

Planning, teaching and assessing the  
curriculum for pupils with learning difficulties

# Music

First published March 2001

ISBN 1 85838 476 1

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Printed in Great Britain

The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority is an exempt charity under Schedule 2 of the Charities Act 1993.

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# Introduction

## What are the purposes of these guidelines?

These guidelines support the planning, development and implementation of the curriculum for pupils with learning difficulties. They draw on effective practice across a range of schools and can be used in mainstream and special primary and secondary schools, specialised units and independent schools. They also provide support to the range of services that work with these schools.

The guidelines can be used with the school's own material, the National Curriculum and the frameworks for teaching literacy and mathematics to:

- confirm the statutory entitlement to learning for all pupils and build on the principles of inclusion set out in the National Curriculum
- help schools develop an inclusive curriculum by:
  - setting suitable learning challenges
  - responding to pupils' diverse learning needs
  - including all learners by overcoming potential barriers to learning and assessment
- provide a stimulus to revisit and revise existing schemes of work or a basis to develop new ones.

## Who are the pupils?

The guidelines relate to all pupils aged between five and 16 who have learning difficulties, regardless of factors such as their ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, family background or gender, or the extent of their other difficulties. This includes pupils who are unlikely to achieve above level 2 at key stage 4. (These pupils are usually described as having severe or profound and multiple learning difficulties.) This also includes pupils with learning difficulties who may be working at age-related expectations in some subjects but are well below this in others. (These pupils, along with those with other significant difficulties, are often described as having moderate learning difficulties.)

## Who are the guidelines for?

The guidelines support the work of a range of adults who are concerned with meeting the needs of pupils with learning difficulties. This includes class teachers, subject coordinators, special educational needs coordinators (SENCOs), senior managers, teaching assistants, parents, carers, governors, therapists, Local Education Authority (LEA) and advisory support services, and professionals from health, social services and the voluntary sector. Throughout these materials, the term 'staff' is used to refer to all those concerned with the education of these pupils.

## What is in the guidelines?

The guidelines contain:

- support on developing and planning the curriculum
- support on developing skills across the curriculum
- subject materials on planning, teaching and assessing each National Curriculum subject, religious education (RE) and personal, social and health education (PSHE) and citizenship. These include descriptions of pupils' attainment showing progress up to level 1 of the National Curriculum, which can be used to recognise attainment and structure teaching.

## The subject materials

The subject materials support staff in planning appropriate learning opportunities. The materials do not represent a separate curriculum for pupils with learning difficulties or an alternative to the National Curriculum. They demonstrate a process for developing access to the National Curriculum and support staff in developing their own curriculum to respond to the needs of their pupils at each key stage. The materials offer one approach to meeting this challenge. Schools may already have effective structures or may wish to adopt different approaches.

The materials identify learning opportunities relevant to each subject. They demonstrate appropriate learning across the scope of the National Curriculum from the earliest levels. They are intended to increase schools' confidence in their capacity to provide appropriate access to the National Curriculum without the need for disapplication. This is particularly pertinent in key stage 4, where disapplication for specific purposes, in line with statutory criteria, is now possible.

A common framework for these materials has been used. In each subject, appropriate learning for pupils with diverse needs at each key stage has been identified. Those aspects of the programmes of study that may create particular difficulties are also discussed, as well as aspects that may be unsuitable at a particular key stage. The suggested activities can be used to develop ideas for relevant, accessible and challenging experiences in curriculum plans.

# Responding to pupils' needs when teaching music

## The importance of music to pupils with learning difficulties

Music is a powerful, unique form of communication that can change the way pupils feel, think and act. It brings together intellect and feeling and enables personal expression, reflection and emotional development. As an integral part of culture, past and present, it helps pupils understand themselves and relate to others, forging important links between the home, school and the wider world.

In particular, music offers pupils with learning difficulties opportunities to:

- experience a sense of pride and achievement in their own work
- demonstrate their ability in an area not dependent on language skills
- improve listening, concentration and attention skills
- develop imitation skills
- produce sounds and develop expressive language
- practise turn-taking
- choose, discriminate and justify decisions
- experiment and try new ideas where there are no right or wrong answers
- develop coordination and functional fine motor skills
- support the development of movement and mobility
- encourage cooperation, tolerance and a willingness to work with others
- develop self-discipline and self-confidence
- foster community involvement
- be involved in activities that may provide a fulfilling hobby or pastime and promote lifelong learning.

