Secondary
National Strategy
for school improvement

Foundation subjects: KS3 music

Unit 1: Structuring learning for musical understanding

department for
education and skills
creating opportunity, releasing potential, achieving excellence

Using this guide

This guide offers some practical strategies teachers use to structure learning in order to develop pupils' musical understanding. The techniques are tried and tested; they draw upon both academic research and the experience of practising teachers.

By working through this guide you can build your teaching repertoire step by step, starting with strategies that are easy to implement and moving on to those that will help pupils to develop their understanding and skills even further. The guide helps you to reflect on specific ideas and aspects of your practice and contains practical tips and tasks to help you develop existing practice in your classroom. Some findings from recent reports are outlined and there is a summary case study to exemplify particular points. The 'Next steps' section asks you to reflect generally on the impact of this unit. There are practical suggestions for developing practice and you are invited to set targets for the future.

As you work through this guide, you will:

- read about the importance and nature of pupils' musical understanding;

- consider the extent to which your teaching currently focuses on the development of musical understanding (Task 1);

- consider the distinctive attributes of styles, genres and traditions, and the breadth and balance of your current Key Stage 3 curriculum (Tasks 2 and 3);

- consider the place of 'abstract musical thinking' within the curriculum (Tasks 4 and 5).

You will then develop a new or refine an existing unit of work by establishing:

- the musical understanding to be developed (Tasks 6 - 8);

- the contexts that will inform the understanding (Tasks 9 and 10);

- the conventions and practical experience that will lead to understanding (Task 11);

- the understanding of musical elements and development of practical skills required (Task 12);

- the expectations and sequence of learning (Tasks 13 and 14).

Finally, you will:

- review the impact of the new planning process on pupils' learning (Task 15);

- reflect on the complete process before considering your next steps.

To assist with this process, make sure that you:

- are clear about where you are in this line of development, and why you are undertaking specific tasks - this will help to focus your time and energies on effective work;

- keep a log of the materials you create, the responses of the pupils and your own reflections on the impact of the work. There is space in this guide for you to write notes and responses to some questions, but you may find it helpful to keep a notebook handy, or to use the CPD log on the DVD

When working through this unit, you will need access to:

Appendices   1 and 2

Audio   1a, 1b, 1c

Resources   1a, 1b, 1c, 1d, 1e, 1f, 1g, 1h, 1i, 1j, 5a

Video   1a

Structuring learning for musical understanding

Contents

Recognising impact

This unit aims to help music teachers review and refine their practice in structuring learning so that there is an explicit focus on musical understanding.

The unit leads teachers to plan and teach units of work that:

- focus on pupils' development of musical understanding;

- explore the conventions of a range of culturally diverse musical styles, genres and traditions;

- focus on the understanding of relevant features of musical elements and the development of specific musical skills;

- define detailed expectations of both musical learning and musical outcomes;

- enable learning through the provision of purposeful music activities.

This will enable teachers to:

- probe and extend learning by exploring a range of different ways of making music over the key stage, covering musical styles across time and place, musical genres and musical traditions;

- identify for each unit the generic purpose or context of the music, and its most pertinent conventions, processes and procedures;

- focus learning on how to develop understanding of the features of musical elements needed to explore the relevant musical conventions;

- focus learning on how to develop the specific musical skills needed to explore relevant musical conventions;

- ensure that detailed expectations of learning for these features of musical elements and specific musical skills are identified;

- ensure that the learning of conventions is experienced through practical music making.

As a result, pupils can:

- develop their understanding of a culturally diverse range of musical styles, genres and traditions;

- understand how music reflects and is influenced by the contexts within which it is created, performed and listened to;

- articulate verbally and practically the conventions, processes and procedures of different musical styles, genres and traditions;

- understand how the features of musical elements impact on music;

- use relevant practical skills for music making;

- be inspired by vibrant and relevant music making.

Background

A range of inspection and research evidence identifies common issues in structuring learning for musical understanding. It also describes how successful teaching finds solutions that enable positive musical learning. The main characteristics are outlined below.

Common issues

Sometimes pupils:

- do not know why they are studying a particular type of music, or how that music is similar to or different from music studied in prior learning;

- are not clear why they are undertaking practical tasks within units of work. They focus their attention on completion of teacher-defined tasks, and do not develop broader understanding of the conventions, processes and procedures of a range of culturally diverse musical styles, genres and traditions;

- do not develop a musical vocabulary they can use to articulate their understanding of music;

- do not understand with sufficient clarity the details of musical elements, and cannot apply knowledge in practical work effectively;

- are unclear about the expectations of skill development and do not know how to improve specific skills.

Resolving the issues

Effective units of work:

- focus on the development of pupils' musical understanding: an awareness of musical contexts and purposes, and how the conventions, processes and procedures of given genres, styles and traditions create an overall impact;

- ensure that work across the whole key stage includes a breadth of culturally diverse styles, genres and traditions, each with a distinctive mode of musical thinking and construction;

- make explicit the conventions of music being studied within individual units, including both the overall cultural or artistic context and the technical processes and procedures used;

- identify how pupils will develop their understanding of features of musical elements pertinent to the conventions required, and how they will apply that understanding in their practical work;

- identify the expectations of specific musical skills that pupils will develop in order to embed their understanding, and how pupils will be helped to improve these skills;

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- make explicit the vocabulary needed for musical understanding and ensure that pupils know how to use this vocabulary;

- employ a range of musical activities to support and develop defined learning: 'performing, composing and appraising activities … provide different ways of demonstrating the same aspects of musical learning. Focus on the musical learning that is being demonstrated through these integrated activities.'
QCA: www.ncaction.org.uk/subjects/music

Factors affecting the design of units of work

The National Curriculum (2000) Orders (currently under review), and the supporting advice provided by QCA, outline that the fundamental aim of music at Key Stage 3 is developing pupils' musical understanding. This can be described as the outcome of combining two areas of learning:

a) knowing about musical conventions, processes and procedures;

b) exploring a range of diverse musical styles, genres and traditions through practical music making.

The ability to work practically with music - to be a 'music maker' - is an essential part of understanding. However, it is seen as the means to an end rather than the purpose of the work itself: performing, composing and listening or appraising skills enable pupils to explore understanding effectively, and to demonstrate what they have learned.

The statement from the National Curriculum (2000) on the importance of music clearly indicates the significance of musical understanding:

'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 … The teaching of music develops pupils' ability to listen and appreciate a wide variety of music and to make judgements about musical quality.

The QCA *Teacher's guide* consequently defines the aims and purposes of music as follows:

'By engaging pupils in making and responding to music, music education offers opportunities for them to develop their understanding and appreciation of a wide range of music.'

It also articulates what 'musical understanding' is:

'In particular, pupils should acquire and apply knowledge and understanding of:

• how music is constructed

• how music is produced

• how music is influenced by time and place.'

It is important to recognise the twin aspects of 'acquire' and 'apply' in this statement: acquiring information about music aids understanding, but musical understanding can only be firmly embedded in pupils' learning when it is explored, applied and demonstrated through practical musical making.

