Secondary
National Strategy
for school improvement

Foundation subjects: KS3 music

Unit 5: Challenge in music

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

Using this guide

This guide offers some practical strategies teachers use to provide appropriate musical challenge for all pupils, including the use of a definition of progression in musical understanding. The strategies 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. 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. A final section provides information about references and further reading.

As you work through this guide, you will:

• read about the principles of challenge in the classroom;

• consider how the range of activities and challenge in your current lessons relates to Bloom's taxonomy (Task 1);

• read about strategies to improve challenge and apply these in lessons (Tasks 2 and 3);

• identify the balance of skills and musical understanding within current planning in order to increase the challenge for musical quality (Task 4);

• consider the breadth of learning about genres, musical skills and elements across the key stage (Tasks 5 and 6);

• identify how depth of challenge can be increased within units of work across the key stage, and related to National Curriculum (2000) level assessments (Tasks 7 – 9);

• reflect upon the types and use of musical vocabulary and wider literacy skills needed to support appraising and higher-order thinking (Tasks 10 and 11);

• identify the range of prior instrumental and vocal learning that pupils bring with them to secondary school, and use this information to set appropriate challenges for more experienced musicians (Tasks 12 and 13);

• 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:

Appendix   1

Audio   1c, 1a, 5a, 5b, 5c

Resources   5a, 5b, 5c, 1a, 5d, 5e, 5f

Challenge in music

Contents

Recognising impact

This unit aims to help music teachers review and refine their practice in setting appropriate challenge in music so that they can promote higher-order thinking skills, recognise increasing challenge in musical understanding and evaluation skills, and accommodate pupils' prior learning, particularly in relation to quality of instrumental and vocal expertise.

This unit leads teachers to:

- use a hierarchy of thinking skills as a tool to improve pupils' development of skills and knowledge;

- identify the progression in learning that promotes effective development of musical understanding;

- use language effectively to promote challenge for learning in listening and appraising activities;

- employ varied strategies that take account of pupils' prior musical experiences, skills and understanding.

This will enable teachers to:

- present an expectation of challenge as a routine part of classroom practice;

- sequence learning episodes by increasing the quality of challenge;

- use structured questions to probe and develop pupils' understanding of essential skills and knowledge;

- make explicit the links between quality, breadth and depth of challenge that contribute to progression in musical understanding;

- plan for and appropriately assess pupils' progression in musical understanding;

- routinely expect pupils to use a musical vocabulary effectively;

- challenge pupils to appraise their own work and that of others rigorously, with appropriate descriptive, expressive and musical language;

- identify and acknowledge the range and breadth of prior musical experiences that pupils bring with them to the classroom;

- plan learning that provides all pupils with appropriate challenge, taking account of the breadth of instrumental and vocal interests, skills and understanding that pupils possess.

As a result, pupils will be able to:

- tackle and meet musical challenges with enthusiasm;

- analyse their learning, reflect on learning goals and regularly evaluate their own progress against clear criteria;

- use the higher-order skills of justification, decision-making and hypothesising, and apply this thinking to their own work;

- value musical understanding as highly as musical skills and knowledge;

- identify and assess the quality of their work by reference to musical understanding;

- use musical vocabulary accurately to inform their learning;

- explore, explain and justify musical views and decisions;

- use existing musical interests and skills in class, particularly where they have developed specific instrumental or vocal expertise and understanding.

Background

A range of inspection and research evidence identifies common issues in defining and providing appropriate challenge for pupils in music lessons. It also describes how successful teaching finds solutions that enable positive musical learning. The main characteristics are outlined below.

Common issues

Sometimes pupils:

- rely on teachers to know what they should do next as they cannot take forward their own learning independently – they cannot identify patterns to their learning, and get stuck with similar problems on a regular basis;

- do not reflect on their learning effectively, and consequently find it hard to evaluate their work in progress or make decisions about what is successful and why;

- focus on mechanical completion of tasks rather than on the processes that lead to effective musical learning;

- do not know how to describe musical quality, and find it difficult either to recognise or demonstrate how musical understanding reflects effective musical learning;

- do not use musical vocabulary consistently, whether using technical or expressive language;

- struggle to describe cause and effect in music, and find it hard to evaluate the value of their own work and that of others;

- lose motivation, either because the skills demanded of them are too high, or because the level of challenge is too low, given their prior experiences of instrumental and vocal music making. In particular, pupils with a range of enhanced performing skills find that the challenge of 'advanced' practical work does not match or stretch their capabilities, and fails to engage their capacity to develop broader musical understanding.

Resolving the issues

- Teachers encourage pupils to think about how to tackle learning, and support them in the process by using sequences of questions that challenge and probe their thinking. They expect pupils to make their own decisions based on clear criteria and a regular analysis of work in progress.

- Musical understanding is an explicit focus for learning. Teachers and pupils value the processes of learning that lead to musical understanding more highly than the simple acquisition of knowledge and skills. They consistently explore the qualities of music and music making that enable effective musical communication.

- Teachers plan learning that takes account of progression in musical understanding, and assess pupils' work primarily by reference to this progression. This provides significant challenge to all pupils, whatever their level of prior engagement with music making and their existing confidence in using practical musical skills.

- Teachers and pupils consistently use an expressive and technical vocabulary to describe their work and learning. This is a foundation stone that supports regular opportunities for pupils to appraise their work, using a range of literacy techniques to embed learning.

- Teachers know what prior experiences of practical music making pupils have had, and are able to challenge all groups of pupils effectively as a result. They build on the skills, knowledge and understanding that different pupils already possess, and extend their understanding by expanding and deepening their known repertoire of styles, genres and traditions.

Challenge in the classroom

The principles

Challenge defines the way that pupils improve and extend their learning. It requires understanding of progression, but goes beyond that to encompass a range of strategies that enables teachers to move pupils' learning forward effectively. It is the active part of teaching and learning: after defining what pupils are intended to learn, it also, critically, identifies the methods and opportunities for them to develop and sequence that learning in the most effective way.

