

Whole School Music Progression

Key Concepts Key Skill

To be reviewed September 2026

At Dorchester Middle school, as part of our Music Medium Term Planning, we ensure that pupils can remember more and learn more by weaving **Key Concepts and Linked Skills** throughout our units of learning so that children have time to practise, discuss, reflect and revisit knowledge. In turn, they develop the skills to apply that knowledge in a range of contexts. We carefully follow the National Curriculum and ensure learning is progressive and sequential; giving pupils the opportunity to build on and apply previous knowledge in all units before developing further skills as a musician.

Key Skills

- To use our voices expressively and creatively**
- To play tuned and untuned instruments musically**
- To perform to an audience**
- Play and perform in solo and ensemble contexts.**
- To play instruments with increasing accuracy, fluency and control**
- To improvise and compose music for a range of purposes**
- To listen to an eclectic range of musical styles, traditions and genres.**
- To sing with an understanding of tone and awareness of harmonic lines**
- Evaluate and analyse self and peer performance**
- To use and understand staff and other musical notations**

Key Concept	Linked Skill	Explanation
Rhythm and Metre	To play instruments with increasing accuracy, fluency and control	Pupils will understand the term and purpose of a pulse – linking this with tempo and the importance of rhythm through all parts of music making. They will learn to improvise, compose and perform within a musical style using particular rhythms and structures. (For Example, in Samba music – playing the syncopated rhythm patterns so evident within this style). From learning simple layering of African rhythms through drumming in year 5 to singing in an operatic style in year 9, pupils will gain the ability to play and singing, using a variety of musical techniques. Pupils will have the opportunity to learn a range of instruments. (Voice, Untuned and tuned percussion instruments, Djembe drums, Samba drums, Boomwhackers, Ukuleles, Keyboards, Electric and acoustic guitars). Each scheme of work throughout the music curriculum allows pupils to improve their ability to play each instrument. Lessons within the scheme focus on control, fluency and accuracy around these.
Performing	Play and perform in solo and ensemble contexts. To sing with an understanding of tone	Pupils will have the opportunity to perform throughout every unit of work being covered each term. Assessment around pupil progress will be completed in termly cycles and based on the pupil's performance and theoretical knowledge. Pupils will learn to perform in small groups, as a class as well as solo pieces. They will learn to evaluate their progress based around key skills such as performance expression, articulation when singing, confidence, poise, presentation and awareness of musical structure being followed and awareness of others within the ensemble.

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	<p style="text-align: center;">and awareness of harmonic lines Evaluate and analyse self and peer performance</p>	<p>As pupils move up the school, they will grow a deeper understanding of the voice – recognising areas of resonance and how this impacts the tone and quality of sound made vocally. They will use this within performances. Pupils will have the opportunity to sing a variety of songs involving different singing techniques (melodic improvisation, scat singing, operatic techniques, warm-ups and tone colours) Pupils will learn to sing in canon, rounds and two-part harmony. This will be revisited in singing assemblies which will take place every other week for all year groups. Pupils will be encouraged to evaluate each other’s performances, using key vocabulary linked to the learning taking place around a set scheme of work.</p>
Singing	<p style="text-align: center;">To use our voices expressively and creatively To sing with an understanding of tone and awareness of harmonic lines</p>	<p>Pupils will learn to sing with confidence, to project their voice and vary the tone and singing style in line with song choice. Pupils will sing in harmony as well as canon and rounds. They will be given the opportunity to sing as a soloist or within small or large ensembles. They will learn the call and response structure in KS 2 and when confident, improvise short ditties and song lines in line with genres being taught (years 7 and 8). They will study rap, opera, music theatre, Jazz and blues during their time with us at DMS.</p>
Notation	<p style="text-align: center;">To use and understand staff and other musical notations</p>	<p>Pupils will learn to read from simple graphic scores, outlining pitch and duration of notes to be played. These will be taught with the expressive purpose of moving to traditional notation further up the school. During rhythmic work, they will also make the connection with rhythm and rhythmic sentences and discuss around this long and short notes and sounds – linking to later learning of note duration within rhythmic sentences. From year 5, pupils will experience notation in a more classical and traditional form. Year five will learn Crotchets, minims and semibreves at the beginning of the year, at the same time beginning the keyboard course running alongside some lessons, allowing them to master simple notation. As our pupils travel up the school, they will build on these skills by on the the keyboard, incorporating skills around playing chords in their left hand, helping them to compose music, make connection with TAB chords also. (tab chords will be used in band units, ukulele learning as well as composition).</p>
Composition	<p style="text-align: center;">To Improvise and compose music for a range of purposes</p>	<p>The skill of composition will be presented through soundscapes, Drumming, Rhythm work, Song writing, film music, Jazz improvisation, Rap, Hip Hop units. All pieces of composition are based around the musical elements and exploring these. For example, in year 6 pupils will use a music tech program to create Hip hop compositions, year 7 will be film music and Jazz, Year 8 pop music and Rap. , pupils will focus on the tone and texture of musical instruments – layering these to create an intended effect that would accompany a poem or represent a picture or film. . By year8, pupils will be able to confidently improvise within a given genre. They may compose a rap around a particular theme or play on the keyboard a melody line in a blues style.</p>

