

Music Curriculum Guidance for Schools (full version) School Music Education Plan

This document is intended for Headteachers, Senior Leadership Teams, Governors and Music Leaders. This version contains 3 separate but connected parts, with information and guidance for schools about:

1. [Ofsted Inspection Framework and Handbook](#)
2. [Creating your own School/Setting Music Policy](#)
3. [Self-Evaluation Tool for Music](#)

Music Education Hubs in England are a resource to help support all schools in their local area. The Tri-borough Music Hub aims to have an active and positive relationship with every school in the three Local Authorities.

Music Education Hubs have been tasked with ensuring that all schools have a **School Music Education Plan (SMEP)**. In essence this is focused on schools identifying how they deliver music in their curriculum and how they engage a range of additional support to help realise their school vision.

A **School Music Education Plan** should not be complicated but needs to indicate that schools are delivering a Music Curriculum and ensuring that pupils have the opportunity to learn to play an instrument, sing regularly, to perform and hear live music, and to work with professional musicians.

In order to support schools, the TBMH has produced this guidance which outlines the revised **Education Inspection Framework from Ofsted**; a suggestion for generating a simple **school music policy**; and a **self-evaluation framework for music provision**.

It is recommended that all schools use this guidance to feed into their own school development plan. This can be discussed with TBMH colleagues and could be used to determine future priorities. It will also provide valuable information to the TBMH who can then provide support as appropriate.

Schools should also be aware of and refer to the [Model Music Curriculum](#) (released March 2021). There is supporting guidance about this on the Tri-borough Music Hub website.

PART 1: Ofsted Framework and Handbook for inspection

The Education Inspection Framework ([EIF](#)) and Ofsted School Inspection handbook (link [HERE](#)) are referenced below. We highlight areas which all schools should be mindful regarding ensuring that they provide a broad, balanced and relevant music education for all learners.

All quotes below are taken from the Ofsted School Inspection handbook, followed by suggested questions to ask yourself in reference to a quality music education provision. These are but a handful within the entire handbook.

1. Paragraph 58 – Risk Assessment: School workforce data

“In a risk assessment, we analyse: school workforce census data”

This will contain each school’s report on the number of hours of teaching provided in each school year for each subject. Schools that are not offering any music may be flagged up in this process.

Questions to consider:

- *Who is delivering your music curriculum lessons?*
 - *Are they appropriately qualified?*
 - *How are they supported in accessing appropriate music-specific professional development?*
- *How are these lessons structured?*
 - *Are music curriculum lessons timetabled to allow progressive development of learning skills and knowledge through weekly teaching?*
 - *If adopting a carousel approach, how is this developing skills and knowledge on a progressive basis?*
- *Would the TBMH School Music Policy (see p.6) and TBMH Self-evaluation tool (see p.9) help identify how music is being delivered, and areas to develop?*

2. Paragraph 37 – qualifying complaints, curriculum/subject breadth/balance

“We may decide that we should inspect a school earlier than its next scheduled inspection if:

- a subject or thematic survey inspection raises general concerns
- we have received a qualifying complaint about the school that, taken alongside other available evidence, suggests that it would be appropriate to do so
- concerns are identified about the breadth and balance of the curriculum (including if the statutory requirement to publish information to parents is not met)”

Ofsted inspectors will receive information about qualifying complaints. It is not clear if lack of access to a curriculum subject is considered to be a qualifying complaint. Other complaints may be noted by the team as well as those pertaining to safeguarding.

Questions to consider:

- *Is the school curriculum genuinely broad and balanced to reflect the needs of all learners, including pupils with SEND (i.e. in accessing a range of arts subjects)?*
- *Would the TBMH School Music Policy (see p.6) and TBMH Self-evaluation tool (see p.7-9) help identify how music is being delivered, and areas to develop?*

3. Deep Dives - Paragraph 217 “Deep dives gather evidence of the curriculum within a certain subject, to build an understanding of the curriculum in the school as a whole. They encompass a range of activities, including:

- talking about the curriculum with leaders
- joint visits to lessons
- work scrutiny
- talking to and observing pupils in addition to joint visits to lessons
- discussions with teachers”

Paragraph 305: “Much of the evidence that inspectors will consider in making the personal development judgement will be drawn from across the deep dives carried out, and conversations with leaders, staff, pupils and governors”

Questions to consider:

- *If pressed by an inspector, are you able to talk about how your curriculum is sequenced to allow progressive development of learning skills and knowledge through weekly teaching?*
- *Can you provide pupil information for music/arts subjects to demonstrate impact?*
- *Do your Schemes of Work appropriately reflect learning needs of your pupils, to allow engaged learning to take place?*
- *Does your school assessment process allow flexibility for arts subjects to reflect assessment/progress in different ways?*

4. Paragraph 427 - Spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development

“Before making the final judgement on overall effectiveness, inspectors will always consider the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils at the school, and evaluate the extent to which the school’s education provision meets different pupils’ needs, including pupils with SEND.” Attention to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development in the previous framework for inspection has often led to mention of good practice in relation to music and the Arts in inspection reports.

