



Curriculum overview for parents and carers

Music 2026/27

A summary of key Music learning for Reception to Year 6.

Unit 1	Exploring sound Exploring how voices, bodies and instruments can be used to create sounds, as well as identifying sounds in the environment.
Unit 2	Celebration music Learning about the music from a range of cultural and religious celebrations, including Diwali, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa and Christmas.
Unit 3	Music and movement Creating simple actions to well-known songs, the children learn how to move to a beat and express feelings and emotions through movement to music.
Unit 4	Musical stories Moving to music using instructions and changing movements to match the tempo, pitch or dynamics. The children recognise that music and instruments can convey moods or represent characters.
Unit 5	Transport Identifying and copying sounds produced by different vehicles using voices, bodies and instruments. The children identify tempo changes and how symbols can represent sound.
Unit 6	Big band Exploring what makes a musical instrument and how instruments are grouped into different families. The children develop their sense of beat using untuned percussion instruments and perform a song.



Year 1			
Autumn 1	My favourite things: Keeping the pulse	Autumn 2	Snail and mouse: Tempo
	Learning how to keep a steady pulse, pupils take part in music and movement activities inspired by their favourite things. They move to the beat of the music while expressing and responding to objects and experiences that are meaningful to them.		Using voices, bodies and instruments to listen and respond to different pieces of music, pupils learn and perform a rhyme and song with a focus on tempo. Through the adventures of the snail and mouse, they explore how tempo can help shape a musical story.
Spring 1	Seaside: Dynamics	Spring 2	Fairytales: Sound patterns
	Exploring the connection between sound and the environment, pupils work together to create a seaside soundscape using percussion instruments, vocal sounds and body percussion. They vary dynamics to create contrasts between loud and soft sounds.		Examining a range of fairytales, pupils identify key moments in each story. They clap and read simple sound patterns linked to different characters, then use these patterns to retell the stories through sound and movement.
Summer 1	Superheroes: Pitch	Summer 2	Under the sea: Musical symbols
	Identifying high and low notes, pupils listen to different pitches and use this to compose a simple superhero tune. They experiment with combining high and low sounds to create a melody that reflects their chosen character.		Exploring the depths of the sea through music, movement, musical symbols and tuned percussion instruments. Pupils interpret musical symbols, translate visual cues into sound and use tuned percussion to represent the underwater world.

Year 2			
Autumn 1	Animals: Call and response	Autumn 2	Musical storytelling: Instruments
	Developing rhythm and pulse through chanting call-and-response sound patterns and performing with untuned percussion instruments. Pupils create and echo rhythmic ideas while responding to each other's chants to build musical communication and performance skills.		Exploring longer pieces of music, pupils look at how music can tell a story through a variety of instruments. They think creatively, considering how sounds can represent characters, actions and emotions when creating a soundscape to tell the story of Jack and the Beanstalk.
Spring 1	Space: Contrasting dynamics	Spring 2	On this island: Singing
	Developing their understanding of contrasting dynamics, pupils listen to music inspired by planets and use these examples to create their own compositions. They explore how loud and soft sounds can represent the unique characteristics of different planets.		Identifying how music can represent different environments by singing songs and creating contrasting soundscapes. Pupils use instruments, body percussion and folk songs to evoke the atmosphere of three different landscapes.
Summer 1	Myths and legends: Structure	Summer 2	Musical Me: Pitch
	Investigating musical structure by listening to, analysing and performing a song based on a well-known myth. Pupils identify sections and sound patterns within the music before using voices and instruments to perform short musical phrases that help tell a story.		Developing pitch awareness through learning the song 'Once a Man Fell in a Well' and recreating its melody using tuned instruments. Pupils connect sounds to specific pitches and begin to understand how simple symbols can be used to represent musical notation.

Year 3			
Autumn 1	Mountain melodies: Steps and leaps	Autumn 2	Reading rhythms: Patterns and layers
	Investigating melody and pitch through using graphic scores to identify changes in pitch by step, leap or repeated note. Pupils compose short melodic pieces inspired by mountain drawings before experimenting with dynamics and movement to bring their musical landscapes to life.		Introducing basic rhythmic notation, pupils learn how rhythms can be written, read and performed. Through clapping, body percussion and instruments, pupils recognise and play simple rhythmic patterns before creating layered group compositions using notation.
Spring 1	Inspired by India: Musical improvisations	Spring 2	Music technology: Introduction to music technology
	Exploring traditional Indian music and the art of improvisation through using the pentatonic scale and simple musical techniques. Pupils create short improvisations and experiment with pitch, dynamics and tempo to express different moods and musical ideas.		Studying sampling as a modern compositional technique, pupils discover how existing sounds can be transformed into new musical ideas. Using music technology, they edit audio samples, experiment with looping and layering and develop their own digital compositions.
Summer 1	Reggae rhythms: Playing in a band	Summer 2	Baroque meets pop: Building harmony
	Exploring reggae through some of Bob Marley's most iconic songs, while learning simplified bass lines, basic chords and the concept of the offbeat. Pupils combine these musical elements to rehearse and perform collaboratively in their own reggae bands.		Discovering how Baroque music's bold musical ideas continue to inspire modern pop songs. Pupils identify key features of the Baroque style before learning and performing patterns and motifs in their own Baroque-inspired piece.

