

# Assessment and Tracking Progress in Music

## A Guide for Schools



In other subjects, formal assessment is fairly straightforward – perhaps taking in books, marking them. But in creative subjects like music, it's a bit more complex. This guide provides our top tips for schools when considering assessment and tracking progress in music.

**Remember, the key purpose of assessment is to check whether your music curriculum is working. Assessment that does not do this should be avoided.**



### Things to remember:

Not all assessment needs to be, or should be, formalised.

Intervention 'in the moment' is far more valuable.

You could assess every single child against every single objective in every single lesson, but there's certainly no requirement to!

The curriculum in your school is the progression model.

Try to make sure the components within your music curriculum are clear – what is it you want the children to learn & remember? These should form the basis of your formative assessments.

Getting better at music takes time – time to build up in logical incremental steps and revisit skills.

Building fluency & competency at learning the recorder for example, doesn't happen overnight.

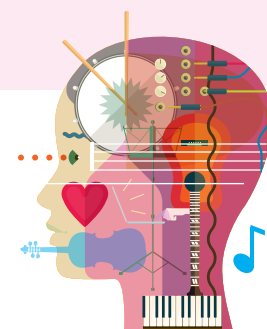
Formative assessment is at the heart of checking that your curriculum is being learned.

It should be woven into your planning and not presented as a standalone assessment strategy.

Summative assessment can be described as a moment when learning stops to give opportunity for the teacher to check on what has been learnt –

to judge whether your school's music curriculum is working, see what's not working, spot gaps and adapt accordingly.

*continued over*



## Things to remember:

*continued*

There's no requirement to use books or paper for music.

Recordings can be a helpful way to consider progress and evidence it.

Consider recording verbal feedback directly onto recordings. For example, keep the video camera rolling at the end of the performance as you (and your pupils) feed back to the class – referring to previous performances and identifying how your pupils have progressed since last time.

Pupil views – have a chat with children on a fairly regular basis – even quickly at the end of a lesson, then you'll be prompting them to remember things.

Pupil view questionnaires help them be prepared should they be asked questions during a review or an Ofsted inspection.

Floor books can be helpful to use as a memory jogger so children, if asked, have something to prompt their conversations about music.

You don't need anything grand, just a scrap book documenting what they've learnt. Some schools add QR codes to link to examples of children's work.

## Things to avoid:

Summative assessment, having a lot of tests or testing, shouldn't be driving your curriculum – assessment should be part of the learning process and shouldn't take over.

A one-size-fits-all approach for assessment across the school doesn't necessarily work for music.

Just because English and maths are assessed every term doesn't mean that music should be too.

Jumping through hoops and/or ticking a checklist is not the way to go.

It takes up too much curriculum time and does not improve musical understanding.

If you are being asked to do lots of formal assessments that involve creating lots of data, it's valid to question why –

data like this has very little impact on learning.

Photos have their place, but they carry a health warning –

they don't show progress.

## Discussions with your Senior Leadership Team:

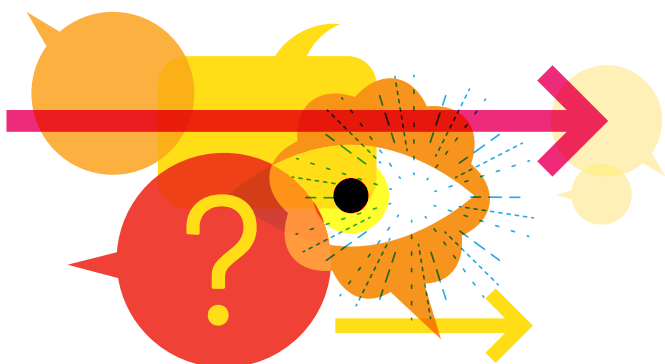
Consider sharing the Ofsted Research Review for Music approach (which links to the Education Inspection Framework) and other relevant documents with SLT.

Have open discussions about the suggestions.

*Ofsted Research Review Series: Music July 2021*

*Model Music Curriculum, March 2021*

*National Plan for Music Education, June 2022*



wiltshire  
music  
connect

This resource was originally devised by Wiltshire Music Connect (Wiltshire Council) during its tenure as the Music Education Hub for Wiltshire.

Wiltshire Council

Supported using public funding by

