



**Tollbar MAT**  
Family of Academies



# Tollbar Academy

## *Music*

### **Intent**

At Tollbar Academy, we aim to create well-rounded and confident musicians. We challenge students to think, act and speak like those working in the field. We do this through Quality First teaching, which challenges our students to not only understand different styles and genres of music but requires them to explore, discuss and demonstrate this understanding in creative ways. Our curriculum is aspirational and students are challenged in all lessons to be able to demonstrate understanding and creativity through performance and composition, collaboration with their peers and evaluation of their own work.

Our curriculum, based on the National Curriculum, goes far beyond what is taught in lessons, for whilst we want students to achieve the very best examination results possible, we believe our curriculum goes beyond what is examinable.

As a department we offer a wide range of extra-curricular opportunities for those students who want to develop their musical skills and abilities beyond a classroom curriculum. Individual instrumental lessons are available to all students throughout the school. We firmly believe that we want all students to participate. Having an open access policy ensures no barriers stop students who want make use of this provision. We also have a vibrant collection of musical ensembles, which we believe offer opportunities to a wide range of students, allowing them to collaborate with other musicians and thus develop their performance skills and understanding, as well as a love of the subject. Where possible and appropriate, we endeavour to expose our students to live music therefore we include visits as a key part of our department.

All students involved in music at Tollbar are given regular opportunities to perform in front of others, both as individuals and with the various groups. This builds on their performance skills and also helps to develop their confidence and understanding as musicians, whilst feeding into the cultural capital.

Our curriculum in Music forms a backbone to our ethos statement. Examples of how our curriculum supports the ethos statement are by providing opportunities for creativity throughout the KS3 and KS4 curriculum through composition and performance. The whole of the KS3 curriculum requires students to be able to collaborate, whilst being mindful of the opinions and abilities of others.

We encourage students to be enquiring in the development of their ideas. Developing the confidence of our students is another vital part of our curriculum and students are frequently challenged to perform their ideas to each other, whilst being encouraged to evaluate the success of these performances through the integral understanding of the Musical Elements.

As a knowledge engaged curriculum we believe that knowledge underpins and enables the application of skills; both are entwined. As a department we define the powerful knowledge our students need and help them recall it by having a carefully planned progression through our sequencing, which not only builds on prior knowledge but regularly enables students to develop key skills in all topic areas. We expect and encourage students to use key musical terminology within their work. We have created bespoke curriculum booklets which support the learning of our students at KS3, giving them the opportunity to reflect on their achievements and areas which they feel need further development.

We build the cultural capital of our students by teaching themes in context – exposing them to influences and traditions from many different cultural and historical contexts. We believe that it is essential to their understanding that they understand the ‘why’ as well as the ‘how’. Further rationale behind our curriculum design includes ensuring that our students have the necessary skills to be able to access the optional curriculum at KS4 and KS5. We encourage students to appraise a wide range of musical styles through regular exposure. They are challenged and stretched by an expectation that they can justify their opinions using musical understanding. We build on more traditional composition skills from the beginning of KS3 so that the composition requirements of the GCSE curriculum are more accessible.

## **Implementation**

Collaborative curriculum planning lies at the heart of what we do in the department. We are committed to developing our schemes of work. We are focussed on embedding stretch & challenge, cross curricular links, memory techniques and literacy into our departmental curriculum. We place particular focus on the sequencing of skills and knowledge and how best to maximise progress over time.

Our KS4 curriculum is also diverse. As well as offering the more traditional course of GCSE Music, we also offer BTEC Music, which appeals to the students who want to actively explore the music industry. Both courses help to develop the students’ musician skills over time in different ways, meeting the needs of all learners.

Our curriculum covers the different key areas of composition, performance and appraisal, as expected in the National Curriculum. The nature of the delivery means that key skills are constantly revisited and key terminology is regularly embedded within the work that our students produce.



## **Impact**

We know our curriculum is working in the Music department through the engagement of our students that can be seen in all lessons. KS3 topic work regularly shows good and exceptional understanding. We have a healthy uptake at GCSE/BTEC and the trend is rising. We have a smaller uptake at KS5 – we are one of two schools in the local area which offer the A level curriculum. A good proportion of students who opt for A level then continue to study the subject further at university.

Our instrumental tuition provision is successful. Retention is very good, with many students continuing to learn an instrument throughout their time at Tollbar. Every term, we offer at least one Saturday ABRSM exam day and the majority of students who choose to be entered for examinations through both Trinity and ABRSM are very successful.

The impact of our extra-curricular provision can be seen throughout the school. Tollbar has a reputation for providing its students with endless opportunities to perform and engage in music making at a high standard. We have a large number of students who are committed in their membership of the various musical ensembles. Regular concerts, both in and out of the academy, give students the opportunity to display their talents and we receive regular compliments from audiences regarding the level of musicality with which our students are able to perform. As a department, we firmly believe that it is the enjoyment of the students and staff alongside their commitment and enthusiasm to make music which drives the department's success.