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The dual nature of musical understanding is logically carried through into the National Curriculum (2000) advice on assessment of musical learning. The Orders' information about level descriptions states that:

'Each level in music begins with an overarching statement, which identifies the key characteristic of attainment at that level. The detail that follows illustrates how this expectation is demonstrated through performing, composing and appraising activities.'

In addition, these overarching statements about musical understanding help to define progression by using the words *recognise*, *identify* and *discriminate* along with increasingly sophisticated aspects of how music is constructed and produced, and is influenced by time and place.
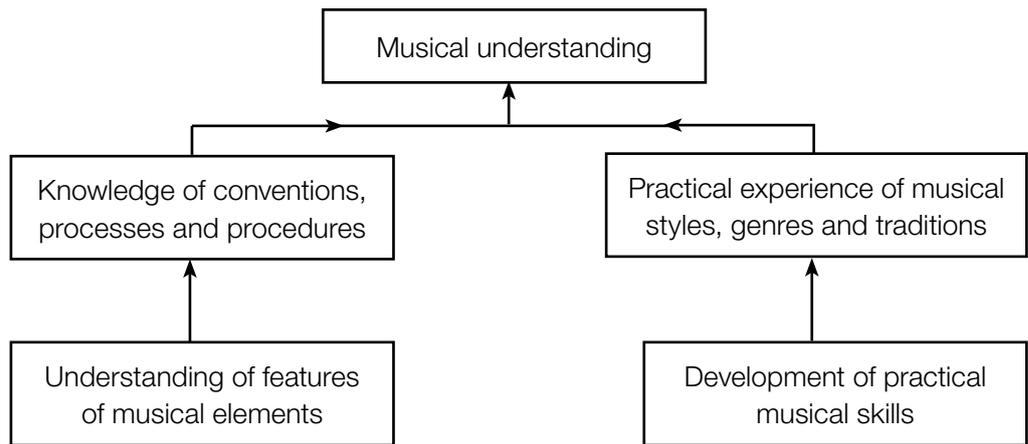
Level 3	Pupils *recognise* … the ways sounds can be combined and used expressively
Level 4	Pupils *identify* … the relationship between sounds and how music reflects different intentions
Level 5	Pupils *identify* … musical devices and how music reflects time and place
Level 6	Pupils *identify* … the different processes and contexts of selected genres and styles
Level 7	Pupils *discriminate* … musical conventions in … selected genres, styles and traditions

The requirement to develop understanding through practical activity is emphasised by adding *and explore* to each sentence: pupils recognise *and explore* …; identify *and explore* …; discriminate *and explore* …

This identification of progression also indicates the specific learning that is required to enable musical understanding.

- If pupils are to recognise, identify and discriminate between the devices, processes and conventions of music, then they will need to know about, use and understand features of musical elements. This is described in paragraph 4 of the National Curriculum (2000).

- If pupils are to explore styles, genres and traditions in increasingly sophisticated ways, then they will need to develop progressively more demanding practical skills to access the music. This is described in paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 of the National Curriculum (2000).

This produces a basic model of musical understanding, as shown in the diagram below.

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                    ┌─────────────────────────┐
                    │  Musical understanding  │
                    └─────────────────────────┘
                         ↑        ↑        ↑
        ┌──────────────────────────┐   ┌──────────────────────────┐
        │ Knowledge of conventions,│   │ Practical experience of  │
        │ processes and procedures │   │ musical styles, genres   │
        │                          │   │ and traditions           │
        └──────────────────────────┘   └──────────────────────────┘
                    ↑                              ↑
        ┌──────────────────────────┐   ┌──────────────────────────┐
        │ Understanding of features│   │ Development of practical │
        │ of musical elements      │   │ musical skills           │
        └──────────────────────────┘   └──────────────────────────┘
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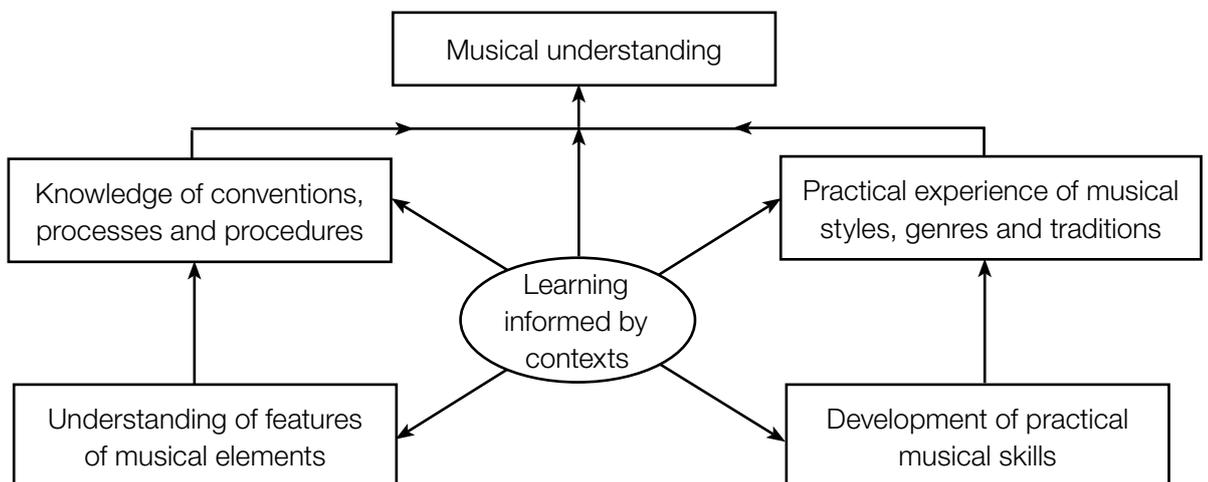
A fuller model of musical understanding will also demonstrate how social, cultural and artistic contexts inform the way that music is created and perceived as an aesthetic subject. All forms of music making reflect a unique context. By exploring the contexts of a broad range of musical styles, genres and traditions, pupils develop an understanding of the ways that different aesthetic, cultural and social values affect music. Paragraph 5 of the National Curriculum (2000) refers to the required breadth of understanding:

> 'During the key stage, pupils should be taught the knowledge, skills and understanding through: a range of live and recorded music from different times and cultures including music from the British Isles, the 'Western classical' tradition, folk, jazz and popular genres, and by well-known composers and performers.'

The QCA National Curriculum in Action website (www.ncaction.org.uk) also indicates the required breadth of musical understanding:

> 'A range of experiences is essential for attainment at all levels. Understanding of a variety of genres, styles and traditions is also essential for attainment especially above level 4. Attainment at the higher levels is impossible without depth and breadth of musical study and experience.'

