

ASSESSMENT IN PRIMARY MUSIC

Revised January 2026

Assessment in Primary Music

Assessment is used to monitor and measure pupil progress and to check whether the skills that are built into the music curriculum have been learnt. Effective assessment helps teachers to plan the next steps and future learning, in order to support pupils to build their knowledge and skills. Research from Ofsted says that the most important form of assessment in music is formative, developmental assessment e.g. in the moment feedback that is part of the ongoing process of learning. Evaluating pupils' work through listening, identifying, and correcting/ suggesting/ celebrating is what assessment in music is all about.

The Bolton Music Service Primary Skills Progression Framework document (revised January 2026) provides classroom practitioners with a broad and balanced music curriculum. When used to plan lessons, it promotes progression and the development of pupils' skills and knowledge over time. The BMS Skills Progression and the BMS Assessment statements are highly calibrated, with the Assessment statements focusing on the most important knowledge and skills that pupils need in order for them to learn the whole music curriculum.

The statements are organised into 4 key areas:

- **Singing**
- **Listening**
- **Composing**
- **Musicianship & Performing**

They show age related expectations at the end of each year group (Years 1-6). *Assessment at the end of EYFS should be completed as part of the EYFS profile.*

Each statement has a letter/number code e.g. **S3a**. These can be used when notating evidence collected of musical learning and progression e.g. video or audio recordings, to identify the skills being demonstrated. Any written work should support the act of making music and support pupils in 'becoming more musical'.

This document supports practitioners in identifying pupils who are working below age-related expectations (ARE) and pupils who are working at ARE (in line with government guidelines). Pupils who are judged to be fulfilling the majority of learning outcomes are assessed as working at ARE. Practitioners can also identify pupils who are showing a greater depth of understanding and skill in music, and/or a greater interest in musical learning and then support them in finding a suitable musical pathway. Practitioners can involve children in assessing their own progress by using the '*I can*' and '*I have*' statements.

Summative assessment statements (as listed in this document) should be used judiciously so as not to take up valuable teaching time or to distort the delivery of the music curriculum; assessment systems need to be manageable and pupils cannot be assessed on every single aspect of their

learning. There is no requirement from Ofsted to keep spreadsheets of pupil data and in fact their research suggests that a high level of micro-assessment could be counter-productive.

This document was reviewed following the publication of 'Research and review: Music' from Ofsted.

ASSESSMENT IN MUSIC – KS1

	Singing	Listening	Composing	Musicianship & Performing
YEAR 1	S1 I can sing 2 melodies (so-mi) with mostly accurate pitch matching.	L1a I can listen with growing concentration to a range of live and recorded music, responding in different ways e.g. drawing, moving. L1b I can say how a piece of music makes me feel.	C1a I have created music in response to an idea or theme, exploring the inter-related dimensions. C1b I can suggest ideas to replace words in familiar songs	M1a I can keep the beat using my body, with some support. M1b I can copy a simple rhythm using my body M1c I have explored a range of tuned and untuned instruments. M1d I have used pictures and symbols to support my singing and playing.
YEAR 2	S2 I can sing 2 or 3 note melodies (la-so-mi) with mostly accurate pitch matching.	L2a I can listen with growing concentration to a range of live and recorded music, recognising changes in dynamics and tempo. L2b I can say how a piece of music makes me feel and give a reason why.	C2a I have created music in response to an idea or theme, exploring the inter-related dimensions. C2b I can create a simple rhythm using words and phrases as a starting point.	M2a I can move and perform to a steady beat/pulse. M2b I can copy a simple rhythm using my body or an instrument. M2c I have played a range of tuned and untuned instruments. M2d I have used pictures and symbols (<i>including sticks and dots</i>) to support my singing and playing.

ASSESSMENT IN MUSIC – LOWER KS2

	Singing	Listening	Composing	Musicianship & Performing
YEAR 3	S3a I can sing with some expression and a growing sense of pitch. S3b I have sung canons, rounds and other partner songs with some support.	L3a I can listen with growing concentration to a range of live and recorded music and describe how the inter-related dimensions are used to create different moods and effects. L3b I have listened to different instrumental families. L3c I am beginning to use the vocabulary of dynamics and tempo when I am talking about music.	C3a I can improvise and compose simple rhythmic patterns on untuned percussion using known notes: <i>crotchets, paired quavers and rests/ walk, jogging and ssh</i> C3b I have recorded my compositions in a variety of ways (e.g. graphic notation, rhythm notation, music technology).	M3a I can keep a steady beat on an instrument. M3b I can clap or tap an ostinato (repeating rhythm) M3c I am beginning to understand the difference between pulse and rhythm. M3d I can read and clap/tap a 4-beat rhythm pattern consisting of crotchets, paired quavers and crotchets rests (walk, jogging and ssh). M3e I can play simple melodic phrases using a small number of notes

YEAR 4

S4a I can sing with expression, good diction and mostly accurate tuning.

