

Progression of Music Curriculum Skills from EYFS to Key Stage Two

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Part 1. Key Stages One and Two

Following changes to Ofsted's Education Inspection Framework and the introduction of the Deep Dive in 2019, the SMS Progression of Music Curriculum Skills (Draft 1.0, Nov 2019) was written to support SMS teachers with a standardised background document linked to the National Curriculum. The Progression scheme was based on the ISM's Assessment and Progression Framework (2014), which divides the curriculum into the four musical activities of Singing, Playing, Improvising & Composing, and Critical Engagement (Listening & Appraising). Each activity has a table of skills statements linked to the National Curriculum and divided into 'Area of Study' rows. Each Area of Study has a code (e.g. S.1, S.2 for Singing skills) which teachers are encouraged to use as a simple way to refer to the Progression.

The KS1 & KS2 Progression scheme is divided into columns called Stages B, C and D, which essentially refer to KS1, Lower KS2 and Upper KS2, respectively. However, since it concerns general musical development, 'Stages' can be used when teaching pupils with SEND where progress does not need to be age-related.

Following the publication of the new Early Learning Goals (statutory from September 2021), the EYFS Stage (Stage A) was rewritten to separate Nursery, Pre-school, and Reception teaching, being simplified in June 2022.

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National Curriculum for Music in KS1 and KS2

KS1	Pupils should be taught to:
1a	Use their voices expressively and creatively by singing songs and speaking chants and rhymes
1b	Play tuned and untuned instruments musically
1c	Listen with concentration and understanding to a range of high-quality live and recorded music
1d	Experiment with, create, select, and combine sounds using the inter-related dimensions of music.
KS2	Pupils should be taught to:
2a	Play and perform in solo and ensembles context, using their voices and playing musical instruments with increasing accuracy, fluency, control, and expression.
2b	Improvise and compose music for a range of purposes using the inter-related dimensions of music.
2c	Listen with attention to detail and recall sounds with increasing aural memory.
2d	Use and understand staff and other musical notations
2e	Appreciate and understand a wide range of high-quality live and recorded music drawn from different traditions and from great composers and musicians.
2f	Develop and understanding of the history of music.

Progression Scheme for Singing

STAGES		STAGE B		STAGE C		STAGE D	
Areas of Study	NC	KS1	NC	Lower KS2	NC	Upper KS2	
S.1 Engagement and Using the Voice	1a	Enjoys joining in with chants, rhymes and singing simple songs.	2a 2e 2f	Sings, with increasing confidence, fluency and expression, songs from different traditions, genre, and times.	2a 2e 2f	Sings confidently, fluently and maintaining a strong pulse, songs from a range of traditions, genre, and times.	
	1a	Uses own voice in a variety of ways, with growing confidence, exploring the sounds a speaking, and singing voice make.	2a	Uses own voice in a variety of ways, including vocal warm ups.	2a	Understands why and how to warm up the voice.	
S.2 Pitch Skills	1a	Sings broadly in tune within a limited pitch range (octave) and with the sense of the shape of a melody or intervals jumps.	2a 2c	Sings accurately in tune within a limited pitch range, following a melody or interval jumps.	2a	Sings accurately in tune within a wider pitch range (*octave and half*) and appropriate individual vocal range.	
	1a	Imitates melodic patterns in echoes.					
S.3 Singing with Control and Expression	1a	Begins to control steady expressive changes in songs and chants (e.g. dynamics, tempo).	2a	Sings songs and speaks chants with increasing expression (e.g. dynamics, tone, phrasing).	2a	Uses dynamics, phrasing, emphasis, and accents to create intended effects.	
			2a	Sings with clear diction and breathing.	2a	Sings with an awareness of breathing, posture, and diction.	
S.4 Ensemble skills and part-singing	1a	Sings in unison, in small and large groups, and may sing solo.	2a	Sings in unison and in short solos.	2a	Sings confidently in unison and solo.	
	1a	Sings in time with others, with or without an accompaniment.	2a 2c	Maintains a simple part in a large group with two or more layers (rounds, drones, and ostinato).	2a 2c	Maintains an independent part in a small group with several layers and being aware of other parts (rounds, drones, ostinato, and harmony).	
	1a	Follows simple musical instructions (e.g. start and stop).	2a 2c	Follows musical instructions (e.g. dynamic changes).	2a	Follows more complex musical instructions (e.g. in part singing).	

