



Knowledge and skills: Introduction

At Polehampton, we first considered the concept of knowing more, doing more and remembering more. Therefore, from our research, we have a shared and consistent understanding of different types of knowledge. Each subject will have a different ratio of distribution for these types of knowledge, and the types of knowledge can (and most often do) intersect.

1. Knowledge refers to the body of facts, information, understanding, principles and concepts etc. of a subject. In other words, this could be referred to as the main component knowledge that pupils might learn (e.g. knowing that different notes have different durations, and that crotchets are worth one whole beat), as well as the understanding that pupils may develop about how those facts were established (aka disciplinary knowledge). Finally, as well as considering how a fact was established, we may also consider its degree of certainty and how it continues to be revised. Pupils need to know information in some form in every subject, even in practical subjects, because there will be an element of theory behind the skill that can be shown/displayed.

2. Skills refers to the techniques required to complete a procedure or task. It is the 'know how' of the processes required in a subject (e.g. the actual skill of being able to play notes on a glockenspiel or hold a rhythm/tune). Skills are often incremental and require regular practice. It is about being able to know how to actually demonstrate that skill or procedure.



Polehampton's Infographic on Knowledge and Skills

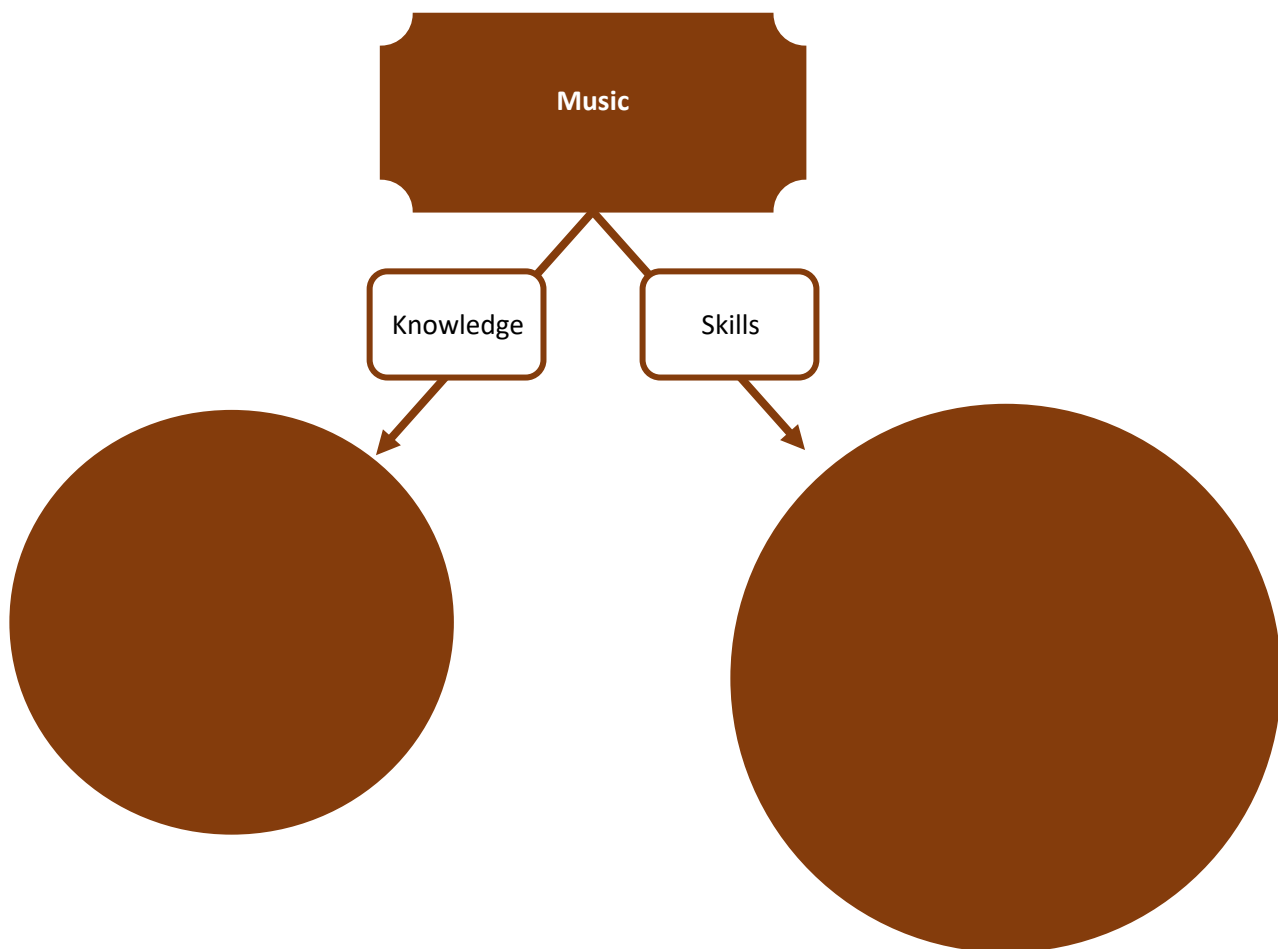
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Knowledge distribution