Year 4			
Autumn 1	Singing in parts: Loops and layers	Autumn 2	Musical motifs: Reading the stave
	Developing vocal technique, confidence and control by singing in rounds and performing musical loops. Pupils build independence, timing and listening skills while collaborating to create layered group performances.		Developing their knowledge of pitch, pupils are introduced to notation on the stave and explore the notes C to G through short musical phrases. They learn how composers use motifs to represent characters and moods, before composing and performing their own motifs in groups.
Spring 1	Sounds of China: Scales and structure	Spring 2	Music technology: Loop-based composition
	Examining traditional Chinese music through listening, improvising and performing, pupils deepen their understanding of the pentatonic scale. They create their own improvisations with a focus on structure and contrast, while developing collaborative and creative thinking skills through group performance.		Developing digital literacy through music technology, pupils create and manipulate musical loops. They turn simple motifs into catchy loops using music software, then layer sounds and compose complementary parts to create their own digital compositions.
Summer 1	12-bar blues: Playing in a band	Summer 2	Minimalist melodies: Developing patterns
	Exploring the history of blues music through listening, singing and playing, pupils recognise key features of the genre. They play bass lines and chords, sing simple blues melodies and experiment with improvisation to understand how these elements create the distinctive sound of the blues.		Learning about minimalist music, pupils recognise how simple musical ideas can develop into engaging compositions. By listening to key minimalist works, they identify how recurring motifs and subtle musical changes create interest, before using minimalist techniques to compose their own pieces.

Year 5			
Autumn 1	Music in nature: Chords and melodies	Autumn 2	Three-chord pop: Playing in a band
	Drawing inspiration from the power of nature, pupils compose short melodies to reflect different moods of the sky. They experiment with pitch, dynamics and harmony, using simple chords to add depth and atmosphere to their performances.		Investigating the key elements of pop music, including bass lines, chords and melody, through performing as part of a pop band. Pupils develop their musical and performance skills while learning how different musical parts combine to create a polished group performance.
Spring 1	West African rhythms: Create, play and perform	Spring 2	Music technology: Composing for games
	Exploring the rhythms of West Africa, pupils experience the energy of traditional ensemble music. They learn how rhythmic patterns fit together and take responsibility for different parts, combining rhythms collaboratively to create layered textures.		Developing an understanding of how music can enhance gameplay by creating mood, atmosphere and excitement. Pupils explore how music reflects different game scenarios, characters and actions, then use music technology to select, arrange and manipulate sounds to create an original game soundtrack.
Summer 1	Stage and song: Storytelling through music	Summer 2	Samba sounds: Rhythm and groove
	Investigating musical theatre and how music helps to tell stories through solos, duets and ensemble performances. Pupils explore how composers use musical elements to create mood and develop narrative before extending their vocal skills through singing in 3/4 time and performing across a wider vocal range.		Discovering the energy and traditions of Brazilian samba and its role in Carnival celebrations. Pupils learn about samba instruments and rhythmic patterns before working collaboratively to rehearse and perform as part of their own samba band.

Year 6			
Autumn 1	Four-chord pop: Playing in a band	Autumn 2	Songs that speak: Lyrics and messages
	Developing ensemble performance skills by forming pop bands. Pupils learn bass lines, chords, melody and harmony from a well-known pop song before rehearsing and refining their performances with added rhythm, creativity and expression.		Examining how songs communicate meaning through lyrics, musical choices and performance. Pupils explore songwriting techniques such as rhyme, repetition and emotive language before creating, rehearsing and performing their own lyrics based on themes of identity, positivity and self-expression.
Spring 1	Bhangra beats: Global grooves	Spring 2	Music technology: Film soundtracks
	Discovering the rhythms, melodies and cultural traditions of Punjabi music and dance through listening, performing and experimenting with musical ideas. Pupils develop their understanding of rhythm and melody before composing and performing their own Bhangra-inspired piece.		Exploring how music and film work together to create mood, atmosphere and meaning. Pupils identify key musical features in film, use music technology to synchronise sound with video and enhance film clips with sound effects, loops and original musical ideas.
Summer 1	Theme and variations: Developing melodies	Summer 2	Leavers: Our story in song
	Investigating the musical form of theme and variations through combining a range of composition techniques. Pupils experiment with changing rhythm, pitch, dynamics and texture to transform a simple theme and compose their own contrasting variations.		Composing and performing an original leavers' song in pop bands. Pupils combine bass lines, chords, melody and song structure while crafting lyrics using rhythm and rhyme to create a collaborative performance reflecting their time at school.