Para 299 “Inspectors will evaluate the effectiveness of the school’s provision for pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. This is a broad concept that can be seen across the school’s activities, but draws together many of the areas covered by the personal development judgement.”

The new framework specifically mentions the following.

- sense of enjoyment and fascination in learning about themselves, others and the world around them (para 300)
- use of imagination and creativity in their learning (para 300)
- willingness to reflect on their experiences. (para 300)
- use of a range of social skills in different contexts, for example working and socialising with other pupils, including those from different religious, ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds (para 302)
- interest in exploring, improving understanding of and showing respect for different faiths and cultural diversity and the extent to which they understand, accept, respect and celebrate diversity. This is shown by their respect and attitudes towards different religious, ethnic and socio-economic groups in the local, national and global communities. (paragraph 303)
- willingness to participate in and respond positively to artistic, musical, sporting and cultural opportunities (para 303)

Questions to consider:

- *Are pupils able to express themselves through arts/music both in the curriculum, and through programmed extra-curricular activities?*
- *Is there a weekly singing opportunity for all pupils (e.g. through collective worship/assembly)?*
- *Are your pupils allowed to leave curriculum lessons to attend instrumental/vocal lessons, or to attend school ensemble rehearsals?*
- *Are pupils taken to a range of external interactive live artistic activities/performances to broaden their exposure to a range of opportunities?*
- *Are your music teachers given opportunities to attend external CPD events that will result in a broad range of benefits for pupils?*

5. Paragraph 201 – National Curriculum, British Values, Collective Worship

“All pupils in maintained schools are expected to study the basic curriculum, which includes national curriculum, religious education and age-appropriate relationship and sex education. 203: Academies are expected to offer all pupils a broad curriculum that should be similar in breath and ambition.”

Although not specified in this paragraph there is also a duty on schools regarding fundamental British values (para 304) and collective worship (para 125). Music is part of the national curriculum and should be taught to all pupils until the end of KS3.

Questions to consider:

- *Is there a weekly singing opportunity for all pupils (e.g. through collective worship/assembly)?*
- *How is your school proactively using music/arts subjects to promote fundamental British values, and to engage all learners?*
- *How is your school using music/arts subjects to engage parents/carers and the wider community?*

6. Paragraph 223 – Curriculum Approaches

“We will judge schools taking radically different approaches to the curriculum fairly. We recognise the importance of schools’ autonomy to choose their own curriculum approaches. If leaders are able to show that they have thought carefully, that they have built a curriculum with appropriate coverage, content, structure and sequencing, and that it has been implemented effectively, then inspectors will assess a school’s curriculum favourably.”

Some have expressed concern about this paragraph because they believe it might provide a means of explaining away the lack of a rigorous and comprehensive Arts curriculum. It is difficult to see however, how a curriculum could be said to have ‘appropriate coverage and content’ if a subject which is so unequivocally a requirement for cultural capital (para 214 and 226) were missing.

Questions to consider:

- *Do your Schemes of Work appropriately reflect learning needs of your pupils, to allow engaged learning to take place?*
- *Is your school able to talk about how your curriculum is sequenced to allow progressive development of learning skills and knowledge through weekly teaching?*
- *Does your school assessment process allow flexibility for arts subjects to reflect assessment/progress in different ways?*
- *Has your school music teacher(s) been supported in accessing peer development with music teachers in other schools to help support and quality assure a secure curriculum?*
- *Are your music teachers given opportunities to attend external CPD events that will result in a broad range of benefits for pupils?*

7. Paragraph 2263 – Cultural Capital

“As part of making the judgement about the quality of education, inspectors will consider the extent to which schools are equipping pupils with the knowledge and cultural capital they need to succeed in life. Our understanding of ‘knowledge and cultural capital’ is derived from the following wording in the national curriculum:

‘It is the essential knowledge that pupils need to be educated citizens, introducing them to the best that has been thought and said and helping to engender an appreciation of human creativity and achievement.’

