

Marking criteria

Grades Initial to 8	Pieces <i>Pitch</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Tone</i>	<i>Shape</i>	<i>Performance</i>
Distinction 27-30	● Highly accurate notes and intonation	● Fluent, with flexibility where appropriate ● Rhythmic character well conveyed	● Well projected ● Sensitive use of tonal qualities	● Expressive, idiomatic musical shaping and detail	● Assured ● Fully committed ● Vivid communication of character and style
Merit 24-26	● Largely accurate notes and intonation	● Sustained, effective tempo ● Good sense of rhythm	● Mainly controlled and consistent ● Good tonal awareness	● Clear musical shaping, well-realised detail	● Positive ● Carrying musical conviction ● Character and style communicated
Pass 20-23	● Generally correct notes ● Sufficiently reliable intonation to maintain tonality	● Suitable tempo ● Generally stable pulse ● Overall rhythmic accuracy	● Generally reliable ● Adequate tonal awareness	● Some realisation of musical shape and/or detail	● Generally secure, prompt recovery from slips ● Some musical involvement
Below Pass 17-19	● Frequent note errors ● Insufficiently reliable intonation to maintain tonality	● Unsuitable and/or uncontrolled tempo ● Irregular pulse ● Inaccurate rhythm	● Uneven and/or unreliable ● Inadequate tonal awareness	● Musical shape and detail insufficiently conveyed	● Insecure, inadequate recovery from slips ● Insufficient musical involvement
13-16	● Largely inaccurate notes and/or intonation	● Erratic tempo and/or pulse	● Serious lack of tonal control	● Musical shape and detail largely unrealised	● Lacking continuity ● No musical involvement
10-12	● Highly inaccurate notes and/or intonation	● Incoherent tempo and/or pulse	● No tonal control	● No shape or detail	● Unable to continue for more than a short section
0	● No work offered	● No work offered	● No work offered	● No work offered	● No work offered

Grades Initial to 8	Scales and arpeggios	Sight-reading
Distinction 19-21	● Highly accurate notes/pitch ● Fluent and rhythmic ● Musically shaped ● Confident response	● Fluent, rhythmically accurate ● Accurate notes/pitch/key ● Musical detail realised ● Confident presentation
Merit 17-18	● Largely accurate notes/pitch ● Mostly regular flow ● Mainly even tone ● Secure response	● Adequate tempo, usually steady pulse ● Mainly correct rhythm ● Largely correct notes/pitch/key ● Largely secure presentation
Pass 14-16	● Generally correct notes/pitch, despite errors ● Continuity generally maintained ● Generally reliable tone ● Cautious response	● Continuity generally maintained ● Note values mostly realised ● Pitch outlines in place, despite errors ● Cautious presentation
Below Pass 11-13	● Frequent errors in notes and/or pitch ● Lacking continuity and/or some items incomplete ● Unreliable tone ● Uncertain response and/or some items not attempted	● Lacking overall continuity ● Incorrect note values ● Very approximate notes/pitch/key ● Insecure presentation
7-10	● Very approximate notes and/or pitch ● Sporadic and/or frequently incomplete ● Serious lack of tonal control ● Very uncertain response and/or several items not attempted	● No continuity or incomplete ● Note values unrealised ● Pitch outlines absent ● Very uncertain presentation
0	● No work offered	● No work offered

Grades Initial to 8	Aural tests
Distinction 17-18	● Accurate throughout ● Musically perceptive ● Confident response
Merit 15-16	● Strengths significantly outweigh weaknesses ● Musically aware ● Secure response
Pass 12-14	● Strengths just outweigh weaknesses ● Cautious response
Below Pass 9-11	● Weaknesses outweigh strengths ● Uncertain response
6-8	● Inaccuracy throughout ● Vague response
0	● No work offered