

CHERBOURG PRIMARY SCHOOL



Music

Knowledge and Skills Year R to Year 6

At Cherbourg Primary School, we believe that music is a powerful and inclusive form of expression that enables every child to develop confidence, creativity and a lifelong appreciation of music, no matter their background. Through an engaging and progressive curriculum, children are provided with rich opportunities to sing, perform, compose, listen to and evaluate music from a wide range of cultures, traditions and historical periods. Through vocal, instrumental and creative musical experiences, children develop the knowledge, skills and understanding needed to appreciate how music is created, performed and communicated.

Our music curriculum is carefully sequenced to ensure that children build their musical knowledge, skills and understanding over time. From exploring pulse, rhythm and pitch in the Early Years to composing, improvising and performing increasingly complex musical pieces in Key Stage Two, children develop both technical proficiency and musical independence. Through singing, playing tuned and untuned instruments, composing and responding to music, children deepen their understanding of the interrelated dimensions of music while fostering creativity and self-expression.

We are committed to ensuring that music is accessible to all learners. Through inclusive teaching approaches, carefully scaffolded learning and meaningful performance opportunities, every child is supported to achieve success and make progress. Children are encouraged to take risks, collaborate with others and reflect on their musical choices, developing resilience and a sense of accomplishment throughout their musical journey.

By the time they leave Cherbourg Primary School, children will have developed as confident singers, performers, composers and critical listeners, with the musical knowledge and skills needed to participate successfully in further musical learning.

Maggie Johnson (Music Leader), July 2026

Listen and Appraise

Introduce pupils to new music, styles, and vocabulary.

Explore and Imitate

Encourage experimentation and copying rhythms, melodies, or techniques.

Practise and Develop

Build skills through guided repetition and scaffolded tasks.

Create and Compose

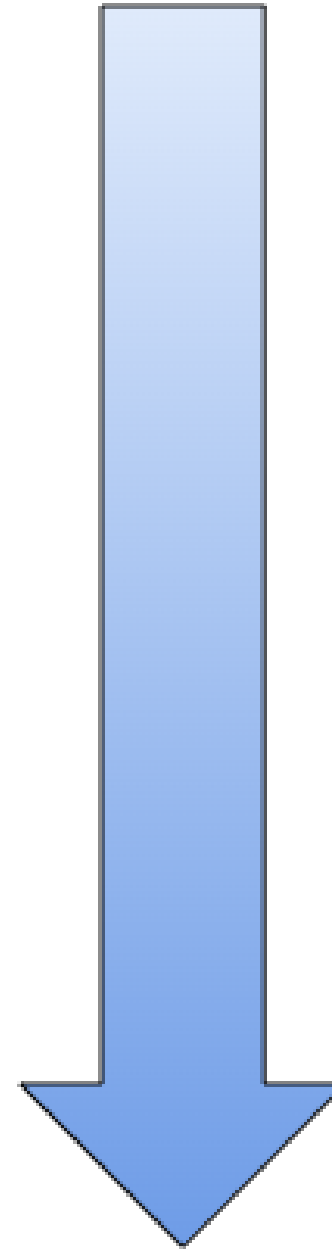
Pupils apply skills to make their own music.

Perform and Share

Showcase learning in performances or presentations.

Reflect and Improve

Pupils evaluate their work against a success criteria.



