



Music Progression Document 2026



Listen

Hear, notice, compare and understand music

Create

Improvise, compose and represent musical ideas

Perform

Sing, play, rehearse, evaluate and improve

Every child is supported to recognise themselves as musical.

We are musicians

In every music lesson we listen, create and perform. We use all three to help our music grow.



LISTEN

We listen carefully.
We notice the beat, sounds and feelings.

CREATE

We explore and choose sounds.
We improvise and compose our own ideas.

PERFORM

We sing and play together.
We share, listen again and improve.

Listen → Create → Perform → Listen again and improve

EYFS statutory curriculum

Music in Sky Nursery, Ocean Nursery and Reception sits mainly within Expressive Arts and Design and also strengthens Communication and Language, Physical Development and Personal Social and Emotional Development. The Shawclough sequence provides frequent, repeated and increasingly purposeful experiences of listening, creating and performing.

Musical process	Statutory EYFS connection	What this looks like at Shawclough
Listen	The Expressive Arts and Design educational programme emphasises the quality and variety of what children see, hear and participate in, and their progress in interpreting and appreciating what they hear, respond to and observe.	Children listen to songs, rhymes, instrumental music, environmental sounds and music from varied cultures; they respond through talk, gesture, movement and musical choices.
Create	Children need regular opportunities to engage with the arts, explore and play with a wide range of media and materials, and develop imagination, creativity, self-expression and artistic vocabulary.	Children explore voice, body percussion, tuned and untuned instruments; copy and invent patterns; choose sounds; improvise; and create story, nature and seaside soundscapes.
Perform	The Being Imaginative and Expressive Early Learning Goal includes singing well-known nursery rhymes and songs, performing songs, rhymes, poems and stories with others and, when appropriate, moving in time with music.	Children sing and move daily, follow a leader, play together, share musical stories and soundscapes, and build confidence performing for a familiar audience.

National Curriculum coverage and endpoints

Phase	Statutory requirement	Where progression is made explicit
End of Key Stage 1	Use voices expressively and creatively by singing songs and speaking chants and rhymes.	Singing and using the voice; Performing and evaluating
End of Key Stage 1	Play tuned and untuned instruments musically.	Playing instruments and ensemble skills
End of Key Stage 1	Listen with concentration and understanding to a range of high-quality live and recorded music.	Listening and musical understanding; Music history culture and diversity
End of Key Stage 1	Experiment with, create, select and combine sounds using the interrelated dimensions of music.	Improvising composing and creating; Interrelated dimensions and vocabulary
End of Key Stage 2	Play and perform in solo and ensemble contexts with increasing accuracy, fluency, control and expression.	Singing; Playing instruments; Performing and evaluating
End of Key Stage 2	Improvise and compose music for a range of purposes using the interrelated dimensions of music.	Improvising composing and creating
End of Key Stage 2	Listen with attention to detail and recall sounds with increasing aural memory.	Listening responding and musical understanding
End of Key Stage 2	Use and understand staff and other musical notations.	Notation and musical symbols
End of Key Stage 2	Appreciate and understand high-quality live and recorded music drawn from different traditions and from great composers and musicians.	Listening; Music history culture and diversity
End of Key Stage 2	Develop an understanding of the history of music.	Music history culture and diversity

Long-term curriculum overview

The overview names the main musical focus in each half term. Skills and knowledge are revisited across units, so a unit title identifies the principal context rather than the only learning that takes place.

Stage	Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1	Summer 2
Sky Nursery	Copy sounds and actions	Join a beat or rhyme	Winter sound contrasts	Story sounds	Animal sounds	Seaside sounds
Ocean Nursery	Songs that make us happy	Celebration music and dance	Hot and cold sounds	Story sounds	Animal songs and movement	Seaside sound sequence
Reception	Voice and body music	Celebration music	Hot and cold music	Musical stories	Nature soundscapes	Ocean soundscapes
Year 1	My favourite things Keeping the pulse	Snail and mouse Tempo	Seaside Dynamics	Fairytales Sound patterns	Superheroes Pitch	Under the sea Musical symbols
Year 2	Animals Call and response	Musical storytelling Instruments	On this island Singing	Space Contrasting dynamics	Myths and legends Structure	Musical me Pitch
Year 3	Ballads	Compositions for an animation Mountains	Singing technique Vikings	Pentatonic melodies Chinese New Year	Jazz	Traditional instruments and improvisation India
Year 4	Body and tuned percussion Rainforests	Rock and roll	Pitch tempo and dynamics Rivers	Haiku music and performance Hanami	Samba and carnival South America	Adapting and transposing motifs Romans
Year 5	Composition notation Ancient Egypt	Blues	South and West Africa	Composition for Holi	Looping and remixing	Musical theatre
Year 6	Dynamics pitch and texture Coast	Songs of World War 2	Film music	Theme and variations Pop Art	Baroque	Composing and performing a Leavers song