We recognise that different subjects have different weightings of knowledge and skills. The infographic below highlights what we consider to be the ratio of each form of knowledge within this subject:



Our vision

Music at Polehampton inspires and engages children in the joy of composing, making, listening to, and responding to music. Through a carefully structured curriculum, pupils develop key musical skills, including performing, composing and listening with understanding. There is also a focus on core knowledge needed to understand music (e.g. terminology or how to read notes). Pupils explore a diverse range of musical genres, traditions and instruments, enabling them to develop confidence and creativity. Our approaches ensure that pupils acquire essential musical knowledge, such as reading notation, understanding key terminology and appreciating the elements of music. We foster an environment where children can express themselves musically, evaluate their own work and that of others, and build a lifelong appreciation for music. By providing rich musical experiences – both within the classroom and through wider opportunities such as performances, instrumental tuition and extra-curricular activities – our curriculum nurtures a love of music and ensures progression in skills, knowledge and enjoyment.

Early Years Foundation Stage

In Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), music is an integral part of Expressive Arts and Design, allowing children to explore, create and express themselves through sound. Our Reception pupils develop their musical skills by singing, experimenting with instruments and engaging in musical storytelling. They explore through active listening, vocal and instrumental play, and movement, fostering creativity and self-expression. Nursery rhymes are an essential part of the

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Early Years experience and children are explicitly taught 6 rhymes each half term, to ensure that by the end of their EYFS journey, the children will have a secure knowledge of a range of nursery rhymes.

Throughout the year, children engage in musical experiences to help develop their ability to listen attentively, respond to music with actions and emotions, and begin to understand key musical concepts like rhythm, pitch, tempo, beat and dynamics. They also develop early musical vocabulary, building confidence in describing and discussing the music they hear and create.

Collaborating is central to their learning, as children work together to create and perform music, developing confidence and social skills. They sing and perform both in groups and independently, sharing their ideas and responding to their own and others' musical creations.

These early experiences lay the foundations for the National Curriculum for Music in Key Stage 1, where pupils further develop their understanding of rhythm, melody and composition. Through play-based, immersive musical activities, EYFS children build key listening, performing and creative skills, ensuring they are well-prepared for the next stage of their musical education.

Key Stage 1

In Key Stage 1 (KS1), Music education focuses on developing pupils' confidence in singing, playing instruments, listening and composing. The UK National Curriculum outlines key areas, including performing, listening, improvising, composing and an introduction to musical notation. The focus is on fundamental skill development such as recognising and following a rhythm and beat and enhancing listening skills. Pupils will listen to and give opinions on music and begin to recognise key aspects of music (e.g. tempo, pitch changes and speed). Pupils will have the opportunity to compose simple pieces of music and use their bodies (e.g. clapping or singing) to either copy or create sounds or pieces. There is an emerging development of precision in Music in KS1, with pupils beginning to play on beat and understanding rhythm, as well as begin to sing in tune. However, in the expressive elements of Music, pupils are encouraged to experiment with tuned or untuned instruments to compose. Finally, pupils will evaluate their own and others' pieces, giving feedback and considering mood or feelings from music. These units provide a strong foundation for Key Stage 2, ensuring that children develop musical fluency, creativity, and the ability to appreciate a wide range of musical styles.

Key Stage 2

In Key Stage 2 (KS2), pupils build on the skills they have developed in KS1 to enable them to be more accurate, creative and evaluative of their own and others' work. The UK National Curriculum emphasises performing, composing, listening, and appraising, with an expectation that pupils develop a greater technical understanding of music. In KS2, the focus shifts to applying these skills to a range of musical styles, skills and instruments which allows for learners to showcase their clear progression and skills acquired. Pupils develop their precision in signing, composing and playing of instruments, and will perform more solo or in groups. Pupils will also learn to recognise and appreciate a wider range of music and consider its effect on the listener, as well as give their opinion on the piece and why they liked or disliked it. Finally, pupils will get to experience a wider range of instruments through focused teaching units.