Questions to consider:

- *Are pupils able to positively articulate their experiences of music/arts subjects that they are exposed to through their school life?*
- *Are pupils actively encouraged to engage with music/arts subjects as part of healthy balanced approach to learning?*
- *Are pupils able to express themselves through arts/music both in the curriculum, and through programmed extra-curricular activities?*
- *Are pupils taken to a range of external interactive live artistic activities/performances to broaden their exposure to a range of opportunities?*

8. Paragraph 207 – Quality of education and Evaluation

“Implementation:

215. In evaluating the quality of education, inspectors will form a top-level view of the curriculum through conversations with senior leaders and through data

293. This judgement focuses on the factors that research and inspection evidence indicate contribute most strongly to pupils’ personal development.

420. “GOOD” - Teachers have expert knowledge of the subject(s) and courses they teach. Leaders provide effective support for those teaching outside their main areas of expertise. When relevant, teachers have extensive and up-to-date vocational expertise.

Inspection reports frequently mention the detrimental impact of teachers’ poor subject knowledge on the quality of certain subjects. This is more frequently mentioned in reports on primary schools. The text in this paragraph of the handbook is much clearer about expectations on schools. It also highlights the need to employ teachers with proper knowledge of the curriculum, carefully planned schemes or sufficient CPD in subject areas.

Questions to consider:

- *Who is delivering your music curriculum lessons?*
 - *Are they appropriately qualified?*
 - *How are they supported in accessing appropriate music-specific professional development?*
- *Are your music teachers given opportunities to attend external CPD events that will result in improved learning?*
- *Do your Schemes of Work appropriately reflect learning needs of your pupils, to allow engaged learning to take place?*
- *Does your school assessment process allow flexibility for arts subjects to reflect assessment/progress in different ways?*
- *Has your school music teacher been supported in accessing peer development with music teachers in other schools to help support and quality assure a secure curriculum?*

9. Personal development

Paragraph 126: “Inspectors may gather evidence from anywhere relevant (including RE lessons and assemblies) to evaluate pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural education, personal development and/or behaviour and attitudes.”

Paragraph 293: “...ensures that curriculum subjects such as citizenship, RE and other areas such as personal, social, health and economic education, and relationships and sex education, contribute to pupils’ personal development – including by considering the provision, quality and take-up of extra-curricular activities offered by the school”

Questions to consider:

- *Are pupils able to positively articulate their experiences of music/arts subjects that they are exposed to through their school life?*
- *Are pupils actively encouraged to engage with music/arts subjects as part of healthy balanced approach to learning and their personal development?*
- *Are pupils able to express themselves through arts/music both in the curriculum, and through programmed extra-curricular activities?*
- *Are pupils taken to a range of external interactive live artistic activities/performances to broaden their exposure to a range of opportunities?*

PART 2: Creating your School / Setting Music Policy

By using the prompts below schools/settings will achieve an overview of their delivery of music education & have an effective School Music Policy.

A Music Policy for an EYFS setting should include:

- Who is responsible for leading the music provision in your setting?
- What is the rationale for delivery of music across the setting? (music is important for the holistic development of children)
- How is music included in the planning; and how do you link to Musical Development Matters ([HERE](#))?
- How are musically rich environments created in your setting, (are instruments/music making resources readily available)?
- What the provision is for singing, music listening, moving and dancing, how often is this offered/catered for?
- A clear policy regarding inappropriate/appropriate use of recorded music with consideration of lyrical content
- Details of external music organisations/people that regularly work in the setting
- How often there are performances in the setting? Are children are taken to performances?
- How is children's music making valued, documented and shared?

A Music Policy for a Primary Phase school (5-11) should include:

- How does KS1/2 provision build upon EYFS/KS1 prior attainment and account for transition between Key Stages?
- Who teaches the weekly Curriculum Music lessons?
- How is music delivered across KS2; how is music timetabled weekly; and how do you link to the [Model Music Curriculum](#)?
- How is musical progression assessed?
- What is the provision for singing [is there a regular weekly whole school (or phase) singing opportunity?; is there a school choir?; is there a regular accessible music opportunity (in relation to SEND)?]
- What instrumental opportunities and/or extra-curricular learning is available. What are these opportunities and when do they happen?
- Which external music organisations regularly work in school (who are the organisations and what is their remit in the school?)
- Who is the assigned music co-ordinator?
- How does the school link with the Music Education Hub?
- How often there are performances in the school?
- How is music used in cross-curricular work?
- How *inclusive is your music provision; and how you cater for all children's needs?
- How is technology used to aid musical learning?