In order to recognise the importance of this breadth of understanding, and to indicate the way that contexts inform all musical activity and learning, the basic model of musical understanding needs to be expanded as follows:

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                    ┌─────────────────────────┐
                    │  Musical understanding  │
                    └─────────────────────────┘
                         ↑        ↑        ↑
   ┌──────────────────────────┐      ┌──────────────────────────┐
   │ Knowledge of conventions,│      │ Practical experience of  │
   │ processes and procedures │      │ musical styles, genres   │
   │                          │      │ and traditions           │
   └──────────────────────────┘      └──────────────────────────┘
          ↑    ↖          ╲         ╱          ↗    ↑
          │         ╲    ┌──────────────┐    ╱         │
          │          ╲   │   Learning   │   ╱          │
          │           ╲  │ informed by  │  ╱           │
          │              │   contexts   │              │
          │          ╱   └──────────────┘   ╲          │
   ┌──────────────────────────┐      ┌──────────────────────────┐
   │ Understanding of features│      │ Development of practical │
   │ of musical elements      │      │ musical skills           │
   └──────────────────────────┘      └──────────────────────────┘
```

From these statements about the National Curriculum at Key Stage 3 and their implications for a model of learning, we can conclude the following:

- Units of work need to focus primarily on the development of pupils' musical understanding, identifying how integrated practical activities will support and embed that learning.

- Across the whole key stage, pupils need to experience a range of culturally diverse styles, genres and traditions.

- The context of these styles, genres and traditions needs to be made explicit, and the way that they are constructed, produced and are affected by time and place needs to be the focus of pupils' understanding.

Task 1 | The current focus on understanding: a pupil perspective | 30 minutes

Talk to small groups of pupils in Year 7, 8 and 9 (you may wish to use, or adapt, the questions provided in Appendix 1). Ask them about the extent to which they feel they currently learn and can demonstrate the aspects of musical understanding listed in the pupil section of the 'Recognising impact' statements on page 2.

(These statements are based on the rationale, definitions and model of musical understanding described above).

Compare their responses with your own audit as shown in the Leadership guide, which you should have completed already.

Are there differences between your perceptions and those of your pupils? If so, in which aspects of their learning?

Note those aspects where pupils report least confidence in their learning for understanding. As you work through this unit, these will need to be the focus for development.

Locating the unit of work in context

Planning for breadth of musical understanding

As shown above, paragraph 5 of the National Curriculum (2000) specifies the required breadth of pupils' understanding, and QCA's guidance about attainment at level 5 and above is explicit about the need for variety of understanding. Despite this, recent Ofsted reports have identified weaknesses in the breadth, balance and relevance of the music curriculum in secondary schools.

It is important therefore that pupils learn about a range of culturally diverse musical styles, genres and traditions, developing over time an understanding of how each works. This:

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- ensures that pupils experience and learn about different forms of musical thinking. Styles, genres and traditions each have their own, distinctive modes of musical thinking and construction. By exploring these different forms of musical thinking pupils can build a broad musical understanding and a repertoire of approaches to music making;

- supports the pupils' own musical and creative development, by enabling them to explore and identify ways of working that appeal to them directly.

Typically, an effective scheme of work for Key Stage 3 will therefore include units of work that produce balanced learning about:

- musical **styles** (across time and place). Styles are generally tightly-defined and the most 'closed' forms of music. Pupils need to recognise and understand how styles are defined by consistent use of particular conventions, processes and procedures.

   Key considerations for learning when exploring styles are therefore rhythm, melody, harmony, instrumentation. Examples of style include music from early times (Medieval music) to the recent past (popular music from the 1950s and 1960s) and present day (hip hop). They also include styles that have developed over a long period of time (folk music) or those from different places around the world (Gamelan or Classical Indian).

- musical **genres** (music for a given purpose). Genres are more open-ended than styles, reflecting a specific cultural or social function. Since music for a genre has to reflect its particular function, it will employ technical features that are common with other pieces from the same genre (e.g. all music for a procession needs to be played at a particular tempo).

   However, genres are distinctively different from styles by demonstrating considerable variety: all music for dance has certain conventions that enable the dancing to be effective, but dance music can adopt a wide range of resources, structures and styles (compare, for instance, a waltz with a 1970's disco dance).

   Key considerations for learning when exploring genres are therefore the purpose of the music, the venue, audience, and how audience and performers interact. Examples of genres include music for dance, for a procession, for fanfares, for film, for a concert audience, for adverts.

- musical **traditions** (ways of working and producing). Traditions are the most open-ended forms of music: it is often hard to predict what the outcomes will sound like before the composing or performing process begins. They very often cut across styles and genres, describing ways of working rather than outcomes or purpose. They provide pupils with a bank of conventions, processes and procedures that can be used in their own work and when learning about the features of different styles and genres.

Key considerations for learning when exploring traditions are therefore techniques such as improvisation, experimentation, notation (cross-cultural traditions) or the influence of particular places and societies (cultural traditions such as the brass brand tradition). Other examples of traditions include the Western classical tradition, vocal traditions, world and popular music traditions, and the tradition of working with abstract musical ideas.

The identification of a particular music as a style, genre or tradition is critical as it impacts directly on the nature of the musical thinking and learning pupils will develop when they engage with that music. This is especially so when exploring music that may display multiple characteristics: Bhangra is a style with very clear melodic and rhythmic characteristics; but it is also a genre (a medium for mass entertainment) and a tradition (a form of popular music). When introducing such music, it will be important to explore this richness of function with pupils. When moving into detailed learning, however, it is crucial to focus on just one of the music's characteristics – approaching it as either a style, a genre or a tradition provides a clarity of purpose that allows pupils to explore and develop a particular form of musical thinking.

Task 2	**Defining the focus of a unit according to style, genre or tradition**	**20 minutes**

Take an existing unit from within your Key Stage 3 scheme of work.

List the characteristics of the music being explored that might reflect aspects of a style, genre or tradition (i.e. film music might be identifiably within a horror movie style; be part of a genre for enhancing dramatic mood; and be part of a tradition which uses clichés to over-emphasise meaning).

Now consider which of these characteristics is the one that you want to make the predominant focus for the unit - the one that will define the nature and focus of the musical thinking (and therefore musical understanding) for the pupils. Is it:

- closed (as in a style, focusing on consistent and particular use of melody, rhythm, instrumentation, etc.);

- completely open–ended (as in a tradition, focusing on techniques that can be used in a wide variety of ways to create any form of music); or

- somewhere in the middle (as in a genre, focusing on broad musical features determined by a contextual purpose, the roles of audience and performer, etc.)?

Consider how you might be able to adapt the current delivery of the unit to:

- explore the richness of the music being explored – do pupils understand how the music works on a variety of levels?

- refine the focus of learning for pupils so that as the unit develops, the form of musical thinking required for the main part of the learning – and the reasons for it – are made absolutely explicit?

Breadth of styles, genres and traditions

Identifying the focus for musical thinking experienced within a style, genre or tradition will help pupils develop different ways of being a music maker, and to articulate different forms of musical understanding. Providing a range of styles, genres and traditions does enable pupils to develop one aspect of progression (breadth of understanding: see Unit 5: Challenge in music, for more), but individual forms of music are not necessarily more advanced than others: exploring music for dance is not necessarily more demanding than exploring gamelan. However, once the principle of a focus on these forms of musical thinking has been established for individual units, it is important to identify the balance provided across the whole key stage to ensure that pupils accumulate an appropriate breadth.