Setting appropriate challenge is therefore essential if pupils are to make good progress and to achieve at an appropriate level of expectation. *Training materials for the foundation subjects* (DfES 0350/2002) Module 9: Challenge notes that:

- challenge is a prerequisite for learning – to make progress in any curriculum area, learners need to work regularly in advance of their prior attainment;

- setting the right level of challenge is crucial – if the learning activity is too easy, pupils will become bored; if it is too hard, frustration will lead to demotivation;

- the challenge needs to be realistic – the learner needs to feel that he or she has a high probability of meeting the challenge;

- support should encourage independence in the learner – he or she should be helped to reflect on the process being used to complete the task;

- challenge in classrooms should be accompanied by low levels of anxiety – when learners experience high levels of stress, their capacity for learning declines, but mistakes need to be accepted as an important part of learning, as effective learners take risks.

Challenge is consequently more about the quality of the learning opportunity than the quantity or difficulty of the work being undertaken by pupils. In musical terms, therefore, it is not about 'more sharps and flats', but about how best to develop pupils' musical understanding of a range of styles, genres and traditions.

While some aspects of progression will be specific to music, there is an underpinning hierarchy of intellectual skills and abilities across the whole curriculum that can help teachers to build challenge into all lessons. This is based upon Bloom's taxonomy of educational objectives (Bloom and Krathwohl, 1956), which is a classification of levels of intellectual behaviour important in learning. The taxonomy classifies cognitive learning into six levels of complexity and abstraction as follows.

- Knowledge – pupils should describe; identify; recall.

- Comprehension – pupils should translate; review; report; restate.

- Application – pupils should interpret; predict; show how; solve; try in a new context.

- Analysis – pupils should explain; infer; analyse; question; test; criticise.

- Synthesis – pupils should design; create; arrange; organise; construct.

- Evaluation – pupils should assess; compare and contrast; appraise; argue; select.

On this scale, knowledge is the lowest-order thinking challenge and evaluation is the highest (see Unit 4: Modelling in music, pages 12-15, for further explanation of Bloom's taxonomy). In most cases, pupils will need to be able to analyse, synthesise and evaluate if they are to attain National Curriculum (2000) level 5 and above.

Level 5: . . . <u>analyse</u> and <u>compare</u> musical features . . . <u>evaluate</u> how venue, occasion and purpose affects the way music is created, performed and heard.

Level 6: . . . <u>analyse</u>, <u>compare</u> and <u>evaluate</u> how music reflects the contexts in which it is created, performed and heard.

It is possible to map musical challenges against this taxonomy. At the lowest, 'knowledge' stage are the sorts of musical learning and skill-based activities that require simple recall and imitation: the identification of instruments' names, the description of notation theory or the performance of a basic melodic line on a keyboard, taught by rote. Activities in the middle, 'application' stage ask pupils to speculate on what might happen if new ideas are tried in a composition, or show how a new arrangement of a piece might better reflect the intended style. At the highest, 'synthesis' or 'evaluation' stages are sophisticated activities that focus on musical quality and an understanding of how music works: evaluating two versions of musical performance, creating compositions that merge conventions of two different styles, or developing a performance of a vocal piece with a special timbre to convey a particular message.

By mapping out this progression in challenge for a sequence of lessons, it is possible to identify the level of challenge that a pupil needs next. The key here is to establish where each individual pupil's learning is located at any given time, and to know how to move them to the next type of thinking; in this way they are constantly being required to work 'in advance of their prior attainment'.

| **Relating musical activities to thinking challenges** | **30 minutes** |

a) Consider a sequence of lessons that you will be teaching soon. Identify the full range of activities that you will be asking pupils to undertake, and match each activity with the particular aspect of Bloom's taxonomy to which you think it most closely relates. Remember that the main consideration is the type of thinking that will be required to complete the learning effectively.

Aspect of thinking	Musical activity with this type of challenge
Knowledge: this involves recalling information. *Activities will be largely skills-driven, and ask pupils to state, recall, or simply reproduce musical examples.*	
Comprehension: this involves understanding information or making sense of ideas. *Activities will involve skill development informed by basic musical understanding, and will ask pupils to explain, describe, or demonstrate practically a musical feature.*	
Application: this involves applying knowledge or understanding in unfamiliar contexts. *Activities will involve skills, together with awareness of musical understanding, and will ask pupils to solve, predict or use prior knowledge and experience to overcome new musical problems.*	
Analysis: this involves using methods and theories in unfamiliar situations to identify patterns and to solve problems. *Activities will involve skills and musical understanding in equal measure, and will ask pupils to identify cause and effect, compare and contrast, or to choose the most appropriate ideas from a range of options to create a successful musical outcome.*	

Aspect of thinking	Musical activity with this type of challenge
Synthesis: this involves combining ideas to make something new. *Activities will depend heavily on musical understanding, and will ask pupils to hypothesise, invent, or create something new by combining ideas from different musical styles or genres.*	
Evaluation: this involves discriminating between ideas and making judgements about value. *Activities will depend almost exclusively on musical understanding with high-level skills to support it, and will ask pupils to criticise, prioritise, or develop new creative styles based on personal preferences.*	

b) If there are gaps in this table, try to work out an activity that would move pupils into this area of learning – stretching them beyond their current thinking to something more challenging. For instance, if you have not noted anything in the 'Analysis' section for a lesson on film music, ask pupils to try an alternative sequence of chord clusters for a given scene. If they already have one using genuine clusters, could they try one using diminished chords instead: which is more effective, and why? This may require preparation of new activities and materials, but will enable challenge to be increased step by step throughout the lessons.

c) Now teach the lessons. Observe pupils carefully to identify where they are on the 'ladder' of thinking: when you are sure that they are secure in one area, use your notes to engage them at the next 'rung' up.

Reflect: did the types of challenge posed enable pupils to make better progress?

Teaching strategies to promote challenge by developing independence

One of the key features of effective challenge is the way that it develops pupils' capacity to work as independent learners. The shift from stages 1-3 of Bloom's taxonomy to stages 4-6 is characterised not only by the move from lower-order to higher-order thinking, but also by the move from dependence (knowledge, comprehension and application) to independence (analysis, synthesis and evaluation).