S.5 Performing	1a	Performs in a group with a good sense of pulse and rhythm, knowing when to start and stop.	2a	Performs confidently in a group and may occasionally perform a solo.	2a	Performs confidently in a group and solo with expression and variety.
	1a	Beginning to be aware of an audience during special performances.	2a	Shows an awareness of audience and a sense of occasion during special performances.	2a	Performs in a way that reflects the meaning and impact of the lyrics to an audience.
S.6 Understanding song structure	1c	Recognises the sections of a song may be the same or different (e.g. verse and chorus, cumulative song).	2a	Recognises different song structures (call and response, verse, and chorus, cumulative).	2a	Understands more complex song structures.
			2c		2c	
			2a	Differentiates between contrasting sections (e.g. verse and chorus) and show awareness of simple phrase structure or repetition.	2a	Identifies phrases through breathing appropriately.
			2c			

Progression Scheme for Playing

STAGES		STAGE B		STAGE C		STAGE D
Areas of Study	NC	KS1	NC	Lower KS2	NC	Upper KS2
P.1 Creating and Exploring Sound	1b 1d	Enjoys playing and exploring sounds.	2a 2b	Confidently explores and creates sounds, <i>including with music technology.</i>	2a 2b	Creates and performs sounds with accuracy <i>including with music technology.</i>
P.2 Controlling Sounds on Instruments	1b	Keeps a steady pulse	2a 2c	Plays a steady beat, internalising pulse. Indicates steady beat by movement including in silence	2a 2c	Plays with others keeping to a common pulse
	1b	Controls and demonstrates changes in dynamics and tempo	2a 2b	Plays instruments with clarity, controlling subtle changes in dynamics and tempo including crescendo/ diminuendo. accelerando/rallentando	2a 2b 2c	Plays instruments with confidence and expression
	1b	Shows control, playing clearly and with increasing confidence				
	1b 1d	Selects instrumental timbres to create sound effects		<i>Selects and controls beats, chords or loops in music technology programmes.</i>		<i>Selects and controls beats, chords, effects, and loops effectively in music technology programmes.</i>
	1b	Selects high/low ascending/ descending pitches where appropriate.				
P.3 Rhythm Skills	1b 1c	Responds to sounds of different duration	2a	Performs simple rhythmic patterns and ostinati to an internalised pulse	2a 2b	Performs complex rhythmic patterns to an internalised pulse
	1b	Recognises difference between long and short sounds			2a 2c	Recognises a metre of 3 & 4
	1b	Recognises and copies simple patterns of long/short sounds			2a 2c	Recognises a change in metre
P.4 Pitch Skills	1b 1d	Identifies and selects high/low high/low ascending/ descending pitches where appropriate.	2a	Performs simple melodies and pitched ostinati to an internalised pulse	2a 2c	Performs complex melodies and pitched accompaniments to an internalised pulse

	1b	Plays simple melodic patterns				
P.5 Ensemble skills	1b	Follows instructions on when to play	2a	Follows a leader directing changes and start/stops.	2a	Leads a group and follows a leader directing changes in musical expression
			2a 2b 2c	Maintains own part in a group piece playing rhythm on rhythm and holding a beat	2a 2b 2c	Maintains an independent part in an ensemble
			2a 2c	Recognises the melodic line and an accompaniment in a texture	2c	Understands how the texture might vary
P.6 Playing from Notation	1b	Plays from a picture score	2d	Plays using various notation as support (Graphic scores, rhythm notation e.g. crotchets and quavers)	2d	Plays using notation as support (Staff & rhythm notation, graphic scores)
P.7 Performing	1b	Performs in a group with good sense of pulse and rhythm	2a	Performs with an awareness of a group and to an audience	2a	Performs confidently in a group and solo, with expression and variety.
P.8 Understanding instruments and how they are played	1b 1d	Matches selected sounds with their pictured source	2b	Selects appropriate instruments and plays in a variety of ways	2a 2b	Organises sounds effectively using a variety of instruments or <i>music technology</i> and styles
	1b 1d	Uses sound words or phrases to describe selected sounds and the ways in which they are produced				

