



Music at Durham Johnston Comprehensive School

The department of three staff has high expectations of all of its pupils and encourages an atmosphere of mutual respect between students and teachers. We all believe that Music is a vital part of any school's curriculum. Music is a continually evolving and dynamic subject but certain concepts remain central to the discipline and so it is our aim to keep the subject matter up to date and relevant whilst endeavouring to give the students the knowledge, skills and understanding necessary to appreciate the subject. We aim to keep the work realistic and accessible to all students, whilst at the same time stretching and stimulating the more able.

The Music Department is situated at the heart of the school building and consists of two large and one small curriculum teaching rooms, which are all designed to double as rehearsal spaces, and five practice rooms, three of which have pianos and one which is equipped with a drum-kit and a range of orchestral percussion. In the teaching rooms there are 53 IT workstations on which students have access to Sibelius and Mixcraft, as well as the usual range of Microsoft Office applications and Internet Explorer. Each workstation is connected to a five octave USB keyboard. In addition to the keyboards, there are class sets of acoustic guitars, glockenspiels, and samba percussion.

Key Stage 3

Years 7, 8 and 9 are taught in mixed ability groups of c. 23 and all students receive a one hour lesson each week.

Key Stage 4

Each year, about 10% of students select music as one of their GCSE options. There are two groups, one group is taught as part of an option block and the other as a pre-school extra GCSE. The department follows the Edexcel syllabus.

Key Stage 5

In comparison with other teaching groups for AS and A2, numbers taking A Level music are relatively small, although this is in line with national trends. Each year a number of students usually choose study music at degree level. The department follows the AQA syllabus.

Music Enrichment Activities

The Music Department offers the following enrichment activities;

- Junior Orchestra – 45 members
- Senior Orchestra – 75 members
- Senior Choir (SATB) – 85 members
- Junior Choir – 30 members
- Chamber Choir (SATB) – auditioned – 25 members
- Wind Band – 40 members
- Big Band - 17
- Theory Club – 20 members
- Guitar/Keyboard Club – 12 members
- Aural Skills – individual lunchtime appointments

Projects in the last few years have included;

- The annual School Carol Service in Durham Cathedral
- GCSE Composition/ Performance project with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment.
- Participation in a performance of the Monteverdi 1610 Vespers with I Fagiolini, The Durham Singers. Directed by Robert Hollingworth.
- Chamber Choir Singing Choral Evensong in Durham Castle and Durham Cathedral