Year R						
EYFS framework	 Singing Voice	 Composing & Improvising	 Ensemble Playing	 Notation	 Music Context	 Performance
Expressive Arts and Design: Being Imaginative and Expressive Invent, adapt and recount narratives and stories with peers and their teacher. Sing a range of well-known nursery rhymes and songs. Perform songs, rhymes, poems and stories with others, and – when appropriate – try to move in time with music.	Knowledge Knows a range of familiar nursery rhymes, songs, chants, and action songs. Understands that songs can tell stories and express feelings. Recognises that voices can make different sounds. Begins to notice changes in pitch, volume, and speed. Knows that singing can be done alone and with others. Skills Joins in with familiar songs and rhymes. Sings repeated phrases and refrains. Uses different vocal sounds during play and storytelling. Sings with increasing confidence and independence. Attempts to match pitch and follow the melody. Maintains attention and engagement during singing activities.	Knowledge Knows that sounds can represent characters, events, and emotions. Understands that music can be created and changed. Recognises that there are many ways to make and organise sounds. Skills Explores and creates sounds using voice, body percussion, and instruments. Improvise simple sound patterns and responses. Creates sound effects to enhance stories and imaginative play. Invents and adapts narratives using music and sound. Makes choices about sounds to express ideas and feelings. Experiments with combining different sounds.	Knowledge Knows that music can be made together. Recognises a range of classroom instruments and their sounds. Understands the importance of listening when making music with others. Knows that music has clear starts and stops. Skills Plays instruments alongside others. Starts and stops in response to visual or verbal cues. Takes turns and shares instruments appropriately. Listens and responds to others during group music-making. Contributes sounds to group performances and storytelling. Demonstrates increasing control when playing instruments.	Knowledge Understands that sounds can be represented by marks, pictures, symbols, and actions. Recognises that music can be remembered and shared in different ways. Begins to understand that symbols can have meaning in music. Skills Uses drawings, pictures, and symbols to represent sounds. Follows simple visual prompts and picture cues. Creates simple graphic representations of musical ideas. Uses movement and actions to support musical understanding. Makes links between symbols and the sounds they represent.	Knowledge Knows a variety of nursery rhymes, songs, poems, and stories. Understands that music is used for storytelling, celebrations, and special events. Recognises that people enjoy different kinds of music. Knows that music can be linked to different cultures, traditions, and experiences. Skills Participates in musical activities linked to different themes and celebrations. Engages with stories, rhymes, and songs from a variety of contexts. Talks about favourite songs, stories, and musical experiences. Makes simple connections between music, movement, stories, and play. Responds to music through discussion, movement, and creative activities.	Knowledge Knows that music and stories can be shared with an audience. Understands that performers use voice, movement, expression, and instruments. Recognises that performances can communicate ideas and feelings. Understands that movement can accompany music. Skills Performs familiar songs, rhymes, poems, and stories with others. Uses actions and movement to enhance performances. Moves in response to the pulse and character of music. Attempts to move in time with music when appropriate. Shows increasing confidence when performing to familiar audiences. Participates in class assemblies, celebrations, and group performances. Uses facial expressions, gestures, and movement to communicate meaning during performances.

KS1						
National Curriculum	 Singing Voice	 Composing & Improvising	 Ensemble Playing	 Notation	 Music Context	 Performance
Use their voices expressively and creatively by singing songs and speaking chants and rhymes. Play tuned and untuned instruments musically. Listen with concentration and understanding to a range of high-quality live and recorded music Experiment with, create, select and combine sounds using the inter-related dimensions of music. 	Year 1 Distinguish between speaking and singing voices. Sing simple echo and call-and-response songs. Match pitch within a small range. Sing with contrasting dynamics and tempi. Year 2 Sing accurately with improved pitch control. Recognise high and low pitches. Maintain pulse while singing. Add simple vocal ostinati and accompaniments.	Year 1 Create simple rhythmic patterns using pictures and percussion. Compose four-beat rhythms. Create simple melodic responses using two pitches (so and mi). Year 2 Improvise and compose using four notes (do, mi, so, la). Create music within an ABA structure. Compose music inspired by animals and songs.	Year 1 Play untuned percussion instruments. Maintain a steady pulse and perform simple rhythm patterns with others. Year 2 Perform on tuned and untuned percussion. Play pulse, rhythm and simple melodic patterns within an ensemble.	Year 1 Read picture-based rhythm notation. Begin using stick notation (Ta and Ta-di). Represent high and low pitch visually. Year 2 Record ideas using graphic scores. Read and write pitch on a simplified stave using four notes.	Year 1 Experience a variety of songs through singing and listening activities. Year 2 Explore working songs and sea shanties. Understand how songs can support collaboration and productivity.	Year 1 Rehearse songs and instrumental parts. Start and stop together. Perform songs with changes in dynamics and tempo. Year 2 Develop confidence performing songs with accompaniments. Rehearse to improve accuracy and maintain a steady pulse.