A Music Policy for a Secondary Phase and Post-16 Phase school (11-18) should include:

- How is music delivered across KS3; how is music timetabled weekly; and how do you link to the [Model Music Curriculum](#)?
- How does KS3 provision build upon KS2 prior attainment and account for transition between Key Stages?
- Who is the assigned lead for music in the school?
- What is the provision on offer post KS3 (e.g. GCSE/BTEC or other)? If so, which course and which Exam board? How many students are taking the exams in each year?
- How is musical progression assessed?
- What is your staffing for class music; and what are the roles of staff?
- How is a regular weekly school choir/choirs delivered?
- How are regular and/or extra-curricular weekly ensembles delivered?
- What instrumental learning opportunities are available; what are these; and how do they link to progressive, developmental, and sustainable work?
- Which external music organisations regularly work in school (who are the organisations & what is their remit in the school)?
- How does the school link with the Music Education Hub?
- How often are there performances in school?
- How is music used in cross-curricular work?
- How *inclusive is your music provision; and how do you cater for all children's needs?
- How is technology used to aid musical learning?


***SEND settings:**


- We know that engagement is central to inclusive practice, therefore how do you support & facilitate this in your setting?
- Do you use any specific techniques, or pedagogical approaches? If so, what are these? And how do they support children accessing a meaningful and appropriate curriculum? For instance, do you make provision for music therapy? Does your provision consider the sensory/experiential role of music in a SEND setting? Music & SEND specific CPD?
- Does your setting working collaboratively with other Schools/SEND schools to support provision?
- Research and the sharing of best practice helps to support young people's experience and access to high quality music education. Do you belong to any networks or carry out any research in your setting?


PART 3: Self-evaluation Tool for Music provision

Whilst some schools/settings have significant provision others may need more support in developing their work. The TBMH has suggested three possible stages of development. These stages are similar to the [Artsmark](#) and are categorised as Silver, Gold and Platinum.

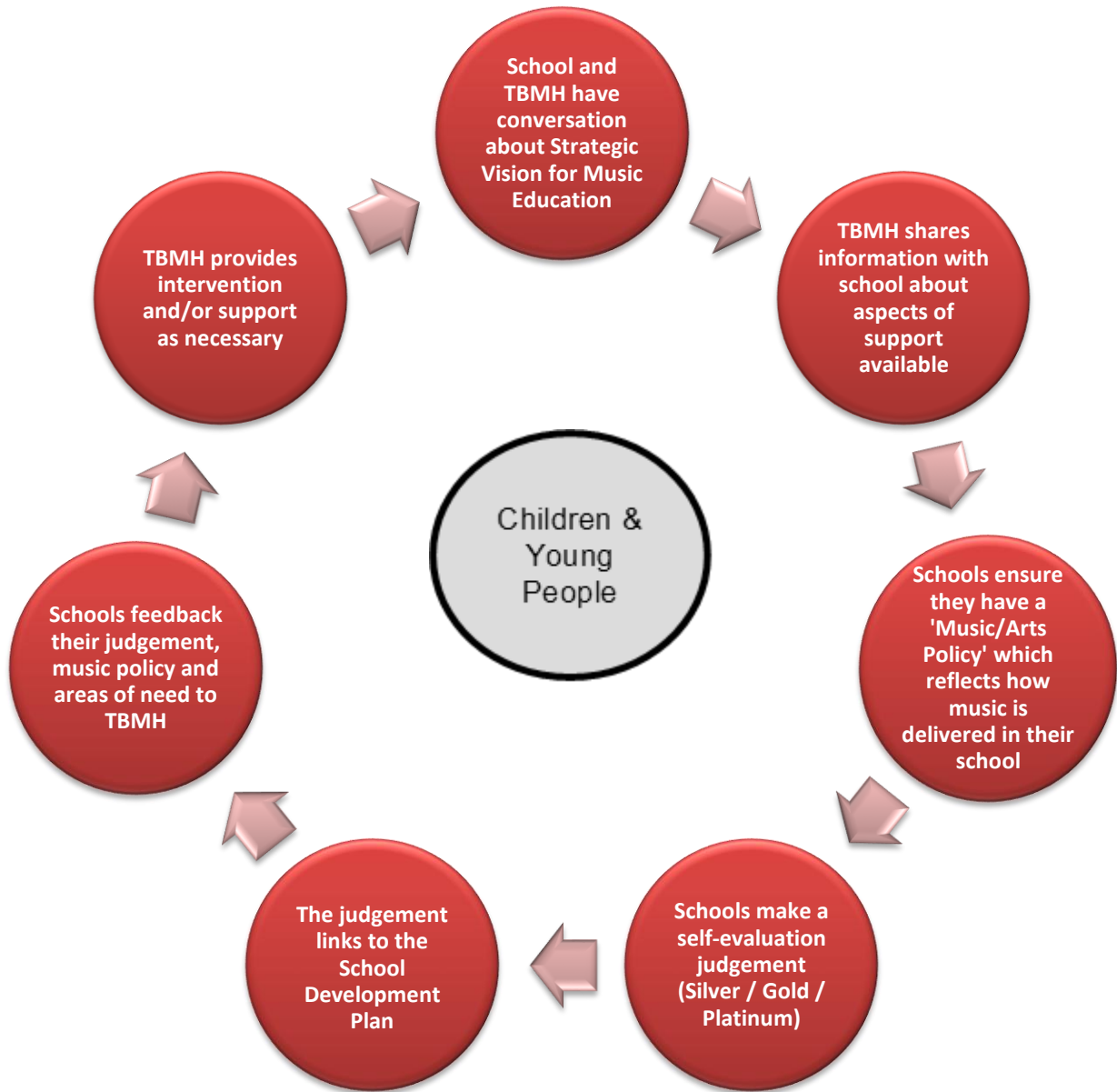
NOTE: Within SEND settings that support young people across key stages and with specific and additional needs we acknowledge that these guidelines may not be appropriate in their entirety but should be used to support provision. We have used the terminology of *appropriate and meaningful* and understand that this is central to good inclusive practice. This document is designed to support, signpost and prompt professional dialogue.

