

Herschel Grammar School
Music Curriculum Overview 2025/26

Curriculum Intent

At KS3:

- To promote creativity in the form of composing music, both as part of the curriculum and as an extra-curricular activity.
- To include Music technology to enrich the composing experience and singing as a means of aesthetic expression.
- To foster an appreciation of Music through listening, particularly delineating the various elements of music and the appreciation of different styles from artists all around the world.
- To advance aesthetic expression through performing, composing and listening to music.

Then at KS4:

- To promote creativity in the form of composing music, both as part of the curriculum and as an extra-curricular activity.
- To include Music technology to enrich the composing experience and singing as a means of aesthetic expression.
- To foster an appreciation of Music through listening, particularly delineating the various elements of music and the appreciation of different styles from artists all around the world.
- To advance aesthetic expression through performing, composing and listening to music.

Curriculum Impact

Students establish a common set of basic skills; develop the confidence to perform; develop skills and confidence. Their understanding of the cultural and historical context of the music is advanced; engage actively in the process of music study and develop performing skills individually and in groups to communicate musically with fluency and control of the resources used; develop composing skills to organise musical ideas and make use of appropriate resources. They develop knowledge, understanding and skills needed to communicate effectively as musicians.

Career guidance: Music teaching can support career exploration by helping students identify values, interests, and skills aligned with green jobs. 

Our climate action and sustainability priority

Through education, we have the privilege of engaging directly with children and young people who: are passionate about the natural world want to do their best to protect it can influence their wider communities. Throughout this document, whenever the following icon is used , it indicates that the teaching and learning is linked to one or more of the following:

- nature
- the causes and impacts of climate change
- careers in the green economy
- the importance of sustainability

Music Curriculum Overview 2025/26

Year Group Plans

Year group	Year 7
-------------------	---------------

Rationale for sequencing	To ensure a variety of topics and skills and a gradual advance in skill and understanding throughout the year.
---------------------------------	--

Term 1	
Half term 1a	Half term 1b
Bridging Unit Singing Assessment: including resources from Sing Up Foundation, which highlight environmental concerns – “Our Earth” and “Save the Planet”. 🌍 Song Reviews including songs which highlight environmental concerns, e.g. “Watch it fall” (Billy Strings); “4 Degrees” (Anohni), and display work 🌍	Listening and composing: Ostinato. Repertoire includes “Mercy Mercy Me (The Ecology)” (Marvin Gaye), deals with mercury poisoning fish. Also “Sun is shining” (Bob Marley), which featured in the 2019 Earth Day celebrations in Chicago. 🌍 Exploring Tonality. Green Music Careers: Organising Sustainable Music Festivals (e.g. attendees invited to pay a small extra fee to offset their carbon footprint; attendees earn money for collecting cups and bottles for recycling) 🌍.
Term 2	
Half term 2a	Half term 2b
Listening and composing: Programme Music, including songs which evoke nature – “Rose Adagio” (Tchaikovsky) and Pastoral Symphony (Beethoven). 🌍	Listening and composing: Indian Music (incorporating keyboard performance). Includes “Ghanan Ghanan”, from Lahgaan which is about the importance of water to life. 🌍
Term 3	
Half term 3a	Half Term 3b
Listening, performing and composing: Chinese Music. Includes “Spring Flowers and Autumn Fruits”, a traditional Chinese piece evoking nature and renewal. 🌍 Listening and composing: Musical contrasts.	Listening and composing: Descriptive Music, including Carnival of the Animals (Saint-Saëns). 🌍 Keyboard performances.

Assessment Plans:	
Term 1	Ostinato composition: Dec 2025
Term 2	Programme Music listening outcomes: Feb 2026 Indian Music listening outcomes: Apr 2026
Term 3	Descriptive Music (animals) composition: June 2026 Keyboard performances: Jul 2026

Music Curriculum Overview 2025/26

Year group	8
-------------------	----------

Rationale for sequencing	To ensure a variety of topics and skills and a gradual advance in skill and understanding throughout the year.
---------------------------------	--

Term 1	
Half term	Half term
Song Reviews including songs which highlight environmental concerns, e.g. “Back to the earth” (Jason Mraz); “Truth to Power” (One Republic), and display work 🌍. Listening, performing and composing: Blues & Ragtime, including blues songs which highlight concerns about rising water levels, e.g. “Backwater blues” (Bessie Smith); “Rising High Water Blues” (Blind Lemon Jefferson) 🌍.	Explore Tones and Semitones. Listening and performing: Caribbean Music, including songs which highlight environmental concerns, e.g. “Botanical Roots” (Black Uhuru); “Watching the World Go By” (Maxi Priest) 🌍.
Term 2	
Half term	Half term
Listening and performing: Film Music, including soundtracks “Koyaanisquatsi” (Philip Glass), a film which explores the relationship between nature, technology, and society; “How far I’ll go”, from Moana: the film and song give awareness to Indigenous communities who are increasingly vulnerable to rising sea levels and more destructive storms 🌍.	Listening, performing and composing: Hip Hop Music, including tracks “New World Water” (Mos Def/Yasiin Bey), which tackles corporate privatization, drought, contamination and the hypocrisy of selling bottled water as clean while communities suffer; “S.O.S. Mother Nature” (will.i.am), which mourns climate change, natural disasters and the greed behind environmental decay 🌍.
Term 3	
Half term	Half Term
Listening and composing: Music and Space 🌍. Green Music Careers: Adapting established products to support the environment (e.g. manufacturing records from non-PVC vinyl; choosing digital distribution instead; options for sustainable merchandise) 🌍.	Listening, performing and composing: Computer and Video Game Music, including soundtracks to the games “Golmore Jungle” and “Secret of the Forest” 🌍.