| Task 3 | Considering breadth and balance: styles, genres and traditions | 20 minutes |

Look at your current scheme of work for Key Stage 3. Complete the grid below, showing for each year group the specific styles, genres and traditions covered.

	Styles	Genres	Traditions
Year 7			
Year 8			
Year 9			

Is there a balance in each year? Is there a balance across the whole key stage?

What areas might be over- or under-represented?

The outcome of this review will be returned to later in the unit, but you might already begin to consider how any imbalances might be addressed: what styles, genres or traditions could you include to improve the range of experiences for pupils, or how could you adapt existing units to re-focus on a different form of musical thinking?

If you wish to explore this notion in more depth, you can also look at Unit 5: Challenge in music, which explores how, over time, a department can build a more comprehensive range of styles, genres and traditions.

The tradition of working with abstract musical ideas

In music education, it is important for pupils 'to work directly with the abstract musical ideas themselves, rather than titles' (Ofsted, 2002). This ensures that pupils understand:

- that music is sometimes there for its own sake, and not just for some external purpose;

- that there are ways of manipulating musical materials that can lead to powerful forms of musical expression with an individual musical 'voice'.

This way of working describes the tradition of abstract musical thinking. It can be defined as non-referential music: it exists purely as music without the need for an external point of reference, and is the complete opposite of programmatic music.

SCAA's *Optional tests and tasks*, Unit 2: Musical ideas, published in 1996, provides a good example of what this might look like in a unit of work. The idea is simple: someone has found a page from a composer's notebook, with various jottings and ideas for a composition that was never completed. Pupils are given a copy of the page and asked to explore the ideas and their potential (a process which includes deciding what not to use as well as what to develop further). They are then commissioned to expand their initial analysis of the ideas into a full composition, thereby completing the process begun by the notebook's creator.

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Task 4

Exploring musical thinking — 15 minutes

Look at the composer's notebook from this unit.

Identify the range of musical starting points (scales, melodic and rhythmic fragments, structural possibilities, chords, words that communicate meaning).

If these represent appropriate expectations for most Year 9 pupils, what would enable more-able pupils to explore similar processes at more advanced expectations?

An important aspect of this example is that it contains a variety of musical starting points, enables a range of compositional techniques to be explored at specific expectations, and guides pupils towards expressive possibilities by the inclusion of text and poetic lines. This differentiates it from many units on Variations, which unless carefully designed can require pupils to explore limited compositional ideas with closed outcomes lacking a sense of aesthetic communication.

Task 5

Understanding abstract music — 45 minutes

In order to develop better understanding of the tradition of abstract music, either:

a) take an existing unit which is already close to the idea (perhaps a unit on cyclical musical forms: ostinato, ground bass, riffs), and adapt it to focus more clearly on:

- a wider range of starting points;

- specific compositional techniques with clearly defined expectations to challenge the pupils;

- providing some kind of steer towards a sense of communication without losing the abstract nature of the work;

or:

b) for a particular year group, devise your own version of SCAA's *Optional tests and tasks*, Unit 2: Musical ideas.

At this stage in the unit, you will have:

- reflected with pupils on the extent to which your KS3 teaching currently focuses on musical understanding, and the conventions, processes and procedures of a range of musical styles, genres and traditions;

- identified whether your scheme of work has an appropriate mix of styles, genres and traditions over the whole key stage;

- worked up an outline for an abstract musical thinking unit.

From this point onward, the unit will guide you through a recommended process for planning a single unit of work to ensure that musical understanding of a style, genre or tradition is at the heart of the learning.

It will guide you through key reading and thinking, and then ask you to apply this to a planning template which is provided as Appendix 2 and as Resource 1b. It will therefore focus on:

- The process of planning.
  The thinking behind the process is critical: you will need to establish your own understanding of this process, take risks in developing the thinking and focus on the process rather than the completion of particular tasks to a formula.

- The application of this process to a particular unit.
  You could choose between:

 a) reworking an existing unit of work of your own choosing, to refine and develop its focus on musical understanding;

 b) creating a new unit of work, based on one of the styles, genres or musical traditions you identified in Task 3 as being currently under-represented.

You might like to note that many teachers have found the second option more rewarding since it enables greater flexibility and creative thinking.

Resources 1c, 1d, 1e, 1f and 1g are examples of units which have been created by teachers using this process. Resource 1h is a version of the planning template with guidance notes.

Identifying the teaching objectives

Three layers of teaching objectives are implied by the model of learning on page 6. These cover:

1. the overarching understanding that informs and is informed by all other learning

2. the conventions, processes and procedures of a musical style, genre or tradition and the focus of the practical experience needed to engage with that music

3. the detailed features of musical elements and the development of practical skills that enable access to the appropriate conventions and relevant music making

The next section takes each of these layers in turn and describes both the rationale for each layer and how that rationale can be translated into clear learning objectives.

1. Establishing the understanding that informs planned learning

The model of learning demonstrates that there are two overarching aspects of understanding that inform all other types of musical learning:

- the *musical understanding* that comes from knowing how a musical style, genre or tradition works;

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- the *context* of that style, genre or tradition and how it impacts on the music's conventions, processes and procedures.

Musical understanding – a focus for learning

To ensure a focus on musical understanding as the key learning within a unit of work, the unit title should reflect the learning. Preceding the title with the words 'understanding the conventions of' immediately indicates the difference between learning and doing: 'understanding the conventions of Japanese music' signals something very different from 'doing Japanese music'.

Task 6	**Refining a unit's title**	**5 minutes**

Decide whether you are going to:

a) re-work an existing unit;

b) create a new unit based on a style, genre or tradition that is currently not well represented in your scheme of work (see Task 3).

Once you have decided, make sure that the title reflects or is reworked into the new format: 'Understanding the conventions of …'

Write this title into the relevant box at the top of the planning template available as Resource 1b.

Musical understanding – a definition of learning

Refining a unit's title captures the broad focus of learning. However, the detailed understanding of the chosen style, genre or tradition needs to be more precisely defined. This will enable the knowledge and practical experience that leads to that understanding to be planned for more accurately. The following chart (also available as Resource 1a) therefore defines musical understanding in six stages of progression appropriate to Key Stage 3. Note that:

- The objective for understanding is defined both by the understanding of conventions the pupils acquire and the practical work by which this is developed and demonstrated. This reflects the dual nature of the definition for musical understanding, and the left and right hand sides of the model for understanding.

- The outcome for understanding describes in more detail what that learning might look and sound like in the classroom. The word 'understanding' at the start of each stage reflects pupils' capacity to musically internalise and formalise their knowledge of conventions. This will involve appraising, as well as the other practical forms of musical learning described.

- The stage of progression is a simple summary of the understanding to be developed. It is a shorthand way of describing the stage of learning that the pupils are working at. It captures both the knowledge and the practical work by using an initial word that relates to understanding, and a final word that relates to practical application.

Defining musical understanding: six stages of progression

Stage of progression	Objective for understanding	Outcome of understanding
Recognise and Respond	Learn how layered combinations of sound can express and communicate ideas; by • Learning how to use layered sounds in order to respond to and convey simple moods or messages	Pupils understand how music layers and combines sounds to express ideas. They recognise and respond to expressive gestures including those that are particularly intense and / or personal and idiosyncratic
