

KS3 Music

Year 8

Scheme of Learning 2025 - 2026

Subject leader: C Ward

Topics by term	Topic overview for Year 8		
	Terms 1&2	Terms 3&4	Terms 5&6
Topics taught	Ukulele Skills	The Blues	Exploring Popular Music

	Vital prerequisites	Vital prerequisites	Vital prerequisites
	<p>Students will have participated in whole class/ensemble performances in Year 7 Music lessons (Singing Skills/Keyboard Skills/Exploring Instruments of the Orchestra) and have learned to play the chords of C, G, F and Am on the keyboard.</p> <p>Some students will have some experience of playing the ukulele through their primary school music lessons (funded opportunities programme).</p>	<p>Students have learnt to play the chords of C, F, G and Am in Year 7 Keyboard skills, and will be familiar with playing chords/bass lines in time as part of a whole class ensemble.</p> <p>They have explored simple improvisation skills in Year 7 Exploring Instruments of the Orchestra.</p>	<p>Students have experienced performing as part of a whole class ensemble on the ukulele, keyboard and through singing. They will have developed their confidence to perform as part of a group, as well as improving their individual keyboard and ukulele skills.</p> <p>Students will have an understanding of what a chord is and its importance as a textural layer in popular music.</p>
	Why are we teaching this now?	Why are we teaching this now?	Why are we teaching this now?
	<p>Students have explored the four chords used in many popular songs in Year 7 Keyboard Skills. They will now apply this to learn to play the same four chords on the ukulele and perform as part of a whole class ensemble.</p> <p>Learning the ukulele will provide Year 8 students with a further opportunity to explore a different musical instrument and may encourage some to take up guitar lessons.</p>	<p>Learning about The Blues will provide students with an opportunity to explore the development of a popular music genre and its influence on later styles of music. It will build upon the keyboard skills introduced in Year 7 and allow students to deepen their understanding of improvisation and performing in time, with a strong sense of rhythm, as part of a whole class ensemble.</p> <p>For students who will go on to study GCSE Music, this unit will provide an introduction to Blues music, which is one of the key areas of study on the KS4 programme.</p>	<p>This unit of work will explore deeper analysis of how popular songs are constructed and developed, and will provide opportunity not only for ensemble performance, but also for students to create their own musical ideas and start to compose their own pieces of popular music.</p> <p>Students will have experienced improvisation skills in the previous unit of work, The Blues, and these skills will be useful in developing melodic ideas for popular song.</p>

Year 8 Music

Topic	Big questions	Topic area: main Items and optional learning objectives	Outcomes	Key Terms/ concepts Literacy Numeracy	Assessment and homework tasks	Resources	Personal Development curriculum links (SMSC, British Values, PSHE)
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Terms 1 & 2

Ukulele Skills This scheme of learning will introduce students to performance on the ukulele. They will learn about the features of the ukulele, and well as performance techniques such as plucking and strumming. Students will play melodies and simple chords on the ukulele, providing them with the opportunity to perform as part of a whole class ensemble and accompany singing. They will be introduced to ukulele tablature and how to understand it in order to perform simple melodies on the ukulele.