Key Assessment Plans:	
Term 1	Blues and Ragtime composition: Oct 2025 Listening outcomes: Caribbean Music: Dec 2025
Term 2	Listening outcomes: Film Music: Jan 2026 Keyboard performances: Hip Hop: Feb 2026
Term 3	Music and space composition: May 2026 Listening outcomes: Computer and Video Game Music: July 2026

Music Curriculum Overview 2025/26

Year group	9
Rationale for sequencing	To ensure a variety of topics and skills and a gradual advance in skill and understanding throughout the year.

Term 1	
Half term	Half term
Song Reviews including songs which highlight environmental concerns, e.g. “1 Sun” (Miley Cyrus); “The Greatest” (Lana Del Rey), and display work 🌍. Listening and performing: The Beatles, including a Beatles song, which is from the perspective of a young person who is also a nature lover: “Mother Nature’s Son” 🌍.	Listening, performing and composing: Musical theatre, including songs which highlight environmental concerns, e.g. “The Circle of Life” (from The Lion King); “Colors of the Wind” (from Pocahontas) 🌍. Listening, performing and composing: Form & Structure.
Term 2	
Half term	Half term
Listening, performing and composing: Form & Structure (continued). Listening and performing: TV Theme Music, including “Planet Earth Theme” (George Fenton); National Geographic Theme (Elmer Bernstein) 🌍.	Listening and performing: TV Theme Music (continued) Listening, performing and composing: Minimalism, including “Meniscus” (Joby Talbot): concerns the effects of oil pollution and oil spills on the environment; “The Welcome Arrival of Rain” (Judith Weir) 🌍.
Term 3	
Half term	Half Term
Listening and performing: Types and Styles of Songs, including “Nature Shines with Beauty” (Resound – gospel); “Blackened” (Metallica – rock); “Earth Song” (Michael Jackson – R&B); “Big Yellow Taxi” (Joni Mitchell – folk) 🌍. Listening and performing: Samba, including “Amor a Natureza” (Paulinha da Viola) 🌍.	Listening and performing: Samba (continued). Listening and performing: Mr Piggott’s Greatest Hits (a recap/revision of various KS3 topics (above) Green Music Careers: Sustainable Touring in Music 🌍.

Key Assessment Plans:	
Term 1	Keyboard performances: The Beatles: Oct 2025 Listening outcomes: Musical Theatre: Dec 2025
Term 2	Form & Structure composition: Feb 2026 Listening outcomes: Minimalism: Mar 2026
Term 3	Final Keyboard performances: Jul 2026

Music Curriculum Overview 2025/26

Year group	10
Rationale for sequencing	To ensure a variety of topics and skills and a gradual advance in skill and understanding throughout the year.

Term 1	
Half term	Half term
Course overview: Listening Activity. Vocal Music research: <i>"Killer Queen", by Queen</i> <i>"My own composition/performance"</i> – a GCSE Assignment.	<i>"Music for a while" (Purcell)</i> – an investigation. Begin <i>Composition no. 1</i> . Green Music Careers: <i>Ecomusicologists examine ways to make music festivals sustainable</i> as possible and included recyclable batteries powered by renewable resources such as hydrotreated vegetable oil, solar power and kinetic energy  .
Term 2	
Half term	Half term
Revise and complete <i>Composition no. 1</i> . Analysis of <i>"Defying Gravity", from Wicked</i> .	Project Work: <i>"Samba Em Preludio"</i> . <i>Group performance</i> – workshops and recording sessions.
Term 3	
Half term	Half Term
<i>Bach's Brandenburg Concerto No. 5</i> – an extended study. Begin <i>Composition no. 2</i>	Revise and complete <i>Composition No. 2</i> . <i>J. Williams: Star Wars Main title theme</i> .

Key Assessment Plans:	
Term 1	<i>"Own composition/performance"</i> assignment: Oct 2025 <i>"Music for a while"</i> investigation: Dec 2025
Term 2	Composition no 1: Feb 2026 Group performance recording: Apr 2026
Term 3	Bach Brandenburg No. 5 extended study: June 2025

Music Curriculum Overview 2025/26

Year group	11
Rationale for sequencing	To ensure a variety of topics and skills and a gradual advance in skill and understanding throughout the year.

Term 1	
Half term	Half term
<i>"Afro Celt Sound System - Release".</i> <i>Solo performance</i> tutorials and recording. Green Music Careers: <i>Composers who are environmentally aware</i>, e.g. John Cage uses environmental sounds in the piece "Child of Tree", which involves amplifying a cactus and pea pod shakers in addition to other instruments chosen by the performer. John Luther Adams has composed work which involves a sound and light installation that is "controlled by natural events occurring in real time" .	<i>"Beethoven's Sonata Pathétique – you teach me!"</i> <i>Composition No. 1:</i> revision and recording. <i>Answering questions on unfamiliar music.</i>
Term 2	
Half term	Half term
<i>Composition no. 1:</i> revision and recording (continued) <i>Answering questions on unfamiliar music</i> (cont.)	<i>"Aspects of Beethoven's Pathétique Sonata"</i> <i>Composition No. 2:</i> revision and recording. Extended response <i>comparison between a set work and an unfamiliar piece.</i>
Term 3	
Half term	Half Term
Extended response <i>comparison between a set work and an unfamiliar piece</i> (cont.) <i>Revision of all set works.</i>	N/A

Key Assessment Plans:	
Term 1	Solo performance recording: Oct 2025 Afro Celt Sound System – Release: Assessment Dec 2025
Term 2	Composition no 1 (revisions and recording): Feb 2026 "Beethoven's Sonata Pathétique": Apr 2026
Term 3	Composition no 2 (revisions and recording): May 2026