Identify and Manipulate	Learn how musical sounds can be manipulated into effective, predictable patterns and structures to reflect simple contexts; by • Learning how to use patterns of sound to create a specific mood for a defined but basic expressive purpose	Pupils understand how music fits together, and can identify how music works to realise a simple but defined purpose. They produce effective, patterned music that matches basic intentions, but does not readily reflect the full breadth of wider musical contexts of style, genre or tradition
Identify and Relate	Learn how musical styles, genres or traditions and the conventions they use can be compared and related to their origins; by • Learning how to experiment with combinations of conventions to meet a range of expressive purposes that reflect changing contexts	Pupils understand a range of styles, genres or traditions, comparing and relating their differences to origins of time and place. They begin to identify how changes to (or breaking of) conventions can be used to create different expressive outcomes. They try this out in their own practical work, showing a wider awareness of contextual implications and controlling the conventions of the music with the support of teachers or peers
Identify and Integrate	Learn how details of musical conventions can be developed to express individual ideas, while staying integrated within a given style, genre or tradition; by • Learning how to explore within a range of idiomatic musical styles, genres or traditions, integrating their own ideas into stylistically consistent outcomes	Pupils understand the detailed processes of the style, genre or purpose of the music being studied. They can use this understanding to create music or perform convincingly within the style (good pastiche). They are also able to deliberately and successfully explore the details of stylistic idioms, bringing some individuality to their work, and are able to work at this expectation with confidence
Discriminate and Develop	Learn how known musical styles, genres and traditions can develop into distinctive forms; by • Learning how to refine and / or combine conventional procedures to create new and coherent forms of musical expression that challenge and excite	Pupils understand how known music can be developed into a modified, coherent style that is distinctive to a composer or group of musicians. They can develop interesting music by increasingly pushing the boundaries within one style, or by using ideas from one style when working in another to formulate an emerging 'fusion' style
Discriminate and Exploit	Learn how individual musical characteristics can be exploited and extended into new music; by • Learning how to create music that can express and symbolise personal views	Pupils understand how musical starting points can be exploited to go beyond a style, and begin to create a distinctive musical 'voice'. They have the capacity to talk about the processes involved and to explore music's impact on personal meaning and values

To supplement this table, refer to the exemplification of each stage of progression in Resource 1i. The exemplification provides:

- a single sentence summary of the understanding pupils develop at each stage of progression;

- a broader description of the key features of understanding that distinguish each stage from the preceding and following stages;

- an example of a typical unit of work that might address this stage of understanding;

- a description of the practical outcomes pupils might be expected to produce in order to demonstrate this stage of understanding.

Task 7	Clarifying the detail of musical understanding	25 minutes

Read the statements and exemplification for each stage of musical understanding in detail.

Note the characteristics of each stage by reading across the columns in the statement table and then reading the exemplification for that stage.

Identify the progression through the stages by reading down the separate columns in the statement table: this can help to clarify the difference between each stage of musical understanding.

Task 8	Applying the progression to unit planning	5 minutes

Select the stage of progression that most closely matches the current understanding of the pupils who will be undertaking the unit identified in Task 6.

Copy either the stage of progression summary, or the objective for understanding bullets from the statement table into the relevant box in the planning template (Resource 1b).

Context – a catalyst for understanding

Once the stage of understanding has been identified, the musical and cultural context of the style, genre or tradition being studied should be articulated in the planning process. This will enable pupils to learn how context informs the way that music works and on its aesthetic values. No music exists in an artistic or social vacuum, and understanding the context of the music powerfully influences overall musical understanding. For instance, in a unit of work defined as 'understanding the conventions of blues music', the context might be briefly described as 'learning how blues music reflects the feelings of depression, aspiration and affirmation that spring from an oppressed, poor people'.

It should be noted that:

- the focus of contextual learning is the music being studied and its place in musical and social life. It is not about what pupils do in lessons. Pupils need to learn about the context in a variety of ways, but defining the learning here requires a real focus on the music and its 'real-life' context;

- contextual learning therefore includes:

  » what the music is for – its purpose, intended effect on audience

  » what the roles of performers, composers and audience are for this type of music

  » what the function of the music is within society

  » what the social, historical, geographical and cultural position share of the music

  » why this music exists

- contextual learning is required not so that pupils can learn about the contexts in isolation, but so that pupils recognise how those contexts impact directly on the music. This can be seen in the National Curriculum (2000) Orders, which state that pupils should be taught to 'identify the contextual influences *that affect the way music* is created, performed and heard'.
  This is a critical point in the planning process: how does the context for blues affect the music itself in terms of the conventions, processes and procedures it uses, and why? The activities pupils undertake must make this connection explicit if they are to properly understand the music;

- there is no pre-determined order in which pupils should learn about contexts. They might learn about the context first, and then experience how this informs the music through practical activity. Alternatively, they might engage with the music first, and then consider the impact of context. Or there may be a very fluid flow of learning between consideration of the context and a practical experience of the music. To see one way of approaching the process, watch Video 1a to see how a teacher focuses on context throughout the course of the first lesson in an early Year 8 unit on understanding the conventions of samba music. You can also hear the end-of-unit performance from one group in the class by listening to Audio 1a, so that you can identify the impact on final outcomes;

- contextual learning is not about composers' biographical details (e.g. Beethoven was deaf) – *unless* this has a direct and clear consequence on the music being studied;

- contexts need to be described in ways that match the stage of understanding already established. If pupils are ready to 'identify and integrate', then the contexts they explore will need to reflect that capacity. For instance, pupils at this stage of understanding might explore the contexts that enable individual film composers to create an identifiable 'voice' within the constraints imposed by a studio for a particular movie. By contrast, exploring contexts that deal with the influence of a particular jazz legend may not be appropriate for pupils whose overall understanding is still at the 'identify and manipulate' stage: they would struggle to see how those contexts affected the music they were engaging with.

| Task 9 | **Articulating the context of the music** | **15 minutes** |

Define the context of the music selected in Task 6: brainstorm everything you know about the music's context, using the aspects listed above.

Now refine the list so that it can be summarised either in a sentence of 15-20 words, or in three or four bullets. When doing this you should decide:

- What are the contextual influences that have the strongest impact on the music, and that pupils will learn and understand most readily?

- How can the learning of these contexts be refined further so that they are matched to the stage of understanding already established for the unit?

You may want to use one of the following stems to articulate the context:

- Learning why, how or that music is: *(or)*

- Learning that the purpose or function of music is:

Add these statements to the relevant place in the planning template.

Context - making the link for pupils

It is important to recognise that this process of planning for contextual learning is not simply to fulfil a planning requirement: it should have a direct consequence on the type and sequence of activities undertaken in the classroom. For instance, if the contextual learning about blues has been identified as 'the feelings of depression, aspiration and affirmation that spring from an oppressed, poor people', what activities can pupils undertake so that they recognise the power of this context and its impact on the music? For example, pupils could debate the role of modern-day illegal immigrants in the USA, and identify how contemporary music there reflects similar issues. They might also identify other sorts of contexts that create and convey heavy, depressed emotions (funerals, certain scenes in films), and describe the way that this context is reflected in the music.