Listening responding and musical understanding

Pupils move from noticing and responding to sound towards detailed, contextual and evaluative listening.

Stage	Progression expectation
Sky Nursery	Attend briefly to songs, rhymes and environmental sounds; respond through facial expression, gesture or movement; notice clear contrasts such as loud and quiet.
Ocean Nursery	Listen to short pieces; identify familiar sounds; move or talk about how music feels; recognise fast and slow, loud and quiet and some high and low sounds.
Reception	Listen attentively to contrasting music; describe mood and simple musical features; identify sounds and instruments; connect music with stories, places, celebrations and nature.
Year 1	Listen with concentration to short excerpts and begin to sustain attention in longer pieces; identify common instruments, repetition and contrasts in tempo, dynamics and pitch; say what is enjoyed.
Year 2	Sustain attention and respond to longer pieces; explain an effect or personal response; recognise beat, repeated rhythm and pitch patterns, common instruments and structural sections.
Year 3	Explain preferences using musical vocabulary; recognise changes and describe timbre, dynamics and texture; identify features of music from different times, places, genres and traditions.
Year 4	Recognise motifs, gradual changes and common stylistic features; explain the effect and purpose of the interrelated dimensions; compare music from different genres and traditions.
Year 5	Discuss stylistic features confidently; compare and evaluate music in detail; explain how music creates an effect; represent features graphically and justify choices using musical vocabulary.
Year 6	Discuss musical eras, composers and influences in context; identify relationships between musical features; evaluate how purpose, venue and occasion affect music; use precise musical vocabulary.

Singing and using the voice

Pupils develop vocal confidence, pitch accuracy, control, expression and independence within an ensemble.

Stage	Progression expectation
Sky Nursery	Join in with familiar songs, action rhymes and repeated phrases; explore speaking, singing and sound effects with the voice.
Ocean Nursery	Sing familiar songs and nursery rhymes with growing confidence; change the voice to match an action, character or feeling; begin to sing together.
Reception	Sing a range of well-known songs and rhymes; use the voice expressively; begin to match pitch, follow a leader and perform familiar songs confidently with others.
Year 1	Sing short songs, chants and rhymes from memory; begin to sing at the correct pitch and in time; use the voice expressively for different characters and moods.
Year 2	Sing with increasing pitch accuracy and a clear voice; follow melodic shape; start and stop together; use dynamics and expression and perform call-and-response patterns.
Year 3	Sing in tune and in time with clear diction; develop breath control and posture; perform ballads and songs expressively and begin to maintain a simple part within a group.
Year 4	Sing a broadening repertoire with accuracy, control and expression; sustain a part in rounds or layered music; recognise and perform on-beat and off-beat patterns.
Year 5	Sing with secure pitch, phrasing and expression; perform songs from different cultures and genres; maintain a vocal line with accompaniment, chords or contrasting rhythmic layers.
Year 6	Sing confidently across an octave with controlled breathing, phrasing and dynamics; hold a part, harmony or counter-melody; refine a performance for audience and purpose.

Pulse rhythm movement and metre

Pupils move from copying a regular action to sustaining and combining increasingly complex rhythmic parts.