A number of strategies can facilitate this move towards independent learning; they are described in Unit 17: Developing effective learners from *Pedagogy and practice: teaching and learning in secondary schools* (DfES 0440-2004 G). Some of the strategies, such as the following, help pupils move through the lower stages of the taxonomy.

- Modelling the learning process and learning habits:
    - » What should the class do, and in what order?
    - » How should they do it and deal with issues and difficulties?

- Planning teaching sequences that lead towards independence:
    - » providing scaffolding that you remove when pupils are ready;
    - » gradually increasing expectations, for example modelling more difficult problem solving or introducing collaborative work.

Perhaps the most significant strategies, though, begin to encourage metacognition (knowledge about one's own thought processes: thinking about thinking) and self-review. These aspects of thinking are requirements of the higher stages of the taxonomy. Strategies to encourage them include the following.

- Sharing with pupils the criteria for success:
    - » pupils need to know why they are doing something, how it links with other work and what a good response or outcome will look like.

- Using phrases and 'quality boards' to explain and clarify:
    - » having phrases on display and making it clear to pupils when they are to be used;
    - » drawing pupils' attention to how they should work by saying: 'In a good group I will see …'.

- Helping pupils to develop self-assessment skills:
    - » getting pupils to evaluate their own work helps them to make links, gain a sense of purpose and develop independent judgement.

| *Task 2* | **Strategies for developing higher-order thinking** | **20 minutes** |

Consider a lesson you will be teaching soon. Reflect on the learning outcomes you have planned for, and the teaching strategies you will use to help pupils achieve them.

Will the strategies enable pupils' independent learning, encouraging them to move through to the more advanced thinking skills of analysis, synthesis and evaluation?

What additional teaching strategies could you plan into the work that will move pupils on more effectively to address questions of quality and independent learning?

Try to use one of the strategies listed above to enable more independent learning.

Using sequences of questions to generate talk

Unit 4: Modelling in music (pages 12-15) describes how Bloom's taxonomy can be applied to the use of questions. This section of Unit 4 indicates the sorts of question that might be used in music lessons to move pupils on to more advanced learning, reflecting a sequence of increasingly challenging thinking.

It is also possible to use this sequence of questions to generate more advanced exploratory talk by pupils, helping them to move beyond simple identification of musical features to more advanced thinking about how the music works. For instance, asking pupils to talk about the names of instruments playing in a recording will produce limited, closed answers that simply require pupils to recall and identify. Asking pupils to talk about what would happen if the instruments were changed or played in a different way would require pupils to make predictions, using prior knowledge to make sense of a new context. At the more advanced stages of thinking, asking pupils to discuss the range of alternative chords they could use within a piece, and to reorganise the texture of the piece on the basis of these changes, would involve pupils in reorganising their ideas and talking about how to create something new. This open-ended type of question, with a diverse range of responses possible, would provide far greater independence for pupils.

Task 3 — Using questions to promote advanced thinking — 20 minutes

Choose a series of two or three lessons you are about to teach that involve performing or composing.

Identify for these lessons the essential points of learning you want pupils to address. Now plan a range of questions that can prompt pupils to discuss the learning in their pairs or groups as they work. For instance, if pupils are composing in groups, a 'knowledge'-based question for them to discuss might be: 'Can you identify what different parts of the texture are played by the different instruments you are using?' A more advanced question might be: 'How could you change the texture to include a greater variety of ways of playing the chords?'

Plan both the questions and the talking opportunities carefully in advance. Afterwards, reflect on what difference the process made to the pupils' progress: were they able to think about what they were doing more carefully and move on to more advanced issues more effectively, and did this improve their final 'product'?

Improving the challenge for musical understanding

The link between thinking skills and musical understanding

The previous section suggested that knowledge and skills were at the bottom of the thinking hierarchy, while evaluation and understanding were at the top. In musical terms, playing the right notes in the right order is a matter of accuracy and is related to the 'quantity' of musical knowledge. By contrast, making subtle adjustments to compositions or performing practice to take account of the style of the music is a matter of evaluation and is related to the 'quality' of musical understanding. There is a demonstrable link, therefore, between progression in generic cognitive learning and progression in musical understanding.

However, whereas cognitive learning moves by step through a single line of progression, progression in musical understanding is more complex. The *Teacher's Guide* from QCA articulates three aspects of progression in music:

Quality: this refers to the way that strong musical understanding is demonstrated by an emphasis on imagination, creativity and cultural awareness. The greater the emphasis on these aspects of learning (rather than on technical issues such as theory or the ability to play the right notes), the greater the quality of musical outcomes and understanding will be.

Breadth: this refers to the range of styles, genres and traditions explored by the pupils. The range of thinking that each requires is critical: progression in musical understanding is partly built by pupils developing a capacity to think musically in a broader range of ways. Progression is also shown by the way pupils increasingly make connections and cross-references between different ways of thinking, and apply this to their practical work.

Depth: this refers to progression in the nature of the musical understanding itself. The type of understanding that Year 9 pupils can demonstrate is more sophisticated than that demonstrated by Year 7 pupils. Articulating this progression therefore helps to identify depth in musical understanding

Increasing the challenge for quality of understanding

Increasing the challenge for quality involves shifting the balance between musical skills and musical understanding. At the early stages of musical learning, skills-based or knowledge-based learning is a priority, but some basic musical understanding is still required. At advanced stages of musical learning, musical understanding becomes the priority, but skills are still needed to access and embed this learning via practical music making. This means that both forms of learning are always present, but by increasingly emphasising understanding, the challenge for quality increases.

This shift of balance between skills and understanding happens not only across key stages but also within units of work at Key Stage 3. Although the intended outcomes of musical understanding should be made explicit at the start of units, there is always a range of knowledge and skills that pupils will need to acquire first. Once the skills are acquired, greater emphasis can be placed on how pupils use them to develop their understanding of the music being studied.

The following diagram describes this shift of emphasis in musical learning, by indicating the changing balance of skills and understanding.

Either: Start of Key Stage 3   End of Key Stage 3

Or: Start of unit   End of unit

| *Task 4* | **The balance of skills and musical understanding** | **30 minutes** |

Consider the balance of learning in a unit of work you are currently teaching:

Does the planned learning enable the change of balance between 'knowledge' (a focus on musical skills and theory) and 'evaluation' (a focus on musical understanding) to take place?