In response to these opportunities, pupils can make progress in music by:

- applying and consolidating skills, knowledge and understanding in a wide variety of age-related activities
- listening and responding to a wide variety of contrasting music
- listening and responding to music for increasing periods, *for example, attending concerts*
- increasing engagement and quality of response in musical activities, showing the development of specific knowledge, skills and understanding
- developing each of the interrelated skills of performing, composing and appraising in all activities
- extending these skills by applying listening skills and a knowledge and understanding of music
- becoming involved in community-based musical activities.

## Modifying the music programmes of study

The statutory inclusion statement of the National Curriculum requires staff to modify the programmes of study to give all pupils relevant and appropriately challenging work at each key stage. Staff should teach knowledge, skills and understanding in ways that match and challenge their pupils' abilities.

Staff can modify the music programmes of study for pupils with learning difficulties by:

- choosing material from earlier key stages
- maintaining and reinforcing previous learning, as well as introducing new knowledge, skills and understanding
- using the programmes of study for music as a resource, or to provide a context, in planning learning appropriate to age and needs
- focusing on one aspect, or a limited number of aspects, in depth or in outline, of the age-related programmes of study
- clearly identifying the starting point for each aspect
- teaching the knowledge, skills and understanding at an appropriate developmental level to provide a sound basis for progression in music
- providing access to appropriate ICT to support and develop pupils' work at all key stages, *for example, computer programs, switches, sound beams, communication aids, recording equipment*. ICT provides many pupils with alternative ways to cause, create, choose, organise, link and change sounds and music and help them take part as fully as possible in the music curriculum.

The four aspects of music identified in the National Curriculum programmes of study all need to be considered and developed together. Each has an important role in contributing to the development of the others. This interrelation of the four aspects is the essence of music. When planning lessons, care needs to be taken to avoid excessive focus on one aspect of music to the exclusion of the others. Such lessons reduce the opportunities for pupils to develop musical capability.

## Listening and applying knowledge and understanding

At an early stage, this aspect begins with the development of an awareness of, and an ability to attend to, voices, sounds and different types of music. Through all musical activities, teaching this aspect across key stages helps pupils to:

- listen and develop aural memory, through listening, imitation and turn-taking activities, *for example, tracking a sound, responding to one's own name in a song, imitating body percussion sounds, matching sounds made behind a screen, responding to a key word in a song, passing a clap or rhythm round a circle, playing instruments in turn*
- be aware of the different musical elements, and how these can be organised into musical structures, *for example, through exploring instruments with different pitches, listening to music with contrasting tempos, stilling to silence in music-making activities, tapping out the rhythm of a name or a word on a tambour, playing percussion at different tempos following a conductor, making a variety of sounds using body percussion, experiencing live music performance with solo and group artists*

- understand how sounds can be made, produced and described in different ways, *for example, by making sounds and music in a variety of ways using voice, body and a range of objects, instruments and ICT, linking sounds to objects or pictures or symbols or signs, using graphic scores and conventional notation*
- understand how music is used for particular purposes, by linking specific sounds, songs and music to particular activities, experiences and moods, *for example, the sound of the dinner trolley, 'good morning' song, quiet music played at the end of the day, music for dancing or relaxing, special music for religious festivals and celebrations, music for worship*; by listening to music previously heard live, *for example, classical or rock concerts*; and by producing music individually or as a result of group or class work.

### Controlling sounds through singing and playing – performing skills

For all pupils, controlling sounds through singing and playing – performing skills – begins with exploring, controlling and interacting with sound, and developing an awareness of self and others. Teaching this aspect across key stages can help pupils to:

- participate in songs, possibly through the use of ICT, *for example, pressing a switch to play a pre-recorded contribution at an appropriate point in a song*; vocalising; signing actions; humming a phrase of a melody or using an end word or phrase in a chant, rhyme or song; developing vocal techniques and musical expression
- play tuned and untuned instruments, possibly through exploring and interacting with sound making or vibrating objects, *for example, exploring sound makers, reaching for instruments, moving the body to operate a sound beam or a musical mobile*; playing a variety of instruments using a range of techniques to produce different sound qualities and working to increase awareness and control; performing with others, through activities to develop an awareness of self and others in musical activities, *for example, listening and attending to music, responding to their own name in a song*; anticipating turns; taking turns; working collaboratively with others with an increasing awareness of their role within the group and their audience, *for example, starting and stopping at a given signal, participating in a simple percussion performance*.