Throughout KS2, pupils refine their ability to read musical notation, play tuned and untuned instruments, and compose increasingly sophisticated pieces. This comprehensive approach ensures pupils are well-prepared for secondary school music education, with a strong foundation in performance, creativity, and critical listening.

Building strong foundations through experiences

To complement the curriculum, pupils have the opportunity to represent the school through groups, such as the school choir. We aim to develop the pupils' confidence and performance skills as part of this. A variety of additional music lessons are also available across KS2 where pupils can learn a chosen instrument. We also celebrate any music

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achievements outside of school (such as grading) in our weekly celebration assemblies. Berkshire Maestros support with this delivery.

As part of our commitment to community engagement, pupils take part in outreach projects, including performing at Polehampton Gardens, our local care home, bringing joy to residents through music. We also provide pupils with a range of performance opportunities, such as participating in WASMA (Wokingham Area Schools Music Association) and the Wokingham Mayor's Carol Concert, helping to foster confidence, collaboration, and a love of music beyond the classroom.

The curriculum

At Polehampton, we follow the National Curriculum for all our subjects. To ensure the National Curriculum is covered effectively, there is an edited version of the National Curriculum which has notes to highlight where in our Unit Maps a statement or section is covered within our strategic documents and planning.

Schemes of work

In Music, we use a scheme called Kapow to support the subject in EYFS to 6. However, we have chosen Kapow to match our ambitions for the subject. We have also reviewed the Kapow progression of knowledge and skills documents to ensure that this strategic planning is appropriate for our school community and links with our curriculum vision (and the National Curriculum).

Curriculum structure

Units are taught using blocking, with one covered every term (usually, one unit takes approximately 1 half term, but this is flexible). This allows time to go into depth in a unit, by having one unit per term ensures the time between units does not adversely affect the ability to build on prior skills and knowledge. Music lessons are taught in discrete weekly or fortnightly lessons (depending on the unit being covered). This ensures that there are regular opportunities to revisit prior learning and build understanding. Units involve a balance of listening and playing. This ensures that the pupils are continuously learning, acquiring and applying the relevant skills. Children complete a warm up; then, through a variety of activities, skills are modelled and significant practise and/or rehearsal takes place individually, in paired or small groups. Throughout a lesson, learning opportunities allow for pupils to apply any skills that they have been taught with regular feedback given and performance opportunities provided. Lessons are completed with a 'warm down' where they are able to consolidate the skills that they have covered and/or revise any key learning points from the session.

We use retrieval practice, knowledge organisers and other methods to ensure that pupils are prepared for their subject and focus on the right objectives during lessons. Subject-specific vocabulary is taught and we aim to deepen understanding through questioning.

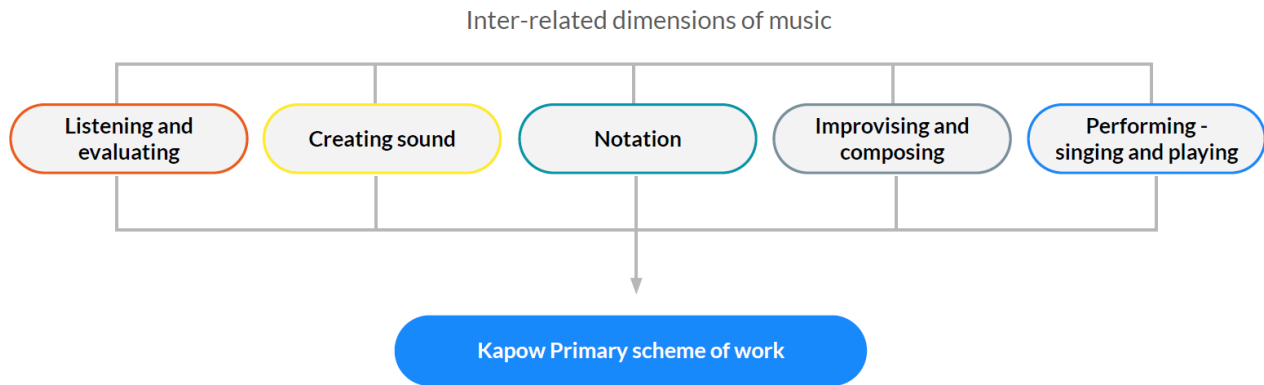
In music specifically, we also have a 'progression of knowledge' document to ensure pupils' understanding of musical knowledge and facts is built upon year-on-year.

