



Music Curriculum Design for Special Education Schools

A Beginner's Guide

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Part 1 - Thinking about Curriculum



1.1 – Introduction

A very warm welcome to this guide. It has been created by a team of teachers and curriculum specialists as part of Music Education Hub East Midlands' Uprising! project. We hope it will be useful for anyone who has been tasked with designing a curriculum for their special education school or Designated Special Provision (DSP) unit.

Designing a curriculum for your class or school is a great opportunity to improve music provision for your pupils and reflect on what is important to you as a teacher. However, the design process can be unfamiliar, and the specialist nature of music theory and terminology can seem overwhelming at first.

How to use the guide

This guide explores some of the key issues and questions that you are likely to encounter whilst designing your curriculum. Begin by reading the first section, which considers the unique nature and purpose of music curricula in Special Education settings.

The second section offers a step-by-step guide to designing your own curriculum. It begins with a set of questions that are best explored in conversation with one or more colleagues: a curriculum specialist from your Music Education Hub, senior leader in your school, or colleague with a passion for music.

The third section shares links to existing schemes of work and useful teaching resources. The appendix offers examples of existing curricula, references for further reading, and information about the authors.

Before we jump in, a couple of important points:

- Designing a curriculum takes time and is an ongoing process. It works best when it is approached with curiosity and plenty of time for reflection, rather than a 'have-to' mentality.
- Your local Music Education Hub can support you in the design process. Hubs often have dedicated Curriculum Specialists who can work with you to design a curriculum that works for your colleagues and pupils. They also offer training programmes designed to develop the knowledge, skills and confidence that your colleagues will need to use your new curriculum.

We hope you enjoy this guide and that it helps you to develop a curriculum for your pupils that you are really proud of. You can find out more about the Youth Music funded MEHEM Uprising! Project at mehem.org/uprising.

1.2. What is a curriculum?

Curriculum meanings

Curriculum is a term that teachers and other professionals in education use frequently in the course of their work. However, there is sometimes an unrecognised variety of ideas and perhaps a missed opportunity to discuss with each other what we actually mean by *curriculum*. A beach looks like a beach from a distance. It's only when you kneel on it and let the sand run through your fingers that you realise that it is in fact made up of thousands of differently shaped pieces of rock and shell. Similarly, the idea of curriculum is made up of lots of differently shaped concepts and perspectives. Taking time to stop and think what these might be can form an important first stage of thinking in curriculum design.

Thinking about curriculum as an object

One way of thinking about curriculum is as an object: a written document that can be examined and held up to the light for analysis. Describing curriculum as an object is often preferred by schools and organisations, who may require their teachers to format documentation in the same way, or use standardised features when addressing curriculum thinking. This kind of approach allows a curriculum to be used as a source document from which lesson plans, short-term planning approaches, and long-term teaching and learning aspirations can be drawn.

It can be challenging to realise music curricula on paper, as curriculum design requires simultaneous thinking about musical learning, content, teacher approaches and enabling meaningful musical experiences for young people. It is important, therefore, to think of a written curriculum as a working document, where teachers continually develop or change curriculum forms. Teacher openness to working flexibly with a curriculum document allows the curriculum to be a starting block for musical journeys, rather than a rigid set of criteria.



Thinking about curriculum as interaction

Curriculum can also be understood as a dynamic engagement, which moves beyond written forms. This way of thinking describes curriculum as dialogue in learning spaces. Curriculum in this sense is continually negotiated, and is something with which you interact, rather than something you can capture in a document. This means that curriculum is something that is *experienced* as well as planned.

Thinking about curriculum as a dynamic set of events and interactions results in curriculum experiences which are creative, flexible and enable young people to make their own choices. This kind of approach is rather different from working through curriculum content as solely a planned set of activities over time. There is, therefore, reason to pause and reflect on whether our understandings of curriculum are developmental or restrictive.

Curriculum reflection

There can be a tension between whether we think about of curriculum as an object or as an interaction. Your school may require you to create a document, but that doesn't mean that you and your colleagues can't also see and discuss curriculum as a constantly developing interaction. It might be helpful to think about curriculum development in two stages, firstly the 'writing' of the curriculum, done centrally in the school, often by the music lead, and the subsequent 'shaping' of the music curriculum by individual class teachers. Only the class teacher and the team will be able to shape the curriculum effectively to best engage their pupils.