These sorts of activities help to establish for pupils the connection between their own lives and the original contexts of the music being studied. A key purpose is to enable pupils to emphasise with the aesthetic function of the music being studied, and to develop their own, personal understanding of the context. At the same time, the process makes the link for the pupil between the generic social and cultural context of the music and its impact upon the technical features that a particular sort of music needs to employ in order to reflect that context. Making the links in this way therefore answers the question: 'how can you make the study of this music relevant to a pupil in this school in C21st England?'

Given the contextual learning already identified, identify an activity that you could use to ensure that the music's context is relevant and clear to and for all pupils.

What parallels are there between the music's context and the everyday life of pupils or others?

How can pupils be helped to empathise with the musicians who make this music?

Is the link best made through a musical activity or a non-musical activity? If it is a non-musical activity, how can the link be made back to the musical learning that is to follow?

Make a note of the activity or activities that you have thought of: you will need to return to them later.

2. Establishing the musical conventions and focus of the practical experience

This second layer of the planning process does two things. It identifies:

- the *conventions* that pupils will learn about to establish their understanding of the music as a unique style, genre or tradition;

- the *focus of the practical experience* that pupils will engage with so that they can best begin to understand those conventions.

Conventions of a musical style, genre or tradition

Once the overarching understanding and context have been identified, the heart of the musical learning for understanding can be addressed: the conventions, processes and conventions of the musical style, genre or tradition being studied.

All forms of music are recognisable because of their unique combination of musical conventions. This is the central aspect of learning for musical understanding: what distinct processes and procedures are combined to create the unique aural character of the style, genre or tradition? For example, in a unit on blues music, this might be fixed as learning about the use of structured lyrics in blues through call and response vocal lines, the blues scale, a defined chord sequence and improvising. It is the combination of these conventions that is so special – other musics also use call and response and improvising, but when these are added to the lyrics, the blues scale and the familiar chord sequence, we instantly recognise the distinctive qualities of a blues song.

Studying 'musical elements' does not always cover the appropriate conventions: improvising, for instance, is a convention of numerous musical styles, but it is not a musical element as defined by the National Curriculum (2000). Similarly, a convention of film music is the use of synchronous sounds (musical ideas timed to coincide with, and express the character of images). This is a skill associated with composing, and would not be covered by a study of musical elements.

As with context, note also how the focus for conventions is on the music. It is not about what pupils do in lessons. What conventions do cover, however, are the features that make up the music's 'genetic fingerprint':

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- the sounds, devices and ways of making music that when combined create a unique and immediately identifiable sound world;

- the essential aural ingredients that define that sound world – the things that, if missing, would mean that the music was something else.

Focus of the practical experience **needed to engage with the music**

When these conventions have been identified, the broad focus of practical musical activities that will enable pupils to access and understand these conventions will become clear. For instance, a unit on programme music will probably identify that a key convention is the way that the music uses short motifs to portray key characters: a good way of learning this would be through a composing activity. By contrast, a unit on gospel music may identify that a key convention is the layering and weaving of vocal lines: a good way of learning this would be through an ensemble singing activity.

Task 11 | **Defining the conventions and the practical experience** **15 minutes**

List as many as you can of the key conventions for the musical style, genre or tradition that is the focus of your chosen unit.

Make sure that these include the most distinctive features that, when combined, create the unique sound world of the music.

Make sure that these do not just refer to aspects of the music that demonstrate a particular use of a 'musical element': be sure to include relevant processes and procedures, including performing and / or composing techniques that are distinctive to the music.

From the 'long list' you have created from your own knowledge of the music, identify a maximum of five that will be the key focus of learning for the pupils.

You may want to use one of the following stems to articulate the conventions:

- Learning how music uses: *(or)*

- Learning that the key characteristics of music are:

Given these conventions, now identify the most likely focus of the practical activity by which pupils can access and develop their understanding of the conventions. This will be broad at this stage – performing, composing, listening and appraising will be appropriate, though you may already be able to refine this further (ensemble performing, for instance).

Note your decisions in the relevant section of the planning template.

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3. Establishing the understanding of musical elements and development of practical skills

The model of learning established that the final layer of the planning process needs to identify:

- how developing knowledge for musical understanding requires pupils to learn about the features of musical elements;

- how practical experience of musical styles, genres and traditions requires pupils to develop the musical skills of performing, composing and listening or appraising.

At this point therefore it is important to identify the following:

- Given the conventions, processes and procedures to be learned, what are the most important features of musical elements that pupils will need to learn about?

- Given the practical explorations pupils will need to be involved in, what are the most important musical skills that pupils will need to learn?

This process helps to articulate the difference between:

 a) understanding how features of musical elements work; and

 b) developing practical skills.

Exploring how features of musical elements work is a form of knowledge–based learning: it requires an intellectual grasp of how, for instance, scale patterns are constructed. True understanding of this knowledge is only secured when it is applied in a practical context (e.g. by playing and using different scale patterns in performing or composing activities); but an important indicator of success in this area of learning is verbal explanation.

Developing practical skills is a very different form of learning. It requires pupils to learn how to improve their music-making skills, such as how to coordinate their left and right hands in keyboard playing or how to develop fragmented melodic ideas into a structured melody line.

These two aspects of learning often intertwine and inform each other. Learning about syncopation might involve being able to define it by articulating how syncopation is created when rhythmic and melodic lines fall across the main beat. Pupils might also learn how to play syncopation by using word patterns that mimic the rhythm, and by watching and feeling the main pulse as they play the syncopated pattern around it. However, being clear about the different focus of each type of learning is critical in helping pupils to develop an appropriate range of musical thinking that leads to effective musical understanding.

It is also important that the focus is only on one or two features of elements and one or two skills – those that are critical for pupils to learn about in order to develop their musical understanding of the style, genre or tradition. For example, in blues music it would be relevant to focus learning on how to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of scale patterns (a feature of the element pitch) so that they can learn how the use of the blues scale enables performers to bend notes for expressive purpose. Similarly, it would be relevant to focus learning on how to develop pupils' skills in improvising, so that pupils understand how to improvise fluent responses to the song's vocal call.

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Pupils will inevitably draw upon and explore a wide range of elements (such as texture, structure, timbre) and practical skills (singing) during the integrated activities of the unit. However, they must be clear about the one or two features of elements and one or two skills they must master in order to access the appropriate conventions and develop their understanding.

It should be possible to identify within each year where each of the musical elements is covered at least once as the main focus of learning. Equally, it should be possible to identify where each of the main practical skills (singing, playing individually, performing within an ensemble, improvising and composing) is covered as the main focus of learning. This is important to ensure breadth of learning, and also to help identify progression in learning. You can explore the importance of progression and breadth further in Unit 5: Challenge in music.

Task 12	Identifying learning	10 minutes

Refer to the unit from Task 6.

