



Communication & Interaction	Cognition & Learning
<p><b><u>Challenges</u></b></p> <p><b>Pupils may:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• struggle to follow verbal instructions or explanations about musical concepts.</li> <li>• find it hard to engage in group activities or collaborate with peers during ensemble performances.</li> <li>• find it difficult to listen to each other during group work.</li> <li>• have difficulty in communicating their thoughts or feelings about the music or their performance.</li> <li>• find it hard to listen to and react to staff and peer feedback.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Provision</u></b></p> <p><b>Teaching staff do:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Break down instructions into smaller, manageable steps and use clear, simple language.</li> <li>✓ Encourage non-verbal communication through activities like conducting or body percussion.</li> </ul> <p><b>Teaching staff provide:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ visual aids to help pupils understand instructions and musical concepts.</li> <li>✓ Support and structures for giving and receiving feedback.</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>Challenges</u></b></p> <p><b>Pupils may:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• struggle to understand musical vocabulary, musical notation or rhythms.</li> <li>• struggle to understand multi-step instructions.</li> <li>• have difficulty remembering sequences of notes or lyrics.</li> <li>• need more time to grasp musical concepts compared to peers.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Provision</u></b></p> <p><b>Teaching staff do:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Regularly review musical concepts</li> <li>✓ Incorporate teaching methods to cater to different learning styles.</li> <li>✓ Break instructions down into manageable chunks.</li> </ul> <p><b>Teaching staff provide:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Plenty of practice opportunities.</li> <li>✓ Prompts, visuals and scaffolds to help pupils remember notation, important information or lyrics.</li> </ul>

## Social, Emotional & Mental Health

### Challenges

#### **Pupils may:**

- feel anxious about performing in front of others or participating in group activities.
- have Low confidence in their musical abilities, leading to reluctance to participate.
- have difficulty managing emotions, which can lead to disruptive behaviour during lessons, or disengagement.

### Provision

#### **Teaching staff do:**

- ✓ Create a supportive and non-judgmental classroom atmosphere to reduce anxiety.
- ✓ Use praise and encouragement to build pupils' confidence and self-esteem.
- ✓ Give children clear explanations and time to prepare for activities.
- ✓ Consider groupings taking into consideration sensory and physical needs of the pupils.

#### **Teaching staff provide:**

- ✓ Social-emotional learning activities, such as group performances and discussions about feelings related to music.

## Sensory/Physical

### Challenges

#### **Pupils may:**

- Pupils may be overwhelmed by loud or unexpected noises in the music classroom.
- Pupils may have difficulty playing certain instruments due to fine motor skill challenges or physical disabilities.
- Pupils may need adapted instruments or equipment to participate fully in the lesson.

### Provision

#### **Teaching staff do:**

- ✓ Provide instruments that are easier to handle or modified for pupils with physical disabilities.
- ✓ Minimise loud noises and prepares children for when loud noises are going to be created/heard.

#### **Teaching staff provide:**

- ✓ A calm, structured setting to accommodate sensory sensitivities.
- ✓ Resources to support children who find loud noises uncomfortable (ear defenders).
- ✓ Seating and space appropriate to children's need – consider using space outside of the classroom for a group if needed.

## Planning Inclusive Lessons

Music is a unique and powerful form of communication that can change the way people feel, think and act. It combines creativity with emotion, enabling personal expression, reflection and development. As well as creating a sense of group identity and togetherness, music enables personal expression, encourages emotional development, and can foster links with the wider world.

Through the primary phase, music teaching and learning should offer a progression of skills and include opportunities to appraise, compose and perform. In order for music education to be accessible and inclusive for all, teachers need to anticipate potential barriers for individual learners and consider ways of minimising these to ensure participation.

For some learners, music can be a medium to break down barriers that may exist in other curriculum subjects. The nature of the subject allows freedom and flexibility in musical expression, preferences and performance. This is beneficial, not only for musical development, but for the growth of self-confidence and for the fostering of creative flair in all learners.



## Creating an Inclusive Environment

Where possible, music should form part of the culture of a learner's primary school experience. Beyond discrete music lessons, assemblies, performances, and other curriculum areas can provide opportunities for exposure to a wealth of musical experiences.

Considering this, ensuring that all aspects of learners' involvement in music education is as inclusive as possible, is paramount. Music can form an effective method of communication, so including it as part of repetitive routines such as the attendance register, number and phonics learning, as well as other daily routines, can provide predictable, reassuring and memorable experiences for learners.

At times, music can create challenges for learners with sensory issues. This needs to be considered when creating an effective learning environment. Consider the practical layout of the room and the position of the learners. Will they be working with a large class or a smaller group? Although music-making opportunities, such as playing instruments together or singing, lend themselves to groups, some learners may benefit from working individually, with or without the support of an adult and/or ICT.

Consider the physical layout of the workspace. Will all learners, especially those with physical disabilities, be able to access resources and have the space to play an active part in the lesson? If there is the opportunity to alter visual and/or auditory stimuli to respond to individual needs, then this should be considered.