Thinking about your own curriculum vision is important, because this will become the bedrock upon which your curriculum decision-making will be based. There is rarely adequate time to consider our beliefs about curriculum during music teaching, so this may be a good moment to do so. There are links to further reading on this in the references section.

1.3 Key Questions

Do I need a dedicated music curriculum for all learners?

For pupils who are engaged in subject-specific study, the importance of a music curriculum is clear, and many teachers use the National Curriculum as the basis for curriculum planning. For pupils working below the level of the national curriculum and who are not engaged in subject-specific study, some schools place music making within a wider creative curriculum, and/or see it as a way of developing communication and functional skills, rather than as a subject in itself.

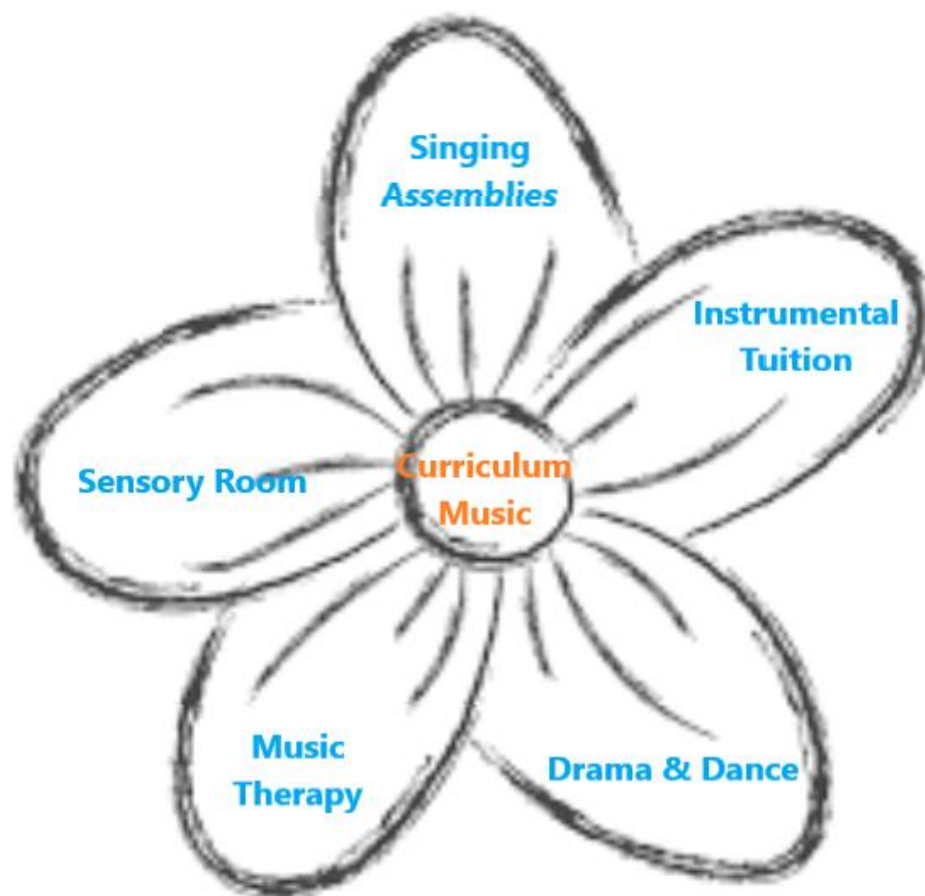
In contrast, we believe that a dedicated music curriculum is valuable for all learners, even those with the most complex needs working within 'informal' or 'pre-formal' pathways. Having a curriculum in place ensures opportunities for musical progression. It ensures breadth, depth and age appropriateness of musical activities for the duration of each pupil's school career. It promotes the value of music for music's sake. It encourages teachers who may find teaching music a challenge to developing their skills and confidence. Throughout this document we have given examples of how skills, knowledge and outcomes can be adapted for a wide variety of needs.

Should my curriculum prioritise musical or transferrable skills and knowledge?

Whilst any quality musical activity will develop both musical and transferrable skills, we believe the focus when designing both curricula and individual lessons should be on musical outcomes. In our experience, focussing on musical outcomes leads to higher quality, more diverse activities, and allows more flexibility for pupils to achieve unexpected transferrable outcomes. Having said that, the importance that many place on pupils' holistic development in general, and Education and Health Care Plans (EHCP) in particular, means that being explicit about transferrable outcomes in the planning phase can encourage colleagues to engage more readily in music-making.

