# Grade Descriptors for GCSEs Graded 9-1: Music

| 9 | To achieve a Grade 9 candidates will be able to: <br> • Perform music of at least grade 5 standard, with no discernible flaws or errors, and with exceptional levels of technical control, expression and fluency. <br> • Compose music with clear structural development. There will be evidence of exceptional and creative use, of a wide range of musical elements, to create an interesting and highly imaginative composition. <br> • demonstrate, through aural identification, exceptional knowledge of a wide range of musical elements, musical conventions, contexts and language. <br> • evaluate music from the Western Classical Tradition, World Music cultures and a wide range of 'popular music' genres, to make convincing judgements using appropriate musical terminology, accurately and effectively. |
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| 8 | To achieve a Grade 8 candidates will be able to: <br> • perform challenging music (of at least grade 5 standard) with a high degree of fluency and sensitivity <br> • compose using a wide range of musical elements with sophistication, creating effective musical ideas and sustaining interest through their development <br> • demonstrate, through aural identification, accurate knowledge of a wide range of musical elements, contexts and language <br> • evaluate music to make convincing judgements using musical terminology accurately and effectively |
| 7 | To achieve a Grade 7 candidates will be able to: <br> • perform music of at least grade 5 standard with high levels of technical control and a secure sense of style and attention to detail. <br> • compose using a range of musical elements, creating effective and imaginative  musical ideas and sustaining interest through their development. Melodic ideas should be well-structured and balanced, and the harmonic structure should develop through related keys. <br> • Demonstrate, through aural identification, good knowledge of a wide range of musical elements, contexts and language. <br> • evaluate music to make accurate judgements using musical terminology accurately and effectively |
| 6 | To achieve a Grade 6 candidates will be able to: <br> • perform music of at least grade 4 standard with a good level of technical control and a good sense of style and attention to detail. Occasional errors in pitch and rhythm may be evident. <br> • Compose using a range of musical elements, creating effective musical ideas, which show evidence of development throughout the piece. Melodic ideas should be well-structured, and avoid too much repetition. The harmonic structure should use recognised conventions and use contrasting key signatures. <br> • Demonstrate, through aural identification, secure knowledge of a wide range of musical elements, contexts and language. <br> • evaluate music to make secure judgements using musical terminology accurately and effectively |
| 5 | To achieve a Grade 5 candidates will be able to: <br> • perform music with some technical challenges broadly fluently with some sensitivity <br> • compose using a range of musical elements with coherence, creating musical ideas and developing interest with some success <br> • demonstrate, through aural identification, mostly accurate knowledge of a range of musical elements, contexts and language |

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| | • evaluate music to make clear judgements using musical terminology appropriately |
| 4 | To achieve a Grade 4 candidates will be able to:<br>• Perform music of grade 2 standard, with a reasonable sense of fluency and sensitivity. There may be noticeable errors in pitch and rhythm, but the musical directions are mostly observed and there is some sense of expression.<br>• Compose using a range of musical elements with coherence. Melodic ideas may be quite short, but there is evidence of a variety of melodic ideas with appropriate harmonic and rhythmic accompaniment. The key signature is likely to be C major or A minor.<br>• demonstrate, through aural identification, a reasonably accurate knowledge of a range of musical elements, contexts and language<br>• evaluate music to make some clear judgements using a good range of musical terminology appropriately |
| 3 | To achieve a Grade 3 candidates will be able to:<br>• Perform music of grade 2 standard, with a reasonable sense of fluency. The performance might lack commitment or conviction at times. There may be noticeable errors in pitch and rhythm which affect the fluency of the performance.<br>• Compose using four different musical elements as a focus. Melodic ideas may be quite short and simple, and may be repetitive. Harmonic structures may be limited to just the primary chords and any key changes are from relative major to minor, or vice versa. Rhythm patterns are likely to be quite simple, regular rhythms.<br>• demonstrate, through aural identification, some knowledge of musical elements, a some musical contexts and a basic range of musical language.<br>• evaluate music to make some limited judgements using a range of musical terminology. |
| 2 | To achieve a Grade 2 candidates will be able to:<br>• perform simple pieces with limited fluency and sensitivity<br>• compose using a range of musical elements, creating musical ideas with some appeal and limited development<br>• demonstrate, through aural identification, some knowledge of musical elements, basic contexts and a limited range of language<br>• evaluate music to produce simple reflections with inconsistent use of musical terminology |
| 1 | To achieve a Grade 1 candidates will be able to:<br>• perform a simple piece, with some sense of musical style. The performance will be inhibited by many noticeable errors in pitch and rhythm, which will affect the fluency. It is likely to be an anxious experience.<br>• compose using the minimum four musical elements, creating musical ideas with limited appeal and limited development. Melodic ideas may be just repetitive ostinato patterns or riffs. Any accompaniment is likely to be simplistic in approach. Rhythm patterns will be simple, regular rhythms. There is no evidence of the development of ideas.<br>• demonstrate, through aural identification, a limited knowledge of musical elements, some basic contexts and a limited range of language<br>• evaluate music to produce basic reflections which may contain inconsistent and incorrect use of musical terminology. |