- Identify one or two significant features of musical elements that pupils will need to learn about in order to develop their knowledge and thereby improve their understanding.

- Identify one or two significant skills that pupils will need to learn and improve in order to access practically the main conventions of the music being studied.

Defining learning outcomes

The planning process should reflect your explicit expectations of learning for musical understanding, understanding features of elements and developing skills: what it is that you expect pupils to learn and demonstrate, and how the learning will be differentiated. These types of musical learning are progressive and therefore different from learning about a range of musical styles, genres and traditions (which is cumulative). It does not strictly matter whether pupils study film music before rock'n'roll - one is not intrinsically more demanding than the other. What will determine their order in the curriculum plan is the expectation identified within each unit about musical understanding, features of elements and development of musical skills.

Planned learning therefore needs to identify not only what will be learned, but also the expected outcomes for that learning. For example, a unit on adverts might contain these expectations:

Understanding: understanding of music for adverts, related to the 'identify and relate' stage and outcome of understanding.

Pupils understand and can compare music for different advertisements, relating their differences to the products being sold and target audiences. They begin to identify how changes to (or breaking of) standard conventions for musical adverts can be used to create different expressive outcomes to surprise or influence listeners. They try this out in their own practical work, showing an awareness of

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advertisements' purpose and controlling the chosen conventions of the music with the support of teachers or peers. All pupils will be starting to develop this understanding; some will be secure in their understanding; and a few will be starting to move beyond this understanding.

Pitch: knowledge and understanding of how different scales are created and how they help to convey character:

- All pupils will learn that there are different scale patterns (major, minor, modes).

- Some pupils will learn how different scale patterns are created, and the expressive features of some scales that result from their intervallic construction.

- A few pupils will learn and understand the potential of exploiting specific features of scales (e.g. a minor 2nd) for compositional and expressive purposes.

Composing: developing ideas based around effects, chordal ideas and motivic development:

- All pupils will learn how to manipulate basic sound effects, mood clusters and fragments or motifs for a particular purpose.

- Some pupils will learn how to use appropriate combinations of effects, background moods and motifs, and some motif development for a specific advert.

- A few pupils will learn how to exploit one of these techniques well to promote the selling point of a product with advanced manipulations of a motif.

Developing this over time will enable effective identification of progression in learning: in Year 7 pupils learn (in unit X) how to use single fingered chords along with a melody; in Year 8 (in unit Y) they use fingered chords; in Year 9 (in unit Z) they use full keyboard mode to generate their own chords.

| Task 13 | Identifying learning outcomes | 30 minutes |

- Identify the range of learning outcomes you want the pupils to achieve in respect of overall understanding, features of musical elements and development of musical skills.

- Add these statements to your unit plan.

Sequencing the learning

Now that essential learning has been identified, you need to decide what activities will enable pupils to acquire this learning, and how pupils will use the learning in a practical way to develop their understanding of the musical style, genre or tradition being explored. When undertaking this task, it is crucial to identify the sequence of learning first, and then decide on the practical activities that will best deliver each stage of the learning. Once the best sequence of learning has been identified, the activities that will most effectively deliver each point of learning can be selected.

The first lesson of a unit will almost certainly need to introduce the new style, genre or tradition and include a brief overview of its key conventions. This will enable the pupils to understand what they will be learning about, and the key points of learning for musical understanding within the unit (including the context and musical conventions). The activities will need to engage and motivate the pupils, since they will set the tone for the rest of the unit. Something practical is more likely to succeed than a spoken explanation, though 'practical' can include not only music making but also active listening, analysis and group discussion. For more detail on this, see Unit 2: Structuring learning for musical engagement.

Now decide how you will sequence the essential aspects of learning identified in Tasks 11 and 12: understanding the conventions of the style, genre or tradition, the features of musical elements and the development of musical skills required to access the music being studied.

In the next lessons, therefore, you may wish to explore the features of elements pupils must learn about if they are to understand the conventions of the style, genre or tradition. This will require practical musical exploration: musical knowledge cannot be embedded in pupils' understanding simply through theoretical study. The next point in the learning sequence might then be to ensure that pupils can improve the musical skills that are also required to access the chosen conventions.

Finally, identify how these new aspects of learning can be brought together into a more extended practical task that enables the pupils to apply the learning they have acquired within the context of the main style, genre or tradition.

Resource 1j is an example of a sequence of learning for a unit on samba, based clearly upon defined teaching objectives.

| Task 14 | Sequencing the learning | 45 minutes |

For your chosen unit, identify and sequence the learning through practical activities that will:

- introduce pupils to the style, genre or tradition and identify the essential conventions, processes and procedures that will be explored;

- enable pupils to acquire necessary knowledge about features of musical elements;

- enable pupils to develop necessary practical musical skills;

- enable pupils to apply this learning in an extended practical task that gives them the chance to explore the convention in context.

Summary case study

Planning sequence	Commentary
Title of unit (see Task 6) Understanding the conventions of music for adverts	This identifies that the unit is concerned with learning about a particular genre
Stage of understanding (see Tasks 7 & 8) Identify and relate	This identifies the overall stage of musical understanding for pupils' learning
Context (see Task 9) Learning how music for adverts is used to support the selling point of a product. The music is designed to convey messages to the listener either about the product itself or about the 'target audience' ('*you* should be buying this'). Making the contextual link (see Task 10) How, when and why people are persuaded to do something	This helps pupils to understand the purpose and function of the music being studied and to understand why particular knowledge and skills need to be learned This helps pupils relate the context of the genre to their everyday lives
Conventions, processes and procedures (see Task 11) Learning how adverts use sound effects, background mood music and the development of musical ideas, either by developing melodic motifs or by using complete extracts of music	This identifies the key characteristics that pupils will need to learn about in order to understand the genre
Features of musical elements (see Task 12) Knowledge and understanding of scale patterns	This identifies for pupils the key knowledge they need to acquire in order to understand the genre and its conventions
Development of skills (see Task 12) Developing the compositional technique of motivic development	This identifies for pupils the key skills they need to acquire in order to explore practically the genre and its conventions
Expectations and outcomes (see Task 13) See the statements on pages 22 and 23 which define the expectations for learning about scales and improving skills	This identifies for pupils what they need to learn and what the next steps will be

Learning sequence (see Task 14)	Practical activities
Initial learning introduces the pupils to the genre and raises awareness of the essential conventions to be learned. Later learning enables pupils to:	Sing songs from popular TV adverts and watch TV adverts - analyse basic musical techniques. Consider the power of persuasion.
• explore how snippets of musical ideas can be combined for a purpose	Set a soundscape exercise: clusters/ melodic fragment/sound effects - what do they suggest when combined?
• explore in depth the construction and impact of specific scale patterns	Look at scales (listening and playing) in jazz, 12 tone, pentatonic: impact on mood/style
• see the potential impact of their learning about scales within the genre	Repeat the soundscape exercise: choose a different scale - consider the impact
• develop their composing skills - e.g. how to develop musical motifs	Analyse TV adverts' melodic construction: imitation/augmentation/ diminution. Play S Reich: 'Clapping Music' and try some short melodic starting point exercises
• learn advanced features of the genre	Explore juxtaposition of aural and visual messages
• apply the learning from the rest of the unit in a practical exploration of their own version of the genre	Set an advert composition task

Task 15

Reviewing the unit   30 minutes

