

Year 9 Music

Units 1 & 2: Music Performance

Learning Objectives

Pupils will develop their keyboard performance skills by learning and performing a range of popular music riffs and parts, focusing on accurate rhythm, pitch, timing, syncopation, consistency and musical expression. They will apply appropriate stylistic techniques to perform confidently and effectively both independently and as part of an ensemble.

What previous knowledge is required?

Pupils will draw on knowledge and skills developed throughout Years 7 and 8 to support their performance of popular keyboard riffs and parts. From Year 7, pupils will have developed an understanding of the $\bar{\text{J}}$, including rhythm, melody, tempo, dynamics, texture and timbre, alongside basic keyboard technique, posture, finger positioning and ensemble skills. Their experience of performing melodies, working as part of an ensemble and exploring different musical genres will provide a strong foundation for this unit.

From Year 8, pupils will build on their understanding of keyboard chords, chord sequences and popular musical styles, particularly through their work on Rock 'n' Roll, Blues and Reggae. They will already have experience of maintaining a steady pulse, performing repeated musical patterns and recognising how rhythm and performance techniques contribute to different genres. Their work with blues and improvisation will also have developed their rhythmic awareness, confidence and ability to respond to other performers.

This prior learning enables pupils to approach the performance unit with an established understanding of rhythm, syncopation, repetition, pitch, timing, stylistic features and ensemble performance. They can therefore focus on refining their technical accuracy, consistency, confidence and musical expression while performing recognisable popular music parts.

How will this term's content help with future learning?

This performance unit provides pupils with a strong foundation for progression to BTEC Level 2 Music by developing the practical, technical and collaborative skills required in further music study. Through learning and performing recognisable keyboard riffs and parts, pupils develop accuracy in pitch, rhythm, timing, syncopation, fluency and consistency, which are transferable to more demanding performance tasks.

The unit also develops pupils' understanding of genre and musical style, requiring them to adapt their playing to different contemporary contexts. This supports future BTEC work where pupils may be expected to perform music in different styles and demonstrate an understanding of the musical characteristics that influence their performance choices.

Working both independently and as part of an ensemble helps pupils develop important professional and transferable skills, including rehearsal discipline, listening, communication, collaboration, responding to feedback and maintaining a consistent performance. These skills are particularly valuable when preparing for assessed practical work and working with other musicians.

The unit also encourages pupils to become more independent performers. By learning to practise a part, identify inaccuracies, respond to feedback and refine their performance, pupils begin to develop the

reflective approach needed for vocational music study. This provides a useful bridge between Key Stage 3 performance and the greater level of independence, practical application and evaluation expected at BTEC Level 2 Music.

Common Misconceptions

Pupils may initially believe that playing the correct notes is enough to produce a successful performance. The unit will challenge this by developing an understanding that accurate pitch must be combined with consistent rhythm, timing, appropriate articulation, dynamics and musical expression. Pupils will learn that a technically accurate performance can still lack musicality if the performer does not maintain a steady pulse or respond to the style of the music.

Pupils may also believe that a repeated riff is easy because it uses the same notes repeatedly. In reality, repeated riffs require concentration, consistency and accurate timing. A small rhythmic or pitch error can become particularly noticeable when a pattern is repeated. Pupils will develop an understanding that repetition requires control and precision rather than simply memorising the notes.

Another common misconception is that syncopation means playing randomly or playing off the beat without a clear pulse. Pupils will learn that syncopation involves deliberately placing emphasis on unexpected parts of the beat while maintaining an underlying sense of pulse. This will help them perform syncopated parts accurately rather than rushing or losing their place.

Pupils may assume that playing faster makes a performance sound more impressive. The focus will instead be on maintaining an appropriate tempo and performing with accuracy and consistency. Pupils will learn that professional performance requires control, and that playing at a slower tempo accurately is more valuable than playing quickly with frequent errors.

Pupils may also believe that popular music does not require much musical technique because the parts can sound simple. Through the unit, pupils will recognise that effective performance of popular music requires good keyboard technique, rhythmic accuracy, coordination, listening skills and an understanding of style.

A further misconception may be that each performer should focus only on their own keyboard part. Ensemble performance requires pupils to listen to the other musicians, maintain awareness of the overall musical texture and adjust their playing where necessary. Pupils will therefore develop an understanding of how their individual part contributes to the success of the whole ensemble.

Finally, pupils may believe that confidence means never making mistakes. The unit will encourage pupils to develop performance resilience by learning how to recover from mistakes without stopping, maintain concentration and continue performing. Confidence will be developed through preparation, repetition, constructive feedback and increasingly independent performance.

National Curriculum / Specification

The National Curriculum for Music stipulates that pupils should build on their previous knowledge and skills through performing, composing and listening. They should develop their vocal and/or instrumental fluency, accuracy and expressiveness, and understand musical structures, styles, genres and traditions, identifying the expressive use of musical dimensions. They should listen with increasing discrimination

and awareness to inform their practice as musicians. They should use technologies appropriately and appreciate and understand a wide range of musical contexts and styles.

Pupils should be taught to:

- play and perform confidently in a range of solo and ensemble contexts using their voice, playing instruments musically, fluently and with accuracy and expression
- improvise and compose; and extend and develop musical ideas by drawing on a range of musical structures, styles, genres and traditions
- use staff and other relevant notations appropriately and accurately in a range of musical styles, genres and traditions
- identify and use the interrelated dimensions of music expressively and with increasing sophistication, including use of tonalities, different types of scales and other musical devices
- listen with increasing discrimination to a wide range of music from great composers and musicians
- develop a deepening understanding of the music that they perform and to which they listen, and its history