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How is the Music scheme of work organised?



Taken from Kapow's LTP document

Concepts (aka 'strands' in Kapow Music)

Each subject has concepts which run through every unit and year group. These concepts allow consistency of focus and progression within each concept from unit to unit and year to year. Our key concepts are as follows:

Appraisal and Knowledge of Others' Work		Developing Ideas and Planning	
Making, Producing and Performing	Expressing	Evaluating	

Kapow also has 'strands', which are also considered and referenced. These strands are referenced as follows:

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Exploring the strands.

Listening and evaluating

Listening to music is important to develop an appreciation for music but listening with a critical ear also allows pupils to recognise how music is constructed and how it impacts the listener.

Listening and evaluating is therefore the precursor to Improvising and composing and **Performing**.

By exposing pupils to a diverse range of music from various cultures and historical periods, this strand also fosters an understanding of the history of music.

Creating sounds

Learning technical proficiency with an instrument takes time, and the ability to create and control sound is fundamental to making music.

This proficiency requires knowledge of specific instruments, including how to hold and play them, as well as the development of fine (and sometimes gross) motor skills and postural awareness.

When it comes to singing, controlling breathing and voice modulation to create dynamic contrasts is crucial.

Notation

In order to compose and perform longer pieces of music, pupils need to understand notation as a means of communicating musical ideas.

They will learn that the position of notes on the staff indicates their pitch, and that the symbols used represent the duration of each note or rest.

Our aim is for pupils to be able to 'work out' how to read a simple piece of music from a given starting note by applying the principles of staff notation, rather than reading music by sight or simply memorising musical pieces. See [here](#) for more information.

Improvising and composing

Improvisation in music involves creating music spontaneously, without prior planning or written notes. This helps pupils build confidence, express themselves freely, and develop flexibility in their musical thinking.

Composition tasks require students to plan and structure their musical ideas. This structured approach strengthens their ability to organise thoughts systematically and often use notation to record their ideas.

Find out more about the composing process [here](#).

Performing - singing and playing

Performing provides pupils with a practical reason to hone and apply their musical skills.

It promotes group practice and collaboration, as pupils work together to achieve an aim.

This experience not only boosts pupils' confidence and self-esteem but also enhances their awareness of themselves and others within the group.

Find out more about the group practising process [here](#).

Taken from Kapow's LTP document

Building on and revisiting learning

Our units rely on a 'spiral curriculum' model, which ensure we can revisit concepts and cumulatively build knowledge and skills.

A spiral curriculum

The scheme of work has been designed as a spiral curriculum with the following key principles in mind:

- ✓ **Cyclical:** Pupils return to the key knowledge and skills again and again during their time in primary school.
- ✓ **Increasing depth:** Each time a skill is revisited it is covered with greater complexity.
- ✓ **Prior knowledge:** Prior knowledge is utilised so pupils can build upon previous foundations, rather than starting again.



Taken from Kapow's LTP document

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How we plan our units

We have chosen to use the Kapow scheme because it offers engaging, curriculum-aligned resources that foster a development of curiosity, skill development and critical thinking in pupils.

Prior to beginning a unit, class teachers will review all the documentation mentioned in this vision document as well as the lesson plans and online resources, in order to understand the direction of the units and lessons. It also ensures that teachers have time to address any subject knowledge gaps they have themselves, or seek support. As part of this professional development support, teachers use the teacher knowledge videos that are provided within the Kapow units to enrich and refine subject knowledge ahead of lessons.

Because of the comprehensive nature of the planning on Kapow, teachers are not expected to produce individual written plans for each lesson. However, teachers are expected to ensure that the teaching resources produced for the lesson are comprehensive and well-planned, as well as being adapted where necessary to suit the needs of the cohort.

This could take the form of the following:

- Using the pre-prepared presentations on Kapow (extra slides can be added to the deck if needed).
- If teachers prefer, they can create their own PowerPoint, ensuring the key information from the Kapow lesson is covered and add any additional slides they feel are necessary.

The most important aspect for us, as a school, is ensuring that teachers feel prepared to (and, therefore, deliver) high-quality lessons to pupils which support our vision of developing knowledge and skills over time. It also enables teachers to consider how these lessons will fit in to the wider picture of a child's learning journey.

Vocabulary development and knowledge organisers

As part of our focus on oracy, we utilise Kapow's unit plans, which outline the key vocabulary for that lesson or unit, which allows progression in vocabulary development over each unit and year.