### Creating and developing musical ideas – composing skills

Creating and developing musical ideas – composing skills – begins with pupils attending, experimenting, exploring and choosing between sounds. Teaching this aspect across key stages can help pupils to:

- create sounds spontaneously through: close attention to adults' imitations of pupils' own sounds, *for example, vocal, body percussion or use of instruments*; being aware that their movements create sounds; experimenting with sounds and sound makers, including the use of ICT, *for example, computer programs and sound beams*; creating a body percussion sequence, *for example, clap-stamp-clap*; improvising; exploring a range of musical elements in a variety of ways, *for example, vocally, using body percussion and instrumentally, using ICT*
- explore, choose and organise sounds and musical ideas through developing an awareness of how sounds can be made by listening, observing and exploring; developing an understanding of cause and effect and how sounds can be changed and ordered; demonstrating a preference for particular sounds; making choices; using ICT to create, record, change, combine and refine sounds; playing percussion instruments in a group and adding or taking away one instrument or a group of instruments at a time; using graphic scores to sequence music; playing,



comparing and contrasting different arrangements; creating a sound picture using instruments or everyday objects; combining aspects of the same and different musical elements to make a simple musical structure, *for example, dynamics (loud, quiet, loud) and pitch and duration (high and fast, low and slow, high and fast)* selecting and combining resources within a given musical structure, genre, style or tradition.

### Responding and reviewing – appraising skills

Developing appraising skills begins with pupils attending to, and moving in response to, music, developing an awareness of the similarities and differences in sounds, and the feelings, experiences and mood music evokes. Teaching this aspect across key stages can help pupils to:

- explore and express their ideas and feelings about music, *for example, through facial responses, body movements, signs, selecting pictures or symbols, painting to music, dance, expressive language* and use a musical vocabulary; develop preferences for particular styles of music; develop an awareness of the similarities and differences between different pieces of music and the feelings and moods they create; respond to music linked to art, pictures, photographs, poems and extracts from books; compare and contrast music by different composers on particular themes, *for example, space, sea, war*; compare and contrast different music by the same composer
- make improvements to their own and others' work by developing an awareness of the similarities and differences between sounds; by identifying and comparing sounds; by listening to and recognising recordings of their own and others' work; by making changes to their work, *for example, by choosing to accompany a song with a different instrument, altering the sequence of picture cue cards to change a simple composition*; and by making and justifying choices about instruments, sounds and music.

### Improving access to the music curriculum

Staff can make music more accessible by helping pupils to experience and play instruments at first hand. They can improve access by:

- enabling pupils to communicate their responses to different music and their choices of music through the most appropriate means, *for example, body movements, facial expressions, signs, pointing, moving an adult's hand onto or towards objects, selecting an object, picture or symbol using an electronic communication aid, speech*
- allowing time for pupils to settle and be familiar with the surroundings so that they are able to participate in a musical activity
- allowing time for pupils to respond and communicate, taking account of the pace at which pupils work and the physical effort required
- correctly positioning pupils so that they can make purposeful movements or focus on an activity
- allowing time for pupils to reach for, grasp or release an object
- allowing pupils time to explore or play instruments, alone or with others
- using a multi-sensory approach where appropriate.

The instruments pupils experience and play may need to be adapted or accessed using ICT by:

- hanging instruments or objects on frames
- using percussion instruments with a large playing surface
- using beaters with large sponge handles
- using bells attached to a wrist or foot
- playing instruments mounted on a height-adjustable stand
- using a keyboard linked to a sound beam.

When teaching music to pupils with learning difficulties who have a hearing impairment, staff may need to:

- emphasise the visual and tactile sensations in musical activities, *for example, by the use of resonance boards on which pupils can rest their bodies and feel the vibration linked to the sound, or the use of larger instruments which vibrate strongly*
- think carefully about the environment where listening and musical experiences take place, considering noise levels and background noise for those pupils wearing hearing aids and the use of small enclosed spaces in which sounds are enhanced and extraneous noise avoided
- think about the appropriate pitch of an instrument to be used, *for example, high or low*, depending on the type of hearing loss.

When teaching music to pupils with learning difficulties who have a visual impairment, staff may need to:

- think about alternative cues so that pupils can anticipate when, and how, sounds will occur
- present objects to pupils in particular ways, *for example, with a verbal cue, in their visual range*
- make sure that pupils know who is present in a group activity and who is singing or playing in the music group
- use appropriate ways to introduce signs and symbols which organise, record and notate music
- carefully position the pupils in the group, so that they can make full use of the vision they have
- use special lighting and enlarged print or notation
- think carefully about the environment where listening and musical experiences take place and be aware that some pupils may benefit from the use of small enclosed spaces so that sounds are enhanced and extraneous noise is reduced.