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What are the names of the ukulele strings? 2. What instrument family does the ukulele belong to? 3. What is ukulele TAB? 4. What is a chord? 5. How do you strum a chord on the ukulele? 6. What is a fret? 7. What is a musical ensemble? 8. Can you describe how to play a chord on the ukulele using the names of the strings and fret position? 9. What is a strumming pattern? 10. Where should you place your fingers to play the chord of G Major on the ukulele? 11. Can you play the chords of C, F, Am and G on the ukulele? 	<p>All pupils will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be able to name the parts of the ukulele (body, neck, fretboard, strings, tuning pegs) • hold the ukulele properly and maintain best playing posture • play simple chords of C major and A minor • maintain a consistent tempo when playing as part of an ensemble • reflect on their progress and suggest an area for improvement <p>Most pupils will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • play the chords of C major, A minor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To understand some basic facts about the ukulele and how it works - To hold the ukulele properly and pluck an open string melody in time with a class performance - To play some notes on the ukulele by following simple ukulele TAB - To understand what a chord is - To learn how to play the chords of C and Am on the ukulele - To strum a simple chord in time as part of an ensemble performance - To be able to perform the chords of Am, C and F on the ukulele - To be able to strum the three chords in time as part of an 	<p>Literacy:</p> <p>Language for Learning: Through the activities in this unit pupils will be able to understand and use words relating to unit. Encourage the use of specific vocabulary.</p> <p>Key foci:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - body - fret - fretboard - strings - tuning pegs - neck - ensemble - strum - pluck - chord - major - minor - TAB - melody <p>Numeracy:</p>	<p>Formative assessment through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Teacher observation and feedback during warm-ups (posture, pitch accuracy, tone quality and articulation) and class participation (engagement, confidence and accuracy of pitch and rhythm) - Teacher log books to record observations - Peer assessment - small group activities to provide opportunity for students to provide feedback to each other (with a focus on key vocabulary). <p>Performances will be recorded so that students can reflect and provide feedback</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Self-assessment – students to use assessment stickers to reflect on their 	<p>Knowledge organisers</p> <p>Ukuleles</p> <p>Plectrums</p> <p>PowerPoints</p> <p>Chairs</p> <p>YouTube</p> <p>Recording device</p> <p>Mini whiteboards</p>	<p>Learning a musical instrument and improving instrumental skills builds confidence as students overcome challenges and perform in front of their peers.</p> <p>Playing in ensembles teaches collaboration, communication, social skills and active listening.</p> <p>Modelling exemplary behaviour. SHAPE AND STEPS used by staff to promote and model to students.</p> <p>Active use of STAR and SHAPE to embed good inter-personal relationships and speech and language skills.</p>
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	<p>12. Can you follow ukulele TAB to play a simple melody on the ukulele?</p>	<p>and F major confidently</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • follow simple chord charts during a live performance • play in time as part of an ensemble performance • perform a simple melody using individual notes on the ukulele • play a selection of simple songs using basic chords <p><u>Some pupils will:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • play the chords of C major, A minor, F major and G major confidently on the ukulele • transition smoothly between chords as part of an ensemble performance • consider and use strumming patterns when performing on the ukulele • incorporate dynamic changes into performances • demonstrate confidence in 	<p>ensemble performance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To self-assess your progress on the ukulele so far - To be able to play the G Major chord on the ukulele - To improve the ability to change smoothly between chords in an ensemble performance - To be able to play at least two chords in time with an ensemble performance - To improve skills to pluck a simple melody on the ukulele, following TAB 	<p>musical concepts related to counting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Beats - Rhythms - Duration of notes <p>Awareness of formal symbols (notation):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Graphic notation – understand and recognise notes on ukulele tablature 	<p>progress and set goals for improvement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Performance opportunities in class to showcase ensemble and solo performances and provide opportunity for self/peer feedback <p>Summative assessment through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Week 3 assessment in Term 2 – students participate in a whole class ensemble performance <p>Homework tasks – as outlined in Knowledge Organisers.</p>		
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		<p>performing in front of peers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be able to follow ukulele TAB to play simple melodies 					
Topic	Big questions	Topic area: main Items and optional learning objectives	Outcomes	Key Terms/ concepts Literacy Numeracy	Assessment and homework tasks	Resources	Personal Development curriculum links (SMSC, British Values, PSHE)

Terms 3 & 4

The Blues

This unit will involve the exploration of the importance of The Blues as a form of popular music and students will trace its history from early examples during the slave trade to the beginnings of rock 'n' roll. Students will develop the ability to identify, explore and make creative use of musical devices found in blues music, as well as being introduced to some basic approaches to improvisation. They will extend their knowledge of chords to be able to play simple triad chords on the keyboard to be able to play along with the 12-Bar Blues chord sequence