How can my curriculum support other music making in the school?

Pupils experience music in many ways in the school, in assemblies, sensory rooms and dance and drama classes. Your music curriculum can weave these elements together, becoming a focal point that helps pupils to make sense of their complete musical worlds and offering a starting point for colleagues to build lessons from.



Rachel Beckett spent many years as a secondary mainstream music teacher before moving into special education. She offers three key pieces of advice for curriculum ‘shapers’:

“As a classroom teacher in a special education school, the freedom to choose and adapt the ‘juicy bits’ from existing mainstream music curricula is a wonderful opportunity. Combining this with the ever-present long-term goal of independence, creates a perfect starting point. However, the vast amount of material and that exists for a non-specialist to work through is a significant challenge, and no two special education classes or schools are the same. Different classes have their own identity, skill set and musical interests. A teacher cannot simply borrow a curriculum and deliver it without extensive adaptations, due to the variety of these specialised needs.

1. Listen to your pupils

This was the advice given to me by musician Jess Fisher as I transitioned from mainstream to special education. Pupils have musical interests and passions. They want to explore performance, composition and musical appraisal. A curriculum needs to make this possible without limitations. Have no preconceptions about what a pupil can or will achieve. Ignore research that tells you what 'an SEND pupil can and can't do'. All instruments and musical experiences can and should be made accessible.

2. *Be flexible*

Expect to revisit musical ideas and concepts enough times for a pupil to engage, explore and enjoy their musical experience. Pace the lessons to match the pupils' interests and musical development. Create a broad mid-term plan but expect it to change and develop. Don't be afraid to challenge preconceptions about ability. Plan, adapt and refine teaching lesson by lesson.

3. *Avoid tick box assessment*

Decide how music making might look for the individual but be flexible in your expectations or thinking. Do not allow assessment outcomes to limit or interfere with musical learning and exploration.

Part 2 - Designing your Curriculum: A suggested process

We have divided the design process into five stages, each with a key question to consider:

2.1 Discussion: Context, Rationale & Core values

Why are you designing a curriculum?

2.2 Skills & Knowledge

What skills and knowledge do you want your pupils to gain?

2.3 Structure & Progression

How will your curriculum be structured to offer breadth, depth and opportunities for progression?

2.4 Outcomes & Assessment

How do we evaluate success and progress?

2.5 Enrichment

What other musical experiences could enhance curriculum learning?

2.1 Context, Rationale & Core values

Your curriculum will sit within your school's overall ethos and structures, and it is important to consider *why* music should have an important place in your school, and the grounding principles that shape how you deliver music (your core values). We suggest you consider the following questions in conversation with a colleague or curriculum expert from your music education hub.

1. Describe musical life in your school. Who teaches music? How often? Where else does music happen in the school?
2. Do you know about any music your pupils are interested in and enjoy?
3. What template do you have to use, if any, for your long-term planning? Do you have to follow a common curriculum template for the whole school?
4. Why should music have an important place in your school? This is your 'rationale'.

5. What are your grounding principles for shaping your music curriculum? These are your 'core values'.

Your answers can be shaped into a short statement to be placed at the beginning of the curriculum and should ground your thinking as the curriculum develops.

	Some ideas to get you started
Why is music education an intrinsic part of your school's curriculum?	MUSIC IS: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a unique language and means of self-expression • an entitlement • an aesthetic essential • an immersive and compelling artform
What are the holistic/extra-curricular benefits of music education?	MUSIC-MAKING <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • enriches our lives, offering emotional depth, connection and perspective • sustains well-being • strengthens the school community • is a socialising agent that enriches communities at all levels • supports cultural capital and enculturation • supports learning across a range of subject areas
What are the core values that will shape music education in your school?	WE BELIEVE THAT: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • music education is an entitlement for all pupils • music education is fundamentally an interactive experience • curriculum delivery must be broad and balanced • our music curriculum should demonstrate clear progression pathways, with scope for tailoring the content to meet the needs of all pupils • music transcends barriers and presents opportunities for pupils with additional needs to excel. Pupils may achieve beyond their mainstream peers in this area. • our provision must open doors for pupils to progress to further study in specialist institutions • pupil voice and agency are principles to be valued and incorporated into the curriculum • access to high quality resources, instruments, equipment and technology are essential in order to ensure a complete and equitable musical experience

2.2. Musical Knowledge & Skills

2.2.1 Different ways to categorising knowledge and skills

Once the rational and core values are established, the next step is to look in detail at the knowledge and skills that you want your pupils to work towards.