Teaching music can help pupils to develop their broader communication and literacy skills through encouraging interaction with other pupils as well as staff. With some pupils, communication and literacy skills will develop through using a range of visual, written and tactile materials, *for example, large print*. With other pupils, their skills will develop through using alternative and augmentative communication, *for example, body movements, eye gaze, facial expression, gestures including pointing and signing, symbols and pictures, objects of reference and electronic communication aids*.

As all aspects of the music programmes of study are appropriate for all pupils, the DfEE/QCA schemes of work for music provide a useful resource for curriculum planning. The DfEE/QCA scheme of work for music key stages 1 and 2 can be used for pupils with learning difficulties at all key stages.

- Units 1, 2, 3, 5 and 6 aim to provide a firm base of musical knowledge, skills and understanding on which future work can be developed.
- Units 4 and 7 allow for further progression.

- Units 8 to 17 provide further development, especially when planning for mixed-ability groups.
- Units 18 to 21 may present a considerable challenge as they are aimed at National Curriculum level 4.

The units of work are structured so that the following types of skills are developed:

- ongoing skills – listening and responding, and singing
- descriptive skills – using and controlling expressive musical elements
- discipline skills – rhythmic skills, which develop a sense of pulse and rhythm, and melodic skills, which develop a sense of pitch and phrase
- ensemble skills – performing music with others.

Ensemble skills will be the most challenging for pupils with learning difficulties. In a mixed-ability group, however, all pupils can be involved by playing or singing a part at an appropriate standard. Pupils may be paired together or with an adult to support their involvement.

The DfEE/QCA scheme of work for music key stage 3 provides the context for musical activities which continue to develop skills already covered in key stages 1 and 2.

When using the schemes of work staff can:

- select a specific motivating focus from the unit
- make it relevant to pupils' experiences
- identify clear expectations for pupils
- reinforce and consolidate learning by repetition and variety.

There is no requirement to teach music at key stage 4. However, for many pupils, music offers satisfying challenges both as a subject in its own right and as a way of developing skills in many other areas of the curriculum.

## Opportunities and activities at key stage 1

Much of the music programme of study at key stage 1 is relevant to pupils with learning difficulties. With modification, it can provide stimulating and challenging learning opportunities.

The focus of teaching music at key stage 1 may be on giving pupils opportunities to access the four aspects of the music curriculum.

Given these opportunities in music at key stage 1:

<p><b>all</b> pupils with learning difficulties (including those with the most profound disabilities)</p>	<p>are encouraged to listen and respond physically to a wide range of sounds and music. They have opportunities to be part of a music-making group, to join in songs, chants and rhymes, and to explore sounds. They play tuned and untuned instruments, either independently or with support, and experience how sounds and silence can create different moods and effects.</p>
<p><b>most</b> pupils with learning difficulties (including those with severe difficulties in learning) who will develop further skills, knowledge and understanding in most aspects of the subject</p>	<p>respond to, and make, a range of sounds. They learn that sounds can be made in different ways. They have opportunities to join in songs and play instruments with others. They experiment with sound and make simple choices in musical activities. They are helped to show preferences for different styles of music, and are aware of obvious similarities and differences in sounds and music.</p>
<p><b>a few</b> pupils with learning difficulties who will develop further aspects of knowledge, skills and understanding in the subject</p>	<p>recognise and explore how sounds can be made and changed. They use their voices in different ways, <i>such as speaking, singing and chanting</i>, and perform with awareness of others. They repeat short rhythmic and melodic patterns, and create and choose sounds in response to given starting points. They may respond to different moods in music and recognise well-defined changes in sounds, identify simple repeated patterns and take account of musical instructions.</p>

Some parts of the key stage 1 programme of study, such as ensemble skills (performing music with others), may be too demanding for some pupils. Such parts may become less demanding as pupils get older, but it may not be appropriate to teach those parts to some pupils during this key stage. It may be more appropriate to draw on materials from *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage*.

The units in the DfEE/QCA scheme of work for music key stages 1 and 2 can be adapted for pupils with learning difficulties. The following activities show how this can be done and provide an example of an approach staff can take with other units.

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### **‘Sounds interesting?’**

This activity is adapted from the DfEE/QCA scheme of work for music key stages 1 and 2, unit 2 ‘Sounds interesting’ by:

- choosing a specific focus to explore everyday sounds
- centring the activities described on the theme of ‘In the kitchen’.

#### *Introduction: what sounds can we hear?*

Pupils experience and explore a range of sounds in the kitchen environment.