A knowledge organiser, in line with our school's format, is shared with pupils from the beginning of the unit and referred to throughout lessons to help embed key concepts and vocabulary.

Cross curricular links

It is important to understand how subjects can work with each other, so there are specific links to other subjects outlined in a specific document to support the wider curriculum development of each subject. However, it is important to note that this does not detract from the focus we have on teaching each unit as part of a discrete subject.

Links with our values, spirituality and organisations

Our school values are part of everything we do. To ensure that is seen within the curriculum, we make explicit links to our values, as well as British Values, spirituality and OECD and UN objectives.

Milestones and assessment opportunities

When assessing progress, we use a range of methods, including the use of Kapow's summative assessment opportunities. Teachers use AFL strategies on an ongoing basis so that misconceptions can be identified and addressed at the earliest point. It is used to assess pupils' knowledge of music. Pupils are regularly given the opportunity for self or peer assessment, which will then be used to inform planning, preparation, adaptations and address misconceptions within that lesson, or for the next lesson.

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Children are given opportunities to retrieve information and to demonstrate their learning throughout each unit of learning. Each unit includes quiz questions which can be used to reinforce and revisit both learning and vocabulary. These questions are also used as part of retrieval practice, and prior learning will be revisited at the start of every lesson, checking recall of previous lessons. This could be through oracy or written tasks.

Formative assessment in Kapow

Every lesson begins with the 'Recap and recall' section which is intended to allow pupils retrieval practice of key knowledge relevant to the upcoming lesson. This section also provides teachers with an opportunity to make informal judgements about whether pupils have retained prior learning and are ready to move on.

Each lesson contains the 'Assessing progress and understanding' section which helps teachers to identify those pupils who are secure in their learning or working at a greater depth in each lesson.

Summative assessment in Kapow

Each unit of work assesses children's understanding and retention of key knowledge using an assessment quiz with nine multiple choice questions and one open-ended question.

In addition, each unit uses either a skills or knowledge catcher, depending on the key strands covered in the unit. This can be used at the beginning and/or end of a unit and gives children the opportunity to further demonstrate their understanding of the key concepts covered.

Assessment quizzes, and skills and knowledge catchers provide teachers with a record of summative assessment as evidence of progression throughout the year and as pupils move between key stages.

It is suggested that teachers keep all forms of assessment as children move through primary school so that the subject lead and teachers will have a record of children's learning.

Milestones and assessment opportunities

Our milestone objectives and assessment opportunities ensure that there is clear progression and we know how to assess those types of knowledge and outcomes within a unit. These milestones are derived from the National Curriculum (and cross-referenced with Kapow's progression of knowledge and skills) to ensure that staff know the key component knowledge and skills required for pupils to experience progress and success.

Measuring impact

We measure the effectiveness of our curriculum in the following ways:

- Pupil data tracking (Sonar and other internal tracking methods)
- Work scrutiny
- Monitoring of lessons and planning (including from SLT, governors and external validation, e.g. TKAT)
- Pupil conferencing.

When evaluating our curriculum, we also ask ourselves the following questions:

Do we provide a high-quality curriculum and inspires pupils?

- To what extent do our children show independence, resilience and high aspirations in the subject?
- To what extent does our curriculum provide new experiences and challenges?
- To what extent do the children engage with high quality resources?

Do we ensure pupils know more, do more and remember more?

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- To what extent do children retain the knowledge learnt?
- To what extent does the curriculum build over time?
- To what extent do children make progress against milestones over time?

Does our curriculum allow oracy development and the opportunity for pupils to collaborate?

- To what extent does our curriculum use/teach high quality language?
- To what extent does the curriculum provide opportunities to work collaboratively?
- To what extent does the curriculum support children with oracy skills?

Is our curriculum inclusive?

- How well is learning broken down, explained and scaffolded/adapted appropriately in the subject?
- How well are assessment forms used to inform planning in the subject?
- To what extent does the curriculum meet the needs of all learners including SEND/ EAL etc?

Do we help our pupils become better people in the wider world and prepare them for life in Modern Britain?

- To what extent does the curriculum allow children to take responsibility for their learning?
- To what extent does our curriculum allow for diversity?
- To what extent does the curriculum offer opportunities to present work in creative ways?
- To what extent does the curriculum offer opportunities to discuss content and/or questions and consider them in an open forum?
- To what extent does offer opportunities to utilise the skills of the wider community?

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