Is this progression properly planned for, so that you can constantly challenge pupils to move on to the next stage of musical learning when they are ready for it?

Are there specific activities that you could add to the unit to make the shift in balance more explicit and effective?

You might consider:

- asking pupils to develop the quality of performing opportunities (fluency, confidence, communication) rather than simply the accuracy of playing skills;

- challenging pupils not only to **apply** knowledge about styles or genres to their composing, but also to **analyse** what they are doing and choose from a wider range of musical options;

- asking pupils to appraise their work in progress more rigorously, asking them to propose alternatives to their current ideas, or asking them to draw conclusions about the effect that the changes would have, based on an ability to **synthesise** their understanding of different possibilities.

Decide on a particular point in the unit where you could add one of these ideas to the planned learning. Afterwards, reflect on the extent to which it enabled a more effective shift towards musical understanding.

Increasing the challenge for breadth of understanding

Unit 1: Structuring learning for musical understanding has already provided a rationale for ensuring that pupils experience a wide range of styles, genres and traditions. The link with thinking skills is worth repeating here:

'Styles, genres and traditions each have their own, distinctive modes of musical thinking and construction. It is important that pupils have the opportunity to explore these different forms of musical thinking so that they can build a broad musical understanding and a repertoire of approaches to music making.'

One form of musical thinking is not necessarily more advanced than any: the nature of a jazz musician's thinking is neither more complex nor more challenging than that of a classical string quartet player – it is just different. Over time, however, progression in musical understanding is supported by pupils being able to build a repertoire of different ways of thinking and making links between them. The broader that repertoire becomes, the more advanced the musical understanding becomes.

An entitlement to a rich repertoire and breadth of musical thinking is therefore important. Over the key stage, pupils need to experience a planned range of musical styles, genres and tradition, each with a distinctive mode of thinking that is made explicit. Unit 1, task 3 provides an audit tool which enables you to see the extent to which this breadth of challenge already exists.

To move beyond this and plan for a coherent range of 'musical thinking' experiences, a curriculum map is provided as Resource 5a. It can be used to plan for the range of musical styles, genres and traditions that pupils learn about, so that the breadth of challenge over the key stage is identified and assured.

In addition to broadening pupils' experience of a range of ways of thinking through exposure to a variety of musical styles, genres and traditions, it is important to give pupils the chance to develop forms of musical thinking that spring from their own interests and aptitudes. Many pupils will already have a very strong affinity with and expertise in particular forms and ways of making music. They will need to both refine these and explore how they can be expanded by incorporating other ways of musical working experienced across the curriculum.

This can be organised in one of the following two ways.

a) Some units across the year can be designated 'pupil-led' units. These are often best done either at the start of a year (as a springboard for future learning) or at the end of the year (as an opportunity to capture and demonstrate learning developed across the year within a framework of known music);

b) Units with an emphasis on open-ended genres can enable pupils to follow their own interests: a unit on 'the conventions of dance music', for instance, might explore the generic conventions first and then allow pupils to apply the thinking to any form of dance music they choose. A classically-trained musician might focus on the waltz; a pupil with an interest in folk could explore folk dances; while a pupil with particular interests in contemporary culture might focus on music for street dancing. The comparisons between these forms of dance music would provide a rich learning experience for all pupils.

The balance of these 'pupil-led' units with other, more 'teacher-defined' units will still be important, to ensure that the principle of a breadth of musical thinking is retained. For further information on the process and impact of pupil-led units, you may be interested to see the work of the recent Musical Futures project: www.musicalfutures.org.uk. This has explored extensively the use of a Key Stage 3 curriculum designed in collaboration with pupils.

Task 5	Use the curriculum map as a framework	20 minutes

Look at the units of work you are currently teaching in each of Years 7, 8 and 9.

Identify whether the form of thinking required in each unit is closest to a style, genre or tradition, and note this on the curriculum map (you could colour-code each form of thinking, for instance: see Resource 5b for an example).

Now look at the units that the year groups will study next: do they address the same form of thinking? Is this appropriate, or would it be better to re-order the units, so that the style of thinking is altered to give greater breadth over a short period?

As the year progresses, keep returning to this grid, and build it up so that you can identify where the gaps are in breadth of challenge are, and what might fill those gaps.

As well as the different forms of musical thinking required by a range of styles, genres and traditions, the generic activities of performing, composing, and listening and appraising all provide a breadth of thinking. The task of analysing a song to identify its structure, for instance, requires a very different form of thinking to that needed when leading an ensemble performance. It is important that this balance is tracked across the key stage, and the curriculum map can again be used for this. Where, for instance, does singing appear across the key stage as a focus for learning: in one unit in Year 7, two units in Year 8 and one in Year 9? Or is it threaded through so that pupils have to experience this way of making music in every unit?

The model of learning in Unit 1: Structuring learning for musical understanding also identifies that pupils need to learn about the features of different musical elements. If they are to develop an effective range of musical thinking, pupils will need to develop their understanding of the full range of musical elements (for example understanding aspects of pitch requires different thinking from understanding of musical structures). Pupils' ability to develop a range of thinking by exploring features of different musical elements therefore needs to be tracked across the key stage.

Task 6 — Tracking skills and elements across the curriculum map

30 minutes

Look at the units of work you are currently teaching in each of Years 7, 8 and 9.

Identify the focus of elements and skill development for each unit, as described in Unit 1: Structuring learning for musical understanding, Task 12.

Now look at the units that the year groups will study next: do they cover the same sorts of learning? Is this appropriate, or would it be better to re-order the units, so that the style of thinking is altered to give greater breadth over a short period?

As the year progresses, keep returning to this grid, and build it up so that you can identify where the gaps are in breadth of challenge are, and what might fill those gaps

This process can also be used to demonstrate coverage of National Curriculum (2000) Programmes of Study, by adding relevant N.C. PoS references each time a skill appears.