They may:

- explore sounds linked to a cookery activity, *for example, splashing water in a washing-up bowl, beating a wooden spoon in a plastic bowl, listening to the whirr of an electric whisk*
- discriminate between contrasting sounds
- match sounds to pictures or symbols
- record sounds they hear using a tape recorder/BIGmack switch/Language Master
- make a visual record of sounds they have heard using photographs or symbols.

#### *Exploration: how can pupils make and use sounds expressively?*

Pupils may:

- reach for, and grasp, kitchen objects
- improvise sounds with a variety of kitchen objects
- play objects loudly and quietly, *for example, this could be linked to a simple card game by turning over cards with loud and quiet symbols*
- play a game, *for example, releasing or putting kitchen objects into a plastic basket as quietly as possible*
- make as many different sounds as they can with one object
- each wait for a person to finish before they play their ‘object’ in turn.

### *Bringing it all together*

Pupils use sound to describe events, feelings, moods.

They may:

- join in a song such as ‘Someone’s in the kitchen with Dinah’ in which pupils’ names are used in the song and a kitchen object is mentioned in the final line, *for example, ‘Paul is in the kitchen with Mary, Paul is in the kitchen, I know, I know. Paul is in the kitchen with Mary, washing up in the bowl’*. Pupils take part in the activities in the song and are encouraged to choose the next person to be named or the object, and if it is ‘played’ quietly or loudly
- listen to the teacher recount a simple story about a cooking activity involving the pupils by name and a range of noise-making kitchen objects and activities. Pupils are encouraged to look at, feel and play objects at the appropriate points in the story after they have listened to it, and to make a tape recording of the story and identify their own sound in it.

This work can link to work in English, design and technology and science.

## Opportunities and activities at key stage 2

Much of the music programme of study at key stage 2 is relevant to pupils with learning difficulties. With modification, it can provide stimulating and challenging learning opportunities.

The focus of teaching music at key stage 2 may be on giving pupils opportunities to access the four aspects of the music curriculum.

Given these opportunities in music at key stage 2:

**all** pupils with learning difficulties (including those with the most profound disabilities)

listen and respond to a variety of different stimuli with increasing personal involvement. They have opportunities to be part of music-making groups of different sizes. They are encouraged to join in songs, chants and rhymes and have opportunities to explore sounds and play tuned and untuned instruments either independently or with support. They are involved in simple performances. They are helped to explore their thoughts and feelings by responding physically, intellectually and emotionally to a variety of music from different times and cultures.

**most** pupils with learning difficulties (including those with severe difficulties in learning) who will develop further skills, knowledge and understanding in most aspects of the subject

recognise and explore how sounds can be made and changed. They may use their voices in different ways, *such as speaking and chanting*, and perform with others. They may repeat short rhythmic and melodic patterns and create and choose sounds in response to given starting points. They are helped to respond to different moods in music and recognise well-defined changes in sounds, identify simple repeated patterns and take account of musical instructions.

<p><b>a few</b> pupils with learning difficulties who will develop further aspects of knowledge, skills and understanding in the subject</p>	<p>recognise and explore ways in which sounds can be organised. They may sing with a sense of shape of the melody, and perform simple patterns and accompaniments, keeping to a steady pulse. They may choose and order sounds within simple structures, <i>such as beginning, middle, end</i>, in response to given starting points. They represent sounds with symbols and recognise how musical elements can be used to create different moods and effects. They are helped to improve their own work.</p>
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The units in the DfEE/QCA scheme of work for music key stages 1 and 2 can be adapted for pupils with learning difficulties. The following activities show how this can be done and provide examples of an approach staff can take with other units.

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### A musical description of the park

This activity is adapted from the DfEE/QCA scheme of work for music key stages 1 and 2, unit 9 'Animal magic'.

#### *Introduction: how can sounds and music describe a visit to the park?*

Pupils experience and explore a range of sounds linked to a visit to the park, *for example, footsteps, rustling leaves, ducks on the pond, birds in the trees, children calling out.*

They may:

- know the difference between contrasting sounds and link them to pictures, *for example, leaves and footsteps*
- listen to recorded sounds linked to the park visit
- listen to extracts of recorded music linked to an 'Autumn in the park' theme, *for example, Vivaldi's 'Autumn' in 'The four seasons', Prokofiev's 'Peter and the wolf' (oboe solo for the duck), Vaughan Williams' 'The lark ascending', and Blur's 'Park life'*
- listen and compare contrasting recordings, *for example, those with birds such as the lark and the duck.*

#### *Exploration: using sounds descriptively*

Pupils may:

- create sound effects linked to the theme, by using their movements to operate a sound beam
- create rustling sounds with dry leaves and also with different types of paper which they listen to and then compare with sounds recorded on tape



- help to create a ‘rainstorm in the park’, *for example, starting with quiet sounds, building up to a crescendo (the storm) and, finally, the sounds die away. They use body percussion to create the effect, for example, they rub hands, tap fingers, pat knees, clap hands, stamp feet, either in imitation of a leader or in turn*
- illustrate a story by playing instruments, *for example, someone climbing up to the top of a slide. Pupils play one note higher as the person climbs each step up the ladder, then a glissando on the xylophone for the slide to the bottom. Another member of the group may also bang a tambour for the bump at the bottom of the slide.* Such an activity could be repeated with pupils playing single chime bars or boom whackers in turn
- play a game about different people walking through the park, *for example, each pupil becomes an old man or lady walking fast or slow, or someone who wears different types of shoes or walks through leaves or puddles. Each pupil makes sound effects by moving slowly or quickly across the room, wearing different shoes, banging different types of shoes on the table, using percussion instruments for the different people.* Such an activity could be linked to a card game using appropriate symbols. Pupils should be encouraged to think about:
  - the length of steps, *for example, short, striding*
  - the rhythm of movement, *for example, skipping, scurrying, jogging*
  - the quality of movement, *for example, heavy, light.*

### ***Bringing it all together***

Pupils choose particular ways in which the elements can be combined in an expressive way.

They may:

- take part in the song ‘Walking in the park’ (to the tune of ‘The farmer’s in his den’.) They use pupils’ names in the song and name something they heard in the park, *for example, ‘Walking in the park, walking in the park, what did Matthew hear/see, walking in the park’.* Pupils take part in creating the sound effects in the song, *for example, they select who will be next in the song and what they saw or heard in the park by presenting objects, pictures, signing or other methods of communication.* They are encouraged to match sounds and movements descriptively, and respond to narration, *for example, through the song, with sounds and movement*
- make a sound picture (in a group) linked to the song ‘Park life’. Pupils use ideas from the lyrics to link movements to sound using ICT, body percussion, vocal sounds, and tuned and untuned instruments. Ideas from the lyrics would include:
  - leaving the house in the morning
  - swooping pigeons, feeding sparrows
  - joggers running circuits
- select pictures or symbols to represent their ideas
- extend the park sound picture by:
  - selecting pictures linked to sound instruments, *for example, rain to rainmaker, slide to xylophone, footsteps to claves*
  - punctuating the sound picture with a chant, repetitive sound effect or movement
  - making decisions about whether sounds are quiet/loud, fast/slow, high/low and how musical elements can be combined to create an effect
  - rehearsing and presenting a short performance using sounds, movement and words.

This work can link to work in English, science and PE.

## Opportunities and activities at key stage 3

As with the earlier key stages, all pupils should be given opportunities to access the four aspects of the music curriculum. Teaching music during key stage 3 can reinforce earlier learning as well as develop new skills. Any modifications to the music curriculum need to take into account the age of the pupil.

Given these opportunities in music at key stage 3:

**all** pupils with learning difficulties (including those with the most profound disabilities)

listen to, experience and explore specific genres, styles and traditions from different times and cultures and develop their own musical preferences. They work in groups of different sizes and are encouraged to take part in a range of musical activities. They may attend and take part in performances of different styles of music and be involved in community-based musical activities.

**most** pupils with learning difficulties (including those with severe difficulties in learning) who will develop further skills, knowledge and understanding in most aspects of the subject

recognise and explore ways in which sounds can be organised. They may sing with a sense of the shape of the melody, and perform simple patterns and accompaniments keeping to a steady pulse. They are helped to choose and order sounds in simple structures, *such as beginning, middle, end*, in response to given starting points. They represent sounds with picture symbols and recognise how the musical elements can be used to create different moods and effects. With support, they can make improvements to their own work.

**a few** pupils with learning difficulties who will develop further aspects of knowledge, skills and understanding in the subject

recognise and explore ways in which sounds can be combined and used expressively. They may sing in tune with expression and perform rhythmically simple parts using a limited range of notes. They have opportunities to improvise repeated patterns and combine several layers of sound for a combined effect. They may recognise how the different musical elements are combined and used expressively, and make improvements to their own work, commenting on the intended effect.

The units in the DfEE/QCA scheme of work for music key stage 3 can be adapted for pupils with learning difficulties. The following activities show how this can be done and provide examples of an approach staff can take with other units.