Progression Scheme for Improvising and Composing

STAGES		STAGE B		STAGE C		STAGE D
Areas of Study	NC	KS1	NC	Lower KS2	NC	Upper KS2
IC.1 Exploring Sounds	1a 1b 1d	Explores sounds with voice, body, or instruments	2a 2b	Explores and improvises sounds or musical patterns with voice, body or instruments <i>and music technology</i> .	2b	Selects and use instruments, creative sound-makers, <i>and music technology</i> , or playing techniques to improvise sounds or patterns.
IC.2 Choosing and Organising Sounds	1d	Selects sounds to represent ideas and feelings.	2b	Selects and orders sounds effectively to represent ideas or feelings, or to tell a story.	2a 2b	Selects, orders, combines, and changes sounds, imaginatively and with expression, to represent ideas, moods, or feelings, or tell a story.
IC.3 Creating music within structures	1a 1d	Improvises within given songs, chants or ostinati.	2a 2b	Creates rhythms, melodies, lyrics, <i>loops</i> , or accompaniments within simple or given musical structures.	2a 2b	Creates and combines rhythms, melodies, harmonies, <i>loops</i> , or lyrics within own musical pieces effectively.
IC.4 Improvising to demonstrate musical ideas	1b 1d	Improvises to demonstrate a simple musical idea (loud/quiet, fast/slow, high/low).	2a 2b	Improvises, with growing confidence and control with voice, instruments, or <i>music technology</i> to demonstrate musical changes or contrasts.	2a 2b	Improvises imaginatively and expressively with voice, instruments or <i>music technology</i> using inter-related dimensions of music.
IC.5 Communicating ideas or moods	1b 1d	Improvises or composes to communicate ideas or moods.	2a 2b	Improvises and composes effectively to communicate ideas or moods	2b	Improvises and composes imaginatively to communicate ideas & moods
IC.6 Improvising rhythms & tunes	1b 1d	Improvises simple rhythms or tunes	2a 2b	Improvises with growing confidence rhythms or simple tunes within musical structures (e.g. a beat, ostinato, or chord sequence)	2a 2b	Improvises rhythms and tunes within musical structures (e.g. a beat, ostinato, or chord sequence) confidently and imaginatively.
IC.7 Creating and Performing own music in a group	1d	Contributes ideas to a composition and perform this solo or as a class or group.	2a 2b	Composes and performs solo or with class or group, contributing ideas to create songs, chants, or pieces.	2a 2b	Composes and perform solos and with others effectively and imaginatively to create songs, chants, or pieces
IC.8 Using Notation	1d	Uses pictures, graphic symbols, or rhythm notation as support to improvise, compose or record own music.	2b 2d	Uses given or own notation (graphic symbols or rhythm notation) to improvise, compose and record compositions.	2b 2d	Uses notation (graphic scores, rhythm, or staff notation) to support & record composition to improvise, compose and record own compositions.

Progression Scheme for Critical Engagement (Listening and Appraising)

STAGES		STAGE B		STAGE C		STAGE D	
Area of Study	NC	KS1	NC	Lower KS2	NC	Upper KS2	
CE.1 Listening to a Range of Live, Recorded, and own Music.	1c	Listens with growing focus to a range to high quality live and recorded music.	2c 2e 2f	Listens to, and comments on, high quality live and recorded music from different traditions, genre, styles and times with increasing focus and attention to detail.	2c 2e 2f	Listens to and evaluates a range of high quality live and recorded music from different traditions, genre, styles and times with concentration and discernment, and share opinions, using musical language.	
CE.2 Differentiating between Sounds	1c	Listens out for, and responds to, sounds that differ, e.g. in dynamics, pitch, timbre, tempo, etc.	2c	Listens to several layers of sound, identifying musical elements or features and discussing their effect.	2c	Listens to several layers of sound, identifying musical elements or features, discussing their effect, and justifying ideas.	
CE.3 Recognising and Recalling	1c	Recalls simple rhythmic and melodic phrases.	2c	Listens and recalls simple tunes, played or notated rhythms with increasing accuracy	2c	Listens and accurately recalls melodies, rhythms, notated music, or separate parts in a group.	
CE.4 Responding through movement	1c	Responds to sounds or music through physical movements.	2c	Responds to music through movement to show understanding of mood, ideas, or musical features (e.g. beat, crescendos).	2c	Responds to music through movement to show understanding of mood, ideas, or musical features (e.g. beat, crescendos).	
CE.5 Describing and appraising	1c	Listens and shares comments and opinions about music, including to own work.	2c	Listens to own music, commenting on it in order to improve it.	2c	Listens to own work and others with discernment, and share opinions, using these ideas to improve own work.	

Progression of Musical Skills for Early Years Foundation Stage

This document outlines key areas of musical development in different stages of nursery and early years. The tables below provide key skills in singing, playing instruments and beat-keeping, composing, and listening, and statements align with, and expand on, relevant statements from the Early Learning Goals in the EYFS statutory framework and Development Matters. The most relevant statements for Music are taken from the following areas of learning:

- Communication and Learning
- Physical Development
- Expressive Arts and Design

Singing				
	0-1 Years	1-2 Years	2-4 Years	Reception
Exploring the Voice	Uses voice to communicate and makes variety of sounds, e.g. crying, babbling, vowel-like or syllable-like sounds.	Takes part in vocal play, e.g. creates sound effects, animal call, vehicles noises.	Uses voice freely within play to make a variety of sounds, e.g. chanting, singing. Joins in with parts of well-known songs and rhymes.	Makes a wide range of vocal sounds including speaking, whispering, and singing. Joining in with familiar rhymes and songs with near pitch accuracy.
Singing and Pitching notes	Imitates caregiver's voice, including melodic aspects, e.g. high and low pitch, or the rise and fall of a melody.	Singing emerges. Joins in with actions songs. Anticipates some words in familiar songs.	Sings a wide range of songs. Begins to sing cuckoo notes (3 rd) and to pitch-match, following a melodic shape. Anticipates and sings words and phrases in songs.	Sings cuckoo notes (3 rd) and a wider range of notes (5 th), pitch-matching most of the time. Sings the shape of a melody. Enjoys experimenting with changing a song, e.g. loudly to quietly.
Singing with others (including Performing)	Enjoys vocalising with others and make 'take turns' with a caregiver.	Enjoys singing with others. Begins to respond to others during music making (e.g. copying an adult)	Sings and chants with and to others. Enjoys sharing learnt songs with familiar people.	Enjoys singing with others, gradually more in time and in tune. Internalises songs and sings from memory. Sings solo in a variety of situations. Performs in a group to an audience.

Playing Instruments And Developing Beat-Keeping				
	0-1 Years	1-2 Years	2-4 Years	Reception
Exploring Sounds on Musical Instruments	Explores their environment by banging or shaking objects around them or simple sound-makers.	Explores creating sound by playing sound-makers or instruments in a variety of ways (shaking, tapping, knocking).	Explores a wide range of instruments and sound-makers, and experiments with different ways of playing them. Starts to control sounds on instruments e.g. loud or quiet.	Play instruments confidently and with control in a variety of ways. Learns how sounds can be changed, e.g. how to play loudly and quietly Changes the sounds they play with control, e.g. loud or quiet, including when following a leader or pictures.
Keeping a Beat and Playing Rhythms	Experiences a steady beat through the movement of others, e.g. caregivers' rocking, bouncing.	Experiences a steady beat via sharing movement with others, e.g. caregivers' motion, circle songs with lycra sheet or scrunchie.	Experiences beat via upper body movements, followed by movement with feet, walking on spot. Plays simple rhythms by copying	Moves towards making regular beats to music or whilst singing. Plays simple rhythmic patterns, e.g. syllables of words.
Playing with Others	Engages through imitation and watching others. Needs support to start and stop.	Is aware of others making music in a group and joins in making sounds. Starts and stops playing with support.	Responds to and copies others when playing instruments. Starts and stops with support.	Starts and stop to a variety of signals, e.g. from a leader, pictures. Plays instruments with an awareness of others and follows directions.
Improvising And Composing				
	0-1 Years	1-2 Years	2-4 Years	Reception
Chooses sounds	See " Exploring Sounds on Musical Instruments " above	See " Exploring Sounds on Musical Instruments " above	Makes own choices about instruments to play. Adds sound effects to stories using instruments, voice, and body percussion.	Selects instruments or vocal sounds to represent specific things, e.g. environmental sounds. Chooses how to play the sound they want to make e.g. shaking or tapping loudly or quietly.

				Creates songs or adds words to make alternative versions of familiar songs
Improvises and plays sounds	See <i>"Exploring Sounds on Musical Instruments"</i> above	See <i>"Exploring Sounds on Musical Instruments"</i> above	Invents own rhythm or melodic patterns in music making. Suggests words, body percussion or actions to insert in songs	Improvises different ways to play instruments and use their voices. Makes up music to represent environmental sounds, e.g. rain, animals, or simple moods, e.g. happy, sad.
Listening To Music				
	0-1 Years	1-2 Years	2-4 Years	Reception
Listening and Responding to Music	Will turn to face a sound source. May respond emotionally e.g. show excitement	Develops favourites and indicates which songs or music they like.	Listens to music for an increasing length of time and shows preferences.	Listens with increasing focus to longer pieces of music all the way through. Describes music or sounds they hear. e.g. happy, scratchy, including changes, e.g. gets louder.
Recognising Different Sounds	Listens to, recognises and responds to sounds, including familiar voices. Listens attentively when sung to and anticipate phrases.	Anticipates and responds to changes in music.	Shows an interest in the way musical instruments sound. Recognises sounds in the environment (vehicles, animals, theme tunes).	Identifies different sounds, e.g. environmental sounds or those that match instruments. Recognises distinctive sections of songs and music, accurately anticipating changes.
Responding through Movement or Dance	Moves body and hands to sounds they enjoy.	Moves body or join in actions in response to a strong beat. Begins to physically interprets different music, e.g. fast, slow.	Moves in response to a strong beat, including large movements. May tap the pulse whilst listening or singing Imitates movement in response to music.	Responds to a wide variety of sounds including changes they hear in music. Walks in time to a beat and performs large and small actions to a pulse. Imitates a set of dance steps for a piece of music/song or may choreographs own dances.