Increasing the challenge for depth of understanding

Increasing the depth of challenge in musical skills is well understood by most teachers, given that it is a consistent part of their musical experience as performers and composers. All music teachers will be able to identify the progression of skills that pupils need to acquire when playing the keyboard, for instance.

The curriculum map referred to in the last section helps not only to identify the breadth of musical skills experienced over the key stage, but also the depth of those skills. For instance, if ensemble performing has been identified as a focus in the second unit of Year 7, and the fourth unit in Year 8 – how is the Year 8 skill more advanced? What specific aspects of ensemble performing will the pupils learn that builds on their Year 7 learning and challenges them to extend and develop greater depth of learning?

Task 7 — Identifying increasing depth of challenge for skills

15 minutes

Take your Key Stage 3 curriculum map.

Identify where one skill currently appears as a focus for learning across the key stage (N.C. PoS 2b, for instance: Creating and developing musical ideas).

Now identify exactly what is taught each time the skill appears (for instance, matching ideas against simple chord patterns, later developing ideas within musical structures using a greater range of chords, and later still producing a stylistically convincing whole with various harmonic and non-harmonic devices).

Do the later appearances build on and extend the depth of challenge? If not, how can the later units be adapted to provide appropriate challenge?

Increasing the depth of challenge in musical understanding is less well understood. Although such progression is indicated by the overarching statement in the first sentence of each of the National Curriculum (2000) level statements, it is not easy to determine its essential characteristics. This progression is critical, however, since it is where genuine aspects of musical quality, understanding and higher-order evaluative thinking are revealed.

The QCA website (www.ncaction.org.uk/subjects/music) reminds us that, by the end of Year 9, pupils should be able to demonstrate higher-order stages of musical understanding.

- Each level begins with an overarching statement which identifies the key characteristic of attainment at that level. This is the key to understanding the levels.

- Understanding of a variety of genres, styles and traditions is also essential for attainment, especially above level 4.

Accurately defining the progression for musical understanding at each point of Key Stage 3 will enable pupils to achieve this goal, and it is therefore an important issue to explore.

Unit 1: Structuring learning for musical understanding has already provided in Resource 1a definitions of musical understanding which are the foundation of all planning for medium – term units of work. Implied within those definitions is a progression in the depth of challenge for musical understanding, moving through a series of 'stages of progression'.

These too can be mapped across the learning for the whole Key Stage 3 curriculum, to ensure that there is true progression in the depth of challenge for musical understanding. Resource 5c is an example map which shows how this might operate for one school.

- In Year 7, teachers identify that on entry, most pupils are thought to be working at the 'identify and manipulate' stage. Some will, of course, be working towards this and some will be beyond, but most are ready to consolidate or develop this stage of understanding.

- If so, in Year 8, the pupils ought to be provided with a greater depth of challenge for musical understanding. Therefore, the units of work for this year group will provide challenge at the 'identify and relate' stage.

- Finally, in Year 9 the depth of challenge will be even greater, and most pupils will be ready for 'identify and integrate'.

The shading of the colours for each year demonstrates that there is no immediate 'jump' from one stage to the next: the depth of challenge gradually increases through the year. However, the broad progression is clear through the key stage for most pupils.

Differentiating for depth of musical understanding

Look at a unit of work that you will be teaching soon. Using the principles outlined above, and the progression statements for musical understanding, identify the stage of progression for musical understanding that you believe most pupils will be working at.

i)   Within the specific context of this unit, what are the detailed features of musical understanding you would expect pupils to show if they are secure in this stage of progression?

Consider the conventions of the style, genre or tradition, what you would expect pupils to learn from a study of these conventions, and how they could articulate their understanding through practical work.

i)   If some pupils are less secure, and are only starting to develop this expectation, what would the main characteristics of their musical understanding be?

How would this differ from the understanding of pupils secure in this stage of progression, and how would you support them?

Again, consider the conventions of the style, genre or tradition, and consider what practical activities you could develop to help move these pupils' understanding forward.

i)   Some pupils will be starting to move beyond this stage of progression, and may now be ready to move on to the next stage.

How will you challenge them with activities and learning that will stretch their musical understanding?

Make sure that the definitions are specific to the unit (i.e. they define the different stages in terms of the conventions, processes and procedures of the music being studied), and if necessary plan any additional activities that will make the learning and outcomes explicit for pupils.

Try these ideas out, and assess the extent to which they were successful in challenging pupils to learn and demonstrate more sophisticated aspects of musical understanding.

Linking depth of challenge to the National Curriculum (2000) levels

The statements of progression in musical understanding relate to the descriptors of attainment in the National Curriculum (2000) levels by:

a)   describing musical understanding first, and then articulating how that understanding is demonstrated through practical work;

b)   focusing on the understanding of musical styles, genres and traditions;

c)   describing an outcome which characterises the quality of musical understanding.

It is therefore reasonable to assume that pupils who demonstrate learning at a particular stage of progression in musical understanding over a period of time and in a range of contexts will be producing work characteristic of a particular National Curriculum (2000) level. The connection is made explicit in Resource 5d which is an expanded version of the statements.

However, note the following points:

- The statements of progression do not describe all the criteria for the awarding of a level. In particular, they do not describe the details of practical work through which pupils demonstrate their attainment.

- The statements have a different purpose to the levels: they are designed to articulate planned learning rather than outcomes at the end of the key stage.

This means that there is no exact link between the statements for a given stage and a particular level. Trials have shown, though, that the combination of the stage of progression statements and level descriptors have provided teachers with accurate tools for both planning and assessing standards of work.

Task 9	**Matching outcomes of understanding to National Curriculum (2000) levels**	**30 minutes**

Take a unit from your scheme of work that has been reviewed with the process from Unit 1: Structuring learning for musical understanding (i.e. with the stage of progression identified and used as a definition of planned learning).

Monitor closely the outcomes of the work through the unit, including both the processes of the pupils and the final products (performances and compositions).

How well is the link made between the planned learning and the Level descriptions? If pupils were to produce the same standard of work over a period of time and in a range of contexts, would it properly fulfil the criteria for the award of the 'matching' level? What other evidence would you want to capture to ensure that the level was right?

Mid-unit review

At this point in the unit, it is worth reflecting on how you have developed your understanding of the unit's principles, and the impact of this on your classroom practice.