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is Blues Music? 2. What is the 12-Bar Blues chord sequence? 3. What is the order of chords in the 12-Bar Blues chord sequence? 4. What is a melody? 5. What does improvisation mean? 6. What are the notes in the Blues scale? 7. What textural layers are common in a Blues performance? 8. How can we measure the success of a Blues performance? 	<p>Expectations: All pupils will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognise Blues music as a distinct from other genres and identify some features of Blues music when listening • Perform a single-note bass line using the notes of C, F and G to the 12-Bar Blues chord sequence • Improvise using at least two or three notes of the Blues scale as part of a 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to understand the history and origins of Blues music - to learn the sequence of chords in the 12-Bar Blues structure - to play the single notes of the 12-Bar Blues sequence on the keyboards - to learn a simple melody on the keyboard that fits with the 12-Bar Blues - to learn and play the sequence of notes in the Blues scale - to use notes from the Blues scale to 	<p>Literacy: Language for Learning: Through the activities in this unit pupils will be able to understand and use words relating to unit. Encourage the use of specific vocabulary. Key foci:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Blues music - 12-Bar Blues - chord - triad - melody - improvise - scale - texture - layer 	<p>Formative assessment through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Teacher observation and feedback during warm-ups and class participation (engagement, confidence and accuracy of pitch and rhythm) - Teacher log books to record observations - Peer assessment - small group activities to provide opportunity for students to provide feedback to each other (with a focus on key vocabulary). <p>Performances will be recorded so that</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowledge organisers Keyboards Headphones PowerPoints Backing tracks YouTube Recording device Mini whiteboards Sheet music (Blues scale) 	<p>Blues music is deeply rooted in expression, often conveying themes of struggle, sorrow, joy and resilience. The study of Blues lyrics will help students empathise with and understand the personal stories shared in Blues songs.</p> <p>Blues music has its origins in African American communities, particularly in the context of slavery, segregation, and the</p>
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		<p>12-Bar Blues performance</p> <p>Most pupils will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the origins of Blues music and identify most features of Blues music when listening • Perform the 12-Bar Blues chord sequence using the triad chords of C, F and G on the keyboard • Improvise using most of the notes of the Blues scale • Perform a melody in a 'swing-style' <p>Some pupils will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand how Blues music helped develop and form other popular music styles • Perform the chords and bass line with a strong sense of rhythm and timing as part of a 12-Bar Blues performance • Improvise with a strong sense of Blues style, using all the notes of the Blues scale 	<p>improvise a simple melody in time to the 12-Bar Blues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to be able to prepare and perform the 12-Bar Blues as a soloist or as part of a duet for an assessment - to be able to identify strengths and areas for improvement in your performance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - structure - sharp - flat <p>Numeracy: musical concepts related to counting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Beats - Rhythms - Duration of notes <p>Awareness of formal symbols (notation): Graphic notation – understand and recognise notes of the blues scale in written notation form</p>	<p>students can reflect and provide feedback</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Self-assessment – students to use assessment stickers to reflect on their progress and set goals for improvement - Performance opportunities in class to showcase ensemble and solo performances and provide opportunity for self/peer feedback <p>Summative assessment through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Week 3 assessment in Term 4 – students prepare a Blues performance as a soloist or as part of a pair <p>Homework tasks – as outlined in Knowledge Organisers.</p>		<p>fight for civil rights. Learning about the historical and cultural background of the blues promotes an understanding of social issues and the importance of cultural heritage.</p> <p>The blues often address themes of inequality, injustice, and social struggle. This can open discussions on social justice, encouraging students to think critically about the world around them and their roles in advocating for positive change.</p> <p>Modelling exemplary behaviour. SHAPE AND STEPS used by staff to promote and model to students.</p> <p>Active use of STAR and SHAPE to embed good inter-personal relationships and speech and language skills.</p>
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take a lead role in a group performance 					
Topic	Big questions	Topic area: main Items and optional learning objectives	Outcomes	Key Terms/ concepts Literacy Numeracy	Assessment and homework tasks	Resources	Personal Development curriculum links (SMSC, British Values, PSHE)
Terms 5 & 6							
