

**Music Assessment Rationale**  
*Integrating Artistic Expression with Attitudes to Learning (A2L)*

## **Curriculum Philosophy: The “Universal Language” Approach**

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Music is a universal language that embodies one of the highest forms of creativity. At the CREATE Federation, our curriculum ensures that pupils perform, listen to, review, and evaluate music across a range of historical periods and styles. Assessment is centred on the **Inter-related Dimensions of Music**: Pitch, Duration, Dynamics, Tempo, Timbre, Texture, and Structure.

Detailed **Knowledge Organisers** and **Learning Overviews** provided at the start of each block ensure that both substantive knowledge (how music works) and disciplinary skills (how to perform and compose) are tracked. These assessment endpoints represent the “crucial knowledge” required for musical literacy, however, the curriculum encompasses a much broader range of experiences. Parents can view the full long-term plan on the school website to see how skills such as vocal performance, ensemble playing, and notation evolve.

## **The A2L “Litmus Test”**

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We utilise the **Attitude to Learning (A2L)** criteria (Levels 1-10) as a “litmus test” for musical achievement. High A2L scores indicate a child is effectively matching pitch, maintaining independent parts, and justifying musical opinions. Conversely, an **A2L Barrier** identifies a risk that a child may struggle with the precision of pulse, the resilience needed to improvise, or the focus required for critical listening.

## **Integrated Music Progress & A2L Barrier Map**

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### **Phase-Specific Support at Home**

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#### **Phase 1: Pre-school & Reception (Foundations of Sound)**

- **Behaviour:** Practice “Pulse” by clapping along to the beat of a favourite song or nursery rhyme.
- **Active Voice:** Use “I hear...” prompts to describe sounds in the garden or street (high, low, loud, quiet).
- **Ownership:** Let them be the “Band Leader”—using pots and pans to lead a family rhythm session.
- **Fixed Mindset:** If they can’t match a sound, explore the fun of making “funny noises” with the voice first.

Level / Year	Assessment Endpoints	Active Barrier	Voice Barrier	Behaviour Barrier	Ownership Barrier	Mindset / Safety Net
<b>L1-4 (EYFS)</b>	Distinguish singing/speaking. Copy simple rhythms. Recognise classroom instruments. Create sequences of sounds.	Unable to describe sounds (e.g. twinkly, whistling) or instrument voices.		Impulsivity stops the ability to copy a steady rhythm.	Failure to participate in group singing or actions.	Quitting if an instrument doesn't make the "right" sound.
<b>L5-6 (Y1-Y2)</b>	Perform to a steady pulse. Recognise timbre and story-telling. Use graphic scores for composition.	Failing to use vocabulary like "tempo" or "dynamics" to describe changes.		Rushing the pulse; inability to maintain a steady beat.	Disorganised recording of musical ideas on graphic scores.	Fear of sharing simple musical structures or movement.
<b>L7-8 (Y3-Y4)</b>	Sing with breath control. Read crotchet/minim values. Identify orchestral families. Use pentatonic scales.	Inability to justify musical opinions or describe historical context.		Failing to listen to the ensemble, leading to poor synchronisation.	Relying on peers to maintain an independent musical part.	Avoiding improvisation; ignoring anomalies in rhythmic patterns.
<b>L9-10 (Y5-Y6)</b>	Perform from Western notation. Lead others in tempo. Refine consonant/dissonant sounds. Evaluate specific eras.	Passive participation stops the critical appraisal of complex pieces.		Lack of precision in matching pitch across a wide range.	Failing to self-correct or refine rhythms during rehearsals.	Avoiding complex time signatures (2/4, 3/4, 4/4) or partsinging.

## Phase 2: Year 1 & Year 2 (The Young Performer)

- Behaviour:** Practice "Precision" by marching in time to music, stopping exactly when the music stops.
- Active Voice:** Play "Musical Detective": Listen to a piece of music and guess the story the composer is telling.
- Ownership:** Help them create a "Graphic Score" using drawings to represent different sounds at home.
- Safety Net:** Encourage them to perform a short song for a family member, focusing on clear diction.

## Phase 3: Year 3 & Year 4 (The Developing Musician)

- Behaviour:** Discuss "Ensemble Respect"—the importance of quiet listening when others are playing.
- Active Voice:** Debate at dinner: "Which instrument is the 'king' of the orchestra? Give reasons."
- Ownership:** Quiz them on "Musical Dimensions"—can they explain the difference between *timbre* and *texture*?
- Fixed Mindset:** Celebrate "Mistakes in Melody"—discussing how jazz and other styles use "wrong" notes to create new ideas.

#### Phase 4: Year 5 & Year 6 (The Critical Evaluator)

- **Behaviour:** Model “Focused Listening” by playing music from different eras (e.g. Baroque or Samba) and discussing the features.
- **Active Voice:** Ask them to justify why a composer might choose a specific instrument for a certain effect.
- **Ownership:** Have them lead a family sing-along, managing the tempo and starting everyone together.
- **Safety Net:** Encourage “Self-Governing” research into a famous composer or a specific musical genre.

*Note: Identification of an A2L barrier suggests potential gaps in musical skill or appraisal. Learning overviews cover the specific strands of Performing, Listening, and Composing.*