The obvious place to begin is the **National Curriculum (NC)**. The aims and outcomes of the NC for music can be achieved by a majority of pupils in special education settings, though the government also acknowledges that ‘the full National Curriculum may not be the most appropriate route to maximising pupils’ learning and achievement and teachers can ‘disapply’ it for individuals or groups¹.

The NC provides a useful list of nine musical elements or building blocks for understanding music, called the ‘interrelated dimensions of music’: pitch, duration, dynamics, tempo, timbre, texture, structure and appropriate musical notations. EQUALS, an organisation that specialises in schemes of work for special education settings, uses these as the basis for structuring their semi-formal music scheme of work².

In addition to the NC, in 2021 the Department for Education released the **Model Music Curriculum (MMC)**³. It identifies four key areas of learning: performing, composing, singing and listening. Though it offers no guidance on how its contents could be adapted for special education settings, many teachers are keen to use elements of it in their classroom. We have taken the four areas of learning in the MMC and used them as the basis for our example descriptors below.

In contrast, the popular **Sounds of Intent (Sol) framework** is written specifically for pupils with complex needs in mind, and identifies three areas of musical learning: creating music, responding to music, and interacting with others through music.

It is up to you to group knowledge and skills in a way that suits you, your colleagues and your pupils.

2.2.2 – Identifying examples of knowledge and skills

As many special education schools have a wide variety of needs within a single classroom, it is important to be clear about what a certain musical skill or

¹ Disapplication of the National Curriculum, DfES 2006, Page 3, https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/286565/disapplication_of_the_national_curriculum.pdf

² Equals Semi-Formal (SLD) Curriculum Schemes of Work Preview - <https://equals.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Preview-My-Music.pdf>

³ Model Music Curriculum, DfE 2021, Page 3, https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/974358/Model_Music_Curriculum_Key_Stage_1__2_FINAL.pdf

understanding may 'look and sound like' for different cohorts. Using the MMC areas, we have created a set of exemplar descriptors for each area and mapped what this might look like for a pupil with Profound and Multiple Learning Disabilities (PMLD), a pupil with complex autism, and a pupil on a 'semi-formal' subject based pathway. This allows a teacher to have the same descriptor for all pupils in a lesson, with specific outcomes tailored to individuals.

Performing

	Descriptor	What this might look like for pupil with PMLD	What this might look like for a pupil with complex autism	What this might look like for a pupil on a semi-formal pathway
1.	Explores the sound of a musical instrument	Makes a gentle movement of an egg shaker Makes sound using an iPad	Selects different instruments using an iPad app e.g. GarageBand Can choose sounds on a keyboard	Produces contrasting timbres on a single acoustic instrument Explores harmonised voices on a microphone effects unit
2.	Initiates sound and recognises cause and effect	Intentionally triggers a switch with musical sample. Responds to sound with eye movement or change of body position	Puts the sound-maker next to face or hands to feel the sound Moves fingers over a string instrument to produce different pitches	Has 'question and answer' musical dialogues with classmate.
3.	Controls the sound of a musical instrument	Reaches out to a guitar player to stop an undesired sound.	Adjusts the volume on a keyboard	Employs glissandos within a solo on a string instrument.
4.	Performs within a given structure	Starts and stops with prompting	Perform a simple ternary (ABA) form piece recognising where the first section repeats	Solos within a set scale using a 12-bar blues structure
5.	Follows a conductor	Can start to play when directed (visual and auditory prompts may be needed)	Responds to flash cards for start/stop louder/softer and faster/slower	Responds to visual directions regarding tempo, dynamics and/or pitch whilst playing
6.	Plays alongside other people	Stops playing to listen to another sound in the room.	Takes part in a small group performance, listening to others and	Consistently performs sequences of music within a group

			aware that they are making music as part of an ensemble	
7.	Performs with increasing fluency and expression	Plays more often and for longer periods over a series of lessons.	Can repeat a melody accurately on glockenspiel or keyboard Uses dynamics to convey mood	Creates tension and release through the use of contrasting textures
8.	Performs a musical pattern	Repeat a short sequence of notes on table top bells	Performs a sequence of notes from a colour score, independently matching the notes to the score	Follows simple staff notation