S4b I can sing canons, rounds and other partner songs with growing independence

L4a I can listen with growing concentration to a range of live and recorded music and describe how the inter-related dimensions are used to create different moods and effects.

L4b I have listened to different instrumental families and I am beginning to recognise them by sound

L4c I am beginning to use the vocabulary of the inter-related dimensions when I am talking about music.

C4a I can improvise and compose within given parameters *e.g. create a simple melody using a small range of notes, or create a rhythm using crotchets, paired quavers, minims and rests/ walk, jogging, stride and ssh*

C4b I have recorded my compositions in a variety of ways (e.g. graphic notation, rhythm notation, music technology).

M4a I can choose and maintain an appropriate pulse.

M4b I can maintain an ostinato part (repeating rhythm) on percussion instruments, keeping to the pulse.

M4c I can identify the pulse and the rhythm

M4d I can read and clap/tap a 4-beat rhythm pattern consisting of known notes: *crotchets, paired quavers, minims and crotchets rests /walk, jogging, stride and ssh.*

M4e I have played a simple melody on a tuned instrument.

ASSESSMENT IN MUSIC – UPPER KS2

	Singing	Listening	Composing	Musicianship & Performing
YEAR 5	S5a I can sing a broad range of songs with clear diction, accurate tuning and control of breathing and phrasing. S5b I can sing songs and speak chants and rhymes in unison and 2/3 parts <i>e.g. rounds and partner songs</i>, beginning to show an awareness of how the parts fit together.	L5a I can listen with growing concentration to a range of live and recorded music and describe how the inter-related dimensions are used to create different moods and effects using appropriate musical vocabulary. L5b I can recognise (visually and aurally) and name a growing number of individual instruments within instrumental families.	C5a I can improvise and compose within given parameters <i>e.g. Improvise freely over a simple groove, or create a simple melody using a given range of notes.</i> C5b I have recorded my compositions in a variety of ways (<i>e.g. graphic symbols, rhythm notation, staff notation and music technology.</i>)	M5a I can play a rhythmic pattern or melody and maintain it as part of a multi-layered ensemble piece, beginning to show an awareness of how the parts fit together. M5b I can read and clap/tap a 2, 3 or 4-beat rhythm pattern consisting of known notes: <i>crotchets, paired quavers, minims, semiquavers, semibreves and crotchet rests/ walk, jogging, stride, running faster, ski and ssh.</i> M5c I have experienced reading music on staff notation. M5d I have played and performed in solo/ensemble contexts, playing and singing with increasing accuracy, fluency, control and expression.

YEAR 6

S6a I can sing with clear diction, accurate tuning, control of breathing and phrasing and an awareness of style.

S6b I can sing songs and speak chants and rhymes in unison and 2/3 parts *e.g. rounds and partner songs*, showing an awareness of how the parts fit together.

L6a I can listen with growing concentration to a range of live and recorded music and compare pieces of music using appropriate musical vocabulary.

L6b I can recognise (visually and aurally) and name a growing number of individual instruments within instrumental families.

C6a I can improvise and compose within given parameters *e.g. Improvise freely over a simple groove, or create a simple melody using a given range of notes*, and consider how to structure my compositions.

C6b I have recorded my compositions in a variety of ways with increasing detail (*e.g. graphic symbols, rhythm notation, staff notation and music technology.*)

C6c I can reflect on and refine my work.

M6a I can play a rhythmic pattern or melody and maintain it as part of a multi-layered ensemble piece, keeping a strong sense of pulse.

M6b I can read and clap/tap more complex rhythm patterns consisting of known notes: *crotchets, paired quavers, minims, semiquavers, semibreves and crotchet rests/ walk, jogging, stride, running faster, ski and ssh.*

M6c I am becoming more familiar with the stave and can read short phrases with support.

M6d I have played and performed in solo/ensemble contexts, playing and singing with increasing accuracy, fluency, control and expression.

MUSIC ASSESSMENT CLASS RECORD

School _____ Class _____ Year _____ Unit/Term _____

Working Towards ARE	Working at ARE	Higher ability/ Gifted & Talented