KS2						
National Curriculum	 Singing Voice	 Composing & Improvising	 Ensemble Playing	 Notation	 Music Context	 Performance
Play and perform in solo and ensemble contexts, using their voices and playing musical instruments with increasing accuracy, fluency, control and expression Improvise and compose music for a range of purposes using the inter-related dimensions of music Listen with attention to detail and recall sounds with increasing aural memory Use and understand staff and other musical notations Appreciate and understand a wide range of high-quality live and recorded music drawn from different traditions and from great composers and musicians Develop an understanding of the history of music. 	Year 3 Sing with increased vocal range and expression. Hold a second part in rounds and partner songs. Develop clear diction and pitch accuracy.	Year 3 Compose rhythmic patterns using rhythm grids. Improvise and compose major pentatonic melodies.	Year 3 Layer rhythmic ostinati, drones and melodic ostinati. Sing and play simultaneously within an ensemble	Year 3 Read and compose using rhythm grids. Notate pentatonic melodies on a simplified stave.	Year 3 Explore how songs are used in communities and celebrations. Sing and listen to pentatonic music from around the world.	Year 3 Rehearse independently in groups. Develop ensemble awareness and perform rounds and partner songs confidently.

KS2							
National Curriculum	Pitch	Duration	Dynamics	Temp	Timbre	Texture	Structure
Play and perform in solo and ensemble contexts, using their voices and playing musical instruments with increasing accuracy, fluency, control and expression Improvise and compose music for a range of purposes using the inter-related dimensions of music Listen with attention to detail and recall sounds with increasing aural memory Use and understand staff and other musical notations Appreciate and understand a wide range of high-quality live and recorded music drawn from different traditions and from great composers and musicians Develop an understanding of the history of music. 	Year 4 Identify melodic shape and explore different scale patterns including pentatonic, major and minor. Year 5 Explore, recognise and identify a range of different scale patterns including pentatonic, major and minor and could extend to: raga, chromatic, modes, and how they influence music. Year 6 Explore, recognise and identify a range of different scale patterns including pentatonic, major and minor and could extend to: raga, chromatic, modes and how they influence music.	Year 4 Identify and understand how rhythm patterns fit to a steady beat using 2, 3 and 4 metre. Year 5 Identify and begin to understand more complex rhythm patterns and metres including counting in 8 and possibly 6. Year 6 Identify and understand more complex rhythm patterns and metres counting in 8 and 6 and possibly 5 and 7.	Year 4 Explore how to use dynamics for expressive effect. Year 5 Understand how a wide range of dynamics can be manipulated for expressive effect. Year 6 Understand how a wide range of dynamics can be precisely manipulated for expressive effect.	Year 4 Explore how to use tempi for expressive effect. Year 5 Understand how a wide range of tempi can be used manipulated for expressive effect. Year 6 Understand how a wide range of tempi can be precisely used and manipulated for expressive effect.	Year 4 Identify voice types and a wider range of non-percussion instruments by family and name; further extend the use of voices and percussion instruments. Year 5 Identify instruments within families and different instrumental / vocal combinations; refine use of voices and percussion instruments. Year 6 Identify voices / instruments within families and their role in a wider range of ensembles; refine the use of voices and percussion instruments with intended impact.	Year 4 Identify and use different types of texture including solo, unison, ostinato parts and simple harmony e.g. melodic ostinato parts, simple chords. Year 5 Extend the use of simple harmony to include consonant and dissonant clusters of notes and simple chords as accompaniments. Year 6 Use a range of harmonic devices with greater awareness and understanding in different musical contexts .	Year 4 Develop understanding of extended conventional structures including Rondo (ABACADA) and identify the subtler development of musical ideas for example simple theme and variations. Further develop use of ostinato. Year 5 Explore and use a wider range of developmental structures (e.g. ABA, Rondo, 12 bar blues, theme and variations) and expressive structures e.g. Leitmotif. Year 6 Use a broader range of developmental structures and expressive structures (see year 5).