Singing/Signing

	Descriptor	What this might look like for pupil with PMLD	What this might look like for a pupil with complex autism	What this might look like for a pupil on a semi-formal pathway
1.	Makes different vocal sounds	Uses microphone with delay and reverb effects Intentionally presses a switch to trigger a pre-recorded sound	Vocalises, chants, sings	Creates different animal sounds within the context of a story.
2.	Adapts mouth shape to give sound more definition	Vocalising with a sense of melodic shape	Beatboxes, scat sings	Makes and copies faces in a mirror while vocalising. Reflects on resulting sounds.
3.	Intentional vocalising, chanting, singing	Vocalises rhythmically. Vocalises and looks for a response	Sings the names of people in the room in call and response	Writes a two-line chorus and sings it with peers
4.	Gives a consistent response to a familiar song	Sways, laughs or vocalises with song	Taps out the pulse or claps along Dances Plans and practises how to perform a chosen song	Copies actions or rhythms within a song Performs songs with increasing confidence
5.	Explores different vocal sounds for different types of song	Adapts dynamic range to the song being played.	Explores or vocalises changes in pitch, intonation or dynamics	Recreates vocables from tabla patterns as part of a lesson on North Indian classical music

6.	Vocalises within basic structures	Will vocalise within a piece of music. Will recognise that the music making has begun.	Takes turns improvising 4-bar phrases using vocables	Sings along to a familiar song with verse and chorus
7.	Uses different dynamic levels to convey meaning of a song	Explores big voice and little voice with a degree of control	Follows the dynamics of others in an ensemble	Listens to, discusses and recreates the dynamics used in the performance of a well-known song
8.	Can sing with increasing fluency and accuracy	Anticipates key moments in the song and triggers vocal sample.	Performs small sections within a given structure Sings with a strong sense of pulse	Responds to feedback on pitch and timing to improve accuracy

Listening

	Descriptor	What this might look like for pupil with PMLD	What this might look like for a pupil with complex autism	What this might look like for a pupil on a semi-formal pathway
1.	Responds physically or emotionally to music from a variety of different styles traditions and genres	May sway, vocalise or stay still and listen	Draws a picture in response to a piece of music.	Identifies favourite songs or styles and explains how each one makes them feel
2.	Shows an awareness/realisation of where musical sound is coming from	Turns to hear where the sound of a bell might be coming from	Understands that different playing techniques create contrasting timbres within a single instrument	Understands how the shape of a guitar is designed to amplify sound
3.	Anticipates the sound that is going to come	Widens eyes or laughs in anticipation of a particular song section.	Performs dance routines to songs.	Conducts an ensemble playing along to a short film
4.	Expresses preference for whether they want to hear a piece of music again	Uses movement/gestures to convey preference	Uses preferred communication method to ask for 'more' music that they enjoy	Articulate how a performance could be improved
5.	Recognise how the inter-related dimensions of music (pitch, duration, dynamics, tempo, timbre, texture, structure) are used	Can recognise musical change and communicate that the recognition has taken place	Responds through movement to fast and slow rhythms within an 'action' song.	Draw a graphic representation of the changing texture within a song

6.	Recognises basic musical ideas within a structure	Anticipates repeated sections	Conducts an ensemble, bringing in instruments one by one	Identifies and sings a bass guitar riff in a pop song
7.	Can describe changes in music	Responds to change with changing body positions, gesture or vocalisations	Uses raised or lowered arms to indicate high and low pitch	Names the entry of different instruments
8.	Expresses what emotion/mood/picture the music makes them think of	Expresses the emotion and requests music to continue or stop	Can paint the sounds they hear Can use flashcard images to identify feelings and emotions	Comment on how music might make others feel

Composing/Improvising (Exploring and creating)