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### Soundscapes

This activity is adapted from the DfEE/QCA scheme of work for music key stage 3, with particular reference to unit 3, 'Soundscapes'.

#### *Introduction: what is music technology?*

Pupils experience and experiment with a range of acoustic and electronic sounds linked to a space theme.

They may:

- make a range of sounds using their voices, body percussion and instruments
- make a range of space sound effects using a sound module, a keyboard linked to switches, or a sound beam
- listen to recordings of different music/songs, which use acoustic and electronic instruments, *for example, Strauss' 'Also sprach Zarathustra', David Bowie's 'Space oddity (Major Tom)', Holst's 'The planets', Babylon Zoo's 'Spaceman', Mike Oldfield's 'Collaborations', extract from 'Star's end'.*

#### *Exploration: how can music technology help to change and control sounds?*

Pupils create sounds using body percussion, vocalisations and/or instruments.

They may:

- record and replay body percussion, vocalisations and/or instruments loudly/quietly or at different speeds
- experiment by making sounds into a microphone linked to an amplifier
- make different movements to create different sounds and different sequences of sound linked to a sound beam

- make a short ‘space’ composition by choosing different pictures/musical phrases and making choices about their sequence using a computer program. This can be saved and replayed at different speeds and volumes using different instruments.

*Application: combining acoustic and electronic sounds*

Pupils make acoustic and electronic sounds.

They may:

- listen to a space rhyme or poem, *for example, one they have created as a group*. The group chooses between a limited selection of acoustic or electronic sounds for a ‘space composition’. They use picture cues if appropriate, or choose a conductor. Each group records a complete performance
- make a space soundscape using both electronic and acoustic sounds. Work on this task may need to be built up slowly over a number of sessions. The class is split and each group given a pack of a small number of picture cues linked to a space theme, *for example, photographs, pictures or symbols*. Each group is asked to decide on a sound or sequence of sounds for each picture. Sounds are recorded for reference and the groups experiment with the sequencing of picture cues and playing the composition. The groups perform their composition and the performances are recorded. The groups listen to the recordings and discuss their preferences.

This work can link to work in English and science.

# Performance descriptions

These performance descriptions outline early learning and attainment before level 1 in eight levels, from P1 to P8.

The performance descriptions can be used by teachers in the same way as the National Curriculum level descriptions to:

- decide which description best fits a pupil's performance over a period of time and in different contexts
- develop or support more focused day-to-day approaches to ongoing teacher assessment by using the descriptions to refine and develop long-, medium- and short-term planning
- track linear progress towards attainment at National Curriculum level 1
- identify lateral progress by looking for related skills at similar levels across their subjects
- record pupils' overall development and achievement, for example, at the end of a year or a key stage.

## Performance descriptions across subjects

The performance descriptions for P1 to P3 are common across all subjects. They outline the types and range of general performance that pupils with learning difficulties might characteristically demonstrate. Subject-focused examples are included to illustrate some of the ways in which staff might identify attainment in different subject contexts.

**P1 (i)** Pupils encounter activities and experiences. They may be passive or resistant. They may show simple reflex responses, *for example, startling at sudden noises or movements*. Any participation is fully prompted.

**P1 (ii)** Pupils show emerging awareness of activities and experiences. They may have periods when they appear alert and ready to focus their attention on certain people, events, objects or parts of objects, *for example, becoming still in a concert hall*. They may give intermittent reactions, *for example, sometimes becoming excited at repeated patterns of sounds*.

**P2 (i)** Pupils begin to respond consistently to familiar people, events and objects. They react to new activities and experiences, *for example, turning towards unfamiliar sounds*. They begin to show interest in people, events and objects, *for example, looking for the source of music*. They accept and engage in coactive exploration, *for example, being encouraged to stroke the strings of a guitar*.

**P2 (ii)** Pupils begin to be proactive in their interactions. They communicate consistent preferences and affective responses, *for example, relaxing during certain pieces of music but not others*. They recognise familiar people, events and objects, *for example, a favourite song*. They perform actions, often by trial and improvement, and they remember learned responses over short periods of time, *for example, repeatedly pressing the keys of an electronic key board instrument*. They cooperate with shared exploration and supported participation, *for example, holding an ocean drum*.

**P3 (i)** Pupils begin to communicate intentionally. They seek attention through eye contact, gesture or action. They request events or activities, *for example, leading an adult to the CD player*. They participate in shared activities with less support. They sustain concentration for short periods. They explore materials in increasingly complex ways, *for example, tapping piano keys gently and with more vigour*. They observe the results of their own actions with interest, *for example, listening intently when moving across and through a sound beam*. They remember learned responses over more extended periods, *for example, recalling movements associated with a particular song from week to week*.

