

STRINGS LEVELS EXPLAINED

Descriptions of assessment levels for strings pupils.

Pieces, scales & arpeggios, sight reading and aural requirements relate to those set by the major examining bodies (ABRSM, Trinity Guildhall and the London College of Music).

Level 1

Pupils are shown how to hold the instrument and learn to play on open strings using pizzicato.

Basic notation and note values are introduced and all melodic and rhythmic material is basic and simple.

Level 2 – Preparatory / Initial Level

Pupils are shown how to hold the bow and to bow on the open strings.

The left hand finger pattern is introduced and bowing on all four strings is developed.

The use of basic notation with extended note values.

Only the most common time signatures and key signatures are used.

Simple tetra chord construction of one octave scales commencing on the three lower strings.

Level 3 – Grade 1

The musical material for Level 3 is of an elementary nature.

Basic time signatures and keys are used.

Melodic and rhythmic material is simple.

Sporadic indications of dynamics, articulation and phrasing are introduced.

Scales and arpeggios are limited to the least demanding at this level but create an awareness of key signatures.

Technical accomplishment is a more important element of assessment than is musicality and expectations of musical communication are limited.

Level 4 – Grade 2

The musical material for Level 4 is of an elementary nature.

Basic time signatures and keys are used.

Melodic and rhythmic material is simple.

Indications of dynamics, articulation and phrasing become a more regular feature of the music, and a wider variety of type are employed.

Scales and arpeggios and finger patterns are expanded in number and create a greater understanding of key signature.

Technical accomplishment and a basic underlying musicality are important areas of assessment at this level.

Level 5

Working towards Grade 3.

Level 6 – Grade 3

The musical material selected for Level 6 is of a more demanding nature.

The number of keys and time signatures which may be used is increased.

Melodic and rhythmic material is more complex.

Indications of dynamics, articulation, phrasing and ornamentation will be a more regular feature of the music, and a wider variety of type will be used.

The repertoire of scales and arpeggios is expanded in number, and includes more taxing examples, including those using different positions.

Musicality and aural awareness become increasingly important elements of assessment in relation to technical accomplishment, and expectations of communication are higher.

Level 7

Working towards Grade 4.

Level 8 – Grade 4

The musical material selected for Level 8 is of a more demanding nature.

The number of keys and time signatures which may be used is increased.

Melodic and rhythmic material is more complex.

Indications of dynamics, articulation, phrasing and ornamentation will be a more regular feature of the music, and a wider variety of type will be used.

The repertoire of scales and arpeggios is expanded in number, and includes more taxing examples, including those using different positions.

Musicality and aural awareness become increasingly important elements of assessment in relation to technical accomplishment, and expectations of communication are higher.

Beyond Level 8

Descriptors set by the major examining bodies (ABRSM, Trinity Guildhall & London College) for grades 5, 6, 7, 8, & 8+ are to be used.