	Descriptor	What this might look like for pupil with PMLD	What this might look like for a pupil with complex autism	What this might look like for a pupil on a semi-formal pathway
1.	Makes simple choices when selecting musical sound	Chooses a sound on a tablet Chooses the same sound on the tablet/keyboard each week	Chooses an appropriate keyboard voice for a Space piece Chooses between a wooden and metal xylophone based on sonic preference	Choose from a selection of pre-recorded guitar riffs on Garageband
2.	Explores different sounds and then makes choices when using the musical instrument/sound-maker	Showing a preference for high/low sounds	Layers samples using a Digital Audio Workstation (DAW)	Creates two contrasting drum beats using a sequencer
3.	Connects sounds in a chosen order to build musical structure	Plays and can repeat three notes in a chosen order	Creates and repeats a melody on a xylophone	Writes a song in a small group with verse and chorus
4.	Creates a score of their musical piece	Picture cards representing specific instruments are chosen in order by the pupil	Places a range of coloured cards/stickers in order to create a score	Creates a grid-based visual representation of a body percussion piece
5.	Improvises to create a soundscape or music fit for a specific purpose	Plays a soundbeam to create a 'haunted house' soundscape.	Can play a drum from slow to fast to represent a rocket take-off	Suggests ideas for how junk percussion could be used to

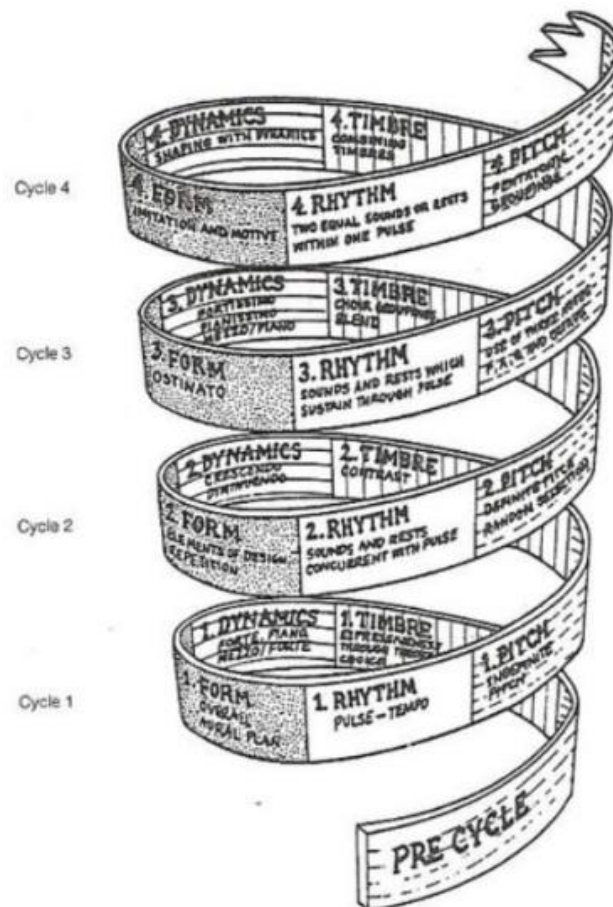
				sonically represent events in a story
6.	Uses musical technology to create music e.g. switches, apps	Uses eye-gaze technology to improvise over a chord progression	Creates electronic dance music using a sequencer	Records a short piece with contrasting textures using the Incredibox app

2.3 Structure & Progression

In order for pupils to secure the knowledge and skills set out above, it is necessary create a structure within which learning opportunities can be sequenced.

Many schools operate on a topic-based approach with all subjects, including music, required to fit into that topic. The opinion of the authors is that squeezing musical knowledge and skills into non-musical topics takes the focus away from, and often compromises, musical learning, and should be avoided.

Instead, we recommend structuring your music curriculum in a way that ensures skills and knowledge are revisited and built on over time, adding layers of musical experience. This has been theorised into the idea of the spiral curriculum ([Swanwick & Tillman, 1986](#)), where musical development is seen as a three-dimensional interaction rather than a linear process. The example shown here was created as part of the Manhattanville Music Curriculum Program



This idea is clearly exemplified in the Key Stage 3 Birkett House curriculum in the appendix, with activities that develop an understanding of harmony, tonality, instrumentation and composition threaded through the curriculum's three-year cycle. We recommend having a look at that curriculum now to see how this is done within a diverse set of musical styles.