Stage	Progression expectation
Sky Nursery	Copy simple actions and body sounds; move to music; begin to join a regular beat or repeated action.
Ocean Nursery	Clap a steady beat with support; copy and invent short rhythms; move in different ways to fast and slow music and action songs.
Reception	Follow and maintain a steady beat using movement, body percussion and instruments; copy and create short rhythms; move rhythmically and respond to changes in tempo.
Year 1	Identify and move to the pulse; coordinate movement with tempo; copy short rhythm patterns; recognise repetition and distinguish pulse from the changing rhythm of words.
Year 2	Keep a steady pulse at different speeds; echo and invent call-and-response rhythms; perform repeated rhythmic patterns and coordinate them with chants and movement.
Year 3	Perform and create rhythms with increasing accuracy; recognise metre; use swung rhythm and syncopation; maintain an ostinato or rhythmic layer in an ensemble.
Year 4	Maintain independent rhythmic parts; combine body and tuned percussion; perform on-beat and off-beat patterns; create and adapt motifs and rhythmic breaks.
Year 5	Perform more complex rhythmic layers and polyrhythms; use rests and rhythmic notation; maintain a repeating pattern against chords, melody or another rhythm.
Year 6	Perform complex rhythms accurately within an ensemble; vary, translate and layer rhythmic ideas; use metre and rhythmic structure deliberately in composition and performance.

Playing instruments and ensemble skills

Pupils develop safe exploration, technique, control, independence, fluency and ensemble awareness.

Stage	Progression expectation
Sky Nursery	Explore how safe classroom instruments and objects make sounds; copy a single sound or action; learn when to play and stop.
Ocean Nursery	Explore and name familiar instruments; choose an instrument for a sound; play loud, quiet, fast and slow; take turns and play together briefly.
Reception	Play tuned and untuned instruments with increasing control; keep a beat, copy a rhythm and select sounds for an effect; follow simple start and stop signals.
Year 1	Play tuned and untuned instruments musically; keep a simple pulse or pattern; control basic dynamics and tempo; respond to a leader and perform as a group.
Year 2	Perform rhythmic and melodic patterns with increasing control; select instruments for timbre; maintain a part in call-and-response and simple ensemble work.
Year 3	Play tuned percussion with correct technique; perform simple melodies, pentatonic patterns and accompaniment; maintain a part and respond to ensemble cues.
Year 4	Perform motifs, bass patterns and layered percussion with accuracy; adapt or transpose a motif; control tone, dynamics and rhythmic precision in an ensemble.
Year 5	Play melodies, chords and rhythmic accompaniments with growing fluency; perform blues and music from South and West Africa; balance parts and self-correct.
Year 6	Play solo and ensemble parts with accuracy, fluency, control and expression; sustain harmony or counter-melody; lead, rehearse and refine an ensemble performance.

Improvising composing and creating

Pupils move from exploratory sound play towards purposeful, structured and refined composition.

Stage	Progression expectation
Sky Nursery	Explore and repeat self-chosen sounds; make a sound for an animal, object, action or story moment.
Ocean Nursery	Choose and combine two or more sounds; create short patterns and story sounds; respond freely to a stimulus using voice, body or instruments.
Reception	Improvise with voice, body percussion and instruments; create simple rhythms, patterns and soundscapes for stories, celebrations, nature and the seaside.
Year 1	Select and combine sounds for a clear idea; improvise short patterns; create simple melodies and soundscapes using contrasts in pitch, tempo and dynamics.
Year 2	Create call-and-response ideas, soundscapes and short melodic phrases; organise sounds into simple sections; refine choices to communicate a story, place or mood.
Year 3	Compose lyrics, motifs and pentatonic melodies; improvise within a clear framework; layer rhythm and melody; select dynamics, tempo, texture and timbre for a purpose.
Year 4	Develop motifs through repetition, adaptation and transposition; compose layered percussion and melodic material; create music for a poem, place or cultural context.
Year 5	Compose using rhythmic and melodic notation, chords, loops and digital tools; improvise within the blues scale; structure and refine music for a stated purpose.
Year 6	Develop themes and variations, film music and songs; combine melody, harmony, rhythm and texture coherently; edit, rehearse and justify compositional decisions.

Notation and musical symbols

Pupils progress from responding to visual cues to using staff and other notation to record and perform music.