### Music and ICT

- [Chrome Music Lab](#)
- [BBC – Bring the Noise](#) – free interactive musical games to support learners
- [BBC Ten Pieces](#)
- [Soundbeam](#) – software for learners with physical disabilities
- [AudioMulch](#) and [Garage Band](#) – interactive composition tools

## Curriculum Considerations

Across both key stages, learners should be encouraged to perform, listen to, review, and evaluate a wide range of music from different genres. This is a key part of their primary experience as it supports the development of personal preferences, respect for the opinions of others and appreciation of the impact that music can have on mood.

All learners should have the opportunity to sing, to learn an instrument and compose their own music with or without the use of ICT.<sup>1</sup> Understanding and exploring how music is created, considering inter-related dimensions, is something that can be achievable and is adaptable to all learners, regardless of individual needs.

### Key Stage 1

Singing, chanting and rhyming form significant parts of the Key Stage 1 curriculum, as does the playing of tuned and untuned instruments, musically. Carefully selecting instruments ensures that all learners can access this element of the curriculum and be successful at it. They will begin to develop the foundational knowledge and skills to enable them to explore sound. Correct terminology can be used, but there are ways of simplifying this, using pictorial or visual aids to support understanding. Learners should be regularly listening to and appreciating a range of live and recorded music, e.g., [Classical 100](#). This can be incorporated into other areas of school life, including assemblies.

### Key Stage 2

The skills previously acquired in Key Stage 1 will be developed further to encourage singing and playing musically with increased confidence and control. There is a greater emphasis on composition, including improvisation, for a range of purposes. Although the National Curriculum mentions using and understanding musical notation, this can be represented in different ways to meet the needs of all learners. Regular exposure to a range of high-quality live and recorded music will help to build a familiar and recognisable repertoire for learners.

## Strategies to Scaffold Learning

### How can I support learners who struggle with attention?

- Carefully consider the layout of the learning environment to engage all learners and maximise access to resources, bearing in mind that circles and grouped tables can be a barrier to attention on learning.
- Pre-expose learners to the content of the lesson, e.g., show them particular instruments and how they are played, share snippets of music and pre-teach musical elements and terminology.
- Consider potential unhelpful sources of distraction, such as over-frequent changes of task or unstructured group work.
- Give learners a particular role in the lesson to keep them engaged and promote active participation.
- Arrange movement breaks or short 'time out' breaks away from the learning environment when and if necessary.

### How can I support learners who have sensory issues?

- Consider the size of the group and allow for the fact that learners may benefit from smaller groups or individual work.
- Music lessons can be challenging for learners with auditory sensitivity. Pre-exposure to music and/or instruments can help to prepare learners, as can the use of a neighbouring room, if space allows. Ear defenders can enable learners to partake in lessons with more confidence.
- Create opportunities for physical contact with instruments and/or sound sources if learners cannot hear sounds clearly. Percussion, stringed, wind and brass instruments all lend themselves well to this.
- Consider the lighting in the learning environment and if learners would benefit from reduced glare on interactive whiteboards and computer screens.

### How can I support learners who struggle to access lessons because of literacy difficulties?

- Provide visual aids to enable learners to identify instruments and musical dimensions, such as pitch and tempo.
- Use strategies such as modelling, demonstrating and imitating to help learners understand musical concepts.
- Create a graphic score or pictorial representations of a composition to provide a form of non-verbal communication.

### How can I support learners who struggle to retain vocabulary?

- Begin each lesson with a recap of key vocabulary learned to date.
- Provide visual word banks that are accessible throughout, as necessary. For support in identifying different instruments photographs of those learners playing the instruments, can help with retention. For support with the meanings of musical dimensions, pictorial word banks can be effective.
- Drip-feed key vocabulary throughout the school day, rather than limiting references to specific music lessons. Discussions around music listened to during assemblies or in other curriculum areas can help to embed this language.

### How can I support learners who need additional time to develop conceptual understanding?

- Break down content into small steps and allow time for guided practice of each step to build up conceptual understanding.
- If resources allow, create a small group opportunity to enable learners to develop understanding with closer adult intervention.
- Maximise opportunities to model, demonstrate and imitate in to encourage active participation through a scaffolded experience.

### Case Study

*A learner in Year 3 has a range of learning difficulties including gross and fine motor skills delay, low muscle tone, hypermobility and auditory sensitivity. She finds loud noises challenging at times, especially if they are unexpected.*

*It has taken several years to build her confidence enough to partake in whole school assemblies, especially when large groups are singing, cheering or clapping together. She loves to sing, has gradually built up the confidence to join the school choir and has played a small role in choir performances, with careful and gradual confidence building.*

*Historically, music lessons have been challenging, at times due to her sensitivity to noise. With an EHCP in place, she has an adult working alongside her and this has enabled flexibility with her involvement in lessons. Pre-exposure to learning environments and instruments has been crucial in Child A's development in music education. Having the opportunity to test out instruments and listen to the sounds they make in advance of lessons, often alongside a trusted friend, has helped with familiarisation, enabling her to take part with more confidence. At times, this has enabled her to be 'the expert' who shows the rest of the class what to do.*

*On occasions, such as during whole-class lessons using African drums, Child A has used ear defenders to reduce the sound and this has been a successful intervention leading towards full participation in the lesson.*