EYFS Settings		
Silver (standard expectation for all settings)		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There is an assigned person (Music Champion) who leads the music provision & can access CPD opportunities 2. Music Champion shares information with colleagues regarding the importance of music in the EY 3. There is a music policy that is inclusive of all children 4. Staff in the setting understand how music weaves through and supports all areas of the EYFS; particularly with language development, self-confidence, communication and positive relationships 5. Practitioners find out about the musical lives/ interests of the children through consulting with parents 6. Children are encouraged and supported to sing on a daily basis 7. Children have access to instruments and music making resources 8. Children have opportunities to listen to recorded music 9. Children's music making is observed 10. Every child is engaged in meaningful and appropriate musical activities 11. Reasonable adjustments are made to ensure that music making activities are accessible, enjoyable, appropriate and meaningful for all children 12. Some additional external projects may happen in the setting 13. Music provision and activity is assessed using an appropriate framework 	All music provision should be progressive and sustainable with a clear focus on the development of skills; knowledge; and understanding 	
Gold (builds upon Silver)		
<p>In addition:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A range of musical environments are created; instruments are displayed and presented on a range of levels both inside and outdoors 2. Music is on the planning; both adult led activities and musical environments/activities are listed to support child-initiated music making 3. Adults recognise and value children's spontaneous vocal play/spontaneous singing 4. New songs and musical games are introduced on a regular basis and children are encouraged to create their own songs/music 5. Music making opportunities are not solely limited to involve the Music Champion; there are music making opportunities across the setting 6. Children's musical play is recognised and valued with adults sensitively interacting where appropriate 7. Background music is kept to a minimum and active music listening experiences are supported by practitioners 8. Recorded music available includes a wide range of genres 9. Children's music making is documented 10. Musical interests of the children are explored and built upon within the setting 11. Practitioners have an awareness of musical development 		
Platinum (builds upon Silver and Gold)		
<p>In addition:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Children's music making is understood, documented using a range of mediums; audio recording, film, annotated photographs and shared with parents and families 2. A range of quality musical instruments and resources are available 3. Practitioners have an awareness of the audio environment and how to use recorded music effectively 4. There are daily opportunities for children to move freely & expressively to music 5. The Music Champion shares new songs, games and ideas to further develop the music provision 6. Active listening experiences are developed to include a range of listening experiences, e.g. moving to music, mark making with music 7. The setting engages in and/or leads CPD opportunities in/out of the setting and supports other settings 8. It is evident that music plays an important role in the life and ethos of the setting 		

