter Concert.**
Year 11 HT2	**Unit Title: Set Work 1 – Bach - Badinerie** Students will learn about/ develop skills of: • Score reading	**NEA Component 2 Composition [To EDUQAS Brief] Submission (15% of grade)**	**Performance opportunities at Agora and Winter Concert.**

	Applying musical analysis to a full score in traditional western classical notation **Unit Title: Ensemble Performance NEA and Composition NEA**		
Year 11 HT3	**Unit Title: Music Through the Ages** • **Looking at key moments across time and linking to all the AOS**	**NEA Component 1 Performing – Ensemble Performance 1 (15% of grade) recorded**	**Performance opportunities at Agora Concert.**
Year 11 HT4	**Unit Title: Music Through the Ages** • **Looking at key moments across time and linking to all the AOS**	**NEA Component 1 Performing – Ensemble or Solo Performance 2 (15% of grade) recorded**	**N/A**
Year 11 HT5	**Unit Title: Exam practice and final revision** Students will learn about/ develop skills of: • How to ace exam questions. • Aural skills revision • Quick wins of how to boost marks in a wide variety of questions.	**N/A**	**N/A**