Stage	Progression expectation
Sky Nursery	Respond to an object, picture, gesture or action as a cue to make or stop a sound.
Ocean Nursery	Match simple pictures or gestures to loud, quiet, fast, slow, play and stop; make marks or arrange pictures to represent sounds.
Reception	Follow and create simple visual symbols and picture sequences for sound; connect symbols with changes in pitch, dynamics, tempo and order.
Year 1	Interpret simple graphic symbols and patterns; show high and low pitch and repeated sounds visually; follow a simple sound sequence.
Year 2	Use graphic and simple letter-based notation; connect symbols with specific pitches and rhythms; read and perform short sound patterns.
Year 3	Read and record basic rhythmic notation and pitch patterns; use letter names and a simple stave where appropriate; record pentatonic ideas and layered compositions.
Year 4	Read and create notation for motifs, rhythms and melodic patterns; recognise note values and rests; use notation to adapt and transpose simple material.
Year 5	Identify and notate pitch and rhythm on the stave; record compositions accurately enough to repeat; combine staff, graphic and digital notation as appropriate.
Year 6	Use and understand staff and other notation with growing fluency; represent pitch, rhythm, dynamics and texture; create a clear score that supports independent rehearsal.

Interrelated dimensions and vocabulary

Vocabulary is taught through practical experience and is retained through repeated use in listening, creating, performing and evaluating.

Stage	Progression expectation
Sky Nursery	sound, song, music, voice, instrument, copy, move, loud, quiet, fast, slow, stop, go
Ocean Nursery	beat, rhythm, pattern, high, low, same, different, perform, audience, plus secure Sky vocabulary
Reception	pulse, tempo, dynamics, pitch, melody, body percussion, tuned, untuned, soundscape, mood, plus secure Nursery vocabulary
Year 1	pulse, rhythm, pitch, tempo, dynamics, pattern, repetition, symbol, melody, percussion, lyrics
Year 2	call and response, timbre, structure, phrase, soundscape, tuned, untuned, notation, section, contrast
Year 3	texture, ensemble, metre, ostinato, pentatonic, motif, ballad, jazz, rag, tala, drone, improvisation
Year 4	crescendo, diminuendo, bass line, walking bass, glissando, syncopation, samba, rhythmic break, transpose, motif
Year 5	chord, major, minor, 12-bar blues, blues scale, polyrhythm, loop, remix, harmony, musical theatre, staff notation
Year 6	counter-melody, theme, variation, polyphonic, canon, ground bass, Baroque, soundtrack, key signature, texture, arrangement

Performing evaluating and improving

Performance develops from sharing familiar music to independently planning, refining and presenting polished work.

Stage	Progression expectation
Sky Nursery	Share a familiar song, action or sound with a trusted adult or small group; notice when music starts and finishes.
Ocean Nursery	Join a group song or musical story; take turns; respond to simple cues; say or show what was liked.
Reception	Perform songs and soundscapes to a familiar audience; follow a leader; talk about a favourite sound and make one simple improvement.
Year 1	Perform short pieces with others; start and finish together; state what was enjoyed and give positive feedback using simple tempo or dynamics vocabulary.
Year 2	Perform with a steadier pulse and increasing control; explain an effect; give positive feedback about rhythm, tempo, dynamics or instrument choice.
Year 3	Rehearse and perform a part in an ensemble; discuss improvements using musical vocabulary; adjust accuracy, balance, expression or timing.
Year 4	Perform confidently with increasing accuracy and expression; maintain a part; use feedback to improve coordination, tone, dynamics and ensemble balance.
Year 5	Perform for a purpose in solo and ensemble contexts; compare versions and evaluate detail; refine interpretation, accuracy, fluency and expression.
Year 6	Plan, rehearse, lead and perform a polished piece for an audience; evaluate against agreed criteria; justify and apply improvements independently.

Music history culture and diversity

Pupils encounter music from varied communities, traditions, genres and historical periods and learn to discuss it respectfully and in context.