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Year Group	Term one	Term two	Term 3	Term 4	Term 5	Term 6
Year 5	<p>Rhythm and Metre <i>(Through Djembe Drumming)</i></p> <p><i>Whole class ensemble piece, laying rhythms and using hand drumming techniques to create drumming compositions.</i></p>	<p>Keyboard course – book one Singing unit (melody)</p> <p><i>(including Christmas songs for performances)</i></p>	<p>Pitch and Melody</p> <p><i>(through glockenspiel playing – focussing on pitch and rhythmic notation reading)</i></p>	<p>Pitch and Melody</p> <p><i>(through the playing of boomwhackers)</i> <i>Tuned and untuned percussion ensembles pieces</i> <i>Learning how to conduct in time.</i></p>	<p>Composing, performing and evaluating – through orchestral music</p> <p><i>(Performance - trip to the BSO – including body percussion and singing plus graphic notation composing, reading and writing)</i></p>	<p>Performing and Evaluating</p> <p><i>(Making music together- Including 2-part singing, Singing techniques Harmony – Through musical futures programme. Band and ensemble work – performing and evaluating)</i></p>
Year 6	<p>Keyboard course book 2. Rhythm and melody</p> <p><i>(Whole class ensemble playing of Ukuleles – understanding tab, chords and playing as an ensemble.</i></p>	<p>Keyboard course book 2 Singing unit (melody)</p> <p><i>(including Christmas songs for performances)</i></p>	<p>Composition</p> <p><i>(Hip Hop unit – using YUStudio on charanga IT platform)</i></p>	<p>Composition</p> <p><i>(Hip Hop unit – using YUStudio on charanga IT platform)</i></p>	<p>Performing and evaluating – singing unit</p> <p><i>(Through the genre of Opera – Carmen)</i></p>	<p>Rhythm and Metre</p> <p><i>World music – Samba music- ensemble playing of syncopated rhythms – layering rhythms.</i></p>
Year 7	<p>Keyboard course book 3. Rhythm and melody <i>(through the genre of blues music)</i></p>	<p>Keyboard course book 3. Rhythm and melody <i>(through the genre of blues music)</i> <i>2 weeks of Christmas music</i></p>	<p>Composition – through Film Music – Ghostbusters</p> <p><i>(with a focus on Texture, timbre and layering of sounds composed using instruments.</i></p>	<p>Composition through Film music – Coraline</p> <p><i>(with a focus around musical motifs of characters using IT to create intended effects)</i></p>	<p>Performance and vocal skills – Musical Theatre</p> <p><i>(Focusing on the musical ‘Matilda’ -vocal expressions, tone and projection skills.</i></p>	<p>Ensemble playing – performing and evaluating – Band skills.</p> <p><i>(Using the musical futures format for building class bands – using tuned and non-tuned instruments)</i></p>
Year 8	<p>Keyboard course book 4</p>	<p>Keyboard course book 4</p>	<p>Composition</p>	<p>Composition</p>	<p>Ensemble playing</p>	<p>Ensemble playing</p>

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	<p>Performance and evaluating <i>(Through pop music genre – studying chords, strophic form.)</i></p>	<p>Performance and evaluating <i>(Through pop music genre – studying chords, strophic form. Chords 1,4,5,6)</i></p>	<p><i>(The studying of compositional techniques around – Electronic dance music – EDM)</i></p>	<p><i>(The studying of compositional techniques around – Electronic dance music – EDM) then move onto composition of their own piece.</i></p>	<p>Rhythm and metre, melody and pitch – <i>(bringing it all together through band work – Cover songs – including stage presence and projection through the voice.)</i></p>	<p>Rhythm and metre, melody and pitch – <i>(bringing it all together through band work – Cover songs- including stage presence and projection through the voice.)</i></p>
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