Review the unit of work undertaken by answering the following questions:

- Did the pupils acquire relevant knowledge about features of a musical element, and did this support their knowledge of relevant conventions, processes and procedures? What evidence do you have?

- Did the pupils learn how to improve their practical musical skills, and did this support their practical exploration of the genre, style or tradition? What evidence do you have?

- As a consequence were the pupils able to articulate and/or demonstrate practically their musical understanding? What evidence do you have?

- Consider the progress the pupils made in learning about features of musical elements and developing musical skills: was this less than, equal to or better than progress normally made? What evidence do you have?

- Consider the impact on pupils' motivation: was motivation lower than, equal to or better than usual? What evidence do you have?

Next steps

This unit has explored an aspect of teaching and learning. You may wish to develop your ideas further, to consolidate, apply ideas in different contexts or explore an aspect in more depth and innovate.

Reflection

Refer back to the 'Recognising impact' statements on page 2 and your planning sheet for this unit. Use these to evaluate:

- the impact of this unit on your teaching;
- the impact on pupils' learning.

Developing practice

Here are some suggestions for developing your practice further:

- Try using the same planning principles in a different unit of work. Ensure that the starting point is very different - e.g. if you worked through this unit by planning work on a style, choose to explore a genre.
- If you have not planned and taught a unit on abstract thinking, tackle this next. Make sure that the expectations are clearly defined through the starting materials, and that pupils are encouraged not just to explore the musical ideas as a technical exercise but also to consider what the ideas can communicate.
- Listen to Audio 1b and 1c which are recordings of two Year 8 pupils, taught by the same teacher but having experienced very different approaches to curriculum planning. The first pupil was taught to use major and minor keys to create a piece influenced by South American dance music (a skills-based approach). The second pupil was explicitly taught the contexts and conventions of South American Tangos (an approach designed to develop musical understanding). The outcomes are very different: while there are strengths in each piece of work, focus on the skills, imagination and sense of musical quality being demonstrated in the two recordings. Is it possible to relate explicitly the nature of the planned learning to the type of musical outcomes?
- Begin to identify the Key Stage 3 map of learning for features of musical elements and musical skills - do you have a balance of focused learning on each of the elements and on each of the skills? If not, how might you adapt future units in order to guarantee this balance - do you need to create alternative units, or can you change the emphasis of the conventions, processes and procedures explored so that the understanding of elements and development of skills also changes? You can use a template curriculum map (Resource 5a) from Unit 5: Challenge in music to help you do this.

Setting targets

Having considered your next steps, you may wish to set yourself some personal targets to support your CPD. You could use these targets to inform your performance management discussion.

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Appendix 1: Task 1 – sample interview schedule

You may like to use the following questions with pupils in order to ascertain 'the extent to which they feel they currently learn and can demonstrate the aspects of musical understanding listed in the pupil section of the Recognising impact statements'

The questions can be used as the basis for an interview and should be adapted to reflect the experiences and interests of the pupils involved. The examples in brackets can be used as prompts to clarify the question if necessary, with specific examples from the department's scheme of work being used to replace the suggestions provided.

Pupils can . . . develop their understanding of a culturally diverse range of musical styles, genres and traditions;

- In your music lessons, what have you learned about most? Do you learn most about:
  - » Practical skills (e.g. playing pieces of music, composing, improvising); or
  - » Theory (e.g. how to read music); or
  - » How musical elements work (e.g. scale patterns, form and structure like Rondo); or
  - » How to recognise the ways that different types of music work (e.g. what makes samba different from film music)?

Explain to me why you think this is so

- Which different cultures have you learnt about in music lessons (e.g. West African, South American, the world of TV and media . . . .)?

- What have you learnt about these cultures? Compare and contrast for me the different reasons they have for using music.

- In terms of the different types of music there are (e.g. music from around the world, music for different purposes like film music or dance music), would you say have you learned about:
  - » Very many
  - » Many
  - » Some
  - » A few

Explain to me why you think this is so

- Do you think your understanding of these types of music is:
  - » Very good
  - » Good
  - » Satisfactory
  - » Weak

Explain to me why you think this is so

Pupils can . . . understand how music reflects and is influenced by the contexts within which it is created, performed and listened to;

- Music is affected by where, how and why it is created or used (e.g. samba is loud because it is outdoors processional music; or film music uses dissonant chord clusters to create a feeling of tension to emphasise the action . . .). What have you learnt in music lessons about the way that the context or function of any music we have studied makes the music like it is?

- Composers are often influenced by the purpose of the music when they decide how their music should sound (e.g. the instruments they choose, the speed of the performance – so a piece of blues music might be slow and use low, heavy sounding instruments . . . .). Describe to me some examples of how the decisions you made when you were composing were influenced by something you had learned about the context for that type of music.

- Do you think your understanding of the way that music is influenced by its context or purpose is

    » Very good

    » Good

    » Satisfactory

    » Weak

Explain to me why you think this is so

Pupils can . . . articulate verbally and practically the conventions, processes and procedures of different musical styles, genres and traditions;

- Think of your favourite type of music, and least favourite. Now describe the main differences between them – how would I recognise them as being this type or that type of music?

- We can usually explain why one type of music sounds different from another (e.g. folk music is distinctive because of the way it uses particular sets of instruments, dance rhythms, structures that link a number of dances together, a unique ornamentation style, etc). What have you learnt in music lessons about what makes any one type of music distinctive – why you can recognise it as being one type of music and not another?

- Can you describe the technical differences between different types of music:

    » Very well

    » Well

    » Reasonably well

    » Not very well

Explain to me why you think this is so

Pupils can . . . understand how the features of musical elements impact on music;

- Different types of music use the elements of music (e.g. pitch, rhythm, dynamics) in particular ways (e.g. West African music uses rhythms to create a lively dance feel . . .). What have you learnt about how any sort of music uses one of the elements to create an effect?

- Can you describe the detail of this (e.g. how polyrhythms are created and used)?

- Is your understanding of how features of musical elements are used to create and change music:
  - » Very good
  - » Good
  - » Satisfactory
  - » Weak

Explain to me why you think this is so

Pupils can . . . use relevant practical skills for music making;

- Describe for me any musical skills you have learned that you did not have before you started at this school (e.g. singing solo or in a group; playing a keyboard; improvising melodies . . .)

- Describe for me exactly what you have learned to do (e.g. how to compose a song with a clear structure using verses and choruses . . .)

- Is your ability to use practical skills in music making:
  - » Very good
  - » Good
  - » Satisfactory
  - » Weak

Explain to me why you think this is so

Pupils can . . . be inspired by vibrant and relevant music making.

- Can you describe a performance of yours, or of someone else in the class, that you really enjoyed?

- Have you gone to listen to or buy CDs of or download any music we have studied?

- How well inspired are you by music making in lessons:
  - » Very well
  - » Well
  - » Reasonably well
  - » Not very well

Explain to me why you think this is so

Appendix 2: unit planning sheet

Year	
Title	Understanding the conventions of
Stage and objective of understanding	
Context (matched to stage of understanding)	Learning why, how or that music is: *(or)* Learning that the purpose or function of music is:
Conventions, processes and procedures (matched to stage of understanding)	Learning how music uses: *(or)* Learning that the key characteristics of music are:
Focus of practical experience	
Features of musical elements	
Development of skills	
Expected outcome of understanding (related to context and conventions and how it will be demonstrated in practical work)	Pupils will show their understanding of by (assessed as developing, secure or strong)
Expected outcome of knowledge and skills (for all, some, a few pupils)	*Element(s)* *Skill(s)*

Sequence of learning	Essential activities

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