Primary Phase Settings		
Silver (standard expectation for all settings)		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There is an assigned lead person who is responsible for music 2. There is a school music policy that is inclusive of all children 3. Appropriate measures are taken to ensure that all music activities are appropriate, meaningful, and accessible to all children 4. The National Curriculum (or other suitable curriculum) for music is taught every week* at KS1 (min. 30mins) and KS2 (min. 45mins) using appropriate Schemes of Work <i>*or evidence of sustained musical experiences each week.</i> 5. Music activities are assessed in a meaningful way that does not hinder creativity 6. There is at least one whole school, key stage or phase weekly singing assembly, (or elements of singing within an assembly) which all children can access and engage with 7. Some additional external projects may take place 	All music provision should be progressive and sustainable with a clear focus on the development of skills; knowledge; and understanding 	
Gold (builds upon Silver)		
In addition: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The assigned music lead person actively engages with the local Music Education Hub 2. Every child is sustained in meaningful and appropriate musical activities 3. There is a regular weekly choir and/or ensemble(s); or an accessible extra-curricular music opportunity 4. There are regular weekly instrumental lessons open to all pupils either as a whole class or in small groups 5. The School engages with the Music Hub's CPD opportunities 6. There are performance opportunities in/out of school 7. There are external projects which will help support curriculum music and the arts 8. There is an assigned Governor with responsibility for Music (Arts) 		
Platinum (builds upon Silver and Gold)		
In addition: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Music is embedded in the whole school with all staff positively reflecting this through their actions/modelling (e.g. music can be offered in the morning, not just the afternoon) 2. The School is actively involved with the local Music Education Hub and helps drive change 3. The school engages and/or leads CPD opportunities in/out of school and supports other schools 4. There are regular performance opportunities in/out of school 5. All additional external projects are linked to the curriculum and a sequenced provision map 6. All musical activities have clear outcomes with tangible evidence of their impact 7. Music making across the school is of a high quality with formal monitoring systems in place to support good practice 8. Children can communicate about music using appropriate vocabulary in a meaningful way; and/or can share and express their feelings through music 9. It is evident that music plays an important role in the life and ethos of the school 		

Secondary and Post-16 Phase Settings		
Silver (standard expectation for all settings)		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There is an assigned lead person who is responsible for music 2. There is a school music policy that is inclusive of all children 3. Appropriate measures are taken to ensure that all music activities are accessible, appropriate and meaningful to all children 4. The KS3 National Curriculum (or other suitable curriculum) music teaching builds on KS2 experience and attainment using appropriate Schemes of Work 5. Lessons are progressive, challenging and developmental across a range of genres 6. Music activities are assessed (the school has accessible Assessment and Accreditation opportunities for SEND) in a meaningful way that does not hinder creativity 7. There is at least one weekly school choir or ensemble which is run by a member of music department staff 8. Some additional external projects may take place 9. There is a post-KS3 offer for music (e.g. GCSE/BTEC) where appropriate 	All music provision should be progressive and sustainable with a clear focus on the development of skills; knowledge; and understanding 	
Gold (builds upon Silver)		
In addition: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The assigned lead member of staff actively engages with the local Music Education Hub 2. Every child is sustained in meaningful musical activities 3. There is a sustainable take up of GCSE/BTEC, (and A Level, if appropriate) courses 4. There are regular weekly instrumental lessons open to all pupils in small groups, pairs or individually 5. There is a range of regular weekly school-based choirs/ensembles; or an accessible extra-curricular music opportunity 6. The School engages with the Music Hub's CPD opportunities 7. There are performance opportunities in/out of school 8. External projects help support National Curriculum music and the arts 9. There is an assigned Governor with responsibility for Music (arts) 		
Platinum (builds upon Silver and Gold)		
In addition: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Music is embedded in the whole school with all staff positively reflecting this through their actions/modelling (e.g. students are released from other curriculum lessons to attend instrumental/vocal lessons) 2. The school is actively involved with the local Music Education Hub and helps drive change 3. The school engages and/or leads CPD opportunities in/out of school and supports other schools 4. There are regular performance opportunities in/out of school 5. All additional external projects are linked to the curriculum and a sequenced provision map 6. All musical activities have clear outcomes with tangible evidence of their impact 7. Music making across the school is of a high quality with formal monitoring systems in place to support good practice. 8. Pupils can communicate about music using appropriate vocabulary in a meaningful way; and/or can share and express their feelings through music 9. It is evident that music plays an important role in the life and ethos of the school 		

Summary: Schools/Settings and Music Hub working together



This diagram shows the process for how schools/settings and the Tri-borough Music Hub can work together to ensure that all children and young people have the best possible music education experiences and access this via a broad and balanced curriculum in school.

Updated 2023