Exploring Popular Music	<p>This unit begins by exploring ‘What Makes a Good Song?’ through practical musical investigation of two ‘good’ songs as case studies: <i>“Shape of You”</i> by Ed Sheeran and <i>“Shotgun”</i> by George Ezra. Students explore Hooks/Riffs, Structure, Melody and Lyrics through listening and analysis and performing parts of each song as short musical arrangements. Students learn about the importance of Hooks and Riffs, Popular Song Structure and Lyrics within both these case studies and a range of other popular songs. Lead Sheet notation is used throughout the unit and pupils are encouraged to confidently navigate around lead sheets evaluating what musical information is, and is not, included in this form of notation. Students will also have the opportunity to use what they have learnt in this unit and begin to develop their own ideas for a successful chord sequence, hook and melodic ideas for a popular song.</p>						
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> What makes a good song? What musical layers feature in popular songs? What does song structure mean? What is a riff/hook? What is a lead sheet? What is a chord progression? What is the structure of most popular songs? 	<p>All pupils will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distinguish between riffs, structure, lyrics and melody in songs Perform simple parts such as basic riffs of well known songs on their own and in unison 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to learn about the features of a popular song - to take part in an ensemble performance of a popular song - to be able to play a simple riff on a keyboard or tuned percussion instrument 	<p>Literacy: Language for Learning: Through the activities in this unit pupils will be able to understand and use words relating to unit. Encourage the use of specific vocabulary. Key foci:</p>	<p>Formative assessment through: - Teacher observation and feedback during warm-ups and class participation (engagement, confidence and accuracy of pitch and rhythm) - Teacher log books to record observations</p>	<p>Knowledge organisers Keyboards Headphones Acoustic guitars Drum Kit Ukuleles</p>	<p>Popular music often explores themes of identity, belonging, and self-expression. By engaging with music that resonates with their experiences, students can better understand and express their identities.</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perform a simple part within a group arrangement of a popular song • Identify some common instruments used in popular songs • Create a four chord progression, playing the single notes C, F, G and A <p>Most pupils will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perform a more complex part within a group arrangement of a popular song • Understand and use musical elements and terms relating to popular song structure through listening, performing and composing • Demonstrate an understanding of lead sheets as a form of musical notation • Create a four-chord progression for pop song, using the triad chords C, F, G and Am 	<p>- to use a lead sheet to develop your own performance of a popular song as part of an ensemble</p> <p>- to be able to develop a chord progression for a pop song using the chords of C, F, G or Am</p> <p>- to be able to compose a short riff/hook to fit with a chord progressions for a pop song</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Popular song - Texture - Layers - Structure - Verse - Chorus - Bridge - Riff - Hook - Chord progression - Lead sheet <p>Numeracy: musical concepts related to counting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Beats - Rhythms - Duration of notes <p>Awareness of formal symbols (notation): Graphic notation – understand and recognise notes that are included on lead sheets (e.g. bass lines, hooks/riffs)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Peer assessment - small group activities to provide opportunity for students to provide feedback to each other (with a focus on key vocabulary). Performances will be recorded so that students can reflect and provide feedback - Self-assessment – students to use assessment stickers to reflect on their progress and set goals for improvement - Performance opportunities in class to showcase ensemble and solo performances and provide opportunity for self/peer feedback <p>Summative assessment through: - Week 3 assessment in Term 6 – students prepare an arrangement of a popular song in pairs or small ensembles</p> <p>Homework tasks – as outlined in Knowledge Organisers.</p>	<p>PowerPoints</p> <p>YouTube</p> <p>Recording device</p> <p>Mini whiteboards</p> <p>Lead sheets</p>	<p>Exposure to different musical styles and the stories behind them fosters an appreciation for diversity and respect for various cultural expressions.</p> <p>Working together on music-related projects, such as creating a group song, performing, or analysing a song as a team, enhances students' teamwork and collaborative skills.</p> <p>Popular music often tells stories of success, ambition, and personal growth, which can inspire students to set goals and pursue their own passions.</p> <p>Modelling exemplary behaviour. SHAPE AND STEPS used by staff to promote and model to students.</p> <p>Active use of STAR and SHAPE to embed good inter-personal relationships and speech and language skills.</p>
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		<p>Some pupils will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Perform independent parts of well-known songs with expressions and sensitivity to other parts, taking a lead role in an ensemble performance• Create a four-chord progression for a pop song and a catchy riff/hook to accompany it					
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