

Music Department

A brief description of the department, its aims and its facilities.

Westcliff High School for Girls places great value and importance upon a good musical education. The resources and accommodation for music have improved and grown over the past few years and we are based in our own purpose built facility.

Music in the Curriculum

All pupils have the opportunity of fully developing their musical potential, whether as performers, composers or informed listeners. Class music lessons (for pupils in Years 7 - 9) explore a wide variety of music through listening, composing and performing; the lessons generally adopt a creative and practical approach in order that pupils learn about the subject through direct experience.

GCSE Music and A level Music are both popular choices of subject with many pupils continuing their study of music at University or Music College.

The Curriculum

All pupils study music in Year 7 - 9 with students in years 7 – 8 following a 2-year Key Stage 3 programme and Year 9 students studying an introduction to GCSE Music.

At Key Stage 4 (Years 10-11) pupils choose to study music as one of their options, and this is taken to GCSE.

At Key Stage 5, students study music to A2 level and have the option to also study for an additional AS qualification in Music Technology.

Musical Instrument Tuition

Over 10% of our pupils take part in school based music tuition. Lessons from peripatetic staff are available on the full range of orchestral instruments, including percussion, as well as piano, classical and electric guitar, drum kit and singing.

Concerts

In the Autumn Term the Music Department puts on a Winter Concert, which showcases the department's many ensembles and talented soloists as well as a Carol Service at a local church. The department is also involved in performing at numerous other festive events around the Christmas period including Carols in the Afternoon for the Mayor and The 12 Days of Christmas event at the Cliffs Pavillion. The Spring Term is focused around the annual whole school production and House Music competition. A Summer showcase is held towards the end of the school year and, in addition to this, there are also AS and A level recitals and the school's ensembles are regularly entered in local and national festivals and competitions. The school's Jazz Ensemble and Senior Choir also take part in a biennial Concert Tour to Europe and have visited destinations including Lake Garda, Florence and Paris.

Music Technology

The Music classrooms have 26 computers with access to Sibelius 7.5, Logic Pro and Garageband. There is also a fully equipped recording studio with facilities for recording various types of performance from solo work to full orchestras.

Stage Productions

Music is also a prominent feature of dramatic productions, in the form of both incidental music for plays and the presentation of fully staged musicals. The productions feature state of the art sound and lighting and are of the very highest caliber. Recent productions have included Into the Woods, A Chorus Line and Chicago.

Associated Board Music Exams, The Guildhall School of Music and Drama Exams and London College Music Theatre Exams.

For convenience, as well as for the comfort and security of familiar surroundings, pupils have the option to take their musical instrument exams at the school. Exam sessions are scheduled throughout the year and a high standard of success is maintained.

Ensembles & Choirs

Numerous ensembles meet regularly, enabling participants to develop musicianship skills as fully as possible.

Ensembles include:

Jazz Ensemble
Gospel Choir
Concert Orchestra
Woodwind Quintet
Saxophone Quartet
Senior Choir
Junior Choir
Harmonics (Vocal Ensemble)
Wind Band
Junior Band
Westcliff Sinfonia (joint school Orchestra).