

MUSIC GCSE

EDEXCEL Specification 1426

This provides a course of practical and written study in the three areas of listening, composing and performing.

The level of difficulty of the pieces performed at the end of the course, which are recorded on tape, need not be high but the performance quality does need to be so. Performance experience is helpful with the composition element, which is done as coursework over two years, as the ability to hear sounds and transcribe them to paper must be acquired. This skill can grow, however, from having little or no previous experience in composition.

The listening element is a mixture of knowledge, taught over the two year course, and spontaneous recognition, which is partly learnt and partly instinctive.

Performing: candidates must play one instrument as a soloist and in an ensemble (or, for the very experienced musician, there is an opportunity to rehearse and direct an ensemble) in prepared pieces and these are recorded. Candidates must also record, as part of their performance module, one of their compositions, either as a soloist or in an ensemble.

Composing: the best two pieces written during the course, both written to a brief, will be presented to the examiners and both will be recorded (one of them as part of the performance module). They can be in traditional notation, graphic notation or written by any means so long as it is clear and exactly describes how the pieces are to be played.

Listening: candidates are taught about western music from the Renaissance to the present day and also about music from other cultures (Africa, India, China, South America, etc.). They are taught about form and style in music, how to recognise examples and how to describe both these and their own feelings about the music.

The course leads to GCSE in Music. The performing and composing modules are each worth 30% of the total and the listening module 40%.