Look back at the Recognising Impact statements on page 2. Identify and consider how you can develop further:

a) principles described in the first section which you now understand more securely and which form a more consistent focus for your teaching;

b) detailed strategies from the second section which are used more frequently in your teaching and which deliver intended learning more effectively;

c) positive changes which you have noticed in pupils' learning or engagement, and how you can best build on them as you work through the remainder of the unit.

You may also wish to revisit some of the unit to embed the new practice more securely before moving on to new ideas. Alternatively, if certain strategies have been particularly effective with one class, you may wish to use them with other classes, and to share the impact more widely across the department with colleagues.

The links between musical vocabulary, appraising and higher-order thinking

The use of language is a specific requirement of the National Curriculum (2000) for music:

'Pupils should be taught how to … communicate ideas and feelings about music using expressive language and musical vocabulary to justify their own opinions.'

The explicit reference to the use of a musical vocabulary is not a surprise, and will be understood by all music teachers. The description of when vocabulary needs to be used, however, and its location within the programme of study for 'reviewing and responding – appraising skills' indicates that it is only the starting point for language use in music. The ensuing challenge is to make sure that pupils can use musical vocabulary effectively to articulate their analysis and evaluation of music key features of appraising and higher-order thinking.

Increasing the challenge in the use of musical language therefore requires teachers to identify:

a)   what basic building blocks are in place for the use of a music-specific vocabulary;

b)   how these are developed and extended to include a wider use of language to support appraising activities.

Musical vocabulary

There are three different sorts of vocabulary used in music lessons, each of equal importance:

general/technical:	general words relating to the common features of elements, performance or composition (pitch, ensemble, inversion, etc.);
genre/technical:	genre-specific words relating to particular music (blues notes, raga, cadenza);
linguistic/expressive:	usually common descriptive words, but occasionally associated with particular styles or genres (soulful, exploratory, demonic).

To some extent, these three sorts of vocabulary can be seen as hierarchical: pupils will find it difficult to describe how blues notes work if they do not already have a vocabulary to describe pitch patterns, and scales in particular. The power of these devices to communicate can then be explained using an expressive vocabulary – though in some situations, of course, it is possible to describe the effect of the music first through expressive language, and then go back to find out what created it.

It is also pertinent to consider separately the issue of progression within expressive vocabulary itself. This can be seen in the following two areas.

a) The quality of expressive language used. Describing music in a major key as 'happy' and minor as 'sad' seriously underestimates the quality of language that Key Stage 3 pupils are expected to use across the curriculum. Pupils possess, and are challenged to use, a significant repertoire of descriptive words in other subjects.

b) The extent to which generic words for expression are used, or the way that, in more challenging work, they can be informed by a musical genre. For instance, pupils might be asked to describe music for an advert by using a vocabulary they would expect to hear in an advert: short phrases, exaggerated descriptions and lively words that capture the essence of an idea.

All this must be planned for. Pupils will not pick up the vocabulary they need just because it is identified in the planning – specific opportunities to use and develop these different sorts of vocabulary need to be built into lessons. For instance, starter activities using card sorts, laminated cards outlining structures for composing, and prompt cards on desks can all be used at the right time to encourage more sophisticated use of vocabulary. Resource 5e is an example of a school's 'Vocabulary chart' for a unit on the conventions of South American Dance music. It provides pupils with a set of vocabulary to use, and for clarity groups them by colour against the genre/technical, linguistic/expressive and general/technical categories. To some extent, there is overlap between the genre/technical and general/technical categories, but the genre/technical group helps to identify the essential conventions of the music being studied.

Task 10	**Identifying use of a musical vocabulary**	**15 minutes**

Consider a lesson you are about to teach.

What planned opportunities are there for pupils not just to learn but to use:

- general technical vocabulary?

- genre-specific technical vocabulary?

- expressive language?

If any of these areas are currently missing, identify how pupils could be introduced to them, and taught how to use them in their work.

Monitor the use that pupils make of this vocabulary, to ensure that it is accurate and appropriate to support their wider musical learning.

Using language to support thinking about music: appraising skills

As already identified, the use of a specific vocabulary is only the first stage of effective language use in music. In broad terms, a musical vocabulary is most critical for types of learning requiring knowledge and comprehension, the starting points of Bloom's taxonomy for cognitive learning. It is also, however, the building block for a more sophisticated use of language that supports advanced appraising skills, which necessarily require skills in application and analysis. Pupils therefore need opportunities to talk and write about music, sometimes at length, if they are to meet progressively harder challenges in their thinking about music.

Literacy in music (DfES 0054-2004 G) outlines a series of important principles and strategies for the use of speaking and listening, reading, and writing within music lessons. In the context of the way that these principles and strategies can support the more advanced thinking skills required by the appraising component of the music curriculum, it suggests the following.

- There are constant opportunities to develop talk about music, and these provide a good way of improving pupils' understanding or evaluative skills. In particular, 'pupils who engage in exploratory talk are more likely to understand, develop and internalise related concepts' and 'in questioning and discussion, [talk allows] pupils increased thinking time'.

- Carefully focused reading activities can be used to enrich musical understanding. Although the range of texts for music is wide (including books on music, texts from the Internet, magazine articles and reviews, CD inlay notes, etc.), 'rather than simplifying the language we offer pupils, we should be providing strategies to support them in understanding challenging texts'.

- 'Clearly focused writing activities challenge pupils to make their knowledge and understanding of music explicit – in thus using language as a tool for learning, their level of understanding of music is further developed'.

As an example, pupils are given a structured reading task about African-American music. After listening to and discussing examples of African music, pupils undertake a complex reading activity that requires them to identify those features of gospel, blues and jazz which draw upon the original African tradition. After more listening, pupils are asked to draw upon their reading research and listening to write an entry for an information guide to different styles of music, e.g. *Rough Guide to World Music*. Following this development of their musical understanding, pupils focus on specific features identified as they prepare performances of African American music.

