

VOICE LEVELS EXPLAINED

Descriptions of assessment levels for voice pupils.

Level 1

Pupils should sing with a natural core sound within a comfortable range, not necessarily more than an octave and not too low as this may cause problems later. Pupils will be expected to demonstrate an understanding of the beginnings of breath control.

Level 2

Pupils can sing in tune and articulate both vowels and consonants clearly. Breath support will be adequate to sustain the literary needs of the words, and this will aid projection as dictated by the punctuation and word emphasis. Some variety of expression is expected. They sing with a sense of the shape of a melody and can improve their own work.

Level 3

Pupils are expected to demonstrate pleasure in singing along with security of pulse and rhythm and a rehearsed familiarity with the accompaniment. The dynamic range may not necessarily be very great at this stage. Over-singing to produce volume will be discouraged and clarity of diction will aid projection. They can grasp the different moods of a piece and have the technique to portray basic expression.

Level 4

Pupils can identify how markings can reflect different musical intentions and use this to perform in the correct musical style. They will be expected to be relaxed when singing, to avoid body tensions being transmitted to the larynx and have good posture. Facial muscles should be active, without tension. They can think about and begin to add elements of their own interpretation and are able to perform songs from memory. They can evaluate their own playing and also judge others objectively.

Level 5

Pupils achieve a good overall performance with attention to detail of dynamics, articulation and style. They recognize a varied range of musical markings and can react accordingly. The vocal range should, by now, be extended to around a 10th, again avoiding low

itches, and the tonal quality should be well focused and clear. However, teenage boys may not have clear tone throughout the range offered. Consonants should be well articulated but should not interfere with the legato line of lyrical music.

They evaluate how venue, occasion and purpose affects the way music is performed and they refine and improve their work.

Level 6

Pupils have sense of ensemble and can react to others in group performance using this skill to improve their own singing.

The changes in vocal quality over the break from middle to upper register will be being dealt with as part of the developing technique.

Breathing will be disciplined and planned, demonstrating a growing awareness of, and technique in, the application of intercostal diaphragmatic breathing.

The breath will be sustained through extended vowels; the tongue and lips shaping the sound and the pharynx and mouth allowing it to resonate.

They identify and explore different contexts of selected musical genres and styles.

Level 7

Pupils will be able to apply intercostal diaphragmatic breathing technique to the extent that inhalation is silent, the lower rib cage expanding at the front, sides and back so that tension is avoided.

Even with sound technique, low range chest singing may be best avoided at this stage in a pupil's vocal development.

It is expected that diction will be clear with good onset, which avoids sharp glottal or breathy attack, and that pupils will be able to break phrases without breath or sharp consonants.

Pupils are able to adapt their technique to perform in different genres, styles and traditions.

Level 8

Pupils are expected to be employing vocal variety and accents, where appropriate, will contribute to the interpretation of the chosen songs.

Pupils should understand and demonstrate in performance the effect of the diphthong on sustained sound.

Pupils can discriminate and exploit the expressive potential of the music they sing.