Stage	Progression expectation
Sky Nursery	Enjoy songs and music that reflect children, families and familiar celebrations in the setting.
Ocean Nursery	Experience songs, dances and instruments from varied families, communities and places; notice that music can be used for celebration and storytelling.
Reception	Listen and respond respectfully to music linked to different cultures, faiths, celebrations and environments; recognise that music has different purposes.
Year 1	Experience high-quality live and recorded music from different traditions and periods; talk about where or why music may be performed.
Year 2	Compare music connected with contrasting places and stories; recognise that instrument choice and style help communicate identity, setting and purpose.
Year 3	Recognise features of ballads, ragtime, jazz and traditional Indian music; understand that music develops in particular cultural and historical contexts.
Year 4	Explore rock and roll, samba, Japanese-inspired work and music linked to rainforests, rivers and Romans; compare purpose, instruments and stylistic features.
Year 5	Explore blues, South and West African music, Holi, looping and musical theatre; discuss origins respectfully and recognise cultural exchange and influence.
Year 6	Study World War 2 songs, film music, Baroque music and theme and variations; place music and composers in context and discuss how styles influence one another.

Key Stage 1 vocabulary progression

This terminology follows the Kapow Primary vocabulary progression updated 1 June 2026. Vocabulary is introduced through the named unit and should then be revisited and used accurately in later listening, composing, performing and evaluation.

Half term	Year 1	Year 2
Autumn 1	pulse, singing voice, speaking voice, thinking voice	call and response, sound pattern, dynamics
Autumn 2	beat, fast, singing voice, slow, speaking voice, warm-up	dynamics, encore, instrumental, sound, sound effect, tempo
Spring 1	dynamics, instrument, seaside, soundscape, symbol, volume	composer, composition, dynamics, inspiration, pitch
Spring 2	character voice, sound pattern	composer, dynamics, pitch pattern, planet, representation, soundscape, tempo
Summer 1	high, low, pattern, performance, pitch, tempo	legend, myth, composition, notation, rest, rhythm, structure, tempo, two half beats, one beat
Summer 2	dynamics, pitch, rest, sound pattern, tempo	dot, low, notation, phrase, pitch, stave

Lower Key Stage 2 vocabulary progression

This terminology follows the Kapow Primary vocabulary progression updated 1 June 2026. Vocabulary is introduced through the named unit and should then be revisited and used accurately in later listening, composing, performing and evaluation.

Half term	Year 3	Year 4
Autumn 1	ballad, chorus, compose, dynamics, emotions, ensemble, expression, features, instrumental, lyrics, melody, performance, rhyme, solo, stanza, story, tune, verse, volume	body percussion, combine, compose, contrasting rhythms, dynamics, layers, loop, melody line, pitch, record, rhythm, sections, structure, tempo, texture, tone, tuned percussion
Autumn 2	atmosphere, compose, composition, dynamics, ensemble, influence, in time, layers, letter notation, melodic pattern, melody, notation, pitch, repeated rhythm, soundscape, tempo, timbre, tuned percussion, untuned percussion	bass line, beat, chorus, dynamics, flat notes, hand jive, in time, in tune, notation, pitch, rhythm, rhythmic pattern, rock and roll, sections, sequence, sharp notes, style, tempo, vocals, walking bass line
Spring 1	accuracy, backing track, beat, body percussion, call and response, coordinated, crotchet, duration, dynamics, in time, in tune, layer, lyrics, key change, major key, minim, minor key, notation, part, pulse, quaver, rehearse, rhythm, rhythmic notation, stave notation, tempo, tension, tune, vocal warm-up	a cappella, breath control, cue, diction, directing, dynamics, expression, harmony, melody, mood, notation, opinion, ostinato, percussion, round, parts, rhythm, staff notation, tempo, texture, vocal ostinato
Spring 2	accuracy, crescendo, control, composition, duration, dynamics, expression, fluency, folk music, glockenspiel, grid notation, harmony, layered melodies, letter notation, melody, musical terminology, notation, notes, octaves, pentatonic melody, pentatonic scale, phrases, scale, timbre, tempo, untuned percussion	compose, col legno, descriptive, dynamics, duration, effect, forte, glissando, haiku, inspiration, interrelated dimensions of music, melody, piano, pitch, pizzicato, represent, silence, sliding pitch, sound effects, staccato, structure, syllable, tempo, texture, timbre, verse
Summer 1	call and response, traditional jazz, improvisation, jazz, off-beat, motif, pitch, ragtime, rhythm, scat singing, straight quaver, swung quaver, swung rhythm, swing music, syncopated rhythm, syncopation, tune	agogo, bateria, caixa, carnival, chocalho, composition, crescendo, cowbell, dynamics, ensemble, ganza, metronome, off-beat, percussion, pulse, repique, rhythmic break, samba, samba breaks, structure, surdo, syncopated rhythms, tamborim, texture, unison, untuned percussion
Summer 2	Bollywood, compose, drone, dynamics, harmonium, improvise, Indian flute, lyrics, melodic line, notation, pitch, repeated rhythm, rhythm, rag, sarangi, sitar, tabla, tala, tempo	backing track, bass line, beat, call and response, compose, crotchet, dotted minim, flats, graphic notation, in time, key, key signature, loop, lyrics, minim, motif, notation, ostinato, pitch, quavers, repeating patterns, riff, semibreve, sharps, tempo, transpose, tuned instrument, vocal warm-ups