Here is another example of building on prior learning whilst incorporating new experiences, this time for Key Stage 1:

KS1 YEAR A:

AUTUMN	SPRING	SUMMER
<p>My sounds e.g. Child-centred music</p> <p>Focuses vocal, movement, body percussion</p>	<p>Sounds in the classroom</p> <p>Sound-makers (unconventional), percussion and electronic 'sound producers'</p> <p>Focuses exploring and initiating sounds, responding,</p>	<p>Sounds around</p> <p>Sound-makers (unconventional), percussion and electronic 'sound producers', environmental sounds, external stimuli (music played for listening/responding)</p> <p>Focuses Exploring and initiating sounds responding, listening, broader experiences, more detailed outcomes</p>

As you begin to structure your curriculum, keep checking back to make sure that what you are designing:

- is broad and balanced, covering a variety of musical styles.
- encourages teachers to seek out high quality live musical experiences and other enrichment activities (see part 2.5).
- offers progression pathways that are robust but flexible, so that provision can be adapted and customised to reflect pupils' individual needs
- considers the needs of the generalist teacher, with signposting to resources and training opportunities.

2.4 - Outcomes & Assessment

As discussed in the introduction, we believe that musical outcomes should be considered first, with an understanding that transferrable outcomes, including targets from pupils' EHC plans, will be clearly identifiable once the music-making begins. They will also need to fit into your school's requirements around target setting and data presentation. Perhaps the first question to ask is: **what targets do we believe are most important for our pupils?**

The Model Music Curriculum and Sounds of Intent framework are solid places to start when thinking about musical outcomes. Various commercial frameworks, e.g. BSquared, offer their own descriptors for musical progress, but these are inevitably not tailored to the interests and priorities of your pupils.

Another approach is to outline key questions about musical learning within your long, medium term and short term planning. For example, for informal learners questions might include:

How did the pupil engage with the music?

What are the pupils telling you through their responses?

How can you be sure they are responding to the music they hear/play?

What might the young person be able to achieve based on this?

Using open ended questions rather than defined outcomes ensures teachers stay curious and open to unexpected outcomes.

Progress can be evidence through audio and video recordings, photos and teacher notes, perhaps in individual learning journey documents.

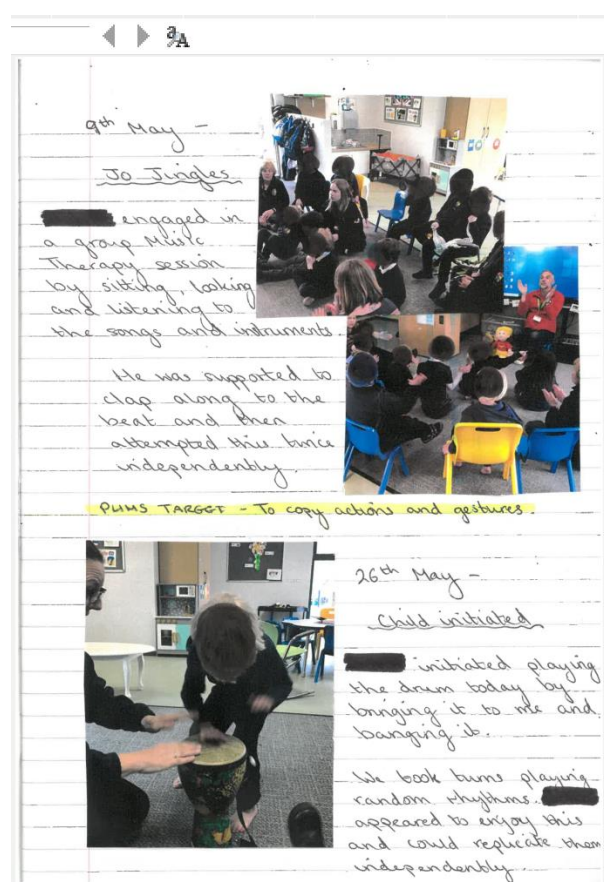


Figure 1: Example of a Learning Journey entry

Setting outcomes for pupils working on informal curriculum pathways

For more complex learners, it can be hard to separate musical learning and holistic learning. For instance, holding a tool could relate to banging a drum but could assist in developing skills in independent feeding. Or, if musical objective is to take

turns playing a musical instrument, does this also meet a target for communication or interaction skills outlined in the pupil's Individual education plan (IEP)?

Considering all of this, our target-setting and assessment of musical outcomes should be specific enough to address and build musical knowledge and skills yet broad enough to incorporate more general skills. The Sounds of Intent framework offers descriptors of musical skills that offer incremental progress from very initial 'encounters' with sound through to sophisticated musical interactions. The government's Engagement Model⁵ is a statutory assessment tool for who are not engaged in subject-specific study, and it can be helpful to mirror the language and learning areas used in this model.