In working through these activities, pupils are learning about the conventions of different musical styles. Specifically, they are being taught to 'identify the contextual influences that affect the way music is created, performed and heard'. They are also having to 'use their existing knowledge and understanding to make sense of a new context' – a feature of application in Bloom's taxonomy. Some pupils will also be able to answer questions such as: 'What is the evidence for …?' or 'Can you make a distinction between …?', questions which address the more advanced cognitive objective of analysis.

All of this clearly helps pupils to develop their appraising skills, as defined by the National Curriculum (2000): 'pupils should be taught to analyse, evaluate and compare pieces of music'. In addition, they are developing their capacity to learn advanced thinking skills, and by using them in the middle of the unit of work, they are able to apply their learning to consequent practical work.

Literacy in music to develop appraising skills   **45 minutes**

Consider a unit of work you are currently teaching. Devise for one forthcoming lesson a talking, reading or writing activity that will enable pupils to use language-based learning in order to:

a) develop their thinking and appraising skills to focus more explicitly on aspects of analysis, application or synthesis;

b) improve their musical understanding of the style, genre or tradition being studied.

Following the activity, make sure that pupils have the opportunity to apply this thinking and understanding to their consequent or continuing practical work.

Can you identify more sophisticated responses in this practical work which reflect pupils' deeper understanding as a result of the language based work?

Is this something that you could do in all units of work, or does the amount of time taken mean that its use has to be carefully selected to ensure maximum impact?

Accommodating the instrumentalist and vocalist

Recognising the range and implications of prior musical experiences

The importance of pupils being challenged in a way that builds on and extends their prior learning has already been noted, but it is worth stating again here.

- Challenge is a prerequisite for learning – to make progress in any curriculum area, learners need to work regularly in advance of their prior attainment.

- Setting the right level of challenge is crucial – if the learning activity is too easy, pupils will become bored; if it is too hard, frustration will lead to demotivation.

This helps to create a climate for learning that is positive: pupils need to be able to feel that they can meet learning challenges, acquiring the self-belief and motivation to address the challenges presented to them in classrooms. Equally, they need to feel that, by building a strong sense of challenge, the lesson has purpose for all learners and that there is something in it for everyone.

In music, the range of pupils' prior attainment and experience is probably wider than in other subject areas. Pupils may previously have had:

- individual or small-group lessons on instruments or the voice;

- regular experience of music-making in an ensemble (recorder group, choir, orchestra, samba band);

- involvement in a range of musical activities, whether provided by local music services or national agencies such as Youth Music, or by their own commitment to music making with their peers;

- experience of a whole-class instrumental or vocal programme at Key Stage 2. This national development stems from the Government's belief that, over time, every primary school child should have the opportunity to learn a musical instrument. Following extensive piloting under the banner heading 'Wider Opportunities', primary and special schools are now being funded to establish their own instrumental and vocal programmes at Key Stage 2. Typically, these programmes will take place during curriculum time

and will run over the course of at least one year. A common feature is that of team teaching, involving a classroom teacher, local music services and community or freelance musicians. Further details can be seen in Resource 5f, which is the document published by DfES in March 2006.

Pupils who have participated in these instrumental and vocal programmes will have received specialist tuition in large and smaller group sessions, focused opportunities to develop core musical skills linked to National Curriculum learning, and the chance to play regularly in a musical ensemble. A wide range of instruments may have been used and pupils will have been encouraged from an early stage to compose, improvise and perform.

Pupils with any of these experiences will bring to the classroom four characteristics:

a) enhanced individual instrumental or vocal skills;

b) enhanced aural, theory and appraising skills (including a better understanding of how music 'fits together');

c) greater exposure to and awareness of a range of musical styles, genres and traditions;

d) increased confidence and higher expectations of music-making in ensembles.

Task 12	Identifying prior musical experiences and expertise	30 minutes

- Take a Year 9 class that you currently teach.

  Confirm or find out from each pupil the range of musical experience he or she possesses:

  » from formal and informal tuition;

  » from participation in formal or informal music making, whether individually or with others;

  » from their own listening to music.

  Given this information, are you confident that the challenges that you are setting individual pupils enable them to use prior experience and to meet new challenges that are 'in advance of their prior attainment'?

- Take a Year 7 class that you currently teach.

  Find out from each pupil the same information. Is the range of experiences of these pupils narrower or wider than that of their Year 9 peers, and what are the differences in their knowledge, skills and understanding?

  For both classes, what are the specific aspects of challenge that could be targeted and increased to enable more pupils to build on their prior learning?

Development: There will already be systems in place in your school to support transition issues. These can arise at any point of transition in a pupil's school career, but they apply particularly to the transfer of pupils from Year 6 to Year 7.

Talk to the member of staff with responsibility for transition, and ascertain how you can find out more about the musical learning and experiences that pupils receive in their Primary schools. This may be in the process of significant change with the national development of new schemes based on the 'Wider Opportunities' pilots for instrumental and vocal tuition at Key Stage 2: see Resource 5f for more details.

Setting challenges that build on prior experiences of practical music making

In providing additional challenge for those pupils with significant prior experience of music making, most teachers will focus on providing pupils with activities involving more challenging skills: taking harder parts, being the leader of an ensemble, using standard notation rather than graphic scores. While this is important, it is unlikely to stretch these musical pupils fully, since this kind of challenge is more about the quantity of the learning than the quality of the learning – the essential balance of their learning is therefore still towards the lower end of the cognitive challenge.

What these pupils do need is the opportunity to develop their musical understanding, with more sophisticated skills being used and developed alongside this process. Throughout this unit, great emphasis has been placed on the relationship between effective challenge and cognitive or thinking skills. Music is no different in this respect to other subjects: the greatest challenges are not those that simply demand more advanced skills, but those that demand more sophisticated thinking about and understanding of music.

Appendix 1 on page 28 shows a diagrammatic definition of the able musician. It places thinking skills at the heart of music pupils' capability, suggesting that the best way of challenging these pupils is by extending their musical understanding – the sorts of learning covered in the earlier section 'Improving the challenge for musical understanding' (see page 10), and in particular the sections on quality and breadth of understanding.

Providing appropriate challenge for pupils with significant prior experience of music making therefore requires something more than the provision of harder parts to play – though this will still be valid and important. Rather, it requires the setting of challenges that will enable these pupils to think about their understanding of the music being studied, applying the cognitive skills of analysis, synthesis and evaluation to their practical work.