Upper Key Stage 2 vocabulary progression

This terminology follows the Kapow Primary vocabulary progression updated 1 June 2026. Vocabulary is introduced through the named unit and should then be revisited and used accurately in later listening, composing, performing and evaluation.

Half term	Year 5	Year 6
Autumn 1	accuracy, backing track, balance, composition, control, crotchet, dotted minim, ensemble, expression, fluency, minim, minor key, notation, parts, pitch notation, quaver, semibreve, staff notation, stave, structure, tempo, tuned percussion, unison, vocal warm-ups	classical, characterise, composition, conductor, depict, dynamics, ensemble, graphic score, improvisation, notation, orchestra, pitch, texture
Autumn 2	12-bar blues, ascending scale, backing track, bar, bent notes, blues, blues scale, chord, descending scale, expression, features, flat, improvisation, lyrics, pitch, quavers, scale, sharp, solo, staff notation	accuracy, backing track, compare, contrast, complement, control, counter-melody, diaphragm, dynamics, era, expression, graphic score, harmony, harmonise, lyrics, melody line, morale, notate, octave, parts, performance technique, phrase, phrasing, pitch, purpose, score, Solfa, tempo
Spring 1	a cappella, break, call and response, chord progression, diction, djembe, duo, dynamics, eight-beat break, ensemble, expression, improvisation, major chord, master drummer, metronome, performance, polyrhythms, pronunciation, pulse, ostinato, rests, rhythm, soloist, syncopation, tempo, tuned percussion, unaccompanied, vocals	chromatics, conversation, evoke, graphic score, imagery, improvise, interval, major, minor, modulate, notate, pitch, sound effects, soundtrack, tremolo, unison
Spring 2	dynamics, graphic score, inspiration, layering, mood, pitch, represent, soundtrack, synaesthesia, tempo, texture, timbre, visual representation, vocal sounds	3/4 time, 4/4 time, accidentals, body percussion, diaphragm, legato, motif, orchestra, percussion, phrase, pitch, pizzicato, pulse, quaver, rhythm, rhythmic elements, section, semiquaver, staccato, tempo, theme, TIKI-TIKI, TI-TIKI, TIKI-TI, translate, variations, vocal line, woodwind
Summer 1	accuracy, backbeat, body percussion, fragment, layers, loop, looped rhythm, melody, melody line, notation, ostinato, remix, rhythm, riff, structure	Baroque, bass clef, bass instrument, canon, counter-melody, counter-subject, fugue, ground bass, improvise, melodic ostinato, melody, musical structure, opera, ostinato, part, pitch, polyphonic, oratorio, recitative, round, rhythmic ostinato, sharp note, staff notation, subject, texture
Summer 2	action song, backdrop, book musical, character song, choreographer, composer, comic opera, costumes, designer, dialogue, director, duet, ensemble, hip-hop musical, jukebox musical, librettist, libretto, lyricist, musical director, musical theatre, opera, operetta, performers, props, rock musical, scene, solo, tempo, timbre, transitions	allegro, arrangement, backing track, chorus, chord progression, compose, crescendo, diminuendo, dynamics, evaluate, forte, largo, lyrics, melody, mood, musical features, notation, piano, poetic structure, repetitive rhyme, ritardando, tempo, sequence, stave notation, structure, upbeat, verse