2.5 - Enrichment

The learning that takes place as part of curriculum music can be exponentially strengthened by experiences provided outside of the classroom. These may include:

- organisations and musicians presenting live music experiences in schools or musical happenings that are attended outside of school
- instrumental tuition and/or bespoke music sessions for individuals or specific cohorts
- collaborations with professional musicians/orchestras
- sensory experience days or projects
- working towards an Arts Award

Many of these experiences can be facilitated and often subsidised by your local Music Education Hub. Many hubs are working hard to provide an offer for special education settings that is as comprehensive as that offered to mainstream settings, including appropriate instrumental tuition and ensemble opportunities. If you aren't already in touch with your local Hub, you can easily find their contact details online.

⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-engagement-model>

Part 3 - Teaching Resources

3.1 Schemes of work

Existing schemes of work from established providers can inform and support your curriculum design:

- [Charanga](#), the largest provider of primary music resources in the UK, offers a vast library of resources, songs, instrumental courses and creative apps. These include special education-friendly versions of many popular songs, Makaton signing music videos, resources for pre-formal and semi-formal contexts, and creative projects using iPads.
- [Sounds of Intent](#), mentioned above, is a unique musical development framework for pupils with additional needs. It can be used to support both planning and assessment.
- The [EQUALS Semi-Formal Curriculum Scheme of Work](#) is part of the wider EQUALS curriculum. It offers activities differentiated for a wide range of abilities, based around some of the interrelated dimensions of music, as set out in the National Curriculum.
- [Leicestershire Music Hub SEND Scheme of Work](#) is a collection of projects focussing on developing musical skills and designed to fit with any topic or theme.
- [Music Express](#) offers six topic-based units of work for use in special education classrooms and for small group and individual intervention work. There are four skills ladders, each offering 20 progressive steps of musical achievement across the key skill areas.
- Other mainstream providers with special education focussed resources include [Sing Up!](#)

3.2 Lesson Plans & Activities

There are several online lists of organisations and equipment that specialise in inclusive music-making. The selection below focuses specifically on resources that support curriculum music in Special Education schools.

Resource Name	Description
BBC Bring the Noise	A set of introductory music lessons
Jessie's Fund	Lots of ideas for classroom activities
The Amber Trust	A selection of activities based on the Sounds of Intent Framework and initially designed for blind children.
English Folk Dance & Song Society	Inclusive folk-focussed videos and resources
Making Sense of Music	Activities that explore sensory music-making with pupils with sensory impairments and complex disabilities.
The Improvise Approach	'a simple way to create a musically harmonious space for soloists and groups to play together' using iPads and backing tracks.

3.3 Interactive Videos

Resource Name	Description
Live Music Now Concerts for Schools & Families	'A range of performances and inclusive musical activities devised by LMN musicians, inspired by their visits to special schools across the UK.'
Jensory	Innovative ideas for multi-sensory music lessons.
Jam-Along with Carrie & Mowkee	Fun, interactive videos for creative music-making.

Appendix

About the Authors

Editors

Ben Sellers leads the MEHEM Uprising! Project.

Dr Anthony Anderson is a Research Assistant in Music Education in the Centre for the Study of Practice and Culture in Education at Birmingham City University, UK. His research interests centre on music curriculum, musical learning and creativity. He teaches on a wide variety of post-graduate programmes, at the university, including Masters and PhD supervision, and is a former secondary school music teacher.

Contributors



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Emily-May Roebuck works for Northamptonshire Music and Performing Arts Trust delivering music session to SEND/SEMH school settings across the county. She is also the Head of Y-Not Arts – a performing arts group for young people with additional needs.

Rachel Beckett enjoyed the first twenty years of her career as a classroom music teacher in mainstream secondary schools. She now teaches at Stanton Vale Special School and takes responsibility for the Creative Arts.

Sue Nicholls has published several music resource books for non-specialists with Collins and OUP and also contributed material to other publications. She now works as an

independent music education consultant delivering courses, seminars, workshops and teacher training modules. Sue also leads the 'Fast-track' Trinity CME programme at the City of Peterborough centre.

Vicki Brown has been Deputy Head of Derbyshire Music Hub and Curriculum Consultant for 11 years after spending 25 years teaching music in secondary schools. She is also Course Director for the Trinity Certificate for Educators course in the East Midlands.

Further reading:

Anderson, A. (2021). [Music Teachers are Curriculum Designers](#). BERA Blog, 16 Nov 2021

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