This might be most easily achieved in two ways.

a) Setting specific thinking challenges to move them beyond simple replication of styles and genres, to an exploration of how the techniques could be used more imaginatively. A good example of this is shown in Unit 3: Creative teaching and learning in music: the reggae beat activities on page 23 show how pupils who already have the instrumental skills to complete the first version very quickly can be given thinking challenges that help them to explore not only the essence of reggae but also sophisticated issues about how music is structured and organised.

    It is also important to recognise that in this type of challenge, pupils will still need to develop advanced knowledge of theory and practical skills – for instance, knowing how to change minor chords into major and vice versa. Indeed, pupils will need to have this 'feed' of more challenging skills in order to sustain their musical understanding.

b)	Setting challenges that require pupils to work beyond an existing style, asking them to develop new musical ideas by combining musical traditions or by developing their own versions of existing styles. For instance, a group of able pupils studying gamelan may very quickly be able to demonstrate their understanding of the basic compositional procedures, and play a gamelan piece accurately in a group. To move their thinking forward, you might challenge them to:

»	create gamelan-influenced music for a specific purpose – for a film or holiday TV programme, perhaps;

»	cross-fertilise the way of working with another, known style: consider whether pupils could use the same melodic techniques to create a new style of rhythmic samba, or apply the ideas to a piece of rock music;

»	produce a gamelan-influenced piece that reflects their personal response to a local or national event.

As well as focusing on the learning for pupils with instrumental expertise, it is important to recognise that these pupils need access to a wide range of opportunities for music making. The recent 'Musical Futures' project has explored this issue in depth with both schools and music services: if you wish to explore the potential of their positive findings for your own school, please go to www.musicalfutures.org.uk to learn more.

| **Task 13** | **Developing instrumentalists' and vocalists' musical understanding** | **30 minutes** |

Consider a series of lessons involving performing or composing that you are about to teach with a class.

Identify pupils in the class who already have advanced instrumental or vocal skills, in any sort of style or genre.

Identify how you can develop the learning challenge in the task by:

a) stretching these pupils' musical understanding through the setting of new thinking challenges, making sure that pupils will be working in advance of their prior attainment in terms of comprehension, application or analysis thinking skills;

b) building into this challenge the requirement to develop advanced musical skills and knowledge that will enable the new thinking to be realised.

When the pupils complete the practical work, reflect on the musical outcomes:

Were the pupils able to produce music that demonstrated more advanced musical understanding than you might otherwise have expected?

Did the pupils use their existing musical skills efficiently, and/or develop new ones?

Were the pupils engaged with this way of working?

Next steps

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

- Develop your use of questions to reflect more accurately Bloom's taxonomy of cognitive learning by studying Unit 4: Modelling in music and *Pedagogy and practice: teaching and learning in secondary schools*, Unit 7: Questioning (DfES 0430-2004).

- When planning your next unit of work, use the definitions of musical understanding in Resource 5d to identify possible outcomes based on musical understanding rather than on skills and knowledge.

- Listen to these recordings of pupils' work that have been generated by focusing the planning on a particular style, genre or tradition. Are you able to identify the forms of thinking that the pupils have had to employ in order to achieve these outcomes? What does this imply for the breadth of your own music curriculum across Key Stage 3?

    Style: Tango: student's own Tango, working towards the end of Year 8;
    Samba: students' own group samba piece, from the start of Year 8.

    Genre: Programme music: students working at the end of Year 7. After studying the principles and conventions of programme music through various pieces, this composition is based on their own stimulus.
    Anthem: a collaborative piece of work inspired by the theme of 'Kick racism out of sport'. It was created by classes at the end of Year 9, who had all studied anthems from across time and place. It also involved GCSE students in the recording process and Year 7 students in the singing of the main anthem line.

    Tradition: Arranging: students working at the start of Year 9. Although they had studied spirituals, the students were given free reign in their arranging task: they could stay within the spiritual style if they wished, but did not have to.

- Audit your current use of vocabulary with pupils: is there a wide enough range, and does your planning identify strategies for enabling pupils to learn and use this vocabulary?

- Study *Literacy in music* (DfES 0054-2004YG) to develop teaching strategies for literacy that can support thinking and understanding.

- Talk to your school's instrumental teachers about their pupils' existing range of musical understanding. Decide how best you can build on this understanding in the classroom.

- Find out from local partner primary schools and your local music service what schemes are in place to develop instrumental and vocal teaching at Key Stage 2, and what skills and understanding your pupils will therefore have developed by the start of Year 7.

Setting targets

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

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References and further reading

From Benjamin S Bloom Et Al *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives* Published by Allyn and Bacon, Boston, MA. Copyright © 1984 by Pearson Education

Extracts and reference to www.ncaction.org.uk/subjects/music, QCA Teacher's guide, National Curriculum in Action website & Creativity: find it, promote it (2004).© Copyright Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. Used with permission

Literacy in music (2004): guidance for LEA consultants and subject advisers (DfES 0054-2004 G)

Tuning in (2004): the Ofsted report and DVD 'Tuning in' (www.ofsted.gov.uk/ publications/index.cfm?fuseaction=pubs.summary&id=3591) describe the national pilot of the Wider Opportunities programme. They reference the impact on learning and motivation provided by working with specialist musicians both in and beyond the music classroom.

Appendix 1: Defining the able musician

The diagram shows two concentric ovals. The outer oval contains **THINKING** (left) and **SKILLS** (right). The inner oval is divided with a dotted vertical line. At the centre: **Musically Able Pupil: The Thinking Musician**, with arrows pointing inward. To the left of centre: **Creativity and Imagination**; to the right of centre: **Understanding of Style, Genre, Tradition**.

Labels around the inner oval: **Knowledge of Theory** and **Practical Skills** (top), **Aural** and **Acuity** (bottom).

Diagonal lines extend to outer labels:
- **Independent Listening** (top left)
- **Valuing Music** (top right)
- **Personal Commitment** (bottom left)
- **Playing and Composing Music** (bottom right)

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