**P3 (ii)** Pupils use emerging conventional communication. They greet known people and may initiate interactions and activities, *for example, performing an action such as clapping hands to initiate a particular song*. They can remember learned responses over increasing periods of time and may anticipate known events, *for example, a loud sound at a particular point in a piece of music*. They may respond to options and choices with actions or gestures, *for example, choosing a shaker in a rhythm band activity*. They actively explore objects and events for more extended periods, *for example, tapping, stroking, rubbing or shaking an instrument to produce various effects*. They apply potential solutions systematically to problems, *for example, indicating by eye contact or gesture the pupil whose turn it is to play in a 'call and response' activity*.

## Performance descriptions in music

From level P4 to P8, many believe it is possible to describe pupils' performance in a way that indicates the emergence of skills, knowledge and understanding in music. The descriptions provide an example of how this can be done.

**P4** Pupils use single words, gestures, signs, objects, pictures or symbols to communicate about familiar musical activities or name familiar instruments. With some support, they listen and attend to familiar musical activities and follow and join in familiar routines. They are aware of cause and effect in familiar events, *for example, what happens when particular instruments are shaken, banged, scraped or blown, or that a sound can be started and stopped or linked to movement through a sound beam*. They begin to look for an instrument or noisemaker played out of sight. They repeat, copy and imitate actions, sounds or words in songs and musical performances.

**P5** Pupils take part in simple musical performances. They respond to signs given by a musical conductor, *for example, to start or stop playing*. They pick out a specific musical instrument when asked, *for example, a drum or a triangle*. They play loudly, quietly, quickly and slowly in imitation. They play an instrument when prompted by a cue card. They listen to, and imitate, distinctive sounds played on a particular instrument. They listen to a familiar instrument played behind a screen and match the sound to the correct instrument on a table.

**P6** Pupils respond to other pupils in music sessions. They join in and take turns in songs and play instruments with others. They begin to play, sing and move expressively in response to the music or the meaning of words in a song. They explore the range of effects that can be made by an instrument or sound maker. They copy simple rhythms and musical patterns or phrases. They can play groups of sounds indicated by a simple picture or symbol-based score. They begin to categorise percussion instruments by how they can be played, *for example, striking or shaking*.

**P7** Pupils listen to music and can describe music in simple terms, *for example, describing musical experiences using phrases or statements combining a small number of words, signs, symbols or gestures*. They respond to prompts to play faster, slower, louder, softer. They follow simple graphic scores with symbols or pictures and play simple patterns or sequences of music. Pupils listen and contribute to sound stories, are involved in simple improvisation and make basic choices about the sound and instruments used. They make simple compositions, *for example, by choosing symbols or picture cue cards, ordering them from left to right, or making patterns of sounds using computer software*.

**P8** Pupils listen carefully to music. They understand and respond to words, symbols and signs that relate to tempo, dynamics and pitch, *for example, faster, slower, louder, higher, and lower*. They create their own simple compositions, carefully selecting sounds. They create simple graphic scores using pictures or symbols. They use a growing musical vocabulary of words, signs or symbols to describe what they play and hear, *for example, fast, slow, high, low*. They make and communicate choices when performing, playing, composing, listening and appraising, *for example, prompting members of the group to play alone, in partnerships, in groups or all together*.











## About this publication

### Who's it for?

This handbook is for all those who work with pupils with learning difficulties. This includes pupils who are often described as having severe, profound and multiple, or moderate learning difficulties. The guidelines relate to all pupils aged five to 16 who are unlikely to achieve above level 2 at key stage 4.

### What's it about?

It provides support material to schools for planning learning opportunities and activities in music for pupils in each key stage. It includes performance descriptions of early learning and attainment in the National Curriculum.

### What's it for?

It will be useful in developing an inclusive curriculum. It can be used in mainstream schools, special primary and secondary schools, specialised units and independent schools. It can also support the range of services that work with pupils with learning difficulties.

### Related material

This handbook is part of a set of guidelines on planning and teaching the curriculum for pupils with learning difficulties. The entire set, which includes general guidelines, guidelines on developing skills and subject guidelines, can be found on the National Curriculum inclusion website at [www.nc.uk.net](http://www.nc.uk.net).

#### ***This publication has been sent to:***

Head teachers of special schools and LEA SEN advisers

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***Price and order ref:*** £4 QCA/01/747